Ten years later, Tree's grown on Hawks

Hawks' center and captain has endured despite recurring trade rumors and changes in team

> Hawks notebook, Page 13-E By Thomas Stinson Staff Writer

When the phone rang, Tree Rollins was biding time in his college apartment with Chubby Wells, an aptly named Clemson forward and teammate who quickly jiggled with anticipation. The NBA was calling, even though the 1977 draft was still days away. Rollins muttered briefly into the phone and hung up, cheerless.

"Man, they called me and said they were going to draft me," Rollins remembers. "The Hawks!

And I said, 'Shoot! Not Atlanta!' "

A decade has passed, and anyone who has followed the Atlanta Hawks over this span has certainly, at one time or another, offered the same lament. Go on, admit it about the low-scorin', overfoulin', slow-steppin', finger-bitin', gimpy-kneed son-of-Harvey-Catchings. Shoot! Why Atlanta?

Rollins has heard it all, maybe heard before it ever started, perhaps even on that day he sat with Chubby.

He knew the Hawks needed a center. But like he said that draft day, "I don't think Atlanta's future depends on me."

The Hawks open their 20th season in Atlanta Friday night at The Omni against Washington with the same 7-foot-1 center they've had for the last 10 years. He's played 738 games here, more than any-

See ROLLINS, Page 10-E

Hawks vs. Bullets

■ Season opener: Washington Bullets, Friday, 7:30

p.m. at The Omni.

■ Tickets: About 3,000 tickets remain. They can be purchased at all SEATS locations or by calling the Hawks' ticket office at 577-9600.

Radio-TV: WGST 920-AM; No free TV. Available on pay-per-view basis. For more information call Prime Cable at 874-8200.

■ Conference: Eastern, Central Division

■ Last year: 57-25 record, division champs Roster: G - John Battle; F - Antoine Carr; F - Scott Hastings; C - Jon Koncak; F - Cliff

Levingston; G - Mike McGee; G - Doc Rivers; C - Tree Rollins; G - Spud Webb; F - Dominique Wilkins; F - Kevin Willis;

G - Randy Wittman.

DOI

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1987 ***

THE ATLANTA CONSTITUTION

The \$6 million man



SCOTT ROBINSON/Staff Dale Murphy (left), Braves president Stan Kasten announce 3-year agreement Wednesday.

Murphy passes up free agency, signs with Braves for 3 years

> Signing doesn't bother union, Page 11-E By Gerry Fraley Staff Writer

Spurred by the ominous specter of free agency, the Atlanta Braves kept Dale Murphy by signing him to a three-year, \$6 million contract Wednesday.

The contract, fully guaranteed, makes Murphy the first \$2-million-a-year player in Braves history and only the fifth in the major leagues. Of Murphy's \$2 million annual salary, \$500,000 will be de-

ferred at 10 percent interest. There are also several incentive clauses. Murphy will receive \$100,000 for winning the Most Valuable Player award in any season and \$25,000 for finishing second or third in the voting. He would be paid \$25,000 for winning the World Series most valuable player award. The Braves will also pay Murphy \$100,000 if their attendance reaches the 1.75 million level and another \$100,000 if they draw 2 million.

"I don't want to know the numbers," said owner Ted Turner, who was not involved in the negotiations.

The annual salary is a 5.2 percent raise for Murphy, who earned \$1.9 million this year. He received \$8.1 million for a five-year contract that expired after this season.

"I'm happy everything worked out," Murphy said. "I'm pleased because I didn't want to have to go through the entire (free agent) process."

Murphy can take free agency when the new contract expires, after the 1990 season. He had that option this year but never filed, another indication free agency has lost much of its appeal to players. The owners' two-year stand against signing free agents figured heavily in Murphy's deci-

See MURPHY, Page 11-E

Murphy signing OK, but why not for life?

So the Atlanta Braves finished one-for-three for the season in dealing with their only player who rarely produces giggles when he takes the field. They signed Dale Murphy on Wednesday. Good. The thing is, they should have taken care of this mess in spring training, months before Murphy's five-year contract expired.

Oh-for-one.

Then they signed Murphy on Wednesday.

One-for-two. Then they announced the deal was for three

years. One-for-three.

Why not a lifetime deal? "There's no such thing as a lifetime deal," said



Braves owner Ted Turner, who described his role in Murphy's final contract negotiations about the way Ronald Reagan described his role in the Irancontra affair. "I really wasn't involved in the process. I just sign my name to the checks."

Anyway, let's get back to lifetime deals, Mr. Turner, the kind of deals that make sure a Johnny Unitas finishes his career with a horseshoe on his

"The way I see it, there isn't a person on this planet who knows how long he's going to live," Turner said. "Who knows? Murph is such a perfect person that the good Lord might call him up pretty soon to join him in heaven to help out."

Until then, or during the next three years, whichever comes first, the Braves' earth angel will continue to smile and slug his way to the Hall of Fame with a tomahawk across his chest.

See MOORE, Page 13-E

No. 2 Gator

Not even Florida's top Heisman candidate now, Bell dreams on

> Complete SEC coverage, Pages 6-8E By Rachel Blount Staff Writer

GAINESVILLE, Fla. - Florida quarterback Kerwin Bell thought this was going to be his year. He'd spent three seasons passing his way into the Gators' record book and the minds of the Heisman Trophy voters, and he now had



Georgia vs. Florida at Jacksonville Saturday,

ly take the trophy home. Then along came freshman running back Emmitt Smith. Bell, and the Gators' passing game, suddenly fell out of the spotlight. The phrase "Bell For Heisman" was replaced with "Can Smith win it

as a freshman?" The school's weekly press releases, which had been built around Bell, relegated him to one page while Smith got three.

See BELL, Page 13-E



WILLIAM BERRY/Staff Kerwin Bell: 'I still feel I'm the best quarterback in the country.'

Iowa, Big Ten will look into younger Harmon's dealings

By Chris Mortensen Staff Writer

Revelations that Iowa running back Kevin Harmon received money and benefits from agent Norby Walters have jeopardized the remainder of his senior season and could have an impact on the Big Ten conference standings.

Iowa, along with the conference and the NCAA, began investigating the matter Wednesday following a report in The Atlanta Constitution that Harmon benefited from his older brother Ronnie's dealings with Walters and associate Lloyd Bloom two years ago.

Indiana, which was beaten last Saturday by Iowa in a key Big Ten game in which Harmon

played, also took an interest in the case. "If they played with an ineligible player, it's something that should be looked at," said Indiana athletic director Ralph Floyd. "It could affect the race."

See WALTERS, Page 13-E





Cleveland Browns coach Marty Schottenheimer is trying to motivate his 4-3 team to play the Atlanta Falcons (2-5) Sunday by FALCONS pointing out that the same team that lost 38-0 to New Orleans last

week is also the only one to beat the 6-1 Washington Redskins. The Falcons knocked off a Redskin team minus quarterback Jay Schroeder and running back George Rogers 21-20 in the season's second week. "They've been an up-and-down team," Schottenheimer said. "Unfortunately, this could be one of their upswings." ... The issue in Cleveland this week concerns why the Browns are not choosing to run the ball as much this season. The ratio. thus far is 58 percent passing to 42 percent running. Quarterback Bernie Kosar's crucial interception, which set up a winning field goal in overtime by San Diego last Sunday, came off a five-receiver, no running backs set. "Obviously, we like to run the ball more," said Browns running back Earnest Byner, the in-

PRO BEAT

tended receiver on the overthrown pass, "but we're just not going to it" ... The Browns are almost as banged up as the Falcons. Paul Farron has replaced starting left tackle Ricky Bolden (broken ankle) and Larry Williams starts at left guard. Tight end Travis Tucker, the Browns' special teams captain, is doubtful (knee). Free safety Al Gross (knee) is questionable. ... Falcons cornerback Scott Case (neck sprain) missed practice Wednesday, but should play. Guards John Scully and Jeff Kiewel (back injuries) practiced and are probable. ... Falcons defensive end Rick Bryan left practice early because of a family emergency.... The Falcons have no interest in picking up waived Dallas and former Georgia Tech running back Robert Lavette. Sources indicate the Cowboys unsuccessfully tried to trade Lavette to the Falcons, among other teams, in the past.

- Glenn Sheeley Bullets' Bol out for opener with injury



Manute Bol won't play against the Hawks in their NBA opener Friday night at The Omni. Washington Bullets trainer John Lally said the 7-foot-6 center suffered a HAWKS strained lateral ligament in his

left knee against Cleveland Monday and is out this weekend. His condition will not be re-evaluated until next Wednesday, Lally said. Bol, who has never missed a game due to injury, said, "It hurts in my bones. I can hardly walk. They took fluid out and I have a lot of pain." He added, "I can't believe I will miss my first game from the start." ... The Hawks hope to surpass last season's record opening crowd of

- Jeff Denberg

Walters

From Page 1-E

Big Ten commissioner Wayne Duke said, "I'm not prepared to comment on the possibility of forfeits. We'll look into it."

Harmon, who leads Iowa in rushing and touchdowns, was named in an arbitrator's decision Monday that centered on the dealings between Walters and Ronnie Harmon, now a running back with the Buffalo Bills. Ronnie Harmon received more than \$54,000 from Walters dating back to his junior year at

Arbitrator John Culver, a former U.S. senator from Iowa, held that Ronnie Harmon will not have to repay almost \$50,000 of the money and gifts he received.

Culver's 30-page decision contained the revelation that Kevin Harmon, as a sophomore at Iowa, received money and airline tickets from World Sports and Entertainment (WSE), Walter's and Bloom's agency.

While the arbitration case dealt solely with Ronnie Harmon, the ruling read, "On one occasion, WSE also paid Mr. Harmon's brother, Kevin, \$350. In addition to these monthly payments, WSE purchased plane tickets in substantial amounts for Mr. (Ronnie) Harmon, his girlfriend and his brother, and provided Mr. Harmon or members of his family with concert tickets. . . . "

"WSE also argues that Mr. Harmon was given over \$12,157 worth of airline tickets for himself, his brother Kevin and his girlfriend."

Though there is no evidence that Kevin Harmon signed a representation agreement with Walters and Bloom, the acceptance of money and airline tickets from an agent is a violation of NCAA rules. Players in the past have been declared permanently ineligible for such viola-



Norby Walters

tions. In other cases, players have been reinstated after missing one or more games.

"I would have to speak first with David Berst (NCAA enforcement director), but my first reaction is if he (Harmon) received anything from an agent, it immediately puts him in jeopardy," said NCAA enforcement official Dave Didion.

Iowa athletic director Bump Elliott declined comment, other than to say he is investigating the matter. Kevin Harmon could not be reached for comment.

Harmon began this season as a second-string running back but became a starter and leads the team with 471 yards rushing (4.3 average per carry) and five touchdowns. Slowed recently by an ankle injury, he rushed 13 times for 46 yards in Iowa's 29-21 win over Indiana, which was previously unbeaten in the Big Ten.

Iowa, 3-2 in the conference and 6-3 overall, lost to Big Ten title contenders Michigan State and Michigan and plays Ohio State, another title contender, Nov. 14.

Bell

From Page 1-E

sidered a top Heisman candidate in those dreams. It just wasn't meant the country - or, perhaps, on his to be. own team - he has no hard feelings. Instead of dreaming about the Heisman, he now dreams of an NFL career and figures that trophy or no trophy, he's doing all right for

"I think every player mentioned as a possible candidate for the Heisman Trophy wants to win it," Bell said. "I was no exception. It was definitely a goal. But things just haven't worked out, and you just have to take what comes. I've just adjusted my goals a little.

"It won't be hard to take, though, if someone else wins it. I've doesn't go to the best player; it goes to the guy who's in the right place at the right time with the right TV exposure and the right publicity. Some running back may get it, but I still feel I'm the best quarterback in the country. If I don't win the Heisman, it brings no shame to me."

Even being mentioned as a candidate is a thrill for Bell, who received no scholarship offers coming out of high school and whose goal was simply to play a few downs for some college team.

Just before Florida's 1984 opener, Bell, a freshman walk-on, was made the Gators' starting quarterback when projected starter Dale Dorminey was lost for the season to

a knee injury suffered at practice. Bell received national attention when he passed for 1,614 yards and 16 touchdowns to lead the Gators to a 9-1-1 record, the best in the SEC, and was named the league's player of the year.

Bell was even better in 1985, passing for 2,687 yards and 21 touchdowns. That season, Bell was fifth in the balloting for the O'Brien Award for quarterback of the year, and he was being mentioned as a

future Heisman candidate. After the first serious injury of his career - strained knee ligaments - kept him out of three games during his junior year, Bell came back late in the season to throw for 1,515 yards and 10 touchdowns in leading the Gators to upset wins over Auburn, Georgia and Florida State. With his knee healthy again, Bell began making plans for

his final season. But with the emergence of Smith, Bell has not gotten the passing attempts he needed to earn the numbers necessary to win the Heisman. Through eight games, he has thrown 143 times, completing 82 for 1,102 yards and six touchdowns. Last season, he threw the ball 242

times in nine games.

wanted my senior year to be something special," Bell said. "As a team and individually, I wanted to end on a positive note. I wanted to win the SEC championship, go to the Sugar Bowl, win the Heisman. . . . I had a Although Bell is no longer con- lot of dreams. But I haven't reached

"If we finish strong and go to a major bowl, I'll consider it a good season. I can't dwell on the past. I'm proud of what I've accomplished in the SEC. Other quarterbacks may have better numbers, but a lot of them have had 400 attempts or played lesser opponents. It hasn't been a great year, but I don't need to hang my head."

In many ways, Bell is grateful for the lower profile made possible by Smith. The running game enables Bell to use the play-action passes he favors and to give the passing game an element of surprise. With Smith felt all along that the Heisman bolstering the Gators' running game, Bell no longer shoulders the bulk of the offensive burden, and he's been healthier because opposing defenses can no longer key on him exclusively.

> But it hasn't all been fun and games. The Gators' outstanding receivers of the past few years are gone, and Bell's primary targets are sophomore Stacey Simmons and freshman Ernie Mills neither of whom had much experience before this season.

> As a result, many of Bell's passes have been dropped, and he's having a more difficult time getting receivers open, especially in the end

> "I'm not hung up on the publicity," Bell said. "But this is the first time I've had a different role in the offense. Our young receivers have come along kind of slowly, and it hasn't gone as well as I'd have liked. I don't like the control passing game; I like to go for the big play, and that's tough to do with young receivers.

> "They've been up and down all year, and it gets kind of frustrating. But it's happened all year, and now, I'm used to it. I figure they'll start making some of those catches. Like I said, you've just gotta take it as it

> Although Bell probably will not eclipse his personal achievements of the last few years, he does have a new, more reasonable goal: playing in a bowl game. NCAA probation has kept the Gators out of bowls during Bell's term. Saturday's game against Georgia could determine whether the Gators will get an invitation to a major bowl.

"I feel like we need this game bad," Bell said. "Emotionally and mentally, I'll be ready to have one of my best games of the year. If we can close out the season with some big wins and get to a major bowl, I'll feel like everything I wanted out "After three years like I had, I of the season was accomplished."

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Atlanta loves the holiday tradition of The Nutcracker. In fact, Christmas isn't the same without it. To celebrate this exciting holiday classic, the Atlanta Journal and Constitution is sponsoring an Experience The Nutcracker contest. We will be awarding 1,000 lucky winners a set of four tickets each to The Atlanta Ballet's preview performance of The Nutcracker on Thursday, Dec. 3 at the Atlanta Civic Center.

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Moore

From Page 1-E

He complemented his .295 batting average last season with 44 home runs, 105 RBI and 115 runs. His transition from center field to right was so smooth that he figures to collect his sixth Gold Glove. He missed only two games. He signed autographs. He kissed babies. He navigated the Chattahoochee on bare feet. He did all this for a team that finished more than 20 games from the lead for the third consecutive season.

Even so, the Braves thought and thought. This was such a tough decision, you know. Then, with Murphy moving lickety-split toward Monday's deadline for players to declare whether or not they want to become free agents, the Braves joined the land of the living. They made Murphy very rich. The problem for the Braves is, barring injury or the slump of slumps, Murphy figures to become a zillionaire at age 34 when his contract expires.

In other words, Braves president Stan Kasten blew it. He does the negotiating for Turner these days. With time dwindling, Kasten played into the hands of Bruce Church, who knew the drawbacks of a lifetime contract for his client.

"We really didn't want a length longer than three years," Church said. "We like the idea of being able to preserve the free-agent right. They've lost a lot of money here. Even though we're dealing with a

premier player, it was difficult for them to deal with the numbers a player of Murphy's stature should command. It took a while for them to accept that."

Now we're left with the "should have, would have, could have" game for the Braves. They should have signed Murphy at bargain-basement prices by offering the man a lifetime contract during spring training. Church would have asked for a shorter length for reasons mentioned previously, but Murphy could have been so impressed by the Braves' generosity that we're guessing he'd have grabbed the nearest pen and signed for life.

See, if Murphy's contract was for \$3 million per season forever, it would give the Braves long-term joy. For one, they wouldn't become victims of inflation by negotiating the contract of a megastar so often. Second, Murphy would repay such compensation with his wonderful ways on and off the field.

Oh, well. The Braves have other thoughts. Let's see, they yawned as Bob Horner became a free agent last season and got nothing in return. That was before Kasten came aboard. He is a capable negotiator, but he has this awful policy of not settling a player's contract during a season.

"I think it's a great policy because if negotiations turn sour, it can have an adverse effect on a player," said Kasten, who uses a similar approach as president of the Atlanta Hawks. "Having said that, we started negotiating quietly with Murphy in July. I reserve my right to change policies."

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an antitrust suit filed when the NFL attempted to block the Raiders' move from Oakland.

LOS ANGELES - The Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum Commission received \$19.6 million from the NFL Wednesday as settlement of

LA Coliseum gets \$19.6 million from NFL

The Associated Press

Ironically, the check from the NFL arrived about 21/2 months after the Raiders announced their intention to move from the Coliseum to the suburban town of Irwindale.