



BOB UECKER, JIM McMAHON, JOHN MADDEN, SPUDS McKENZIE

Tower Akeem Olajuwon, even though his performance didn't merit it. The money will help finance this real-life Tin Man's trip to Oz, to get what he really needs.

(5) Doyle Alexander: The joyless journeyman pitcher who helped the Tigers win the American League East. He reminds us, against our best wishes, that baseball is not a game so much as a transaction.

We Saved The Receipts: Unwanted Items On Our Christmas List

Heartbeat of America ads . . .

Jack Nicholson at Lakers games; Alan King at the U.S. Open; Tip O'Neill at RFK Stadium; Bob Irsay anywhere . . .

Stakes matches; Skins Games; John 3:16, The Wave, blimps, Bud Adams; Bill Bidwill and any other wanderlusting, mercenary pro-sports owner . . .

Pseudo-eccentric athletes; pandering ex-jock TV announcers (Sample question — "Good game, big guy"); commercials featuring John Madden, Jim McMahon, Bob Uecker, Spuds McKenzie or that burr-headed Australian creep touting batteries (I'll give him one-o'-these) . . .

Tales of LT's wild, wild life; "Mets Feuding" stories; people suggesting Darryl Strawberry-for-Rick Honeycutt trades; "Boss Angry" stories; hero criminals (Hollywood Henderson, Denny McLain), especially those hyping books . . .

Steroids, cocaine, lasix, blood doping, busts and confessions . . .

Praising jocks for their "courage" in recovering from drug addiction — patience, yes, rehabilitation, of course — but don't laud them for their stupidity . . .

About 1,000 Heisman Trophy voters; 12 bowl games; two playoff rounds in the NHL; two games in baseball's championship series; 16 teams in the NCAA Basketball Tournament . . .

John Matuszak on ESPN Sunday Night Football; whispering Brits on major golf tournament telecasts; stories about "the next Willie Mays"; stupefying baseball statistics; jock biographies; Sports Illustrated cover stories on Southern California, Ernest Hemingway, Arnold Schwarzenegger and that renowned athlete, the pit bull terrier . . .

Gary McLain; John Denny; **Norby Walters**; **Lloyd Daniels**; Dennis Rodman; Dana Kirk; Texas Gov. Bill Clements; George; Billy.

Did We Leave Anyone Out?

The World: A Summer Olympics that works.

Hitters: A little sanity. Not every brushback is a signal to go 15 rounds.

Pitchers: A little honesty. Probably, there were more scuffed balls than corked bats last year, and the fact is the pitching was mostly lousy. Don't blame hitters for that.

NFL players: The class to forgive, forget and play. They gain nothing by moping, certainly not sympathy. Comparatively speaking, their lifestyle ranges from comfortable to exorbitant, their wages among the highest in the world — in any field.

NFL owners: The decency to allow their employees to work where they choose and the chance to sell their services to the highest bidder. It's only right.

Bad sports agents: Morals.

Good sports agents: Distance from the bad ones

Toronto Blue Jays: A more restful winter than the one they're spending right now

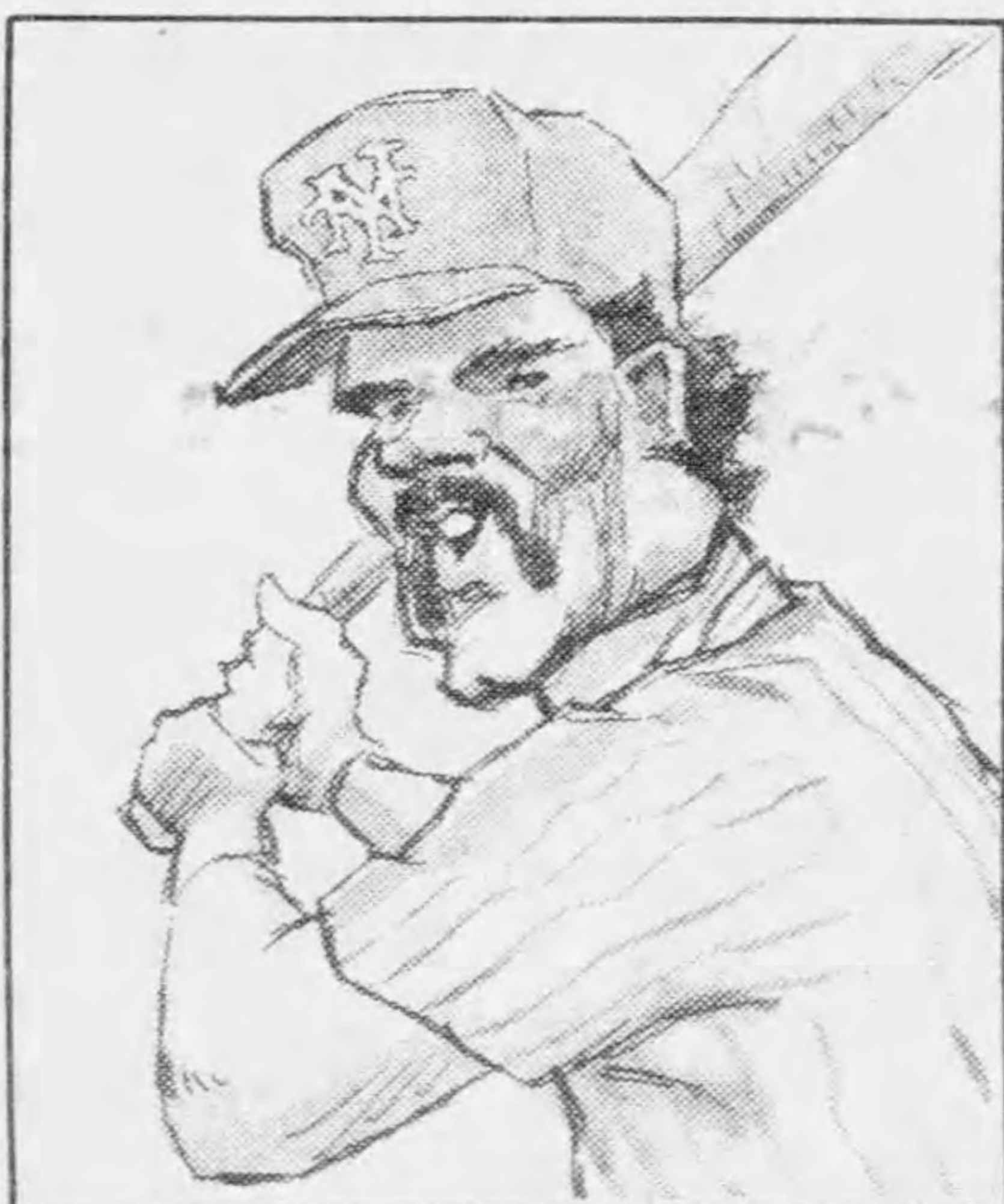
Howard Johnson: 1987, all over again.

Mike Bossy: A comeback.

Davey Johnson: Peace of mind.

Karl Nelson: Good health.

Everyone else: Joy.



HOWARD JOHNSON

Illustrations by Bill Plympton

When Sierens Tapes for NBC, CBS Listens

Shame on CBS Sports. Shame for doing an unethical thing and not being so quick to own up and apologize for the transgression.

On Dec. 13, when Gayle Sierens taped one of her series of practice auditions in preparation for her NBC debut as the first woman play-by-play announcer of a National Football League game, CBS surreptitiously made a copy of Sierens' tape. It was able to do that because this Detroit-Tampa Bay game was being telecast by CBS, and its people were in a booth next to where Sierens was going through a test run.

This unethical act elevated into dirty tricks when a CBS executive let drop in a conversation with USA Today reporter Rudy Martzke that he had heard the tape and that he thought Sierens wasn't too good and needed more work.

Those actions by CBS were all too reminiscent of the dirty tricks by Nixon's Watergaters. The Nixon gang made the mistake of never owning up to their transgressions. CBS, at least, is beginning to accept, though reluctantly, that it should not have copied the tape. And that it should not have said anything publicly that could have only undermined Sierens' attempt to be the first woman to call NFL play-by-play for a TV network.

Sierens' endeavor has been under attack by many doubters in the business — some at CBS — and by media critics. While some have been quick to applaud NBC executive producer Mike Weisman for attempting to give a woman a long overdue shot at such a prestigious position, others have questioned Weisman's good faith.

Though Sierens' situation doesn't have the import of Jackie Robinson's breakthrough in baseball, much of the cynicism about Sierens' attempt is all too reminiscent of the dialogue when the Brooklyn Dodgers announced they were signing Robinson.

The Sporting News greeted Robinson's signing by saying, "He isn't good enough. It isn't fair to the boy." Some charged that Dodgers boss Branch Rickey was intentionally signing a lesser player rather than a more accomplished player such as Satchel Paige to ensure blacks would fail; that he was doing it to ward off competition from the Negro Leagues; that he wanted only to silence critics of baseball's lily-white policy.

Why did CBS tape Sierens?

Its executives said it was a only a matter of curiosity. After an early denial about the taping, it concedes now the producer at the game, Danny Forer, plugged into Sierens' tape on his own "out of curiosity," and sent it up to executive producer Ted Shaker. Shaker and CBS sports head Neal Pilson were unimpressed, and Pilson actually mentioned this to Ken Schanzer, an NBC Sports vice president, at an informal gathering. These appraisals managed to get passed on in off-the-record form to Martzke, who has shown no great

TV SPORTS



Stan Isaacs

sympathy for the Sierens experiment, actively quoting industry figures who are skeptical about it.

NBC said it first learned from Martzke about CBS' taping and comments. The story then blew up Friday with NBC's charges of dirty tricks. CBS defended its action, responding with comments that criticized NBC for using a facility so close to CBS' production booths, for making it all a circus by overpublicizing Sierens.

NBC's Weisman said, "I can't believe that a lower-level producer would take it upon himself to go to all that trouble and expense to make such a tape. I can't see any good intentions at all in that and the fact that CBS executives then passed on negative comments about her."

Jay Rosenstein, the newly named programming head at CBS Sports, admitted "one or two people were guilty of poor judgment," but this was "not a plot nor a stain upon CBS' whole luster as a company. It was an isolated situation which got out of bounds because of intense scrutiny that the TV sports press



UPI Photo

Gayle Sierens gets set in the booth before last Sunday's test run.

puts on our business." NBC and CBS have been tilting at each other in various areas, generally kid stuff that has made lively copy in some quarters.

Pilson does not admit the taping was a mistake nor that CBS had anything for which to apologize. But he did call Sierens Saturday night. "I told her she was not a target nor did we want to disparage her. I told her she was caught up in a competitive situation. I expressed regret that it was another distraction in her preparation and wished her good luck and told her I think this tryout is good for the industry."

Susan Kerr, a CBS publicist who has been in the front trenches in the CBS-NBC lilliputian battles about which network has the better pregame football show, said: "We do really wish her the best and everybody here is sorry that it blew up the way it did."

Let it be overlooked in TV's Alphabet Canyon skirmishes, Sierens' for-the-public debut as a play-by-play announcer will take place on Sunday's Seattle-at-Kansas City telecast. It will be seen by only 10 percent of the country, and not in New York.