

SPORTSPEOPLE

Odds & **INS**



By Linda Kay & Mike Conklin

To build or not to build. That is the question today in Chicago sports. If all went as smoothly as the current Bear projects in Soldier Field seem to be going, everyone might be happy on the local scene.

Nuts and bolts

■ The construction of the 56 new skyboxes will take about three months, compared to about 10 months for the 60 skyboxes built in 1982. Officials told us the steel superstructures start going up this week and are scheduled to be completed May 16.

■ In '82, the Bears worked in a partnership with the Chicago Park District. This time, it's strictly a Bear project and, presumably, at no cost to taxpayers.

■ The target date for completion for the new skyboxes and natural grass field is Aug. 1, or five days before the first home exhibition game. Bears operations chief Tim LeFevour, who also is in charge of skybox sales and administration, tells us everything is on schedule. Because the Bears play Miami in that opener, we have to think Bears President Mike McCaskey would like nothing better than to show Dolphins owner Joe Robbie, who just built a new stadium, that he can get things done in Chicago.

■ In '82, we're told the going rate for a skybox was \$25,000 a season, with no differential for location. The prices for the new yard-line or corner end-zone skyboxes: \$50,000 a season, three-year license agreement and \$25,000 deposit for a third season. For an end-zone skybox, the rates are \$40,000 a season, five-year license agreement and \$20,000 deposit on a fifth season. A nonrefundable \$10,000 deposit, to be applied to the license fee, was required with a countersigned application. The Bears will not give S&H Green Stamps.

■ Current skybox tenants get priority for the proposed West Side stadium, and it appears the Bears are shooting for a 1992 completion date for that facility. The early indications are that the new stadium will have 240 skyboxes.

■ The architect for the skyboxes is Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum of Kansas City, which is designing the new domed stadium in St. Petersburg, Fla., that may or may not house the White Sox.

■ The skybox work is being done by Chicago's Turner Construction. It's also quite possible the firm will do any new Bears stadium. Turner is handling the Wrigley Field lights and also did work on new skyboxes in Denver's Mile High Stadium.

■ LeFevour said the skybox owners will continue to read like a Who's Who of Chicago business. Almost every major local business concern—banks, beverage companies, media, commodities, manufacturing—is represented in skyboxes. We're told four of the boxes will be licensed by individuals without business interests. Said LeFevour: "The first time, there was a lot of interest from the Board of Trade. This time, the freight and container businesses seemed to be big."

■ The Bears received requests for applications from more than 200 businesses for the new skyboxes.

■ LeFevour said the 60 original skyboxes, erected in 1982, were sold in two days. This time, the new skyboxes were contracted in about a month, with three deals yet to be completed. There is a waiting list.

■ Several skybox customers tried to get the Bears to sign an agreement of exclusivity, whereby they would be the only firms in their particular industry to have a skybox. The Bears refused.

■ The new Soldier Field skyboxes, like the originals, come with 16 tickets for each. They will be a little roomier, at 14x16 feet. Unlike the originals, the new boxes also will feature windows that can be opened to take advantage of the better weather early in the season.

■ From information sent to prospective tenants, we quote: "The skybox will feature six fixed and six movable upholstered armchairs for your viewing pleasure, with the fixed chairs in the lower level. The upper level will include a color-coordinated lounge area. Other features include built-in cabinets, personal storage closet, under-the-counter refrigerator, color TV (with in-house feed), radio and public address announcers' play-by-play broadcast, sink, carpeting, wall hangings and individual heating and air-conditioning." The tenants also get special parking privileges.

■ From another section of the letter, we quote: "The license agreement also allows you first right of refusal to view any other event scheduled by the Chicago Park District in Soldier Field."

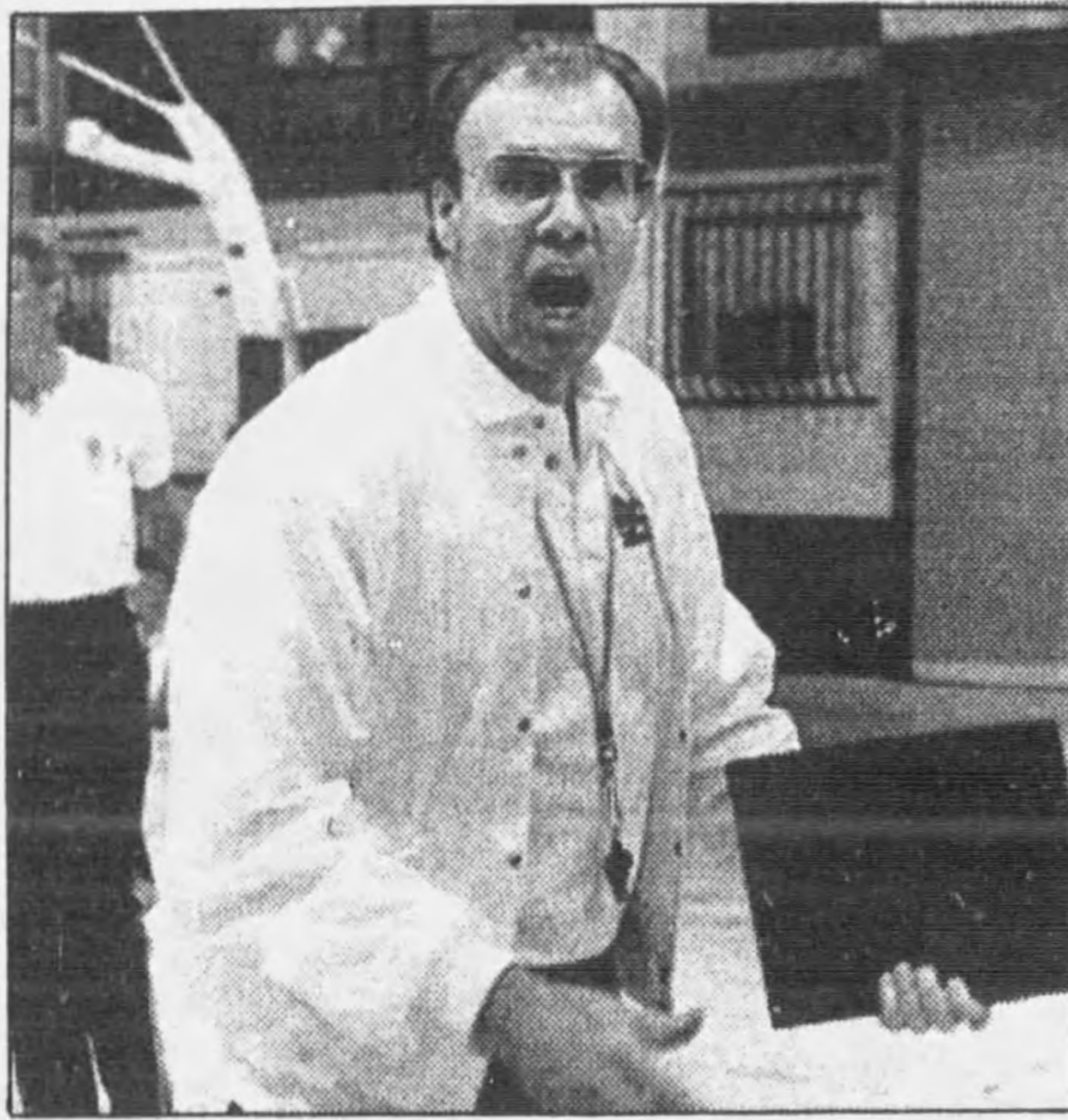
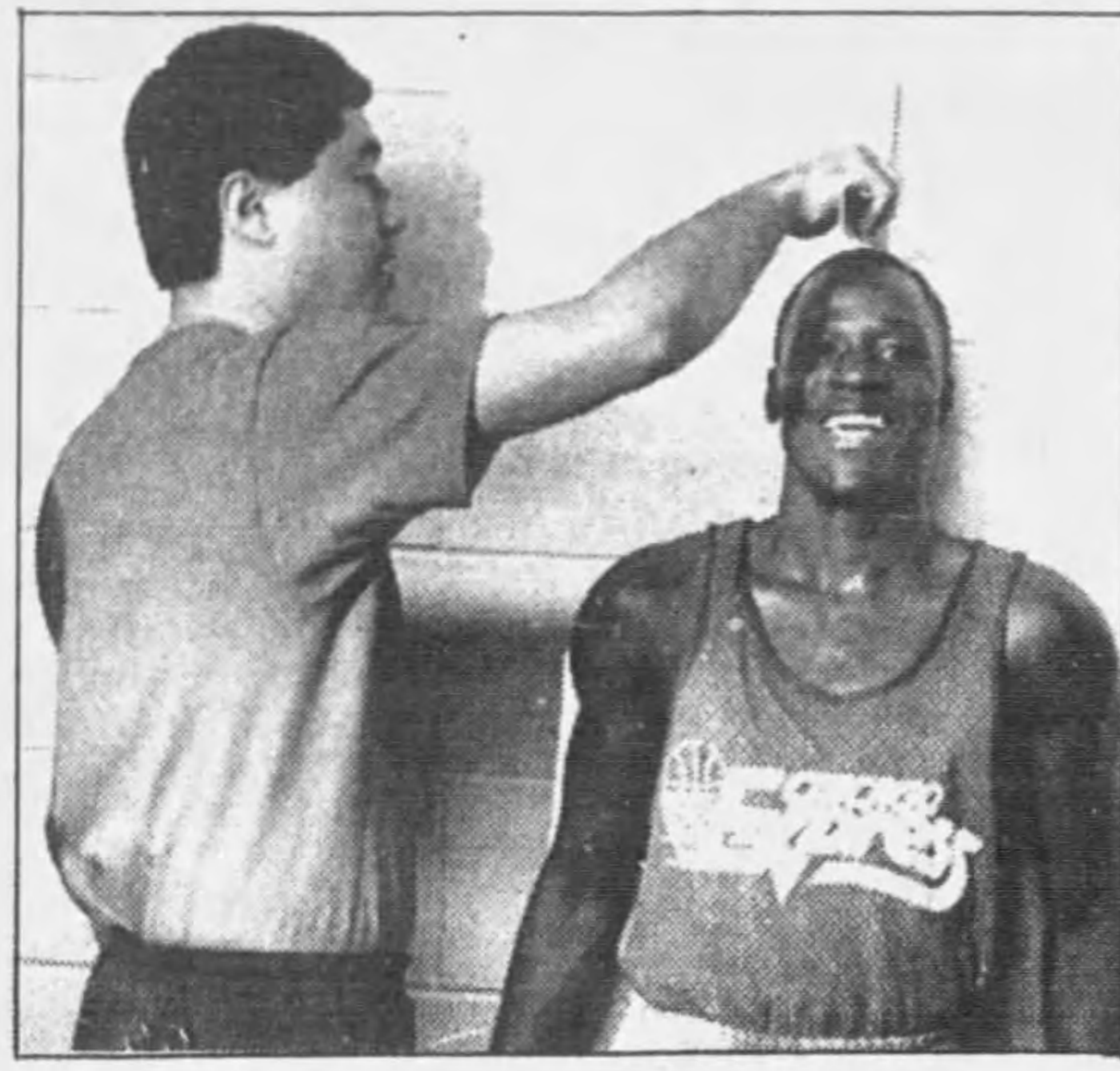
■ What if there's an NFL strike? The skybox tenants get credited amounts for preseason or regular-season games that aren't played and they will, in effect, be applied toward future postseason games.

■ Soldier Field's artificial turf has been completely removed and work on irrigation equipment is taking place. The seeding work won't start until June. One of new running back Brad Muster's first comments when he learned he'll be playing on a grass field was "Great." The Bears' No. 1 draft pick played on natural grass at Stanford.

■ The massive scoreboard at the south end of the stadium has been taken down, to be replaced by a smaller, strip scoreboard similar to the ones seen on the sides. This is one project that definitely would've pleased Papa Bear George Halas. The new strip board is being built using parts from the old scoreboard.

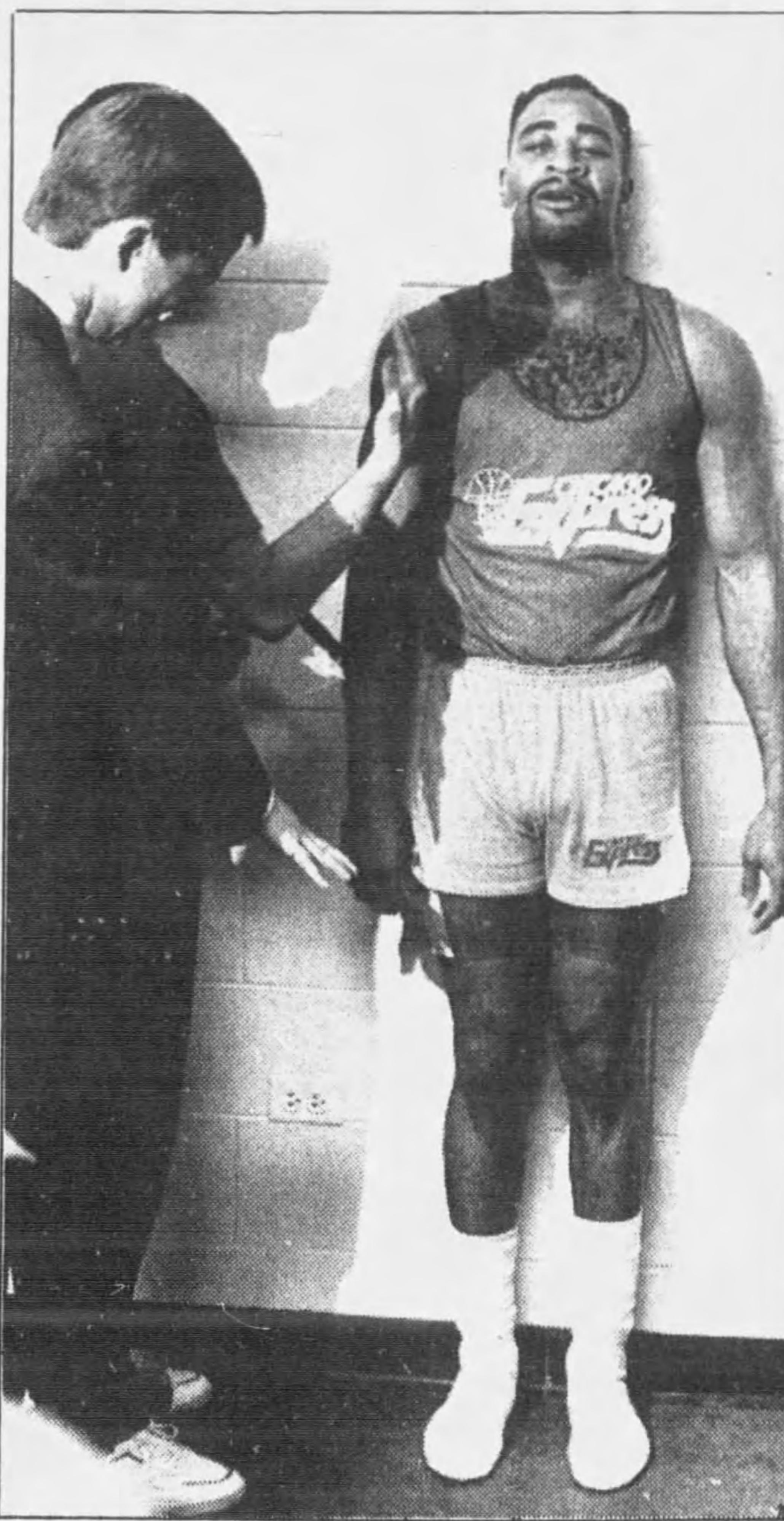
■ Bears public relations director Ken Valdiserri got so much response when it was learned the auxiliary press box and 100 seats would be eliminated to make room for skyboxes that an alternative is being studied. In order to salvage space for the press, officials are studying the feasibility of placing a huge trailer on top of the new skyboxes. The trailer would be lifted by cranes.

■ Finally: One new skybox feature will be the Bear Den. It's going to be an extra-wide party and viewing box in the south end. It's actually four boxes with collapsible walls, adjustable to different sizes. The Den will be rented on a per-game basis. Hey, sounds just right for your kid's birthday party, but be ready to take out a mortgage.



Sizing up the Express

Chicago Express coach Rich Falk calls for his players to measure up Monday.



Alfredrick Hughes (right) and Larry Jordan fit right in with the team of players under 6-4.

The heck with Northern Iowa... bring on the Orioles

Eastern Illinois University's baseball team came up a run short of the record books Sunday when it scored 20 runs in one inning.

The Panthers (21-20), on their way to a 28-2 victory over Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, got their 20 runs—one

short of the NCAA record—in the fourth inning on 15 hits and 6 walks. There were no errors, so all the runs were earned.

Twenty-three batters came to the plate, and 14 runs came with two outs. Three batters reached base

Soviets undiplomatically dumped by Chicago team

The Chicago Challengers amateur basketball team is safe and sound back home in Chicago after winning the International Labor Sports Festival Friday night in Mexico City.

Things might not be going as well for the team the Challengers beat for the championship.

The Challengers won the tournament with an 88-75 victory over Zabytka, the Soviet Union's club team champions.

"The [Soviet] ambassador showed up and left at halftime screaming and yelling," Challengers captain Bob Lucenti said. "We were up 19 at the half."

"They put a lot of emphasis on this tournament. I'm told that when the ambassador shows up it's big stuff."

Sherrod Arnold, formerly of Chicago State, had 29 points, and Bob Konecki, who played college ball at St. Xavier, added 19 for the Challengers, who beat three other teams on their way to the championship.

Jordan fan club has S.F. chapter

Joan Ryan, a columnist for the San Francisco Examiner, asked members of the San Francisco Giants a hypothetical question:

If they could pick one athlete in the world—anyone outside baseball—to try out for the Giants, who would it be?

Manager Roger Craig: "Michael Jordan. He's one of the best athletes I've ever seen. I'd put him in center field. He'd have great range out there, and he could jump into the second deck to catch home runs. And he could hit for power. He'd be like Willie Mays—a guy who can do everything."

Former Giant Willie McCovey: "Carl Lewis or Michael Jordan. They're two guys who look like they might be able to excel at anything."

Catcher Bob Brenly: "It wouldn't be a bowler. Maybe a tennis player because they have good hand-eye coordination. A golfer would be a good low-

ball hitter. But I'd have to go with Michael Jordan. No matter what he did, he'd have to be able to help."

Second baseman Robby Thompson: "Herschel Walker. He'd be my fleet-footed center fielder with some extreme power."

First baseman Will Clark: "Walter Payton, because if he could last that long and take that much abuse (in the NFL), he can probably do anything."

Outfielder Joel Youngblood: "Walter Payton because of all the feats he's accomplished and because of his body and moves and his endurance. He's fast and had great hands."

Vice President of Baseball Operations Bob Kennedy: "Michael Jordan. I'd play him anywhere he wanted."

Pitching coach Norm Sherry: "I don't know any of their names. Who's that guy in Chicago who flies through the air? Him."

And playing guitar, Eric Plunk

The team blazers worn by the Oakland Athletics have not gone unnoticed.

As the players were walking through Midway Airport the other day, a passerby asked Jose Canseco, "What band are you in?"

Nortons are now more than just father and son

Ken Norton Jr. says the good thing about being the son of a world heavyweight champion is that he never has to fight anybody.

"Nobody knew if I could fight like my father or not, and they didn't want to find out the hard way," he says.

The Dallas Cowboys' second-round draft pick, a linebacker from UCLA, said being the son of a superstar meant he had to be the best at whatever he did.

"Football was no problem because I'm a natural athlete," he says. "And I think I was the toughest. I didn't want to be a boxer because I didn't want to get my head beat in. I've seen a lot of my father's fights on tape, and it's a pretty brutal business."

Ken Norton Sr., visiting his son at the Cowboys' training facility in Irving, Tex., said he

was a bust as a football player.

"My desire was not as big as his, and I also wasn't as big and strong," Norton Sr. said. "Right now I'm going through my second childhood because of my son."

A near-fatal automobile accident two years ago has limited Norton Sr.'s physical activity, but it has brought him closer to his son.

"There were some incidents where only a son could help me," Ken Sr. said. "I was on medication, and my son came home from school. He'd push my wheelchair. Help me shower. How can you explain it? We have a special bond."

"We've always been close," Ken Jr. said. "Only now, we have a different type of relationship. Instead of father-son, it's more like man-to-man."

Make Mother's Day unforgettable

Still trying to come up with something special for Mom for Mother's Day?

Then consider the Spring Clash, a basketball game between members of the Bears and the Minnesota Vikings, Sunday at the Horizon.

You don't even have to throw in a floral piece. All the Moms who show up at the Horizon get one free.

The game is scheduled for 3 p.m., but doors open at 2 for an autograph session. In addition to the game, there'll also be exhibitions by the Jesse White Tumblers and a halftime show that will include a celebrity slam dunk contest (Walter Payton is among those entered), one-on-one competition and a volleyball game between the Honeybears—yes, folks, it's

also a Honeybears reunion—and members of the Luva-balls.

Proceeds from the Spring Clash will go to the G.M. Eisenberg Unit of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Chicago, and the Variety Club of Chicago.

In addition to Payton, among the Bears scheduled to appear are Otis Wilson, Emery Moorehead, Shaun Gayle and Kevin Butler. The Vikings scheduled to appear include Anthony Carter, Ted Brown, Darrin Nelson, Steve Jordan and Mike Mularkey.

And if you really want to give Mom a treat, tell her she doesn't have to drive. There'll be buses to and from the Horizon from Payton's Pacific Club in Lombard and Jim McMahon's bar in Chicago.



A soldier serves as a course marshal Sunday at the first pro golf tournament in China. The sign reads "Quiet please."

BRIEFS

■ Kentucky basketball recruit Shawn Kemp on Monday denied a report that he was "looking for a handout" when he visited Indiana. "That's ridiculous. I never had any interest in anything under the table," Kemp told the South Bend Tribune. Former Hoosier player Rick Calloway told the Louisville Courier-Journal that Kemp wanted to know what he could get if he decided to play with the Hoosiers. Kemp said Monday he did not even talk to Calloway during the recruit's official visit to Indiana.

■ NBC officials are standing by their decision to air Indiana coach Bobby Knight's controversial comments on rape and stress, saying the remarks were used in context and were "relevant to his opinions of stress."

■ The Dallas Times Herald reported Southern Methodist basketball coach Dave Bliss met with New Mexico Athletic Director John Koenig over the weekend concerning the Lobos' coaching vacancy.

■ The Goodwill Games, an amateur sports festival launched by cable television magnate Ted Turner two years ago, will continue through 1998 under an agreement signed Monday. The 1990 Games are scheduled for Seattle. "We're optimistic we'll have a small loss or break even," Turner said.

■ Edwin Moses, the world and Olympic record-holder in the 400-meter hurdles, called on the world's sports heads to quickly solve the "critical" Zola Budd situation. "I've talked to several British athletes... [and] they're prepared to take up the stand on their side, mainly because of the fact that she's a British citizen, regardless of the way that was done," Moses said. "I don't have any problems competing with her. But if the situation starts repeating itself, it's going to cause a problem in the [Olympic] movement."

■ Rich Schutz of Mt. Prospect captured his third straight title in the National Weightlifting Championships and advanced with five other 220-pounders to the U.S. Olympic trials July 15-16 in Boca Raton, Fla. Schutz, 22, with a total of 355 kilograms (782½ pounds), easily won the men's 100-kilogram class by 20 kilos, or 44 pounds.

■ Walter Huston, a junior middleweight boxer who lost consciousness after dropping a six-round decision Saturday night in New York, remained in intensive care at Staten Island Hospital. But Huston's manager, Ben Cognetto, said he had spoken with the fighter Sunday and that he was alert and talking.

■ Louisiana State Rep. Jim St. Raymond said it's time for the New Orleans Saints to help Louisiana by doling out \$1.2 million to make up for the economic loss stemming from the Saints' decision to train in Wisconsin this summer. St. Raymond said he is introducing a resolution to urge the team to renegotiate its contract with the state in which the football team receives some \$3 million in concessions. "When the Saints needed financial aid, we were there to help them," said St. Raymond. "Now, we are in need and I'm asking them to help us."

■ Sports agent Lloyd Bloom, who failed to appear for his initial arraignment in March, pleaded guilty in Tuscaloosa, Ala., to one misdemeanor charge for his dealings with an Alabama basketball player and will testify for the state at the trial of former associate Norby Walters.

■ Two-time world champion Bruce Davidson heads a team of five riders chosen for the U.S. Equestrian Three-Day Event team that will represent the U.S. in the Summer Olympics. Also named to the squad were Phyllis Dawson, Jane Sleeper, Karen Stives and Ann Sutton.

Compiled by Bill Hageman and Steve Nidetz from staff, wire reports.

TANK McNAMARA



GIL THORP

