

SPORTSPEOPLE

Odds & INNS



By Linda Kay & Mike Conklin

The Bulls and Michael Jordan aren't just battling the Detroit Pistons. They're fighting history. Only once in the National Basketball Association's modern era has a team had the league's No. 1 regular-season scorer and won the championship. It occurred in 1971, when Kareem Abdul-Jabbar led the Milwaukee Bucks to the title.

On the beach

If the Bulls get to the NBA finals, they'll obviously be disappointed because of the conflict they'll have with this summer's Best of the Beach Games planned for Chicago's Montrose Avenue beach. What are the Beach Games? They're a celebrity athletic competition featuring players from the Bears, Blackhawks and Bulls. The announcement was made Wednesday, when Dave Duerson of the Bears said that the event is scheduled for June 16—or before the NBA figures to have a champion. No sweat, says Duerson. "We'd be happy if that happens because it would just draw that much more attention to the event," said the astute Bear. "We'd enlarge the Bears and Blackhawk squads." Of course, Granville Walters and Mike Brown are among the Bulls who've committed. At the rate Walters and Brown have been used this season, they could compete in two venues simultaneously. The sports will be tug-of-war, canoeing, running, volleyball and golf ball driving and chipping. The results will be shown later on Channel 2. "I think we can win the golf, but I'm not so sure about the others," said Hawks star Troy Murray.

Going, going...

The Bulls are a hot item these days. A folding chair with the team's logo, two jerseys and a basketball—all autographed by Jordan—went for \$800 at the recent sports auction benefiting the Center for Enriched Living. Are the Cubs hotter? A day in Wrigley Field accompanying Cubs photographer Stephen Green was purchased for \$1,000 and a day as Tribune columnist Bob Verdi's guest at a future game was worth \$500. ... Our theory on the Cub bidders: They'll redeem their bids when the team plays its historic, first night game in the park.

Reach out

The Chicago Bruisers hoped their phones would be ringing off the hook this week. They're 2-0 with a home game Saturday night in the Horizon. But reaching their Downers Grove headquarters has been nearly impossible because of the telephone outage in the western suburbs. Team spokesman Mike McGraw said Wednesday that he returned a sportswriter's hand-delivered message by driving to the O'Hare Oasis to use the phone. Said McGraw: "If we go up a couple of miles north and find a pay phone, then we can make a call. But then if you call somebody and they're not in, you can't have them call back later. I don't know if it's going to hurt business or not, but it's annoying."

Blackhawks star Rick Vaive, who played with Toronto eight years before being traded to Chicago last year, has purchased a house in Wheaton and will remain here in the off-season. Vaive says he likes living in a major metropolitan area, where he can keep a low profile. "In Toronto, a hockey player couldn't make a move without it becoming big news," said Vaive. "I think that hurts. A guy has a good season, gets all sorts of publicity and then, maybe, he stops trying as much." ... Although Vaive said he knew the off-season environment is different in Chicago, he thought there would be telephones. "After that storm, I've just been able to make long-distance calls in the last few days," he said. "Makes it tough to get a golf game going."

Follow a leader

The Association of Mid-Continent Universities will be moving its offices to Chicago now that Jerry Ippoliti has been named the league's new commissioner. Ippoliti has been an associate athletic director at Northern Illinois after coaching football at the De Kalb school. With the former Huskie now the commissioner of the league, will his old school be far behind? Nope. We hear Northern Illinois is among four schools that wants to join the eight-team league to play basketball as soon as the 1989-90 season. The others are Wright State, Akron and Youngstown. Obviously, NIU, which used to belong to the more prestigious Mid-American Conference, has had a quick change of heart about playing an independent schedule.

News, notes and nonsense

Lockport High School senior Carlyn Fisk, daughter of White Sox star Carlton Fisk, has committed to Illinois-Chicago to play volleyball next season. ... Harness fans will get to see Eleanore Flavin, plus Mike Paradise, seven days a week on their SportsVision "Chicago Harness Racing" show. Their program, which started in a five-day-a-week, 15-minute slot less than a year ago, is expanding its current 30-minute format to seven days a week in June. ... The National College of Education men's soccer team, under new coach Victor Stanculescu, won two tournaments and finished second in a third tourney to conclude its indoor season. ... Western Illinois basketball coach Jack Margenthaler has just signed his fifth recruit for next season and all five are junior-college transfers. ... The Illinois youth bowling championships will be decided May 14 at Wheaton Bowl. ... Illinois grad Mary Rodino has joined Wilson Sporting Goods Co. as marketing director for its athletic footwear division.

Finally, Chicagoan David Silbar, a student at Ferris State in Michigan who's avidly following his home team in the NBA playoffs, was intrigued to read in the Detroit Free Press that one of the keys for the Bulls would be the help Michael Jordan gets from Sedale Threatt. Threatt, of course, was traded almost three months ago to Seattle for Sam Vincent—who starred at Michigan State.

Book says Cosell not the toast of former colleagues

And you thought the ABC booth during "Monday Night Football" was a fun place to be.

In a new book, former ABC executive Jim Spence says Howard Cosell drank "before, during and after telecasts" and once threw up on broadcast partner Don Meredith's cowboy boots.

In "Up Close & Personal: The Inside Story of Network Television Sports," Spence also says former ABC Sports chief Roone Arledge was dishonest.

Spence, who worked at ABC for 26 years, was senior vice president of ABC Sports from 1978 until he left the network in 1986. He is now president of Sports Television International, a produc-

tion and marketing company.

Spence describes Cosell as an insecure, overbearing man who became impossible to work with late in his career.

"He had made millions of dollars, traveled the world, been applauded and honored time and time again. Yet, today, I think he is one of the unhappiest human beings on this planet," he wrote.

Cosell could not be reached Wednesday. Arledge, now group president of ABC News and Sports, declined comment.

Spence said that during a "Monday Night Football" telecast from Philadelphia in 1970, Cosell "got so drunk he couldn't pronounce the name of the city

he was in without slurring."

Cosell left the booth after throwing up on Meredith. At Arledge's request, Spence said, an ABC publicist told reporters that Cosell became ill after one drink because he had a "reaction" to medication he was taking.

Spence also slammed Arledge.

In 1977, Spence said, ABC President Fred Pierce asked him whether Arledge was an honest man. Spence said he paused several seconds before answering.

"Finally, I did what I believe in my heart I have always tried to do—I told the truth: 'No.'"

"And Fred Pierce said, 'That's what I thought.'"



Howard Cosell



Angela Walczak shows off her gold medal after winning the 25-meter wheelchair race at the three-day Chicago Special Olympics, which began Wednesday at the University of Chicago's Stagg Field.

Hang it up and throw darts at it

It isn't often that a fisherman picks the smallest crappie on his stringer to be mounted. But that's what Steve Brown of Topeka, Kan., did.

The way he sees it, that fish was worth remembering.

It could have made him rich.

When Brown caught the crappie at Perry Lake, located 40 miles west of Kansas City, he noticed it was one of the fish that had been tagged for the Crappie Masters Tournament.

Brown learned the next day that he had caught the Zebo Kid, a crappie worth \$50,000.

There was only one problem: Brown hadn't purchased his \$5 permit to enter the tournament. So he was left with nothing more than the dream of what could have been.

"I think I got \$50,000 worth of sympathy," he said. "People from all over the country have called."

"That fish has attracted a lot of attention. It was one of the smallest

crappies I caught that evening, but I'm having it mounted anyway. It will be a good conversation piece."

The catch could have been much more than that. Before fishing that evening he stopped at a bait store and considered buying a permit to enter the Crappie Masters, a two-month tournament in which fishermen can redeem tagged crappies for cash prizes.

But Brown didn't have the \$5, so he decided to get it next time.

"It was a spur-of-the-moment fishing trip," Brown said. "My friend and I had to pool our money just to buy the minnows. We had only \$3 and change between us."

"I had wanted to buy a permit for the tournament, so I called home to see if my wife could bring me some money. But she was out, so we just went on."

"I never thought anything like this would happen."

Bad knee could KO defending Tour de France champ

Tour de France champion Stephen Roche says he has "less than a 50-50 chance" of taking part in this year's event.

Roche told the Daily Telegraph of London that he would decide this month whether to have surgery on a chronic knee injury.

"I have a less than 50-50 chance of racing in the Tour de France," Roche told the newspaper. "If there is any pain at all in my knee after next week, then it will mean an operation as soon as possible."

If the pain goes away, Roche

said, he will enter the Midi-Libre stage race next month as preparation for the 2,000-mile tour, which begins July 4.

Roche injured his knee two years ago during the Paris six-day race and aggravated the injury last winter.

So that's why Tommy John is still around

Major league baseball is a healthy occupation, and those who play the best live the longest, according to a new study.

Doctors surveyed big league players from early in the century and found that their overall death rate was 6 percent lower than that of ordinary folks.

They said the findings support the idea that getting plenty of exercise and being in good physical shape early in life help keep people healthy as they grow older.

"The main thing we found was the overall protective effect of being an athlete," said Dr. John Waterbor, a researcher at the University of Alabama, who published his results in Thursday's New England Journal of Medicine.

The study was based on 985 men who played major-league ball between 1911 and 1915. Their longevity and causes of death were compared with those of the U.S. white male population of the same age. The researchers successfully followed up on 958 players, of whom 16 were still alive in 1984. The average age of death was just under 71.

The study found that those who had long playing careers or good records lived the longest, although these differences were small.

Among other findings:

■ Researchers were surprised to find that the death rate from heart disease was 10 percent higher for ballplayers than for average American men.

■ Baseball players were also somewhat more likely to die from cancer. But they were substantially less likely to die from infections, lung disease, diabetes or accidents.

■ Catchers were more likely to die from pancreatic cancer, pitchers from Hodgkin's disease and outfielders from digestive ulcers.



Former world middleweight champion Marvelous Marvin Hagler (right) and actor Francesco Quinn pose for a publicity shot for "Indio," a film in which Hagler plays a defender of Amazon Indian rights. Hagler said Wednesday that he wants to fight Sugar Ray Leonard again.

Vote for 'Bonecrusher'—or else

Former heavyweight champion James "Bonecrusher" Smith says he is running for political office to strike a blow against drug abuse and racism.

Smith finished first in last week's Democratic primary for Harnett County (N.C.) commissioner. But he failed to get 50 percent of the vote, and runner-up Bill Shaw, a three-term incumbent, has called for a runoff. Smith says he is willing to enter a runoff against Shaw.

"It really bothered me that we never had a black elected to county government in Harnett County," says Smith, who is black. "But we don't want to bill it as a racial campaign; we have a lot of white supporters."

Smith, 35, won the World Boxing Association title when he knocked out Tim Witherspoon in the first round in December, 1986.

In his next bout, he lost a 12-round decision to Mike Tyson in March, 1987.

Smith had one more bout, losing a decision to Adilson Rodriguez in Brazil, before retiring to his native North Carolina, where he owns a trailer park.

Smith says that if elected to the county commission, he will push for lower taxes and will "lead the fight against drug abuse."

Smith faces a tough fight. Harnett County is 76 percent white, and the area is known for its Ku Klux Klan activity.

"Being the only heavyweight champion in the history of boxing to have a college degree [Shaw University], we've already made some history," he says.

Smith insists his nickname "Bonecrusher" be listed on the ballot.

"I don't know if just James Smith could pull it off," he says.

BRIEFS

■ The San Francisco 49ers and the Miami Dolphins will meet in an exhibition game July 31 at London's Wembley Stadium in the third straight American Bowl. The game is one of three exhibitions to be played outside the United States this year. The Bears and the Minnesota Vikings will meet in Goteborg, Sweden, Aug. 14 and the New York Jets will meet the Cleveland Browns in Montreal Aug. 18.

■ Ivan Lendl, Mats Wilander and Andre Agassi were extended to three sets before posting second-round victories Wednesday in the Italian Open tennis championships in Rome. The top-seeded Lendl overcame Milan Srejber 6-1, 5-7, 6-1. Wilander, the No. 2 seed, took nearly 2½ hours to beat Carl-Uwe Steeb 6-4, 4-6, 6-3 in his second hard-fought match in a row. Agassi, the ninth-seeded American, battled back to beat Jan Gunnarsson 3-6, 7-6 (7-5), 6-3.

■ Southern Illinois defeated Cal Poly-San Luis Obispo 5-4 to win its third consecutive NCAA Division II women's tennis title at Rohnert Park, Calif. The Salukis captured the team title when Michele Wreen and Sandy Stace defeated Vicki Kanter and Susan Norman 6-4, 7-5 in the No. 2 doubles match to break a 4-4 tie. In No. 1 singles, Cal Poly's Wendy Elliott downed Kristina Bokelund 6-4, 5-7, 6-4.

■ High school All-America guard Litterial Green of Moss Point, Miss., signed a national letter of intent to play basketball at Georgia. The 6-foot-1-inch Green chose the Bulldogs over Illinois. The Illini, who are searching for a point guard, still are in pursuit of Sean Tunstall of Missouri state champion St. Louis Vashon.

■ Wisconsin basketball coach Steve Yoder said he is not totally surprised to hear he was criticized at a meeting of the school's athletic board last week. "We just keep trying to do the best we can," he said. "I think that's all you can ask." The Milwaukee Sentinel quoted sources as saying the board showed some concern about Yoder's frequent comments about the university's commitment to basketball, his teams' 68-103 record over six years and his supervision of his assistant coaches.

■ Citing a lack of playing time, Randy Doss said he is transferring from Ohio State's basketball program. "I just don't think I got a fair chance," said Doss, a junior-to-be from Chicago who was the last recruit of former Buckeye coach Eldon Miller. "I felt I could have been playing more, but I guess the coaching staff didn't think so." Although he hasn't visited any schools, Doss said he is interested in Creighton and Tennessee-Chattanooga.

■ Iowa has raised the price of men's basketball tickets by \$2 so the athletic department can pay the annual utility bill for Carver-Hawkeye Arena. Ann Rhodes, the university's assistant vice president for finance, said school officials decided basketball ticket receipts should be used to pay the \$392,000 bill because "basketball is most closely tied to the use of the facility."

■ The University of Alabama filed a \$3 million civil lawsuit against sports agent Norby Walters, whose dealings with former basketball players Derrick McKey and Terry Coner cost the institution \$250,000. "Our complaint is that by interfering with Derrick McKey and Terry Coner, Norby Walters and his associates caused the university to lose a substantial amount of money and revenue from the NCAA basketball tournament," said Robert Potts, the university's general counsel. Potts said the suit is separate from the misdemeanor case against Walters.

■ Manhattan College named Steve Lappas, an assistant at Villanova, head basketball coach and signed him to a four-year contract, the first multiyear contract for a basketball coach in the school's history. Lappas, 34, replaces Bob Delle Bovi, who resigned April 15 after posting a 13-43 record in two seasons.

■ Canadian sprinter Ben Johnson and U.S. rival Carl Lewis will compete head-to-head in the 100 meters at a Paris track meet on June 27, their first showdown since Johnson's record-shattering (9.83 seconds) performance at the World Championships in Rome last September.

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

TANK McNAMARA



GIL THORP

