

# Odds & INNS

By Linda Kay & Mike Conklin

Gene Banks, anyone? The Bulls certainly look as if they could use an experienced, offensive-minded forward like Banks at this desperate point in the NBA playoffs. The Bulls lost interest in the 29-year-old forward at the start of the season after a bitter dispute over an injury sustained last summer. Banks recovered, but Tuesday he was in a Chicago hospital—awaiting the birth of his second child. Last year, he was the club's No. 4 scorer, with single-game bests of 24 points and 17 rebounds. He'll be back. We hear Banks is headed for a contract with the new NBA team in Charlotte, N.C.

## Summit meeting

The Blackhawk Think Tank will convene Wednesday in a Stadium meeting that should be significant for the franchise's success-starved fans. General Manager Bob Pulford and coach Bob Murdoch will go over, from soup to nuts, priorities for next season. Their talk is sure to cover the upcoming draft, player personnel and training-camp structure. Specific goals are expected to be established for next season. Said Murdoch: "If we get 69 points again, we'll all be looking for jobs." Hint to players worried about staying on the roster: The coach is reading a book about mental toughness by Dr. James Laehr.

## Some Sox sunshine

You'd better sit down for this item. We have good news from White Sox officials. They're reporting the dire predictions of long traffic delays, resulting from Dan Ryan Expressway construction, haven't materialized. A study done by the team showed the suggested alternate routes to Comiskey Park have created only "marginal increases" in travel time for fans. Said Sox Vice President Howard Pizer: "The Ryan construction thankfully has not been a problem for game traffic to this point. The enormous publicity generated by the media apparently kept a large percentage of traffic off the expressway. Better yet, many people seem to be making use of public transportation and avoiding the roads entirely." ... Note: The Sox volunteered this information in a press release—a curious move, considering they've spent most of the season painting a gloomy picture for themselves in Chicago. Could this shift in gears mean St. Petersburg is fading?

## Foreword, ho

Our esteemed Tribune colleague, Bob Verdi, has just had some of his columns published in book form. It's called "The Bob Verdi Collection," and the book is one of four in a series of works by columnists published by the Taylor Co. in Dallas. The other writers are Jim Murray of the Los Angeles Times, Blackie Sherrod of the Dallas Morning News and Edwin Pope of the Miami Herald. Said Verdi: "It's nice to be a part of this group, but I think it was sort of like golf: They needed someone to round out a foursome." ... With all due respect, the four sports columnists have some entertaining guys as warmup acts in their books. The introductions were written by: Mike Royko (Verdi), Vin Scully (Murray), Dan Jenkins (Sherrod) and James Michener (Pope).

## In your dreams

One Chicagoan, Eric Barber, can watch Michael Jordan put on his one-on-one moves and yawn. Barber is the wheelchair basketball player who beat Jordan about a year ago in an NBC SportsWorld challenge match. Now, we hear that particular segment, which was included in the Sports Fantasy IV video narrated by Len Berman, is up for an Emmy in the Edited/Special category. Sports Fantasy V comes out later this month, and Bear fans should be relieved one request never materialized. A letter-writer wanted to challenge William Perry to a rib-eating contest, but producers couldn't get it arranged.

## Past and present

Merle Harmon, who helped usher in White Sox games on SportsVision in 1982, has signed a contract with NBC to serve as a substitute pro football announcer while the network's regular crew is in South Korea for the Olympics. For 10 years, Harmon was the voice of the Milwaukee Brewers on WTMJ radio. He is currently a pay-TV voice for Texas Rangers home games when he isn't overseeing his thriving sporting-goods business. Merle's most recent football announcing has been Southwest Conference games, which, of course, is almost the same thing as doing pro football. Gary Fencik has graduated from Illinois Lotto ads to the big time. Intersport has just negotiated a deal for the photogenic ex-Bear to appear in a Miller Lite commercial, which will be filmed in late August in Los Angeles.

## News, notes and nonsense

The telephones may not be working, but the show will go on Saturday in Naperville. The Riverwalk Walk-A-Thon benefiting Special Olympics will start early in the afternoon. It begins near the Riverplace Apartments, and former Bears Bob Thomas and Brian Baschnagel will participate. ... Wally Reule has returned as manager for the Lakeshore Athletic Club in Chicago after spending the last two years in Las Vegas in a related field. Reule managed Lakeshore from 1983 to '86. ... Blackhawk goalie Darren Pang is honorary chairman for the American Diabetes Association's annual bike ride Sunday on Chicago's lakefront bicycle path. ... Elmhurst College will host the NCAA Division III women's softball national tournament this weekend at Plunkett Park. Finally: Not everyone believes the Bulls will be eliminated by the Pistons from the playoffs Wednesday night in Detroit. The Luv-a-Bulls, the team's cheerleading troupe, continued practicing this week. We hear they even put in a new routine for a sixth game Friday in the Stadium.

## Pro wrestling 'a joke'? Give him a head butt

British television viewers are about to see their last body slam and flying dropkick.

Professional wrestling is being thrown out of the TV ring. ITV, Britain's independent television network, said Tuesday it would drop wrestling by the end of the year.

The network said it was trying to polish its image, while cutting an expensive show that had lost more than half its audience in the last three years.

"It has a loyal following but it is a bit of a joke as a sport—more an entertainment," said Greg Dyke, head of ITV Sports. "I expect wrestling fans will be after my blood."

The wrestlers themselves said the network would regret its decision.

"The viewers won't let you do this," said Giant Haystacks, a 392-pounder who wrestles in long hair, full beard and a woolly vest. "It's a dreadful mistake. Professional wrestling is an institution. There'll be an almighty outcry."

Wrestling was once king of Saturday afternoon TV. Up to 7 million viewers tuned in to watch the action and hear announcer Kent Walton sign off each week with: "Goodbye, all you grappling fans."

But in recent years TV audiences declined, to 2.5 million in the latest count. Faced with a \$1.9 million annual production pricetag for the show, ITV decided to pull the plug.



A group of 36 sky divers forms a diamond-shaped figure over Lyon, France. It took almost 6½ minutes to assemble the formation, which they held for 23 seconds.

## Senior Open special to Barber

The U.S. Senior Open isn't just another stop on the PGA Senior Tour. It has that major feel to it.

"To us, it's The Open," said three-time U.S. Senior Open champion Miller Barber at Tuesday's media day at Medinah Country Club, host of the 1988 championship. "It's something special. Anybody who tells you it isn't is kidding themselves."

The biggest difference at the Aug. 4-7 Senior Open is the golf course. Medinah's No. 3 course has seen two U.S. Opens, but the Medinah Barber and his mates will see isn't the same one they saw in 1975.

Medinah has added a par-3 17th hole and a par-4 18th hole, designed by Packard Inc. of Chicago, and changed another par 4 into the par-5 14th.

"The changes that were made are marvelous," Barber said. "People will be able to walk around and see more than they did before. The holes are well designed and, I think, add to the character of the golf course. A lot of golf courses you see that add holes don't blend in, but these do."

Medinah will play at 6,881 yards, long by Senior Tour standards. Like the Open on "the junior tour" as Barber calls it, the golf course will eliminate many of the participants from contention.

Barber sees defending champion Gary Player, Chi Chi Rodriguez, Bruce Crampton, Arnold Palmer ("If I could teach him to putt," said Barber, who teamed with Palmer last month in the Legends of Golf. "I could have killed him a couple of weeks ago") and Lou Graham, who won the 1975 Open at Medinah, among the contenders. The man once known as Mr. X isn't counting himself out, either.

"I can still whack it out there a little bit," he said.

By Reid Hanley

## Thank you, Mr. President

The last eight years might not have been great ones for the national debt, but they've been pretty good for Mike Schmidt, Jack Morris, Joan Quigley and a few others.

Bob Ford of the Philadelphia Inquirer has come up with the major leagues' statistical leaders during the Reagan administration.

Here are the leaders, from 1981 through Monday's games:

Home runs	Victories
Mike Schmidt 251	Jack Morris 128
Dale Murphy 235	Fernando Valenzuela 114
Eddie Murray 198	Charlie Hough 104
Dwight Evans 198	Dave Stieb 100
Andre Dawson 198	Bob Welch 95
Runs batted in	Saves
Dave Winfield 743	Dan Quisenberry 200
Mike Schmidt 735	Jeff Reardon 194
Eddie Murray 724	Lee Smith 184
Jim Rice 694	Rich Gossage 159
Dale Murphy 689	Bruce Sutter 156

## Giants' Nelson on way back

Karl Nelson has been working out five hours a day, four days a week trying to get back in shape to take over again as the New York Giants' starting right tackle.

Nelson, who learned he had Hodgkins disease during training camp last summer, is finished with his radiation treatments, and doctors say the cancer is in remission.

"I have always felt and I have to feel that I am going to be back," Nelson said Tuesday as the Giants opened mini-camp. "If I don't feel that way my workouts are not going to come along."

Nelson's shoulder is still a little weak following January surgery, and he will not take part in any contact work this week.

"I think the main goal is just the first regular-season game, and to try to be fully ready to go for that one," Nelson said.

## And they'd like to sign Mr. Donut as a sponsor

National Hockey League referee Don Koharski is holding a celebrity golf tournament, and guess who'll attend?

Of course—New Jersey Devils coach Jim Schoenfeld.

Koharski and Schoenfeld became embroiled in a nasty shouting match following Game 3 of the Boston-New Jersey Stanley Cup semifinal series.

At one point Schoenfeld was clearly heard screaming: "You slipped, you fat pig. Go eat another doughnut!"

"It was an unfortunate incident, but it's over," Koharski says. "It was tough for a few days. I don't hold any grudges."

"Schoenie and I talked at the [league] hearing and he has since sent me a nice letter apologizing for the anguish the incident caused me and my family."

"He also asked if he were still welcome at my tournament."

Koharski's tournament, slated for August at a golf course outside Toronto, raised \$12,000 for the mentally handicapped last year.

"The thing wrong with baseball today is that there are no more colorful characters around. There's almost no one around that I'd pay to see play. They're better players today, but they're just dull."

Jimmy Piersall

## At first, New Mexico just wanted help from Knight

Bob Knight didn't go looking for the New Mexico job. And New Mexico, at first, wasn't after him.

Knight told the Albuquerque Journal that he was contacted first by New Mexico Athletic Director John Koenig as a consultant in the school's search for a new coach.

"John ran some names past me," Knight said. "I told him some he shouldn't consider and some who would do a good job for him."

"He called me back one other time, maybe twice. Then he asked me if there'd be any chance I'd consider it."

"I told him I'd have to explore it to find out if I would consider it. He came down to Louisville [for the Kentucky Derby] and we talked there."

Knight suddenly found himself giving the proposition serious consideration.

"I've cut the number of places I'd be interested in to almost none," he said. "But New Mexico is one."

Knight visited New Mexico May 10.

"It was very important to me because they wanted to explore me and I wanted to

explore them," he said. "I didn't want anything done or offered. I just wanted to look at it."

He and Koenig decided to keep the visit quiet. However, the media soon found out Knight was in New Mexico.

"I wanted him [Koenig] to drive me through some areas to look at housing," Knight said, adding that he visited "the Pit," where the Lobos play their home games.

He returned to Indiana the following day and studied New Mexico's roster and began considering the offer. Knight was supposed to give New Mexico his answer within a day but decided it was too big a decision to make in such short time.

Finally, Knight met with Indiana University President Thomas Ehrlich Sunday night and told him he would be staying.

Knight said the most important reason he cited for not taking the New Mexico job was he didn't feel he had the time to make the team an NCAA contender.

"I told John that I had to feel I could do the best job possible," he said.

## BRIEFS

Southern Methodist basketball coach Dave Bliss verbally accepted the New Mexico coaching post Tuesday night and will be presented Wednesday as the replacement for Gary Colson, sources close to the negotiations told the Ft. Worth Star-Telegram. "He's got it," said Jerry Apodaca, a member of the university's board of regents and a former New Mexico governor. Another source confirmed that Bliss had accepted the job, contingent upon Bliss' approval in a meeting Wednesday with the university's athletic council. The source called Wednesday's meeting "a mere formality."

A New Jersey casino's co-sponsorship of a college basketball game Dec. 10 featuring Kansas and Temple does not violate NCAA rules, but the organization is concerned and will probably move to make sure it doesn't happen again. The two teams will meet in Atlantic City, with the Showboat Casino co-sponsoring the game. It was moved to Atlantic City at the request of Kansas coach Larry Brown, who did not want to play Temple in Philadelphia. The teams will not get any money from the casino, only from NBC, which is televising the game nationally.

Illinois came up a loser in its bid to recruit guard Sean Tunstall, who averaged 18.5 points a game for Vashon High School of St. Louis last season. Tunstall signed a letter of intent to play for Kansas.

Doug Elgin, an assistant commissioner of the Sunbelt Conference for the past four years, has been named commissioner of the Missouri Valley Conference.

A tentative settlement in Alabama's case against New York sports agent Norby Walters could restrict his contact with athletes throughout the Southeastern Conference, similar to his pact with Big 10 officials.

The expected field for the Preakness was reduced to 11 with the withdrawal of Tejano by trainer D. Wayne Lukas.

Jimmy Connors has withdrawn from next week's French Open tennis tournament because of an injured right foot. Connors first injured the foot prior to last year's U.S. Open. He aggravated the injury three weeks ago.

Stefan Edberg and Anders Jarryd defeated Eric Jelen and Patrick Kuehnen 6-4, 6-4 to give Sweden a 2-1 victory over West Germany, Czechoslovakia downed Spain 2-1 and France beat Argentina 2-1 in the \$750,000 World Team Cup tennis tournament in Duesseldorf, West Germany.

Steve Kerr, who led Arizona to a berth in the NCAA Final Four, was the first pick in the World Basketball League draft. The 6-foot-3-inch Kerr was taken by Las Vegas as a total of 30 players were selected by the five teams. Chicago's first pick was Perry McDonald of Georgetown. The league, for players under 6-5, begins Wednesday.

PGA Tour Commissioner Deane Beman has decided to abandon his role as an active player.

Denise Parker, 14, set a national woman's record at the U.S. Olympic archery trials in Harrisonburg, Va. Parker scored 1,301 points out of a possible 1,440, becoming the first American woman to score more than 1,300 points.

Opponents of a Lausanne, Switzerland, bid to host the 1994 Winter Olympics have submitted nearly four times the signatures needed to force a local referendum on the project. Mayor Paul-Rene Martin has said the candidacy will be scrapped if the vote, scheduled June 26, goes against it.

Unbeaten European heavyweight boxing champion Francesco Damiani will fight American Tyrell Biggs July 3 in Italy. Damiani hopes a victory will get him a shot at world champ Mike Tyson in December. ... Rocky Lockridge will defend his International Boxing Federation junior-lightweight title July 23 against Tony Lopez in Sacramento. ... Chicagoans Joel Zapata (112 pounds), Mike Brown (156) and James Hutcherson (super heavyweight) won first-round bouts Tuesday in the national Golden Gloves tournament in Omaha. Chicago had four winners Monday, including 132-pounder Rodney Wilson.

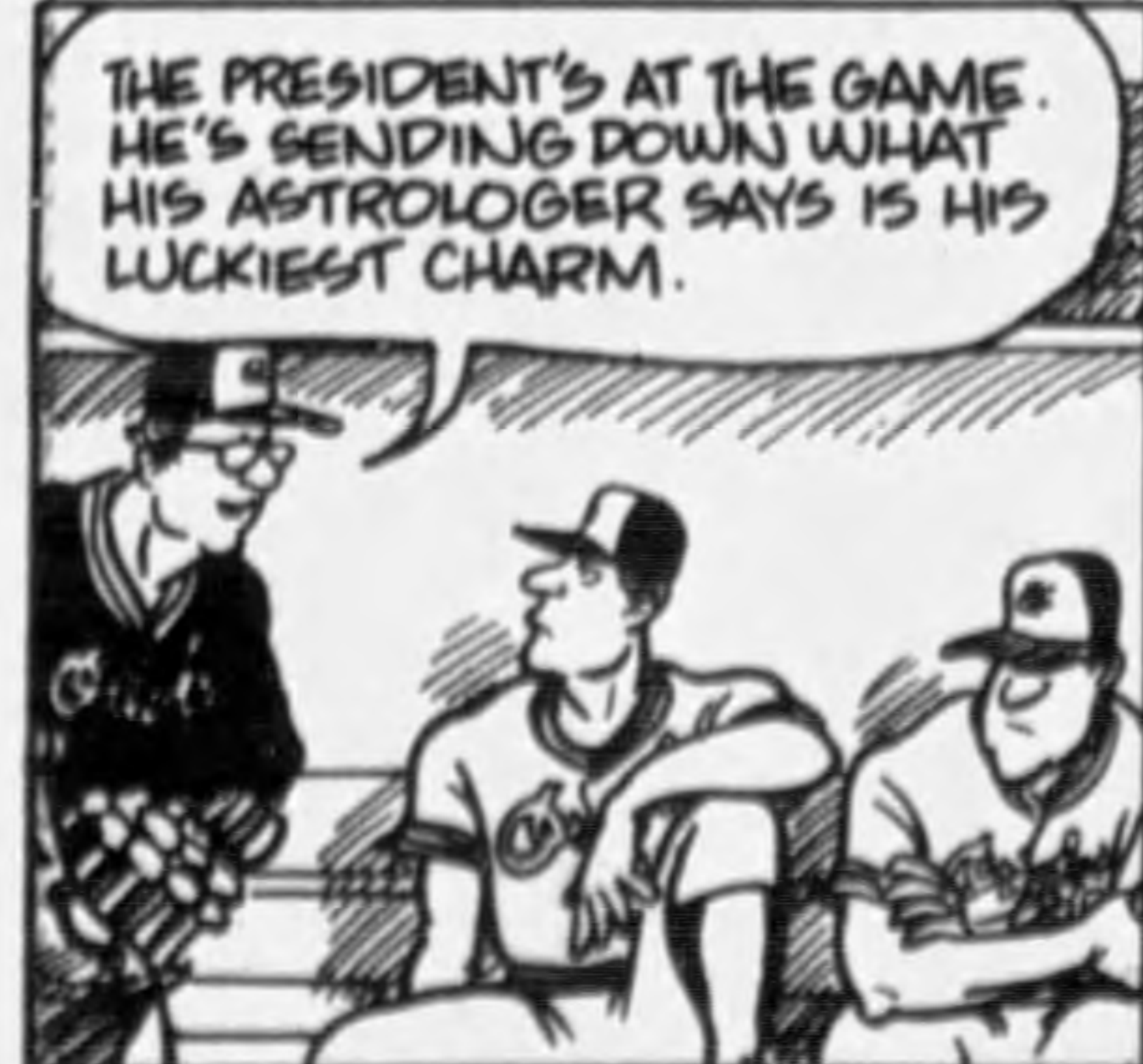
Joseph J. Tomlin, the founder of "Pop Warner Football" for youths, has died after a brief illness. He was 85.

Compiled by Bill Hageman and Rich Strom from staff, wire reports

## Corrections & clarifications

A story in the Sports section of some editions of the May 16 Tribune incorrectly identified one of the members of the second doubles team for Deerfield High School's badminton squad. Young Lee paired with Sara Marshack on that team for Deerfield, which won the state championship. The Tribune regrets the error.

## TANK McNAMARA



MILWAUKEE THINGS 5-19



## GIL THORP

