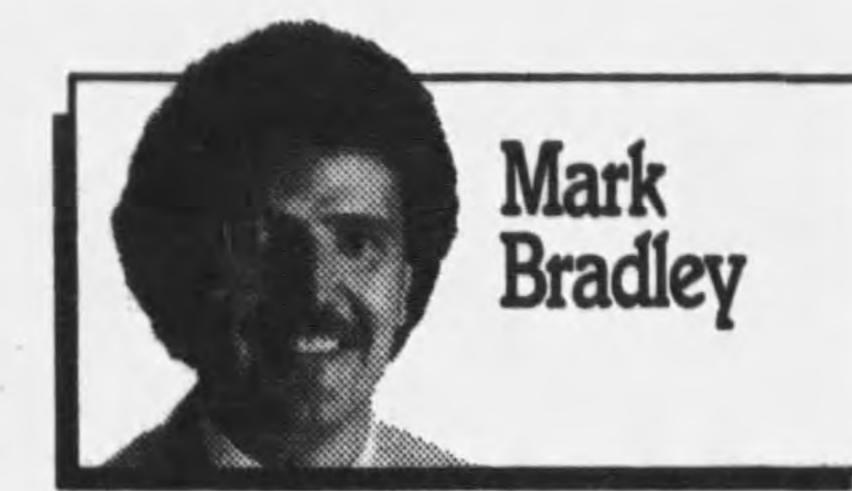
Sports

SECTION F

THE ATLANTA CONSTITUTION

* FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1989



Favorite Son Fleming

When he's excited, Vern Fleming's voice does this odd trick. It soars into the upper register, making his words come out in falsetto. While at Georgia, Fleming would call the Bulldogs' "Overload" play and sound like Mr. Bill was running the offense. Oh, noooooooooo!

The other Dawgs had much fun with Fleming's voice. They'd all try to mimic it, all of them failing. (Some things are so unique as to be inimitable.) Mostly they'd just giggle and tell Fleming he "sounded like Hugh." Which, to them, was most fit-

Hugh Durham coaches Georgia and is himself possessed of what you'd call a distinctive voice. When Durham screams, he approximates the noise Jimi Hendrix's guitar would make after the virtuoso set it afire with lighter fluid, and Durham screams often. Funny thing, though: No Bulldog can remember him screeching at Fleming. Said Dominique Wilkins, Fleming's teammate at Georgia: "See, Vern was Durham's son."

Biologically, no. In spirit, yes. Ask David Durham, Hugh's real eldest son, to name his dad's favorite Georgia player, and D. Durham will think maybe a millisecond before saying: "Vern. No question." Ask H. Durham and he'll say: "Well, Fleming would be way up there."

Fleming embodied everything Durham values — smarts, effort, toughness, defense. That Fleming wound up the leading scorer in Dawgs history was almost incidental to Durham. What mattered more was that Fleming knew how to play. The one thing he didn't do well is call attention to himself.

A Good Player for a Bad Team

To this day, Fleming has never gotten the credit he deserved for steering Georgia to the 1983 SEC tournament title and the NCAA Final Four. He was only fabulous that March, flying and driving and harassing everybody from Ennis Whatley to Chris Mullin to Michael Jordan. A year later, Fleming would make the U.S. Olympic team, and those who hadn't been paying attention were shocked. Doubtless those same folks would be surprised to learn that Fleming has developed into one heckuva pro guard.

Alas, he has done it for a bad team based in a city known as India-no-place. Were he a New York Knick, folks would be likening him to Walt Frazier. Because he's an Indiana Pacer, the casual fan has forgotten Fleming's name, assuming the casual fan ever bothered to learn it. But look at his numbers — averages of 14.3 points, 5.8 assists and 3.9 rebounds; 53 percent shooting — and you'll note that there are no point guards more economic. As ever, Fleming overrides his limitations as a jumper-shooter by never taking a bad shot. He makes 53 percent of his shots, a staggering figure for a guard.

Not that anybody notices. "When you don't win," said Fleming, in town Thursday for a game against the Hawks, "people look at negatives. Take a guy like Doc Rivers: He's a good player and his team wins, so he gets some attention. Winning's the bottom line."

Five years a Pacer, Fleming hasn't yet played on a winning team. To his credit, he hasn't been daunted by losing. He still plays hard, which qualifies as no news to those who know him. "He'd always come to work," Wilkins said. "Vern never said much. I loved the guy." Here Wilkins laughed. "I had to. He was the guy getting me the rock."

No Dunks, but No Misses Either

Some expected Wilkins and Fleming, the Dawgs' biggest-ever recruits, to fight over the ball. That never happened. (Georgia's other guard, the enigmatic Eric Marbury, had a running feud with everybody on the team, but Sky Dawg's another story.) From his first practice in Athens, Fleming did as he'd done at New York's Mater Christi High, outhustling everybody else on the floor. "I've always played hard," Fleming said. "I like to play basketball. Maybe that was what Coach Durham liked about me: I came in and played hard."

Wilkins: "Durham was like Vern's daddy. It was really funny. He'd yell at everybody else, especially me. He'd say [and here Wilkins twists his voice into a rasp/screech, mocking Durham's], 'Wilkins, why'd you take that stupid shot?'

"But he never yelled at Vern." If anything, Fleming's five-year absence has made his college coach's hard heart grow only fonder. Last year Durham was speaking of a play the Dawgs had run for Willie Anderson, a lob that Anderson caught and slammed off the back rim. Almost a great dunk, someone offered. Said Durham: "We ran that play 100 times for Fleming, and he never once

tried to dunk it." Here Durham grinned. "But he never

missed the shot, either."

Hawks Escape From Revamped Pacers

Wilkins Sparks 100-97 Victory With 26 Points in Second Half

> By Jeffrey Denberg Staff Writer

For a team with big-time aspirations, the Atlanta Hawks have some peculiar ideas about how to win games.

Leading the reshuffled Indiana Pacers by 11 points with 1:53 to go at The Omni on

Thursday night, the Hawks could not rush the ball quickly enough. In five possessions, they suffered two turnovers, missed six shots and nearly gave away still another

The final buzzer saved them as Chuck Person's three-point bid to tie was off, preserving a 100-97 victory.

In some respects the 33rd triumph of the season was a nice one since the Hawks made only 36.5 percent of their shots from the field and withstood an unorthodox assault by Pacers coach Dick Versace that almost succeeded.

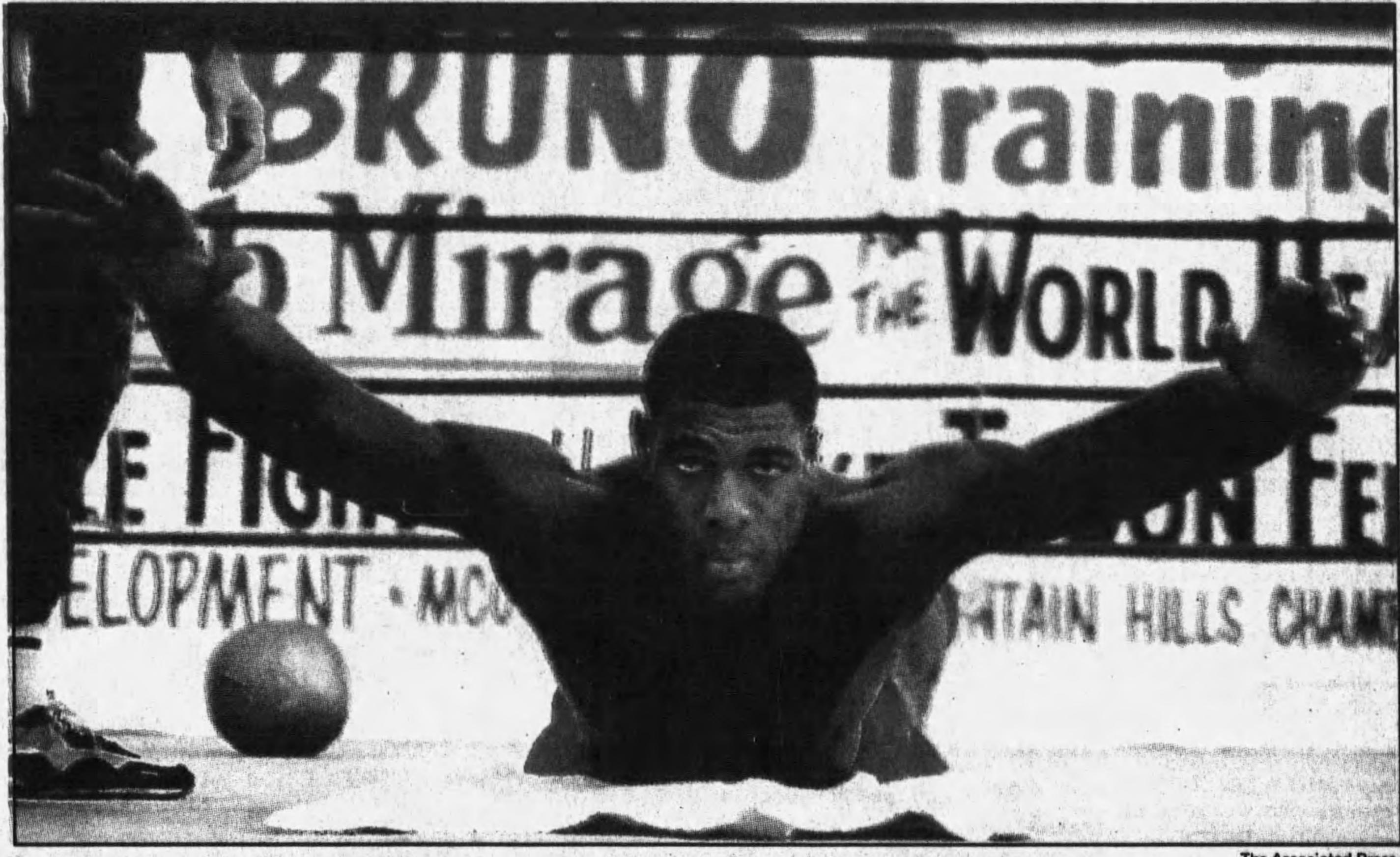
"Dick was clever," Hawks coach Mike Fratello said. "He had all those new faces [LaSalle Thompson, Detlef Schrempf, Randy Wittman], so they decided to gamble all night with a half-court trap and dare us to hit jump shots."

The Hawks did not hit their shots, even the many open ones. They struggled so, Dominique Wilkins had to recover from his first scoreless half of the season to get 26

points. "The first time I can ever remember not scoring in the first half," Wilkins said.

The combination of a revived Wilkins, a steady Moses Malone (24 points, 17 rebounds) and some slick defensive work by Reggie Theus and Doc Rivers turned the game around, the Hawks assuming command for keeps with an 11-0 burst in the third quarter as Wilkins reversed an 0-for-7 start with a 7-for-7 shooting spree.

HAWKS Continued on 6F



The Associated Press

Frank Bruno says he expects 'a new heavyweight champion from England,' but the Las Vegas oddsmakers think otherwise.

THE

Against Tyson, Bruno Will Try to Break a Long Losing Streak: Great Britain Hasn't Had a Heavyweight Champ in 84 Years

> By Bud Shaw Staff Writer

LAS VEGAS — The immediate question isn't if Mike Tyson can lose a fight, any fight. It's whether he can lose to a manwho sounds like Rex Harrison.

British heavyweights in this century have been far more polished wordsmiths than boxers, and Vegas odds — 9 to 1 currently — say Frank Bruno belongs to the same lineage.

Tyson-Bruno is scheduled for 10:28 p.m. Saturday night on HBO. History and Tyson suggest the closing scene of HBO's coverage will be Bruno getting cold-Cockneyed.

No Brit has held the heavyweight title since Bob Fitzsimmons lost the belt 84

years ago. Before Bruno, the heavyweight class in England was one long lament. From Tommy Farr's loss to Joe Louis in 1937 through Brian London, Don Cockrell, Henry Cooper, Joe Bugner and Richard Dunn, Britain's big boys have fallen hard.

Bruno, they hope, is different. For one thing, he's bigger — 6-foot-4, 230 pounds than Brits gone by. For another, he's black, the son of West Indian immigrants who, through a winning personality and by winning fights, is now considered the most popular athlete in Great Britain.

Asked what people should expect Saturday evening, Bruno stared and said only this: "a new heavyweight champion from England."

There are few reasons to suspect that's

a possibility. Bruno is 32-2 with 31 knockouts, the obvious No. 1 contender. Teasing British fans once before, he had overweight Tim Witherspoon beaten for the WBA heavyweight title three years ago but was knocked out in the 11th round.

Similarly, Bruno pounded James "Bonecrusher" Smith for nine rounds in a 1984 fight before Smith knocked him out in the 10th. Tyson expects to accomplish the same, though he promises to save the ringcard girls some mileage.

Tyson hasn't fought Witherspoon. One could say he didn't fight Smith, either. Smith turned his bout with Tyson into a ballroom dance, hugging and swaying for survival. Tyson barely lost a round in the 12-round unanimous decision.

Some boxing writers who recognize the gleam in Tyson's eye this week have already prepared their fight-night story this

BRUNO Continued on 10F

Franzese on U.S. Witness List For Trial of Walters, Bloom

> By Chris Mortensen Staff Writer

Michael Franzese, the organized crime leader who allegedly provided money and muscle for sports agents Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom, is scheduled to testify for the U.S. government in the agents' racketeering trial, which begins next week.

Franzese is on the government's witness list and has been cooperating with the FBI on the Walters/Bloom case and other organized crime matters, according to

Franzese told the Atlanta Journal-Constitution last Aug. 31 that he had refused to cooperate with federal prosecutors during a 17-month investigation.

Walters and Bloom were indicted Aug. 24 by a federal grand jury in Chicago on charges of racketeering, extortion, mail fraud and wire fraud stemming from their dealings with more than 50 college athletes.

Franzese, who was named by the federal grand jury as an unindicted co-conspirator, said he twice exercised his Fifth Amendment rights before the grand jury. Labeled by prosecutors as one of the nation's top mob bosses and a member of the New York Colombo crime family, Franzese is serving the fourth year of a 10-year sentence on racketeering charges.

Franzese has been "in transit" since Feb. 15 from his federal prison camp in Boron, Calif., according to prison records. A Justice Department official said Thursday that Franzese's specific location would not be disclosed "for security reasons."

The Walters/Bloom indictment alleged that "in exchange for using Michael Franzese and his reputation as a member of a New York city organized crime family that used extortionate means, defendant Norby Walters would and did pay Michael Franzese."

Franzese allegedly was involved in the business dealings of Walters, who was a top booking agent for musical acts. As part of

AGENTS Continued on 10F

Garvey Admits Role in Two Pregnancies

From Staff and Wire Reports SAN DIEGO - Steve Garvey, whose reputation in baseball prompted the nickname "Mr. Clean," admits two women claim he impregnated them and says his wife of less than a week isn't upset about it.

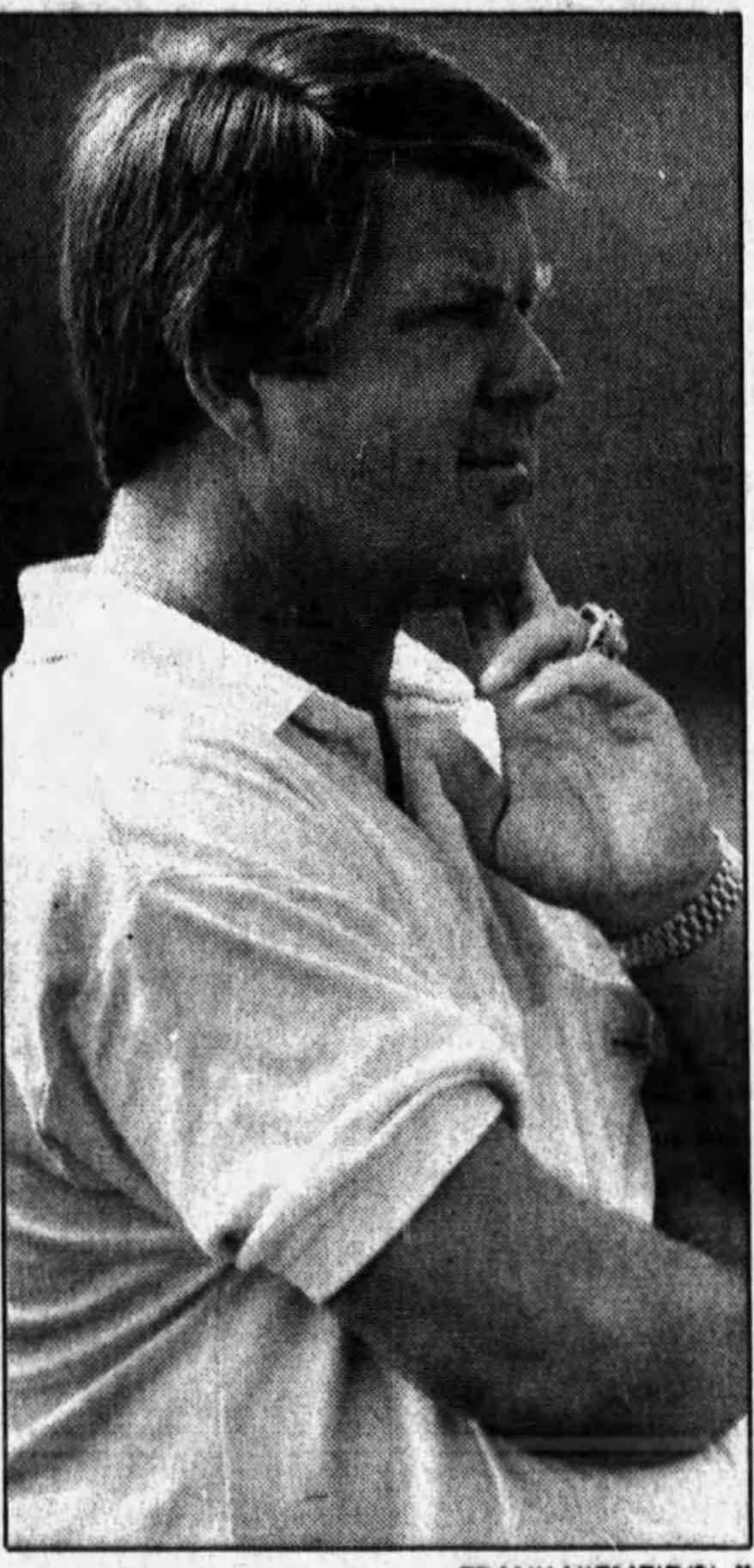
One of the women, former fiancee Rebecka Mendenhall of Atlanta, criticized Garvey for making her paternity allegations public and insisted that Garvey knew she was pregnant before he broke off their engagement.

Garvey, 40, the former All-Star first baseman of the Los Angeles Dodgers and San Diego Padres who retired in January 1988 after 17 years in the major leagues, said he plans to support the children "if tests proved that I am the father."

A girl was born in San Diego Feb. 13 to an unidentified woman whom Garvey said he dated "four or five times."

Ms. Mendenhall, a national desk assignment editor at Cable News Network (CNN), said she became engaged to Garvey last Nov. 25, but said he postponed their wedding plans in early January. She said they

GARVEY Continued on 5F



FRANK NIEMEIR/Staff

The Dallas Cowboys and Jimmy Johnson have been holding 'hush-hush' talks, according to sources.

Cowboys Considering Johnson as Next Coach

By Chris Mortensen Staff Writer

MIAMI — University of Miami football coach Jimmy Johnson is under serious consideration as the eventual — and possibly immediate — replacement for Dallas Cowboys coach Tom Landry, according to NFL and college sources.

Cowboys owner H.R. "Bum" Bright has told acquaintances a change involving Johnson and Landry "may happen sooner than you think," one source said.

Meanwhile, a Fort Worth television station, KXAS, reported late Thursday night that Bright will sell the club to Arkansas businessman Jerry Jones, who will name Johnson as coach. Jones and Johnson were teammates on the University of Arkansas football team in the 1960s.

Cowboys president and general manager Tex Schramm said he knew nothing of possible sale. "I guess anything can happen, but I know nothing of it," he said.

Schramm said he last talked to Bright on Wednesday, "and he said nothing about it." Asked if the team could be sold without him knowing about it, Schramm said, "I think it would be strange."

Meanwhile, in Miami, a source close to

Johnson said talks between the Cowboys and the Miami coach are "supposed to be hush-hush."

Johnson and Bright were not available for comment.

Landry, the only head coach the Cowboys have had since their inception in 1960, has said he would like to stay on the job at least through the 1989 season. Shortly after the TV station's report, Landry said from his home that, "I don't know a thing about

Johnson called some coaching friends in the NFL this week to inquire about the league's rule that prohibits the hiring of assistant coaches in the league after March 1. The rule is intended to prevent raids of coaching staffs close to the season.

The Cowboys recently demoted Ernie Stautner, who had been defensive coordinator for 20 years, and pass offense coordinator Paul Hackett. George Hill, former Indianapolis Colts defensive coordinator, replaced Stautner and Jerry Rhome was hired from the San Diego Chargers as quarterbacks coach, taking Hackett's place on the staff.

COWBOYS Continued on **7F**

Staff Writer The hot bikers ride Saturday night — no matter the cold. Races sanctioned by the American Motorcycle Association (AMA) return to Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium af-

By Bill Robinson

ter a two-year absence. A new turf, with improved drainage system, has been cited by the stadium authority as the reason the Camel Supercross Series is welcome back. The Atlanta Braves objected after the last such event in 1986 because of wear on the stadium surface. A similar Supercross was held in The Omni in 1987, but last year neither event was staged.

This weekend, the chief concern is not the turf but the cold.

"Motorcycles do some weird things in cold weather," said Rick Johnson, the season's unbeaten rider. "We call it 'cool siege.' Bikes can get brittle, parts can break. But it's harder on the riders. You can get distracted in the cold.

"But we're going to run. We just have got to make sure the bikes have antifreeze, and I'm going to wear thermal underwear under my driver's suit."

Bill West, the Supercross promoter from Tampa, said, "We've never canceled a show because of bad weather. We're expecting it to be clear and cold, temperatures somewhere in the 30s.

"In fact, Atlanta is the badweather city on the tour. It has al-

most become a tradition. We almost always had adverse weather in Atlanta, the worst we've ever had."

Racers on 250 cc bikes compete over a curling, weaving three-quarter mile course with 35 obstacles.

"We'll come off those jumps and sail about 75 to 80 feet in the air," Johnson said. "And we'll come down on a landing-type ramp on those longest jumps. It's that kind of racing. And we'll have the usual hairpins and esses, a difficult course always."

Johnson, 24, from San Diego and a member of Team Honda USA, is the defending national champion and has won the first five events of 1989. He took his first national title in 1986, then yielded the top spot to

Jeff Ward, who won his second national championship, in 1987. But Ward, a Kawasaki rider, tore all the ligaments in his right foot in the opening event at Anaheim, Calif., and has been out since.

Johnson has built a 25-point season lead over his his nearest rival, Jeff Stanton, also a Honda rid-

Johnson's full name is Richard B. Johnson Jr. "My father used to race Go-Karts, and he's known as Dick Johnson," Rick said."I was on a motor bike when I was three years old. And I was in my first race when I was nine."

The previous race was in the warmth of Miami.



257-1391, ext 261 or 217 6480 Roswell Rd. - Sandy Springs Located directly across from Sandy Springs Toyota's New Car Showroom

Georgia Southern's Success Scares Off I-AA and I-A Foes

By Earnest Reese Staff Writer

The Georgia Southern football team is finding success has its drawbacks.

The Eagles, with two NCAA Division I-AA national titles and three appearances in the championship game during the past four years, have been dropped from the schedules of longtime I-AA opponents Bethune-Cookman and South Carolina State this season and from Florida A&M's next year.

In addition, no Division I-A school would agree to a game with the Eagles this season, according to Georgia Southern athletic director Bucky Wagner.

As a result, Georgia Southern will take on three in-state teams from Division II this fall. The Eagles open with Valdosta State in Statesboro Sept. 2, face West Georgia at home the following weekend and take on Savannah State at Paulson Stadium on Oct.

Since they started competing at the I-AA level in 1984, the Eagles have a 55-14 record. They believe their average of 11 victories a season is scaring off potential opponents.

"Our competitiveness in I-AA football is catching up with us," Wagner said. "We have found that the only I-A teams that are interested in playing us are topranked programs such as Florida State and Auburn."

Wagner said he had discussed playing dates this season with three I-A teams. "But after the athletic directors got their heads together with the coaches, we had no deal. One coach told us that even if he did decide to play a I-AA team, we'd be the last team he'd pick."

Last season, the Eagles led Florida State 10-7 entering the

fourth period before losing 28-10. Wagner said games with Florida State and Auburn in 1990 are possible.

□ 1989 Schedule, Page 8F

Agents

From Page 1F

the alleged conspiracy, the grand jury found that Franzese and Walters tried unsuccessfully to force their way into promoting the musical tour of the Jackson Five group earlier this decade.

Then, as Walters and Bloom crossed into the sports field in late 1984, Franzese provided the agents with \$50,000 to help start an operation in which they recruited numerous college-eligible athletes in violation of NCAA rules, the grand jury

When athletes tried to renege on contracts they signed with the agents, Walters and Bloom used Franzese's reputation to threaten some players, the grand jury alleges.

The trial, expected to last six to 10 weeks, is scheduled to begin next Wednesday with jury selection, according to U.S. Attorney Anton Valukas of Chicago. It is the first-ever attempted federal prosecution of sports agents.

Mr. Valukas refused to comment on Franzese or the proceeding. "I

will do my talking in court," he

Defense attorneys also refused to comment on Franzese's appear-

ance on the witness list. Bloom has retained former U.S. Attorney Dan Webb of Chicago as his lawyer. Mr. Webb formerly presided over Mr. Valukas and Assistant U.S. Attorney Howard Pearl, the two lead prosecutors on the case. Former sports agent M.L. "Mike" Trope, an attorney who has represented Bloom, will assist the defense team.

Walters continues to be represented by attorney Robert Gold of New York.

Because of the indictment and mounting legal fees, Walters has been paralyzed as a music agent, industry sources say. He was barred from booking any more acts in Atlantic City, N.J., under a law that prohibits casinos from doing busiunder ness with someone indictment.

Consequently, Walters has sold his business, "Norby Walters Associates, World Entertainment and Sports, Inc.," to Jerry Aide of New York. The company is now known as "Famous Artists, Inc."



Butler Aviation-Atlanta, Inc. is seeking dependable; hardworking individuals who are interested in exciting careers in the field of aviation. You may qualify for one of the following:

AIRLINE RAMP WORKERS AIRLINE RAMP SUPERVISORS AIRLINE RAMP MANAGERS

Positions are available on all shifts. Applicants will be required to undergo substance abuse screening. For immediate consideration, apply in person to:

> BUTLER AVIATION-ATLANTA, INC. Argenbright Office Park, Bldg. 3 off Camp Creek Parkway & 285 762-9413



Bruno

From Page 1F

way: "Mike Tyson hit Frank Bruno on the jaw Saturday, and seven people at ringside were wounded by flying glass."

"If I listened to what everybody says, I wouldn't get out of bed in the morning," said Bruno. "I feel very confident."

Bruno turned pro in 1982. He won his first 21 fights by knockout. Even with the losses to Smith and Witherspoon, his popularity never suffered. Forty members of the British press corps are in Las Vegas for the fight.

When Bruno was trapped by year with his girlfriend and two daughters, England anxiously waited for good news. A fight with Tyson seems like another natural disaster, but the news probably won't be as good for Bruno.

It's not quite fair to suggest Bruno made his name on European journeymen and bloated has-beens. But his fights in the last two years show why a 32-2 record doesn't command more respect.

The demolition of South African Gerry Coetzee on March 4, 1986, a first-round knockout, would've impressed more a year earlier. A British writer described Coetzee as ·looking "like a fat man on vacation

when he went to London to meet Bruno."

The loss to Witherspoon followed the Coetzee fight. Then came forgettable matches with James "Quick" Tillis (KO fifth round), Chuck Gardner (KO 1), Reggie Gross (KO 8) and Bugner (KO 8). Bugner, 37, weighed in at 256 pounds. Nobody knows how much weight he lost when he had to escape from a press conference on a freight elevator to avoid being served alimony papers.

Bugner, like Coetzee, retired' the day after his bout with Bruno.

No one should blame Bruno if his opponents can't stay out of the buffet line. Fact is, he comes to Tyson with as many credentials as anyone else in boxing these days.

"I'm more of a man now than Hurricane Gilbert in Jamaica last when I fought Witherspoon," Bruno said. "Mentally and physically. I am confident."

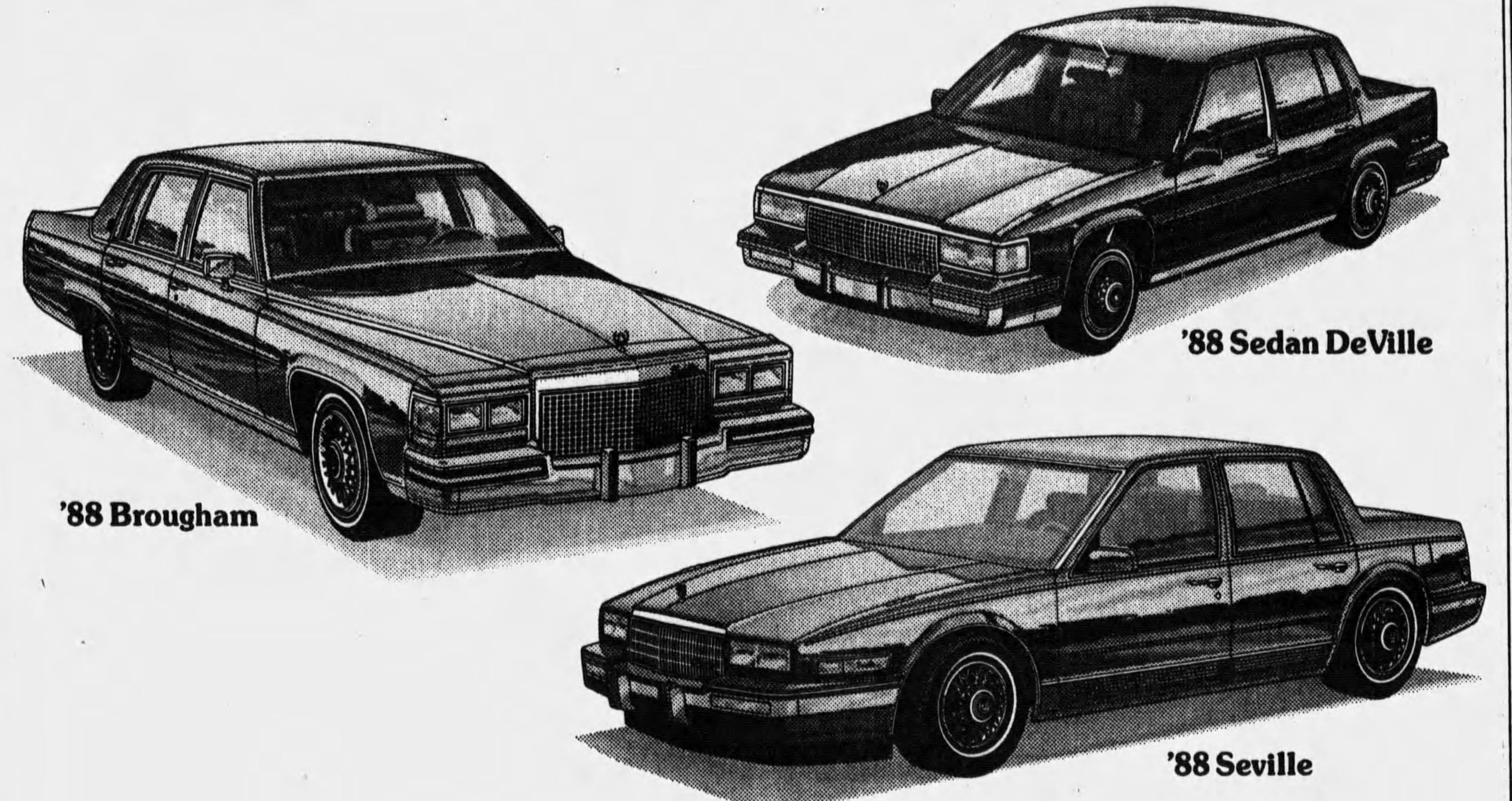
Confidence usually leaves Tyson's opponents when the first good punch or 20 arrives.

Tyson is 35-0 with 31 knockouts. There is concern that his personal problems will derail his concentration. Bruno thinks so. He calls this "a peak time to beat Mike Tyson."

The history of British heavyweights isn't very pleasant reading. Neither is a more recent history of

The last time people said Tyson's personal life might snag him was last June. He knocked out Michael Spinks in 91 seconds.

Final Closeout On Fifty'88 Cadillacs!



Great savings while they last. Make your selection from this special group of over fifty 1988 Sedan DeVilles, Broughams and Sevilles, purchased from General Motors.

Fully equipped with tilt & telescope steering wheel, climate-control air conditioning, wire wheel discs, electronic level control, rear window defogger, six-way seat adjusters, AM-FM stereo radio with cassette player, power trunk release, cruise control, delay

wiper system, accent striping, tinted glass, vanity mirror, leather interior and more.

When you buy or lease one of these 1988 Cadillacs, it comes with many special extras, such as a full tank of fuel, free oil changes, a service department that's open all day Saturday, courtesy limousines and more. In addition, they are covered by a 12-month/12,000-mile service agreement. And the GM protection plan is available.



Scoles Cadillac We add to the pleasure of owning a Cadillac

Southlake Mall • Jonesboro Road at I-75 • Atlanta • 968-1000

Get to know Celestine Sibley.

Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday in the Journal and Constitution.

> The Atlanta Lournal THE ATLANTA CONSTITUTION