*** WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8, 1989

The Atlanta Journal AND CONSTITUTION

Astros' Speed Latest Price for Murphy

Bass, Young Spice Trade Interest as Mets Pull Out

By Terence Moore Staff Writer

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. -As the rain fell outside Municipal Stadium on Tuesday, Dale Murphy was in a comical mood inside the Atlanta Braves clubhouse.

"I've just been involved with the invasion of the New York writers," said Murphy. "This is the first time I've seen them since all the talk started about me possibly going to the Mets. I told them that I was a pretty boring interview."

It didn't matter. Since the New York Mets weren't swinging or sniping at each other for a change on Tuesday, the news that

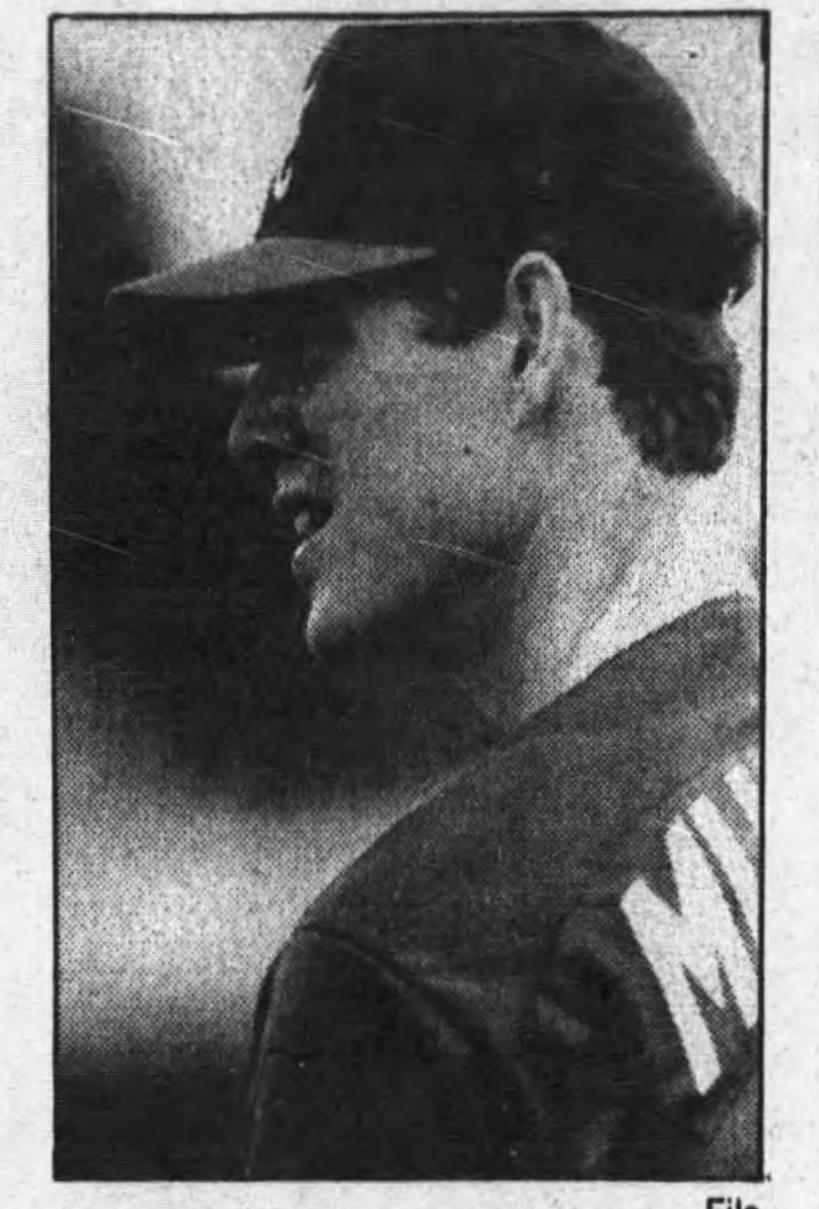
the Mets and the Braves had suspended their trade discussions involving Murphy was the most important item for the New York reporters and photographers at the two teams' rained-out exhibition game.

"I guess they [the New York media] wanted to know how good my left hook was," said Murphy, referring to last week's springtraining fight between Darryl **Strawberry and Keith Hernandez** during the Mets' team picture day. "It's difficult to say whether or not I've been relieved since I've found out that the Mets' deal is off. After all, nothing really happened."

According to Braves general

manager Bobby Cox, a trade involving Murphy this spring "probably won't happen." The Mets informed the Braves on Monday that they no longer plan to continue pursuing Murphy, and Cox says the San Diego Padres have come to the conclusion they're not going to be able to satisfy the Braves' demands for Murphy. Cox has started to focus most of his trade attention on the Houston Astros.

Cox is interested in Astros outfielders Kevin Bass, 29, and Gerald Young, 24, both speedsters. Bass has averaged 17 home runs and 76 RBI since 1985. Young finished his rookie season last year with a .257 batting average. "We have to see if they're serious in what they [the Astros] want to give up," Cox said.



Braves' Dale Murphy, subject of trade speculation for months, is no longer being sought by the Mets.

Sutton Likely to Become **Broadcaster for Braves**

By Prentis Rogers Staff Writer

Former major-league pitcher Don Sutton is expected to become the fifth member of the Atlanta Braves broadcasting team, according to sources close to TBS.

Negotiations between Sutton and TBS on a multiyear deal have not been completed, but the plan calls for Sutton to fill in as a part-time announcer on radio and television this year and then TBS. become full time next year as Ernie Johnson's replacement. Johnson will retire at the end of this season after 25 years as a Braves announcer.

"We've been talking to Don Sutton. We think he's an enormous talent and we hope to settle the deal in the near future. But it isn't done by any stretch," said TBS Sports vice president Don McGuire.

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Sutton would join Skip Caray, Pete Van Wieren, Billy Sample and Johnson. He is expected to start in April, filling in when Caray and Van Wieren are tied up with the NBA playoffs on

Sutton also would fill in during the season for Johnson, who will cut his schedule by 50 to 60 games this year.



Hawks 'Kareemed' On Goodbye Night Of Abdul-Jabbar

It was a night for winter fantasies, for shedding our longjohns and electric blankets and dreaming springtime dreams.

An afternoon in June, perhaps.

A hot, sultry afternoon in the South when the biting chill of early March has long since given way to postseason fever, and memories of heatless nights in Miami have all but disappeared.

A rematch, perhaps.

It was a night when the Hawks might have told us where all of this was going, and whether we should save our hearfelt goodbyes for another time. Tuesday evening in The Omni was billed as Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's curtain call in Atlanta, the final puncutation mark to a career that spanned several generations and stamped the 7-foot-2-inch skyhook wonder as the greatest center who ever played the game.

And that's exactly what it was, I'm afraid. To the question that has dogged this city since the arrival of Moses Malone last August now comes an answer. Will we see the Hawks and Los Angeles Lakers, the twotime defending champions, in a wondrous rematch in June in the 1989 NBA Finals? Sad to say, no way.



RENEE' HANNANS/Staff

Dominique Wilkins scores over Lakers' James Worthy (right) and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (left).

buying time."

The Hawks' cache dwindled first, as their 85-84 lead with 9:28 on the clock was sliced and diced by a running sky number from the 42-year-old goggled one, a ridiculously easy running finger-roll by James Worthy and two Byron Scott free-throws that gave LA a 90-85 cushion before Fratello, hoarse now with fear,

While Academically Ineligible

Agents: Iowa Played Harmon

By Chris Mortensen Staff Writer

CHICAGO — The University of Iowa perpetrated a fraud by using star running back Ronnie Harmon in its 1985 Big Ten championship season, defense lawyers for sports agents Norby Walters and Lloy Bloom said Tuesday.

Harmon's academic transcripts, subpoenaed in pretrial action by Walters and Bloom, revealed that the player had a 1.69 grade-point average (GPA) by his senior season, short of the 2.0 minimum then required by conference rules.

Harmon played every game that year, including the Rose Bowl, because lowa certified he was eligible. University officials, including athletic director Bump Elliott, will testify today. They were unavailable for comment Tuesday.

Harmon, now with the Buffalo Bills of the NFL, was the government's first witness in the trial of Walters and Bloom on charges of racketeering, mail fraud, wire frau and extortion stemming from their dealings with more than 50 college athletes.

The prosecution earlier played to the jury a conversation Harm secretly taped when Walters made a high-pressured, fast-talking sales pitch to the running back on March 10, 1985, prior to his senior season. During Walters's recorded pitch to Harmon and his father, Jesse, in the agent's New York office, he likened the concealment of his deal with the player to cheating on in- and Special Conditioning Football, come taxes.

"Dig it, it's just like income tax. ... The name of the game is that we don't give 'em their money unless we have to. That's the name of the game," Walters said on the 40-minute tape.

But the defense accused Harmon of cheating Walters of almost \$50,000 he never repaid the agent and accused lowa of cheating on NCAA and Big Ten rules to keep Harmon eligible for his senior season.

Cross-examined by Bloom's attorney, Dan Webb, Harmon reluctantly agreed that he had not met minimum academic standards at Iowa to remain eligible.

Presiding U.S. District Judge George Marovich decided the issue of Harmon's academic standing was relevant because the government has charged that Walters and Bloom defrauded universities when they induced the athletes to falsely certify their eligibility for scholarship benefits.

Walters and Bloom are trying to

show that the universities them selves falsely certified documents to keep the players playing football to generate "millions of dollars."

Webb tried to show that Iowa went to great lengths to get H academically eligible. Harmon GPA was 1.62, 1.86 and 1.69 his first three years in classes such as "Billiards, Coaching Football, Bowling, Soccer, Coaching Basketball, Officiating, Intramural Athletic Footbal said Webb.

Webb reminded Harmon, a communications major, that he took two courses between his junior and senior years in an effort to get off academic probation.

"You took 'Water-Colors Painting,' and 'Elementary Spanish,'" Webb said to Harmon, who did not dispute him. "You withdrew from Spanish. You got a 'D' in Water Col-? ors, right? And you still did not get: off academic probation, correct?

"But you still played football. You still played in every game. Correct?"

Webb pointed out that after: played in the Rose Bowl on: Jan. 1, 1986, Harmon withdrew from: school.

The government went into details over Walters's and Bloom's recruitment of Harmon prior to his senior season. They re-established that Walters post-dated the contract to Jan. 2, 1987, as part of the plan to conceal the agreement from the school.

Walters's taped sales pitch often drew smiles, head-shaking and muffled laughter in the packed federal courtroom. On the tape, he called himself "the agent of the stars."

Walters allegedly spread \$2,500 in cash on his desk in the middle of

Not this year, at least.

Not until the Hawks finally grasp the secrets that have dangled just beyond their reach throughout this season of change. The home team's hopes of playoff brilliance in 1988-89 may have been slayed on this night when the team of the '80s came to town, administered its singular lesson in basketball success, then said its farewells with a wave and a 106-97 triumph that, as they say, wasn't really that close.

Not when it mattered, at least.

Not when measured by any standard other than points. Not when measured by guile, by patience, by trust — the three ingredients that separated the victors (even though the Lakers ain't what they used to be) from the vanquished on this night, and provided with a standard against which the Hawks, now and forever, should be judged.

For nothing have the Lakers won enough championship rings this decade to be fitted for a championship glove. For nothing have they endured roster changes, injuries, intrasquad turbulence and the pressures created by their enviable success throughout the decade. The Lakers discovered the secrets years ago through a painful evolution, through seasons of anguish administered by teams from Boston, Houston and Philadelphia.

Right now, the Hawks haven't paid their dues. On Tuesday, the first bill arrived, special delivery.

To understand the price of ultimate success, study the final nine-plus minutes of the Lakers' visit. Maybe even longer, to the start of the final period when two men of similar sartorial style played their game of "coaches chicken." At one end of the floor, Pat Riley rested his mainstay, Magic Johnson. At the other end, Mike Fratello nurtured precious moments for Moses Malone, the hardest working man in show business, and Dominique Wilkins. Said Fratello: "You're just

could summon the cavalry.

It was more than a minute later when Riley finally buckled under and reinforced his lineup by recalling Magic to the floor. By then, the Hawks were weakening, their thunder diminishing. Six straight misses, silly misses. Twenty-footers from Jon Koncak and prayers from the key from Cliff Levingston — Remember Boston? — that weren't answered.

It was later 92-90, but then the roof fell in. Or was it the sky? As in a running zinger following an illegaldefense free-throw that ignited a 13-2 Lakers explosion, which was sandwiched around a stilted Hawks display of impatience and fadeaway bombs that said, frankly, not this year.

The theme most apparent in the victorious lockerroom was trust, a trait that was exhibited as the Lakers frustrated the Hawks out of their first options then executed their own plays until a seam in the defense could be exploited."We were trying to pound the ball into the post, and it just didn't work," said Doc Rivers. Trust.

Said Byron Scott, the Lakers guard: "Every year, we've grown. Now when the game's on the line we've got four or five guys out there that trust one another. If Magic calls someone's number, we've all got faith that the guy'll deliver."

On the other side of the building, Fratello was supressing his thoughts. "The caliber of team we played against makes you see what we can do better, what you can improve upon."

Such as?

Silence.

"Things just show up against the Lakers that we can't do anything about."

- Such as? Silence.
- "What can I say?"

How 'bout, Wait 'til next year.

the presentation and, according to the tape, promised to make at least \$250 monthly payments. Harmon accepted the deal.

Harmon testified that he was paid at least a \$1,000 bonus for introducing teammate Devon Mitchell to the agents by telephone.

Johnson's Coach: Steroid Use Necessary

The Associated Press

TORONTO — Ben Johnson is the greatest sprinter of all time, and anabolic steroids played only a small part in his success, Johnson's coach said Tuesday.

"Anabolics played a role, as they did with his competitors," Charlie Francis told a Canadian commission on drugs and athletics. "I believe he was on a level playing field ... and he was winning. He is the best sprinter of all time, I'm convinced of that."

The coach made his comments in his fifth day of testimony to the commission, which was formed after Johnson was stripped of his 100-meter gold medal at the Seoul Olympics when he tested positive for steroids.

Francis has outlined steroid use by Johnson since 1981, including injections he gave, saying it was necessary to keep up with the competition. He said illegal substances could explain only one percent of a performance, the rest being determined by years of work and training.

As he ended the direct testimony portion of his appearance, Francis said the chairman of the Canadian Track and Field Association agreed to try to give him advance warning if his agency instituted random drugtesting before the Olympics.

The official, Jean-Guy Ouellette, was "determined" random testing not occur before the Olympic Games," Francis said. "He also went further and said if in fact." random testing was put in, he would attempt to become : involved in the process so that we would find out and have some advance warning."

Ouellette, sitting outside the hearing room, denied : the allegation.

Taking steps to eliminate the use of illegal substances in Canada — while cheating went on elsewhere - would have been like disarming unilaterally, the ; coach said, claiming it would have been "the athletic ! equivalent of being nuked."

Francis said the optimal benefit for sprinters after steroid use is 20 to 50 days after use is stopped, making it easy to regulate steroid use in training periods with no chance of being caught by a test in competition. "The main benefits are in the training period," he said.

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