


Bob Verdi

In the wake of the news

A hot theory on Cubs' cold start

Chicago Tribune

MESA, Ariz.—It appears, one week into spring-training contests, that the Cubs have achieved near midsummer form. Most teams in March discover hitters to be ahead of pitchers. At 1-6, the Cubs are lapping everybody in this business of rounding into shape for the regular season. Give them 10 minutes to pack, and they'll be ready for the opener at Wrigley Field.

Various theories have been advanced for this accelerated program, and ours is the weather. It is deathly hot in the Valley of the Sun, not unlike it was around Chicago last season. On Wednesday, the Phoenix area endured 92 degrees, a record for the date. Thursday's numbers: downtown Mesa 95, Milwaukee 7, Cubs 1. Any psychiatrist worth his or her shingle will tell you that such inclement conditions tend to skew a human body's metabolism and bewilder biorhythms.

And the Cubs indeed seem confused. They want in the worst way to gear up for their National League debut at home April 4, and there is no worse way to do so than in this searing desert. Moreover, the Cubs' second game, on April 5, will be at night, the same evening that the Stanley Cup playoffs commence. It might be warmer at center ice of Chicago Stadium than it will be at second base in Wrigley Field, but the show must go on.

Arriving at HoHoKam Park overdressed in golf shirts and shorts, the Cubs find themselves disoriented, which is where you usually find them when the atmosphere becomes incandescent. Last season, recall, the Cubs were eight games above .500 on July 4. But then they overheated and went into the toilet. This sort of thing occurs like clockwork. The 1989 campaign, in fact, marks the 20th anniversary of one of the Cubs' all-time pratfalls. The cause of death then, of course, was listed as sunstroke.

All these day games in Arizona merely fast-forward matters, as witnessed by what the Cubs have managed to accomplish here in a relatively brief period. They aren't hitting a lick, but their pitching staff's earned-run average is an unsightly 6.05, but they aren't fielding the ball very well, either. In seven contests, they have committed 17 errors, including five during a 4-3 loss to Oakland the other day when the Cubs, all bearing gloves, approached the ball as though it were a grenade.

There have been errors of omission, too. Mark Grace, at second base with the potential tying run, failed to score on a flare single to right field during the ninth inning against the A's. A pretty alert fellow, Grace said he stayed close on a hunch the ball would be caught. Opposing runners rarely exercise such caution against the Cubs, who have been losing a few balls in the sun. This is forgivable because, after all, the team has trained here only since 1967.

If Jim Frey, the general manager, and Don Zimmer, the manager, weren't so wily, they might panic and presume that the squad is peaking too soon. But they have seen it all, including 1984, when the Cubs zipped through the Cactus League with a 7-20 record. Upon their leaving, the clubhouse was fumigated. Everybody thought the Cubs were playing awful when they were only playing possum. They won 96 games and the National League East title. Obviously, these games don't mean a thing.

"Our defense has been something less than flawless," noticed Frey. "But I remember what Don told me five years ago when he was coach and I was manager. He told me that I'll see some crazy things in Arizona because of the high sky and the wind. Zim was absolutely correct. In fact, I remember during our brief 11-game losing streak that spring, he came into my office one afternoon and looked at me

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INSIDE

Hawks' Pang hangs in there

Goalie Darren Pang says that, despite a lack of success in his second NHL season, he remains strong mentally. Page 4.


Karkovice tries again

Ron Karkovice (left), who once figured he'd be the White Sox catcher of the future, is now trying to hang on as a backup to 41-year-old Carlton Fisk. Also, Sox release Donnie Hill. Page 5.

NHL

Capitals 7, Bruins 2	Flyers 4, Islanders 4
Canadiens 5, Nordiques 2	Blues 4, Leafs 1
Wings 3, Rangers 2	Flames 10, Penguins 3

Roundup, Page 6

NBA

76ers 106, Kings 96	Warriors 120, Cavs 114
Spurs 112, Nets 98	Roundup, Page 6

Jordan, Collins mend fences

By Sam Smith

Michael Jordan, suffering from a pulled groin muscle that forced him to miss his first game in almost three years Wednesday night, went for his usual rehabilitative treatments Thursday.

But he ended up engaging in some unusual repairs of his relationship with Doug Collins.

Jordan and the Bulls' coach met privately for almost two hours in the coach's office in the Deerfield Multiplex in the wake of reports that:

■ Jordan was growing angry about what

he felt was Collins' misuse of him, particularly that he thought the coach was overplaying him in the fourth quarter, when defenses are focusing in on him the most.

■ The Bulls' offense was starting to break down due to Collins' insistence that a large percentage of plays be directed toward Bill Cartwright, even though the team was playing well with Dave Corzine.

■ Team **disharmony** was growing, even though the Bulls are 10 games above .500.

■ Collins' sometimes aggressive manner was alienating some players even as Jordan refused to accept a leadership role.

dan refused to accept a leadership role.

■ Jordan skipped the Wednesday trip to Boston to send a message to Collins about his discontent.

"That's just ludicrous," Jordan said in reply to that final point, adding that he hoped to go through a light practice Friday and play Saturday if his condition didn't worsen.

In fact, team doctors said Jordan ran the strong risk of serious injury if he had tried to play Wednesday. Team officials were concerned he might try to play, given his

See Jordan, pg. 9



Doug Collins



Michael Jordan



Simeon's Cyrus McGinnis (left) and Dunbar's Sherman Monis fight for a loose ball during Thursday's Public League semifinal at the UIC Pavilion. Simeon won 64-58 to advance to Sunday's final. Story, Page 7.

Shot II: King nips South Shore

By Paul Sullivan

King coach Landon "Sonny" Cox ran into Illinois coach Lou Henson at the UIC Pavilion Thursday before the Jaguars' Public League semifinal game against South Shore. It was only natural that "The Shot" would be the topic of conversation.

"Nick really shot that ball," said Cox to Henson, referring to Nick Anderson's buzzer-beating 30-footer last Sunday that defeated Indiana.

"Yes, and Jamie's got a good shot, too," replied Henson, referring to King's 6-foot-4-inch junior Jamie Brandon, one of the most coveted

■ No. 1 Simeon isn't at its best, but it dumps Dunbar 64-58. Page 7.

■ Previewing Friday's Class AA and Class A contests. Pages 7, 10.

sharpshooters of the Class of 1990.

Less than two hours later, Brandon pulled off a near-perfect imitation of Anderson's heroics, canning a 30-footer as time expired to give the second-ranked Jaguars (28-1) a 68-66 victory.

Brandon, who finished with 37 points, was soon at the bottom of a pile of delirious teammates, while

South Shore guard McGlothter Irvin (25 points) sat alone near the three-point line with his head bowed and tears streaming down his face.

When Brandon finally made it to King's locker room, one of the first people to congratulate him was Anderson, the former Simeon star who came home with Illini teammates Marcus Liberty and Ervin Small to watch their alma maters in the playoffs.

With No. 1 Simeon (28-0) vaulting past Dunbar 64-58 in the second game, Brandon's shot dramatically set

See King, pg. 7

Ex-Michigan star tells of Bloom threat

By John Gorman

Sports agent **Lloyd Bloom** threatened to expose a secret agreement he had with University of Michigan running back Robert Perryman to force the athlete to drop contract demands, Perryman testified Thursday in federal court.

Bloom claimed that public disclosure of Perryman's agreement, signed a year earlier, could cause the school to lose the Big 10 conference football championship won the previous season, Perryman said.

"He said he could go to [coach] Bo [Schembechler] and incriminate my name... and the Big 10 championship could be invalid, and he could mess up the institution," Perryman said.

In other testimony, former **Iowa** defensive back Devon Mitchell said that he had borrowed a booster's car during his sophomore and junior years.

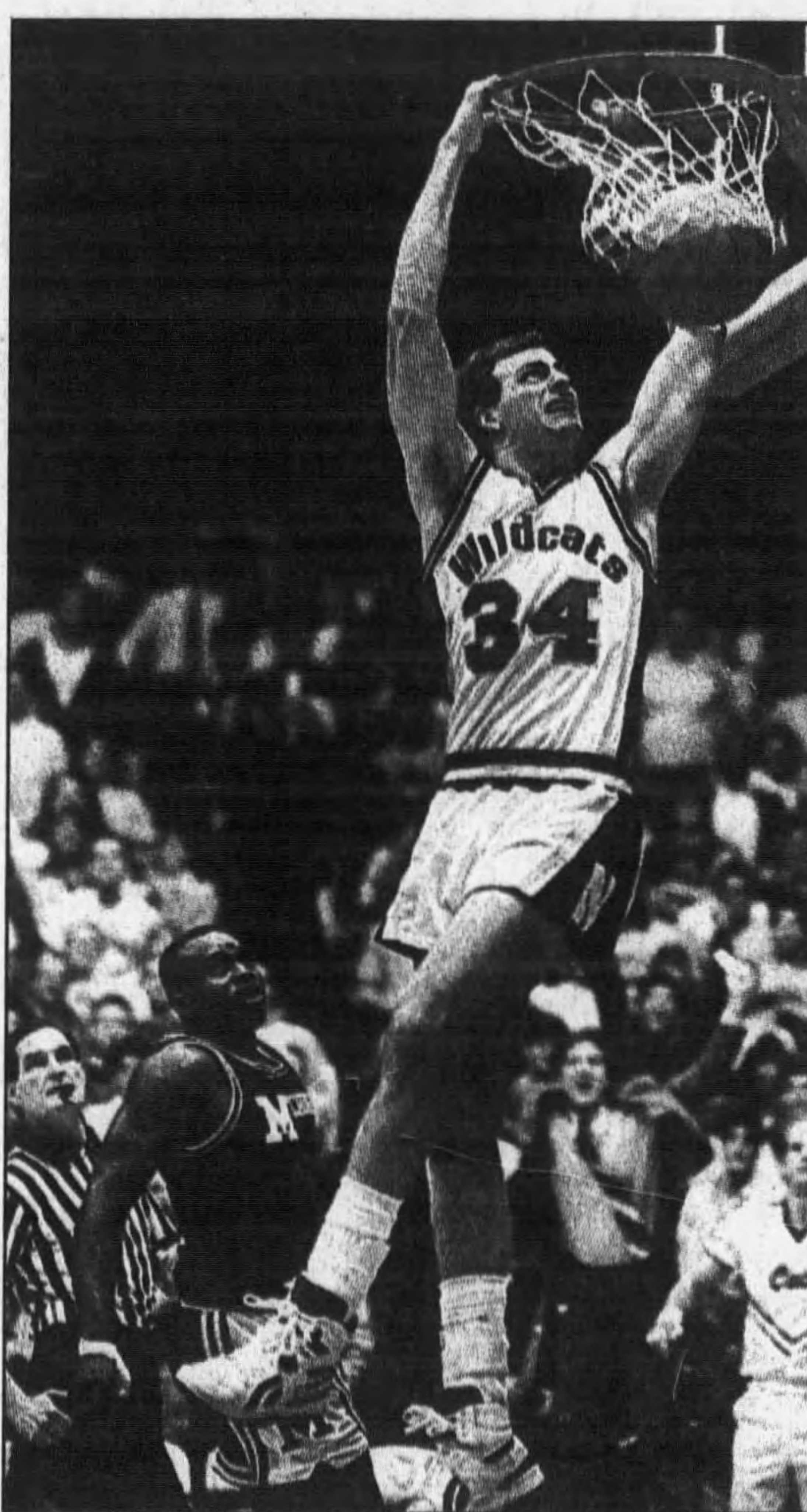
"I thought the rules said I was not supposed to take money or gifts from anyone outside my family. I didn't take a gift. I borrowed a car," Mitchell testified.

Mitchell and Perryman testified in the fourth day of the trial of Bloom and Norby Walters, partners in the New York-based World Sports & Entertainment, Inc.

Walters, 58, and Bloom, 29, are charged with defrauding the universities by convincing the athletes to sign representation agreements in violation of eligibility rules and concealing the existence of the agreements.

Defense lawyers continued to hammer away at the academic credentials of the athletes. Jurors and U.S. District Judge George Marovich listened as Dan Webb, attorney for Bloom, recited the titles of classes taken by Mitchell, including football, ancient athletics, karate, billiards, tennis

See Agents, pg. 4



Northwestern's Walker Lambiotte dunks during NU's 88-79 loss to Michigan. Story, Page 3.

College basketball

Xavier 85, Loyola 83	Boston Coll. 81, St. John's 74	St. Louis 68, Butler 64
Michigan 88, Northwestern 79	Purdue 83, Ohio State 53	Rutgers 70, Penn State 66

More coverage, Page 3

Big 10 chooses Duke's successor

By Ed Sherman

James Delany, commissioner of the Ohio Valley Conference, is expected to be named the Big 10 Conference's new commissioner. If he receives the post, the Big 10 will be getting a man with some considerable clout in intercollegiate circles.

Assuming no last-minute glitches, Delany will replace Wayne Duke and become only the Big 10's fifth commissioner in 67 years. Duke, stepping down after 18 years as commissioner, will remain with the conference in an advisory capacity.

Delany, 41, is the choice of the Big 10 presidents. He couldn't be reached for comment Thursday because he was en route to Kansas City, Mo., to serve as a member of the NCAA basketball selection committee, which will pick the 64-team field this weekend. Delany has been named the chairman of the powerful committee for the next two years, a position he's expected to keep with his move to the Big 10.

"If the Big 10 is fortunate enough to get him, they'll be getting one of the top guys in college athletics," said Tennessee State Athletic Director William Thomas. "He's an outstanding administrator. He'll roll up the sleeves and get it done for them."

Rob Knight, though, should

be warned of Delany's arrival. Considering the Indiana basketball coach's hatred for 9:30 p.m. starts to accommodate ESPN, it will be interesting to see his reaction when he learns of the package Delany worked out with the cable outlet. In the Ohio Valley Conference's deal, the games start at 11:30 p.m. Eastern time.

"We're talking apples and oranges," Thomas said. "We're [the OVC] not like the Big 10, who doesn't have to fight for the exposure. Heck, we'd start our games at 3 a.m. if they asked us."

Added OVC spokesman Jon Verner: "We've had good ratings and slightly above-average attendance for the late-start games. It's worked out well for us."

Delany has served 10 years as commissioner of the OVC, a seven-team league comprised of schools such as Austin Peay, Murray State and Eastern Kentucky. He was only 31 years old when he received the OVC post in June, 1979, making him the youngest conference commissioner in the nation.

See Big 10, pg. 9

Indiana wraps up Big 10

From Chicago Tribune wires

BLOOMINGTON, Ind.—Indiana's rocky start three months ago and even a last-second loss to Illinois Sunday were only distant memories Thursday as the Hoosiers wrapped up a record Big 10 championship with a 75-64 victory over Wisconsin.

The Hoosiers' 10th outright title broke the record they shared with Purdue and Ohio State.

"They came back to just give us all, everyone associated with Indiana basketball, one of the greatest treats I've ever seen a group of people give anyone," said Bob Knight, who has coached three NCAA championship teams.

The Hoosiers lost four of their first seven games, with Syracuse, Louisville and North Carolina all scoring more than 100 points, a feat accomplished only once before against Indiana in Knight's first 17 years as coach. But Indiana came back to win 22 of its next 24 games, with both of the losses to Illinois.

"They've worked awfully hard, done the things we've asked them to do," Knight said of the Hoosiers, who earned an automatic berth in the NCAA tournament. "Last Sunday was a tough loss for us, but tonight that doesn't mean a thing because can't any of 'em catch us now."

The victory, sparked by freshman Eric Anderson's 19 points, gave Indiana a 25-6 overall record and a 15-2 mark in the Big 10.

"It really takes a great group of kids to put as much on the floor as they did last Sunday and come back and play against a Wisconsin team that played extremely hard tonight and a team, I think, deserves to be in the NCAA tournament," Knight said.

Wisconsin, hoping for an at-large NCAA bid, dropped to 17-10, 8-9.

"We can't let a team shoot so many free throws," Wisconsin coach Steve Yoder said, noting Indiana's 39 trips to the foul line and 30 points on free throws to just 8 for the Badgers.

"We played hard, but when you send them to the free-throw line that many times, they're going to beat you. We were getting the ball

See Indiana, pg. 3

Odds & INS

By Linda Kay & Mike Conklin

Legal beagle: With Iowa's athletic program under a microscope in a Chicago courtroom, the Big 10 Conference probably can't wait to anoint James E. Delany its new commissioner. No doubt his legal acumen will be highly valued: Delany was an associate attorney general in North Carolina and has courtroom experience.

Speaking of Iowa...

Testimony during the trial of agents Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom revealed that Iowa running back Ronnie Harmon studied billiards, bowling and soccer on his way to what was supposed to be a degree in computer science. Now we learn that former teammate Devon Mitchell had a similarly suspect academic record. The defensive back was only able to muster a 1.0 grade-point average as a sophomore, recording three F's, one D, one C and an A. That promising A? It was granted for his participation in varsity football.

Aftermath

Folks on the Northern Illinois campus are not at all pleased by the firing of basketball coach Jim Rosborough. "He just didn't get a fair shake," said one close to the school. There's talk that some of the current players may leave the program in protest, and there's more talk that some of the athletic board members may resign. But there's also talk that a replacement for Rosborough is in the wings. He's Ray Jones, an assistant at Wyoming and a former assistant at Minnesota, where NIU Athletic Director Gerald O'Dell spent three years.

Did anyone notice?

The fabled Sports Illustrated jinx was perpetuated this week when the magazine put Michael Jordan on the cover. Our copy arrived just hours before the Bulls played Boston, minus the services of Jordan for the first time in three years.

Now it can be told

Doug Collins, who coached his first game without Jordan on Wednesday—and may be without his star again Saturday night at the Stadium—was the youngest coach in the NBA when Jerry Reinsdorf hired him at the age of 35. At a recent speaking engagement, Collins finally revealed how he managed to so favorably impress the Bulls' owner in spite of his youth. "Jerry was in Tucson," Collins related, "and I was living in Phoenix, and the day we met it was 116 degrees. I made him go outside. I didn't let him wear a hat. I didn't give him a drink. He became delirious and he offered me a job."

What national pastime?

Baseball bills itself as the national pastime, but pro football and basketball are actually reaching more of the American sporting public. Consider this: While there are 26 major-league baseball teams playing in just 14 states (and two Canadian provinces), there are 28 NFL franchises playing in 19 states and the District of Columbia, and next season, there'll be 27 NBA teams playing in 21 states. What's more: With baseball's lack of interleague play, fans in most major-league cities have no chance to see half the teams. Given baseball's reluctance to expand—new Commissioner Bartlett Giamatti has put the issue on the backburner—what's left is a sport that seems to be closing fans out.

Kindred spirits

White Sox reliever Bobby Thigpen is a Florida native, but he carries a hockey puck in his baseball equipment bag. Thigpen got the puck, along with a couple of sticks, from Blackhawks goalie Darren Pang. Thigpen is a big hockey fan and, naturally, gravitated to someone else in the business of making saves.

News, notes and nonsense

Should you feed your computer generic or brand-name diskettes? Ask Gale Sayers. The former Bear great tackled the subject in a computer newsletter recently. Sayers is now president of Crest Computer Supply. ... Florida safety Louis Oliver signed on with agent Steve Zucker Thursday. Oliver's longtime gridiron rival, cornerback Deion Sanders of Florida State, signed with Zucker earlier. Both are likely first-round draft choices. ... Looking for the perfect gift for St. Patty's Day? Try a gold or silver coin commemorating Notre Dame's championship season. Joe Witry of Arlington Heights, who distributed a medallion marking the Cubs' first night game, now has 25,000 silver and 500 gold coins available for Notre Dame fans. Silver goes for \$24.95, gold is \$950. ... SportsChannel America has hired sportscaster Jerry Kuc as its Chicago-based correspondent for the show "Sports Nightly." ... Nuts? Fruit? Candy bars? What to munch for energy is the topic at the weekly running clinic sponsored by Lutheran General Hospital in Lincoln Park on March 21, when Ann Marie Lynch, the hospital's registered dietician, speaks on "Eating to Improve Performance." ... Billie Jean King and former pro Ilana Kloss promote Domino's Pizza TeamTennis at a free exhibition and clinic at the Lakeshore Athletic Club Tuesday night. TeamTennis, the recreational and professional leagues founded by King, is based in Niles.

And finally, here's a helpful sporting device being offered this spring by Hammacher Schlemmer: floating golf balls. They're designed to buoy—no pun intended—a golfer's confidence around water. The floaters perform just like the standard ball, but absorb water for easy retrieval in ponds, lakes and other assorted water hazards.

USOC chief medical officer doesn't go quietly

By Phil Hersh
Chicago Tribune

TORONTO—There was no small irony in the timing and reasons when Dr. Robert Voy resigned this week after four years as chief medical officer of the United States Olympic Committee.

As Canadian track coach Charlie Francis continued to give his extraordinary testimony about the scope of drug use in the sport, a frustrated Voy was leaving his post because he felt muzzled by the USOC.

"For an organization that has been outspoken in an antidrug stance not to be able to accept a person who is outspoken on the same issues is a fundamental contradiction in terms," Voy said via telephone in his first comment on the resignation, effective March 17.

Voy, 55, was under increasing fire from USOC officials, U.S. sports federation officials and some athletes for his challenges to the credibility of drug-testing in the U.S.

When Voy suggested to the press in October, 1987, that the U.S. Track Fed-

eration (TAC/USA) withheld positive results at its 1987 national championships, he angered TAC Executive Director Ollan Cassell, the most powerful federation head in the country. Voy said he was then asked by USOC officials to tone down his remarks to the media.

He said the muzzle was applied 10 months later, after he told a pre-Olympic media seminar that positive results from the 1988 Olympic track trials had not been announced and that only two U.S. federations had been clean during the years of drug-testing.

TAC later said the positives were for drugs like cold remedies which, although banned, had been taken in such small quantities as to indicate inadvertent use.

Voy said Thursday there have been a dozen other cases, not necessarily involving TAC, in which tests showing definite steroid use were dismissed on technicalities.

"Dr. Voy shares the frustration we all have, that the program constructed by the USOC and the world frankly has not worked, but we're not going to quit,"

said USOC President Robert Helmick, who added he "knew of no muzzle" on Voy.

"We want the facts on the table. That does not mean we can countenance divulging any privileged information that would prejudice the rights of athletes."

Voy said he thinks it is "hiding behind a veneer" to cite the rights of the athlete in most cases.

"My point has been none of this should have been a secret," Voy said. "Analytical positives should be public knowledge. Otherwise, it only arouses suspicions that someone is manipulating the outcome. I never wanted to name names, just give aggregate numbers. If we aren't able to prove this expensive process is yielding results when we know drugs are being used, why are we doing it?"

Members of the USOC's Athletes Advisory Commission were nevertheless upset that Voy wanted to publicize cases of inadvertent use. Heads of federations that had only a few positive cases from such use were similarly disturbed that

Voy's statistics tarnished their reputations.

Voy said that anger led to his being denied a role in the negotiations for a doping control agreement between the U.S. and the USSR.

"My regret for the Olympic Committee and the federation leadership was they were unable to take the heat from what I was saying—having an honest and factual basis for my statements—rather than muzzle, criticize or degrade me. My object was not to point fingers but to alert people there were problems."

Voy said he would be willing to testify before the Canadian inquiry on drug use, which was prompted by Ben Johnson's disqualification in the 100-meter dash at the 1988 Olympics.

During Thursday's testimony, Johnson's lawyer, Ed Futerman, hurt his own argument that the runner was a naive young man duped by Francis. Futerman's questioning gave Francis the chance to cite three recent instances in which Johnson made independent decisions that contradicted the coach's wishes.

Culture shock for new coach

They love Jari Kurri in Edmonton, Mats Naslund in Montreal and the Stastnys in Quebec, but Canada has yet to open its arms to Alpo Sunonen of Finland, who a month ago became the first European head coach of a North American professional hockey franchise.

Sunonen, 40, was hired in a hurry by the Winnipeg Jets to coach the Moncton Hawks of the American Hockey League after Rick Bowness was promoted from New Brunswick to replace Dan Maloney, who was dismissed.

"To come here to coach as a European, and be the first one, brings out a lot of feelings in some people," said Sunonen, who was 3-4 after seven games at the helm. "To my face no one has said anything, but I can feel it in the air."

Sunonen, who has 18 years of coaching experience, groomed future National Hockey League players such as Kurri and Mikko Makela for Finland's national team.

Sunonen, a part-time Jets scout, said he realized he had been hired to keep the club steady on its playoff course, not redirect it. He has had to adapt to his players, not them to him.

"This is a different culture, a different kind of game, and lots more games than I'm used to," he said.

This nickname does say it all

The Grand Rapids, Mich., team that will join the Continental Basketball Association for the 1989-90 season will share a nickname with the game of basketball itself.

The name for the team, the Grand Rapids Hoops, was selected from about 2,000 entries to a "name-the-team" contest, said Tom Rubens, head of the Hoops ownership group.

"Hoops is basketball, and we are basketball," said Rubens, a former commodities broker who announced his intentions to locate a CBA team in Grand Rapids last fall.

Rubens said he has sold 450 season tickets so far, including all 56 courtside seats.

T-shirts bearing the team name and logo in team colors of purple, green, orange and black were distributed as part of the introduction.

Rubens also announced that 26 of 30 limited partnership units costing \$25,000 each have been sold.



Mushing under the sun—or the 20 percent of it not obliterated by Tuesday's eclipse—a competitor in the Iditarod Sled Dog Race heads toward Nome, Alaska. AP Laserphoto

And the nostalgia boom goes on

The Senior PGA Tour has enjoyed tremendous popularity in recent years, and so have a variety of other "old-timers" events.

Jim Morley figures the time is right for baseball to get into the act. He's putting together the Senior Professional Baseball Association, a league for slightly over-the-hill ballplayers.

Morley hopes to start the league next winter. Here is how it would work:

- There would be 10 teams, all in Florida and most in cities that currently are spring-training homes for major-league teams.

- Each team would have 18 players and two coaches. Most of the players would be former major-leaguers between the ages of 33 and 40.

- The season would last three months, from Nov. 10 to Feb. 10. Each team would play 72 games, 36 at home and 36 on the road.

- Players' salaries would range from \$4,000 to \$15,000 a month, with some of the top players also receiving signing bonuses.

- The designated-hitter rule would be in effect.

Morley, a self-employed businessman from Colorado Springs, envisions someday having offshoots of the leagues in Arizona and southern California. But for now he is concentrating his efforts on Florida "to test the waters and keep costs down."

Morley mailed questionnaires to 1,150 former players. He is visiting the 14 Florida cities he is considering for

charter membership.

"So far, the response has been good—surprisingly good, really," Morley said. "Everybody's pretty excited."

Mark Fidrych, who was one of the game's best pitchers before being sidelined by a shoulder injury, said he tossed Morley's letter aside at first "because I thought he was crazy."

But after hearing more about the league, he isn't so sure.

"If you don't gamble, you never know," said Fidrych, 34, who owns his own trucking business in Massachusetts. "Some of the best fortunes have been made by people who had a brainstorm and were willing to take a chance."

"I think it might work. The key will be to find guys who are ready to drop everything they're doing and take three months off. I mean, not everybody can just up and quit his job. But I think he'll find enough people. Hey, to a lot of guys, \$30,000 or \$40,000 is a heck of a lot of money. And for three months? You'd have to be crazy not to at least see what it's all about."

Fidrych said he might be willing to play.

"I think I could take off enough time to do it. Of course, I'd have to have a guaranteed contract."

Morley said because the league is in its preliminary stage, it's too early to say who some of the players will be. But he hopes to make an announcement within a couple of weeks.

Padres' 'Mom' ignores chauvinists

As the San Diego Padres' administrator of minor-league operations, Priscilla Oppenheimer is one of only a handful of women executive assistants in major-league baseball.

She has become a mother figure to many of the organization's 115 minor-league players. But to others, she represents an unwelcome intrusion in baseball's male-dominated world.

Her duties include executing contracts at the minor-league level, producing organization manuals, monitoring rules changes and making sure the farm system has the proper equipment and supplies.

Unofficially, she is a player-counselor.

"A lot of them call me 'Mom,'" said Oppenheimer, 47. "If they have a problem,

I can talk to them. I'm a pretty open-minded person. I've raised three kids myself, and I'm not judgmental. I think they feel that."

Oppenheimer, whose interest in baseball was sparked years ago by her involvement as the parent of Little Leaguers, began working for the Padres in 1983 as a secretary in the scouting department. Last November, moved up to her present job.

"At first I got the feeling [at organization meetings], 'Well, why is she here, and how did she get her job?'" Oppenheimer said.

"I can't battle that, and I'm not going to waste my energy trying to say, 'Hey, I got the job because I deserve it.' Whatever they think, they're going to think it."

BRIEFS

Commissioner Peter Ueberroth said Thursday that some major-league owners have requested that the expansion process be delayed. In recent weeks, Ueberroth and his successor, A. Bartlett Giamatti, have said there was a timetable for expansion targeted for the early 1990s. Cities that have expressed interest include Tampa, Denver, Washington and Buffalo. "I think Bart has it in hand. He's talking about a timetable in the '90s—early '90s—is talking about the possibility of two teams in the National League as a first step," said Ueberroth. The commissioner declined to identify the owners who asked for the expansion process to be delayed or when the request was made. Players Association Executive Director Don Fehr said the owners weren't interested in expansion. "The owners have never been interested in expansion. The nonsense you hear that they are is just that—nonsense. There is a great baseball tradition in Florida and there probably should be two teams here, but they can't figure out a way to put a team anywhere in the state. Why is that? The reason is if you put a team in Tampa Bay, [owner Jerry] Reinsdorf can't extort money from Chicago by threatening to move the White Sox."

The Cincinnati Bengals say they are paying for another drug rehabilitation program for suspended fullback Stanley Wilson, who still awaits word from the National Football League on whether he will be allowed to play again. Wilson checked into a drug rehabilitation clinic March 1 in Inglewood, Calif., said Mike Brown, the Bengals' assistant general manager. Brown said Wilson was scheduled to stay at the clinic for a week to 10 days and was being treated as an in-patient. The Bengals are paying the cost of Wilson's stay at the clinic through an insurance policy, Brown said. General Manager Paul Brown has said the team has no further plans for Wilson as a player. Wilson, 27, was suspended hours before the Jan. 22 Super Bowl in Miami because of evidence he had relapsed into drug use.

Ole Christian Furuseth of Norway won his second World Cup skiing victory in as many weeks and in the process became the season champion in the giant slalom. Furuseth had a time of 2 minutes 33.70 seconds in Shiga Kogen, Japan, to beat Hubert Strolz of Austria by .76 seconds. Furuseth had 82 points. That tied him with Pirmin Zurbriggen of Switzerland, but Furuseth was awarded the gold medal because he had two second-place finishes against one for Zurbriggen.

Top-seeded Ivan Lendl and No. 5 Emilio Sanchez breezed into the quarterfinals at the Eagle Classic tennis tournament in Scottsdale, Ariz. Lendl beat Christo van Rensburg 6-0, 6-2. Sanchez topped Mark Woodforde 6-3, 6-3. Yugoslavian teenager Goran Ivanisevic upset No. 8 Andrei Chesnokov 4-6, 6-3, 6-3. Unseeded Jim Courier beat Johan Kriek 6-1, 6-1. ... Third-seeded Pam Shriver beat Anne Minter 6-2, 6-3 in a second-round match at the Virginia Slims tournament in Indian Wells, Calif. Seventh-seeded Nicole Provis lost 3-6, 7-6, 6-3 to Jana Novotna. No. 8 Nathalie Tauziat lost 5-7, 6-2, 6-3 to Isabelle Demongeot. Catarina Lindqvist defeated Akemi Nishiyama 6-2, 6-3, and Jenny Byrne downed Terry Phelps 6-4, 6-4.

Arkansas is favored to take the men's title for a record sixth consecutive year when the NCAA Indoor Track and Field Championships start Friday in Indianapolis. The Razorbacks are led by Joe Falcon, the defending champion in the mile and the two-time defending champion in the 3,000 meters. Other strong teams include Baylor and Florida. Texas, with multi-talented Carlette Guidry, is the defending women's champion. Villanova and Louisiana State are contenders.

Compiled by Bob Fischer and Rich Lorenz from staff, wire reports

TANK McNAMARA



GIL THORP



BASEBALL

2 Cubs willing to pay utility bill

Wilkerson, Ramos realistically play waiting game

By Alan Solomon
Chicago Tribune

TUCSON—It's a tough job. It may be the toughest job in baseball. And the toughest part may be accepting the role in the first place.

Curt Wilkerson and Domingo Ramos are utility infielders. Wilkerson, who came to the Cubs in the winter deal with the Texas Rangers, is assured a spot on the Opening Day roster. Ramos, signed as a free agent over the winter after California released him, has a good shot.

They would rather be starters. "If you don't want to start, you shouldn't be in this game anyway," says Cub coach Larry Cox.

"In '86," says Wilkerson, "when the Rangers made me a utility player, I couldn't accept it. I was so used to playing every day."

He had played in 153 games in 1984 and hit .248 in 484 at-bats. Two years later, he played in 110 games, had half the at-bats and hit .237.

"During that off-season," Wilkerson says, "I just decided that if they wanted me to be a utility player, I'd just concentrate on doing that. Ever since then, I've been successful."

"Being a starter is what every ballplayer wants, dreams about," says Ramos. "But being in the big leagues is what it's all about."

"You want to play, but you can't play—but you don't want to go back to Triple A to play every day. You want to stay here."

Ramos, despite a .226 lifetime average, has six-plus years in the majors, almost all as a part-time player with the Seattle Mariners. From 1984 through 1986, he hit .185, .196 and .182.

He has had all that time in the majors because he can play first, second, short and third, all with skill.

"You've got to work hard, twice as hard as the other guys," says Ramos, who hit a career-high .311

'You've got to work hard, twice as hard as the other guys. You've got to catch groundballs at third, short, second and first. You've got to run a lot of sprints, and you've got to take extra batting practice to be sharp.'

—Domingo Ramos

in 1987. "You've got to catch groundballs at third, short, second and first. You've got to run a lot of sprints, and you've got to take extra batting practice to be sharp."

And there's the mental part.

"During the game," says Wilkerson, batting .286 (2 for 7) this spring, "you watch the whole game and watch situations, watch what other people do. I try to learn from

other people while I'm sitting there. It only makes me better.

"Then when a certain situation comes up, I'm always into the game. When the manager calls for me, I'm ready."

It's that mental aspect that can make the difference. Every player in the major leagues was a star growing up, probably the best player in his community. He's had some success in the minors, sometimes in the majors, as a full-time player.

"You're used to playing every day," says Cox. "Now, all of a sudden, you might play maybe once every 10 days. It's a big adjustment mentally."

"I have seen guys that couldn't accept that role, and it cost them a few years in the big leagues."

Former Cub Manny Trillo, now at Cincinnati, played in four All-Star games. He has hung on past his prime because of his willingness and ability to accept a part-time role.

Ramos, who will turn 31 before Opening Day, was never an All-Star. Wilkerson, 27, hit .293 last year at Texas and isn't past his prime.

Both understand reality.

"You learn to deal with it," says Ramos, batting .500 (3 for 6) this spring. "Being in the big leagues is nice."

"I've gotten used to being a utility player," says Wilkerson. Then there's a pause.

"But I've never given up on playing every day."

Cubs notes

Chicago Tribune

MESA, Ariz.—Jerome Walton crushed his first homer off big-league pitching. Les Lancaster worked two perfect innings and Mitch Williams struck out all three batters he faced.

On the other hand, the Cubs are now 1-6 after losing 7-1 Thursday to the Milwaukee Brewers. They've been outscored 46-23, and three more errors lifted their spring total to 17.

"I'm not going to get all excited about not winning games in spring training," said manager Don Zimmer. "We want to win, but I'm not going to worry about it if we don't."

Rick Sutcliffe went four innings. He struck out the side in the first, breezed through the next two innings, then was socked for four runs in the fourth on five hits and a throwing error by catcher Damon Berryhill. The Brewers added three more off Jeff Pico in the sixth before Lancaster and Williams took charge.

Walton's home run, a shot over the left-field fence, led off the ninth, and Dan Plesac, the Brewers' No. 1 reliever, was the victim. "That's the hardest anyone's ever hit a ball off me," Plesac said.

Mike Birkbeck threw five shutout innings for the Brewers. He has blanked

the Cubs in 13 straight innings over two springs.

Al Nipper had a date with the doctors Thursday afternoon for a look at his troubled left knee. The doctors showed, Nipper didn't, and the mood was not happy in the trainers' room after the game.

Berryhill's throwing error was his second of the spring. This time the batter's helmet was partly to blame, but it turns out his arm has been sore anyway. "I don't want him to play until it gets better," said Zimmer, who didn't realize there was a problem until Berryhill lobbed a throw to second after Sutcliffe's warmups in the first inning. "I've got all kinds of young catchers. He's got plenty of time to get his arm ready."

Another catcher, Kelly Mann, was still shaken two days after he was involved in a two-car accident. Neither driver was hurt seriously, but Mann, one of several candidates for a backup job, suffered a strained neck and a bruised left knee. He is expected to be out another couple of days. "My knee feels all right," he said, "but my neck's stiff."

Mark Grace took some heat from several sources, including a usually friendly one, after he failed to score the tying run from second on Doug Descenzo's ninth-inning strike Wednesday.

"Even my dad thought I should've scored," said Grace, who hesitated, had to stop at third and died there as the rally fizzled. "It's little things like that that lose ballgames."

Many Cubs are calling the new field beyond the left-field wall "two Jims" because it's hot, it's arid and there's no shade. "It could use a water fountain," said Descenzo. "And maybe a big tree."

The chances are slimmer than slim, but that can't keep Vance Law from dreaming.

"I don't know what Atlanta's asking, but if it's something that's reasonable, I'd love to have him on this team." Law said of his good friend, Dale Murphy, who could be had by someone. "He's a power hitter who could hit behind Hawk [Andre Dawson], and he plays an outstanding center field. I don't see how we could go wrong."

Jim Frey has acknowledged there was some talk between the clubs, but that it was long ago and the offer unreasonable.

Friday's starters in Scottsdale: Greg Maddux for the Cubs, Altee Hamaker for the Giants.

Alan Solomon

Verdi

Continued from page 1

and said, 'I was right, wasn't I?' The only thing Zim didn't explain was why the sky wasn't high and why the wind didn't blow for both teams."

Frey thinks his pitching staff now is deeper than at this juncture in 1984, and he has a point. Many of the starters' problems have been unearned, and Goose Gossage is throwing well, too. Also, Scott Sanderson. Blessed with a rash of new

talent, Zimmer has juggled his personnel, so as to find just that perfect combination. If you suggest that he has 15 outfielders in camp because he doesn't have three, he merely stews. But if you dredge up the premise that Andre Dawson will be pitched around all summer, he argues.

"Do you mean to tell me," Zimmer growls, "that if Grace is batting behind Dawson, they're gonna walk Dawson to get to Grace? Anybody who thinks that has had too much sun."

There's that beast again, the sun.

But the Cubs are always thinking. Just the other evening, seven players posed for a poster toasting the first full season of lights at Wrigley Field. The "Night Heat" placard, available soon to their fawning public, features Cubs in various aggressive, war-like ensembles. Even Vance Law, a decent and God-fearing chap, partook in the warning to the rest of the National League.

"I'm wearing a torn T-shirt and a mean expression," Law revealed. "Real mean."

We repeat. The Cubs, 1-6, look ready.

NHL

Hawks' Pang refuses to back down

By Mike Kiley

Welcome to Hard Times.

If you see that E.L. Doctorow classic in the bookstore, be advised it isn't a story of Darren Pang's sophomore season with the Blackhawks. Pang believes the adversity he has faced this year will eventually be just a chapter in his career biography, the one that mentions his trials as a springboard to his success.

"I'm a mentally stronger person now than when the year started," Pang said. "It might be tough for some guys to handle the pressure, but I feel I've remained strong, whereas I would have questioned myself in the past."

If Pang isn't questioning his goal-tending future with the Hawks, plenty of other observers are. What has happened to the promise that enabled him to be named to last year's National Hockey League All-Rookie Team and finish third in the voting for Rookie of the Year?

"He's hovering around a .500 record," coach Mike Keenan said succinctly when asked about Pang, 10-10-6 this season and 17-23-1 last season. "He'll probably improve with experience."

Probably. That's a threatening word hanging over Pang's head like a sharp blade.

He had an opportunity while starting the last five games to recapture the momentum, and even though he didn't lose any of those games, he didn't make Keenan stop wondering if Alain Chevrier's imminent return from injury can stop his team's recent slide.

With Chevrier out with a knee sprain, the burden was again placed on Pang, who was returning after a two-month layoff for a pulled hamstring. He came out of the brief, but critical, span with a less-than-satisfying record (1-0-3) and a 3.62 goals-against average.

Pang started Wednesday night's 7-5 loss to New Jersey but didn't

receive the decision. Ed Belfour entered when the Hawks were down 5-4 in the third period and was given a 5-5 tie he couldn't hold. It was the second straight game in which Pang was replaced in the last period.

"I really don't know if we're a better team with Chevrier. We'll find out," Keenan said. "I do know we are a .650 team with him and a .500 club without him."

Chevrier, 9-4-2 with the Hawks, is expected to return Saturday in Philadelphia. Does Pang think he let a chance slip away with his recent efforts?

"Not at all," he said. "I played in four tough Norris Division games and was disappointed the team didn't get more points out of them. Tying games isn't succeeding, and I don't feel satisfied about the ties. But I feel I couldn't have prepared myself more than I did. I was ready."

Pang thinks he has handled the

adversity this season as well as he handled the acclaim he received last season.

"You see a lot of young players get real high when things are good and real low when they're bad," he said. "I've stayed on an even keel. Last year I kept it in proper perspective, and this year, though it's been tough, I've kept fairly close to the middle in my emotions."

Whether this season's experiences have made him a stronger goaltender remains to be seen. They could spur him to greater heights, or they could be the beginning of the end for him in Chicago, with No. 1 pick Jimmy Waite waiting in the wings, along with Belfour, to challenge Chevrier for the No. 1 job.

Pang remains No. 1 in many fans' eyes. They booed Keenan for pulling him out of goal last Sunday against St. Louis. But what position he currently holds on Keenan's measuring stick isn't at all certain.

Blackhawks notes

Coach Mike Keenan, that old softie, decided not to have two practices after last Thursday, as he originally scheduled after the 7-5 loss to New Jersey Wednesday night. New forward Greg Gilbert was most grateful for his change of heart.

Gilbert, not used to Keenan's taxing skating drills, became ill at the end of a hard-driving morning practice. Much of the session was simply hard skating.

Gilbert, acquired Tuesday from the Islanders for a fifth-round 1988 draft pick, smiled sheepishly about learning the hard way how Keenan has toughened the team.

"It's different than New York," he said. "We didn't work for such a sustained period. I'll get used to it."

"I'll play better than I did Wednesday night in my first game here. I'm a pretty good defensive player. I can provide more offense than I showed recently in New York. This team looks like it can go a ways, and I'm looking forward to helping them."

The Hawks have changed their mind on goalie Jimmy Waite's immediate future. Keenan had been saying Waite would soon be headed for junior hockey now that his broken collarbone is almost healed. But Thursday Keenan said: "We're going to keep Jimmy off the ice for a month and let him heal. He won't be going back to juniors. He can't take shots yet, and there's no sense of him playing."

With six games left at home and six on the road, the Hawks can't consider any of them easy, Keenan said. The lineup includes some formidable competition: Calgary, Boston, Pittsburgh, Detroit and Philadelphia. "At this point, there are no easy games, regardless of who we are playing," said Keenan. "Teams start to gear up when they see the light at the end of the tunnel. We've been trying to win easy, and you can't do that in this league."

Wingers Steve Thomas (shoulder) and Mike Eagles (broken hand) practiced with the Hawks Thursday, though they probably won't be able to play until April. Eagles practiced with a cast on his left hand.

Mike Kiley

FROM PAGE 1

Agents

Continued from page 1

and jogging. Other courses included introduction to military organization, advanced slow-pitch softball, taekwondo, coaching football, recreational leisure and advanced bowling.

Perryman said that in March, 1987, he spoke to Bloom by telephone about rewriting a contract they had signed the previous May. Perryman said he sought revisions because he did not want to give the agents their money "at the front end."

Perryman, now a running back with the New England Patriots, said that a few days earlier he had been summoned to Schembechler's office, presumably to talk about rumors of Perryman's signing the contract. But before he talked to his coach, he telephoned Bloom, Perryman testified.

"He [Bloom] said it was speculation on Bo's part, and to stick to our story," Perryman told Assistant U.S. Attorney Howard Pearl.

Perryman said he lied to Schembechler because "I had no other ties to Bo. So I didn't have to tell him the truth anyway."

In return, Perryman said that he received \$2,500 in cash from the agents at their Manhattan office and was paid another \$250 a month until the draft.

Under cross examination by George Lombardi, one of Bloom's attorneys, Perryman admitted that he never repaid the agents, though he said he offered.

Perryman said he didn't believe that he was committing a federal crime when he signed the contract and later filled out his eligibility forms for the school. "The only crime I knew I'd violated was the NCAA [rules]," he said.

Former Purdue defensive back Rod Woodson, now with the Pittsburgh Steelers, testified that he signed with the agents in May, 1986, in return for \$4,000 in cash and the promise of \$200 a month until he signed his pro contract.

Steve Molo, a Bloom attorney, asked Woodson if he believed he had defrauded the school when he signed. "Not at the time, no. But I knew that I'd have to sign the forms," Woodson said.

The forms signed by Woodson, Perryman and other football stars were the representations to the school that they had done nothing to compromise their eligibility. The prosecution contends that

the universities were defrauded when those athletes who signed contracts with Bloom and Walters signed forms asserting their eligibility.

Mitchell also testified that he thought that he had done nothing wrong when he took \$2,000 from Bloom and Walters several months before his final season in 1985.

Mitchell conceded that he signed a plea agreement with the prosecution, admitting that he cheated Iowa out of his scholarship when he signed with the agents.

"You didn't want to sign that agreement, did you?" Webb asked. "In my opinion, I didn't think I was guilty... in my opinion I was just borrowing against my future earnings," responded Mitchell, 26.

Meanwhile, Iowa officials, still concerned over testimony earlier in the trial about the academic eligibility of Mitchell's teammate, Ronnie Harmon, said that Harmon was required to maintain at least a 1.85 grade-point average (on a 4-point scale) in his fourth year, even though the Big 10 now requires a 2.0 average in the fourth year.

Though Harmon testified that he was on academic probation entering his year, officials said his average was 1.9½, above the proper standard.

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