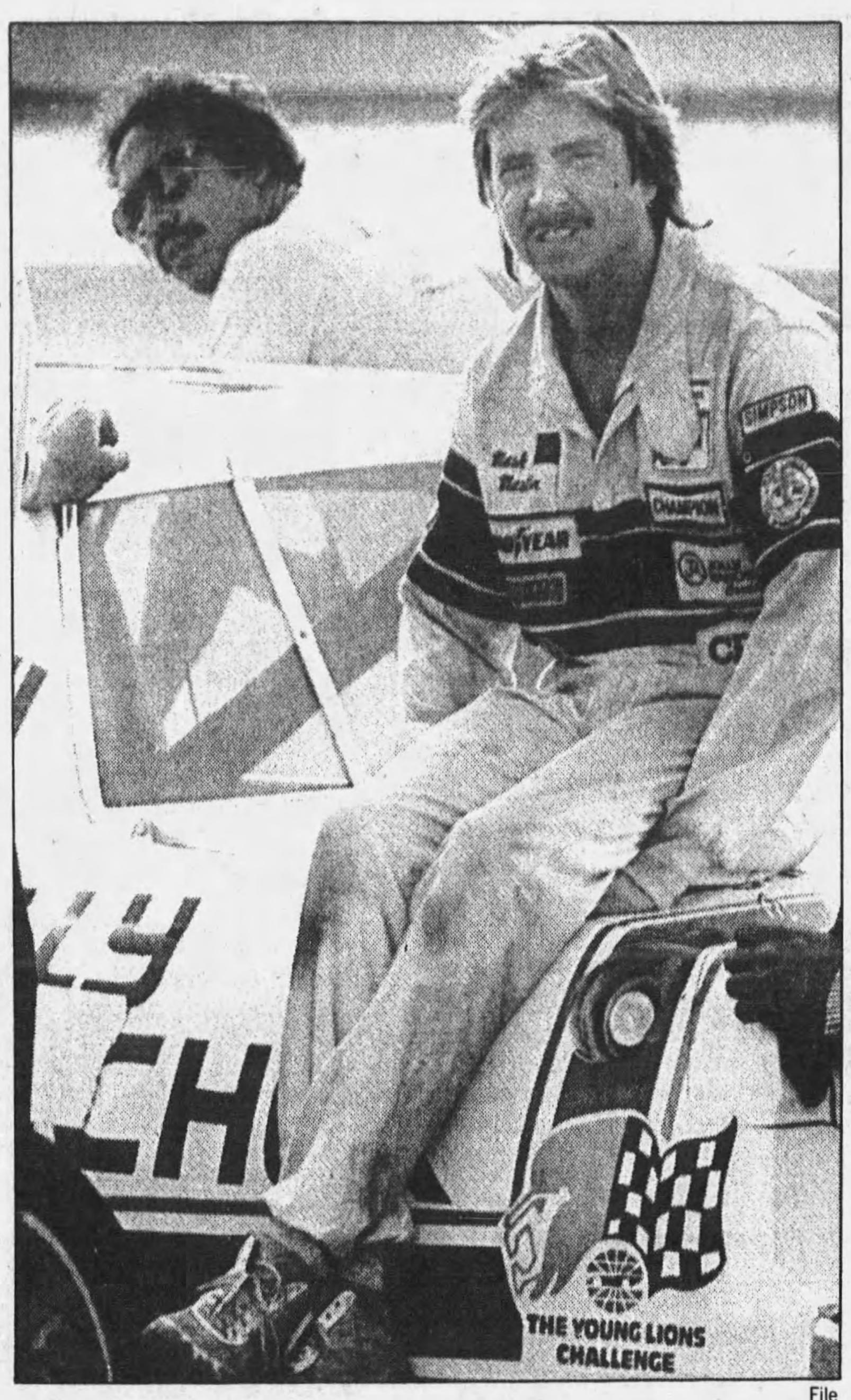
Martin **Earns** Pole At Bristol

12 Break Track Record; **Tire Problems Feared**

By Ed Hinton Staff Writer

BRISTOL, Tenn. — The track billed as "the world's fastest halfmile oval" was faster than ever Friday. A dozen drivers broke Bristol Raceway's record speed for NAS-CAR Winston Cup cars during qualifying for Sunday's Valleydale 500.

Mark Martin won the pole, his second straight on the NASCAR tour, by whipping his Ford Thunderbird around the 36-degree banked, newly repaved track at 120.278 mph, to lead the obliteration of Rick's Wilson's record of 117.552 set last year.



The Atlanta Journal AND CONSTITUTION * SATURDAY, APRIL 8, 1989 **Steeplechase Feature Field Is Cut Short After Census Scratched for Ailing Leg**

By Bill Robinson Staff Writer

CUMMING, Ga. - The already small field for the feature race at today's Atlanta Steeplechase was reduced further when a top contender, Census, was withdrawn Friday with a leg ailment.

Because of formidable favorite Jimmy Lorenzo, only five challengers had entered the 22nd annual Hennessy Jaguar/Robinson-Humphrey Cup, the \$100,000 race that courses over national fences and 21/8 miles of Seven Branches Farm.

"Census came up with heat high in his leg — it's his right fore," said George Chase, the horse's owner. "Janet Eliot is a conservative trainer, and she's going to do what the vet says — and he said not to run. We're bringing certified papers from the vet to the steeplechase people tomorrow.

"It's just a shame. If anything, Census has too much heart. You have to be careful in situations like

Steeplechase At a Glance

What: The \$165,000 Atlanta Steeplechase. When: Saturday, post time 1:30 p.m.

Where: Seven Branches Farm, Cumming, Ga.

■ Races: The \$15,000 Bank South Maiden 'Chase (2 miles), followed by the \$10,000 Bellsouth Mobility 'Chase (2 miles), the \$10,000 Michelob Cup (21/2 miles), the \$100,000 Hennessy Jaguar/Robinson-Humphrey Cup (21/8 miles), the \$25,000 Portman Barry Cup (21/8 miles), and the \$5,000 Range Rover Plate (1 mile flat turf race). Tickets: None available.

first time that Jimmy Lorenzo has had to run in a handicap in America — the first time outside matched weights. That, I believe, will make it very equal, and could help a good horse like Polar Pleasure - carrying only 148 pounds — maybe to win steeplechasers." the race."

tram Firestone to race in the United States because the small horse disliked heavy footing of English, Irish and European courses.

Jimmy Lorenzo, 1988 Horse of the Year in steeplechasing, will not have regular jockey Jonathan Smart, who suffered multiple skull fractures and a broken leg and arm practicing in Camden, S.C., last week for the Carolina Cup.

Smart rode "J.L." to three wins last year, including the \$250,000 Breeder's Cup and the Colonial Cup on the way to the Eclipse Award and the championship of the National Steeplechase and Hunt Association (NSHA) for trainer Jonathan Sheppard.

Sheppard replaced Smart with veteran Ben Guessford.

"I think the presence of Jimmy Lorenzo — especially this early in the year — helped scare away a lot of horses," said Campbell. "He can 'quicken' as good as any horse I've seen in steeplechasing. Jimmy likes to lay way out of it, and you usually don't associate that with

Geoff Bodine was second in a Chevrolet at 119.903, followed by Alan Kulwicki in a Thunderbird at 119.805, Wilson in an Oldsmobile at 118.988 and Dale Earnhardt in a Chevrolet at 118.349.

Defending Valleydale 500 champion Bill Elliott was 16th fastest on Friday, at 117.279 mph, suffering more from handling difficulties with his Thunderbird than from his broken left arm. Only the top 15 positions for Sunday's field were determined Friday. In today's second round, Elliott can either stand on his time or re-qualify.

New pavement on a track creates optimum traction and sends speeds soaring, but also brings danger of tire problems.

"We're real, real nervous about the tire situation," said Martin. "The speeds are tremendous. We'll be looking at that real close, and a story will be told here tomorrow [in today's 200-lap preliminary event for Grand National class cars]."

"You're going to see one spectacular race," said Martin. "I like the track. It's smooth, it's fast, and right now it keeps you on your toes in the high groove. It should get better up there after the Grand National race is run tomorrow."

Martin, 30, of Batesville, Ark., won the pole for last Sunday's Tran-South 500 at Darlington, S.C. He came here last week to test his car on the new pavement but left dejected.

"Our test was short because we Darrell Waltrip, 13th fastest, do a lot of funky things." felt bad about what we had," he was the first of the drivers who □ Friday's Qualifying, Page 11B

Mark Martin will be on the pole for the second straight week.

said. "We left here feeling a little bit frustrated and confused. Our Goodyear tires worked badly, our Hoosier tires worked badly and everything seemed off. But we went home and didn't turn a screw.

"Then today, we didn't try nearly as hard as we usually do, but it just seemed to come together for

Martin had originally planned to qualify on Hoosiers, but switched to Goodyears at the last minute.

Bodine ran on Hoosiers. "I was hoping we could go a little faster," he said, "but we're happy with that."

Kulwicki said his run was "real smooth, maybe too smooth guess not loose enough."

Others quicker than the old record included Phil Parsons, Michael Waltrip, Rusty Wallace, Butch Miller, Morgan Shepherd, Harry Gant and Eddie Bierschwale.

made the top 15 but failed to break the record. He barely missed at 117.543 in a Chevrolet.

* * *

NOTES: A surprise visitor to the track on Friday was Bobby Allison, who also appeared at Atlanta International Raceway prior to the Motorcraft 500. Allison is still recovering from the severe head and leg injuries he suffered last June in a crash at Pocono, Pa. He said his left leg, which was mangled in the crash, is causing him less pain than before he had the pins removed in February. "It still hurts," he said, "but nothing like it did." ... Earnhardt's crewmen now carry a lifesize cardboard image of their archrival, Darrell Waltrip, on their truck. They talk to "Darrell" constantly. "We take him with us a lot of places," said fun-loving car-owner Richard Childress, "and make him

that. He's a thoroughbred, and they'll run through pain. He could hurt his leg worse. . . . And you have to pick and choose - run only three, four times a year — when you campaign an 11-year-old."

Census won the inaugural Breeder's Cup Steeplechase in 1986, was Horse of the Year and was tops among all-time money winners (\$212,766) for a single season.

Census needs to win \$9,000 more to pass Flatterer (\$421,146) as all-time career money winner.

Chase still expects a competitive race, partly because Jimmy Lorenzo, a 7-year-old gelding, has been assigned high weight at 162 pounds.

"They're lacing his saddle with iron," Chase said. "This will be the

Highly regarded Kesslin will carry 150 pounds. Steve Canyon is second-high weight with 156. Lightest will be Limaton with 138.

Cot Campbell, owner of Kesslin, feels optimistic because recent rains softened the turf, a possible equalizer.

"We've been praying for rain," said Campbell. "Had it been hard ground, we wouldn't even have entered the race. The rains make it a little better for us."

A heavy, or "yielding," turf tends to favor American steeplechasers. Jimmy Lorenzo was imported from England by owner Ber-

NOTES: A 10-year-old who has been troubled by lameness and has raced only twice in the last two years is co-favorite for the world's most grueling steeplechase today on the Aintree course in Liverpool, England. Dixton House is rated at 8-1 in the Grand National, along with Durham Edition, runner-up last year. Forty starters are expected for the 4½-mile-run over 30 fences. Experts said wet, testing conditions could produce the lowest number of finishers since 1982, when only eight of 39 starters completed the race.

□ Complete Field, Page 11B

Walters-Bloom Jury Takes a Weekend Break

By Chris Mortensen Staff Writer

CHICAGO — A federal jury went home Friday without reaching a verdict on sports agents N Walters and Lloyd Bloom, and it decided to wait until Monday to resume deliberations.

. The eight-woman, four-man jury formally has met 12 hours to ponder the fate of Walters and Bloom, who have been charged with racketeering, conspiracy, mail fraud, wire fraud and extortion stemming primarily from their dealings with college athletes.

Neither Walters nor Bloom was available for

comment. Attorneys for both sides declined comment, but they have privately expressed the belief that the longer the jury deliberates, the better chance Walters and Bloom have of being acquitted.

Twelve hours is not considered a lengthy period of deliberation for a trial that lasted five weeks.

On a related matter, Philadelphia Eagles wide receiver Cris Carter, the only athlete indicted in the Walters/Bloom case, has a sentencing date scheduled here in U.S. District Court April 17.

Carter faces maximum penalties of 10 years imprisonment and a \$500,000 fine, though prosecutors are expected to ask the judge for leniency.

