MINOR-LEAGUE SPORTS

Pitching dandy in young season

By Mike Koolbeck Gazette sportswriter

lthough his team had played but three games, Cedar Rapids Reds Manager Dave Miley was asked to assess the prospects of his club for the 1989 Midwest League baseball season.

"We're not going to have the pitching they did here last year," Miley said Thursday night before the Reds' 3-1 Memorial Stadium win over the Quad City Angels.

"That was a once in a lifetime staff," said Miley, referring to last season's group that led the Midwest League with a 2.81 team ERA. "But if we swing the bats and score four or five runs a game, we should be OK."

After blanking Burlington, 3-0, Friday night at Burlington for their fourth straight win, the Reds had a team ERA of 1.60. Furthermore, opponents were hitting just .183 against Reds hurlers.

While there may not be a Butch Henry (16-2, 2.26 ERA), Scott Scudder (7-3, 2.02) or Mike Moscrey (11-8, 2.74) on this year's club, the first five games prove there is considerable talent.

Mike Myers, who was 15-4 last season at Charleston, S.C., in the South Atlantic League, hurled five innings of two-hit ball last Tuesday night, and Bill Risley (8-4 at Greensboro, SAL) tossed six innings of twohit ball Thursday. Converted reliever Scott Jeffery (8-3 at Greensboro) hurled six

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innings of one-hit ball Friday and evened his record at 1-1.

Southpaw reliever Steve McCarthy, who had arthroscopic shoulder surgery last October to repair a torn ligament, won his first two games. Reliever Steve Foster notched saves in two of his first three appearances.

Pitching always seems to be ahead of hitting at this time of the season, and this year is no different. Through five games, the Reds were hitting just .216 as a team and had only five extra-base hits in 153 at-bats.

"Hopefully, when the weather warms up, so will our bats," said second baseman Scott Sellner, one of three players with the Reds from last year's league championship squad.

Olympic heroes

■ Cedar Rapids shortstop Jeff Branson is one of three members of last October's gold medal-winning Olympic baseball team playing in the Midwest League this season.

Ty Griffin, the Chicago Cubs' No. 1 draft choice, has been assigned to Peoria, and Mike Fiore, a 15th-round pick of the St. Louis Cardinals, is at Springfield.

Branson, drafted in the second round by Cincinnati out of Livingston (Ala.) University, batted .207 in 58 at-bats during last summer's tour. He swatted his first professional home run to highlight a four-run ninth inning in the Reds' 6-5 win over Quad City Wednesday night.

Griffin, a second, baseman who played collegiately at Georgia Tech, batted .416 and bashed 16 home runs in 185 at-bats for the touring Olympians last summer. He and Olympic teammate Robin Ventura were named Baseball America's co-Summer Baseball Players of the Year for 1988.

Fiore, an outfielder, hit .268 in 149 at-bats for the Olympians. He was a first team All-America selection by Baseball America after hitting .397 for Miami, Fla., last spring.

Seventeen of the 20 Olympic squad members signed professional contracts. Jim Abbott, the one-handed pitcher who was California's top draft choice, is the only one to make the jump to the major leagues.

Foul weather woes

Of the 57 Midwest League games scheduled to be played through Friday, 21 were postponed by inclement weather and one game was suspended by rain.

Wausau had its first six games postponed before finally besting Beloit, 9-0, Thursday

Cedar Rapids had three games postponed, all with Waterloo. The games will be made up as double-headers later in the season.

Injury in spring motivates Hawk QB to excel in the fall

By Jim Ecker Gazette sportswriter

IOWA CITY — It was a meaningless interception in spring workout that nobody will remember next fall.

But Tom Poholsky, the top quarterback at the University of Iowa, couldn't let it go.

After throwing a bad pass that got picked off during the first week of practice in March, the fifth-year senior tried to get involved with the tackle. That decision cost him a broken bone in his left shoulder.

"It was a pride thing for me," Poholsky said last week. "I was rather frustrated by my performance for the day."

He'd thrown two interceptions, which turned out to be one too

He realized too late that No. quarterbacks shouldn't be making tackles in March.

"Right before I hit him, I said 'I better not, because something will happen.'"

Too late. Poholsky got caught between a pair of players, and the Hawkeye were without their only experienced quarterback for the rest of spring practice.

Poholsky, a 6-foot-3, 210-pounder from St. Louis, is in the sixth week of his recovery period. "Usually it takes six weeks for a broken bone to heal," he said, anticipating no problems in the

The Hawkeyes are thin at quarterback. Poholsky hasn't seen much action since passing for 980 yards and five touchdowns as a red-shirt freshman in 1986. After him are Matt Rodgers, who hasn't completed a pass at Iowa, and Jim Hartlieb, a red-shirt freshman.

Chuck Hartlieb, Jim's older brother, ran the show for the Hawkeyes the last two years, passing for more than 7,000 yards. Poholsky can't help wondering "What if?"



Tom Poholsky

What if he hadn't hurt his right (throwing) shoulder back in '87, when he and Hartlieb and Dan McGwire were battling for the

"Not that it should have, but it could have" been me, said Pohol-

But it wasn't, and now he has one year left to make his mark. Poholsky has a tough act to follow. Hartlieb made all-Big Ten in both 1987 and '88. Before that, Chuck Long was all-Big Ten in 1983, '84 and '85.

That's five all-league QBs in six years at one school. Will Poholsky make it six out of seven?

"I personally feel I've got that potential," he said. But he's not worrying about it.

"I try not to put myself in that situation, to put that much pressure on me," he said. He just wants play ball. He

craves competition after two years of being idle. "I loved being out on the field

my freshman year," he said. He's ready for more, and even has used this year's injury to get psyched up for 1989.

"I think it's driven me internally, to motivate myself even more," he said.

Fired coach gets new post in CBA

on Ekker, who was fired as coach and president of the La Crosse Cathirds last month, Friday was named head coach of the new Sioux Falls entry in the CBA.

"Ron Ekker fulfills the Kemper Lesnik criteria for a head coach, including being a proven winner, a great judge of talent, knowledgeable regarding the collegiate draft, well-connected with the CBA and NBA and a good fit with the community of Sioux Falls," said David R. Gilbert, president of Kemper Lesnik Basketball Inc.

The club also named 25-year-old Steve Raab as general manager. Raab had been the team's acting general manager.

Ekker, 52, had a four-year record of 111-93 at La Crosse, including a dismal 19-35 mark and a fifth-place finish in the Western Division this past season.

La Crosse led the CBA in attendance each of the last four years.

All-CBA team

■ The CBA recently announced its 1988-89 all-league team, as selected by the loop's 12 head coaches. On the first team are guards Clinton Wheeler (Rapid City) and Brooke Steppe (Pensacola), forwards Antho-

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ny Bowie (Quad City) and Pace Mannion (Rockford), and center Jim Lampley (Rock-

Wheeler and Steppe are now teammates with the NBA's Portland Trail Blazers. Wheeler averaged 20.0 points in 33 games for the Thrillers and Steppe's 25.7 average led the league.

Bowie was the named the CBA's Most Valuable Player after averaging 20.7 points for the Thunder.

Mannion, who had NBA stints with Detroit and Atlanta during the season, averaged 20.4 points in 32 games for the Lightning. Lampley averaged 9.8 points and 20.4 points in 32 games, before breaking his

The second team consists of guards Ennis Whatley (Wichita Falls) and Kelvin Upshaw (Albany), forwards Andrew Kennedy (Rapid City) and Peter Thibeaux (Tulsa), and center John Stroeder (Albany).

Silver Bullet bits

■ The Cedar Rapids Silver Bullets set or

1988-89 CBA season, according to the team's publicity department.

tied nearly 50 franchise records during the

Originally known as the Ohio Mixers, the Silver Bullets franchise recently completed its sixth CBA season, its first in Cedar Rapids.

The most notable record broken was the franchise's attendance mark of 99,355, which shattered the old mark of 26,156 set in 1984-85. The Silver Bullets' total is the secondhighest for a first-year city in the 43-year history of the CBA.

Point guard A.J. Wynder, who set or tied eight franchise records, was the only Silver Bullet selected in the recent World Basketball League draft. He was picked by the Illinois Express in the third round of the dispersal draft for players not competing at the collegiate level in 1988-89.

The Express, headquartered in Springfield, is coached by former Kansas and NBA star Dave Robisch.

The WBL is a summer league for players 6-foot-5 and under and is entering its second season of competition.

Agent vs. clients: Mismatch from start

CHICAGO (AP) - Norby Walters talked too fast for most of his marks and promised things few dared to dream about.

The relationships were uneven

from the start. known and widely traveled, a high-rolling booking agent equally at home among entertainers and syndicate kings. His clients were black and closer to 20. Most had never ventured far beyond the inner-city neighborhoods where they grew up or the college campuses where they played foot-

had money and they had none.

"Long before this thing ever got near a courtroom," said Bob Woolf, the Boston-based dean of sports agents, "I remember being astonished that someone could walk out of the entertainment business and sign 40 players . . and most of them blue-chip prospects at that.

"The average agent figures he Thas a good year if he gets four or five," said Woolf, who numbers football star Joe Montana and basketball's Larry Bird among his clients.

"Maybe I knew it before then," the added, "but I remember seeing those numbers and being struck by what easy prey most of these kids truly are."

testimony and deliberating for nearly 40 hours over six days, a U.S. District Court jury Thursday convicted Walters and partner Lloyd Bloom, 28, of defrauding two universities by using cash to Jure college athletes into signing improper representation contracts, and of threatening to harm clients at other schools if they

tried to renege. Less than 24 hours later, attorneys for Walters and Bloom reached settlement on profits the New York-based sports agents will forfeit to the government

following their convictions. The amount was not disclosed. But U.S. Attorney Anton Valukas, who steered the prosecution through some potential minefields, said the government would seek a minimum of \$250,000 from Walters and \$125,000 from

Bloom. They will be sentenced by Judge George Marovich during the week of May 23, pending appeal. Each faces a maximum jail

term of 55 years and fines of \$1.25 million.

At the center of the government's case was a novel interpretation of racketeering laws — that Walters and Bloom had defrauded Walters, 58, was white, well- " the universities of the ability to control their scholarship monies by signing athletes to professional representation agreements before their eligibility had expired.

To further that scheme, the government alleged, Walters and Bloom used extortion.

At the center of the defense's case was the argument that college athletics was rife with abuses Most important, perhaps, he concerning athletes' eligibility long before Walters and Bloom arrived on the scene. And that the specific practice of signing players before their eligibility expired dated back to at least 1960, when Pete Rozelle, then general manager of the Los Angeles Rams and now the NFL commissioner, signed Heisman Trophy winner Billy Cannon to a series of pro contracts.

The defense argued that the players themselves — 43 escaped prosecution by agreeing to cooperate, perform community service and repay portions of their scholarships - were "double dealers," who signed with several agents and took money from them all. Those players included former University of Iowa football team After hearing five weeks of members Ronnie Harmon and Devon Mitchell.

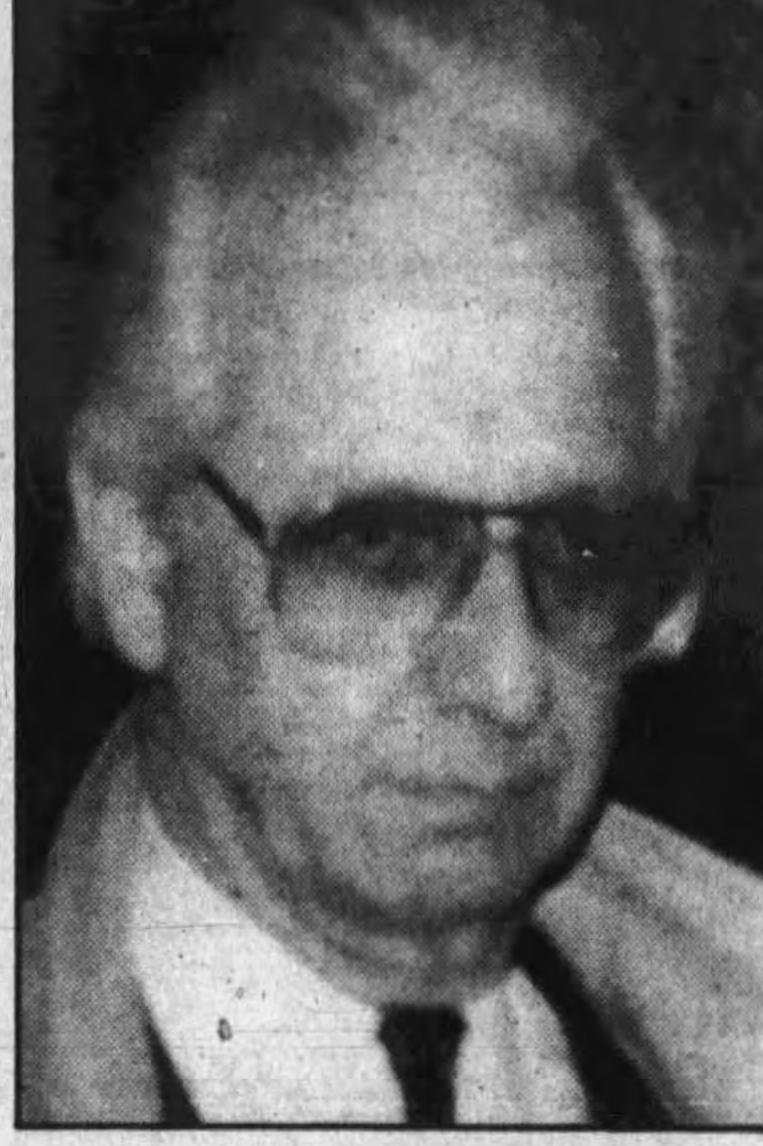
In one of the most revealing stretches of the trial, prosecutors played a tape in which Walters makes his pitch to Harmon, a former Iowa running back, and his Harmon's father, Jesse.

In a raspy, measured tone, Walters calls himself the "top representative of black entertainment in the world," tells Harmon then a junior, that he is "the product . . . and we want to represent the selling of that product," and closes by spreading out \$2,500 in cash.

Over the next 15 months, the "product" would testify, he also received a Mercedes, plane tickets and other gifts from Walters and Bloom totaling more than \$54,000.

But the potential damage from that testimony was still settling in the jury's mind when Dan Webb, who preceded Valukas in the U.S. attorney's post and was now representing Bloom, went on the counterattack.

Harmon, it turns out, took such



Norby Walters

courses as billiards and bowling, football and the coaching of football to remain academically eligible. After Bloom negotiated a \$1.3 million contract for Harmon with the Buffalo Bills, it turns out, the player fired the agents before they could collect a commission.

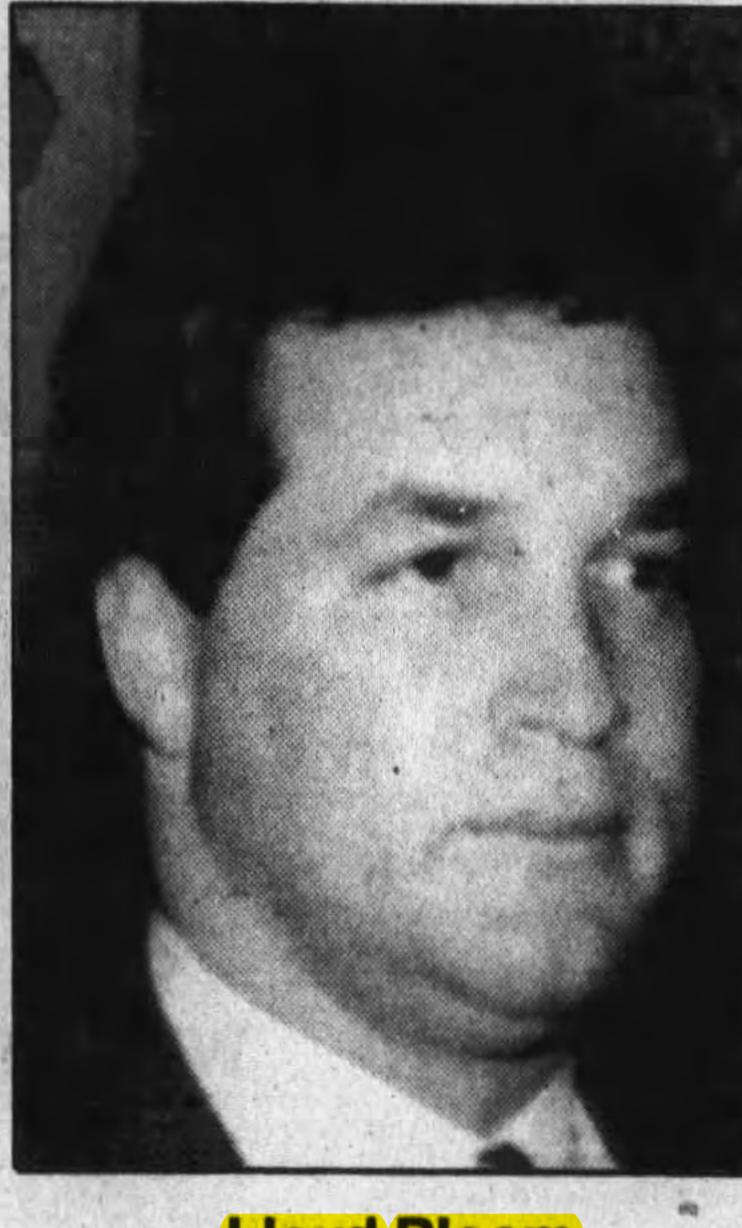
When other signees tried the same thing, the government countered, Walters and Bloom told them cautionary tales of mobsters coming in from Los Angeles or Las Vegas with the express purpose of breaking

Star prosecution witness and admitted Colombo family crime member Michael Franzese was brought from a jail cell to tell how he provided \$50,000 seed money for Walters' segue from the entertainment business into sports agentry, and how he allowed Walters and Bloom to use his reputation as a threat to keep

clients in line. Walters and Bloom were convicted of conspiring to defraud six schools - Big Ten Conference members Michigan, Michigan State, Iowa and Purdue, as well as national football champion Notre Dame and Temple.

But the jury also decided the pair had actually defrauded just two - Michigan and Purdue.

Ultimately, the verdict was hailed by many of Bloom and Walters' competitors and a host of embarrassed and exasperated school administrators. The agents' influence was so pervasive, Temple president Peter Liacouras revealed outside the courtroom,



Lloyd Bloom

that when the school offered to forfeit a 1986 game after learning it had used one ineligible Walters and Bloom client — All-America running back Paul Palmer — Pitt refused because it had fielded

Yet, several agents said privately that the two had been used as scapegoats, picked off as the most flamboyant and unscrupulous of an unscrupulous lot, and that removing them from the business would do little more than instill the process with a false sense of

"I wish this was one of those cases that cured the problem," Woolf said.

"But I'm realistic. Anytime you've got kids without money and somebody promising it to them, you've got a match."

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NCAA-qualifying effort paces Hawkeyes to win competition. Iowa also defeated 10WA CITY — Iowa senior Pat

McGhee qualified for the NCAA championships in the 400-meter high hurdles to lead the Hawkeyes to victory in a five-team invita-Francis X. Cretzmeyer Track.

50.84 seconds — one-100th of a second better than the NCAA qualifying standard. Earlier this season he qualified in the 110meter high hurdles.

Iowa defeated Northern Iowa, Wisconsin-LaCrosse, Western Illinois and Morningside in the team

UNI in dual meet scoring. Paul Jones and James Arm-

strong each won two individual events and ran on a winning relay tional track meet Saturday at for the Hawkeyes. Jones, who earlier this season qualified for McGhee won the 400 hurdles in the NCAA meet in the long jump, won that event as well as the triple jump.

Armstrong won the 100 meters and 110-meter high hurdles. Both ran on the winning 400 team.

Iowa's K.P. Lansing, a former Linn-Mar standout, won the high jump with a 6 foot, 10-inch effort.

Holtman named All-American

Laura Holtman has been named to the National Junior College Athletic Association All-America

women's basketball second team. The 5-foot-8 former Cedar Rapids Washington prep ranked 10th tion. in NJCAA scoring with a 22.7

average. Kristi Kincaid of Central Arizona, a 1987 Waterloo West firstteam all-stater, was a first-team NJCAA all-America selection. She

Kirkwood sophomore forward reanked 10th nationally in rebounding with a 13.6 average. Marshalltown Community College freshman Missy Sharer, a

Marshalltown prep first-team allstater, received honorable men-Final NJCAA season statistics ranked Kirkwood sophomore Dawn Embretson eighth in two-

point field goal shooting percent-

age (59.3) and the team second in

overall field goal accuracy (50.9).

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