By Karen Rosen Staff Writer

Andre Agassi is anything but subdued. The No. 5 men's tennis player in the world has all the effervescence of an Alka-Seltzer tablet — a good thing to have around when his antics cause heartburn in his critics.

But Agassi admits, "I think a little part of me says, 'Maybe at certain times I shouldn't be too expressive with my actions.' I don't think it's calmed down tremendously, just a little bit."

After consulting with several players on the tour, he has toned down his act from last year. He was criticized for catching an opponent's serve during a Davis Cup match and occasionally applauding his foes' good shots, which they considered insulting.

"I've cleaned out all the things that I think are obnoxious," said Agassi, who dropped a notch in the rankings from No. 4 on Monday, five days before his 19th birthday. "I've kept the good things."

The spiky blond hair, denim shorts and pulverizing forehand will be on display tonight when he plays Tim Mayotte in the AT&T Challenge at Horseshoe Bend Country Club in Roswell. Michael Chang and Aaron Krickstein open at 7 p.m.

"I'll be concentrating on playing good tennis, but, you know, I'll be having some fun, too," Agassi said.

Although he's sometimes considered more irritant than entertainer, he's content with his image.

"I feel as if I'm coming across exactly how I want to," Agassi said. "I've been criticized a little bit in the near past, and it's only helped me because it's shown people that my skin's pretty thick. I'm showing people that I'm more of a person, and that's what people want to see — how deep I go.

"When you get negative responses, keep on strong, because I feel what I do is good for tennis, good for people, good for children."

A recent Sports Illustrated article slammed him as hard as one of his forehands, portraying him as a



Flamboyant Andre Agassi meets Tim Mayotte tonight in the opening round of the AT&T Challenge at Horseshoe Bend.

AT&T Challenge At a Glance

Where: Horseshoe Bend Country

Tuesday's matches: Michael Chang vs. Aaron Krickstein, 7 p.m., followed by Andre Agassi vs. Tim

Tickets: All night sessions sold out except 100 left Saturday night. About 1,500 left Wednesday and Thursday afternoons, 900 Friday afternoon. Sunday afternoon sold out, but some single seats may be available.

Parking: To avoid congestion, all parking is off-site, with a \$4 fee going to charity. Please arrive early. TV: ESPN, 1 p.m. Wednesday-Fri-

day, noon Saturday-Sunday.

spoiled brat.

"It disappointed me, but I like the fact it was written," said Agassi, a semifinalist in the French and U.S. opens last year. "It's helped me so much. Now it's like people really come to my support more. wouldn't change anything if I could go back in time."

Mayotte says, "I really like Andre. I don't feel that he's out there trying to distract me. I think he has a lot of sex appeal in a way that's good for the game."

"I think the younger teenage girls might think that way," said Agassi, who has seen roses thrown

at his feet from the crowd. "I don't look at it in that respect."

At Indian Wells, Calif., in early March, Agassi made a gallant move that he said received "the best response I've ever had."

He was playing Yannick Noah in the quarterfinals. Noah was up set point at 6-5 in the first set. Agassi's service return winner was called good, but Agassi saw the ball was out. He couldn't ignore it.

"Maybe I have too much of a conscience," he said. "I gave him the point. And I grabbed the microphone because people were disappointed that I lost the point. I said, Listen, I can't take a point if the ball was out."

It was game, set and, eventually, match to Noah.

Agassi is still trying to regain the form which took him to a No. 3 ranking and six titles in 1988.

He took six weeks off this year — "I had to learn how to play tennis all over again," he said — and worked with manufacturer Donnay to develop an acceptable racket.

Agassi had not beaten a player ranked higher than No. 30 until the Davis Cup matches in San Diego, where he defeated Noah and Henri Leconte. In an exhibition in Charlotte last Sunday, he lost to Chang 6-4, 6-4.

Yet he said, "I feel very confident where my game is right now and where it's going to go."

Yogi's Not a Hemingway, but You Can Believe He's Earnest

This is just to illustrate the ridiculous improbability of Yogi Berra being involved in the literary field, and it happened several years ago, when Toots Shor's place in New York was the roundup joint for strays of the sporting life.

Yogi — nobody ever calls him Lawrence Peter, or even Larry, or even Lawty, his growing-up name

Furman Bisher

on Dago Hill in St. there for lunch when the proprietor introduced him to Ernest Hemingway, needs no further introduction here.

"I see you met Papa Hemingway," a friend said on the way out. "What do you think of him?"

"Quite a fella," Yogi said. "What does he do?"

"He's a writer."

"Oh, what paper?" Yogi said. Well, Yogi Berra, the author, passed through town wearing the cloth of the Houston Astros, and pushing his latest work titled, "Yogi — It Ain't Over

"How'd you like my book?" he asked, beaming rather proprietorially. "I enjoy hearing people say they like it."

He had just come from signing books at Oxford Book Store until they ran out. It made him feel as good as if he'd gone 5-for-5 and driven in the winning run. I told him I liked it, though I hadn't quite finished it. I wanted to make him feel good, and besides, I do like it. It's heartwarming to see a great performer and a Hall of Famer getting acquainted in his after-years with the magic of the written word. Not bad for a kid who went from the eighth grade to a job in the shoe factory.

You realize, of course, that Yogi didn't write it. He talked it and a fellow named Tom Horton, who publishes books, did the writing, and it's different. Carmen, Yogi's wife and his connection with the arts, was pretty much against him doing it.

"She reads a lot of books. She's a reader. She knows about these things. I never read books. I read the sports pages. I told Tom it had all been done. He said not the way we were going to do it. The other times somebody else had done the talking. This time I was going to do it," Yogi said.

"Carmen read it and took out some things she didn't like, but didn't take out one thing about George Steinbrenner. ["I threw a pack of cigarettes at him once."]

"She said, 'Tell the truth, Yogi. He's a S.O.B. and you wouldn't work for him if you were hungry,' and she's right and I wouldn't."

Yogi hasn't been back to Yankee Stadium since Steinbrenner fired him as manager, and he has



Astros' coach Yogi Berra has develed into the world of literature once again.

pledged never to set foot in the place as long as outrageous George owns the team. He refused to show up when Steinbrenner erected a plaque to him. "George was hurt," he wrote. "George hurt me, too."

Yogi Berra defies athletic science. He doesn't walk, he waddles in an anthropodial gait. He almost has no legs, no rear end, no hips. He's all shoulders and head. There's nothing beautiful about him until he plays the role of being himself, and even then his voice comes out like a low growl. Behind it all, he's a lovely, generous, kind and gentle man.

The science he defied was that he played that odd body into a 19-year career as a Yankee, played in more World Series games than any man who ever lived, amounting to half a regular season, and waddled right into Cooperstown. Even the most violent Yankee-hater turns soft when Yogi shows up. If he was indeed an athletic freak, they need an assembly line turning out freaks.

America has laughed gently at some of his twist-

crowded.' I said that.

ed verbiage. Some he said, some he didn't. "Like, 'Nobody goes there any more, it's too

"Bobby Brown and I roomed together at Newark, and he was studying all those big medical books. 'How'd it come out?' I said that. I also said, 'I want to thank the people that made this day necessary," he said. "But I don't like it when people make fun of me saying a lot of things I didn't say."

"Well, after this you may take to writing, but you haven't left much for a sequel," I said.

"Oh, yes I have," Yogi said. "I've already got the title, 'It's Over.' "

Sadly, it wasn't. The Berras have three sons, and one, Dale, also made it to the big leagues. He was one of the players involved in the big Pittsburgh drug trial. After we finished lunch, Yogi went back to his hotel to find a message that Dale was in trouble again. Being the man that he is, he dropped everything, including his book, and flew home to be Carmen's husband and Dale's father, two of his best

Pistons, '88 Runners-Up, Favored to Go All the Way

By Jeffrey Denberg Staff Writer

For the first time since Moses Malone led Philadelphia in its famous fo'-fo'-fo' march through the playoffs, a team other than the Los Angeles Lakers or the Boston Celtics is favored to win the NBA title.

When the postseason starts Thursday, it's a rough, brawling Detroit team that sits atop the NBA after finishing second in last year's playoffs. The league's only 60-game winner, the Pistons (63-19) are to basketball what Attila the Hun was to life in the Dark Ages — virtually unbeatable.

Since spring 1983, no team has been the threat Malone and the 76ers posed as they swept three teams in a mere 13 games. Malone, now with the Hawks, was just one game off on his fo'-fo'-fo' prediction, meaning the 76ers would sweep all three best-of-seven series that year.

"The great thing about our position," says Pistons assistant coach Brendan Suhr, "is that we're just 11 home wins from the finals if we don't win a road game. That's the edge you play for."

ANALYSIS

"No question they're the team to beat," says the Atlanta Hawks' Dominique Wilkins.

"Take away all the physical stuff, and they are still a very fine basketball team," says Cleveland general manager Wayne Embry, who saw his club lose twice to the Pistons within a week this month.

Milwaukee assistant coach Mack Calvin watched the Pistons Sunday and wondered, "Are we all wasting our time?"

The Lakers, champions the last two years and 4-3 winners over Detroit in last year's final, couldn't clinch their own division title until they beat Portland Friday night in game No. 81. With Kareem Abdul-Jabbar moving gingerly on 42-yearold legs, the Lakers are considered no better than even money to survive the Western Conference

The teams to watch are Utah, which took L.A. to seven games in

start Phoenix, nosed out in the Pacific Division after a terrific run.

The Suns, No. 3 seeds in the West, will play Denver in Round 1, while Utah starts with Golden State. L.A. has the softest first-round foe, Portland having clinched the last remaining berth in the last game of the regular season.

When Boston was announced Sunday as Detroit's first-round foe, the 21,454 fans in the Pistons' Palace roared with delight. Celtics bashing has become popular these days, and Boston, which did not edge out Washington for the final Eastern Conference playoff spot until Sunday, appears in no condition to put up much of an argument.

For the Bucks, who open with Atlanta Thursday at The Omni, there is the matter of how to deal with an opponent who has whipped you seven straight times, six this season.

"Sometimes, it's better to have a challenge," Milwaukee coach Del Harris said last week.

The biggest question in the East is New York, which had a 52-30 recthe West final last season, and up- ord but was just 4-6 in April. Have

the Knicks simply lost their incentive after clinching the Atlantic Division title early, or has growing discord involving playing time gotten the best of them?

"Friction? We had friction in

Portland. This is nothing," says Kiki Vandeweghe, the ex-Blazer who has become the innocent center of a storm that has Charles Oakley, Johnny Newman and Gerald Wilkins upset by changes in rotations.

"This team plays on emotion," Vandeweghe said, "and when it's emotionally high, it can beat any team in the league. But when it's not, it really struggles."

The other question in the East is Chicago. Can the Bulls, playing Cleveland, recapture the fire that had them roaring with four straight wins out West last month against that conference's best teams?

Michael Jordan is fearful of this matchup against an opponent that beat the Bulls six straight times this season.

"We knocked them out in the playoffs last year, and there's a little revenge factor," he said. "They also expose our weaknesses well." □ Playoff Schedule, Page 7F

Cris Carter 1st Athlete Sentenced for Agent Dealings Carter was among 58 athletes

Fine, Service Imposed For Lies to Grand Jury

By Daniel Weir

Special to The Journal-Constitution

CHICAGO — Philadelphia Eagles wide receiver Cris Carter was ordered by a federal judge Monday to pay a \$15,000 fine and perform 600 hours of community service, making him the first athlete to receive a criminal sentence for dealing with agents before his college eligibility expired.

U.S. District Judge Brian Barnett Duff said Carter had committed "a serious crime" by lying to a federal grand jury about accepting money from agents Norby Walters, Lloyd Bloom and David Luddeke.

The amount of the fine was to "give pause" to young athletes who were considering straying from the

rules of sports, Duff said. Carter, 23, told a grand jury he took \$5,000 in May 1986 from Walters and Bloom while he was a junior at Ohio State, but he concealed \$5,000 he subsequently accepted from Lueddeke in October of that year.

"I don't come to you for some kind of excuse for what happened; I understand I'm responsible now," Carter told the judge. "Have mercy upon me. My life is in your hands." Carter pleaded guilty Sept. 16 to

one count each of mail fraud and obstruction of justice. He faced up to 10 years in prison and a \$500,000 Duff said he believed Carter

would best serve the public by establishing a "mass communication system" on televison or radio to counsel children age 10 through 13. "You see little children look up

to you like a god. You've seen 10year-olds in awe of your existence," Duff told Carter. "They can go in a variety of directions, and you can make a difference."

Carter said he had become a devout Christian and turned his life around since dealing with the agents in 1986 and lying to the grand jury and federal prosecutors

Duff also ordered Carter to serve three years' probation.

"I'm aware you were 18 and 19 years old when the pimps attempted to seduce you," Duff said of the agents. "You have to rise above it

all, rise above the cynicism."

Carter began weeping as Duff issued the sentence and bent over clutching the courtroom podium after the judge recessed the court.

When Carter pleaded guilty, prosecutors recommended a "a substantial period of incarceration," but U.S. Attorney Anton Valukas said Monday he had reconsidered that position, partly because Carter had become active in charitable work for more than a year.

Morrow, GA.

who dealt with Walters and Bloom from 1985-87. The two agents last week were convicted of racketeering, conspiracy and mail fraud by a federal jury.

Finest Quality

LIMITED PRODUCTION OF 1500 TURBO V-6 W/INTERCOOLER, T-TOPS AND LEATHER

\$35,000

968-6800



· Shannon Southpark

Auburn, AL
Augusta, GA

Satisfaction guaranteed or your money back

Sears, Roebuck, and Co., 1989

Spartanburg SC
Tuscalousa. At.
Warner Robins, GA

Mall-West End