

DAILY NEWS  
**Sports**

**NEW REGIME:** The Islanders are expected to announce Monday that ex-Ranger/Islander left wing Don Maloney will replace Bill Torrey as club GM. Former Isle Bryan Trottier is expected to join the front office.

# Hoss is hurt; Phil to start

By **BARRY MEISEL**  
Daily News Sports Writer

The Giants will be without starting quarterback Jeff Hostetler when they host the Cleveland Browns tonight at Giants Stadium (Ch. 2, WNEW-1130, 8 p.m.).

Hostetler suffered a hyperextended right elbow in practice Thursday, and when his condition didn't improve yesterday he was removed from the QB rotation.

Phil Simms will start. Jeff Carlson and Kent Graham will finish. Simms will have the Giants' five best healthy and signed offensive linemen in front of him, but William Roberts (irregular heartbeat) and Jumbo Elliott (back) won't be two of them. And Eric Moore is still unsigned.

Also missing from Jim Fas-

sel's offense will be tailback Rodney Hampton (swollen right knee) and receiver Ed McCaffrey (inflamed neck). All the injured players are expected to practice next week.

## Memories

An NFL team's second pre-season game is usually not too crucial, but when the Giants line up against the Browns they would be wise to remember a lesson learned this time last year. After three days of practice against the Browns in Mentor, Ohio, the Giants slept through a 16-10 loss at Cleveland Stadium.

It was the first hint of the inconsistency that plagued Ray Handley's team throughout the head coach's rookie year.

No, exhibition games don't mean anything in the stand-

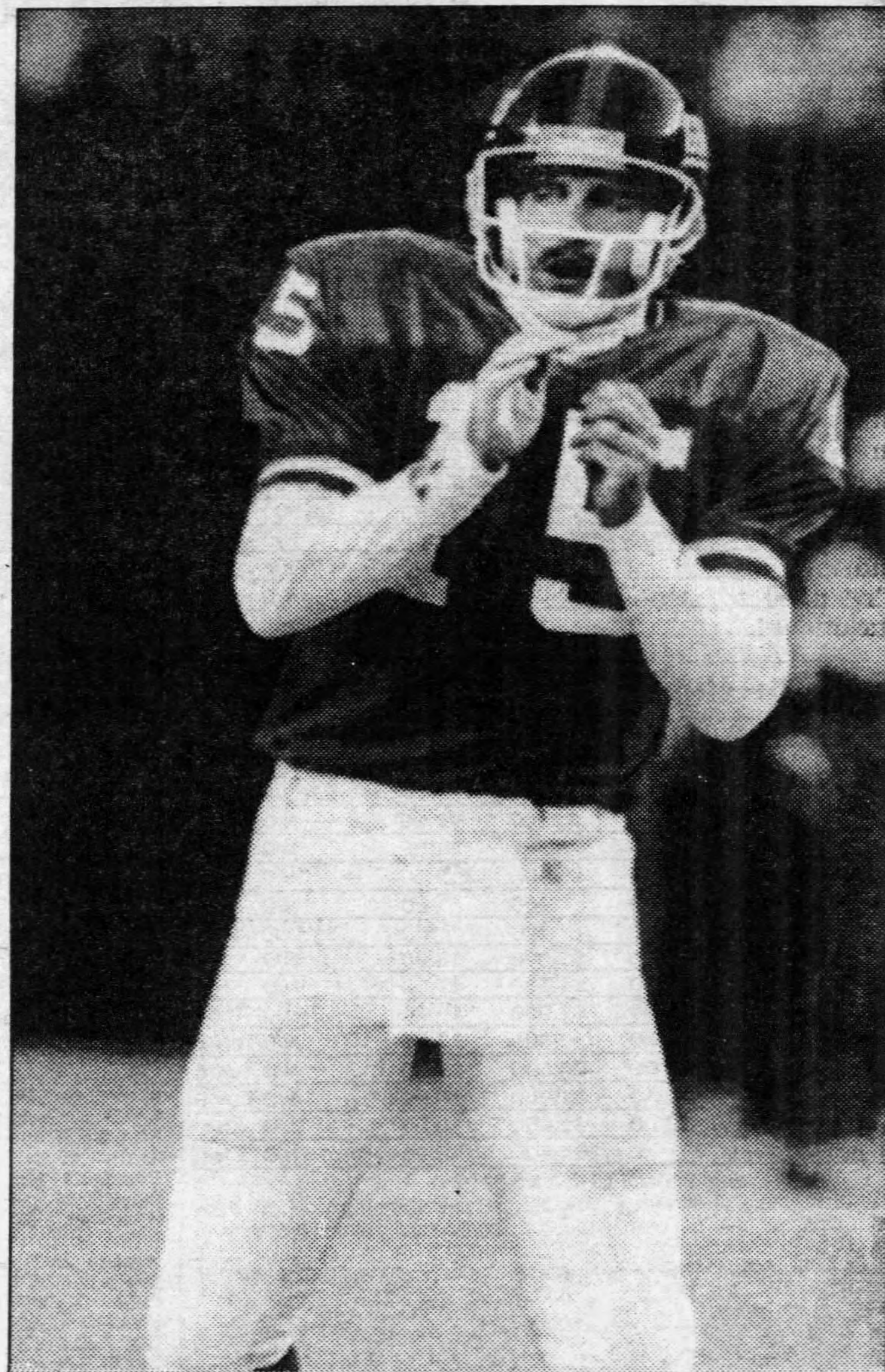
ings. But they can set a tone. Hungry rookies playing hard to win jobs usually stay hungry. Veterans, whether their jobs are in jeopardy or not, need to be reminded of what it takes to win.

"I approach the game as though winning is a very important thing and I portray that to the players," said Handley, whose 2-2 pre-season last year mirrored his 8-8 regular season. "Perhaps I didn't do enough of that a year ago. I'm putting more importance on that this year as far as getting them ready. Perhaps I gave them too much credit for getting themselves ready a year ago."

Defensive starters Lawrence Taylor and Leonard Marshall won't play more than a quarter or two, but look for second-year outside linebackers Corey Miller and Kanavis McGhee to get plenty of action.

And Handley said he plans to give ample playing time to rookie wide receivers Nate Singleton and Charles Swann, the Giants' 11th and 12-round draft picks. Two rookie cornerbacks, Phillippi Sparks (No. 2) and Anthony Prior (No. 9), will get a chance to help themselves by handling the kickoff returns.

A year ago, the Browns



**HOSS GRIEF:** Jeff Hostetler suffered a hyperextended right elbow in practice Thursday and won't play against the Browns tonight.

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were coming off a 3-13 season and just introducing themselves to new head coach Bill Belichick. After a 5-11 year, the Giants' former defensive coordinator added as his linebacking coach the Giants' 1991 coordinator, Al Groh. He also signed Mark Bavaro.

Publicly, the Browns have

been cautious with their praise for the ex-Giant tight end trying to make a terrific comeback from a ravaged right knee. Privately, though, they are ecstatic over how good Bavaro has looked. He is first on the depth chart and likely will play in the first half tonight.

## FLASHES



**CB Mark Collins**, who signed eight days ago but didn't play in Giants' 13-7 win over Bengals Sunday, will get plenty of work tonight. He's playing new defensive coordinator **Rod Rust's** defense for first time. "It's a big adjustment for me, but something I can do," Collins said about the matchup-zone style of pass coverage that blends man-to-man and zone responsibilities. "When everybody's on the same page, I think it'll be a damn good defense." ... Key dates: Giants break camp Friday, day before 8 p.m. game vs. Jets. Cutdown to 60 is three days after that. Final cutdown is Aug. 31, six days before Sept. 6 opener vs. 49ers. — **Meisel**

# King: Mob story 'pure bull'

By **BOB RAISSMAN**  
Daily News Sports Writer

A month after invoking the Fifth Amendment seven times before a Senate committee investigating boxing, Don King told the Daily News yesterday the inquiry was a "witch hunt" and part of a continuing conspiracy designed to destroy him.

"No one, the mob or anyone else, can buy me. No one can intimidate me," King said. "I will go out just as I came in — fighting. I'm won't drown in my own tears."

The Senate investigations subcommittee heard allegations that King and the Rev. Al Sharpton were tied to organized crime. The panel viewed undercover FBI video and audio tapes and heard the testimony of former FBI

agent Joe Spinelli, now New York State inspector general, and Michael Franzese, a former capo in the Colombo crime family.

Franzese, who said he met with King several times, placed King at meetings with members of the mob hierarchy, including the late Gambino crime boss Paul Castellano.

## Know? No!

"I didn't know Franzese, I don't know him. He was supposed to have met with me with the FBI agent involved in the sting operation. There were a few people in the room," King said. "What he said was pure bull. Franzese is pimping for the U.S. government."

King said he's never done business with the mob. "If I

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was connected with the mob, why would they send in Sharpton to put the sting on me?" he asked. "If I was in bed with the mob, why did they send an emissary to bring me to the flock? Besides, they don't let blacks in the Mafia."

Spinelli testified about the FBI's 1983 undercover operation in which FBI agents posed as drug dealers trying to launder drug money through a phony boxing promotion company called TKO Promotions. The sting was designed to hook King.

"Don King didn't want anything from these guys," King said, adding that he doesn't

take on partners. "They didn't offer me anything worth discussing. They tried to get me to bite; they didn't. Why do you think the government stopped funding the operation?"

"Do you think all these fighters — Tim Witherspoon, Mitch Green — would be suing me if I was with the mob? Do you think they'd want to risk broken legs and cement shoes?"

The promoter said Spinelli was using the Senate subcommittee to continue a vendetta against him.

## 'Old rehash'

"This is the same story he sold to Sports Illustrated," King said. "It's an old rehash. Only this time he's gotten senators to waste millions of taxpayer dollars so he can

tell it again." Spinelli wrote a story for SI last spring detailing the sting operation, which was called "Crown Royal."

"This is nothing more than a reactionary movement designed not only to destroy me, but to also destroy Mike Tyson," King said. "Now it's become part of the flow. I'm not worried as long as they don't try to frame me. I have no skeletons. My closet is open."

Franzese also testified that the mob had advance notice of the result of the 1982 WBC heavyweight title fight between Larry Holmes and Gerry Cooney. "That is pure fantasia," King said. "This is straight out of old 'Untouchables' re-runs. Do you think Cooney would've absorbed the beating he took if he was going to take a dive?"