### **BASEBALL SCORES**

### **AMERICAN LEAGUE**

Baltimore	6	Detroit	1
Cleveland	6	Anaheim	5
Tampa Bay	7	Chicago	3
Kansas City	4	Minnesota	3
Oakland	3	New York	1
Texas	4	Toronto	3
NATIONAL LEA	GUE		
Arizona	10	Chicago	7
Cincinnati	13	Atlanta	9
Colorado	6	Pittsburgh	2
Florida	5	Houston	3
Montreal	5	Los Angeles	1
St. Louis	5	Milwaukee	1
San Diego	4	Philadelphia	0
San Francisco	6	New York	4

RUURDUPS on Page 25

RANDY BRUBAKER ASSISTANT MANAGING EDITOR, 515-284-8130

college students to play basketball.

New basketball league to start

others have only talked a good game: paying

launch the Collegiate Professional Basketball

League as early as next year, with franchises in

Boston, Chicago, New York and five other cities.

A college professor is putting his money where

Paul McMann and his management team hope to

### The Des Moines Register

**New deal for Saints' Ditka** 

New Orleans Coach Mike Ditka signed a new contract Wednesday that runs through 2002. "It makes me extremely happy because it's what I want to do, it's where I want to be and it's the only organization I want to work for," Ditka said.

THURSDAY

AUGUST 6, 1998 D DM

**NFL NOTES on Page 5S** 

### Cubs do everything but win

Sosa hits home run, Riggleman and Lynch get contract extensions.

**STORIES on Page 2S** 

# Indian Hills coach exits, may go to ISU

Ditka

Terry Carroll might join the ISU basketball team as an assistant.



Carroll "has reportedly accepted a position as assistant coach at Iowa State."

Conrad also said Wednesday that it was his understanding that Carroll was headed to

afternoon. "We are highly interested in hiring him. He is one of the top candidates we are considering to fill our remaining vacancies. However, Iowa State has not officially mation on the addition to our coaching staff in the next couple of days." Carroll declined comment Wednesday. Eustachy could not be reached for comment. Eustachy has already hired Leonard Perry, one of his assistants last season at Utah

State. Another assistant, Steve Barnes, is a candidate to succeed Eustachy at Utah State. Carroll, an Ames native and an Ames High School graduate, had a 260-50 record in nine offered an assistant coaching seasons at Indian Hills. Four of position to Terry Carroll. We his teams qualified for the na- record for consecutive victoanticipate having more infor- tional tournament. Carroll was ries, 71, with its victory in the named national junior-college national semifinals in March, coach of the year in 1997 and then set a standard with No. 72 1998. He has been junior- in the title game. college District XI coach of the year four times.

"Terry has done a great job challenge. here, and I know it's hard for him to leave," Conrad said. "He gave it a lot of thought. This was a good opportunity for him." Indian Hills tied the NJCAA

"I can tell the new coach, 'The last guy won the first 72, now you just have to finish it," Conrad said, jokingly. Conrad said he had already heard from some candidates. "It's amazing how the network works," Conrad said. "The unofficial one."

13

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501

#### **By RICK BROWN** REGISTER STAFF WRITER

After coaching Indian Hills **Community College of Ottum**wa to 72 consecutive victories and back-to-back National Junior College Athletic Association Division I basketball titles, Terry Carroll is ready for a new challenge.

Carroll, 43, submitted his

Smith Carroll Ames native Interested

resignation to Indian Hills Athletic Director Kelly Conrad on Wednesday morning.

The school then issued a release Wednesday that said

Iowa State, where Larry Eustachy was hired last week to replace Tim Floyd. **Iowa** State Athletic Director

Gene Smith called such reports premature. "Terry Carroll has inter-

viewed for an assistant coaching position at Iowa State," Smith said in a statement released by Iowa State's media relations office Wednesday

Carroll was interviewed for positions as coach at Drake in record of 88 consecutive vic-1996 and Northern Iowa this spring.

After not getting the Northern Iowa job, Carroll set his sight on UCLA's all-time

Conrad said Indian Hills will also advertise its vacancy on the Internet and in The Des Moines Register.

"We want to get someone hired as soon as possible, but tories. Now his successor will we don't want to rush it, eibe the one taking on that ther," Conrad said.

### Miller's victory record

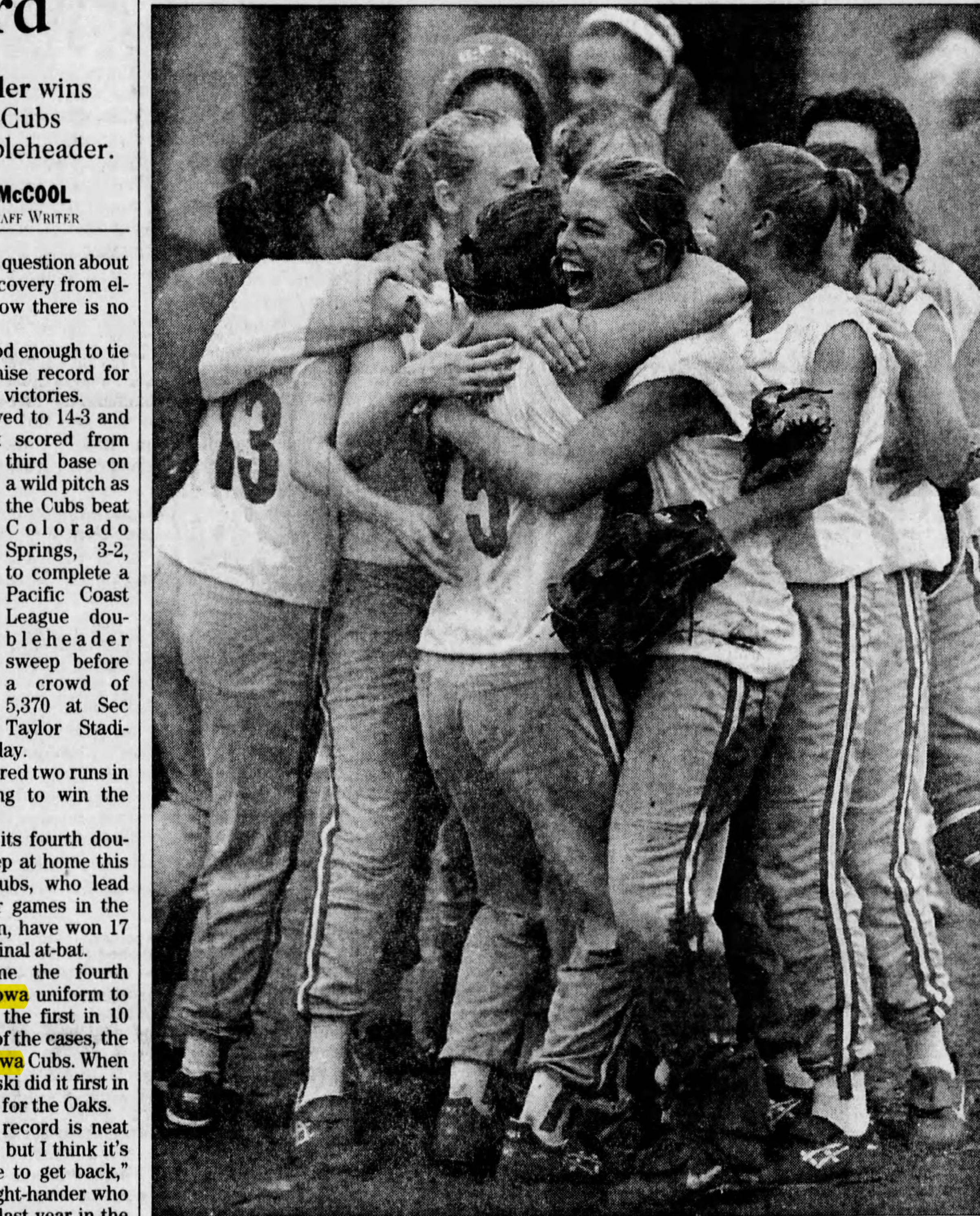
Kurt Miller wins No. 14 as I-Cubs sweep doubleheader.

> By DAN McCOOL REGISTER STAFF WRITER

If there was a question about Kurt Miller's recovery from elbow surgery, now there is no question.

He's fine. Good enough to tie

# That rainy day feeling hits state tourney North Scott, in a mudslide



Rain, extra innings add drama to softball victory over Heelan.

#### **By JOHN NAUGHTON** REGISTER STAFF WRITER

Fort Dodge, Ia. - North after 121/2 innings Tuesday Scott of Eldridge kept a sunny attitude amidst rainy conditions Wednesday.

The team won a state Class 3-A softball tournament firstround game that during the course of two days broke three tournament records. The outcome was a 6-4 vic- On Sunshine,' during rally. tory for fourth-ranked North Scott against No. 6 Sioux City Heelan in 14 innings at Harlan Rogers Park. The details included records 1980.tor:

• Longevity of a game -

 Most strikeouts in a game - 21 by North Scott's Anne Hamilton.

North Scott's Lindsay Wood with five.

night because of rain with a 3-3 score.

Wednesday afternoon, North Scott scored three runs in the top of the 14th inning and held Heelan to a run in the bottom of the inning.

Tuesday's game: One lasted about 5 minutes, the other 18 minutes. A steady downpour caused the game to be suspended.

"It's tough when you talk about having to stop and then come back," Heelan Coach Ron Dardis said. "That's tough for both teams. You always wonder if kids are going to be ready to play."

North Scott (48-4) scored three runs in the top of the ninth inning Tuesday. Heelan (35-7) tied it, 3-3, in the bottom of the inning with a two-out

"It was disappointing, but

4 hours 28 minutes.

• Most hits in a game -

The game was suspended

an Iowa franchise record for season pitching victories.

Miller improved to 14-3 and Marty Gazarek scored from

the Cubs beat

Colorado

Springs, 3-2,

to complete a

Pacific Coast

League dou-



bleheader sweep before Miller a crowd of No. 14 5,370 at Sec Taylor Stadi-

um on Wednesday.

The Cubs scored two runs in the sixth inning to win the opener, 2-0.

Iowa posted its fourth doubleheader sweep at home this season. The Cubs, who lead Omaha by four games in the Central Division, have won 17 games in their final at-bat.

Miller became the fourth pitcher in an Iowa uniform to win 14 games, the first in 10 years. In three of the cases, the team was the Iowa Cubs. When Stan Perzanowski did it first in 1973, he played for the Oaks.

"(Tying) the record is neat and everything, but I think it's just fun for me to get back," said Miller, a right-hander who spent much of last year in the Florida Marlins system recovering from Dec. 16, 1996, surgery on his right elbow.

Iowa pitching coach Marty **DeMerritt said some re-tooling** of Miller's pitches has paid big dividends. "We revamped his slider to match his fastball because it was like a slurve (a slidercurve) and we added a curveball and he took off," DeMerritt said. "He's tired of hearing me getting on him about being aggressive all the time. Nothing earth-shattering." DeMerritt said with more time to strengthen the elbow, Miller could be something else. "Now he knows how to pitch and with this taken care of and proper rest, I think we'll have something pretty special," De-Merritt said. Miller said having a potent offense and a good defense behind him has helped. "Especially in the first half of the season, this team was the easiest team to pitch for in the world," Miller said. "If you gave | fans couldn't believe the magic up three, four runs, (Iowa) would score eight or nine and it was an easy win. It's been a culmination of things."

Stacia Evans of Sioux City Heelan shows North Scott's players celebrate a 6-4 her disappointment (top photo) while state tournament victory Wednesday. "We were singing 'Walking

warmups," Hamilton said.

The longest previous game they were hitting the ball well, was 2 hours 55 minutes - a Hamilton said. "We knew we'd 16-inning game between win it. It was just a matter of Charles City and Harlan in time."

Two rain delays interrupted

N. SCOTT Turn to Page 3S

### Rain forces more postponements

Kristi Kurtzleben said. "I think

Two games suspended

"We've kind of been watch-

Tuesday night because of rain

were resumed Wednesday

ing the weather all day," Coach

tournament, we heard they'd

do anything to get the dia-

monds ready. We thought they

might be soupy, but we were

afternoon.

we'll be ready for the game."

Fort Dodge, Ia. - North and watch movies (Wednes-Iowa of Buffalo Center was day)," North Iowa left fielder supposed to play softball Wednesday. Instead, the team was in a hotel swimming pool, playing with a beach ball.

Rain caused suspension of the evening session of the state softball tournament at Harlan Rogers Park.

Six games scheduled for B.J. Mayer said. "With our first 5 p.m. Wednesday will be played at 10 a.m. today.

"I think we were really ready to play," North Iowa first baseman Jenny Wilson said. "We were going to play and then watch games (Wednesday night), but I guess it changed our plans. We have to get to bed earlier."

The team was scheduled to play Riverside of Oakland in a Class 1-A consolation semifinal. Two semifinals and four consolation games were rescheduled.

"We'll probably just swim

### STATE SOFTBALL

### CLASS 3-A

#### WEDNESDAY'S GAME

North Scott 6, Sioux City Heelan 4 (completion of suspended game)

**TODAY'S SEMIFINALS** 

6:15 - Fairfield (34-15) vs. D.M. Lincoln (42-3) 7:30 — Cedar Rapids Jefferson (53-2) vs. North Scott (48-4)

### CLASS 2-A

WEDNESDAY'S GAME Benton (Van Horne) 2, Clear Lake

**TODAY'S SEMIFINALS** 6:15 - Perry (34-9) vs. Waukee (37-6)7:30 — Storm Lake (23-13) vs. Benton (Van Horne) (27-24)

### CLASS 1-A

**TODAY'S SEMIFINALS** 11:15 a.m. — Clear Creek (Tiffin)-Amana (51-7) vs. Manson-Northwest Webster (32-12:30 - Central (Elkader) (26-

16) vs. Woodward-Granger (38-

anticipating playing." The team has a 16-22 record. "I think it's a new experience," Kurtzleben said. "We're enjoying it as much as we can." For now, the team will keep

an eye on the weather forecast. "We'll see what happens," Mayer said. "They're talking a

chance of rain" today. Today's forecast calls for showers and thunderstorms. -John Naughton

Miller had three strikeouts and three walks Wednesday. The strikeouts tied his fewest

I-CUBS Turn to Page 3S

"I'll be playing until they kick me out of the building."

- Ronnie Harmon Former Iowa Hawkeye

### Dedication spurs Harmon

Ronnie Harmon of the Chicago Bears isn't afraid to work.

### By RON MALY REGISTER STAFF WRITER

Platteville, Wis. - Dave Wannstedt can't believe some of the things Ronnie Har does on the football field.

Welcome to the club, Dave. A lot of coaches, players and Harmon brought to Big Ten Conference stadiums in the 1980s.

"If you didn't know Ronnie Harmon is 34 years old, you'd never guess it by the way he works and the plays he makes," said Wannstedt, who is in his sixth season as the



the former Io-Harmon wa tailback and wingback 13th season

signed with Chicago after being waived by Tennessee.

"Ronnie can definitely be a factor with our team, Wannstedt said. "He'll be a third-down back and a special teams guy. That's what he does best, and he's still doing it well.'

Harmon, who is in his 13th season in the National Football League, merely shrugged when

told of what his coach said about him. But it was obvious he liked it.

BILL NEIBERGALL/THE REGISTER

Anyone who's been around the league as long as Harmon has heard a lot of compliments and won't block his ears to a few more.

"I'm just a football player trying to do the things that will help our team," he said.

That includes things off the field.

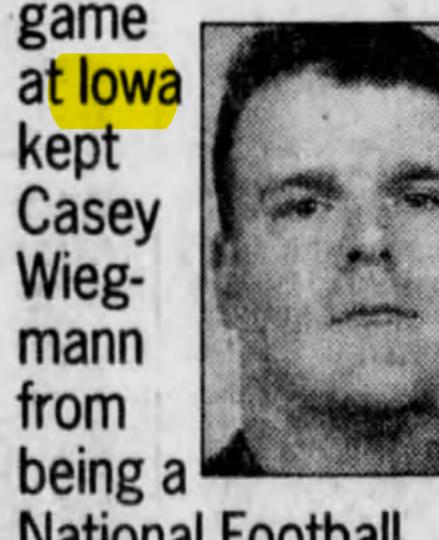
Waking up at 5:30 a.m., then running a steep hill outside the Bears' training facility with teammate Curtis Conway at 6:30 is one of the ways Harmon is fine-tuning himself for the season.

"Being in shape is very

**HARMON** Turn to Page 5S



### Friday: An injury in his final collegiate



National Football League draft pick in 1996. Two years later, he's the Chicago Bears' starting center.

### Jockey punished for interference

#### **By DAN JOHNSON** REGISTER STAFF WRITER

Altoona, Ia. -- Jockey David Essman was suspended for 30 days and placed on one year's probation Wednesday

after stewards ruled he intentionally interfered with another horse to help the mount that his wife was riding.

The three stewards that Essman oversee rac- Will appeal ing at Prairie -----Meadows stated in their ruling that Essman was suspended "for willfully impeding the horse Avie's Lady and attempting to influence the

outcome of" the July 18 Des Moines Challenge.

The ruling further asserts, "Essman attempted to influence the outcome of said race by impeding 'Avie's Lady's' chances of winning the race and giving his wife, Vicki Warhol-Essman, a better chance of winning the race."

Essman denied wrongdoing and immediately filed an appeal. He received an injunction so he can continue to ride until the case is heard by an administrative law judge.

Essman acknowledged that his mount, Isthataclaimgirl, drifted out into Avie's Lady in the July 18 stakes race, but said that was the mare's doing, not his.

didn't do anything

**ESSMAN** Turn to Page 4S

THE DES MOINES REGISTER THURSDAY, AUGUST 6, 1998 55

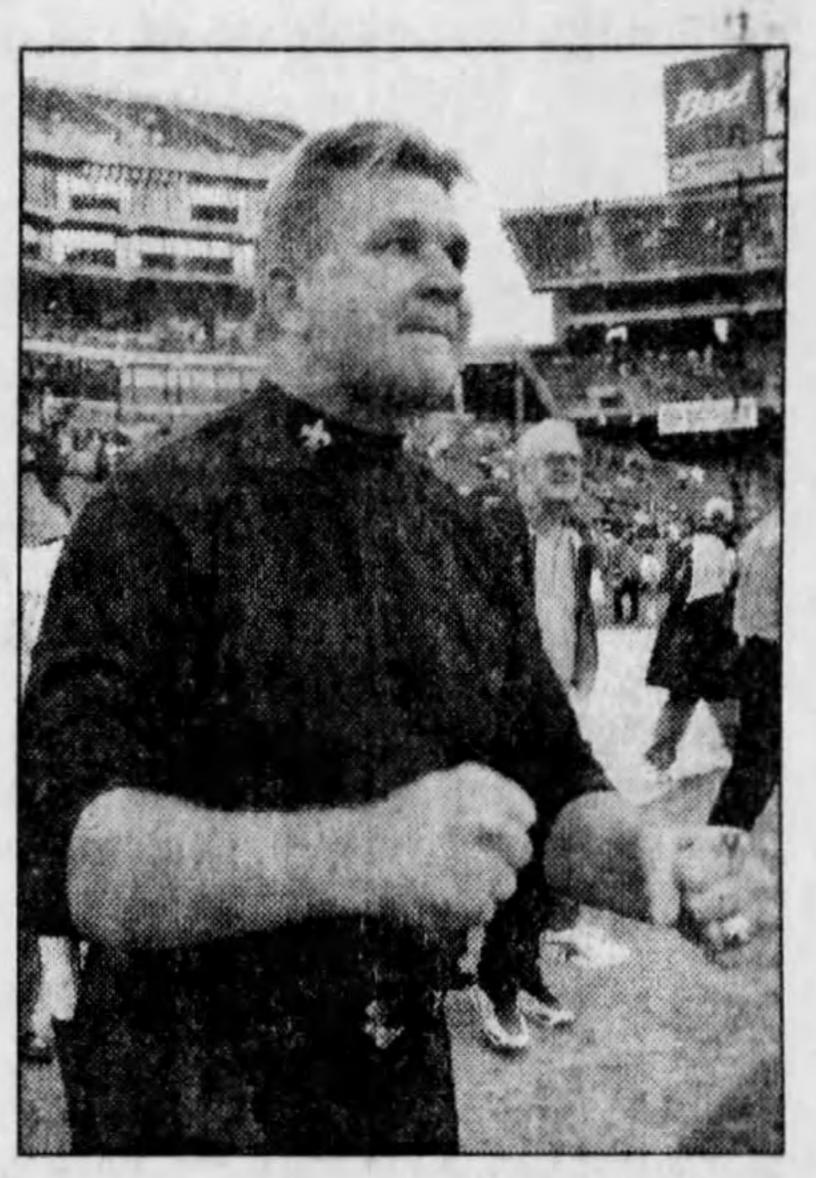


# Ditka signs 5-vear deal with Saints

FROM REGISTER WIRE SERVICES

New Orleans signed Coach Mike Ditka to a new five-year contract, keeping him with the National Football League team through the 2002 season.

The agreement, financial terms of which weren't released, replaces the three-year contract Ditka signed when he joined the Saints in 1997. Ditka, 58, is in his second season with the Saints. New NFL Orleans went 6-10 in NOTES his first year, doubling its victory output from 1996. "I want to be here," Ditka said. "I know the coaching staff and myself feel we're going in the right direction. I really believe what we're doing is right." Team owner Tom Benson said: "I feel good about what's going on with this club. We're going to win a lot of games, but on top of that, I think our club internally is a lot better today with Mike Ditka." Zimmerman returning — Gary Zimmerman will reportedly postpone retirement and rejoin Denver for John Elway's final season. The decision came after Elway visited with Zimmerman. Zimmerman, a tackle who has protected Elway for the past five years, announced his retirement after the Broncos won last season's Super Bowl. Zimmerman also retired and unretired during last season's training camp.



ASSOCIATED PRESS Ronnie Harmon of the Chicago Bears is chased by safety Patrick Mannelly during training camp. Harmon is in his 13th NFL season.

## Dedication spurs Bears' Harmon

### HARMON

### Continued from Page 1S

important to me," Harmon said. "Playing this game asks a lot of your body."

Chicago is Harmon's fourth NFL team. He was drafted in the first round, and was the 16th player picked, by Buffalo in 1986. He stayed four seasons with the Bills, went to San Diego for six seasons, then spent 1996 and most of 1997 with the Oilers.

Don't look for him to retire soon. If he does, it won't be his idea.

"I'll be playing until they kick me out of the building," he said. "I'll sweep the floor and turn off the lights to stay around." Harmon enters the season ranked fourth among NFL running backs with 582 career receptions. He trails only Marcus Allen, who has 587; Davenport native Roger Craig, 566; and Keith Byars, 584.

### Bears put Bam in backfield

Platteville, Wis. (AP) -Now that Bam Morris is in, who's Harmon, formerly of Iowa. out for Chicago?

signed a one-year deal late Tuesday, a few weeks to get into football shape and even longer to learn the Bears' offense.

The forecast looks cloudy for several reserves, including Darnell Autry, who would be on the bubble if first-round draft pick Curtis Enis ends his holdout.

"It won't change anybody's role, but it may affect some guys'

perhaps 13-year veteran Ronnie

The No. 1 tailback job still be-It's going to take Morris, who longs to Edgar Bennett, but the Bears see Morris as a "powerful back that can take the ball between the tackles consistently."

The original plan called for Enis and Bennett to share playing time at halfback.

Bears Coach Dave Wannstedt isn't willing to define Morris' role yet.

"Who knows if the guy will be able to help us at all, or what he'll



### Chicago Bears

Coach: Dave Wannstedt, 37-45 in sixth season with Bears, 37-45 in five National Football League seasons.

■ 1997 record: 4-12. Stadium: Soldier Field

Leaf named starter - What's been a foregone conclusion for weeks became official Wednesday Ryan Leaf is San Diego's starting quarterback.

The decision by Coach Kevin Gilbride goes way beyond Saturday night's exhibition opener against San Francisco. Leaf, the second pick in the April draft, has the job for the year, making him the first rookie in team history to go into a season

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mike Ditka will be with New Orleans through the 2002 season. Ditka, who led the Saints to a 6-10 record last season, signed a five-year contract with the team Wednesday.

Mike Wahle on Wednesday, leaving running back Dorsey Levens as the team's only unsigned player. Terms of Wahle's deal were not disclosed.

The Packers thought enough of Wahle that they spent a secondround pick on him in the supplemental draft, which in turn took away Green Bay's second-round pick in the 1999 draft.

"We're glad he is coming in," said General Manager Ron Wolf, who added that Wahle will work out at right tackle and right guard, despite not playing guard in college.

Payton checks Ontario — Hall of Fame running back Walter Payton has talked to city officials twice in the last two months about building a stadium for a possible NFL expansion team.

Marck Alberts, Payton's business partner, characterized the talks as "super preliminary." He would not identify what other cities Payton has talked to or say where Ontario ranked among them. Payton, the NFL's career rushing leader who played 12 seasons for Chicago, owns Walter Payton Inc. and is co-owner of a professional auto racing team. Payton was the front man for a group of investors who failed to bring an NFL expansion team to St. Louis in 1993. Instead, the league selected Jacksonville, Fla., and Charlotte, N.C.

career-high 79 catches for 914 yards four seasons. for San Diego in 1992.

NFL talent scouts were well aware bination. of Harmon's versatility long before touchdowns in 443 carries. He caught 146 passes for 2,045 yards and 10 touchdowns.

Hawkeye Coach Hayden Fry rebut the player from Laurelton, N.Y., ers we've ever had here." was a wingback for two years before that season, he ran for 907 yards. As wide receiver because we had a senior in 1985, he ran for 1,166. what Harmon accomplished. The He just did his job very well. best came afterward. He could zig-, zag with the best to avoid tacklers. The Bears say he can still do it after all these years.

"We had good teams at Iowa," Harmon said. "A lot of guys were great. I was just part of the puzzle. The team was more important than the individuals on it."

Iowa had records of 8-4, 9-3, 8-4-1 "and 10-2 in Harmon's years. Chuck pretty fast." -Long, who passed for 10,461 yards

repetitions," Bears offensive coordinator Matt Cavanaugh said Wednesday.

Autry, James Allen and even Ronnie Harmon right now."

He led all running backs and was throw for more than 10,000, was sixth overall in the league with a Harmon's quarterback in all of his

Obviously, it was a dynamite com-

"Chuck and I had a mindset," Harhe signed his first contract. At Iowa, mon said. "I don't quite know how to where he played from 1982 through put it, but I knew what he was think-1985, he ran for 2,271 yards and 22 ing and he knew what I was thinking."

Long, now an Iowa assistant coach, called Harmon "a great player and a very rare player, in that for two cruited Harmon as a running back, years he was one of the best receiv-

"He was a guy who came in wantmoving to running back in 1984. In ing to play running back, but went to shortage of players there," Long said. Getting through the line and "He was an ultimate team guy catching passes were just part of never complaining or saying a word.

> "Then he continued having an excellent career when he went to running back. Had he been at one position or the other, he'd have set all the records at Iowa."

Long said he's not surprised that Harmon is still in the NFL. "Being a third-down running back has extended his career," Long said. "Most first- and second-down run-

ning backs in the NFL get beaten up

Harmon's career at Iowa had a

be able to do," Wannstedt said. "It would be unfair to say anything right now. I know this: It definite-That means fewer carries for ly doesn't affect Edgar Bennett or

> in the 1986 Rose Bowl, he fumbled four times in the first half and also dropped a pass in the end zone.

> At least Harmon didn't drop the ball on every play. He caught a career-high 11 passes for 102 yards against the Bruins. Long finished with 29 completions in 37 attempts for 319 yards.

> Several years later, Harmon admitted receiving \$50,000 from agent Norby Walters during his college years. However, rumors that he had thrown the Rose Bowl game were unfounded.

Later in his career, Harmon was so sure-handed from Dec. 12, 1992, to Nov. 19, 1995, as a San Diego player that he went 52 games without fumbling in 383 times as a rusher, receiver and kick returner.

The Bears open their exhibition schedule Saturday night at Baltimore. The team's fortunes have gone downhill in the past two seasons after Wannnstedt went 7-9, 9-7 and 9-7 in his first three years.

"I think we've had a productive training camp," Harmon said. "Every year can be a great year. It's up to everybody to pull together. To get to the next level, you've got to think that way."

Reporter Ron Maly can be reached at (515) 284-8350 or

(66,950), Chicago. Strengths: Former

lowa player Mike Wells figures to help the defensive line after being with Detroit. However, an injury

slowed him Wannstedt early in training 37-45 camp. Linebacker Barry Minter is a strong pass

rusher. Weaknesses: Plenty. Erik Kramer is the team's best quarterback, but doesn't appear talented enough to lead the Bears to a .500 record or better. The linebackers as a group aren't good, and neither is the secondary.

Intangibles: Wannstedt has three years left on his contract, but probably won't be around next season if the Bears can't get it going. It will be interesting to see if the team puts together enough effort to save the coach's job.

Predicted finish: Mike Ditka's shadow still looms large in Chicago. Fans keep wondering if there's another Ditka to coach on the Bears' sideline. Look for a 5-11 record at Chicago.

-Ron Maly

holding the top spot.

"He's the guy we think gives us the best chance to win," said Gilbride, who presided over a disastrous 4-12 season in 1997.

Leaf said: "I didn't leave college early so I could sit on the bench for a year. This is what I wanted to do."

It took the Chargers just 11 training camp practices — Leaf missed the first five while his contract was worked out - for Leaf to beat out incumbent starter Craig Whelihan.

"I think they just felt I grasped the offense pretty quickly and I continue to improve every day, and they see potential, I guess," said Leaf, who turned pro after taking Washington State to the Rose Bowl as a junior. "That's what I hope they're seeing. I hope it's not out of desperation, because I think everybody has had a good camp throwing the football."

Green injures knee — Darrell Green, Washington's 38-year-old Pro Bowl cornerback, injured his left knee Wednesday during warmups before practice.

"I did a basic maneuver in the drills and felt pain in my knee," said Green, who skipped the afternoon practice after being examined by Redskins team surgeon Gordon Avery.

Green is listed as day-to-day with what Redskins trainer Bubba Tyer termed tendinitis of the left kneecap. "If it were a game he would have played," Tyer said. "I think he will be fine."

Wahle signs with Packers -

Manning believes he'll play -Peyton Manning expects to play a half Saturday in Indianapolis' exhibition opener at Seattle.

"What I hear the plan is right now is to play the first half," said Manning, the No. 1 overall pick in the April draft. "I don't know whether that will alter during the next three (preseason) games after that. Whatever time I'm in there, I'm going to try to make the best out of it."

Officially, Colts Coach Jim Mora will announce the quarterback rotation today.

Miller opts against surgery -New York Giants linebacker Corey Miller decided Wednesday not to have surgery to repair a herniated disk in his neck. He will be out for the season.

Miller, 29, will continue to have steroid treatments and traction in the next few months in an effort to reduce the size of the bulging disc in his neck.

Miller intends to see a spinal sur-

ball

geon later this week. Green Bay signed offensive lineman

### Coach verbally puts Verba in place

### Ross Verba's allowing of a sack draws ire of Packers' Mike Holmgren.

### FROM REGISTER WIRE SERVICES

Green Bay, Wis. - On Green 'Bay's first pass play of the exhibition season Saturday, Ross Verba got the shock of his National Football League career.

On the fast artificial turf of the Tokyo Dome, Kansas City's Derrick Thomas blew around him cleanly, his NFL career. sacked quarterback Brett Favre and caused a fumble that the Chiefs recovered.

rookie at the crucial left-tackle posi- struggled. tion, he never faced anyone like grabber.

"I was like, dang, he's quick," Verba said.

That's a gushing endorsement from Verba, who in his one season with the Packers has been brief when talking of his own play and

given to mostly cursory praise when talking of his opponents'. Verba and Thomas faced each other only in the first quarter of their exhibition opener, but in that short time, Thomas gave

Verba Lineman Verba perhaps the toughest outing of

At 31, Thomas remains one of the premier speed rushers in league and has averaged 10.8 sacks a season In the 14 regular-season and play- during his 10-year NFL career. Verba off games Verba, a former University had only a handful of downs to adof Iowa player, started last year as a just to Thomas' quickness and

Coach Mike Holmgren, who was Thomas. That play was an attention critical of how the Packers opened the game on both sides of the ball, saved his sharpest words for Verba during a post-practice interview Wednesday.

Earlier in training camp, Holmgren joked about his left tackle's long hair, but Wednesday, there

was no levity in his voice.

"He can't start the game that way, that much I do know," Holmgren said. "You get a younger player who's played and all of a sudden they might think they have all the answers. Then you go against a Derrick Thomas and you realize you don't have all the answers. You're still a second-year player and you have to get your hair cut, that's what you realize.

Tom Lovat, the Packers' offensive line coach, characterized the matchup with Thomas as "a good eyeopener" for Verba.

"He's the best guy Ross has faced out there," Lovat said. "He didn't play anybody like that last year, so he had to experience it. It's a good thing he did it in the preseason."

Verba said: "On (artificial) turf, he's so quick off the ball, and not keeping your shoulders square . . . all of those little things going against an excellent opponent ... but I'll get better, I'll learn from it."

Though Verba had his struggles, the Packers know he's a good, young left tackle who probably will make big strides this year.

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