

OUTDOORS



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When water levels are low, never say never

Never, they said. Any time a fishing captain who has been in this area for more than 25 years uses this word in regard to fishing, something has to be up.

It started March 23, when Capt. Zach Zacharias saw what he called a "substantial school of 60-70 pound tarpon cavorting just off Whitney Beach." As well as he remembered, Zacharias had never seen tarpon off the beach that early.

Recently, another oddity. Captain T.J. Stewart, 27, born and raised in Bradenton, landed an 18-inch barracuda near the Sunshine Skyway. How often has he seen that? "Never seen one in Terra Ceia," Stewart said.

Never?
"Never," he said. "I think maybe the water's getting a lot cleaner."

Here's another: Capt. Ray Markham caught vermillion snapper, lane snapper and mutton snapper in less than six feet of water in lower Tampa Bay.

Hey, Ray — how long have you been fishing this area? "56 years."

Have you ever caught those species in such shallow water?

"Never."
So what's the deal?
"They're kind of a tropical species more prevalent in the Caribbean — not so much here," Markham said. "I have no idea what they were doing."

As for the mutton snapper: "He must have been lost," Markham said.

In "Sport Fish of Florida," Vic Dunaway writes, "in the Gulf, few Muttons are caught north of the Keys, although they turn up now and then in the bogs of offshore bottom fishermen all along the Gulf Coast."

However, biologist Wendy Quigley from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute said she spoke to some fellow biologists, who offered a common theme: "They said it's not unheard of (for) them to be inshore," she said. "Based on what I heard from a few folks down here, those observations aren't that unusual."

Not as unusual as "never?"
Quigley did not offer a reason for the early tarpon sighting. But she said the presence of the aforementioned snapper species and the barracuda in shallow water could be a result of high salinity levels, caused by drought conditions.

Robyn Hanke, a spokeswoman for The Southwest Florida Water Management District, which covers 13 counties including Manatee, said our area has received below-average rainfall for a year and a half.

Even this month in Manatee County, we've had 5.88 inches of rainfall, which is just 68 percent of the average of 8.67 inches.

"It will be a long-term process of getting our resources to rebound," Hanke said.

Reportedly, Lake Manatee is barely high enough for a small johnboat to put in; water levels at Myakka River State Park long have been too low for boats; and Lake Okeechobee is experiencing record-low water levels.

"It's all good and bad, depending on how you look at it," Hanke said. "It's gonna take some time."

Sooner, hopefully, than never.

Rice's days in Tampa Bay over

Defensive end is cut after failing physical; rookie Gaines signs

By ROGER MOONEY
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CELEBRATION — Simeon Rice looked like his old self Thursday afternoon as he reported to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers' team hotel for the start of training camp. He flashed his wide smile to the Bucs fans

lining Bloom Street and teased Greg Spires, who reported with a new look: shaved head and thick beard.

A few hours later, Rice left the hotel and headed back to Chicago, his days with the Bucs over after he failed the annual pre-camp physical. The injured shoulder that forced Rice to miss eight games last season, including the last six, has not sufficiently healed from the surgery that took place last December.

"We anticipated, he anticipated being ready for training camp," Bucs general manager Bruce Allen said. "He needs more time to recover. He's going to get after it. He's very confident Simeon Rice has a lot of football left in him."

Rice, the 33-year-old defensive end, is second among active players in career sacks with 121. The third overall pick in the 1996 draft by the Arizona Cardinals, Rice signed with the Bucs before the 2001

season and played a major role in their Super Bowl championship season the following year.

The shoulder injury limited his effectiveness last season, when he had just two sacks,

BUCS TO 5D

Bucs training camp

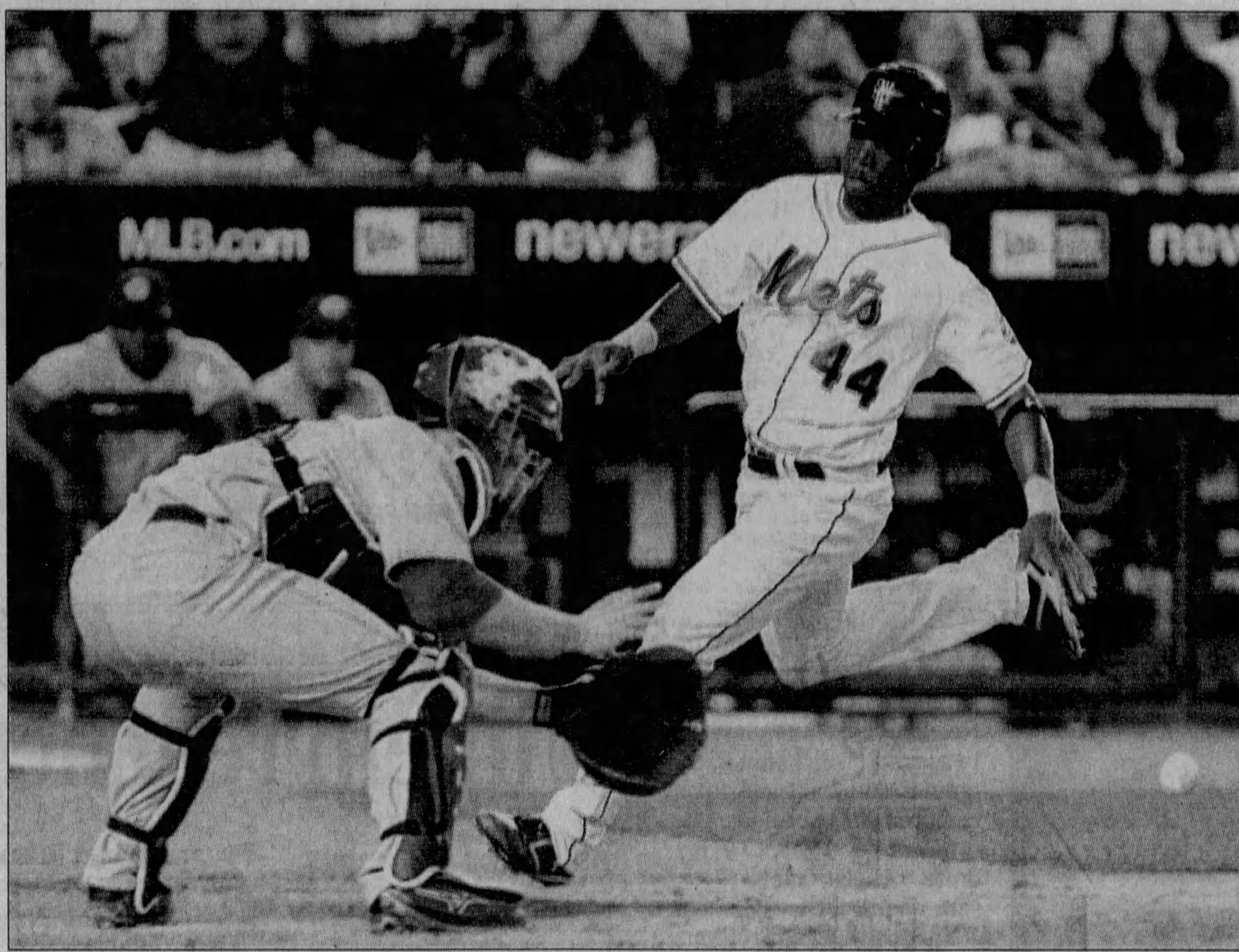
Tampa Bay opens practice today at Disney's Wide World of Sports, 8:30-11 a.m., 2:45-5:15 p.m.



McCLATCHY TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO
An ailing shoulder forced the Bucs to cut veteran Simeon Rice just as training camp was set to open.

BASEBALL | Palmetto native making his presence felt

The Big Show



ASSOCIATED PRESS
The Mets' Lastings Milledge plays with what he calls a "colorful" style, one that can rub opponents the wrong way.

Milledge puts his swagger on display

By ANTHONY RIEBER
Newsday

NEW YORK — Lastings Milledge is aware that his flamboyant style of play might ruffle some feathers around the National League.

He just doesn't care.
"I like to use the word 'colorful,'" Milledge said Wednesday before the New York Mets faced the Pittsburgh Pirates. "I don't often use the word 'flamboyant.' It's kind of like a thing where you've got two TVs. You've got a black and white, and you've got a color one. Which one would you choose? Both show the same thing, but one is a little more appealing."

The Mets choose Milledge — he's started in center field the past three games in place of the injured Carlos Beltran (abdominal strain) — even if they have to rein him in a little from time to time. Manager Willie

Randolph admitted Wednesday he told the 22-year-old Lakewood Ranch High product and Palmetto native to "tone it down" when Milledge was celebrating his eighth-inning home run outside the dugout in Tuesday's 8-4 win over the Pirates.

"The guy's young, he's excited, he hit a big home run," Randolph said. "Everyone around the league does their little dance or whatever. If I feel like he's getting overzealous with it, I just say, 'Hey, man, wait till you get to the top of the dugout. Tone it down.'"

The Pirates were already miffed with Milledge for his exuberant celebrating while rounding the bases on pitcher John Maine's fourth-inning home run (Randolph said he didn't have a problem with Milledge's windmilling antics). Milledge was hit on the elbow in his next plate

MILLEDGE TO 6D

Bonds watch

Home runs needed to pass Hank Aaron:

3

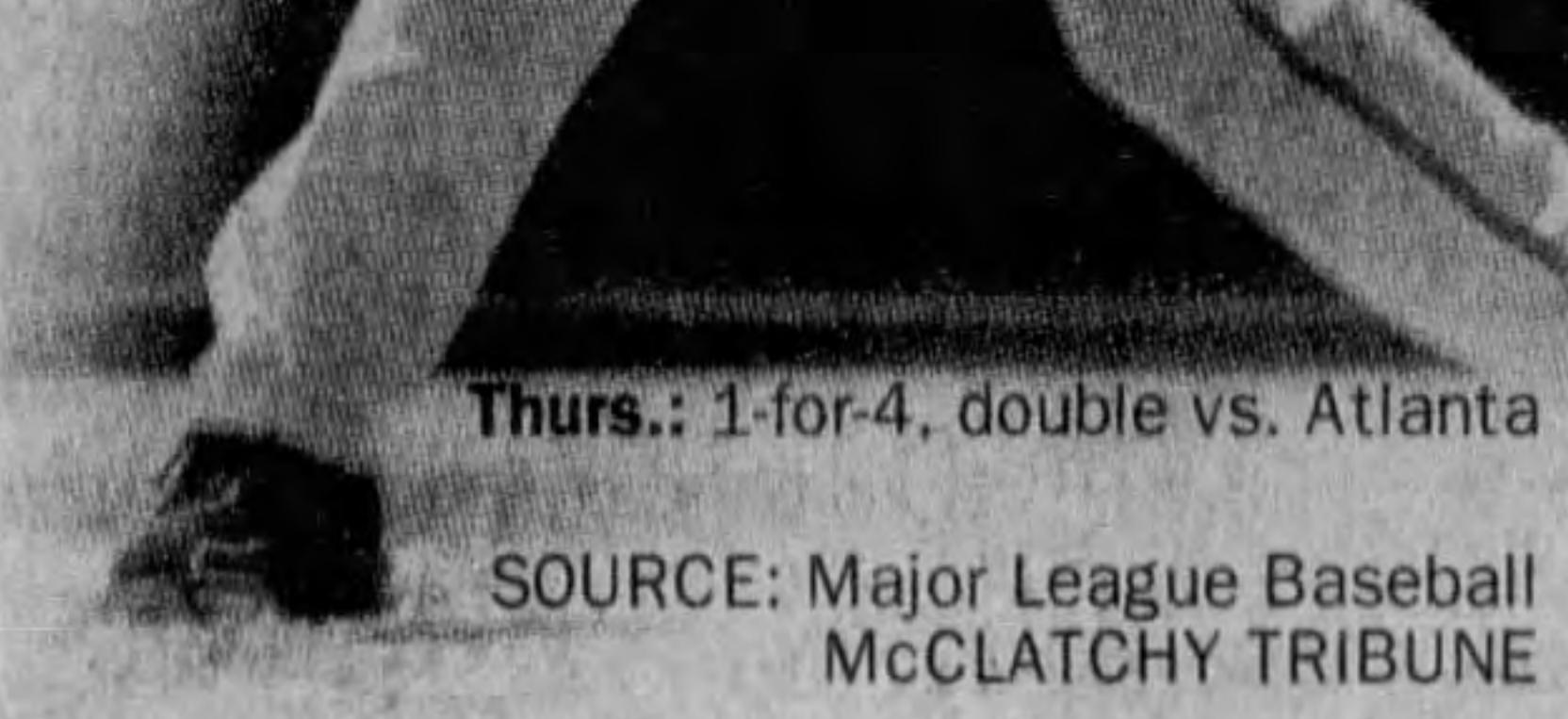
Bonds' total

Career

753

Season

19



THURS.: 1-for-4, double vs. Atlanta
SOURCE: Major League Baseball
McCLATCHY TRIBUNE

Mob insider warns of gambling's danger

Reformed criminal advises refs, athletes not to get involved

By ROGER MOONEY
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Michael Franzese is the former captain in the Colombo crime family who served 10 years in prison for racketeering and now travels the country warning of the dangers of gambling with members of organized crime.

He's spoken to NCAA basketball officials, all 30 Major League Baseball teams and the major league umpires, and 270 universities, including South Florida.

He's also spoken to the NBA rookies, but not the NBA officials.

"Now that might change,"

Franzese said.

He was referring, of course, to the alleged gambling scandal involving former NBA official and Lakewood Ranch resident Tim Donaghy that has rocked the league.

"I tell you, I'd love to have spoken to that guy," Franzese said during a phone interview Thursday night from his home in California.

Franzese was once known as the "Don of Long Island" and "The Prince of the Mafia." He was thought to have

made the most money for the underworld organization since Al Capone.

But after 10 years in prison, Franzese became born again and decided to go straight. His second career is educating organizations about the evils of gambling.

"He told stories that will make your hair stand up," said Steve Welmer, the NCAA's top basketball official who lives in east Bradenton.

GAMBLING TO 2D

Gators lacking attitude

Meyer fears squad may rest on laurels after national title

By JOHN ZENOR
Associated Press

HOOVER, Ala. — Fresh from leading Utah to an unbeaten season, Urban Meyer needed only two years to take the Florida Gators back to the top of the college football landscape.

But as the Gators get ready for their bid to repeat their national title — something the school's basketball team already has managed — Meyer has noticed something is missing.

It's not just the slew of players who are gone from the team that beat Ohio State 41-14 in the BCS Championship Game in January, including nine who were drafted by the NFL, led by first-round defenders Jarvis Moss and Reggie Nelson.

What's missing — beyond all that talent — is a certain swagger.

Speaking at the SEC media days Thursday, Meyer said the common denominator for his most successful teams at Florida and Utah was they were "great practice teams."

And this group?
"Unfortunately, I've seen some chinks in the armor," Meyer said. "I've seen some things show up that's not correlated to a tough football team. However, I'm giving them the benefit of the doubt."

Meyer has brought in Florida hoops coach Billy Donovan and New England Patriots coach Bill Belichick to discuss the challenge his team faces this season.

"Don't bask in our glory, that's how I feel about it," safety Tony Joiner said. "We had a great year last year, but it was last year. If we live in last year, we won't win this year."

The Gators have only 21 scholarship upperclassmen on the roster. None will be under more pressure or scrutiny than sophomore quarterback Tim Tebow.

GATORS TO 2D

Florida schedule

Sept. 1	W. KENTUCKY
Sept. 8	TROY
Sept. 15	TENNESSEE
Sept. 22	at Ole Miss
Sept. 29	AUBURN
Oct. 6	at LSU
Oct. 20	at Kentucky
Oct. 27	*vs. Georgia
Nov. 3	VANDERBILT
Nov. 10	at S. Carolina
Nov. 17	FLA. ATLANTIC
Nov. 24	FLORIDA ST.

Home games in ALL CAPS
* at Jacksonville



Donaghy

MOTORSPORTS ROUNDUP



ASSOCIATED PRESS

ESPN will air a Nextel Cup race for the first time since 2001. Jimmie Johnson, above, is defending champ at the Brickyard.

ESPN races back into NASCAR

ASSOCIATED PRESS

The promotions started weeks ago, and special programming soon followed. Just in case there were any regular viewers who weren't aware ESPN is going NASCAR racing, the network made it impossible to ignore.

ESPN kicks off its return to Nextel Cup coverage this weekend with Sunday's race at Indianapolis Motor Speedway and is leading into it with its usual hyped-up blitz. In addition to reminders, scrolls and commercials, ESPN is airing 66 hours of NASCAR-related programs this week to market its upcoming coverage of the final 17 races of the season.

"So excited about ESPN," NASCAR chairman Brian France recently gushed.

And he should be.

As ratings continue to slump — the most recent race, the July 15 event at Chicago aired on TNT was down 8 percent from last season — France is hoping ESPN and its hype-machine can end the slide.

The network was launched in 1979 and began covering NASCAR two years later, but after airing 262 Cup races, ESPN was locked out of a 2001 television contract that split the season between Fox, NBC and TNT. An ensuing spat with NASCAR over which ESPN programs could use footage gathered inside the track then led the network to scale back its coverage entirely.

The popular nightly magazine-style show "RPM

Tonight" folded, and brief racing highlights were often buried on "SportsCenter." Lead reporter Mike Massaro, barred from filming interviews inside the track, spent almost six seasons chasing drivers to help pads and airports for access.

It dropped NASCAR low on the priority list at ESPN — which focused on the NFL, NBA and Major League Baseball — and potentially hampered the sport's ability to attract new viewers.

Now that the network is back in the fold — it signed an eight-year contract that splits the 36-race season on ABC/ESPN, Fox and TNT — ESPN is reaching out to viewers to give NASCAR a chance.

FORMULA ONE — McLaren will not be punished for

possessing confidential information on the design of Ferrari cars in a decision that has infuriated its rival.

Motorsport's world governing body — FIA — ruled Thursday that McLaren did have sensitive Ferrari documents, but there was insufficient evidence the data was misused.

A hearing was called to work out how a 780-page technical dossier on Ferrari cars was found at the home of McLaren chief designer Mike Coughlan, and if other team officials were aware of the contents.

Coughlan has since been suspended by McLaren.

Ferrari said FIA's decision not to punish McLaren "legitimizes dishonest behavior in Formula One and sets a very serious precedent."

SKIP PROSSER | 1950-2007

Demon Deacons men's basketball coach dead at 56

By JOEY McCREARY
Associated Press

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. — Skip Prosser, who led Wake Forest to its first basketball No. 1 ranking three seasons ago, died Thursday of an apparent heart attack, the university said. He was 56.

Prosser was found slumped on his office couch and unresponsive by director of basketball operations Mike Muse shortly after returning from his noon jog, athletics director Ron Wellman said. Medical personnel performed CPR and used a defibrillator on Prosser, who was taken to Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center and pronounced dead at 1:47 p.m.

Wellman said he was unaware of any previous health issues for Prosser, calling his death "a devastating loss" during a news conference Thursday night.

"Because of his strength, we'll be able to go on, and we'll be just fine eventually," Wellman said. "We're not right now. We're all suffering right now."

Dr. William Applegate, the dean of the university medical school, said the events were "typical of a sudden massive heart attack."

"This kind of attack, when it's not witnessed by someone next to the person and CPR is not started within seconds, then the outcome is often not good," Applegate said.

Prosser had been in Orlando earlier this week for an AAU national tournament.

Prosser spent six seasons with the Demon Deacons, winning an Atlantic Coast Conference regular-season title in 2003 and reaching the NCAA tournament in his first four seasons. Wake Forest went to No. 1 for the first time during the 2004-05 season.

Chris Paul, who went on to star in the NBA, was the point guard on that team.

"His passing is a tremendous loss for the entire Wake Forest community," Paul said in a statement. "He played a very significant role in my life, and his influence extended well beyond the game of basketball."



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Skip Prosser had a career coaching record of 291-146.

GAMBLING FROM 1D

Franzese doesn't name names, but he said his stories are based on fact.

"His delivery is direct, no punches pulled," said Jeff Ziegler, the Tampa Bay Devil Rays' traveling secretary. "It was scary and interesting at the same time."

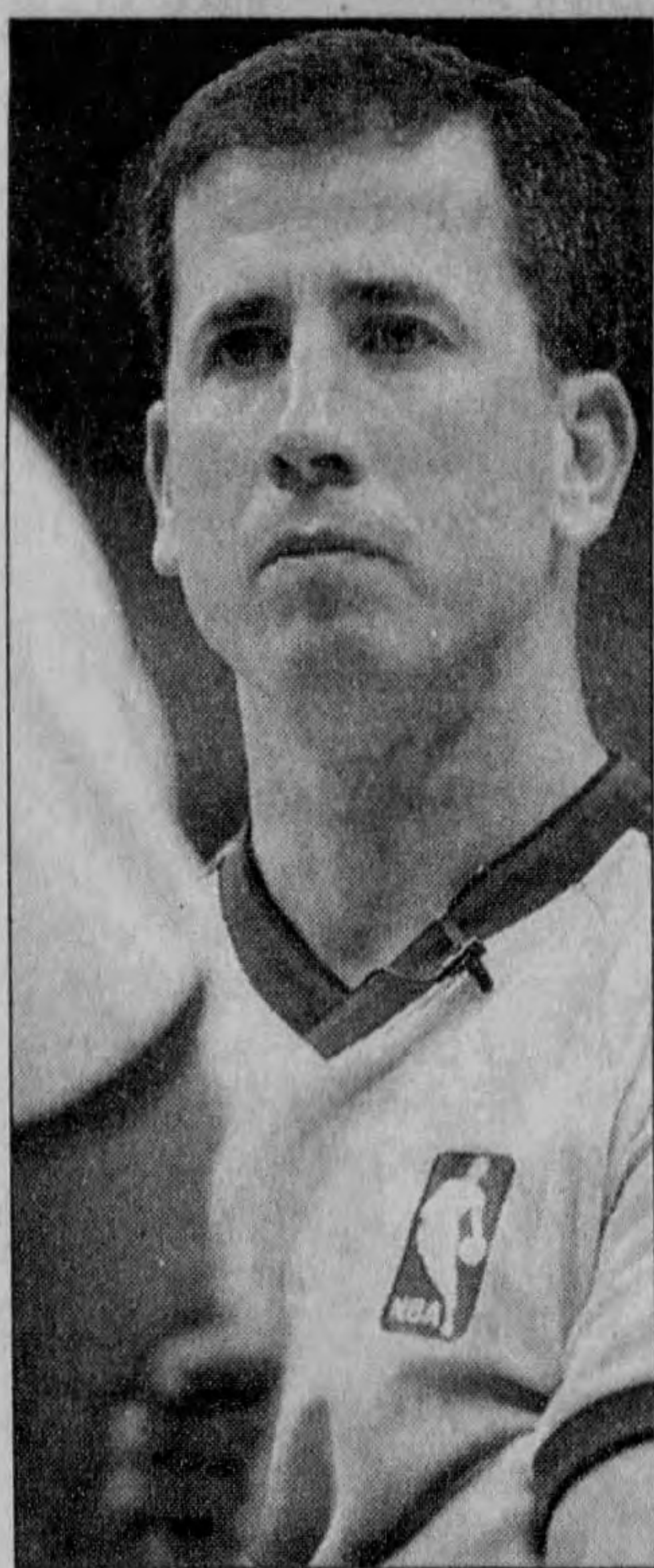
With the amount of gambling on college campuses — Franzese estimates 60 percent of the male students and 40 percent of the female students are gambling in some form — it seems logical to have him talk to college athletes. That's why he's talked to the football and basketball players at the University of South Florida the past two seasons and the entire student-athlete body last year.

"We feel it is very important to notify our kids about these problems with gambling. Michael Franzese, he doesn't sugarcoat anything," said Steve Horton, USF's associate athletic director for compliance. "You have to do that now. You want them to hear the stories."

"It's one thing to read about (organized crime) in a book or see it in a movie," Franzese said, "but to hear it laid out matter-of-factly by someone like me, that's frightening."

Franzese said he explains step by step how a mob figure can gain control of an athlete or an official.

"This is how it's going to go down, and once we get a hold of you, it's going to end up bad



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Former NBA referee Tim Donaghy is being looked at by the FBI for his possible involvement with gambling.

for you," he said.

Once it goes down, athletes have few choices. They can go to the police and risk losing their scholarship or their position with a professional team.

"That's bad," he said. And more than likely, they will end up testifying against the mob.

"And that's bad," he said. Or they can choose not to pay their debts, and that's bad.

"You're going to end up in the hospital," he said.

Franzese was not willing to share any of the stories, but Ziegler did.

One story, Ziegler said, involves a woman who seduces an athlete and then drugs him. Not long after, the player is presented with photos of himself and that woman in compromising positions.

"The players call it Dr. Bedreau," Ziegler said.

It seems far-fetched, but Ziegler said he's heard players warn each other of Dr. Bedreau since he joined the Rays in 1998.

"Yes, absolutely 100 percent," Ziegler said. "They've been able to get athletes into a position where they could get him to do anything they want him to do."

Franzese said he's amazed at the amount of professional athletes who frequent casinos and are involved in online betting.

"You'd be surprised how many of them come up to me after I talk," he said. "I tell them you guys are real suckers."

Franzese doesn't think today's athletes would risk everything to throw games. Maybe years ago, when the salaries weren't as high. But with so much disposable income nowadays, if they do run up gambling debts, it could lead to a compromising situation for their sport.

As the Donaghy case has proven, an athlete or referee with a gambling problem can still find him or herself in real trouble.

"What's scary about what I say is it's real. This is what happens," Franzese said. "If we find a guy like Donaghy, we're going to take it to the Nth degree."

GATORS FROM 1D

As a freshman last season, he played a complementary role with Chris Leak. Now the starting job is his. Tebow actually rushed for more yards (469) than he passed for (358) last season, but scored 13 touchdowns — two against the Buckeyes in the title game.

Despite little mileage for his throwing arm last season, Tebow is seen as the

prototype quarterback to run Meyer's spread-option offense. Meyer has compared him to Alex Smith, who passed for more than 5,000 yards and ran for more than 1,000 in two seasons at Utah, before being picked No. 1 overall in the 2005 NFL Draft.

Tebow threw more than three passes in only two of Florida's 14 games, but says he wants to be more of a pocket passer this year.

Receiver Andre Caldwell feels Tebow is up to the task and is a better passer than some fans realize since he was used more as a runner last season.

"He's a lot more confident than most quarterbacks," Caldwell said. "He believes in himself. He works harder than anybody I've ever seen in my life."

Plus, he said, "He throws a great ball."

GOLF | U.S. Junior Amateur

Uihlein reaches quarters

Bradenton golfer gets by two tough foes on hot day in Missouri

By MIKE HENRY
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Call Peter Uihlein a fighter. Call him a survivor.

And, if you must, call him a bit lucky.

For the moment, though, the most accurate description of the 17-year-old Bradenton golfer is U.S. Junior Amateur quarterfinalist. Uihlein won two draining matches Thursday at Boone Valley Golf Club in Augusta, Mo., to advance to this morning's showdown against Anthony Paolucci of Dallas.

"I'm definitely going to sleep well," Uihlein said at 7 p.m. CDT, in anticipation of his match against Paolucci and a possible semifinal match this afternoon. "I'm going to bed in

about an hour."

Uihlein — an incoming senior at The Pendlelee School who trains at the David Leadbetter Golf Academy — nearly got to take an afternoon nap. He trailed Hunter Hamrick of Montgomery, Ala., 2-down with four holes to play in their round-of-32 match.

Uihlein inched back with a birdie on No. 15, then tied the match when he managed par on the 490-yard 17th and Hamrick made bogey. On 18 — another difficult par-4 — Uihlein chipped his third shot to 3 feet. His par putt proved decisive when Hamrick three-putted from long range for bogey.

Uihlein defeated Hamrick 2 and 1 two years ago in a U.S. Junior Amateur match at Longmeadow (Mass.) Country Club. This time, it was even tougher.

"I definitely felt relieved, because I was never even all-square until 17," Uihlein said. "I

went through a lot of ups and downs, but my emotions were fine.

"I definitely dodged a huge bullet, because I was hitting it awful early in the match. I think by coming back the way I did, I showed I can come back in any match, in any situation I find myself."

A warm-up session before his afternoon match helped Uihlein hop on the birdie train against Jeffrey Kang of Fullerton, Calif., forging a 2-up lead through nine holes. Uihlein made a 20-foot par putt on No. 10 to maintain his advantage, then dashed Kang's comeback hopes on No. 13 by holing a sand wedge shot from 126 yards for eagle-2.

Uihlein said playing two matches in 92-degree heat wasn't as exhausting as he might have expected.

"You kind of get the adrenaline going. This course is awesome, and you want to keep playing it," he said.

GOLF ROUNDUP

Mahan ties tourney record with 62

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hunter Mahan had to rely on the crowd to tell him where his approach shot ended up on the ninth green Thursday in the Canadian Open.

The loud roar made it easy to figure out he holed the 81-yard shot for his third eagle of the round — and second on a par-4 hole.

"I was like, 'Wow! That's crazy,'" Mahan said. "That doesn't happen."

Playing in perfect scoring conditions on Angus Glen's North Course in Markham, Ontario, Mahan also holed out from 189 yards on No. 18 — the ninth hole of his morning round — and made a more routine eagle with a 10-foot putt on the par-5 11th. He finished with a 9-under 62 to

match the tournament record and take a two-stroke lead.

"Golf's a funny game," Mahan said. "Sometimes you have it, and sometimes you don't. Sometimes you do everything you're supposed to do, and it doesn't work out. You have to be patient, and you've just got to keep working."

Three other players have shot 62s in the Canadian Open, all at Glen Abbey. Leonard Thompson set the mark in 1981, and Andy Bean matched it in 1983, both when Glen Abbey played to a par of 71. Greg Norman did it in 1986, when par was 72.

LPGA — Pat Hurst and Brittany Lincicome of the United States and Eun-hee Ji of South Korea each shot a 6-under 66 in Evian-Les-Bains, France, to

share the lead after the first round of the Evian Masters.

Michelle Wie, the 17-year-old star from Hawaii, shot a 73 and has not broken par since finishing tied for second at this event last year.

CHAMPIONS TOUR — Nick Faldo recaptured enough of his famous competitive edge to shoot a 3-under 68 for a share of the lead in his tour debut.

The six-time major champion made six birdies — including a 3-foot putt at the last — in the first round of the Senior British Open at Muirfield in Gullane, Scotland.

Joining Faldo at 3 under were 65-year-old Dave Stockton, a regular on the Champions Tour, Nick Job and Gordon J. Brand.

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