SUNDAY, JANUARY 7, 1990



Detective Sgt. George Adymy has helped shut gatehouses like this one on Kilhoffer Street.

## Neighbors help to put gatehouses out of business

Block clubs, police combine efforts to oust drug dealers

By JUAN FORERO News Staff Reporter

The drug war continues, but the battle on one front is turning.

Through an aggressive campaign of locating and then busting down the doors of fortified houses from which drugs are sold, Buffalo police claim that the number of gatehouses has declined here during the past year.

While they believe their own aggressiveness . is part of the reason for the success, the officers also say credit goes to a strong network of residents and street sources who provide valuable tips.

"I think the block clubs have been extremely helpful," said Lt. Ron Christopher, head of Police Community Services. "What's happening is they're more aware of what's happening in the neighborhoods ... and they in turn discuss it with our liaison officers."

The residents are proud of their contribu-

"Because everyone knows what a gatehouse

is: block clubs are

forming and people

are reporting gate-

"We didn't give them a chance.

When we see action around houses, that's it."

Kosciuszko Street

houses," said a community activist in the Fillmore-Leroy area. "Gatehouses are still around, but not like before." "They don't last too long here," the

president of the Kos-**Block Club president** ciuszko Street Block Club said of the gatehouses. "People tell me, I talk to the proper

authorities. "We didn't give them a chance. When we

That president, like other residents interviewed, asked that that her name not be used

see action around houses, that's it."

for fear of retribution. The gatehouses are the fortified houses from

which drug dealers sell their wares. The windows of the houses usually are covered by boards or grates, and bars or wood planks cover the doors. Drug dealers do not normally live in the houses, but arrive and sell their wares through a small opening in a door.

See Gatehouses Page A8

## Navy ships en route to Colombia

Vessels to patrol coast in drug-interdiction mission, White House sources say

By JOHN M. BRODER Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON - Two Navy ships are on their way to South American waters to monitor and intercept airborne and seaborne drug traffic off the coast of Colombia, Bush administration sources said Saturday.

The aircraft carrier John F. Kennedy and the nuclear-powered cruiser Virginia left Norfolk, Va., Thursday night and are expected to be on station in interanational waters off Colombia within the next several days.

The Pentagon intends to send additional ships to patrol the Caribbean coast of South America on a rotating basis, officials said.

Colombian radio stations reported the deployment Saturday and described the ships' arrival as the beginning of an American "blockade" of Colombia. But U.S. sources said the mission was intended only to interdict drugs and not to block legitimate traffic into and out of Colombia.

In a signal that the administration intends to move aggressively to employ the military to combat drug trafficking.

the deployment began even before President Bush formally endorsed a broad set of Pentagon proposals for an expanded anti-drug mission.

White House Press Secretary Marlin Fitzwater said last week that final preparations were being made for U.S. military actions to help interdict supply routes out of Colombia, but that final plans had not yet been approved.

It was unclear Saturday whether Bush authorized U.S. forces to pursue suspected smugglers into Colombian drugs. waters or airspace or if they must remain in international waters.

An administration official said Saturday that the two ships, and perhaps several others, also would be used to bolster security for Bush when he travels to Cartagena, Colombia, next month for a Latin drug summit.

The use of a flotilla off the coast of Colombia was proposed last fall by the Navy's Atlantic Command after Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney ordered all field commanders to come up with new ways to use the military to combat

See Ships Page A9

BILL WIPPERT/Buffalo News

## Communists to dissolve their party in Poland

New image sought by ousted leaders

By BLAINE HARDEN Washington Post

WARSAW — Leaders of Poland's Communists, who were humiliated at the polls last June and flushed out of power last September, voted Saturday to dissolve their party at a congress later this month and replace it with a leftist party that will have a new name.

In a move aimed at attracting voter support and retaining membership, the 230-member Central Committee of the Polish United Workers Party approved an agenda for the party congress that includes a withering condemnation of the party's 45-year record in Poland.

"The party is responsible for crimes of the Stalinist period, for violation of the principles of democracy, for forced collectivization, for conflicts with the working class, for the pauperization of the intelligentsia, for the present economic crisis and for the present social crisis," said the draft program.

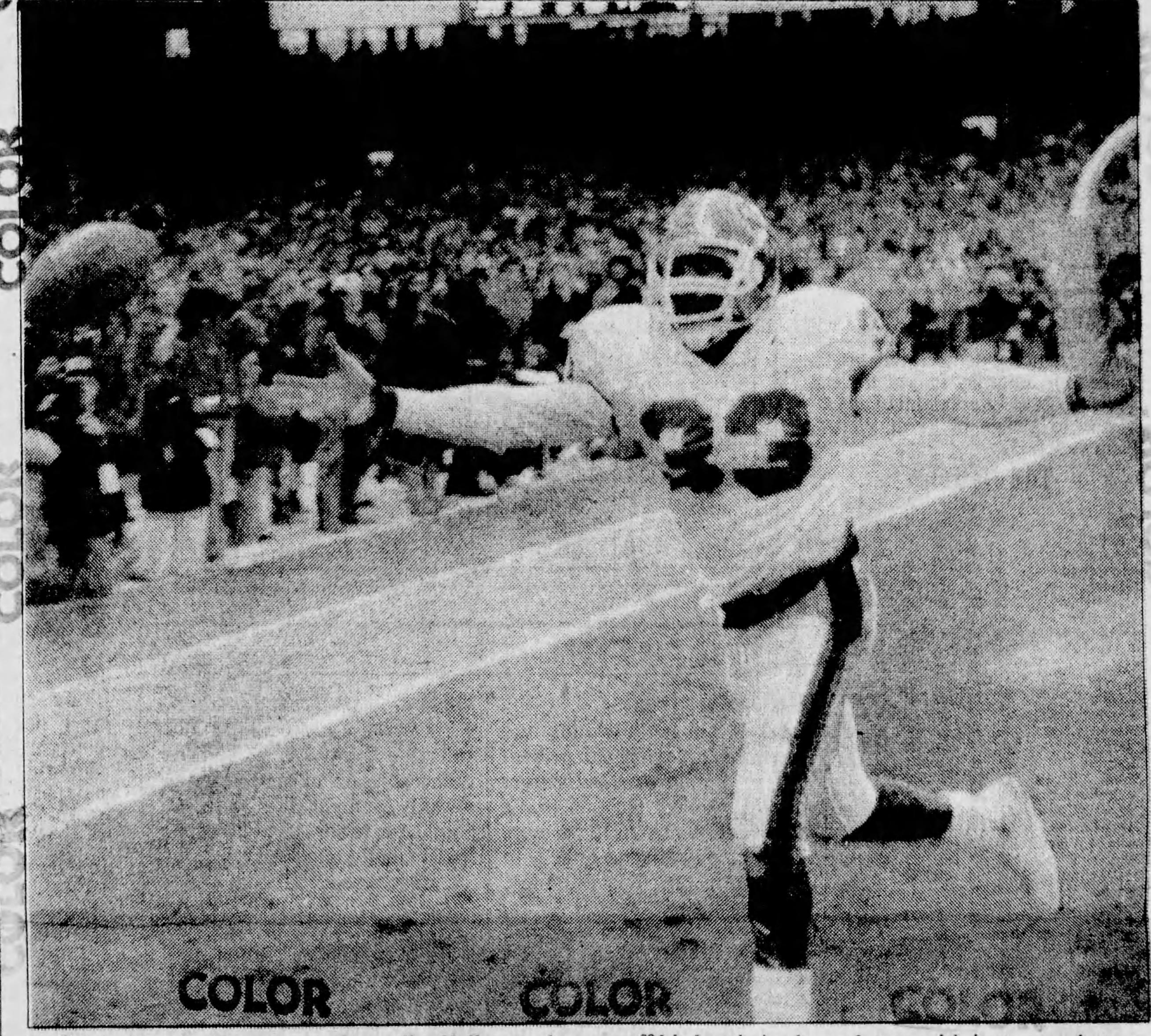
The program was passed on today by the Central Committee to the 1,637 delegates expected to attend the party congress scheduled to begin Jan. 27. It suggests new "democratic" policies. along with six new possible names, for a successor party that might prove more palatable to the Polish people.

If the agenda is approved, as seems likely, the Polish Communist Party would become the second in the Eastern Bloc, after the Hungarian Communist Party, to change its name and its rhetoric in an attempt to escape popular distrust and distaste for Communist abuses of power.

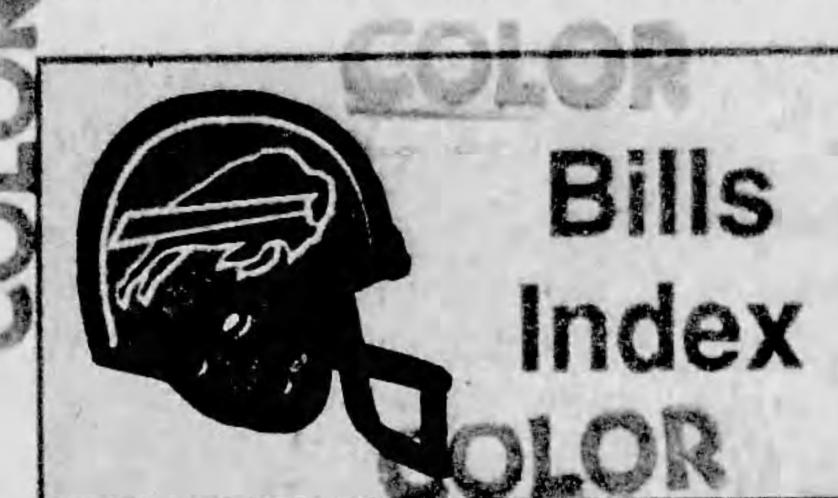
Communists in Hungary changed the name of their party in October to the Hungarian Socialist Party. The move there, however, has done little for the party's image or its member-

A poll late last year gave the Hungarian Socialist Party only 14 percent of public support. A new political party, the Democratic Forum, is nearly twice as popular in the polls. Official membership in the renamed party has

See Poland Page A8



Buffalo's Ronnie Harmon watches a Jim Kelly pass bounce off his hands in the end zone with just seconds to go Saturday in the Bills' 34-30 playoff loss to the Cleveland Browns.



Bills were deserving of a happier ending. C1

■ The praise of others speaks for the play of quarterback Jim Kelly. C1

Comment in the huddle could spark final furor. C4

Special teams win (and lose) titles. C4

Possible "last dance" adds to the frustration for veteran Fred Smerlas. C5

Sunday Billboard. C4 The game in pictures. C16

## Super Bowl dreams die Index Pas Bills fall to Browns

By GENE WARNER News Staff Reporter

CLEVELAND — The Bills' road to the Super Bowl crumbled at the Cleveland 1-yard line Saturday, in a 34-30 loss to the Browns in the National Football League playoffs. One play after a Jim Kelly pass

glanced off Ronnie Harmon's hands in the end zone, Cleveland's Clay the game, ringing down the curtain Jim Kelly now." on the Bills' season.

It set off a thunderous home-

crowd celebration after 59 minutes and 57 seconds of football fireworks inside Cleveland Stadium.

Defeat came suddenly, as Kelly moved the Bills 63 yards downfield in a dramatic drive against both the clock and the Browns' defense that kept more than 77,000 fans on their

"I thought Jim was going to pull it out at the end," Bills owner Ralph Matthews intercepted another Kelly C. Wilson Jr. said after the game. pass to running back Thurman "Everybody played extremely hard. Thomas with three seconds left in and I hope the people appreciate

See Bills Page A11

### NSIDE SUNDAY'S NEWS

#### Sabres lose 4th straight COLOR

The Buffalo Sabres' losing streak reached four games with a 6-3 loss to the Montreal Canadiens Saturday night. Sports, C1.

#### Newswomen tell it like it is

Pay disparity and age bias still affect women in the television newsroom. Anthony Violanti tells you what several TV newswomen have to say about these problems. Lifestyles, E1.

#### TV's best and worst in 1989

Jeff Simon lists the best and worst in television for 1989. tv topics.

| Color Comics TV To | opics   Buffalo Magazine |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Business / B10     | News Power / B7          |
| Classified / D1    | Sunday Pause / E11       |
| Crossword / E11    | People / B4              |
| Deaths / B6        | Picture Page / C16       |
| Entertainment / G1 | Sports / C1              |
| Lifestyles / E1    | Travel News / H1         |
| Local News / B1    | Viewpoints / H7          |
|                    | ; new game in TV Topic   |



Partly sunny Brisk winds with clouds and sunshine today. High 35 to 40. Partly cloudy tonight. Low 25 to 30. Page A2

## In Delano investigation, mayor stands by his man Griffin is unwavering

in support for parks chief By DAN HERBECK

News Staff Reporter Buffalo Parks Commissioner Robert E. Delano is

under fire from many different directions - but not from his boss and close friend, Mayor Griffin.

While FBI agents investigate his activities in the Parks Department, Internal Revenue Service agents look into his personal finances and two Common Council members call for his removal, the mayor stands by the embattled parks chief.

According to one federal law enforcement official. the FBI probe is uncovering evidence of what may become one of the worst scandals in Buffalo's recent history.

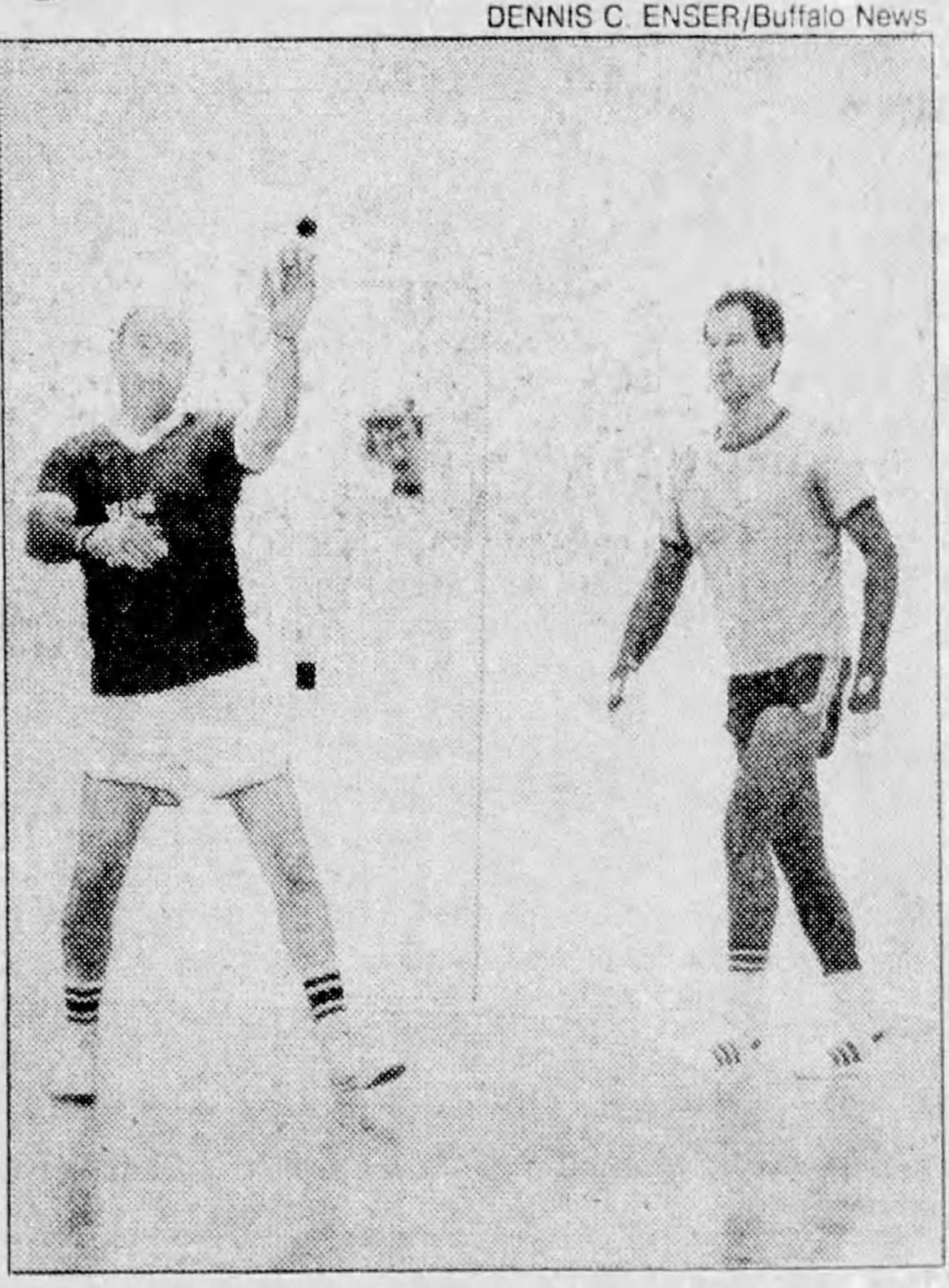
But on at least five occasions since the probe became public knowledge last November, Griffin has made strong statements in Delano's defense, speaking in glowing terms of a friend and leader who has given Buffalo "one of the best parks systems in the coun-

Speaking to reporters after a ribbon-cutting ceremony in late November, Griffin said he is "not concerned one bit" about the FBI probe.

He also told political supporters at a South Buffalo Christmas party that parks workers who complained to reporters about Delano are "malcontents" and "stool pigeons."

That worries parks workers whose testimony holds the key to the investigation into allegations of criminal activity by Delano and some of his top aides. Three parks workers told The Buffalo News that

they and others are afraid to report illegal activities to



The friendship of Mayor Griffin and Parks Commissioner Robert Delano goes back over 12 years and many handball games.

the FBI because of concerns that the mayor may punish them.

Delano last month transferred one parks worker to an unfavorable night-shift job at a city ice rink after it became widely known in the department that he was

cooperating with the FBI, parks officials confirmed. "Everybody is wondering, 'If this is how the mayor teels about Delano, what is he going to do to me if I testify against Delano?" said one parks worker, who spoke on the condition he not be named. "Most of us have families to feed. We need to keep our jobs."

U.S. Attorney Dennis C. Vacco, who is overseeing the grand jury probe, is concerned by accounts of the mayor's remarks on the investigation.

"I'm not going to comment on what I think the mayor should say or not say, but it would be helpful if workers could speak to the FBI without any fear of reprisals, either real or imagined," Vacco said.

G. Robert Langford, special agent in charge of the Buffalo FBI office, said his agents are depending on the cooperation of parks workers and will investigate any threats or action taken against them. Langford said he has "no comment" on remarks

Griffin has made about Delano and the parks investigation. Griffin and Delano declined to be interviewed for

this story. The News talked to more than 20 of their associates, friends and foes to learn about their relationship, a friendship forged over 12 years as handball opponents and political allies. Some close to Griffin say his continuing support of

Delano is nothing more than a show of loyalty for a

"Jimmy Griffin has always been loyal." said Common Council Majority Leader Eugene Fahey. "He's also never been one to kick a person when he is down, particularly a friend. Unless Delano is actually indicted by the grand jury. I ean't see the mayor

taking any action against him." That view was shared by Police Commissioner Ralph V. Degenhart. Public Works Commissioner David Comerford and Stanley A. Buczkowski. the

STREET, BUTCHE

See Delano Page A9

## Bills: Fans applaud team for giving its all

Continued from Page 1

"I thought we were going to do it," nose tackle Fred Smerlas agreed.

"Fourth (down) and 1, bang we hit it. Fourth and 10, bang, we hit it. It seemed like destiny was on our side."

But with Bills fans' hearts pounding, destiny jumped back into a brown-and-orange uniform just in time to send the Browns into the AFC Championship game next Sunday instead of the Bills.

"It was a frustrating season, and it ended frustratingly," Smerlas said in the Bills locker room.

This was a fans' game, an offensive shoot-out played at a fever pitch, with about 5,000 Bills fans refusing to be drowned out by the wave of orange and brown around

At times, the dueling chants — "Let's Go, Buffalo" and "Let's Go, Browns" — threatened to shake the girders in 59-year-old Cleveland Stadium, which easily brought back memories of Buffalo's War Memorial Stadium.

The end may have been heartbreaking, but the fans who made the 400-mile round trip here found some solace in the way the Bills almost pulled off the upset.

"It's the best game I've ever seen, regardless of who won," said Rick Fox, 31, of Palmyra. "Somebody had to win. It's just a shame that the Bills had to lose such a close game."

"I feel great," said Ed Ferger, 26, of Amherst. "We played a great second half, and we didn't lay down and die. It was the best game I've seen in 10 years."

That may have been one reason for the positive comments coming from Bills followers: a team that had been criticized for fingerits all.

their money," said Ferger's friend, Bills rally. "Every time the offense Chris Sweda, 23, of Amherst. clicks, when Bernie's in control "The Bills put their differences the way he is now, the defense aside and played together as a steps up." team. There's something to look forward to for next year."

Another bright note was the Bills offense, which has been criticized at times for being unimaginative and conservative.

This was a crowd-pleasing offensive shoot-out, as the Bills threw their conservative playbook into nearby Lake Erie.

Kelly threw 54 times, completing 28 for 405 yards and four touchdowns — two to Thomas and one each to Andre Reed and James Lofton.

In retrospect, the Bills lost this driving out at 7:20 p.m. game on big plays: Eric Metcalf's 90-yard kickoff return reopened a 10-point lead in the third quarter after the Bills had cut it to 3, and two Bernie Kosar touchdown passes of 52 and 44 yards to Webster Slaughter.

good our defense is," Buffalo at- Harmon were unfortunate. torney Peter Braun said late in the fourth quarter. "The defense hasn't come through in one crucial 22, of Lancaster. "They played situation."

### Tonawandan injured fatally at Bills game

CLEVELAND (AP) - A City of Tonawanda man who attended Saturday's National Football League playoff game at Cleveland Stadium fell from the side of an escalator to his death, police said.

The Cuyahoga County coroner's office identified the man as Daniel Bulmahn, 52, of 343 Wadsworth Court, Tonawanda. Police said he was dead at the scene. Coroner Elizabeth Balraj checked Bulmahn two hours after his fall and formally pronounced him dead.

"There's absolutely no indication of any horseplay or fight," said police dispatcher Michael Goga. "It was purely an accident, according to his friends."

Goga said the victim was leaving the stadium after the game "on the down escalator from the upper level of the stadium and he was with several friends when he apparently stumbled and fell over the side, 18 to 25 feet, onto another person. He sustained a head inju-

Bulmahn fell onto William Bauer, 31, of Vickery, about 50 miles west of Cleveland. Bauer was treated and released at a nearby hospital, officials said.

that could keep both sides giddy.

"When the Cleveland Browns score 31 points in the first three pointing and pelty bickering quarters, you've got to believe couldn't be accused of not giving they're going to the Super Bowl," Cleveland insurance executive "At least we gave 'em a run for Paul Buerger, 34, said before the

That proved somewhat prophetic, at the last second, when Matthews stepped up to grab the hero's role.

Bills fans caught glimpses of players Saturday night at Prior Aviation in Cheektowaga, although NFTA officials and police prevented the fans from going farther than the entrance at Wehrle

Bills fans started gathering at about 5 p.m., deputies said. There were between 150 and 200 on hand by the time the Bills began

Most of the crowd shouted encouragement but many in the group chanted "We want Harmon. Let the rest go."

Several fans said they wanted to congratulate the Bills when they returned home, even in defeat. "I think we've overrated how They also said the catcalls toward

"This is Buffalo, and you got to be a Bills fan," said Dean Boldt, good. So Harmon dropped the If offense sells tickets and keeps ball. This is football. Sometimes the fans satisfied, this was a game you drop the ball."

### Bills fans set some styles in choice of playoff gear

By GENE WARNER News Staff Reporter

CLEVELAND — One observer's awards to the Bills faithful he encountered at Saturday's Bills-Browns playoff game:

BEST FASHION STATE-MENT: Dave Montenage, 31, of Riverside wore two 3-inch-diameter Bills buttons — in his ears. He also had an appropriate coat for a game in the Browns' Dawg Pound.

"This is my game face," Montenage said. "I put my Bills hard hat on. I put my earrings in. I put my war paint on my face. And I put on my pit-bull fur coat."

BEST MILITARY UNIFORM: Bill Panzica, 30, of West Falls wore a Jason-Friday-the-13th mask along with his camouflage outfit.

dog bones," he said of the mask. Then he explained the fatigues: "First Panama, then Cleveland."

vid Ellerstein, a Williamsville East senior, carried two Bills seat cush- Bennett points his approval.

ions over his head as he walked through the Dawg Pound before the game.

"I used my Bills cushions to antagonize the fans, and also as a shield to block the bones being thrown at me," he explained.

Ellerstein escaped with a few taps to the head from a big dog bone. A foam one, at that.

MOST CREATIVE TOY: Craig Ceccato, 32, of Riverside made a Dawg Pounder, attaching a tiny stuffed dog to a long rubber band tied to a small hand-held paddle. "It's one of those Cleveland scum dogs," he explained. "Ain't

that cute? What an idea." MOST ELABORATE SHEET SIGN: The one carried by Steve Bigaj of Lackawanna and Roy

Weiskerger of Hamburg, entitled "I don't want to get hit with "Super Bowl Bound Bills." "Dawg Wardens, Puppys MOST COURAGEOUS, OR into an elaborately drawn dog

Only," the sign read, as it showed Bruce Smith tossing Bernie Kosar MASOCHISTIC, MOVE - Da- catcher's wagon full of Cleveland helmets. Meanwhile, Cornelius

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BILL WIPPERT/Buffalo News

#### Bills were deserving of a happier ending

LEVELAND — In a way, it capsulized \_ the Buffalo Bills' bizarre 1989 football season.

They did some wonderful things and they did some unbelievably horrible things.

As the climax drew near, as the Bills drove to a first down at the Cleveland 11-yard line with the seconds ticking away and the swagger drained out of the Browns' defense, there was no reason not to expect a happy ending.

But there was no happy ending. Valiant. yes, but not happy.

On other days, the Bills' minuses might have overwhelmed them in a game like this. They dropped nine passes. The drops were damaging enough in themselves, but the early ones in the first half also interrupted important drives and pushed the defense back on the field when it needed more rest.

Yet the Bills came back.

The special teams, considered a strong Buffalo asset, malfunctioned at critical times. Someone left his lane on the league-leading kickoff-coverage unit and Cleveland's Eric Metcalf returned a ball 90 yards for a touchdown. On Buffalo's final touchdown, placekicker Scott Norwood slipped on the icy turf and missed the extra-point attempt. That meant the Bills could not send the game into overtime with a field goal.

Yet they came back.

Mostly, they came back because Jim Kelly flushed away his month-long doldrums and played superbly.

"Jim played a great game," volunteered Thurman Thomas, Kelly's former antagonist during the time this season when the Bills were at their devisive worst.

"Jimmy had that look in his eye," added veteran nose tackle Fred Smerlas.

No one was putting Kelly on any overrated list Saturday afternoon.

For the first time as an NFL quarterback. Kelly passed for more than 400 yards, 405 to be exact, with four touchdown passes. He would have been over 500 yards, easy, if most of the dropped passes had been held.

That was the only happy ending for the Bills: Kelly won his team back. It was his

greatest performance in a critical NFL game. On the final drive, when the Bills' chances had shrunk to a fourth down and 10 yards to go on their own 42-yard line with a mere 1:36 to play, Kelly coolly waited for Don Beebe to break open and found him with a 17-yard completion to return Buffalo to its life-support

system. As the play was completed, all the Bills watching on the sidelines seemed to levitate.

At that point, it definitely did not appear to be a team divided.

"I think we grew up as a team in this

game," said Thomas. Maybe the little running back has some-

thing. You could tell in the first five minutes that the Bills wanted this one.

There was no easing into the combat, which had characterized their play during the dismal, three-game losing streak that postponed their winning the AFC's Eastern Division champi-

onship. Instead, they played a lot like they did most of last season. The 1988 squad functioned at most times like a cohesive team. Too often this season, the Bills functioned as a loose confederation of highly skilled, individual contrac-

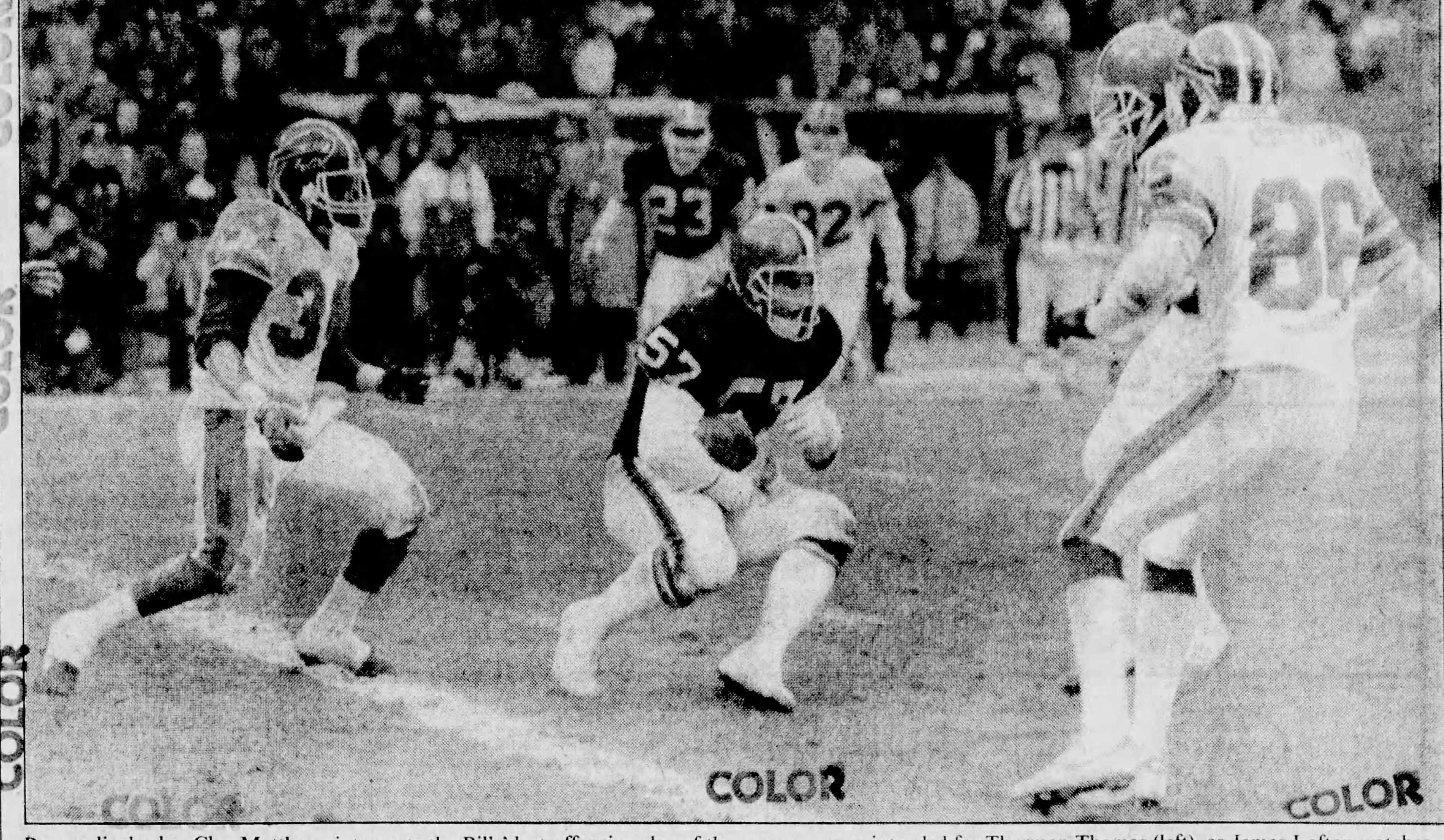
The only sour note to this healing day was provided by Ronnie Harmon.

With nine seconds to play in the game and the ball on the Browns' 11, Harmon got open in the left corner of the end zone. Kelly threw him the ball. Ronnie did not catch it.

According to Thomas, when Harmon returned to the huddle he told Kelly if the ball had been thrown more quickly, he could have caught it for a touchdown.

No way. It should have been a fairly routine catch for a good NFL receiver. If anything, Harmon seemed to short-arm the ball. He

See Felser Page C5



Browns linebacker Clay Matthews intercepts the Bills' last offensive play of the season, a pass intended for Thurman Thomas (left), as James Lofton watches.

## Browns end Bills' season, 34-30 Dramatic rally halted by Harmon's dropped pass, Matthews' interception

By MILT NORTHROP News Sports Reporter

CLEVELAND — Clay Matthews' interception at the 1-yard line with three seconds left Saturday cut short a frantic Buffalo drive for the winning touchdown and ended the Bills' Super Bowl hopes.

The veteran linebacker picked off Jim Kelly's throw down the middle to preserve Cleveland's 34-30 victory over the Bills and send the relieved Browns to the AFC championship game next Sunday, either in Cleveland or Denver.

It brought the curtain down on the most controversial season in Bills history with a sudden and dramatic finality. Only seconds before, it appeared as if the Bills were about to conclude a most dramatic comeback.

"I'd rather lose a game, 34-0, because when you lose like that you know you never had a chance, but we had a chance," said running back Thurman Thomas.

Jim Kelly walks off the field at the

RON MOSCATI/Buffalo News

■ Special teams are key / C4 Comment could spark furor / C4

Sunday Billboard / C4

Scoring and statistics / C4

Possible 'last dance' adds to frustration: Fred Smerlas' column / C5

This time, Clay Matthews gets an interception he can keep / C5

Picture page / C16

"It really hurts to lose a close game like this."

As it turned out, the Bills came just inches short of going to the conference final for the second year in a row. On the play before the interception, Kelly's pass flicked off the fingers of running back Ronnie Harmon in the left corner of the end zone.

nine passes Bills' receivers dropped during the course of the offensive shootout, which was the last thing anybody

expected from these two teams.

Besides the 64 points, the teams churned up the permafrost of ancient Cleveland Stadium for 778 yards. Browns quarterback Bernie Kosar completed 20 of 29 passes for 251 yards and three touchdowns.

Kelly was even more brilliant. The Buffalo quarterback connected on 28 of 54 passes for an NFL career-high 405 yards and four touchdowns. Besides the nine dropped balls, he also had a completion erased by a penalty and another ruled incomplete on a controversial officiating call.

Thomas, who dropped three passes in the first half, ended up with 13 catches for 150 yards.

Andre Reed caught six for 115, including a 72-yarder for the game's first touchdown. Harmon had four catches for 50 yards and James Lofton snagged Harmon's flub was just one of the three for 66, including a 33-yard scoring catch in the second quarter.

The Bills needed Kelly and the offense at their best because the defense

and special teams let down badly. The Buffalo pass coverage, to put it kindly. was erratic. The secondary gave up scoring bombs of 52 and 44 yards to Webster Slaughter. Cleveland's Pro Bowl wide receiver, and bit for Kosar's play fake before he threw a 3-yard TD pass to tight end Ron Middleton that put the Browns in front to stay, 17-14. with 1:06 left in the first half.

As Kosar was about to be buried by a Buffalo blitz in the second quarter. he lobbed a throw to Slaughter for a 52-yard scoring pass. Slaughter froze Bills cornerback Nate Odomes with an out-and-up fake that left him in the open by 10 yards.

In the third quarter, the Bills didn't bother covering Slaughter at all on a 44-yard bomb from Kosar. The Bills made a faulty adjustment in their dime defense to the Browns' man in motion. It resulted in two Bills covering Reggie Langhorne and nobody on Slaughter.

See Bills Page C5

## Performance by Kelly draws praise Questions regarding quarterback's confidence disappear

By VIC CARUCCI News Sports Reporter

game and the season, so Buffalo Bills publicist Denny Lynch took one final crack at trying to persuade Jim Kelly to

speak with the media. "No!" the Bills' quarterback bel- thing. lowed Saturday as he knotted his tie behind a curtain in the visitors' dressing room at Cleveland Stadium. "I'm not talking. How many times have l got to say it? That makes 30 guys who

have asked me now. . . . Geez!" Although Kelly merely was sticking to a policy he established four weeks ago, when he cut himself off to the media at large, his anger and frustration never were more understandable.

A short while earlier, he had thrown a perfect pass, only to have it bounce off the fingers of Ronnie Harmon in the end zone with nine seconds left on

the clock and the Bills trailing the Cleveland Browns, 34-30. Kelly's next pass was intercepted by Clay Matthews. CLEVELAND — It was over, the giving the Browns the right to advance to the AFC championship game and sending the Bills home for the rest of the winter.

Kelly really didn't have to say any-

of spokesmen — teammates, the head coach, the general manager. They couldn't heap enough praise on Kelly for his performance Saturday, by far his best in the last five games and among the better he has had since joining the Bills in 1986.

It had all the makings of a playoffquarterbacking classic: 54 attempts. 28 completions, 405 yards (the first 400yard game of his NFL career), four touchdowns, two interceptions. The completions and yards should have been dramatically higher, but, counting

Habs rip Sabres, 6-3; Bruins pull within 1

the would-be touchdown to Harmon. nine passes were dropped.

Suddenly, the questions about his confidence, raised during a dreadful three-game slump last month, had dis-

"I think he played brilliantly." Bills offensive tackle Will Wolford said.

When the Bills' offense huddled af-This was a day when he had plenty ter getting the ball at their own 26 with 2:41 left in the game. Wolford looked into Kelly's eyes. What he saw gave him great confidence the Bills would be able to score the go-ahead points.

"What did I see? The same Jim Kelly I've always seen," Wolford said. "There's a look of confidence, a look of a man ready to play his game."

Other than calling the plays and signals, Kelly wasn't a whole lot chattier with his teammates in those final minutes than he was after the game.

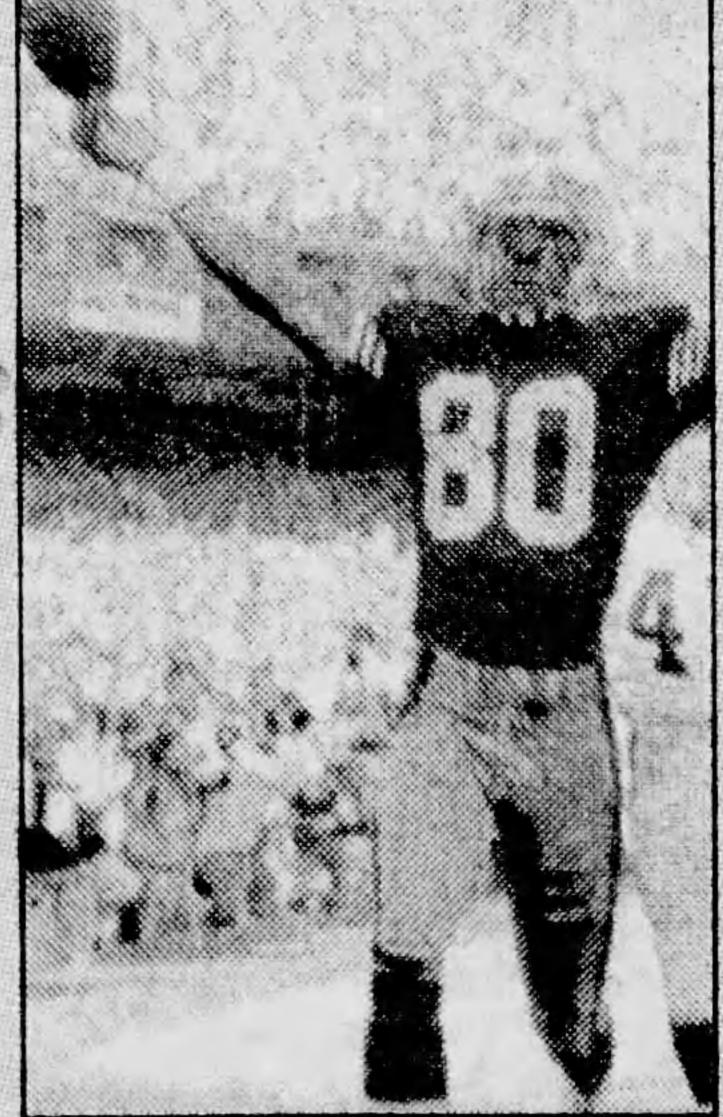
See Kelly Page C4

Browns 34, Bills 30 49ers 41, Vikings 13 (Story on C3)

Canadiens 6, Sabres 3 Bruins 5, Capitals 3 Whalers 4, Oilers 4 Islanders 5, Nordiques 2 Penguins 5, Jets 3 Maple Leafs 7, Kings 4 Blues 4, Rangers 3 Blackhawks 8, Flyers 5 North Stars 4, Red Wings 3 (Roundup on C6)

#### COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Villanova 93, Syracuse 74 Manhattan 70, Canisius 65 Niagara 59, Loyola, Md. 56 W. Virginia 105, Bona 65 UB 70, LeMoyne 59 Buffalo St. 56, Clarion 54 Georget'n 93, Providence 91 Minnesota 91, Illinois 74 Oklahoma 66, Colorado 61 Missouri 78, Oklahoma St. 68 N.C. State 74, Temple 71 (Roundups start on C8)



Jerry Rice celebrates as the 49ers rip the Vikings in the NFC semifinal.

Jerry Glanville will not return ers in 1990. C3.

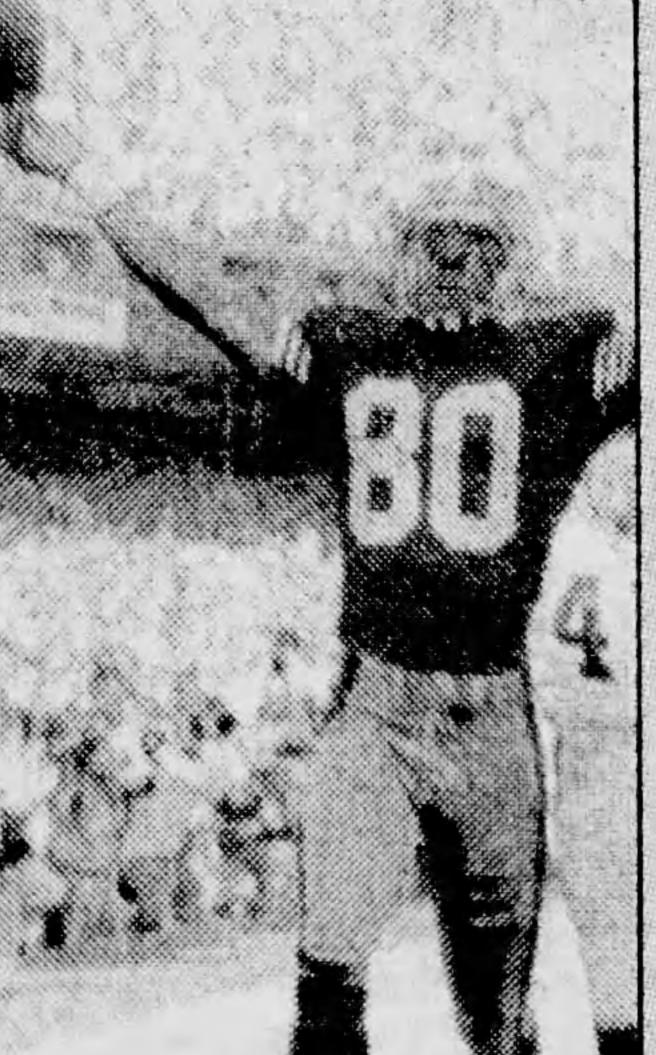
Paul Azinger takes the lead in the Tournament of Champions. C13.



end of the game.

Associated Press

Owner Bud Adams says as coach of the Houston Oil-



News Sports Reporter MONTREAL— Nine days ago

the Buffalo Sabres were negotiating a season-long lease on the Adams Division penthouse. But that deal feel through and

By BOB DICESARE

tonight the Sabres face eviction. The Boston Bruins can gain

sole possession of the division lead tonight by defeating the Sabres at Memorial Auditorium (7:05, cable, WBEN).

Buffalo's 6-3 loss at Montreal Saturday night, combined with Boston's 5-3 victory over Washington, brought the Bruins within a point of the division lead. Boston was nine points in arrears before its Dec. 29 victory over the Sabres.

The Sabres haven't won since. In breaking a five-game winless streak, Montreal extended the Sabres' season-high losing streak to four games.

Montreal received third-period

goals from Petr Svoboda. Guy

■ Sabres-Bruins roster / C6 Suspensions for brawl / C6

Carbonneau and Shayne Corson to overcome Buffalo's rally from a 3-1 deficit. Carbonneau had two goals for

Richer and Brian Skrudland added singles. Phil Housley scored twice and

the Canadiens, while Stephane

Benoit Hogue once for the Sabres. Svoboda broke a 3-3 tie at 7:34 of the final period by overpower-

ing goaltender Clint Malarchuk

with a 50-foot slap shot high to the glove side. Carbonneau solidified the lead with his second goal at 12:25 and Corson scored into an empty net

Housley had tied the score. 3-3. at 3:04 of the period, scoring off passes from Pierre Turgeon and Alexander Mogilny.

with 54 seconds remaining.

Mogilny was shaken up late in the period after taking a blatant elbow to the head from Chris Che-

lios. Referee Dan Marouelli failed there, although both teams had a to detect the infraction and in- few good chances. stead dealt Mike Foligno a game misconduct for going at Chelios.

The first period was played at a break-neck pace. The freewheeling style made for a thoroughly entertaining 20 minutes, but the accompanying pressures also coaxed both teams into costly mistakes.

Malarchuk was caught away from his crease and failed to recover in time to keep Richer from scoring at 3:36. Malarchuk dived from the backboards to the crease to stop Richer's initial bad-angle shot, but the puck squirted free and Richer pounced on it to score his 22nd.

Strong forechecking and an errant pass by defenseman Jyrki Lumme enabled Buffalo to tie the score at 6:28. Dave Andreychuk stole Lumme's outlet pass along side the crease to finish a flurry the left boards and quickly fed Hogue in the slot. Hogue closed in on goaltender Brian Hayward and scored with his backhand shot.

The period's scoring ended

Sabres center Jeff Parker prevented a late Montreal goal, swiping the goal line clean of a shot that had slid beneath Malarchuk.

The Canadiens had a 3-1 lead and had put the Sabres in retreat before Housley revitalized Buffalo's chances with a late second-period goal.

The Sabres were working on a power play when Housley onetimed a 35-footer past Hayward with 47 seconds remaining.

Goals by Carbonneau at 7:34 and Skrudland at 17:08 had given Montreal its two-goal lead. Carbonneau scored with a de-

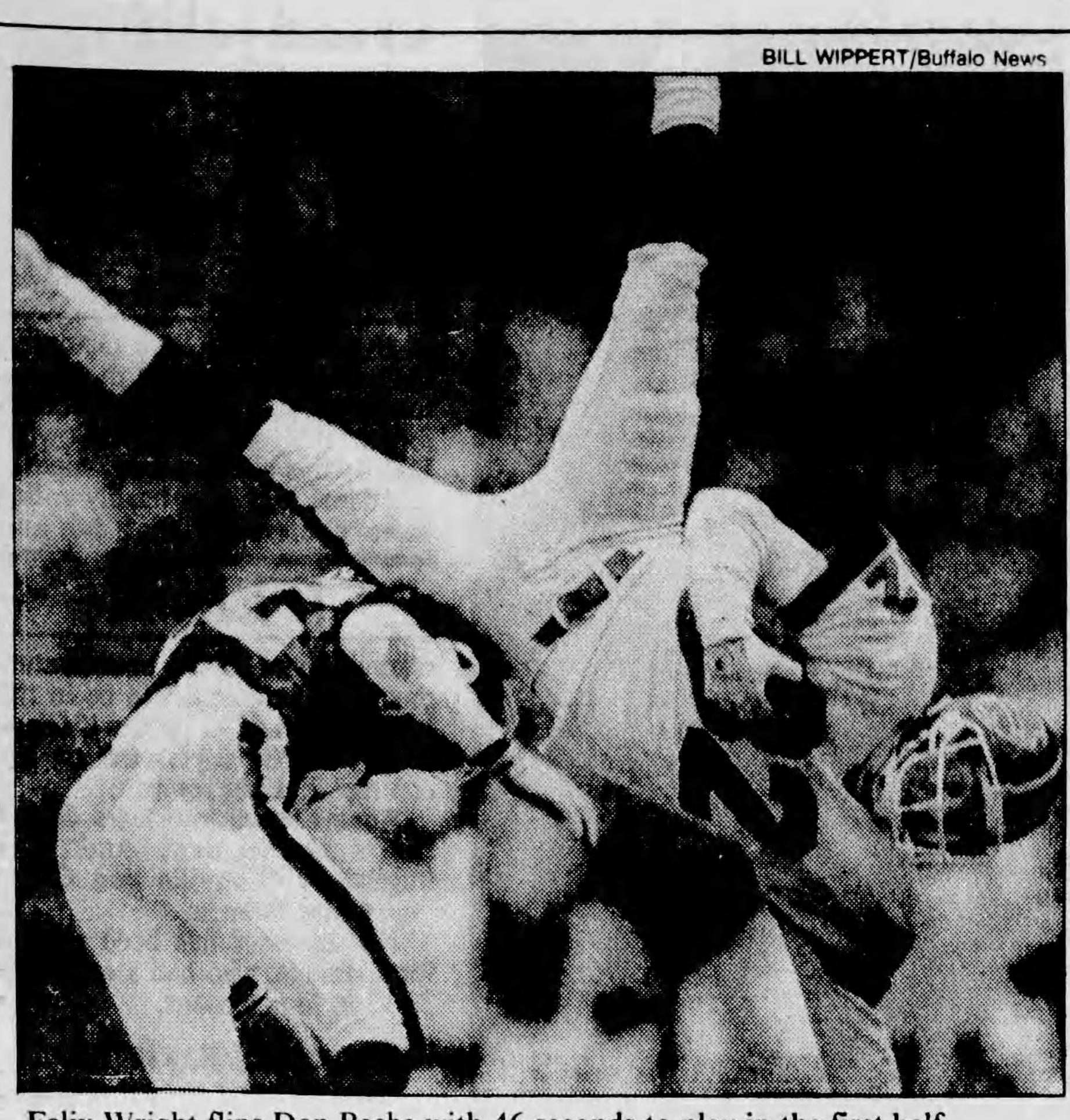
flection off his body of Craig Ludwig's high shot from the point. Skrudland tallied from just out-

around the Buffalo net. Malarchuk kept the Sabres close by making 14 saves, one on

a short-handed half-ice breakaway

by Mike McPhee.

#### SUNDAY BILLBOARD



Felix Wright flips Don Beebe with 46 seconds to play in the first half.

- The Big Picture: Do not adjust sets. The big picture has faded to black. The Bills' Super Bowl hopes were dashed Saturday when their valiant, last-second comeback fell just short in a 34-30 playoff loss to the Browns at Cleveland Stadium.
- Play of the Game: The Bills had just scored to pull within three points, 24-21, and momentum appeared to be shifting their way. But Cleveland rookie Eric Metcalf returned the ensuing kickoff 90 yards for a touchdown with 4:23 left in the third quarter. For Metcalf, the son of former St. Louis return great Terry Metcalf, it was the first kickoff return for a TD in his brief NFL career.
- Drop Everything: Jim Kelly threw for an NFL career-high 405 yards, despite seeing his receivers drop nine catchable balls. The most damaging, of course, was Ronnie Harmon's muff in the left corner of the end zone with nine seconds to play.
- Quote of the Day: According to Thurman Thomas, it came in the huddle after Harmon's fatal drop. Thomas said Harmon came back to the huddle and told Kelly he had waited too long to throw him the ball, and that he would have had a TD if the ball had been delivered sooner.

- Best Direct Quote: Coach Marv Levy, asked about his team's nine dropped passes: "What am I going to do, say 'hold onto the ball, look at the ball, catch the ball?' How do you explain it? The first time I ever saw Brooks Robinson play, he made three errors, and you know what a great fielder he was."
- Hit of the Day: Specials teams star Steve Tasker nearly converted Cleveland's Gerald "Ice Cube" McNeil into crushed ice early in the second quarter. McNeil eschewed the fair catch on Kidd's towering punt and paid the price when Tasker leveled him as soon as he caught the punt.
- Unsung Hero: The Bills' offensive line was brilliant in defeat, allowing the Browns' vaunted pass rush only one sack for a loss of a single yard. Left guard Jim Ritcher deserves special mention for his outstanding job on Michael Dean Perry, Cleveland's All-Pro right tackle.
- Zebra Report: The officials' most difficult moment occurred just 46 seconds before the end of the first half. Jim Kelly threw high over the middle to Don Beebe, who was drilled by Felix Wright and landed hard on his neck, knocking the ball loose. The Browns recovered, then the fun began. At first, it appeared the ground had caused Beebe to fumble and the play would be ruled a comple-

tion. But after a replay review, it was ruled an incompletion — even though replays seemed to indicate Beebe had possession before his head struck the ground. So no one was too happy with the call, least of all Bills General Manager Bill Polian, who bolted out of his press box seat and loudly bemoaned the

• Best Sign: "Hey Wyche, We Saved You and Glanville two tickets!"

• Field Day: Cleveland, perhaps taking advantage of the absence of injured strong safety Leonard Smith, completed seven passes to its tight ends. Veteran Ozzie Newsome equaled his season's high with four receptions. Obscure backup Ron Middleton, who had caught only one pass all season, had three catches, one for a TD.

Arm Weary: Kelly threw an astonishing 40 passes in the second half alone, including 16 straight in the final 2:41 on the Bills' desperate final drive.

 Coming Attractions: See next year's Bills schedule. The Browns move on to play the winner of today's Denver-Pittsburgh game in next week's AFC championship game. If Pittsburgh wins, Cleveland will host the game. Otherwise, the Browns go to Denver's Mile High Stadium.

#### BY THE NUMBERS

BUFFALO ..... 7 7 7 9-30 LEAD, 17-14. CLEVELAND. 3 14 14 3-34 FIRST QUARTER

Touchdown pass, 72 yards, Reed from Kelly at 9:56 (Norwood kick). Drive of 72 yards in two plays after Bahr missed a 45-yard field goal. BILLS LEAD, 7-0.

Field goal, 45 yards, by Bahr at 14:12. Drive of 39 yards in 10 plays after Metcalf's 19-yard kickoff return. Key gains: Kosar pass to Slaughter for 18 to Bills' 49, Kosar pass to Brennan for 15 on third-and-16 to Bills' 28, option pitch to Metcalf for 2 to 26 on fourth down. BILLS LEAD, 7-3.

SECOND QUARTER Touchdown pass, 52 yards, Slaughter from Kosar at 4:33 (Bahr kick). Drive of 79 yards in seven plays after McNeil returned 45-yard punt by Kidd for no yards. Key gains: Kosar pass to Langhorne for 16 to Browns' 37, Tillman reverse for 8 and first down at Bills' 48. BROWNS LEAD, 10-7.

Touchdown pass, 33 yards, Lofton from Kelly at 7:12 (Norwood kick). Drive of 66 yards in five plays after Beebe returned Wagner's kickoff 32 yards. Key gains: Kelly pass to Lofton for 19 to Browns' 47, Kelly bootleg for 5 to 33. BILLS LEAD, 14-10.

Touchdown pass, 3 yards, Middleton from Kosar at 13:54 (Bahr kick). Drive of 55 yards in eight plays after Kidd's 33-yard punt was downed. Key gains: Kosar pass to Langhorne for 9 to Bills' 44, Mack run for 16 to 24, Mack run for 12 to 3. BROWNS

BUFFALO

Kidd ...... 3 124 41.3 46

Rushing

Thomas

Passing

Punting

Punt Returns

Kickeff Returns

Defensive Stats

Smerlas .....

Talley .....

Bennett ..... 2

Jackson ..... 2

Still ..... 2

Hagy .....

Wright ....

Seals .....

Total First Downs ...... 25

By Rushing ..... 2

By Passing ..... 20

By Penalty ..... 3

Total Net Yards ...... 453

Total Offensive Plays ...... 73

Avg. Gain Per Play ..... 6.2

Total Rushing Plays ..... 18

Average Gain Per Play...... 2.7

Net Yards Passing ...... 404

Avg. Gain Per Pass Play ...... 7.3

Net Yards Rushing .....

Was Sacked - Yds. Lost.

Gross Yards Passing...

Third-Down Efficiency .... 6-15-40 6-13-46.1

Passes-Completed-Int ..... 54-28-2 29-20-0

Pass Receiving

Kinnebrew .....

Kinnebrew .....

Kelly ..... 1

THIRD QUARTER Touchdown pass, 44 yards, Slaughter from Kosar at 4:21 (Bahr kick). Drive of 46 yards in three plays after Harper intercepted

Touchdown pass, 6 yards, Thomas from Kelly at 10:22 (Norwood kick). Drive of 21 yards in six plays after Kelso recovered Mack's fumle. BROWNS LEAD, 24-21.

Kelly's pass. BROWNS LEAD, 24-14.

Kickoff return, 90 yards, by Metcalf at 10:37 (Bahr kick). BROWNS LEAD, 31-21.

FOURTH QUARTER Field goal, 30 yards, by Norwood at 1:08. Drive of 68 yards in 11 plays after touchback on Wagner's kickoff. Key gains: Kelly passes to Lofton for 14 to Bills' 34, to Thomas for 12 to Browns' 48, to Thomas for 27 to 21. BROWNS LEAD, 31-24.

Field goal, 47 yards, by Bahr at 8:10. Drive of 38 yards in 11 plays after 26-yard kickoff return by Metcalf to Browns' 33. Key gain: Redden's run for 9 to 47, Mack's run for 9 to Bills' 28. BROWNS LEAD, 34-24.

Touchdown pass, 3 yards, Thomas from Kelly at 11:00 (kick failed). Drive of 77 yards in eight plays after 14-yard kickoff return by Harmon. Key gains: Kelly's screen pass to Harmon for 12 to Bills' 46, Kelly pass to Thomas for 15 to Browns' 39, Kelly

LEAD, 34-30. Attendance: 77,706 (1,704 no-

CLEVELAND

McNeil ...... 1 0 0

Mack ..... 12

Redden .....

Metcalf .....

Langhorne .....

2 Kosar ..... 29 20 251

Langhorne ..... 6

Slaughter ..... 3

Middleton ..... 3

Mack .....

Brennan .....

Wagner .....

Metcalf .....

0 Gash ..... 4

Dixon ..... 6

Wright ..... 5

Grayson ..... 3

Baker ..... ?

Hairston ..... 2

Lyons ..... 2

Blaylock .....

Minnifield ..... 0

Harper .....

E. Johnson .....

Kickoff Returns-Yards ...

Had Blocked ...

Punts-Avg...... 3-41.3

Total Return Yardage..... 4

Punt Returns-Yards ..... 1-4

Interceptions-Yards ..... 0-0

Penalties-Yards ..... 6-35

Fumbles-Lost ..... 2-1

Touchdowns ..... 4

By Rushing ..... 0

By Passing..... 4

By Returns ..... 0

Extra Points Made-Att ...... 3-4

Field Goals Made-Att ..... 1-1

Time of Possession..... 25:44

- RON MOSCATIBuffalo News

0 M. Johnson ..... 5

0 Perry ..... 3

23 Oliphant .....

Sack Defensive Stats

5.0 Tillman .....

Pass Receiving

Yds Avg

Att Com Yds TD Int

No Yds Avg Lng

No Yds Lng 4 159 90

Tkis Asst Sack

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

Att Com Yds TD Int Passing

No Yds Avg Lng

No Yds Lng Punt Returns

No Yds Lng Kickoff Returns

TEAM STATISTICS

Rushing

pass to Harmon for 22 to 3. BROWNS



Scott Norwood slips to the turf after shanking an extra-point try late in the game.

## Special teams win (and lose) titles

By JERRY SULLIVAN New Sports Reporter

CLEVELAND — Marv Levy knows all about these things. The Bills' head coach cut his teeth as an NFL special teams coach and his snapper (Adam Lingner). had spent a lot of time trying to drum a simple fact into his players' heads.

"Coach was saying it all along," said Jamie Mueller, one of the unfortunate members of the Bills' kickoff coverage team. "Special teams win championships."

And, as the Bills discovered Saturday, they also can lose them. There were plenty of reasons for Buffalo's 34-30 playoff loss to the Browns, but rarely has a team been so utterly betrayed by its usually reliable special teams.

Midway through the third quarter, the Bills scored a touchdown to pull within three points, and the momentum appeared to be shifting their way. But on the ensuing kickoff, Cleveland rookie Eric Metcalf dashed 90 yards up the middle, virtually untouched, for a TD that restored the Browns' 10-point lead.

Then, trailing, 34-24, with four minutes to go, the Bills scored another TD. With the

addition of a routine extra point, they would be within a field goal of forcing overtime. But slipped on the slick natural grass of Cleveland Stadium and shanked the ball off the back of

"Special teams are a definite difference in games like these," said Steve Tasker, the acknowledged leader of Buffalo's special units. "Teams are scouted so well, and game plans so well-developed. When you can get breaks like those (on special teams), it really helps."

The Bills' kickoff coverage has led the NFL in fewest yards allowed the last two seasons. They could not have picked a worse time to have their most dreadful game in recent memory. The Browns returned all six Buffalo kickoffs past their own 30-yard line. The killer, of course, was Metcalf's TD.

"We knew Metcalf was a great returner," Tasker said, "and we just didn't stay in our lanes well enough to cover on that play. That was definitely the play that broke the game for them and I'm just disappointed it happened against the special teams."

Since Norwood lacks the leg strength to kick the ball to the end zone, the Bills' usual strateas he stepped into the kick, Scott Norwood gy is to kick the ball toward the corners. But, as Tasker and Levy both pointed out, Norwood's kickoffs drifted to the center of the field Saturday, and Cleveland capitalized.

Bad kickoffs are one thing. The flubbed extra-point attempt, which cost the Bills a chance to tie the game, might have been Norwood's most discouraging moment as a pro.

"It was hard and icy down there," Norwood said in his customarily impassive fashion. "I knew that in the pregame and went out there early. It must have gotten worse as the game progressed, but it seemed all right in warm-

"It's not an ideal field by any means, but I wish I'd coped with it better than I did. I've always done well in mud and ice, but on that particular kick, I guess circumstances caught up with me."

He might as well have been talking about Buffalo's entire special teams. Under the most special of circumstances, they proved to be anything but.

## Huddle comment could spark final furor

By MILT NORTHROP News Sports Reporter

CLEVELAND — The Bills may have one last controversy brewing in the aftermath of Saturday's 34-30 loss to the Cleveland Browns in their AFC divisional playoff game. In comments relayed by run- plete pass.

ning back Thurman Thomas, second-guessing quarterback Jim ception ended the last Buffalo out. threat with three seconds to go. Kelly's pass went off Harmon's

hands in the left corner of the end zone with nine seconds left. It appeared on television replays that Harmon had room to make the catch and land in bounds for what would have been the winning touchdowns. "Ronnie Harmon said 'if he

had looked at me a little bit quicker' he would have scored because he was wide open," Thomas said during a post-game interview session. Thomas relayed that Harmon said "Jim looked a little bit too

long the other way, but by the time he looked (Harmon) was almost out of the end zone." Harmon did not speak for himself because he has not allowed

media interviews for the last two seasons. Kelly also refused to be inter-

viewed after the game.

The most controversial play of the game was an apparent catch by Bills rookie Don Beebe with 35 seconds left in the first half. Beebe made a leaping catch but was flipped over by the force of Felix

#### BILLS NOTEBOOK

Wright's tackle. He landed on his head and the ball popped loose. Wright caught it before it hit the ground.

The play was ruled an incom-

"Yeah, I thought I caught it, I Ronnie Harmon appeared to be really did," Beebe said. "I caught the ball and the guy took my legs Kelly for looking for him too late, out, and when I hit my head and I one play before a Cleveland inter- hit my elbow, too, the ball popped

> "The ball ... popped out. The ball actually was on the ground."

Guard Jim Ritcher neutralized Cleveland's Pro Bowl defensive tackle, Michael Dean Perry, who had six tackles but no sacks.

"He's pretty tough," Ritcher said. "I watched him eat up a lot of left guards. I did a lot of film study on him.

like you have pretty good position on him, he just picks you up and moves you.'

After a shaky start, Thomas ended up tying Kellen Winslow's record of 13 receptions in a playoff game. Winslow set the mark in 1981 in an overtime game at Mi-

Thomas had three dropped passes, two on the Bills' first series and one on the opening series of the second half.

"I was just nervous," Thomas said. "Really, all day I had a hard time catching the ball.

"The first series, I was really nervous. Throughout the rest the game, I thought I had an excellent game."

Thomas caught 11 passes for 123 yards in the second half.

On the Bills' last play of the game, the interception by Cleveland linebacker Clay Matthews near Thomas, the Bills back said "He's so strong. When you feel he was not the primary receiver.

"I wasn't the primary receiver. I think two of the inside receivers, Ronnie Harmon and Andre Reed,

"Jim read the coverage before the ball was thrown and maybe thought I was open more than the other guys. When I ran my pattern, I thought I was open for a second, but Clay Matthews got a great break on the ball. I thought I was open for a second."

The Bills put safety Leonard Smith and linebacker Ray Bentley on their two-man inactive list for

the game. The Browns placed Kevin Robbins and Kevin Simons, both offensive tackles, on their list.

Cleveland lost defensive back Tony Blaylock with a neck injury — a cervical sprain — in the second half. He was to be held overnight at the Cleveland Clinic for observation, but had movement in all his extremities, the Browns

## Kelly: Linemen expected miracle finish

Continued from Page C1

"There wasn't a whole lot to say," Wolford said. "We knew what we had to do."

"I thought it was going to be another Miami,"

recalled offensive guard Jim Ritcher. His reference was to the miracle comeback drive, capped by a Kelly TD run, in the season opener against the

in charge. Like always, the general leading us down the field."

"If we have time on the clock and we're throwing the football, there's no doubt in anybody's mind out there: We're going to score," center Kent Hull said. "When Jim walks into the huddle in that situation,

he is in total control. He doesn't get any plays from the sidelines. They (the coaches) don't tell him when to call time out. He is in command, and that's when he's at his best."

The Bills marched 63 yards, with Kelly throwing 16 consecutive passes, to the Cleveland 11-yard line. But, with three seconds left, the final throw wound up in enemy hands.

"Jim did not have to prove anything to me," Bills "Jim was real confident," Ritcher added, "He was coach Marv Levy said. "I thought he performed extremely well. He showed a lot of heart — the same

heart he has had." "A lot of people have questioned whether Jim Kelly was a good-enough quarterback to be a championship quarterback in this league," said Bills Gen-

eral Manager Bill Polian. "Question answered."

Mark Kelso recovers a Kevin Mack fumble in the third quarter.

## Possible 'last dance' adds to frustration Hands met in unity on last drive

Greek's not going to dance forever.

He's 32 years old. He has been in the NFL 11 seasons at a position that has chewed up and spit out a lot of players in half that

So maybe Saturday's playoff loss to the Cleveland Browns was my last dance — my last shot at a Super Bowl ring. Maybe it was Art Still's and Joe Devlin's last shot,

A lot of players don't understand that there's no guarantee every year. We made it after the of the Cleveland bench. 1981 season, and it wasn't until 1988 that we made it again.

Fortunately, I wound up getting realized it might have been their turn for a touchdown. last shot, period.

that much more frustrating.

Nine seconds left. We were at the Cleveland 11-yard line. I thought, for sure, we were going to score.

In those last couple of minutes, on the sidelines, holding hands led to a score. with the other players as a sign of other.

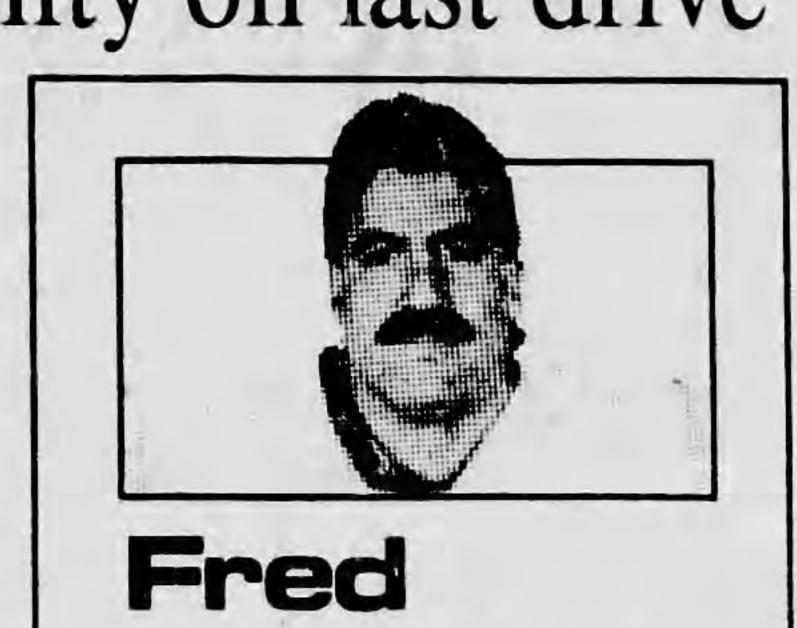
When I saw Kelly drop back for that last pass, I closed my eyes. I was confident we would do it, but I couldn't watch. I was waiting to hear the boos or the yeas.

When I heard the yeas, I knew it was a big boo for us.

It felt like the last day of a tropical vacation and you're heading back to 10 feet of snow. The door to the airplane shuts. Bang. It's over.

Kelly was fabulous. He had nine passes dropped. If those were caught, he could have thrown for more than 500 yards against one of the best defenses in football.

Our offense moved on their defense. Their offense moved on our defense. It was a great game to watch — that is, if you were in front of your television set, sitting



you're going to reach the playoffs in the stands or standing in front

Smerlas

From where we were, it was pretty painful.

Although there was Ronnie two more chances after our post- Harmon's dropped pass in the end '81 playoff loss to Cincinnati. But zone and the interception on I just don't think a lot of guys who Kelly's last throw, the big play was were on the field for us Saturday Eric Metcalf's 90-yard kickoff re-

We got to Bernie Kosar a few Which was what made coming times. We hit him a lot all day. as close as we did against the But he's tough to get to, because Browns, losing the way we did, he's smart and knows how to use head-fakes and pump-fakes to avoid being sacked. He made a pretty good living throwing those dump passes, and came up with the big passes when he had to.

As for my own performance, I as Jim Kelly and the offense felt good about it. I knocked down moved downfield, I was standing a pass and caused a fumble that

The knockdown came on the unity. We wanted the offense to Browns' first drive, which ended know that we were pulling for with Matt Bahr missing a 45-yard them. We were all pulling for each field goal. When I got off the center, I threw him down to my left and went right and got a piece of the ball as Kosar released it.

> Halfway through the third quarter, I knocked the ball out of Kevin Mack's arm one play after Larry Kinnebrew fumbled. Mack was trying to run to my left, so l stepped to that side while jamming the center. Then, as Mack tried to cut back, I threw the center the other way and stuck my helmet in the ball and it popped out. Mark Kelso recovered for us, and Kelly wound up throwing a touchdown pass to Thurman Thomas to cut the margin to

It was a frustrating end to a frustrating season.

It has been an extremely tough year for me, because it seemed the harder I played and the better played, the less I played.

Fred Smerlas and Scott Norwood leave the field.

I've always thought that you should leave your best players on the field, but I often found myself being replaced by Jeff Wright. It Bills' uniform next season. didn't happen as much in this game as in others, but it happened and I can't say I liked it.

I think there will be a lot of changes for us next season. I think some will be warranted, and, of course, a lot won't.

But the mesh of a team is very important. It's up to the coach to pick the right players, and that's Marv Levy's job.

He's the chef making the soup. If there's too much salt, too much pepper and too much oregano, you're going to have a bad-tasting soup. If the mixture's not right,

you're going to have some prob-

I hope I can dance again in a

(News Sports Reporter Vic Carucci assisted in the preparation of this column.)

## Matthews' interception proves a keeper this time

By FRANK DERRY Special to The News

BILL WIPPERT/Buffalo News

CLEVELAND — Clay Matthews clutched the ball as though it were a newborn baby.

He wasn't about to let loose, much less lateral the ball as he did two weeks ago against the Oilers when he almost cost the Browns the AFC Central Division title with the most boneheaded play of his 12-year career.

No, this time he held on for dear life after intercepting a Jim Kelly pass on the 1-yard line with three seconds remaining to seal the Browns' heart-stopping 34-30 AFC playoff victory over the Bills Saturday afternoon at Cleveland Stadium.

"I hope you noticed I got down with the ball very quickly," said a smiling Matthews.

In the game at the Astrodome, the Browns were clinging to a 17-13 lead with six minutes remaining when Matthews recovered a fumble. Instead of falling on the ball, he tried to lateral to teammate Chris Pike, only to have the ball fly high over the head of the 6-foot-8 Pike to be recovered by the Oilers.

On the next play, quarterback Warren Moon hit Drew Hill with a 27-yard touchdown pass to give the Oilers what appeared to be the winning score.

However, the Browns came back, thanks to fullback Kevin Mack, who scored in the closing seconds to pull out the victory.

"I would have shot him," Browns coach Bud Carson said when asked if he thought Matthews was going to lateral the ball again. But in a game where the abnormal seemed to be the norm, Carson shouldn't have been totally surprised at anything that hap-

about once every three years," Carson said. "On defense, you hope you never get in those."

The special teams highlight was a 90-yard kickoff return for a touchdown by rookie Eric Metcalf.

"They (the Bills) tried to kick the ball away from us, but all week we have been working on reading which way he (Scott Norwood) was going to kick the ball." said Metcalf.

Offensively, the Browns had three touchdown passes from quarterback Bernie Kosar, despite his suffering a sprained middle finger on his throwing hand, plus a hip pointer.

The offensive game plan called for the Browns to throw short to start the game, offsetting the Bills' pass rush. Then, when the Bills changed their defense, it allowed Webster Slaughter to get open deep for two TDs.

On the first Slaughter touchdown, he gave a stutter-step to Nate Odomes, then turned on the burners and ran under a bomb from Kosar.

On the second one, Reggie Langhorne went in motion and flooded the left side of the field! with three receivers.

"They put the man who was supposed to be on me on Langhorne, but the other guy didn't switch," Slaughter said. "The safety shot up and I just turned around and nobody was around

"When I turned around, I saw (Mark) Kelso and that's when I slipped. I tried to turn it on a little and I kind of stumbled into the end zone."

But despite all the offense, the Browns still were hanging on for dear life to end the game.

After failing to get any pressure on Kelly with four-man, five-man and six-man rushes, Carson decided to go with a three-man rush.

"I don't like a three-man rush," "It was one of those crazy, wild Carson said. "It's just that we had football games that you get in tried everything else today and nothing worked. It's the first time all year we didn't get pressure on the quarterback."

## Bills: Kosar riddles secondary with three touchdown passes

Continued from Page C1

who is dangerous enough with coverage.

It was an unforgiveable error against a Cleveland shift that the Bills were prepared for.

The kickoff coverage team, No. 1 in the NFL during the regular season, yielded a 90-yard touchdown return to Browns rookie Eric Metcalf after the Bills had closed to within 24-21 in the third quarter.

Metcalf fielded Scott Norwood's kick at his 10-yard line and ran almost straight up the

The Bills wanted Norwood to angle his kicks to the corners, but this one apparently got away. "I know Scott wanted to place the ball in the corner on his kicks. It didn't go there. You can't do that with Metcalf," Bills coach Marv Levy said.

#### 'Play of the game'

In retrospect, Metcalf's return was the difference in the game and saved the Browns from elimination from the Super Bowl tourna-

"They regained their momentum. It was the play of the game" Levy said.

Another big play was a missed extra point after the final Buffalo Manoa ran for 2 yards but Darryl said. touchdown with four minutes left. Kicker Scott Norwood slipped on his approach and his kick hit the pass to Kevin Mack was good for back of snapper Adam Lingner.

It left the Bills four points short, which meant when they regained possession for the last time, with 2:41 left, they had no choice but to play for a touchdown. A field goal was no option.

The Bills opened the game in shotgun formation and kept the Browns off balance.

"That's the best game plan that I've seen this year (from the Bills)," Browns coach Bud Carson said. "They did an outstanding job of coming in here with a completely difference mixture. They Browns called time out with 1:16 surprised us, they got us off guard."

on a third-down play on which the through with a clutch throw, this Bills used a hurry-up offense and one to Reed for 10 yards to the 22. caught the Browns with the wrong Kelly spiked the ball to stop the

#### Browns caught off guard

"They snuck in a wide receiver on us which caught us off guard," said Browns safety Felix Wright, ing. who boasted before the game how easily he could read what the Bills

were going to do on offense.

and could have been a back-breaker, but the Bills came right back and marched to the Cleveland 12 where they faced a third-and-1. Here Mike Johnson, a Browns linebacker, made a defensive stop that now looks very big. He stopped Larry Kinnebrew for no gain. The Bills decided to go for a field goal on fourth down and Norwood hit a 30-yarder to make it 31-24.

The Browns got that back on their next series with Matt Bahr hitting from 47 yards with 6:50 to play. What's more, Kosar had been able to eat nearly seven minutes (6:52) off the clock on the

But with 6:50 left, there was plenty of time for Kelly and the

Buffalo offense. The Buffalo quarterback hit six of seven passes to reach the Cleveland 3, then threw his second scoring pass to Thomas to make it

The Browns' fans were booing their defense for allowing the Bills to move up the field with such apparent ease, but they cheered when Norwood missed the point

#### Bills' defense makes stand

If there was ever a time Buffalo's defense needed to make a stand it was then, and it did. Tim Talley sacked Kosar for a 9-yard loss on second down. A screen 14 yards, but left Cleveland 3 yards short of a first down and Bryan Wagner had to punt.

Buffalo took over at its 26 with 2:41 left. The Bills had one time out left and the two-minute warning to play with. Kelly completed passes to Harmon for 9 and 7 yards and a first down at the Buffalo 42, but three incompletions left Kelly facing a fourth-and-10

with 1:36 to play. He drilled a 17-yarder to Beebe to pick up the first down at the Cleveland 41 and the beleaguered left. With 52 seconds left, Buffalo faced a fourth-and-one from the The touchdown to Reed came Cleveland 32. Again Kelly came defensive personnel on the field. clock, leaving it second-and-10 from the 22 with 34 seconds left. After an incompletion, Kelly hit Thomas for 11 yards to the 11. Now there was 16 seconds show-

#### Browns' defense out of sync

The Browns were barely hang-Metcalf's return made it 31-21, ing on by this time. They were

using seven defensive backs, three rushing linemen and one linebacker, Matthews, in an effort to stop the Bills.

"They kept our defense out of sync all day." said Carson. "We were lucky enough to get out of it with a win."

Kelly spiked the ball again to stop the clock with 14 seconds left.

On second down, Harmon got open on an out pattern in the end zone, but failed to hold Kelly's

Now there were only nine seconds left. The Bills players on the sidelines held hands and prayed. "We tried to draw strength from each other and came up a little bit short," said nose tackle Fred Smerlas.

On third down, Kelly dropped back, the field seemed flooded with defenders because there were now eight Cleveland players dropped off in pass coverage, including Matthews.

Kelly thought he saw a seam and fired for Thomas, but whatever gap was there was closed by Matthews, who made the intercep-

"They had been going to him, so I kind of figured they were going to go to him again," Matthews

Fortunately for the Browns, he guessed right.

#### Felser: Harmon should have kept silence

Continued from Page C1 should have caught it for the

winning touchdown. Harmon, who doesn't talk to the media, would have been better off keeping his silence in the huddle, too. Kelly's pass was on the money. Considering Harmon's own big-game deficiencies — i.e., last year's AFC title game against Cincinnati and the infamous Rose Bowl game his senior year at Iowa — he has no business critiquing others, particularly when the Bills are attempting

to heal themselves. No. there was no happy ending and it wasn't such a hot

day for justice, either. The Bills should have won.

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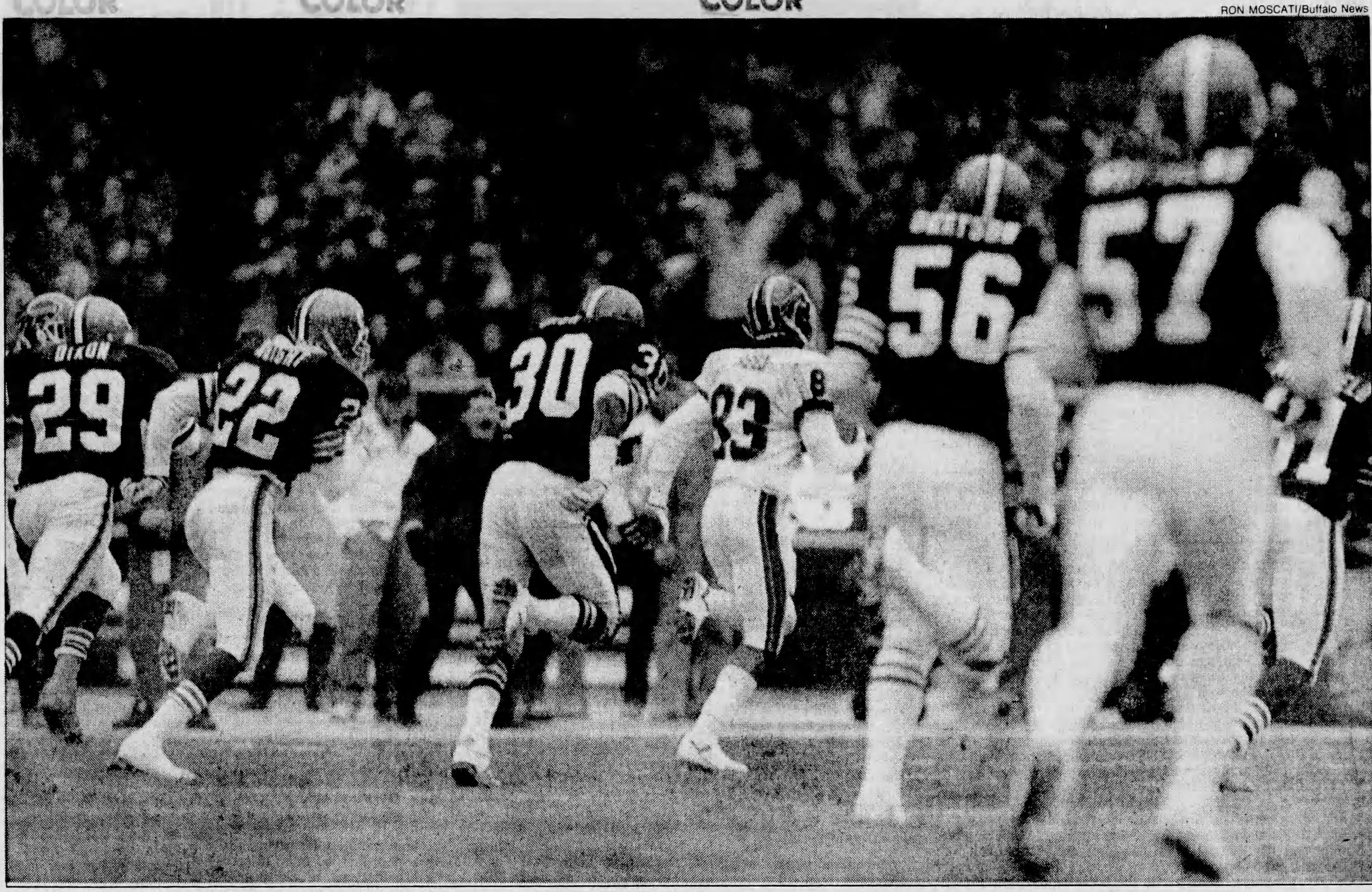
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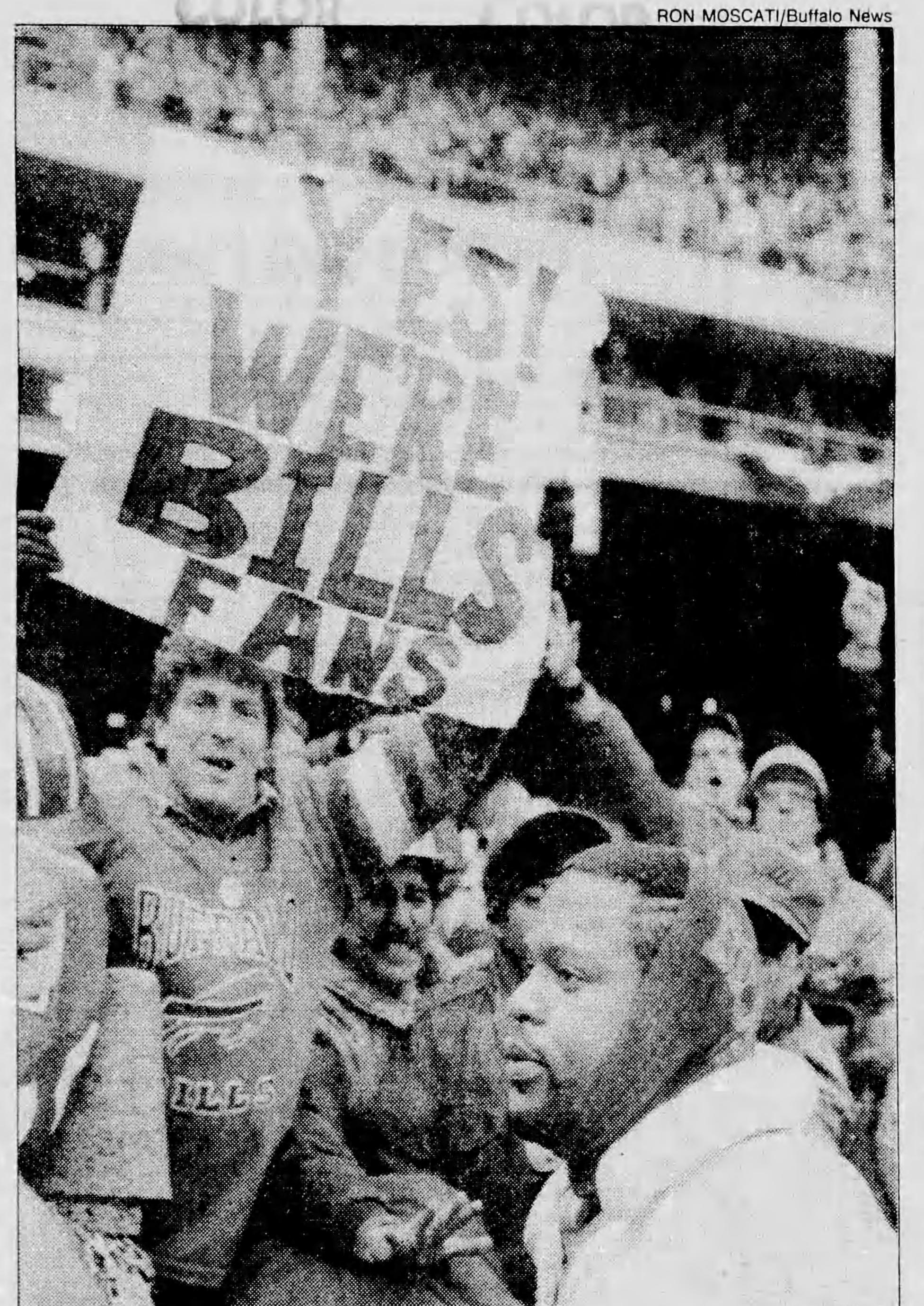
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Andre Reed outruns Browns defenders on a 72-yard scoring play that gave the Bills a 7-0 lead in the first quarter.



## THE BUFFALO NEWS

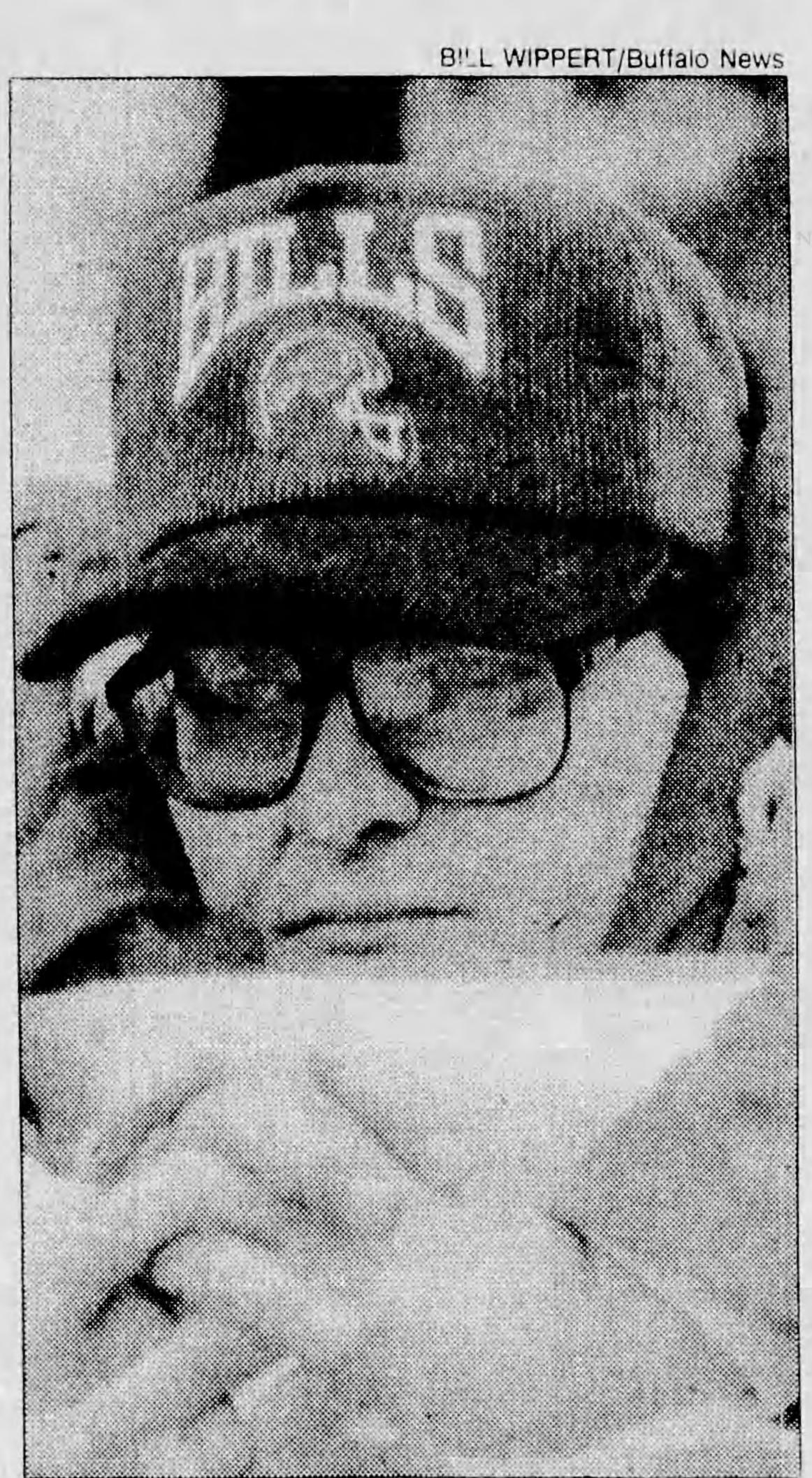
Sunday, January 7, 1990

## Heartbreak on the lake

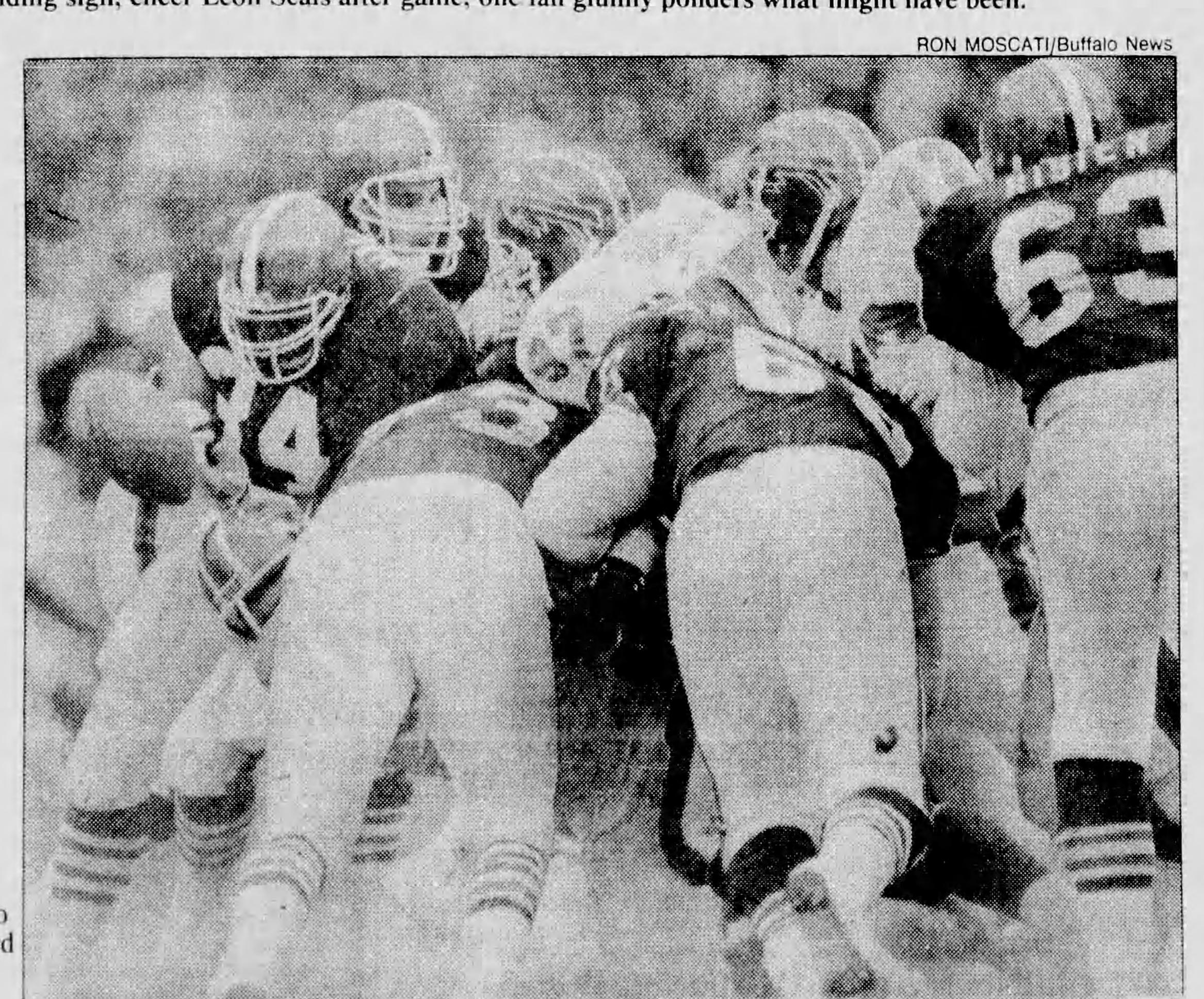
An extra-point attempt gone awry ... a dropped touchdown pass ... missed assignments on kickoff coverage. The mistakes on the lake added up as the Bills suffered a heartbreaking 34-30 loss to winning pass in the end zone in the waning the Browns on Saturday in Cleveland Stadium. Late in the fourth quarter, it seemed as if the Browns would be the team heading for a heart-

breaking loss. Quarterback Jim Kelly, who threw for 405 yards and four touchdowns, would have had a fifth if Ronnie Harmon had held a gamemoments. On the next pass, Kelly was intercepted, sealing the Bills' fate and sending the Browns to the AFC Championship Game.

RON MOSCATI/Buffalo News



Bills fans led by Jim Migliore, holding sign, cheer Leon Seals after game; one fan glumly ponders what might have been.



Tight end Pete Metzelaars consoles Thurman Thomas

after the Browns pass interception ended the game.

The Bills get a big break when the Browns' Kevin Mack fumbles in the third quarter, leading to a Buffalo touchdown shortly afterward that narrowed Cleveland's lead to 24-21.