SPORTS

A tale of autograph seekers and givers

Sam Lacy

An interesting scenario unfolded in the wake of the annual "Tops In Sports" banquet in Towson (Md.) Center, recently .... It offered a close-up look at passion and patience, the passion of fans seeking autographs and the patience of star athletes giving them.

Over the five decades of attending events at which strangers converge on athletes en masse for the purpose of obtaining signatures, the opportunity to witness and study behavior patterns has been presented many times over.

Some athletes are receptive, others are less than willing .... Women stars are most cooperative, treating all as if they have known the pen-bearers for years.

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As for the fans, they would be strangers to the athletes .... They feel the stars should at least recognize them since they have idolized the players from their 20th row seats in the stadium for years.

And they are at the same time hurt and furious when they come upon one of their favorites who ignores them and their outstretched pens and programs, scorecards, notepads, etc.

That happens, friends, more often than you might imagine .... It will be discussed later.

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But, while most athletes take this kind of philosophical approach, there are some who accommodate their public begrudgingly .... Some even have asked for clauses in their contracts that provided "nuisance" bonuses if they comply .... None had much luck in that effort.

Then there have been others who simply ignored the requests .... givers .... At one spring baseball camp some years back, the subject was being discussed, and comparisons were drawn to see which athlete did the most work .... They counted the number of letters each had to write to satisfy each fan.

Roy Campanella lamented that his name was 13 letters long .... "Try writing that on a baseball 20-30 times a day," he grinned .... Jackie Robinson beat Roy's 13 by one letter .... Don Newcombe counted only 12, Larry Doby 9 .... Joe Black's 8 gave him the easiest chore.

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At the "Tops In Sports" affair, Mickey Tettleton took the distance honor with 15 letters .... And when a starry eyed kid asked him to sign, the Oriole catcher goodnaturedly included "Loops" as a reminder that he's the guy whose homerun production last summer was credited to his fondness for breakfast cereal.

Brooks Robinson never seems to mind that he has 14 letters to cover .... The popular ex-Bird invariably adds a "Good luck" to his autograph.

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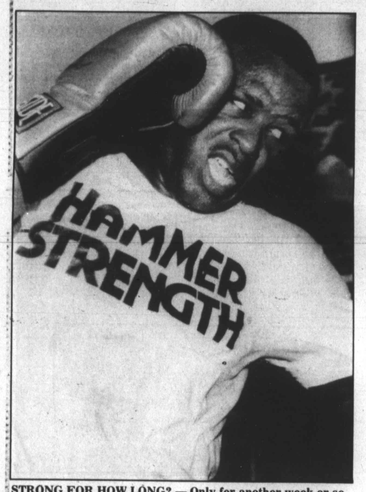
Applying that evaluation of patience to the "Tops" head table guys, it came out: Kevin Mitchell 14, Frank Robinson 13, Roland Hemond 12, and Cal Ripken, Jr., 11; Gregg Olson had 10, and Jim Palmer and Joe Morgan got off with 9, each.

Had he been asked, Sam Lacy would have been relieved with only 7 .... But, except for a few irreverent souls, he was bypassed in deference to his feebleness, I suppose.

How about Arnold Schwarzenegger?

IMPERTINENT QUESTION: How much is 110 percent?



STRONG FOR HOW LONG? — Only for another week or so, many believe. Because heavyweight "Buster" Douglas meets champion Mike Tyson in Tokyo on Feb. 10.

Not strawberry sundae, it's fridae

LOS ANGELES (UPI) — New York Mets outfielder Darryl Strawberry was arrested on suspicion of assault with a deadly weapon during an argument with his wife.

FULL MOON — Houston Oilers quarterback Warren Moon outlasted 27 contestants for the honor when he was chosen NFL Man of the Year for his efforts off the field as well as on it.

Police were called to the Strawberrys' house in the Encino district early Friday morning on a domestic violence report, Sgt. Woody Baca said.

Lisa Strawberry, 25, told officers her husband slapped her face during an argument. She then grabbed a metal rod and hit her husband across the wrist and in the ribcage.

Darryl Strawberry then allegedly threatened his wife with a handgun, which was later recovered at the house, Baca said.

The weapon was a .25-caliber semiautomatic, Baca said.

Lisa Strawberry was not hurt in the incident. Her husband suffered bruises on his wrist and ribs, Baca said.

Strawberry, 27, was booked at the West Valley division station on suspicion of assault with a deadly weapon. He posted $12,000 bail and was released a short time later, police said.

Police Commander William Booth said he did not know when Strawberry would be arraigned, or the date he was scheduled to appear in court regarding his bail money.

"The last I heard, he was back with his wife living happily after," Booth said.

OVERVIEW

PERVIS'S POP'S PICKS — It is general knowledge that Pervis Ellison pocketed a huge sum of money when he signed as the first-round overall pick in the 1989 NBA draft.

However, the brilliant Sacramento Kings rookie gained his windfall after four hard years of college varsity. His dad, for whom Pervis is named, showed him an easier way: He picked all five numbers in the Florida Lottery's Fantasy 5 game the day after Christmas — collected $137,000.

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THE MOON PASS — When Travelers passed its $25,000 NFL of the Year check to Warren Moon last weekend, the Houston Oilers quarterback, highest paid passer in pro football, made the meaningful pass of his career. He shuttled the check to the Crescent Moon Scholarship Fund, held for needy inner-city students.

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A MITE TARDY? — In 1954, Joe Morgan was cut by the Milwaukee Braves when the team signed Hank Aaron as a rookie; in fact, Aaron was given Morgan's uniform number.

It is common knowledge that Joe went on to become one of major league baseball's greatest stars, winning MVP honors in successive years, 1975-6. So, how is it Aaron beat the tiny second baseman to the Hall of Fame by six years, 1984 to 1990?

Because Hank retired six years before Joe. Both were elected in the first year of their eligibility.

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For those who like to plan ahead, the next Super Bowl will be played Jan. 27, 1991, in Tampa, Fla.

The following game is scheduled for Jan. 26, 1992, at the Metrodome in Minneapolis.

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LIKE POP, NOT SON — Kip Keino and Akbi Bile, two African runners of world class distinction, were represented by kin in the recent Sunkist Track and Field Championships at Los Angeles.

Kip's son, Martin, managed a third in the high school mile race at the games. But Bile's younger brother, Abdul, was eighth in a 9-man field.

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NAME CALLING — In life, individuals are called many things, most of them unprintable here.

Not so with the daughter of Denver Bronco safety Dennis Smith. Real name for daddy's little girl: Tiffany Diamond.

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WHAT, NO NAILS? — Olympic track champion Florence Griffith Joyner unveiled new uniforms Wednesday that she designed for the Indiana Pacers, who will have a redesigned logo and a darker look to their attire next season.

"We're very excited," said Donnie Walsh, the NBA team's general manager. "She did a great job coming up with a new look. This is a '90s uniform, an unbeat uniform. It's really a beautiful use of strong colors. It's a classy design, designed to last."

No long fingernails, though.

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A 'SWEET' BRONCO — Denver reserve runningback Ken Bell picked up a treasured souvenir from his trip to New Orleans.

Bell stumbled upon a cologne called "Cerruti," buying the only two bottles available for $60 each. He had been searching for that particular cologne for two years.

Bell collects quality colognes and watches. Four of his watches were designed for special football games. One of his five colognes is available only at a shop on a corner in a run-down section of the Bronx in New York.

Bell said he usually does not wear too much around the team. "I do not want to get all sweet for practice," he said.

Notable quotable

Former major league southpaw Bill Lee, now pitching in the Senior Pro League in Florida:

"You have a left and a right. The left side controls the right half of your body, and the right side controls the left. Therefore, lefthanders are the only people in their right mind."

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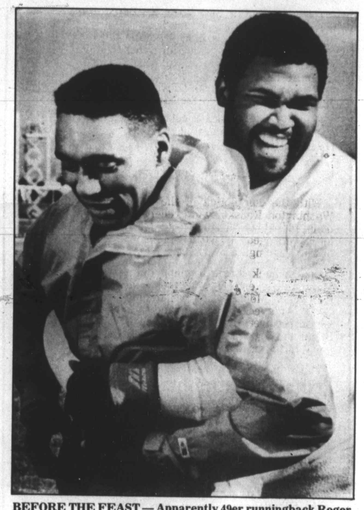

BEFORE THE FEAST — Apparently 49er runningback Roger Craig (L) and tackle "Bubba" Paris don't mind eating horse meat. They rejoiced even before devouring the Broncos, 55-10 in the Super Bowl.

No TV, SF homeless knew outcome

SAN FRANCISCO (UPI) — The City by the Bay, the big earthquake rapidly fading from memory, erupted in a roar of fireworks, horn-honking and cheering Sunday after the San Francisco 49ers won their fourth Super Bowl in a decade.

Only three months ago the region celebrated the World Series cake-walk by the Oakland Athletics, even if it came at the expense of the National League champion San Francisco Giants.

Streamers fluttered from high-rise apartment balconies and balloons were launched into the dark.

At the Bus Stop Bar on trendy Union Street, which was not as crowded with celebrants as last time, bouncer John Strom sang the praises of his favorite team.

A homeless man with a flowing white beard, sitting on his bedroll on Market Street, said the 49ers were leading 27-3 the last he had heard.

"Why should I sit in there (a bar) in front of an idiot box when I can enjoy the sun out here," he said, confidently predicting a 49er victory.

At the Bus Stop, Denielle Ferroni, the owner's daughter, said, "Montana, oooooh! Definitely Montana. This place just exploded last year when it went down to the wire. It's more mellow this year. The Broncos are losing by too much."

CLIMBS — The $97,200 check he picked up last weekend in the Phoenix Open enabled Jim Thorpe to leap from 23rd place to 6th on the PGA money list for 1990. He has $117,200.

SPORTSCENE

By Fred Lindsey

Special Olympic's winter games

Over 150 athletes trained and competed in Nordic, Alpine and Sit skiing at Maryland Olympics Annual Winter Games held recently at Canaan Valley Resort in Davis, West Virginia.

While the athletes trained and were tested in time trials on the sloping trials of the West Virginia mountains, Canaan Valley had to create a trial for Nordic competition at the Alpine venue because of warm weather conditions and the lack of natural snow.

Members of the Baltimore Ski Club and other volunteer coaches trained new athletes in various skit techniques and helped veteran Special Olympians improve their skills.

Baltimore City Athletes taking part were:

Nordic Skiing Kevin Westry, John Barksdale, Latrice Wright, Brandon Foster, Thomas Hardy, Dante Abraham, Latasha Turpin, Kevin McEachin and Tavon Lane.

Alpine Skiing: Gary Scott, Amy Fortman, Kevin Westry, Maurice Chapman, Floyd Goodlett, Wendy Seymour, Corey Wedlock and Robert Watson.

Fair Lanes PBA open

The excitement of professional bowling will return to the Baltimore/Washington area for the 21st year when the Fair Lanes $150,000 Professional Bowlers Association (PBA) Open takes place at Fair Lanes Woodlawn in Baltimore from Sunday, February 25 through Saturday, March 3, 1990.

The greatest bowlers in the world will be competing for a top prize of $27,000. The defending champion of the Fair Lanes Open is Ron Bell of Akron, Ohio.

There are several new features related to the pro am portion of the 1990 tournament. In the adult pro am, every bowler will receive a blue urethane bowling ball exclusively manufactured for Fair Lanes by Columbia, and every youth pro am bowler will receive a blue polyester Columbia made ball. Also, the Sunday 3 p.m. pro am time will be an adult/youth squad which will enable parents and children to bowl on the same lanes with the pros.

For more information about PBA Open, pro am entries and admission tickets, call the Fair Lanes PBA open Hotline at (301) 944-4079.

Art Monk football camp

With the completion of the Super Bowl, all - Pro Washington Redskin wide receiver Art Monk has announced that he will hold a football instructional program for players aged 8-18, which will involve several members of the Washington Redskins.

Quarterback Mark Rypien; defensive end Charles Mann; tight end Don Warren; tackle Jim Lachey, linebacker Monte Coleman; defensive tackle Darryl Grant, wide receiver Ricky Sanders, cornerback Darrell Green, receivers coach Charles Taylor; offense coach Joe Bugel and Art Monk have all committed themselves to being at the program everyday.

The Camp will be held on the campus of Western Maryland College, Westminister, Maryland. The program will be for one week, June 24-29 and players will be able to stay overnight or attend day sessions.

The cost for the overnight stay is $399 while the day sessions are $245. For more information phone (301) 421-1365 or write to: AMFC, P.O. Box 58, Burtonsville, MD 20866.

Metro classic

The Eighth Annual Metro Classic Basketball Games to benefit the Fuel Fund of Central Maryland, Inc. has been scheduled for the Baltimore Arena on Monday, March 5, 1990. Four basketball championships will be decided beginning with the MSA C title at 2:00 p.m. The MSA B champions tip-off at 4:00 p.m., followed by the Catholic League and Public School City-Wide Girls' championship at 6:00 p.m. and the finale at 8:00 p.m. which will determine the Maryland Scholastic Association A champion.

Tickets for the Classic will go on sale Monday, February 5, 1990 at the following locations: All MSA public, private and parochial schools as well as the Arena's box office, all TicketCenter outlets and Charley Rudo Sports.

Tickets are $4 in advance and $8 at the gate.

Pro boxing returns to Pikesville

Baltimore Pro Bouts' promoter Stu Satosky has announced that pro boxing will return to the Pikesville Armory, February 13th, for the first time in four years.

This six fight card will feature some of the top fighters in the Baltimore area, headed by Baltimore's (No. 6 IBF) Vincent Pettway vs. Efrin Brown from Indianapolis, Ind. Pettway (29-2, 24 KOs) hopes to continue his quest for a world title shot.

One of the undercard matches will feature Baltimore Jr. Welterweight Eddie Van Kirk (19-7), 12 KOs) against Mike English (14-11, 6 KOs) from Columbia, S.C. Van Kirk is the current Maryland State Champion.

In the other semi - feature, Glen Burnie's Jr. Welterweight Chuck "Pit Bull" Sturm (23-2, 12Kos) will fight Jerry Smith (14-8, 7 KOs) from Atlanta, Georgia. Sturm, who is currently ranked No. 13 by the (USBA) United States Boxing Association, has won 16 straight fights.

Baltimore's Percy Harris (5-0, 5KOs) will be featured in a six round fight against an unknown opponent, at this time. Harris is considered the top new boxer in Maryland.

The fights will begin at 8:00 p.m. Ticket prices are $30, ringside; $20, reserved and $15, for general admission.

For more information, call 727-0885.

Ed Waters track club

By Fred Lindsey
Local Sports Editor

"Keeping kids out of trouble and off the streets," is one way of looking at the value of an Ed Waters Track Club.

But beyond the basic intent of the activity, the Ed Waters Track Club is producing many quality athletes as well as good citizens.

Preparing for their last indoor track meet of the season, "The Easterwood Group," as part of the ninety member club will travel to the University of Delaware, in Wilmington, on February 18 to do what they do best - run.

"Over the years, we have had to provide the kind of training and expertise that will help our track and field performers at their schools," said coach Thomas Henderson. "We supplement their running in hopes that they can become first class in their events and eventually win athletic scholarship."

Henderson, a Glen Coe, New York native, who attended Coppin State, has been training kids for track in Baltimore since 1969. Henderson has indicated that it takes a great deal of work and sacrifice for the kids to develop into the types of athlete that will make their high school team become a star and win an athletic scholarship, but the Ed Waters Track Club serves as a basis for that to happen.

"We hope that every kid that comes through the program advances to that level," Henderson said, "But sometimes it's difficult. Kids are sometimes sidetracked into different activities and the pressure of theirpeers often leads them into something negative, but we are always hopeful that track will have a positive influence in their lives."

Advocating strong support from their parents, the Ed Waters Track Club, which takes kids from ages 7-18, encourages parents to be a part of their kids activities, and Henderson says "its the parents that keep the club together."

"I'm only the coach," Henderson said. "I try to be a good, role model, but its the parents that ultimate take the responsibility for their kids, becoming good citizens. Track is only a vehicle for that responsibility."

Claiming to be the best track club in Baltimore City, Henderson feels that the trend for excellence at Ed Waters will continue.

"Every kid on our team has placed third or better in the meets we have entered," Henderson said, "And we don't think that our direction will stop because of our hard work and dedication."

While teaching kids to become better citizens and developing their talent in track and field, the Ed Waters Track Club is always looking to add to their numbers.

"If any kid is interested in joining us," Henderson said, "They should contact Mr. Ralph Durant, coordinator of the Baltimore Track and Field Development Program, at 396-2936 and we will take a look at them."

The Easterwood Group: From left to right (top row) Christa Dorsey, Crystal Johnson, Sean Davis, Ysaha Wilson, Yolanda Little, Steeley Spencer, Mildrena Robinson and Damon Davis.

MSU changes basketball guard

Morgan State University fired two - time basketball coach Nate Frazier, after the Bears lost to crosstown rival Coppin State, last Thursday.

Frazier, who had been coach at Morgan on two separate occasions, had combined 11-year record of 187 wins and 145 losses.

Frazier is being replaced on an interim basis by former UMES basketball and current Morgan assistant football coach Nathaniel Taylor, who has yet to win a game, dropping decisions to UMES and Howard University.

From 1971 to 1978, Frazier was the coach at Morgan. Frazier guided Morgan to the Division II national championship title and then left to take an assistant coaching job with the New York Knicks.

Frazier returned to the Cold Spring campus in 1986, when Morgan moved up to Division I status.

Nat Frazier

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