

NBA free agency begins today; what is Jordan worth?

■ **NBA:** The bidding wars begin for basketball's most recognized hero

By Rick Gano
AP Sports Writer

CHICAGO — Time to pay up for the Chicago Bulls. Michael Jordan is a free agent, and it's going to take a mound of money to keep him.

"I don't know what worth is in this game," Bulls coach Phil Jackson said this spring before he signed a one-year deal worth about \$2.5 million. "If Sylvester Stallone is worth \$20 million for a movie, I can't imagine why Michael won't get \$20 million for a season."

Jordan's value goes beyond the four NBA titles he's helped the Bulls win, his eight scoring titles, his four regular-season MVP awards and four playoff MVPs.

He, more than anyone, has made the

NBA a global league. From Bombay to Buenos Aires, from Rome to Reykjavik, the league's popularity has soared, much like its greatest player does when he takes off for the basket for a double-clutching, tongue-wagging dunk.

His impact as a player and pitchman can't be overestimated.

During the NBA Finals, Commissioner David Stern said the league had no plans to kick in and help with the contract of players, like Jordan, who have done so much for the league by enhancing its worldwide appeal.

At home, Jordan is the most adored figure in a city that revels in its sports teams and heroes. To see Jordan in another team's uniform would be like taking the White House out of Washington, D.C., which happens to be where Jordan's powerful agent, David Falk, runs his business.

Jordan said earlier it would take at least \$18 million a season for him to return to Chicago. Another Falk client, Patrick Ewing, made \$18.7 million last season.

Falk said Jordan's asking price should be higher, and figures like \$20 million and \$25 million per season — maybe for one year, maybe for two — have been mentioned.

Falk wants to negotiate, not with Bulls general manager Jerry Krause, but with head man Jerry Reinsdorf, known for his tough bargaining stances as chairman of both the Bulls and baseball's Chicago White Sox.

It will be a negotiation between two of the most powerful figures in sports. Falk represents 14 free agents in this summer's market.

The negotiations were delayed two days this week by a three-hour lockout and now can't begin until Thursday afternoon.

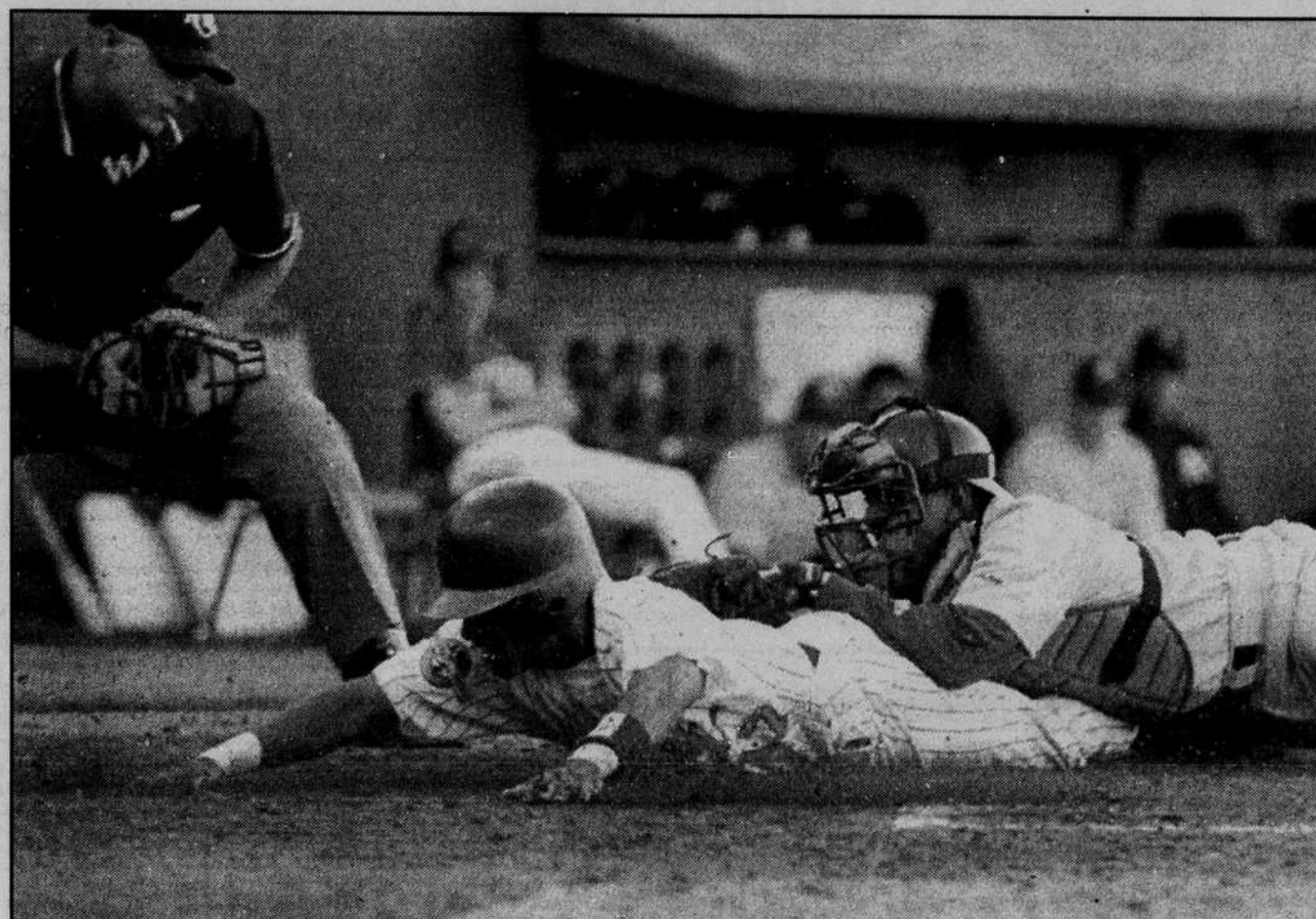
Falk and Reinsdorf will be talking about what's fair for an athlete who makes an estimated \$40 million a season in off-court endorsements but who, by current league standards, has been grossly underpaid at about \$4 million a season.

Jordan feels his impact upon the franchise entitles him to a big-time makeup call in his final contract; the Bulls, who now attract sellout crowds of 24,000-plus, drew only 4,042 fans to the final game of the pre-Jordan era in 1984.

"I'm not looking for (Reinsdorf) to cripple himself from a business standpoint," Jordan said recently.

"I want to see the Chicago Bulls organization maintained. But don't play me for a fool, either. It's a business, but it makes money. I just want to see what he feels I'm worth compared with what his business makes."

Comin' Home



MARK MCTYRE/Emerald

The Eugene Emeralds have stolen the show lately in their run toward the South division lead of the Northwest League.

Strong play brings Ems within reach of lead

■ **BASEBALL:** Good hitting and pitching have kept the Emeralds close to division-leading Boise

By Mark McTyre
Sports Editor

The Eugene Emeralds are on a roll and will be bringing their act back to Civic Stadium Friday night.

First-year field manager Jim Saul has his players in sync and making a run for the South division lead of the Northwest League. The Ems have won eight of their last 10 games, including a streak of seven in a row, entering their two-game road series versus division-leading Boise. Depending on how Eugene fares against the Hawks, the Ems could be within two games of the leaders when they play visiting Yakima Friday.

Pooh Hines and Corey Pointer have led the Ems during the team's streak of success. Hines' .349 batting average is currently fourth among league leaders, while he leads all players in hits (30) and triples (5).

Pointer, who hit his first home run of the season during Eugene's last home stand,

has exploded since then with his power stroke. He currently leads the league in homers with eight, and is among the top five in runs batting in (20).

As a team, the Ems lead all rivals in batting with a .278 average.

Eugene's pitching hasn't been anything to gripe about either. The Ems' staff has a combined earned run average (ERA) of 3.86 while leading the league in strikeouts (205). Jimmy Osting is among the league's best, holding a 2-0 record and a 2.14 ERA in 21 innings pitched.

While the four-game series against Yakima will be exciting, there will be two promotional nights as well. Friday's contest will offer the first 3,000 fans in attendance seat cushion sponsored by PeaceHealth, while on Saturday night the first 1,000 children 14-years-old and younger will receive a baseball bat compliments of AT&T and KMTR.



POINTER

Oregon coach leads US golf squad to win

Oregon women's golf head coach Renee Baumgartner helped lead a group of U.S. collegians to a 34-26 victory over a Japanese team at the 21st annual U.S.-Japan Collegiate Golf Championships last week.

Baumgartner, making her fourth competitive trip to Japan in eight years, guided the women's all-stars while Auburn's Mike Griffin coached the men. Baumgartner took a group of Pac-10 all-stars on a 27-day tour of the Orient in 1989. She returned to Japan with the 1992 Oregon contingent and a Southern California squad in the fall of 1993.

Erika Wicoff of Indiana and Wake Forest's Laura Philo were named most valuable players for Baumgartner's squad. Wicoff shot an even par (72) in the second round as did Philo in the third round to lead the women. The twosome claimed a team victory on the first day as well.

On the men's side, Heath Slocum of Alabama and Arizona's Ted Purdy were named most valuable players. Slocum fired a second-round two-under par 70, and Purdy shot a 69 in the final round to lead the men. Both men combined for a team victory on the first day.

Licensing rights strips school of logo

■ **TRADEMARK:** An Ohio high school loses its mascot because it duplicates Notre Dame's

By Nancy Amour
AP Sports Writer

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — Notre Dame's tiny leprechaun is causing some big problems for an Ohio high school.

Catholic Central was forced to abandon the logo it had used for nearly 20 years after Notre Dame officials discovered last fall it was a copy of their trademarked leprechaun. That irked some residents of Springfield, Ohio, who've been known as the Fighting Irish for as long as they can remember because of their Irish heritage.

Even worse, the school had just redone its gymnasium floor and put up new score-

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