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Problems? Trade them all away

Want to trade?
I'll give you my
honor-roll student
who is demanding
the biggest allowance in parent-
ing history — we'll call him Mike
for the purposes of this column
— and his journeyman sidekick
who hangs at the "hot corner" —
he'll go by Todd.

In exchange, I'll take four of
your kids, plus the one with the
good arm who is on the way.
Which four?

I'm glad you asked. I'll relieve
you of the three all-stars that led
their little-league team to the
world championship — I believe
their names are Sheff, Bobby Bo
and CJ — and their older brother,
Jim.

What's that you say? Mike and
Todd eat too much, and your
boss — we'll call him Wayne —
continues to cut your supply of
food stamps? Well, they'll de-
mand as many skinny kids as
you desire on the open market.

Yes? All right, nice dealing
with you.

Although the above situation
is purely hypothetical — no, I
don't have any kids, and if I did,
chances are none of them would
ever make the honor roll — with
a little stretch of the imagination
it can be compared to one of the
biggest trades in major league
baseball history that took place
last week.

The Los Angeles Dodgers sent
franchise player Mike Piazza,
who is widely regarded as the
best-hitting catcher to ever play
the game, and third baseman
Todd Zeile to the bargain-base-
ment Florida Marlins for their
three remaining stars — outfield-
er Gary Sheffield, third base-
man/outfielder Bobby Bonilla
and catcher Charles Johnson —
veteran outfielder Jim Eisenreich
and minor-league pitcher
Manuel Barrios.

The deal is a prime example of
the way trades have evolved in
the modern professional sports
world.

Increasingly, swaps these days

seem to be
made for one of
two main rea-
sons: either
teams are get-
ting rid of un-
happy or trou-
ble-making
players, or they
are dealing for
economic rea-
sons. Often,
both these mo-
tives are the cause behind any ex-
change.

A few months ago, it appeared
that the Dodgers would never
part with the sweet-swinging Pi-
azza, who hit .362 with 40
homers and 124 runs batted in
1997. But Piazza, who is in the
last season of a two-year, \$15
million contract, turned down
L.A.'s most lucrative offer, re-
portedly \$80 million for six sea-
sons.

When the world-champion
Marlins agreed to a deal the
Dodgers could not resist, Los An-
geles did not hesitate to show Pi-
azza the door. However, Piazza's
(and Zeile's, for that matter) mov-
ing is not done.

Florida — which sheds mil-
lionaire players faster than own-
er H. Wayne Huizenga's Block-
buster Video stores can satisfy
with you with the latest release
— is expected to trade both play-
ers by the July 31 deadline. The
Marlins have already cut their
payroll from \$53 million at the
end of 1997 to \$24 million.

Would this deal have been
made if player value were the
only variable considered? Piazza
is definitely a spectacular offen-
sive talent, but, for the sake of all
you rapidly diminishing Marlins

fans, I certainly hope your presi-
dent, Don Smiley, would not
trade the team away if he had a
choice.

Do you think these extraneous-
circumstance swaps are only
happening in the lopsided world
of professional baseball, where
the rich get richer and the poor
get poorer?

Think again.

Last week, the NBA's Sacra-
mento Kings and Washington
Wizards traded problems.

Washington sent troublesome
but talent-laden power forward
Chris Webber to one of the
league's historically worst teams,
Sacramento, for all-star guard
Mitch Richmond and power for-
ward Otis Thorpe.

Although the Wizards got old-
er, smaller and, some would ar-
gue, less talented with the ex-
change, they were desperate to
do something to shake up an un-
derachieving, tumultuous roster.

Webber had run into numer-
ous legal problems during his
stay in the nation's capital, in-
cluding an arrest for marijuana
and assault charges and a sexual
assault complaint, and had been
unable to mesh successfully with
"Fab-Five" teammate Juwan
Howard, who plays the same big
forward position.

Meanwhile, Richmond had ex-
pressed his desire to escape the
losing Kings on many occasions.
He is a free agent after next sea-
son, and Sacramento knew it
would not be able to keep him.

Consider this deal yet another
example of the prototypical
1990s big-time sports trade.

And Chris, have fun playing
for one of the NBA's bottom feed-
ers — once again, calling timeout
will do you no good.

*Tim Pyle is a sports reporter for the
Emerald. He can be reached at
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Ole Miss football player drowns in pond

*Joey Embry, 21, apparently drowned
following a diabetic-related seizure
while retrieving golf balls*

The Associated Press

STARKVILLE, Miss. — The body of Joey Embry,
a University of Mississippi offensive tackle, was
found early Tuesday in a pond on a golf course.

Embry, 21, drowned apparently after suffering a
diabetic-related seizure, said Oktibbeha County
coroner Michael Hunt.

Drugs and alcohol were not suspected to be a fac-
tor, he said.

Embry and two friends from his hometown in
Bruce had gone to the Mississippi State University
Golf Course late Monday night to search for golf
balls. They apparently had played the course earlier
in the day.

Soon after they arrived about 11 p.m., his com-
panions could not find the 6-foot-6, 300-pound Em-
bry. After searching the course, they called 911 at
1:19 a.m. Tuesday, and Embry's body was recov-

ered from the pond about an hour later.

"We've lost a member of our football family and
our hearts go out to Joey's family. This is a tremen-
dous loss for all of us," said Ole Miss coach Tommy
Tuberville.

Embry reportedly had suffered several diabetic-
related seizures in the recent months, including at
least one during a football practice.

As a freshman in 1996, Embry played in all 11
games and earned his first letter.

After missing the 1997 season because of a back
injury, Embry was listed as the No. 2 right tackle af-
ter spring practice this year. He was expected to get
plenty of playing time this fall.

"Joey had worked so hard to come back from
some health problems and back surgery," Tu-
berville said. "He had shown a lot of courage and
determination and was projected as a possible
starter this fall. Our players looked up to him for the
way he had battled through some tough times."

Services were set for Thursday.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Bleakney is Pac-10 athlete of the week

Oregon's Gregg Bleakney has
been named the Pacific-10 Con-
ference men's field athlete of
the week after his triple jump
mark of 53 feet, 9 3/4 inches in
the Oregon Twilight last Fri-
day.

The jump — a personal best
for Bleakney by six inches —
was just 1 1/2 inches off the
Oregon record of 59-11 3/4 and
moved him to the top of the
Pac-10 triple-jump list.

Bleakney, who finished sec-
ond at the 1996 Pac-10s and
fourth at the 1998 conference
meet, will go after his first Pac-
10 title this weekend at Stan-
ford.

California's Ross Bomben
earned Pac-10 men's track ath-
lete of the week honors after
defending his conference de-
cathlon title. Bomben scored a
personal best 7,808 points and
finished first in four of the 10
events.

Amy Skiersz of Arizona was
named the Pac-10 women's

track athlete of the week after
winning the 3,000 meters at the
Cardinal Qualifier with an
NCAA automatic qualifying
time of nine minutes, 12.31
seconds. It was the fastest colle-
giate time of the year in that
event.

Closing out the week's
awards was Stanford's Tracye
Lawyer, who was named the
conference's women's field ath-
lete of the week after winning
the Pac-10 heptathlon title with
a school record 5,809 points. It
was her second straight title.