

SPORTS BRIEFS

NBA's No. 1 pick signs with Bologna

BOLOGNA, Italy - Michael Olowokandi's first pro basketball workout was far from the NBA.

The No. 1 pick in the June draft practiced with European club champion Kinder Bologna Tuesday, hours after signing a contract that allows him to return to the United States if the NBA lockout ends.

Future of Foreman-Holmes fight looks dim

NEW YORK - Larry Holmes may still fight at some point in the next month. He just may not be trading punches with George Foreman.

Promoter Roger Levitt was not available for comment Tuesday regarding the status of the Jan. 23 heavyweight fight at the Houston Astrodome. But Holmes lawyer, Russ Sauer, said Tuesday night that the fight is in serious jeopardy of being canceled.

"Larry is frustrated for this thing to fall apart at this late hour," Sauer said. "This is a fight we've been working on for more than five years. He's in good shape and wants to get in the ring."

Ryan, Brett, Yount Voted into Baseball's Hall of Fame

NEW YORK - Not since the election of the Babe himself has Cooperstown seen a rookie class quite like this.

In one of the most eagerly awaited Hall of Fame elections, Ryan, Brett and Yount all were voted into the baseball shrine Tuesday on their first try.

"I think it's the final chapter of my career," said Ryan, who came within one vote of receiving the highest percentage in history. "From an individual standpoint for a player, it's the highest honor."

NBA Players To Vote Wednesday

NEW YORK - With no one saying if it will be a secret ballot or a show of hands, locked-out NBA players started arriving in town Tuesday to cast votes that could determine if there will be a season.

Wednesday's vote comes on the eve of the possible cancellation of the rest of the season. The balloting will be open to all NBA players, although the union emphasized that it is not a ratification vote.

Instead, players will be asked whether they support the union negotiating committee's recommendation to reject the owners' final offer.

Boxing-A still angry Tyson erupts in conference call

PHOENIX, Arizona - In case anyone doubted it, Mike Tyson is still a very angry man.

It was about 25 minutes into a mostly mundane teleconference call with reporters Tuesday when Tyson, who had seemed relaxed and cordial, suddenly launched into an obscenity-laced diatribe aimed at society he said rejects his credibility and automatically believes "the sleaziest" people in the world over him.

"A supreme court of law will say I believe" other people, whom Tyson said rob gas stations and commit other crimes because "my credibility is shot."

Couch reportedly to skip senior season

Kentucky-Quarterback Tim Couch reportedly has decided to leave the college game for the pros, where he could be the first pick in the upcoming NFL Draft.

Broadcast reports say Couch has decided to skip his senior season and will file for the draft sometime before Friday's deadline. The 6-foot-5, 221-pound Couch is considered among the top quarterback prospects in the April draft and could be taken by the expansion Cleveland Browns, who own the first pick.

SPORTS

Martin lifts Volunteers to national title

TEMPE, Ariz. — Tee Martin stood amid an ocean of orange and celebrated Tennessee's first national championship since 1951. Marcus Outzen slumped in a corner, head in hands, dismayed by Florida State's defeat.

Martin, who spent the previous two seasons in the shadow of top NFL draft pick Peyton Manning, had touchdown passes of 79 yards to Peerless Price and 4 yards to Shawn Bryson to cap the Volunteers' perfect season with a 23-16 Fiesta Bowl win Monday night.

"We had to prove to everybody we were the No. 1 team in the nation," said Martin, whose Vols were underdogs in the game despite being undefeated and top-ranked. "We had a chip on our shoulders. We won all our games. And we still didn't get our respect."

The Volunteers, 13-0 for the first time in school history, received all 70 first-place votes in the final Associated Press media poll. Ohio State was second, followed by Florida State.

Under the new Bowl Championship Series format, Tennessee was crowned national champion in the USA Today/ESPN coaches' poll immediately after the game.

Tennessee coach Philip Fulmer, long a proponent of a playoff, benefited from the first BCS championship. "This is the best system anyone has come up with so far," he said today as he accepted the writers' and

coaches' championship trophies. "I'd still like a playoff." But the meeting of the nation's top two teams was far from the classic that organizers had envisioned when they set up a No. 1 vs. No. 2 showdown in the Fiesta Bowl. It featured seven turnovers and 165 yards in penalties, and very little offense at times.

Tee Martin did what Peyton Manning couldn't do in at Tennessee: Win a national title. (AP)

In many ways, the very imperfect victory was a microcosm of a Tennessee season in which the Volunteers stumbled but never fell. "All year long we've been called a team of destiny," Fulmer said.

"During the course of the year, we did what we had to do. It wasn't always perfect, it wasn't always pretty, but they found a way to get it done."

Fulmer saluted his players. "It's just an incredible run by an incredible football team," he said. The coach said the national championship would have an impact on the program.

"I know the expectations are going to be high," he said. "At Tennessee, they always are. With success comes expectations and we accept that. We want to be in the mix of people known as the best football teams in the country."

Florida State, which has finished in the top four in the final poll for the past 12 seasons, made too many mistakes and couldn't generate much

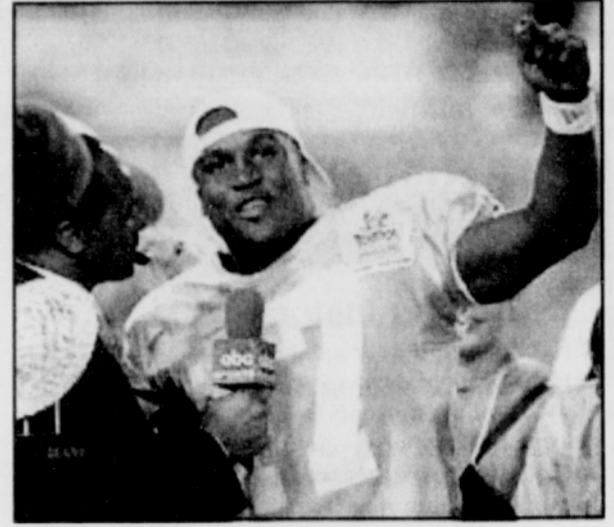
offense. Sophomore quarterback Marcus Outzen, making his third start in place of the injured Chris Weinke, was harassed into a 9-of-22 performance for 145 yards. He threw two interceptions, one of which was returned 54 yards for a touchdown by Dwayne Goodrich, and was dropped for 54 yards in losses.

"I think I did some good things. Of course, I did some bad things," Outzen said. "In every aspect of the game, our team made mistakes." Florida State coach Bobby Bowden said his team showed the effects of not having played in 44 days.

"We were a very, very rusty football team," Bowden said. "They made more big plays than we did. We had a hard time getting the ball to our threat, and they deserved to win."

The Seminoles' threat, wide receiver Peter Warrick, was held to one catch for 7 yards — though he did add an electrifying 51-yard punt return, evading four tacklers, to help set up one of Florida State's scores.

Martin, who had thrown just 16 passes the past two years in a backup role, did what Manning couldn't — win a national title. He was 11 of 18 for 278 yards against the nation's toughest pass defense, while Price caught four passes for 199 yards and was voted the game's MVP. "(Martin) played an outstanding game," Fulmer said. "He knows how to manage a game. As the season has gone along, he's gotten better and better. I would



Tee Martins celebrates the Vols win at the Fiesta Bowl

not trade Tee Martin for anyone in the country." The Vols took a 14-0 lead on a pair of touchdowns in a 25-second span of the second quarter and led 14-9 at halftime. Neither team scored in the third period. Martin threw his second touchdown pass, the 79-yarder to Price, with 9:17 to go to put the Vols ahead 20-9 and Jeff Hall kicked a 23-yard field goal with 6:01 left. But the Seminoles (11-2) rallied. Florida State cut the lead to 23-16 on Outzen's 7-yard scoring run with 3:42 left. Sebastian Janikowski's ensuing onside kick was recovered by Florida State, but officials ruled the ball hit the kicker's hand after it

had traveled only 7 yards and the Vols took possession.

Florida State recovered a Tennessee fumble two minutes later, giving the Seminoles a final chance. But on the first play after the fumble, Outzen's long pass was intercepted by Steve Johnson and the Vols ran out the clock.

"It feels great, it feels great," Martin said in the middle of a wild celebration at midfield. "All the adversity we faced — all the guys that went to the NFL last year, all the shoes we had to fill." Said Price: "Nobody believed us."

They probably do now.

Portland Interscholastic League

SPORTS STANDINGS WINTER STANDINGS 1998/99

Table with columns: BOYS BASKETBALL, W, L, TO. Lists teams like Benson, Cleveland, Jefferson, Wilson, Grant, Roosevelt, Franklin, Lincoln, Madison, Marshall.

Table with columns: GIRLS BASKETBALL, W, L. Lists teams like Jefferson, Wilson, Benson, Grant, Lincoln, Madison, Marshall, Roosevelt, Cleveland, Franklin.

Table with columns: BOYS SWIMMING, W, L, T. Lists teams like Lincoln, Benson, Wilson, Grant, Cleveland, Franklin, Madison, Jefferson, Roosevelt.

Table with columns: GIRLS SWIMMING, W, L. Lists teams like Grant, Lincoln, Benson, Cleveland, Wilson, Franklin, Madison, Jefferson, Roosevelt.

Table with columns: WRESTLING, W, L, TO. Lists teams like Benson, Cleveland, Franklin, Grant, Jefferson, Lincoln, Madison, Marshall, Roosevelt, Wilson.

Seahawks dangle 5-year, \$21-million deal for Holmgren

The ball's in his court. He has to do what he has to do.



said Monday that the Packers had given Holmgren permission to talk with the Ravens, Eagles and Seahawks.

"I'll give this to you today, but in the future I don't think this is my job," Wolf said. "It's Mike Holmgren's thing. It's all Mike."

The ball's in his court. He has to do what he has to do.

Holmgren's agent, Bob Lamonte, didn't return phone calls seeking comment on whether Holmgren would meet with any of the three suitors.

Holmgren could still return to Green Bay and sign an extension that would make him the highest-paid coach in the NFL at about \$4 million per season, but he'd still lack the final say on personnel matters that he desperately covets.

Holmgren delayed his season-ending news conference until Tuesday, but he might have tipped his hand about his intentions after San Francisco's 30-27 victory, when he said of the Packers: "They'll be good for a long time."

On his weekly television show Monday night, Holmgren said he expected to know very soon where he'll be coaching next year. "I would suspect things would happen rather quickly now because there's a lot of places that are open and we'll see. If it doesn't happen quickly, then it won't happen."

According to several players, Holmgren was emotional at his end-of-year meeting with the team Monday, leaving many wondering if he'd coached his last game for the Packers, who despite Reggie

White's fabulous farewell season, struggled through an 11-6 year and fell from Super Bowl status.

If Mike Holmgren gives the thumbs up to the Seahawks' offer, Green Bay will be coachless.

"There are a lot of things we don't know, what the future is going to bring to this football team," receiver Antonio Freeman said.

"This is a family to us. From Reggie to Holmgren to the training staff, it's one big family. You hate to lose anybody, Coach, Reggie, whoever. It's real life, though."

Freeman said in an ideal world, Holmgren would stay put to help revive a team that underachieved in a season marked by injury and inconsistency.

"This is real life, unfortunately. This isn't a soap opera," Freeman said. "The man has a family of his own to take care of. If a more prosperous situation presents itself, I'd take it. Sometimes opportunities come only once in a lifetime."

That's Holmgren's quandary — if he signs a long-term deal to stay in Green Bay, it won't contain an escape clause.

So, would he leave an ideal coaching situation in Green Bay for a less-than-appealing dual role elsewhere because he can't wait for something better? Dorsey Levens said Holmgren didn't hint at what his future held.

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