

SPORTS BRIEFS

British Open Ratings Slip Slightly as Lawrie Captures Playoff

This year, Lawrie, who started Sunday tied for 14th place at 10-over-par, won a playoff with 1997 British Open winner Justin Leonard and France's Jean Van de Velde, who led by five shots going into the final round.

Van de Velde needed just a double-bogey on the 18th hole to clinch a win, but his triple-bogey forced the playoff. The three players tied at 6-over-par 290 at the end of four rounds.

Lawrie was the first Scotsman to win the British Open since Sandy Lyle in 1985.

Ratings measure the number of U.S. households with televisions watching the game, while the share is the number of households with televisions turned on watching the event.

Cone Comes Back to Stadium As a Hero

NEW YORK (AP) - David Letterman asked for him. So did Regis and Kathie Lee. The Hall of Fame called, and umpires sent over some balls to be signed.

Everyone wanted David Cone on Monday.

"I was completely disoriented for a period of time," the New York Yankees ace said. "I probably still am."

Cone took away just one memento from his perfect game Sunday against Montreal. He kept the final ball, and plans to give it to his dad.

Cone's jersey will end up in Cooperstown once it's presented to Hall of Fame representatives on Aug. 3 before a game against Toronto. Other souvenirs from his first no-hitter since a seven-inning job in Little League - and the 14th perfect game in modern history - will go to help charities.

After talking to fellow perfect-game pitcher David Wells in Toronto following his gem, Cone spent the night out toasting with Derek Jeter, Tino Martinez and Chuck Knoblauch. He talked with his family back in Kansas City - his father listened to the final innings on the radio, via the Internet.

All the activity on Yogi Berra Day - Don Larsen, who pitched a perfect game at Yankee Stadium in the 1956 World Series, threw out the ceremonial first ball - left Cone a bit "frazzled," he said.

Irwin Wins Third Ameritech Senior Open in Five Years

LONG GROVE, Ill. (AP) - On the first day of the Ameritech Seniors, Hale Irwin had one of those rounds where everything was off. Putting, chipping, driving - it was all just kind of blah, and his score, a 1-over 73, reflected it.

He thought about practicing afterward. Instead, he put the clubs away, worked out and then called his son for some putting advice.

"I had a good workout, got rid of some of my frustrations," he said. "My son just gave me that little bit of a putting tip, and I putted very well the last two days."

That's an understatement. "He made every putt he needed to make," said Raymond Floyd, Irwin's playing partner Sunday.

That's why Irwin has yet another trophy. He shot a 5-under 67 Sunday for a 1-stroke victory at the Ameritech Senior Open. It was his second straight victory at the Ameritech, and third in five years.

Armstrong has lead going into 15th stage of Tour de France

ST. GAUDENS, France (Ticker) - The Tour de France resumes today as American Lance Armstrong carries a seven-minute, 44-second cushion into the 107-mile 15th stage to Piau-Engaly.

Monday's final rest day at the event was not without incident as stage 11 winner Ludo Dierckx of Belgium was excluded by the Italian team Lampre-Daikin after admitting to taking a banned substance.

Dierckx claimed the 123-mile leg from Bourg d'Oisans to St. Etienne on Thursday and subsequently passed a mandatory drug test.

However, the 34-year-old Belgian champion confessed to taking the corticoid Synacthen to cure some tendonitis. Riders must declare if they are using such medication or face the possibility of sanctions.

Dierckx had a prescription to take the drug, but did so without informing his team's staff. Monday he was sent home by Lampre-Daikin, which does not have a rider in the top 20 in the overall standings.

SPORTS

Don King's Promotional Success, A Rite Of Passage

By COLLIE J. NICHOLSON
COMMENTARY

Over the years, Don King made boxing feel good about itself by promoting the biggest events in the sports' history... That's what sets him apart.

To say that King is a boxing icon is an understatement that is tantamount to claiming that Walt Disney was a minor movie mogul or that Bamum and Bailey were minor minstrels searching for a big top they could call their own.

To denigrate King—the acknowledged best promoter the fight game has ever seen—is an exercise that takes the green out of envy and is an abuse of one's right to be silly.

The abuse of silliness, however, is an exercise that is being done against King all over again and something that envious sportswriters and the U.S. Justice Department seem to be making sport of.

It is hard to believe, in view of King's excellent record as a promoter, that there are still dissidents out there who seem bent on giving Don's reputation another shellacking. Like in the past, though, King is likely to come out of all of the acrimony, the innuendo and the false claims smelling like a rose.

Talk and news show host Geraldo Rivera said on a recent "Geraldo Rivera Live show," on CNBC Television, "The government has sucker-punched King three times." Each time King has emerged exonerated and the chances are better than even he will survive this latest try at besmirching his dignity a fourth time.

Criticism of King is based on perception, not reality, as famed boxing

trainer Don Turner pointed out.

While the government's effort to make King the proverbial three-times loser has been unsuccessful, the smart choice now, it seems, would be for the feds, and the media, to toss aside the silliness and look at the good that King has done for the sport as well as what he has contributed to society.

King is in a stew right now over whether or not he conspired with International Boxing Federation President Bob Lee, Sr. to influence ratings and ranking of fighters.

Detractors say he did. King and Lee insist that they have done nothing wrong. It is not Don's nature to take licks quietly.

For what it's worth, it may be noted that both King and Lee are African-Americans and the most prominent members of their race in boxing today. While the IBF is at center ring in this controversy, it may also be worthy of noting that the other two major fight organizations—the World Boxing Association and the World Boxing Council—have summarily honored King for his contributions to the fight game.

In 1994, the WBC named King "The Greatest Promoter of All-Time." Also in 1994, the WBA named King "The Promoter of the Century." Thus, there seems to be no squabbling and no adversary feelings among the other two boxing organizations about King's revered place in boxing. Their declarations along with King's uncountable—but very notable—accomplishments and achievement in boxing are the very stuff of which legends are made, plus proof enough that King is a man of considerable talent and unbesmirchable charac-

ter, despite what you hear and read to the contrary.

What Don King has done for boxing would fill volumes. To wit, here are just some of what King has done to move boxing to an exalted status:

- King was the first promoter to advocate that professional boxing immediately institute well-posted, official round-by-round scoring—a major issue, currently being considered, in boxing today. He made his seven-point proposal in a New York Times article, Oct. 3, 1993.

- In 11 major promotions in 1993, more than 300,000 people purchased tickets to watch fights promoted by King.

- King was the first fight promoter to establish his own television network the Don King Sports and Entertainment Network (DKSEN). It was established in 1982 and televised a fight once a month.

- King formed the second pay-per-view sports and entertainment network, KingVision in January 1991.

- King was the promoter for such classic boxing matches as "The Thrilla in Manila," "The Rumble in the Jungle," "The Sound and the Fury," "The Grand Slam of Boxing," and other multi-million dollar fights that featured such boxing luminaries as Muhammad Ali, Joe Frazier, George Foreman, Larry Holmes, Mike Tyson, Sugar Ray Leonard and Evander Holyfield, to mention a few of the many of boxing's all-time greats.

- King's promotion of Holyfield vs. Tyson was the largest TV audience in the history of boxing. The fight was watched by more than 1.5 billion people across the globe.

- King was the first fight promoter to put three world heavyweight cham-



Don King

ampionship bouts on one card—Nov. 9, 1996, at the MGM Grand—Tyson vs. Holyfield (WBA); Moorer vs. Botha (IBF), and Akinwande vs. Zolkin (WBO).

- On February 20, 1963, King promoted the fight between Julio Cesar Chavez and Greg Haugen in Mexico City that drew 136,274 fight fans, the largest live attendance in the history of boxing.

- King was the originator of the record-setting \$150 million Jackson Victory tour. He also negotiated the Michael Jackson Pepsi-Cola commercial, one of the most successful TV spots in history.

- No other promoter can match King's record. No other can come within hailing distance. No other will fill his place in the history of boxing. The records that he has achieved, including being named to the sports' Hall of Fame, will stand well into the next millennium.

King's reputation for greatness is not just associated with boxing. He has been a mover and a shaker and a

giver to more community and civic causes than even he can enumerate. When a cause has called, King has responded, in no small manner.

He has been especially kind to education, contributing million of dollars to colleges and universities all over the nation.

Two years ago at the New Orleans Superdome at the famed Bayou Classic, King was given a Lifetime Achievement Award by Grambling State University.

Similarly, he received the NAACP's President's Award and was recently honored as the New York Republican Council's "Man of the Year." For more than 30 years King has given away turkeys during holiday seasons to the poor and homeless.

So many other King contributions have been made and kept well away from public notice. It is the nature of the man to be giving and beneficent, perhaps like few other philanthropists of our time.

He gives generously to the NAACP, united Negro College Fund, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Foundation, the Indiana Black Expo, the Simon Weisenthal Center, the National Hispanic Scholarship Fund, the National Coalition of Title I/Chapter I Parents, Wheelchair Charities, the Our Children's Foundation...and on and on and on.

His beneficence has crossed racial barriers and goes by one guideline: Need.

Thus, it seems pointless and without factual basis for detractors of King to again be working the rumor mill, creating innuendo, and framing allegations which can only be called sinister, purposeless and totally vindictive actions.

Davis Cup Celebration Crumbles

By STEVE WILSTEIN
© THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BROOKLINE, Mass. (AP) - In the end, Tom Gullikson knew he made a bad deal with Pete Sampras, one that blew apart the team's spirit and led to a shocking collapse against Australia.

By accepting Sampras' insistence that he play only doubles, Gullikson set up a weekend of acrimony and suspected flimflammy that tainted the centennial celebration of the Davis Cup at its birthplace.

"Maybe it is a character builder," Gullikson said, trying to muster a

weak smile after the Americans went down in flames, 4-1, in this quarterfinal. "Hopefully, we learn from these lessons and go on. ... You've got to play the cards you're dealt."

When Gullikson accepted Sampras' condition, he guaranteed endless speculation about a last-minute substitution for Martin or Courier. Gullikson had until Thursday to change his mind, and when he put Martin and Courier in singles the Australians barely suppressed their glee.

No sooner was that match over than Longwood was rife with rumors about Martin being injured.

Former Rage Coach on Blazers' List

Three-time Olympian and former Philadelphia Rage coach Anne Donovan has joined Lin Dunn, Linda Hargrove and K.C. Jones on the list of candidates to become the Trail Blazers' first WNBA coach and general manager.

Donovan was in her first season with the Rage when the American Basketball League folded in December. Despite being one of the worst draws in the ABL, the Rage was in second place in the Eastern Conference at 9-5.

Before joining Philadelphia,

Donovan spent three years at East Carolina. She was an assistant coach on the 1998 Olympic team, and was an All-America forward at Old Dominion.

Blazers senior vice president Harry Hutt said the team hopes to have its final interview done within the next week or so. The team is hoping to have the hire made by the end of the month.

The Blazers must sell 5,500 season tickets by Oct. 15 to officially secure the franchise. The team is scheduled to begin play next summer.

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