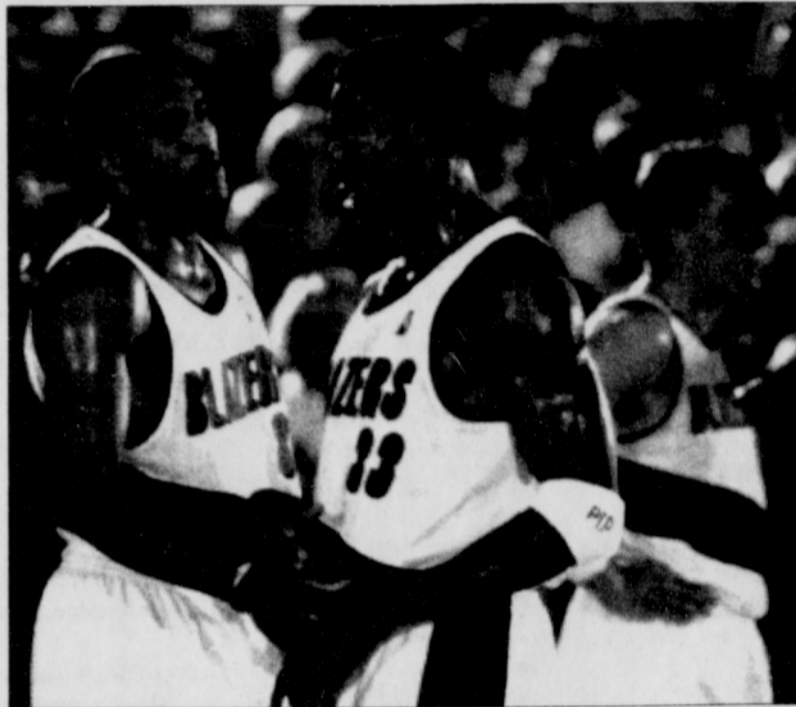




Metro/Sports

Trail Blazers and Warriors face off in Oakland



• Trail Blazers hope to extend winning streak

ASSOCIATED PRESS

GAME: Portland Trail Blazers (38-11) at Golden State Warriors (12-35). TIME: Tuesday, 10:30 p.m. EST. The Portland Trail Blazers look to extend their winning streak to five when they head to Oakland, Calif. for the first of a home-and-home set with the Golden State Warriors. The Blazers posted a 107-100 win over the Los Angeles Clippers last Wednesday for their fourth straight victory and 10th in their last 11 games. Arvydas Sabonis led Portland with

23 points and Steve Smith added 17. Rasheed Wallace chipped in 15 points and 14 rebounds. At 38-11, the Blazers own the NBA's best record this season and lead the Los Angeles Lakers by 1/2 game in the Pacific Division. Portland leads the league with a 47.3 team field goal percentage and is tied with San Antonio for the league lead in points allowed (89.3). After Tuesday Portland plays six of its next seven at the Rose Garden, where the Blazers have posted the NBA's best home record of 20-8.

Tiger's impact: raising interest, raising games

ASSOCIATED PRESS

The 2-mile stretch of road from Interstate 5 in San Diego to Torrey Pines Golf Course was bumper to bumper about 30 minutes before Tiger Woods teed off in the first round of the Buick Invitational. Ticket sales were astronomical. Officials estimated the gallery at close to 40,000 for the final round and considered using the adjacent North Course - where half the field played the first two rounds - as a parking lot. The overnight ratings? Only the highest for a PGA Tour event in the last 13 years.

No, this is not the Tiger Tour. He will not win every week, as Mickelson proved Sunday. He will not play every week, as the Phoenix Open found out two weeks ago and Doral will learn when the deadline comes and goes a week from Friday. But while Woods builds upon short-term streaks and long-term records every time he plays, he is bringing the rest of the PGA Tour with him. Even Mickelson attests to that. Mickelson could have felt slighted by all the attention on Woods. After all, San Diego is his hometown, Torrey Pines like a home course. And as far as his credentials, only one other

player in his 20s - Woods - has won more on tour. Instead, Mickelson embraced reality. "The way Tiger has played the last six events, and prior to that, has generated a lot of interest for the game of golf," Mickelson said. "Galleries were so large this week, they couldn't accommodate it parking-wise. And I'm a beneficiary of that." Never mind that more people waited to watch Woods than stayed to watch Mickelson, who built a big lead and held off a gallant charge. After tying for the lead, Woods bogeyed two of the next three holes to squander a chance to win his seventh straight

PGA Tour start. But the only thing he really handed Mickelson was the size of the winner's check - \$540,000, three times greater than when Mickelson won the Buick in 1993. The total purse this year will approach \$158 million, most of that the result of a TV contract that was negotiated about the time Woods first broadened golf's popularity by winning the '97 Masters. "I'm making more money because Tiger is helping increase these purses," Mickelson said. "He is creating more excitement in the game of golf. All the players are beneficiaries."

Reds manager excited about Griffey

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cincinnati Reds manager Jack McKeon learned first hand the excitement caused by the trade that landed Ken Griffey Jr. Since Thursday's big trade, McKeon has had trouble calling the office because of the jammed telephone lines. "I haven't been able to call in there in two days," he told the Burlington Times-News from his Elon College home over weekend. "The lines are

just tied up." But McKeon is happy for the interest in the team and its new star player. "It's exciting really," said McKeon, who was won the NL Manager of the Year for guiding the Reds to within a game of the National League playoffs in 1999. "You've got a chance to put the best player in baseball in the lineup and that's kind of nice. A few weeks ago, McKeon figured any possibility of landing Griffey had passed.

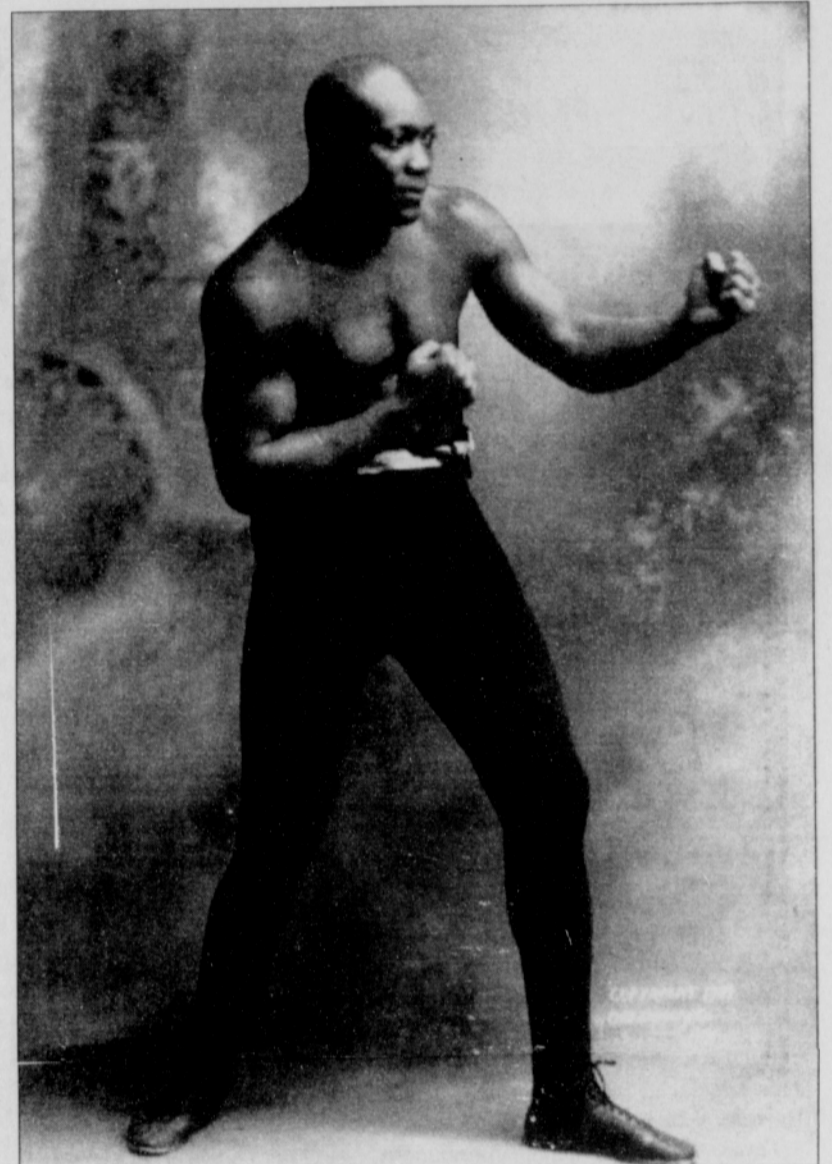
"It looked like it was dead in the water. Then all of a sudden it turned around," he said. "Seattle put themselves in a pretty tough position. ... The longer we waited, the more patience we had, we knew the price would come lower." McKeon likes the odds of Griffey added to the lineup to bring the Reds more success in 2000. He said Cincinnati didn't give up too much, losing pitchers with a combined five wins in the trade. "You're still going to win with pitching," he said. "(Having Griffey) will take a lot of

pressure off our younger players. Everything seems to be in place." McKeon starts spring training with the Reds this week in Sarasota, Fla., after keeping a relatively quiet schedule lately. He went to New Jersey and New York for award presentations and attended a dedication of a baseball field in his hometown of South Amboy, N.J. Griffey's first spring training workout is scheduled for Feb. 23. "When Griffey starts on the 23rd, it will be a zoo," McKeon said.

2000 NFL free agent signings

FREE AGENT SIGNING TO PLAY WITH A NEW TEAM	Philadelphia Tennessee 6 years, \$30 million	Fred Thomas New Orleans Seattle 2 years, undisclosed	Marcus Coleman NY Jets 5 years, \$20 million
PLAYER NEW TEAM PREV TEAM TERMS	Bruce Smith, de Washington Buffalo 5 years, \$23 million	Kimo von Oelhoffen, nt Pittsburgh Cincinnati undisclosed	Ken Dilger, te Indianapolis 5 years, \$15 million
Ashley Ambrose, cb Atlanta New Orleans 5 years, \$22.5 million	Thomas Smith, cb Chicago Buffalo 5 years, undisclosed	Brian Walker, s Miami Seattle 2 years, \$2.3 million	Sam Barnes, s NY Giants undisclosed
Jeff Blake, qb New Orleans Cincinnati 4 years, \$17.2 million	James Stewart, rb Detroit Jacksonville 5 years, \$25 million	FREE AGENT SIGNING TO PLAY WITH PREVIOUS TEAM	Rod Jones, ot Cincinnati 3 years, undisclosed
Phillip Daniels, de Chicago Seattle 5 years, undisclosed			
Joey Galloway, wr Dallas (trade) Seattle 7 years, \$42 million			
Joe Horn, wr New Orleans Kansas City 4 years, \$10 million			
Shawn Jefferson, wr Atlanta New England 4 years, \$14.2 million			
Everett Lindsay, g Cleveland Baltimore 4 years, \$5 million			
Chris Mims, de Chicago San Diego 1 year, undisclosed			
Chris Oldham, s New Orleans Pittsburgh 2 years, undisclosed			
Orpheus Roye, de Cleveland Pittsburgh 6 years, undisclosed			
Jon Runyan, t			

Black History Month



In 1908, Jack Johnson became the first black prizefighter to win the world heavyweight championship when he defeated Tommy Burns in Sydney, Australia. His ability to hit hard with either hand, his flawless defense, and his superb balance are, according to some experts, unmatched to this day. With a career record of 107 wins and 6 losses, Johnson was inducted into the Boxing Hall of Fame in 1954. This week's observation of Black History Month covers the years of 1950-2000. Can you name the world-famous pugilist who was also known for his funny poems? For the answer, look in Focus under the header, H.

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