U. S. BASKETBALL REIGN FACING THREAT

By SAM LACY

MEXICO CITY — As this is written, the United States has just rolled up its 73rd victory without loss in Olympic basketball, defeating Japan in the sixth round of play at Mexico City's fabulous Palacio des Sportes . . . But Johnny McLendon is not entirely happy about the promise of the future . . . and McLendon's is a voice to be heard whenever basketball is the subject under discussion.

"The gap is gradually closing," declares the one-time CIAA tutor who, Bill Russell not withstanding, was the first colored coach in professional basketball when he guided the Cleveland Pipers of the defunct American Basketball League in the early sixties.

"You will see here at this meet, that several of the other nations are making great strides," Mac observes . . . "Russia, everyone knows, is moving ahead, but a lot of people aren't aware of the progress being made by nations like Spain, Yugoslavia, Brazil and Mexico . . .

"The Mexicans are being coached by Lester Lane, who was a member of the finest Olympic team we ever had — the one with Oscar Robertson, Jerry West, Walt Bellamy and that crowd at Rome."

Incidentally, the Spaniards also owe much of their improvement to a colored coach . . . he's Jorge Luyck, who some say was known as George Luke when he was living in Chicago.

Not in language

"The Soviets have every reason to be getting closer," says McLendon . . . "They recruit their players on a national scale, much like our colleges do in seeking athletes . . . And once a young man is selected, basketball becomes a job he works at eleven months in the year . . . That other month he spends on a paid vacation with his family at Soucl, a Russian resort on the Black Sea.

"Under our rigid amateur code, we could never advocate such a program." Johnny goes on, "but the Russians insist there's nothing wrong with it . . . They tell you they can't be professionals because there's no such word in the Russian language.

Not only reason

"But the fact that other countries are improving isn't the only reason that the American advantage is shrinking," Mac points out . . . As assistant to the U.S. head basketball coach Hank IBA, McLendon feels quite sensitive over the declining stature of Uncle Sam in the game he invented.

"We're as much to blame because of our collegiate attitude toward the international game," he says, "especially in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) schools . . . With a few simple adjustments in their teaching techniques, our so-called bigtime coaches could help maintain our superiority, and at the same time, would do no harm to their own efforts . . . In fact, I'm sure they could even improve their teams in certain areas.

Not our best team

"For instance, this team we have in Mexico isn't as good as it could have been . . . and I'm not speaking about the absence of (Lew) Alcindor, (Elvin) Hayes, (Wes) Unseld and the others who chose not to come — like Neal Walk and Mike Warren . . . They had their preferences and made them, which is entirely their right.

"I mean it isn't as good because teamplay means so much in international competition . . . And it's hard enough to work an assortment of youngsters who are strange to each other into a unit in the short time we have . . . But it becomes impossible when we get boys whose coaches have permitted their stars to run away with their game.

"Take youngsters like Pete Maravich and Calvin Murphy . . . both these boys are deadly in shooting, as evidenced by their scoring last year . . . They were in the tryouts with us but they were strictly individuals, they had no conception of team effort . . . I'm not knocking the boys themselves, it's the system that produced them that's at fault.

NCAA bears blame

NCAA schools . . . And it shows how harmful it is to our international program when you look at our trials and see that invariably it's a small-college (NAIA) or AAU team that wins.

McLendon continues, "calls for wider free-throw lanes, which means a handicap for a center who wants to set a post . . . they are very strict in enforcing the 3-second rule . . . International rules permit only two time-outs per half, and only the coach can call a time out . . . and they have a regulation that imposes two shots for every foul committed in the last five minutes of a game.

"Teaching your players whom to foul and how, especially in the closing minutes," says McLendon, "is as important as instructing in any phase of the game."

Note of irony

For the benefit of those who need refreshing on the subject of John McLendon, it may be pointed out that the balding Kansan is undoubtedly one of the most widely-respected technicians in international basketball regardless of complexion . . . A former coach at North Carolina College, Hampton Institute, Tennessee and Kentucky State, McLendon is now settled at Cleveland State University, where the student body is approximately two percent colored.

"It's ironical," he laughs, "that I hold a full professorship, make more money and have the poorest record I've had in all my years in the field."

The parting shot

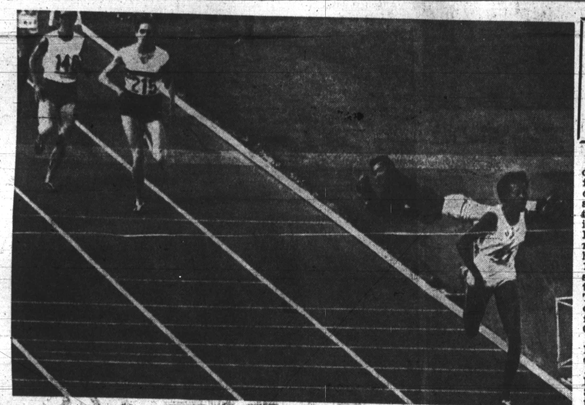
For McLendon who has had many in his basketball lifetime, the most memorable experience occurred several years ago when he became the first American coach to be permitted behind the Iron Curtain . . . Johnny took a U.S. quint on a 25-city tour of Russia and her satellite countries . . . To assure the Americans of their sportsmanship, he says, the Soviets advised him there would be "neutral" referees for each game . . . This "neutrality" was carried out through the use of, say, an Albanian in Chzéchosovakia, a Hungarian in Poland, a Bulgarian in Yugoslavia, etc. . . . in other words, "cousins" referred instead of "brothers."

On the final night, in a game in Kiev, the referee was an East German and while the players had learned much earlier what to expect, they were giving vent to their irritations in remarks to one another.

After the game, McLendon says, the referee bade him goodbye and good luck in German, then added: "Tell your fellows, Coach, that I understand English and I'm NOT a "freaking" Nazi!"

SAM LACY

A to Z AFRO Sports



WOULD YOU BELIEVE RECORD? — Madelina Manning, though appearing to be out for a Sunday morning physical fitness jog, is shown charging to a world record clocking in winning women's 800 meters at Mexico City. Miss Manning completely outclassed her competition as she won the event, and its gold medal, in 2:00.8, incredibly fast time for a woman contestant in the grueling half-mile in Mexico's high-altitude conditions.

AT MEXICO CITY:

Relay crew determined to 'win it'

MEXICO CITY — Ronnie Ray Smith, a member of the United States 400-meter relay team which won the Olympic gold medal Sunday in world record time, said afterwards, "We had perfect determination."

His teammate, Army Capt. Mel Pender, said, "We knew we could do it."

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"WE DIDN'T put all out in the semifinals Saturday because Charlie Greene's leg was sore," added Pender. "We did just enough to qualify. Today, we knew we had a job to do and we knew we were faster than the other guys."

Greene said he had been bothered by the pulled muscle which he reinjured last week while running in the 100-meter dash individual sprint.

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GREENE said that there had been doubt up until Saturday that he would be able to run on the relay team.

"I think the thing that really pulled me through was that the guys — Mel, Ronnie and Jim (Hines) — said they wanted me on the team and that I could do the job if I could just bring it in even."

Hines, who ran the final leg of the relay, was asked what he thought when he saw how close the race was as he took the baton.

"I knew I would have to run as hard as possible and that's what I did," he said.

Carmichael gets Cubans' medals

MEXICO CITY (UPI) — The Cuban team which placed second in the Olympic 400-meter men's relay said it was sending its silver medals to Stokely Carmichael, the U.S. Black Power advocate, to demonstrate "support of the colored people" in the United States.

"We are sending our medals as a contribution to all of the colored who are struggling for freedom," said Enrique Figuerola, the Cuban anchor man.

Ring coach undismayed by low regard for team

By SAM LACY

MEXICO CITY — The first colored boxing coach in U.S. Olympic Games history, isn't the least bit swayed by the disdain in which his 11-man squad is held in the 19th Olympiad competitions.

Pappy Gault is willing to go on record as predicting medals for his predominately tan aggregation by the time next Saturday night's curtain is drawn at the Arena.

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"NOBODY gives us a chance," the friendly ring tutor declared the other day, tossing a smelly towel around his neck. —

"But these kids are the most eager learners I've ever known, and they have a closeness that would make you think they'd been gang pals for years, instead of just meeting.

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"THEY watch each other as closely as I do," he continued, "and make corrections in style and strategy as though they were brothers. Even when I'm not working with them on something particular, I see 'em getting together at the mirror and pointing out flaws.

"In Olympic boxing, you know, it isn't a case of slug and bang. You strive for points, and you get these only through superior technique.

"The kids have learned fast, and they're gonna fool a lot of people. I give 'em three, possibly four, of the top medals, unless I'm way off in my judgment."

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THE 11-man-squad is entirely colored, although Armando Muniz is a Mexican living in Artesia, Cal., and Dave Vasquez is of Puerto Rican ancestry and lives in the Bronx, N.Y.

The other members are heavyweight John Fireman of California light-heavy Arthur Redden of Wilmington, Del.; middleweight Al Jones of Detroit, light middleweight John Baldwin also of Detroit, light-welter Jim Wallington of Fayetteville, N.C.;

Lightweight Ron Harris of Canton, Ohio; featheweight Al Robinson of Oakland, Cal.; light flyweight Harland Marbley of Washington, D.C., and bantamweight Sam Goss of Trenton, N.J.

U.S. boxers 12-3 in Olympic ring

MEXICO CITY (UPI) — Harland Marbley of Washington, D.C., captured a semifinal beth in the Olympic boxing tournament Sunday and three-time National AAU champion Ronnie Harris of Canton, Ohio, moved into the quarterfinals.

Marbley advanced in the light flyweight division by scoring an easy, unanimous decision over Gabril Ogun of Nigeria, and Harris scored a split decision over John Stracey of Great Britain in the lightweight division.

Although the verdict was divided, the 20-year-old Harris, a junior at Kent State, appeared to have a decisive edge in each of the three rounds. Four of the five judges scored for Harris by margins of 2 to 3 points, but one official had the 18-year-old Stracey winning by one point.

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THE VICTORY gave the American team a record of 12 wins and three losses. The U.S. squad has eight of its 11 original boxers still in the competition. The entire U.S. squad is colored.

Harris, a southpaw, pursued the shorter London salesman, throughout the fight and scored effectively with right jabs and solid left crosses to the head.

He staggered Stracey repeatedly with lefts to the jaw in the second and third rounds but the Englishman came back with flurries of his own and was boxing on even terms at the final bell.

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THE 25-year-old Marbley, also a National AAU champion, was in command of his fight from start to finish as he scored often with a stiff left jab to Ogun's face.

Marbley, a special security guard for the District of Columbia, hurt Ogun with a solid left hook at the end of the final round but the Nigerian danced his way out of trouble.

All five judges had Marbley the winner anywhere from one to three points. It was Marbley's 190th career victory compared to only five losses.

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SOUTHPAW John Baldwin of Detroit, also moved into the quarterfinals by scoring a unanimous decision over Voltech Stantien of Czechoslovakia.

Baldwin, a 19-year-old truck driver, received the votes of all five judges, although he landed very few punches in the dull bout which had the crowd jeering throughout.

Mexican Mixers

MEXICO CITY — Boxing coach Pappy Gault is confident that he may have one of the biggest fistic stories in the making since the advent of Cassius Clay, in the person of George Foreman, the United States representative in the heavyweight class of the 1968 Olympics . . . Gault says he has big plans for the 218-pound, 19-year-old Texan, whom he intends to convert into a pro within a few months after Mexico City.

Foreman, born in the Houston ghetto, looked to the Job Corps for salvation after being graduated by Houston's E. O. Smith High School . . . He was sent by the corps to Pleasanton, Cal., and while there won 18 of 21 AAU and Golden Gloves fights — 11 by kayo . . . The three bouts he lost, says Gault, were due to inexperience and lack of guidance, something that won't happen again, if Pappy has anything to do with it . . . Gault says he'll request a Job Corps transfer to Washington, D.C., for Foreman, and will then take the youngster under his wing with an eye to an eventual heavyweight title.

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JOE YANCEY, veteran coach of the New York Pioneers when he's not checking on the tax returns of Harlemites for Internal Revenue, is working his sixth Olympiad. . . . Joe, who tutored three teams from Jamaica (1948-52-56) was in charge of an aggregation from Trinidad in 1960, and one from the Bahamas in 1964. . . . Currently, the astute Gotham amite is guiding a promising two-man contingent from the Virgin Islands, the country's first essay in international competition.

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BUDDY TAYLOR, the former Morgan State College-Virginia Union-Tennessee State athletic trainer, got his present job with the American Basketball Association's Los Angeles Stars under most unusual circumstances.

Stars general manager Jim Hardy was en route from Chicago to the West Coast on a plane when he picked up a magazine and saw a brief piece on the affable 39-year-old conditioning specialist. . . . Immediately on deplaning, he went to a phone booth and placed a long-distance call to Taylor at Tennessee State. . . . "I thought he was calling to inquire about one of our players," Buddy laughs, "and when he said he didn't want an athlete, he wanted me to fly out for an interview, I was dumbfounded."

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WHEN THE field for the Olympic 100 meters toed the mark for last Monday night's final race, colored athletes occupied seven of the eight lanes. . . . The other blocks sent a Madagascan, Ulig Ravelomanantsoa, en route to a last-place finish.

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INCIDENTALLY, ONE of Taylor's most regrettable experiences occurred here Sunday evening at the Olympic Village. . . . He was rubbing down long-jumper Willy White after a brief

(Continued on Page 20)

VICTORY-BOUND — Wyomia Tyus, two-time women's Olympic 100-meter champion, begins race to victory in 400-meter relay triumph for United States. Tennessee State speedster has just taken baton from Mildrette Netter of Alcorn A. and M. College, for run to wire ahead of Cuba in world record time of 42.8 seconds.

Spectacular finish nets 14 Olympic gold medals

By SAM LACY

MEXICO CITY — In what was undoubtedly the most spectacular display of speed ever to adorn the scene of the Olympic Games, colored athletes captured 14 of the 15 gold medals distributed at the close of activity at Olympic Stadium here Sunday.

Fourteen medals went to tan winners of relay and individual events. The fifteenth was acquired by Dick Fosbury, a white teammate of the mercury-heeled colored contingent.

And even in Fosbury's event, the High jump, the silver medal, symbolic of second place, was picked up by a tan jumper.

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OF THE 14 colored gold medalists, twelve wore the uniforms of the United States. The other two hailed from Black African countries — Kenya and Ethiopia.

The first triumph of the Sunday afternoon of triumphs was recorded by the all-colored men's 400-meter relay foursome. The second was registered by the equally all-colored women's 400-meter tandem, and the third was added by the 1600-meter relay unit, also comprised of four colored speedsters.

The 12 colored Americans involved in the late sweep were Barbara Ferrell, Margaret Johnson Bailes, Mildred Netter and Wyomia Tyus, women's relay; Charlie Green, Mel Pender, Ronnie Smith and Jim Hines, men's 400 meters, and Vince Matthews, Ron Freeman, Larry James and Lee Evans in the 1600-meters relay.

• • •

KICHOGE KEINO, the Kenyan, took the 1500 meters, soundly thrashing the favorite, Jim Ryun, and Mamo Wolde of Ethiopia, captured the marathon run.

All the victories were achieved in record times.

colored silver medalist in

Ed Caruthers was the colored silver medalist in the high jump.

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THE RELAY teams were amazing as they swept the boards.

In the men's 400-meter finals, Hines, the Olympic 100-meter champion, was about a foot behind Cuba's Enrique Figuerola as they turned into the home-stretch. Hines surged ahead of the Cuban about 70 meters from home and held a one-stride lead to the tape despite a game comeback by Figuerola.

Cuba had beaten the U.S. tem twice in preliminary heats but this time Greene, the United States' first runner, got an excellent start despite an aching leg muscle.

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THE UNITED States women's relay team had brilliant baton passing and Miss Tyus, the 100-meter champion, was touched off ahead by one yard for the last lap. She opened the gap to about three yards to the finish.

The Americans trailed at the end of the first leg of the 1600-meter relay run by Matthews. But Freeman came storming down the backstretch to take the lead and was about 20 yards ahead when he handed off to James. From then on, it was a runaway and the only question was by how much the Yanks would break the record.

• • •

WOLDE took the lead in the marathon about three quarters of the way along the grueling 26-mile course. By the time he entered the stadium he was a half mile ahead of his nearest rival, and he caught the finish line alone in the stadium.

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U. S. KEEPS CHALKING UP OLYMPIC MEDALS

(Sports Editor Sam Lacy's copy from the Olympics failed to arrive from Mexico by deadline time for early editions. Watch for his on-the-scene reports and views resuming in the next edition of your AFRO).

MEXICO CITY (UPI) — John Carlos, suspended U.S. sprinter, said Saturday night he would leave Mexico on Monday to return to school at San Jose State College and said he will be going "of my own volition and not theirs."

Carlos was suspended from the U.S. Olympic team on Friday by the U.S. Olympic Committee along with sprinter Tommie Smith because they made a "Black Power" gesture during the ceremony at which they received medals for finishing third and first, respectively, in the Olympic 200-meter dash.

Carlos said he plans to file suit in the United States against the U.S.O.C. on grounds his rights under the U.S. Constitution were violated.

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IN SAN JOSE, former San Jose assistant professor Harry Edwards, who once tried to organize a black boycott of the Olympics, also said suits would be filed against the U.S.O.C. for "persecuting" Carlos and Smith.

Smith said black students in the United States would follow their example and hang their heads and raise a clenched fist when they hear the U.S. National Anthem played.

Carlos, in his first public statement since his suspension, claimed the U.S.O.C. was trying to take away his "freedom of speech."

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THE U.S. Olympic basketball team more than overcame a hostile crowd with the 20-point performance of Spencer Haywood Saturday night to clobber Italy, 100-81.

It was the sixth victory for the Americans without a loss.

The semi - finals were scheduled for this Wednesday night.

The disfavor was touched off by two signs that were paraded through the aisles at halftime.

One sign read, "U.S.A. '69 Gold Rush," and the other read, "Sock it to them U.S.A." When the sign carriers returned to their seats, the crowd around them stood up and booed.

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YOUTHFUL American welterweight Armando Muniz scored a stunning upset Saturday night by outpointing defending gold medalist Marian Kasprzyk of Poland in the Olympic Boxing Tournament.

The 20-year-old former UCLA student, who had fought only 37 amateur matches, won on four of the five official ballots and moved into the 147-pound quarterfinals.

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OTHER SURPRISE medals for the United States came in clay pigeon shooting (silver) and heavyweight weightlifting.

Thomas Garrigus of Hillsboro, Ore., won the silver in shooting after two shoot offs. It marked the best U.S. showing in the event since 1920. The winner was John Braithwaite, who gave Great Britain its first gold medal in the event dating back to 1908.

Russia's defending champion Leonid Shobotinsky took the gold medal in the weightlifting with a total lift of 1,259½ pounds. Serge Redding of Belgium and Joe Dube of Doctor's inlet, Fla., each lifted 1,214 pounds but Redding got the silver because he weighed less than Dube.

BILL TOOMEY of Laguna Beach, Calif., won the title of "World's Greatest Athlete" at the Olympic Games Saturday night when he beat off his nearest rival in the final event of the gruelling 10-event decathlon to make up for American disappointments in swimming and rowing.

Toomey carried a 61-point lead over world record holder Kurt Bendlin of West Germany into the final event—the 1,500 meter run—and then beat Bendlin to finish with 8,193 points short of Bendlin's mark which was achieved at sea level compared to Mexico City's 7,350-foot altitude.

THE UNITED STATES team of Barbara Ferrell, Margaret Bailes, Mildrette Netter, and Wyomia Tyus broke the world record for the women's 400-meter relay by winning its trial heat in 43.4 seconds in the Olympic Games Saturday.

The record was immediately equalled when Holland won the second heat, also in 43.4.

The old record was 43.9 seconds.

Jamaica, anchored by Lennox Miller, broke the world record in the first-semi-final heat of the men's 400-meter relay by winning in 38.3, thus lowering the mark of 38.6 which it had tied in a trial heat in the morning. Miller was eased up at the wire.

Cuba defeated the United States in the second heat of the 400-meter relays in almost an exact duplication of the morning heat.

The Cubans were timed in 38.6.

THE UNITED STATES' 400-meter relay team of Charlie Greene, who has sore leg muscles, Mel Pender, Ronnie Ray Smith and Jim Hines was second to Cuba in both the trial heats and the semi-finals while the 1,600-meter team of Vince Mathews, Ron Freeman, Larry James and Lee Evans won its qualifying heat in 3:00.6 and Evans eased up most of the way on the final leg.

Barbara Ferrell; Margaret Johnson Bailes, Mildred Netter and Wyomia Tyus showed they are the team to beat in the women's 400 relay when they set a world record of 43.4 in their qualifying heat Saturday.

Soccer committee gets new member

RALEIGH, N.C. — E. K. Curry, soccer coach at St. Augustine's College, was recently appointed to District 26 soccer committee of the National Athletic Inter-Collegiate Association.

The new committeeman received his degrees from Paine College and North Carolina College. He is also head coach of the St. Augustine's College cinder men.

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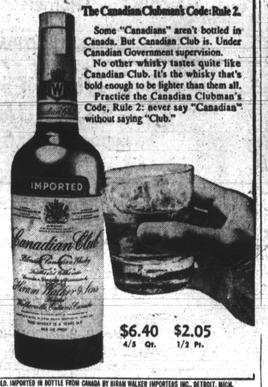

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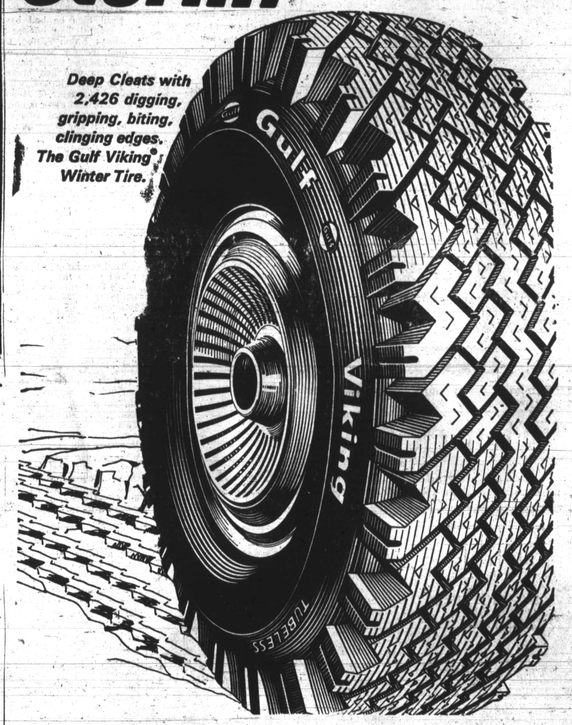

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