Aaron vows he won't be 'houseboy'

By Jim Duff

All-time home run king Hank Aaron may have struck out at the plate last week at Richmond's Parker Field, but he was a big hit with the fans.

Aaron struck out and popped but in two appearances as his Atlanta Braves lost a 6 to 5 decision to their Richmond Braves farm team in an exhibition game, but the mere presence of the all-time home run hitter drew a crowd of 8,662 to witness an otherwise meaningless event.

However, at a press conference before the game, the amiable Aaron made it crystal clear that he doesn't plan to strike out when he trades his baseball uniform for a businessman's suit in the Braves' front office.

Looking forward to retirement next year, Aaron, not known to get tough often, said he isn't about to settle for a flunkie's job with the Braves after his playing days are over.

"I don't want to be a houseboy," said the superstar who has been offered a front office job by the Braves. "I want to be able to give constructive criticism. I'd like to be able to use some of the talent I've acquired in 20 years."

What about becoming the first black manager in major league baseball?

Aaron said he wasn't interested, but later indicated that he wasn't shutting the door on any meaningful position when he, in response to another question about coaching said, "some things have to come naturally. I don't know whether I'd like that job or not."

* * *

The fans came to see number 44, the man who owns nearly every hitting record in baseball. Young and old, they arrived early to see him and to ask for an autograph.

* * *

During a pre-game press conference, youngsters crowded around the Braves' Tee-Pee room calling for autographs. Later, trying to reach Aaron, so many crowded against a cinderblock wall around the field that a portion of the wall collapsed.

The fans honored Aaron with a standing ovation on his first trip to the plate, and they booed the pitcher who struck him out, or maybe the umpire who called the third strike.

This is the year to honor the 41-year-old Aaron. He told the press conference that he foresees nothing which could make him return for another season, except "a salary like some of those basketball players are making," he said laughing.

Cities around the country have been honoring Aaron ever since April when he tied and then broke the former career home run record of 714 set by Babe Ruth.

He has since addressed a joint session of the U.S. Congress and been given the gold medal of the city of New York, among other honors on and off the field.

Asked during the press conference about the effects of such honors and ceremonies, Aaron admitted that they took their toll, but that "the New York gold medal was a great honor since it's only been given to five or six athletes."

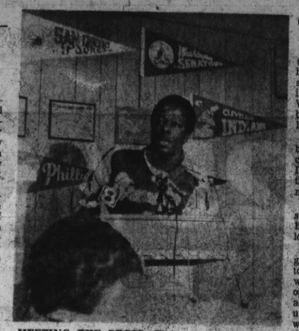
Complimented and queried on remaining a humble man despite the barrage of publicity this year, Aaron said, "I think about Mobile, Alabama and never forget about where I came from. I've still got brothers and sisters there."

Aaron added that he hoped his attitude made an impression on young kids and proved "helpful" to them.

On another question about dealing with youngsters, Aaron said he thought little league baseball was a good program, but objected to parents and coaches who might harm a youngster while trying to make him into a star.

After patiently answering a few more questions about his career which he must have answered many times, he thanked the questioners and followed one of his many police escorts to the club-house to prepare for the game.

Maybe the fans here didn't see him hit a home run, but they will be sure to tell their kids that they saw the man who owns the records.



MEETING THE PRESS—Home run king Hank Aaron answers reporters' questions during a Richmond press conference.

(AFRO Photo by Jim Duff)

Girls' series set by Little League

WILLIAMSPORT, Pa. (UPI) — Little League headquarters in Williamsport, Pa., has announced 11 a first Little League World Series for girls will be played at Freeport, Long Island, Aug. 28-31.

In the series which will become an annual event, champions of the Little League's east, west, central and south regions will meet.

During its first season, some 50,000 girls in the 9-12 age group played in 500 local leagues.

The girls' softball program is a parallel activity to Little League baseball, which earlier this month opened up its previously all-boy leagues to girls under pressure from women's rights groups and the courts.

The Little League program for girls is played on a regulation Little League diamond with 10 players a side.

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Inner-city net clinic promises to be popular

The free tennis clinic being sponsored by the Junior League of Baltimore, appears to have caught on immediately with inner-city youngsters.

Registration for the classes, which begin Monday at Druid Hill Park and will be continued through August 8, officially closed this morning (Friday). The enrollment was so encouraging that officials said a decision will be made over the weekend on whether or not enlarged quotas will require reopening of the books for at least one day next week.

The clinic has been set up for boys and girls between nine and 13 years of age, who wish to learn how to play tennis.

Mayor Schaefer will be on hand Tuesday for the 9:30 a.m., to noon session.

* * *

James Bland, a teaching professional from Boston, is signed as one of the instructors.

M's Pat Brugger of the Bureau of Recreation, and Carlton Cromwell of the Baltimore Tennis Club (BTC), are also on the staff.

Marcia Dickerson, a teenaged local star, will serve as junior instructor.

Youngsters are required to equip themselves with shoes only once they have been registered.

Rackets and balls are being provided by the Junior League, whose Mrs. Louis Hargrave is chairman of the clinic project.

Blair HR wins $3700 for fan

Paul Blair pranced around the bases in the 7th inning at Baltimore Memorial Stadium Wednesday night, happy in the knowledge that the home run he had just hit tied the score for the Orioles with the Detroit Tigers.

What the classy Bird centerfielder didn't know at the time was that his clout into the leftfield seats had made a Baltimore fan $3,700 richer.

So, dancing the baselines with Blair—in spirit if not in body—was Richard M. Robey of a Cornwall Road address.

* * *

Robey's name had been drawn from the jackpot set up by the National Brewing Co., as a prize for the entry whose name is pulled during a televised "Home-run Derby" inning.

It was an unusual triumph for Robey because the particular inning was an unusual one.

* * *

Most often, the selected inning is one in which the heavier hitters are due to bat. Wednesday's 7th brought on the tail end of the bird lineup and Blair's came after Andy Etchebarren and Mark Belanger had been retired.

Etchebarren, two innings later, singled to break the ice and give the O's a 3-1 victory.

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Next primary election for governor and state legislators is September 10, 1974. August 12, 1974 is the last day to register.

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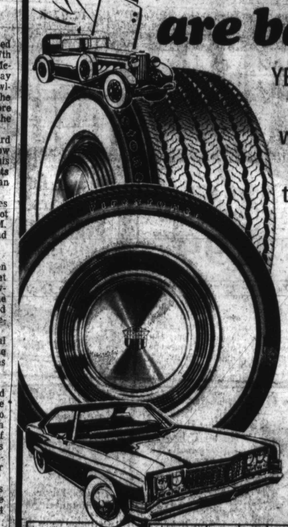

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Nation's best hurdler found but sprint champion isn't

Steve Williams equalled mark in 100, but trounced in 220

It just may be that amateur track's finest hurdler was uncovered at a meet in which emphasis was placed on determining the fastest runner.

That circumstance developed when Charles Foster of North Carolina Central ran away from a class field of America's best fencers last weekend at the National AAU meet at Los Angeles.

As a result, Foster will lead the U.S. squad against the Soviet Union in the dual meet July 5-6, at Durham, where N.C. Central is located.

* * *

Meanwhile, the question of who might be the world's fastest human remained unsettled. This despite Steve Williams' world record-equalling 9.3 seconds in winning the 100.

Williams, the 20-year-old San Diego State sophomore who was the No. 1 sprinter in the world in 1973, was a badly beaten fourth in the 200, a race captured handily by Jamaica's Don Quarrie on Saturday.

Quarrie ran the 200 into a wind and won in an eased-up 20.5.

* * *

"It was only my third 220 of the year and I just didn't have the conditioning behind me," said Williams, a double sprint winner at the 1973 AAU meet at Bakersfield, Calif.

The 6-3½ native New Yorker and talented Tennessee freshman, Reggie Jones, the NCAA 100-yard dash champion, are expected to run against Russia's Valery Borzov in the U.S.-Soviet Union meet at Durham, N.C., July 5-6.

"I hope he (Borzov) runs the 100," said Williams. "If I'm half as psyched as I was last year, I'll go under 9.9 and redeem myself as the world's fastest human."

At Russia last year, Borzov declined to meet Williams on a head-to-head basis. But Williams caught him on the anchor leg of the 400-meter relay and won going away.

Quarrie, who is a co-holder of the world 200-meter record of 19.8, is a Jamaican and won't run at Durham. Asked if he would like to meet Borzov, he replied, "I would like to meet all good sprinters."

John Lucas defeated in NCAA net tourney

University of Maryland's John Lucas was eliminated from the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) tennis champions in Wednesday's second round of play at Los Angeles.

Lucas, almost as adept at tennis as he is at basketball where he was a 1973-74 All-American, bowed to Sashi Menon of Southern California, 6-1, 6-0.

Though winner of the Atlantic Coast Conference singles title, Lucas was not seeded at Los Angeles.

Ali contrite too late after Foreman hassle

NEW YORK (UPI) — Inevitably, the morning after has to follow the night before and, like so many other transgressors before him, Muhammad Ali looked at things a little differently when he awoke Sunday morning.

He didn't have a hangover because he doesn't drink, but he was palpably, genuinely, sorry for what happened Saturday night.

Sorry he had said some of the things he did about heavyweight champion George Foreman. Sorry that what he said had caused the boxing writers dinner to deteriorate into a dangerous glass flying brawl, and sorry that he had talked too much.

Maybe you'd never believe you'd ever see the day Muhammad Ali would ever admit he talked too much, but Sunday was the day.

"I talked outta turn, and I talked too much," he said. "I was off course."

* * *

He said it without any of the usual Muhammad Ali marshmallow either. He said it like a man who honestly believed and meant what he was saying. At least that's the impression he gave me.

George Foreman, who defends his title against Ali Sept. 24 in Zaire, was being honored by the writers Saturday night as fighter of the year. He was being presented with the Edward J. Neil Award and Ali was to be the guest speaker. Ali violated rule number one by speaking too long, nearly 20 minutes. He took care of rule number two as well by demeaning Foreman.

* * *

"I'm sorry it happened," Ali said.

"I apologize to George Foreman and to all those people who were at the dinner. I apologize for getting on him, talking about him, and bringing him down as a champion. That probably got him upset. Still he had no right to grab my jacket and rip it off.

"I say a lotta things and do a lotta things for promotion, publicity and so on, but I wouldn't be so bold as to do what he did. No, that bold to rip a person's jacket off. That was a big move. That took a lotta nerve.

* * *

"Where I was wrong, where I made a mistake was talking about him not being a good champion not having a hard punch.

"The whole dinner was to honor him not me. I shoulda kept that in mind. It's just that I was thinking about the fight in September, and when I got up to speak, naturally I wanted to say things to help it.

"I wasn't really thinking that much about the dinner being in his honor. I'm sure kings, presidents and politicians go to dinners honoring their adversaries and they don't agree with everything that's said, but they just sit there and don't raise any fuss. That was my mistake. I said some things I shouldn't have."

During all the time Ali was talking at Saturday night's dinner, Foreman, according to those who were there, said nothing. All he did was glare at Ali in icy silence. When Foreman got up to leave, he was holding the plaque given him and he told the audience he appreciated the award, but said he'd had enough of Ali.

All impishly grabbed the plaque from Foreman and held it behind his back. Foreman asked for it back and when Ali refused, the champ went right after it and that was when he ripped Ali's jacket. Ali then tore Foreman's jacket and literally yanked the shirt off his back.

* * *

By this time, both fighters were being held back in a scene reminiscent of Ali's scuffle with Joe Frazier in a TV studio before their last fight in January. There were some glasses on the table in front of Ali and Foreman, and Ali, who thrives on chaotic excitement, latched onto a couple of goblets and flipped them in Foreman's direction.

No blows were struck although Ali said Foreman did make a move to hit him when both were being restrained. When Ali returned to his hotel, there was a phone call from Herbert Muhammad, his manager. Herbert Muhammad had heard about the trouble and told Ali he was wrong in having done what he did.

Ali admitted he was wrong.

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G78-14	37.97	33.50	2.55	H78-15	41.08	36.90	2.82
H78-14	40.25	35.50	2.77	J78-15	42.63	37.50	2.99
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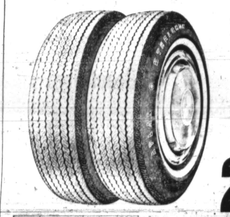

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G78-14	53.74	37.50	2.79	G78-15	55.83	41.22	3.06
H78-14	56.16	40.39	2.94	H78-15	58.34	42.99	3.15
G78-15	56.96	39.45	2.86	L78-15	61.76	45.65	3.20

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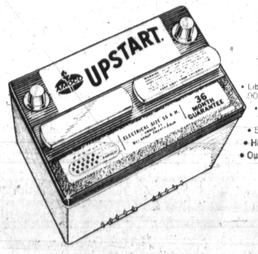

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