Olympic Games seen as having little impact on Soviet society

By Roland Tyrrell

MOSCOW (UPI) — The Olympic games appear to have had far less impact on Soviet society than Western observers predicted and Soviet authorities feared.

The Western boycott, prompted by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, evidently has something to do with the lack of Olympic fever in the air.

While 300,000 foreign sports fans were originally expected in the biggest influx into Moscow since Napoleon Bonaparte's 1912 invasion, the boycott has slashed that figure so that the final count is expected to be about 100,000 and the majority of those are from Eastern Europe.

But the boycott does not account completely for the "certain something" which is missing from the atmosphere in Olympic Moscow.

Most main thoroughfares of Moscow are decorated with bunting in honor of the Olympics, but there are whole districts where there is no sign the Olympics are going on at all.

The 103,000-seat Lenin Stadium, the main Olympic venue, has been filled almost to capacity every day with Soviets who have traveled from as far afield as Vladivostok and Tbilisi.

But the reaction of the average Ivan in the street who has no ticket seems so far to be a politely suppressed yawn.

"I shall be glad when it is all over we can get back to normal work again," said a cab driver whose taxi was one of 22 standing outside Yaroslaysky Station, where it normally takes 20 minutes to find a cab.

Many Muscovites have apparently followed the time-honored tradition of the summer months and gone to the country, leaving Moscow's streets comparatively deserted, except in the very center.

Over the past six months, Moscow Communist Party Chief Viktor Grishin has twice warned Muscovites in speeches of the importance of guarding against ideological subversion by foreigners during the games.

Western observers have raised visions of visitors being besieged by Russians anxious to pay the sky for their jeans or chewing gum and of Soviets staring goggle-eyed at electronic wrist-watches, pocket calculators and instant cameras, which are now part of the Western tourist's panoply.

But interviews conducted at random reveal that while most people have seen foreigners around the town, in shops and restaurants, there has been very little East-West contact on a personal level.

"Sure, I've seen foreigners around," said a 25-year-old pipeline welder. "But I've had no reason to talk to them."

A young woman who works as a paramedic in the ambulance service said virtually the same thing and a married couple said, "We haven't met any foreign visitors. We are always happy to meet people."

Even the events themselves appear to have aroused less sporting enthusiasm than last year's U.S. tour by the Soviet Hockey team which thrashed the National Hockey League in a three-match series.

That excited comment on buses and in shop queues, with aficionados discussing the rectitude of this or that decision by the referees and assessing the beauty of this or that attack.

Street interviews show that most people do not know who won the 10 meters dash in Moscow or that a controversy in the women's gymnastics tournament over Nadia Comaneci had raised the threat of a Romanian walk-out. L.C.-Raiders, Steelers

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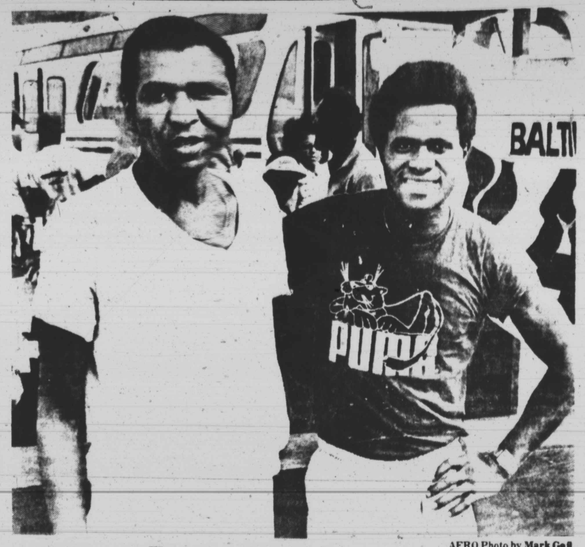

SOCCER STARS — Waldir DeSouza and Ada Coker (R), two members of the new Baltimore indoor soccer team, which is named the "Blast", were present at the recent AFRAM-EXPO held in Rash Field last weekend. The two demonstrated suprising ball-control skills as they challenged all comers to attempt to best them in games of one-on-one soccer.

AFRO Photo by Mark Gail

FUMBLES — Texas Ranger first baseman Pat Putman could not stop the ground ball hit hard by Baltimore Orioles John Lowenstein during a Wednesday night game in Arlington, Texas but neither did he slow it down enough so that Ranger Bump Wills could not field it either. And no one was on first. The Orioles beat the Rangers, 3-2.

Colts unload seven players

The Baltimore Colts released seven players this week, including veteran running back Ron Lee.

Lee, a West Virginia graduate, was placed on waivers after failing a physical examination. He started four games in 1978 but sat out last season with a back injury. Lee joined the Colts in 1976.

Veteran Punter Neil Clabo of Tennessee, a free agent who did not report, also was released. Five others, all rookie free agents, were placed on waivers — defensive backs Keith Brown of Minnesota and Harold Perry of Southern Methodist, Linebacker Eugene Jacobs of Winston-Salem State, Maryland Guard Scott Collins and Punter Casey Murphy of Temple.

Play nice

Rough stuff may be federal offense

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Players who use hockey sticks as weapons, take punches at each other on the basketball court or hit each other with baseball bats may find the cost of such antics escalating.

Rep. Ronald M. Mottl, D-Ohio, planned to introduce legislation that would provide for a $5,000 fine and-or one year in prison for professional athletes who do violent and bodily harm to another.

The Sports Violence Act of 1980 would make it a federal crime for professional athletes to engage in excessive violence in the course of a sporting event.

"This bill seeks to draw a line between the kinds of natural physical contact that are a normal part of any rugged physical sport and the kinds of vicious, dangerous contact that a civilized society should brand as criminal, whether it occurs inside or outside the sports arena," said Mottl.

"You can play rough and hard, but you cannot play to deliberately or recklessly hurt someone."

Richard B. Horrow, a federal court law clerk, wrote the bill after writing a book on the subject. He said he has the backing of several people from the sports world.

"We're not saying that every late hit of a quarterback should mean a year in jail as well as a 10-yard penalty," said Horrow. "But we are saying that there are certain extreme acts, like smashing a hockey stick over somebody's head, that simply will not be tolerated."

Horrow wants to make a player liable only if six criteria are met:

—The violence was inflicted in circumstances that showed a definite resolve to harm another, or negligent, reckless, deliberate or willful disregard for the safety of another.

—It is in violation of a rule of the game designed to protect players from injury.

—It occurs either after play is stopped, or occurs without any reasonably relationship to the competitive goals of the sport.

—It is unreasonably and excessively violent, and beyond the general accepted nuances and customs of the particular sport.

—It could not have been reasonably foreseen by the victim as a part of the normal risk in playing the sport.

—It causes a significant risk of serious injury to the victim.

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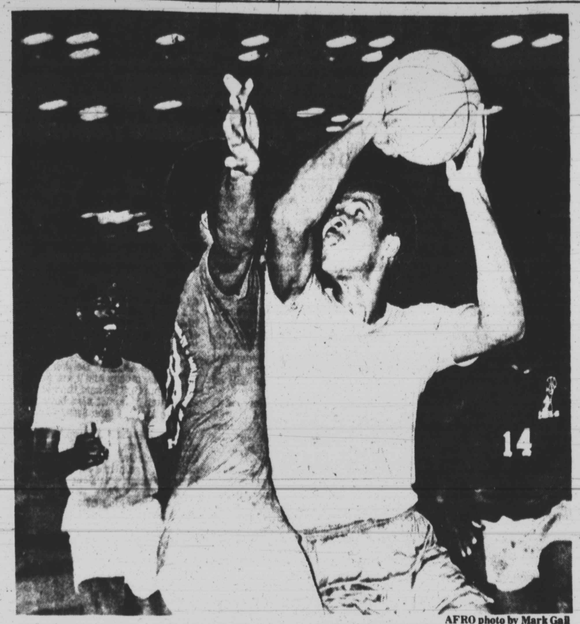

BASKETBALL ACTION — Baltimore Neighborhood Basketball League unlimited AA championship was held Tuesday, July 29 at Morgan State University. Bentalou, with an 11-1 record, scored 48 points to 38 for Camp Concern, 10-2. In this photo, Timmy Green (3) of Camp Concern tries to drive past a Bentalou player.

AFRO photo by Mark Gail

9 Steelers' 7 Raiders on NFL '70s team

NEW YORK (UPI) — Nine members of the Pittsburgh Steelers and seven Oakland Raiders were among those chosen by members of the Pro Football Hall of Fame selection committee to the NFL Team of the 1970s, the league announced.

Pittsburgh quarterback Terry Bradshaw, receiver Lynn Swan, defensive tackle Joe Greene and linebacker Jack Ham were named to the first team. Center Mike Webster, linebacker Jack Lambert, running back Franco Harris and defensive end L.C. Greenwood made the second squad.

Oakland had five players on the first team — tight end Dave Casper, tackle Art Shell, linebacker Ted Hendricks, cornerback Willie Brown and punter Ray Guy. Guard Gene Upshaw was named to the second team.

Others of the team of the 1970s were: Dallas wide receiver Drew Pearson, Minnesota tackle Ron Yary, Miami guard Larry Little, Buffalo guard Joe Delamielleure, Miami center Jim Langer, Buffalo running back O.J. Simpson.

Also, Chicago running back Walter Payton, Los Angeles defensive end Jack Youngblood, Minnesota defensive end Carl Eller, Dallas defensive tackle Bob Lilly, Chicago middle linebacker Dick Butkus, San Francisco cornerback Jim Johnson, Houston safety Ken Houston, Dallas safety Cliff Harris, Miami kicker Garo Yepremian, and Denver kick returner Rick Upchurch.

Miami's Don Shula received 11 votes for Coach of the Decade to edge Pittsburgh's Chuck Noll, who had nine votes.

Houston's J.R. Richard

Star pitcher survives 'life or death' operation

HOUSTON (UPI) — Houston Astros pitcher J.R. Richard, who collapsed during a workout at the Astrodome Wednesday, was successfully operated on for removal of a life-threatening blood clot in his neck, doctors said.

The 90-minute emergency surgery was performed after doctors Wednesday afternoon diagnosed a clot that was restricting the flow of blood through his carotic artery to his right shoulder and arm.

One doctor described the surgery as a life-or-death operation.

"Hell, they weren't worried about his arm, they were worried about his life," said the unidentified surgeon, who was not involved in the operation but had been briefed by the team of cardiologists headed by Dr. Charles McCollum III.

Hospital vice president Elizabeth Lancaster issued a statement when the surgery ended at 11 p.m. CDT.

"He was found to have a blocked artery in his neck. Surgery was performed. It has been successfully accomplished. He is in an intensive care unit."

The 30-year-old all-star was rushed to Methodist Hospital at 11:30 a.m. after attempting to pitch for the first time since his hospitalization late last week. He had been released from the same hospital Saturday. The team said doctors had diagnosed a circulatory problem, but not one that required surgery.

Apparently the surgery ended the season and possibly the career of Richard, who had started the July 8, All-Star game for the National League.

Two examinations after that came turned up no physical ailment and team physician Dr. Harold Brelsford had termed the problem partly psychological.

Richard's wife, Carolyn, who lives with the couple's five children in Louisiana but who was in Houston during his medical treatment, also rushed to the hospital.

"I can't talk to the press," she said. "I'm too nervous to talk about it. All I can do is walk around."

She said she did not know his condition.

"I don't know, all he does is sleep," she said.

Richard had played catch with former Astro Wilbur Howard for 10 minutes and sat in a dugout for 10 minutes before returning to the field for more throwing. Then he became dizzy and collapsed, an eyewitness said.

Trainer Doc Ewell, who observed the light workout, called for an ambulance and began applying water-soaked towels to the back of Richard's neck.

The 6-foot-8 pitcher remained conscious as he waited for an ambulance to enter the stadium and drive on the field. He was placed on a stretcher and into the ambulance.

Team spokesman Rick Rivers said he watched Richard toss the ball.

"He was talking as he was throwing. He didn't seem to be in any pain," he said.

J. R. Richard

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