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Survivor lives to play again

KENT, Ohio (UPI) — Backup wide receiver Ricky Feacher has several nicknames among his Cleveland Browns' teammates but his best nickname is probably one which his teammates never thought of — "The Survivor."

Feacher was picked up in 1978 as a free agent after being cut by the New England Patriots.

Each year since then, Feacher's name has been mentioned at the beginning camp as one who's position on the club was in serious jeopardy. But every year, once the opening gun has sounded, Feacher had won a spot on the roster.

And lately he's become more than just a survivor, he's become an integral part of both the offense and the special teams.

His nicknames — "Instant Bomb" and "Quick Six" - were earned in the final season game against Cincinnati last year, when he caught two long touchdown passes from Brian Sipe within three minutes of each other to bring the Browns from seven points down to a 24 - 17 lead.

He pulled a similar feat in Saturday's victory over the Atlanta Falcons in the Hall of Fame game, pulling in touchdown passes of 29 and - 37 yards from substitute quarterback Paul McDonald.

He's not likely to become a starter ahead of Dave Logan or Reggie Rucker, but provides more than adequate backing for those two receivers.

His greatest contributions, says coach Sam Rutigliand, come on the special teams.

"He's a great special teams player," Rutigliano said. "In fact, that's what really gave him his opportunity here. We try to tell all the rookies that.

"Some listen, some don't," Rutigliano added.

Feacher realizes he probably won't get a starting job unless someone is injured, but he says he's happy at what he's doing.

"It's been known, I guess, that I always was picked to be cut," he said, "Sure, I'd love to start, everyone has their goals and dreams, but I enjoy my role. All I care about is winning and contributing."

READY, SET, HUT — Baseball players, fresh from the strike, gear up for the second season with a drill reminiscent of a football scrimmage line.

SIX THE HARD WAY — Charles White, former USC standout and Cleveland Brown, goes over the top in last week's Hall of Fame game against the Atlanta Falcons.

College grid star plans for Olympics

NEW YORK (UPI) — Herschel Walker will have his eyes focused on Tennessee a month from now when Georgia begins defense of its national football championship, but his thoughts never stray very far from Los Angeles and 1984.

Walker, who broke Tony Dorsett's freshman rushing record last year and put the bite back in the bulldogs, has his sights set on the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, where he hopes to win a gold medal in track for the United States.

"The gold medal is the thing I really want most and I think I have a good shot at competing in — ½," Walker said Wednesday at a midtown press conference, where he received an award for excellence in amateur sports. "I think my chances are better than just about anyone else's. I'd really like to be there in L.A. because the Olympics is something very few people get to compete in.

"I love going against other people on a 1-on-1 basis where you're face-to - face with your opponent. That way, if I make a mistake I have to pay for it myself and there are no excuses."

The award he received is the Tanqueray Award.

Walker needed few excuses to offer bulldog fans during his wondrous 1980 season, when he was named a freshman All - America and finished third in voting for the Heisman Trophy, awarded to the nation's outstanding college football player. Georgia coach Vince Dooley, who was on an amplified phone hookup Wednesday, calls Walker "that once - in - a - lifetime youngster that you get, coming in as a freshman and doing everything superbly right from the start."

Walker, a 6 - foot - 2, 220 - pound Wrightsville, Ga., native, has been competing in track and field events ever since he capped his remarkable 1980 season by rushing for 150 yards and scoring both Georgia touchdowns in a 17-10 sugar bowl triumph over Notre Dame seven months ago.

Walker's specialty event in outdoor track is the 100 meter dash, with a best time of 10.22. He finished seventh in the NCAA 100 meter event.

Last week in Syracuse, N.Y., running for the south team in the National Sports Festival, Walker's quartet finished only a fifth of a second behind the winning West team. Previously, he was a member of Georgia's 400 meter relay team that won the Southeastern Conference championship and finished second in the NCAA championships at Baton Rouge, La.

It is on the football field, however, where Walker's legend continued to sprout with every game.

The SEC player of the year as a freshman, Walker broke Dorsett's rushing record with 1,616 yards, averaging 5.9 yards per carry and scoring 15 touchdowns.

After his record - setting season, Walker was approached by maverick owner Nelson Skalbania of the Montreal Alouettes, who offered Walker a long - term Canadian Football League contract worth a reported $2 million.

"The negotiations got real serious," admits Walker, "and it was 50 - 50 for a while. I gave it real good consideration and discussed the offer with my parents and family before deciding I wanted to stay at Georgia. I don't think I'll ever play in the CFL — but then again, you can never tell the future."

Perhaps one of the safest things to say about the future is that, barring injury, Walker will figure prominently in the Heisman voting this year as a sophomore.

"I don't think anyone can think about the Heisman right now," he says. "You have to do your talking on the field."

That's where few have ever spoken with the eloquence of the newest Georgia peach.

All-Stars gear for Sunday

By Mike Tully
UPI Sports Writer

CLEVELAND (UPI) — In 1933, the All - Star game began as a showcase with a bit of experiment thrown in.

Forty - eight years later, despite vastly different circumstances, the 1981 classic amounts to basically the same thing.

More important than displaying the finest players, this game will showcase major - league baseball after its seven - week strike. Instead of testing the response of fans to a mid - season dream game, this event may help measure public reaction to what Commissioner Bowie Kuhn has called a "nightmare."

"It kind of gets the second half going with our best foot forward," said Bill Giles, Executive Vice President of the Philadelphia Phillies. "It still is a good showcase to tell the world we're back and remind the people who the stars of the game are. It's a marketing plus."

Not since 1919, the year of the Chicago Black Sox World Series scandal, has the image of the national pastime needed such a boost.

Kuhn, though carefully contrasting the "integrity" involved in the strike to the alleged fix in the 1919 series, asserts that baseball has never experienced a deeper misfortune than moving to the brink of a lost season.

"We've never had a worse criscis," said Kuhn.

Resuming the season with the all - star game gives baseball a way of offering the Olive Branch to the public and solving some practical problems at the same time.

"The All - Star game was part of the negotiated settlement, a very vital part of the negotiated settlement because of the financial aspect," said Gabe Paul, Indians' president. Paul was referring to the issue of pension payments made by the owners to the players.

If the all - star game had been cancelled as a result of a players' action, the owners would have been freed of the obligation to pay $2,130 million to the players' pension fund.

Deciding to resume the season with the classic, baseball also avoids further scheduling problems.

"It's better than resuming and then having another interruption," said Peter O'Malley, president of the Los Angeles Dodgers, who added, "the City of Cleveland was really counting on it. The atmosphere and the attitude in Cleveland is up. If Cleveland didn't want the game, we wouldn't have put it there. They worked for a year."

The first All - Star game took place in Chicago's Comiskey Park and Babe Ruth hit a two - run homer to give the American League a 4-2 victory. In all, the National League has won 32 games and lost 18. There was a tie in 1961.

Cleveland has been host to the game on three previous occasions: the AL's 4-1 victory in 1935 the AL's 9-7 triumph in 1954, and the NL's 5-3 success in 1963. But none of those games had the drama of this one, which is already memorable as the All - Star game that nearly wasn't played.

Richard yanked from trial start

HOUSTON (UPI) - Houston Astros manager Bill Virdon Wednesday scratched pitcher J. R. Richard from an exhibition game this week because he felt Richard was not sure enough about taking the mound for the first time since he suffered a major stroke 53 weeks ago.

Virdon said his decision was not based on anything new regarding Richard's physical ability.

"It's just that I think he has some doubts yet," Virdon said. "I decided after observing his comments and so forth. I just don't think he's quite sure he's ready or not."

Richard reacted angrily Monday to club officials saying he would pitch in an exhibition against the Texas Rangers Friday in the Astrodome. He said he wanted to pitch but had not been consulted.

"That's not true," Virdon said. "I talked to him before anything was said. I don't think he meant to say the things he did."

Following the team's workout Wednesday, Richard refused to comment on the decision.

Removing him from the game probably eliminates Richard from pitching until next season. The baseball season resumes Monday and agent Tom Reich has said there are several steps remaining before Richard will throw in a regular game.

Dr. William S. Fields, Richard's personal neurologist, Monday pronounced Richard fit to take the mound and said Richard was enthusiastic about about it. Richard has pitched for short periods of time in team workouts since tentative settlement of the players' strike, and he has had good velocity and so - so control for short periods of time.

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Nino, Duran to fight Sunday

Promoter Don King is pulling out all the stops to make his August 9 boxing show at Cleveland Public Hall - featuring Roberto Duran's comeback bout against Nino Gonzalez - a big draw in his home town.

In an effort to keep interest high, King built a boxing ring in the concourse of the downtown Terminal Tower to put his star on display for the lunchtime crowd.

During a free public workout Thursday, more than 500 spectators looked on as Duran routinely ran through his daily practice. The former lightweight and welterweight champion, who has not fought against Sugar Ray Leonard, got a warm reception from the crowd.

"We expected some kind of negative feelings when we came to the States," said Duran's interpreter and co - manager Louis Heriquez. "But the way the public has accepted us, I have no complaints."

Duran arrived in Cleveland July 13 weighing a pudgy 170. The native of Panama must get down to 154 by the day of his junior middleweight bout with Gonzales, but Henriquez does not seem worried about the 16 extra pounds.

"There's no problem with the wieght," he declared. "Today he's at 161 and will get down to 158 when he leaves (the workout). I know what I'm doing with him."

Gonzalez proved Wednesday the public workouts are not all for show. The Bavonne, N.J. broke the jaw of his sparring partner, Gil Rosario.

But perhaps the main attraction at the workouts, which continue until Aug. 7, is King.

These hometown people are 'treating me great,' said King, who has made it a point to mix with the spectators. "It's better than I expected... It's always better than I expected."

When it came to talking about ticket sales, King was less complimentary.

"We need all the help we can get until every ticket is gone," he said. "I don't know how many

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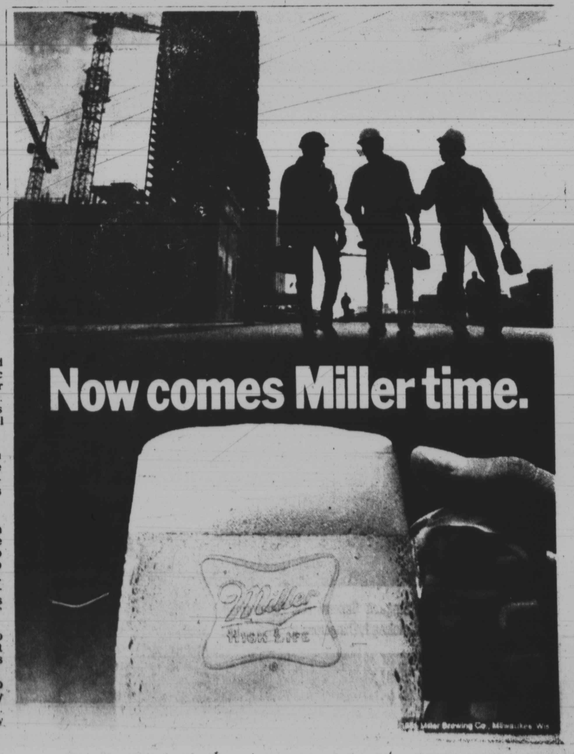
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