By Sam Lacy

Better still, how would the people watching and reporting on them respond to such a probe?

Nat Fields, a public relations consultant in New York, has been commissioned by the Gordon's Gin Company to seek out the nation's No. 1 black athlete so that he or she may be honored.

of black media folk to come up with a legitimate choice through a quarterly poll. His plan called for members of the panel to vote every three months, picking five athletes in

voting for the span between July and September.

Also justified if he is anticipating a better fate than he has enjoyed previously, is Edwin Moses who has established himself as the world's premier intermediate hurdler.

The former Morehouse College Academic All-American was fifth in the April-June ballot, then climbed to third behind Peete and Lewis in the July-September voting.

His consistency in running his string to 89 consecutive 400-meter hurdles championships all over the world (as of this writing), plus acceptance of the Spanish athlete-of-the-year award in mid-November would appear to



order of preference for the period.

The names of the five leading point-getters will be sent to each member of the panel next month for a final evaluation.

\$25,000 in cash and a handsome trophy handsculpted by former astronaut Ed Dwight.

Getting early starts in the race were basketball stars Ralph Sampson and Moses Malone.

Sampson's second consecutive collegiate player of the year while sparking University of Virginia's fine season, was the first-quarter choice of the panel.

Malone who gained MVP honors in leading the Philadelphia 76ers to the NBA title last spring, was the second-quarter selection.

The nod in the summer balloting went to Calvin Peete, who was fourth in money winning on the pro golf tour and was a member of the victorious U.S. Ryder Cup team.

Meanwhile, Carl Lewis has to wonder what it takes for him to gain top billing in the eyes of the panel.

The 24-year-old sprinter and long jumper who added an unprecedented triple—100,200 and long jump—at the Pan American Games to his long list of other glowing accomplishments, finished second in the voting in each of the three quarterly ballots.

In the January-March period, the Jerseyborn Lewis was runner-up to basketball star Sampson. Another basketball whiz, Moses Malone, outpolled him in the April-June quarter. And golfer Peete topped Lewis in the Page 6

enhance his chance of capturing the coveted Gordon's trophy and cash.

Anyone who decides to take up the challenge to pick the eventual winner, should bear in mind that there are some others who have propelled themselves into contending positions.

Nebraska's Mike Rozier, for example, has dazzled the collegiate football world by an All-America, Heisman Trophy performance in leading the No.1 Cornhuskers to the role of Orange Bowl (New Year's Day) favorites.

Another is Eric Dickerson, who has been equally devastating as rookie sensation of the Los Angeles Rams in the (pre) National Football League.

Perhaps at this point, the writer should venture to explain the virtual absence of any women athletes from this running poll. It is not due to an air of chauvinism on the panels.

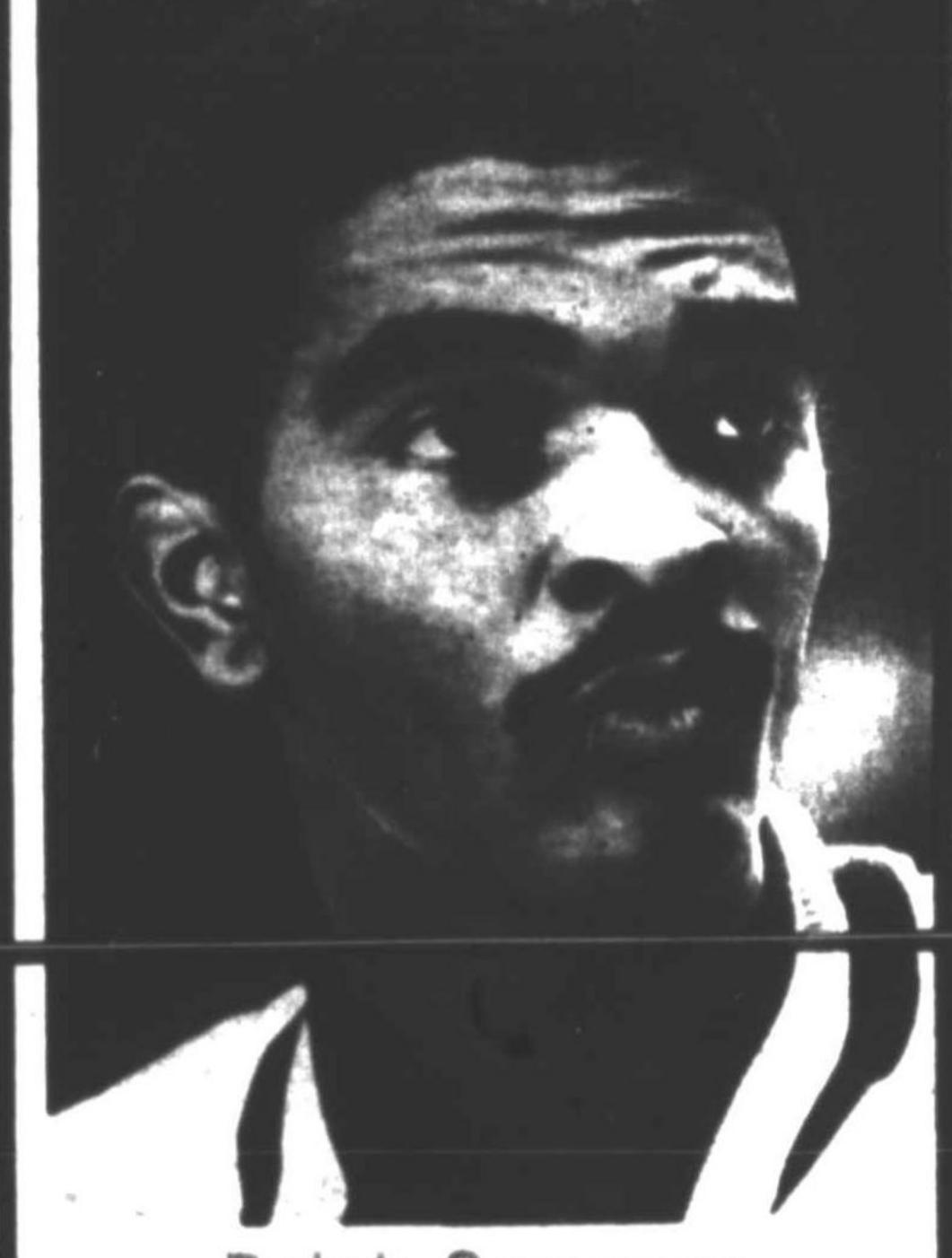
Evelyn Ashford was voted to fourth place behind Sampson, Lewis and Larry Holmes in the first quarter.

However, the slender sprinter who is probably the class among women runners in the world, suffered injury and was forced into an extended layoff that shot her chance to break the male monopoly.

Tennis player Zina Garrison and All-America basketball player Cheryl Miller received support during the periods when their competition was at peak, but neither managed to reach the top five of those quarters.

The Year's Best Black Athlete?

JANUARY







Ed Moses

JULY

OCTOBER



APRIL

Moses Malone



Here is the breakdown on



quarterly voting:

Ralph Sampson, basketball
Carl Lewis, track-field
Larry Holmes, boxing
Evelyn Ashford, women's track
Marvin Hagler, boxing

APRIL 1 TO JUNE 30

Moses Malone, basketball Carl Lewis, track-field Calvin Peete, golf Rod Carew, baseball Edwin Moses, track



Carl Lewis



JULY 1 TO SEPT. 30

Calvin Peete, golf
Carl Lewis, track-field
Edwin Moses, track
Franco Harris, football
Darryl Strawberry, baseball

OCT. 1 TO DEC. 31
Voting in process