

# Does Finley have better idea?

**United Press International**  
NEW YORK — As far back as high school, Charley Finley was looked upon as a "strange boy."  
One of his former classmates, a mature woman now, says she and most of the other girls considered him "quite a dude because he wore a sport coat to school."  
One thing about Charley is that he's always thinking. And he does his homework, too.  
Maybe that's why he keeps coming up with all these ideas and innovations of his, innovations which some people laugh at when they first hear them and later on say, "You know something, that wasn't such a bad idea at all."  
For years now, Finley has been asking himself why it is that some people prefer watching football, basketball and hockey to baseball. The most common reason he hears is that baseball drags too much, it's not exciting enough.  
Charley feels he has come up with the answer to that and a possible so-

lution as well.  
One of the things which make some people think baseball "drags" is the count of four balls and three strikes before a batter either walks or is called out.  
Why not shorten the count to three balls and three strikes, Finley suggests.  
"The big reason football, basketball and hockey are considered more exciting than baseball is because the people in these three sports have been smart enough to balance defense with offense," Finley says. "The baseball people haven't been smart enough to do that."  
"In football, you have 11 players against 11 others; in basketball, it's five against five and in hockey, it's six against six. You have perfect balance in all three of those sports, but in baseball, what have you got — nine against one. Everybody is ganging up on the hitter."  
"What I'm saying, and have been saying for years," Finley goes on, "is give the poor batter a break. Give

him first base on three balls instead of four. The result would be more action, more excitement, the game would be speeded up and there would be greater attendance."  
The first thing Charley Finley did about his theory was to go to San Jose State University, which owns one of the most extensive sports libraries in the country.  
"I did a great deal of research on the subject and discovered there was no such thing as balls and strikes in professional baseball before 1879," he said.  
"That year, for the first time, a count was introduced and it was nine balls and four strikes. In 1880, the count was changed to eight and four; in 1881 to seven and four; in 1884 to six and four and in 1885 it went back to seven and four. They made it five and three in 1887 and finally four balls and three strikes in 1889."  
"Think of that for a minute. That means there has been no change in the count for the past 89 years."

Finley has done more than merely think about it. He has tried getting three balls and three strikes incorporated into the rules of professional baseball for some time now but has gotten nowhere with the Rules Committee.  
A few weeks ago, Finley tried a different route.  
At the invitation of the National Federation of State High School Associations, he made a special presentation in front of that group in Elgin, Ill.  
His three balls, three strikes idea was favorably enough received so that the rules committee of the federation Finley appeared before approved the experiment among a select number of state high school associations.  
"It's a radical change," says Bryce Durbin, the federation's executive director, "and I'm interested in seeing the results after the schools' experiment."

As matters stand in the majors, the pitchers dominate the batters now. The ratio of strikeouts has risen appreciably in the past 30 years. You get a pitcher like Houston's 6-foot-8 J.R. Richard out there blowing his fastball by the hitters and it's Gulliver among the Lilliputians.  
Unquestionably, something has to be done to bring the batter and pitcher into a more even balance. The designated hitter represents only one step and still the pitchers have the upper hand.  
Maybe Charley Finley's theory is the answer and then again, maybe it isn't.  
At least he's trying to do something about it. That puts him one up on most of his fellow baseball operators.

## Oilers to waive seven players

**United Press International**  
HOUSTON — Coach Bum Phillips faced a number of tough decisions Monday, the day before he was to waive seven players from the Houston Oilers' roster.  
Although the cuts may not be revealed until Thursday, the list was almost certain to contain names familiar to Houston fans.  
Veteran cornerback Zeke Moore is the most prominent among players expected to be released. Third quarterback Tommy Duniven, who has not played in the final two exhibition games, had a chance to be in the final group cut. Others believed to be on the block were rookie lineman John Schumacher USC, free agent wide receiver Johnny Dirden and third-year punter Cliff Parsley.  
Selecting between Parsley and 15-year veteran Jerrel Wilson for the punting job has been especially difficult for Phillips. In preseason Wilson averaged 40.2 yards per punt, Parsley 38.2. But Parsley is 14 years younger than Wilson.  
"Neither came out of this thing as a clearcut winner," Phillips said. "We had hoped to trade one them,

but there's nothing in the works. It makes me mad. I guess we value our people a whole lot more than anybody else does."  
There were other decisions to be made which, unlike the punting situation, could backfire.  
For instance, the Oilers prefer to keep wide receiver Eddie Foster on their roster. Foster has been injured this preseason, however, and he may not be able to play for four weeks. Does Phillips keep him active or place him on injured reserve for the season and keep rookie Dirden?  
Serious injuries often pare a team during preseason, but the Oilers have not had any. That fact, at least, encouraged Phillips.  
"This was the best preseason we've had since I've been here, in spite of our (1-3) record," he said. "We came out of it in good shape physically and there's no doubt in my mind that we're ready to play."  
Leg injuries suffered by wide receiver Billy Johnson and running back Anthony Davis were not expected to keep them out of the lineup much longer. Knee injuries sustained by linebacker Art Stringer

and cornerback Willie Alexander Saturday night were not believed to be serious.  
A defensive lineman and a player from the defensive backfield are expected to be included in the seven cuts today.  
Two players waived by the Oilers and unclaimed by other teams can

be resigned before the regular season opener at Atlanta Sunday. The final roster limit is 45 players.  
The expected cuts meant that rookie wide receiver Mike Renfro from TCU and recently acquired wide receiver Rich Caster were included on the season-opening roster.

## Center offers sports to handicapped people

**United Press International**  
MINNEAPOLIS — The Norwegians are introducing health sports to the United States, where the concept promises to change the lives of thousands of handicapped.  
Plans are underway for a health sports center in Minnesota to serve the handicapped from all over the United States.  
Handicapped persons who use the facilities will be encouraged to test the limits of their physical capabilities to gain confidence and endurance, says Curtis L. Carlson, a businessman and member of the center's board of trustees.  
Called Vinland Center, it will be patterned on the Beitostolen Health Sports Center in Norway, where the lame help the blind and vice versa.  
A similar but expanded program, including the arts, is envisioned for Vinland Center, Carlson said in an interview.  
Beitostolen was founded eight years ago by Erling Stordahl. Its daily schedule allows the blind to ski, the paralyzed to play volleyball and swim and the immobilized to ride horseback through the scenic countryside in the Jotumheimen Mountains 160 miles northwest of Oslo.  
The handicapped are paired off for joint activities. For example, a person with leg disabilities steers a tandem bicycle from the front seat while a partner who is blind pedals from the rear seat.  
Beitostolen's corridors are covered with special strip carpeting to

help the blind pinpoint their location in the building. Office doors are marked with braille. Sculptures have braille inscriptions. A special ramp in the center's indoor swimming pool eases access for the physically handicapped and paralyzed.  
The founder, who has been blind since age 13, thinks the handicapped must be willing to help themselves and each other.  
"We challenge our clients to test the limits of what their bodies can do, no matter what type of handicap they have," Stordahl told Carlson and other Minnesotans who recently visited the Beitostolen Center. "One of the most important parts of our program is to take away peoples' fear and provide positive motivation so they know what their body is capable of."  
In Norway, the handicapped stay a month to six weeks at Beitostolen before returning to their old environment to practice newly acquired skills and attitudes.  
Construction of the Minnesota center is scheduled to begin in the spring of 1980 on a scenic 60-acre site adjacent to a lake at Lakeville, 25 miles south of Minneapolis. It is expected to cost \$5-\$7 million. The funding includes a bicentennial gift of 1 million kroner, or \$200,000, from the Norwegians. The state of Minnesota has since appropriated another \$200,000 for the project.  
Vinland Center is expected to begin year-round operations by 1981.

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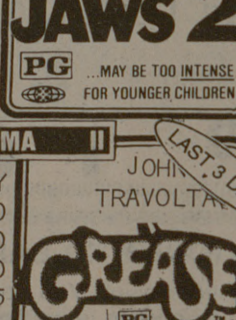
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