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Ali's attorney calls suit 'frivolous'

NEW ORLEANS — Former heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali's attorney said Monday a \$20 million slander suit accusing the boxing star of spouting racial insults against two promoters of

his 1978 Superdome fight was frivolous. This was a frivolous lawsuit at its inception and it's frivolous now," attorney Jack Martzell said in his opening argument before an all-white jury of four women and two men.

"(The defendants) were actively seeking publicity and were in a sense making a mountain out of a mole hill," Martzell said.

Martzell said a report that Ali called the promoters "white Dagos" was false.

The suit was filed by Philip Ciaccio, a city councilman, and Jake DiMaggio, two of the four partners in a New Orleans group that helped sponsor the September 1978 fight in which Ali regained the title from Leon Spinks.

DiMaggio and Ciaccio, both white, said Ali Ciaccio and any racial remarks were not intended slandered them at a news conference after a dispute arose between them and their black partners, Sherman Copeland and Don Hubbard.

DiMaggio and Ciaccio initially filed separate \$10 million suits, but they were consolidated for trial before U.S. District Judge Morey Sear.

Ali, who signed autographs in the lobby of the federal courthouse, spoke only to his attorneys and sat at the defense table scribbling notes. He kept his back to DiMaggio and Ciaccio.
Attorney William Wessel, representing

DiMaggio and Ciaccio, said he would present at least a dozen newspaper and television reports that would prove Ali vilified his clients. "The remarks were such that the plaintiffs suf-

fered public ridicule, general embarrassment and

affected their reputations," Wessel said.

Martzell said Ali did not know DiMaggio and

United Press International JACKSON, Miss. — A youth soccer team from Atlanta defeated

North Texas 1-0 in overtime Sunday

to win the Boys 19-and-under Divi-

sion in the Southern regional of the

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Texas team loses in tourney

Kevin Fouser scored the winning

team for Georgia, which now advances to Omaha, Neb., June 20 for

In the finals of the Girls 19and-

under division, North Texas defe-

ated South Texas 11-0 in regional

RUIDOSO DOWNS, N.M. —
Jim McGehee of Seminole has struck

it rich twice before in New Mexico,

but his third bonanza ranks as the

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as insults against them. He also said because the promoters actively sought publicity, they would have a greater burden to prove that they were

Sear ruled he would allow newspaper articles of the news conference to be entered into evidence. However, he delayed a ruling on whether to allow the jury to view a videotape of portions of the

news conference. Ali's attorneys said the edited version of the news conference unfairly portrayed Ali's remarks.

"I've been in court more than anybody else," Ali said as he arrived in a limousine accompanied by a motorcycle police escort. "I've been in court

The jury was selected in less than one hour but Sear said attorneys estimated the case could last for four to five days.

competition for the National Cup. The competition was part of the United States Youth Soccer Associa-

tion Southern Regional Tourna-

ment. Some 73 teams from 11 states

competed in the three-day tourna-

McGehee, director of the county office of the U.S. Department of Agriculgure in Seminole, Sunday

collected \$29,908 by being the lone

ticket holder in the Big Q pool. It was

the highest Big Q payoff in Ruidoso

In a Big Q pool, the winner must pick the first and second place

finishers in two consecutive races,

normally the two final races of the

"I didn't think I'd wind up with the

Sunday's success marked the third

time McGehee, a regular Ruidoso Downs patron, has cashed in big

payoffs at New Mexico tracks. He

said several years ago he hit two Big Q payoffs at Sunland Park, the first

for "about \$11,000" and the second

McGehee wagered \$200 on Sunday's Big Q and had 10 live tickets

ALDEN

'around \$10,000.

only winning ticket," McGehee said. "I thought there'd be five or six of

Downs history.

Seminole resident wins

big at Ruidoso Downs

by Richard Oliver

ng memorial Librar

Reflections

'You know, baseball is so great, I don't know why we get paid. Isn't

S.F. stumbles through 1980

Jim Lefebvre, first base coach for the San Francisco Giants, glanced

quizzically at me. Lefebvre, a sandy-haired, handsome man who made his fame as a player with the Los Angeles Dodgers during the sixties, was sweating heavily after pitching twenty minutes of batting practice before Satur-

heavily after pitching twenty minutes of batting practice before Saturday night's game against the Houston Astros.

"I enjoy baseball," he said. "It's a lot of fun."

It's hard to imagine baseball being fun for the Giants this season. After promising years in 1977 and 1978, the team has skidded to last place this season so far with a 21-31 record.

"We're having our problems," Lefebvre mused. "We don't have speed. You need speed to win. Speed and pitching."

We watched as the giant Giant Willia McCover showed.

We watched as the giant Giant, Willie McCovey, slammed a pitch off the right field Astrodome fence, 340 feet away.

"Hitting isn't everything," Lefebvre noted, echoing my thoughts.

McCovey checked his swing, sending the baseball a mere 330 feet

down the left field line. "Speed and pitching are the key," Lefebvre repeated. "Defense is also important, but you have defense if you have speed. You've got to

have speed to be able to make the plays on the field.

"Also, if you have the pitching, you don't have to score runs. Hitting just isn't that important, pitching is much more important."

Lefebvre should know. In 1966 he played for a Dodger team that

batted a team average .230 most of the season, but managed to win the World Series behind a pitching staff that gave the opposing teams only 2.62 runs a game.

"That year, we were playing teams like the Giants who had McCovey, Mays and other great hitters," he said, "but we still beat them, because we were a good pitching team and fast as hell.
"We went into the Series with (Sandy) Koufax (27-9), (Don) Drysdale

(13-16), and Claude Osteen (17-14), and a fast lineup and won the

Jack Clark, the Giants' star outfielder, slammed a practice pitch into the left field seats.

Lefebvre grimaced at the mention of the Giants' 1980 record. 'Well, we're slow as anything," he said. "It'll take some changes to

Lefebvre noted that the St. Louis Cardinals, who currently lead the National League in team batting with a .281 average, are mired in last place in the Eastern division.

'The Cardinals as a team are batting higher than our top guy (Clark, .279), and they're in last place," he said. Lefebvre said the Western division race will be between three

teams: Houston, Los Angeles and Cincinnati.

"Sure, Houston can win it," he said. "They can play their own park
They're hard to beat here. And they're pitching is hard to hit. When a
guy gives up only three hits and strike out 13 batters, who needs runs?" Lefebvre was referring to Astro ace J.R. Richard, who Friday blank-

ed the Giants on a three-hitter, 3-0. Giants outfielder Bill North came over and threw in a few com-

"Damn, when you've got four pitchers like they (Houston) have, you don't have to hit home runs," he said. "Besides, no one else hits home runs here. The air's dead.

North jogged into the batting cage to hit a few. After managing to slap two of five pitches into right field, he cursed to himself and pitched

I asked him if he thought San Francisco could improve enough to

make a good showing this season.
"No way," he said, shaking his head. "There's got to be some changes ... a lot of changes.

"Three clubs have a chance to win it. You all (Houston) don't need hitting. People complain about hitting, but whatever the Astros are

Whatever the Giants are doing, it's not working.

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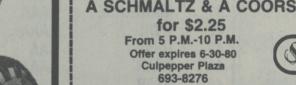
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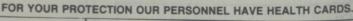
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