

Kuhn may benefit from owners' bickering over commissioner's job

by Milton Richman
UPI Sports Editor
NEW YORK — Bowie Kuhn resign? Forget it. That's the furthest thing from his mind, and you can make that as strong as you like because it's straight from the horse's mouth. The question of Kuhn's resignation arises because next Wednesday, Aug. 3, is D-Day for

him, the day the major league owners gather in Boston for their annual summer meeting. With his contract expiring only nine days later, on Aug. 12, and with Kuhn offering no sign whatsoever of giving up the commissioner's job even though he doesn't have enough votes to be re-elected, the owners have a king-sized dilemma on their hands.

One way or another, they have to do something Wednesday. You know what they'll do? Personally, I think they'll argue and wrangle all day and then wind up doing nothing. It'll be typical of them. Besides, why should they do anything else? That's all they've really done about resolving their problem — absolutely nothing — for the past eight months, or ever since six National League clubs voted not to renew Kuhn's contract in Chicago last Nov. 1.

The obstacles in the way of Kuhn being re-elected haven't changed at all since the last vote in Chicago. Four negative votes in the NL, where most of his opposition is coming from, are enough to keep his contract from being renewed. His opponents mustered two more votes than were necessary in Chicago, where the Cardinals, Mets, Astros, Reds, Braves and Cubs all voted to replace him with someone else.

Efforts have been made since then to influence some of the

anti-Kuhn forces, the latest one taking place in St. Louis last week when Peter O'Malley of the Dodgers, Charles Bronfman of the Expos, Bob Lurie of the Giants, Ballard Smith of the Padres and Bill Giles of the Phillies made a special visit to Cardinals vice president Gussie Busch III.

The purpose was to have him talk to his father, Gussie Jr., who is the Cardinals' chairman of the board, president and chief executive officer, with a view toward getting the elder Busch to come up at least with some kind of compromise. The Cardinals did offer an alternative proposal, but it was found to be unacceptable by those working for Kuhn's retention.

There had been some thought that Kuhn's position might have been strengthened recently when the brothers who own the Reds, James R. and William J. Williams, brought back their former president, Bob Howsam, to run the club after firing Dick Wagner.

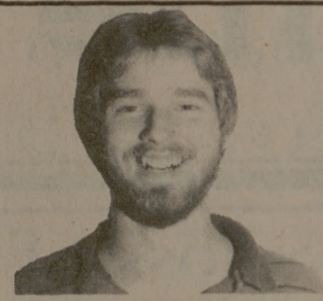
No dice. The Williams' aren't likely to change their vote unless old man Busch does, and he doesn't seem as if he ever will.

Those who are against Kuhn's re-election can't possibly understand why he doesn't resign.

If no decision is reached in Boston Wednesday, the whole thing gets dumped in the lap of baseball's executive council.

All eight members of the council are in favor of keeping Kuhn. Under existing rules, they have all the powers and duties of the commissioner during any vacancy of his office until a temporary commissioner or new one is named. In such a case, they undoubtedly would wish to install Kuhn as temporary commissioner, hoping he might be re-elected later on, but the rules say even a pro-tem commissioner cannot be elected without a three-quarters vote of the clubs in both leagues. Kuhn would never get that vote the way the lines are so bitterly divided in the National League.

Just what we need now, another war.



John Wagner

Lance, Marty and the flexbone magic

SMU'S BOBBY COLLINS likes to call Lance McIlhenny the best option quarterback in the country.

Critics say he can't run and can't pass. But no one can deny the success the Mustangs have had with McIlhenny at the helm. The 6-0, 188-pound senior has led the Mustangs to two Southwest Conference titles and two national rankings in the top five.

But is he the best? A lot of people say yes. Rick Crandall ... maybe not.

Crandall is director of promotions at the United States Air Force Academy. It's not that he has anything against McIlhenny — he admits he knows very little about SMU's Main Campus. It's just that he believes Air Force has a quarterback with something extra.

Meet Marty Louthan.

CRANDALL AND THE Academy are touting Louthan as a candidate for 1983 All-America honors — Air Force's Magic Man, they call him. At 6-1, 190 pounds, Louthan has the size and two pounds on McIlhenny. But that's not all.

The flexbone offense is a variation of the wishbone offense that teams like Oklahoma ran wild with in the 1950s. The passing the football became more fashionable, the wishbone was scrapped at many schools. At Air Force, it was never.

The Falcons' flexbone is still a running offense, with emphasis on the quarterback and the fullback. But it allows the quarterbacks greater freedom to leave the backfield and hand off, meaning the quarterback must be able to run and pass.

Louthan can do both. He rushed for 796 yards and threw for 1,337 last season. Compared to McIlhenny and his SMU teammates, Louthan does look like a magician.

McIlhenny ran for just 150 yards and threw for 1,144 in 1982. Want to reconsider, Bobby?

IN ALL FAIRNESS to McIlhenny, it's hard to pile on when you've got running backs like Eric Dickerson and James on your side, hogging the ball and grabbing the yards. And McIlhenny's specialty is confusing the defense — running over them. His ability to pitch the ball to the tailback, SMU's I-formation is — or at least, was — his forte.

But now that Dickerson and James have gone to the pros, McIlhenny may not have much chance to pitch. Without tailback, Little Mac may spend 1983 running — or throwing — for his life.

That's where the flexbone has an advantage. "When you're the Air Force," Crandall said in a telephone interview Wednesday, "and you're outweighted in the backfield, you're always looking for a way to get the ball to the tailback. That's why we went to the flexbone when we joined the Military Athletic Conference."

"We don't have guys with great speed and great arm strength, so everyone has to get involved in the offense."

LOUTHAN AGREES THE flexbone is geared for the wishbone without that one big back (though the Falcons have a good one in senior fullback John Kershner). Because it's difficult to run people for a service academy, the Falcons' recruits are always as big and fast and strong as the players at other schools. "We're fighting for our lives in every game," Louthan explained.

And as the flexbone is the offense for Air Force, Crandall says Louthan is the man for the flexbone.

"There's probably no quarterback in the country who would throw the ball out of the wishbone as well as what's taken us from 1981 to 8-5 (the Falcons' record last season)."

"It's an offense that's made for me," says Louthan. "I'm a super good passer and I'm not a super good runner, but I can run both adequately. In that respect, it's a good offense for me."

LOUTHAN IS READY to put past accomplishments behind him and start the 1983 campaign. After a summer of running lifting weights, he says he's in shape for one more season of flexbone magic.

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Panthers, Stars place four apiece on USFL's inaugural All-Star squad

United Press International
NEW YORK — Led by quarterback Bobby Hebert, the champion Michigan Panthers

had four first-team selections on the inaugural United States Football League All-Star team.

The 52-player first and second teams were elected by sports writers, columnists and broadcasters in the league's cities who cover the USFL on a regular basis.

Hebert, the league's leading passer, was joined on the first offensive unit by Panthers guard Thom Dornbrook and tackle Ray Pinney. Michigan outside linebacker John Corker was a first-team defense selection.

Hebert led the league in passing with 257 of 451 completions for 3,568 yards and a USFL-high 27 touchdown passes.

Philadelphia, loser to Michigan in the title game, Tampa Bay and Chicago also placed four men apiece on the first squad.

Herschel Walker of the New Jersey Generals and Kelvin Bryant of the Philadelphia Stars, the USFL's two leading ground gainers, joined Hebert in the backfield. Walker led the league with 1,812 yards and Bryant had 1,442.

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"Quality First"

Couple take 'the plunge' 20 feet down

United Press International
SEATTLE — When and Moana Stepetak children they took "the when they got married won't be joking. The changed wedding vows underwater in Puget Sound recently.

The bride wore blue with a wreath of pink plastic flowers in her hair. The groom was in a black wet suit.

The ceremony was formed by a judge who scuba diver. He held placards bearing the vows and the signatures couple written in water ink.

McBeth said the went off without a hitch except for a few anxious moments when murky water threatened to conceal the bride and groom from the rest of the party.

When the happy couple faced, fellow divers formed an arch of crossed spears to them to pass under as they and relatives on shore West Seattle beach cheered.