

Moses enters ranks of good turned bad

United Press International

NEW YORK — Edwin Moses is the fifth famous athlete to run afoul of the law in the last 18 months.

He joins baseball's Willie Wilson and Vida Blue, football's Billy Cannon Sr. and baseball's Denny McLain as athletes once held in high esteem who have seen their star status lose some luster after being arrested and charged with a crime.

Cannon, a former Heisman Trophy winner, was sentenced to jail for counterfeiting in July of 1983; Wilson, an American League batting champion, and Blue, a former AL Cy Young Award winner and Most Valuable Player, both spent time in a minimum security prison for drug possession last year and McLain, twice an AL Cy Young Award winner and former MVP, is currently standing trial on charges of extortion, racketeering, gambling and drug possession.

But, of the five, Moses' case has created the biggest shock.

News of Moses' arrest for soliciting a prostitute and his being given a citation for possession of marijuana was like being told that Santa Claus had been arrested for child molesting or that Steve Garvey had slapped a baby.

What was it the kid said when Shoeless Joe Jackson was implicated in the notorious Black Sox scandal of 1919?

Well, say it ain't so, Mo. Like the Biblical Moses, Edwin Moses has always been revered by those who know him.

Dignity, integrity, maturity, class. Those are words used to describe the Olympic champion and world record holder in the 400-meter hurdles. Not only is he a dominant force in his track specialty, but he has always championed the cause of athletes' rights in his chosen sport.

It was Moses the U.S. athlete chose to present the Oath of Allegiance at the Summer Olympics and last summer he became the first American athlete ever elected to the International Amateur Athletic Federation's Board of Directors.

Many in track and field circles considered Moses to be the ideal role model for the youth of America. While Olympic champion Carl Lewis projected an arrogant image to the general public, Moses was the anti-thesis.

His election as co-Sportsman of the Year, along with Mary Lou Retton, by Sports Illustrated had further enhanced his reputation as a man of outstanding character.

His "crime," if you can call it that, is not a serious one. In fact, it carries only a misdemeanor penalty. Yet, he may suffer far more than those athletes who went to jail for far bigger crimes.

When you say McEnroe, superlatives gush forth

United Press International

NEW YORK — Inevitably, following the kind of year he enjoyed, John McEnroe and superlatives usually come flowing out in the same mouthful.

For the moment, no one can come close to McEnroe with a tennis racket. His closest rival is Ivan Lendl, and the powerful Czechoslovakian is becoming so frustrated in his futile pursuit that he has gone on a diet, losing 15 pounds and is experimenting with his style of play.

For the seventh time in their last eight meetings, and 10th in the last 12, McEnroe defeated Lendl on Sunday, this time on the strength of a crushing 7-5, 6-0, 6-4 victory in the final of the \$400,000 Masters Championship. In the process of routing Lendl for the second consecutive time in the Masters final, McEnroe put together a string of 11 winning games.

Afterwards, adjectives such as "best" and "greatest" were liberally thrown out in McEnroe's direction. To his credit, he wasn't ready to accept all he heard.

"It's a great thing for people to say," he replied to a query about his thoughts to being called the greatest tennis player ever. "I think what I do speaks for itself. I don't need some person to tell me what he thinks. It was a nice thing to say, and I don't complain about it, but you can't compare me to someone who played 50 years ago."

There are so many things that are different. It's impossible to make a statement like that. You give each champion credit, but the whole idea of sports is to improve upon it.

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— John McEnroe

There are going to be better and better athletes coming into the sport."

McEnroe's only immediate concern is to continue to work on his game and improve it, ideas that are frightening enough to those who must play him. By sweeping through the Masters, McEnroe closed his 1984 account with a match record of 82-3 and earnings for the year of \$2,026,109.

He also joined with Peter Fleming to win the Masters doubles crown for the seventh consecutive year, beating Sherwood Stewart and Mark Edmondson, 6-3, 6-1, in Sunday's final.

The tournament was known as the Volvo Masters.

What aspects does he think he can improve on?

"Concentration level, physical condition, careless shots," McEnroe said. "There are some technical things I need to work on."

One thing for sure, McEnroe has

not gotten tired of his endless winning, explaining, "I never get bored when I'm playing like that," and he's not particularly concerned about the absence of a strong challenger.

"If it means me being No. 1 for a couple of years, no, I'm not concerned," he said. "If suddenly the level of tennis improves, and then it brings out better tennis in me, then, yes."

"But if I'm able to continue to improve on my own terms, then no, I wouldn't want to see it for a while."

About the only aspect of his career that displeases McEnroe is the image he has created, one of a whining, immature complainer who feels that everyone is against him. Try as he might to refine his court manners, he is unnaturally tense when he plays and his temperament usually gets the better of him.

He wishes that people would respect him more for his abilities as an athlete, rather than always look for an excuse to demean him.

"It gets a little frustrating when people don't consider you like a person," he said. "People don't care about you. They think you're some sort of animal, and they treat you like dirt."

A few minutes later he renewed the theme, saying, "I feel that people like to take pot shots at me, and I'm an easy target. Anyone can say anything they want about me because of my past reputation. I think I deserve a hell of a lot more respect than I get."

Simmons leaves his USFL post

United Press International

NEW YORK — Chet Simmons, commissioner of the U.S. Football League since its inception, resigned Monday.

No reason was immediately given for the move. A. Alfred Taubman, chairman of the special committee for the commissioner's office, announced in a statement.

The league did not name a replacement and said a search has begun for a successor with the new season to begin Feb. 23.

Simmons, former president of ESPN and NBC Sports, was named USFL commissioner in June 1982, one month after the league was formed.

"As we move into our third season, I'm confident the USFL's future has never been brighter," Simmons said in a statement. "The recent consolidation to 14 teams and an exceptionally strong collegiate draft will further strengthen the league's position."

Harry Usher, a former Olympic executive and Florida businessman, is said to be the strongest candidate for the commissioner's post. Usher was the executive vice president-general manager of the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee.

"A successor will be announced shortly," said Miles Tanenbaum, owner of the Baltimore Stars, from a reception in Annapolis, Md.

"I think there are some things Chet wants to do that are personal to him and I wish him the best of luck. He gave our league a good start and we're going to have to take it from there."

Wadkins worked hard for Desert win

United Press International

PALM SPRINGS, Calif. — When Lanny Wadkins went home from the PGA Tour last fall, he thought for a long time about his future.

"I thought I played well last year, especially in the second half," Wadkins said of 1984, "and then I went over to Japan and won a big one (the World Nissan Championship)."

"Still, I turned 35 in December, so I knew I couldn't be looking at another 20 years out here on the Tour. That's when I decided to work as hard as I could to get my game in the best shape possible so that I could have a big year in 1985."

True to his word, Wadkins left Dallas for Los Angeles on Jan. 1 to begin practicing with an eye toward getting off to a fast start in the new year's first event — the \$500,000 Bob Hope Desert Classic.

All the hard work paid off because while others staggered in the 90-hole, five-day Hope, Wadkins was nearly as fresh when the tournament was over as he was when it started, and he played 95 holes. Adding to his exhilaration was a winner's check of \$90,000.

Wadkins, who had won 12 tournaments coming to the Hope, put on a strong finish Sunday, birdying the last three holes to tie front-running Craig Stadler at the end of regulation, then beating the burly Californian on the fifth hole of a sudden-death playoff.

"I'm proud of the way I played and the way I hung in there," said Wadkins. "I never gave up and that's the kind of attitude you have to have out here if you expect to win. You also have to work hard and I think I did that, too."

The victory boosted Wadkins' career earnings to \$1,967,439 and pushed him into ninth place on the all-time list ahead of Arnold Palmer and 1984 Masters champ Ben Crenshaw.

There is a bit of irony in Wadkins moving ahead of Palmer, because Wadkins was the first recipient of a Palmer scholarship at Wake Forest University where he turned out to be one of the best amateur players in the country in the early 1970s by winning the U.S. Amateur Championship.

Wadkins had to be at his absolute best to beat Stadler, and he was. He eagled the par-5 14th at Indian Wells in regulation, then birdied the last three holes for a 65 to Stadler's 66 to force the playoff. The two played 90 holes in a record 27-under-par 333.

Wadkins saved himself twice in the playoff but also missed twice when he could have ended the match a lot sooner.

"I know some of Craig's shots don't always look pretty," Wadkins said, "but he is a tough competitor. I've played enough times against him to know you never count him out."

Stadler made two fine saving shots in the first four holes of the playoff and another on the fifth when he came out of a bunker to within five feet of the pin. But on that hole, the par-3 15th, Wadkins hit a 6-iron to within 20 feet of the cup and then made the putt to end the marathon.

From here, the Tour moves to Phoenix for the second event of the new season and Wadkins will be there in a field that includes Crenshaw, Hale Irwin, Johnny Miller, Calvin Peete and Lee Trevino, among others.

Speaking of his Hope victory, Wadkins said, "I'll have all of one day to enjoy it. Starting on Tuesday, it's back to work. And after Phoenix, I plan to play in the Los Angeles Open and the Bing Crosby National Pro-Am, so I'll be out here four weeks in a row. I'm serious about wanting 1985 to be my best year ever."

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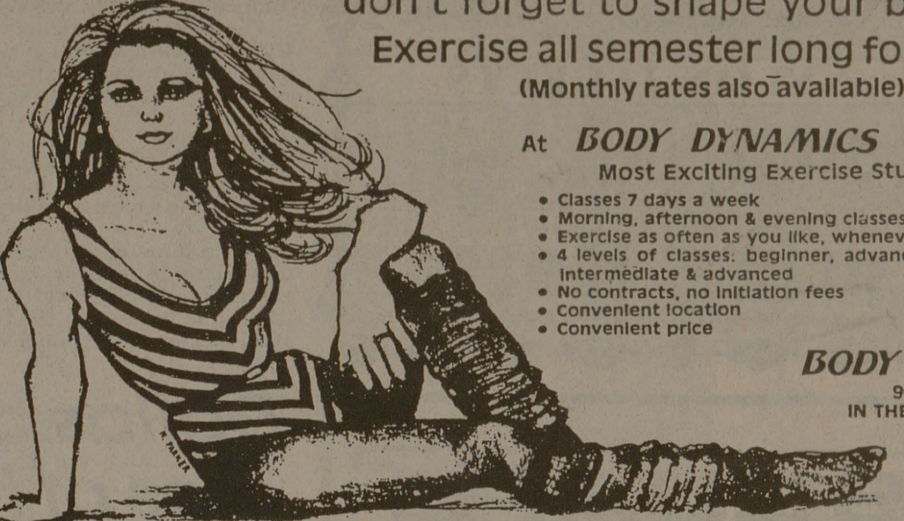
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