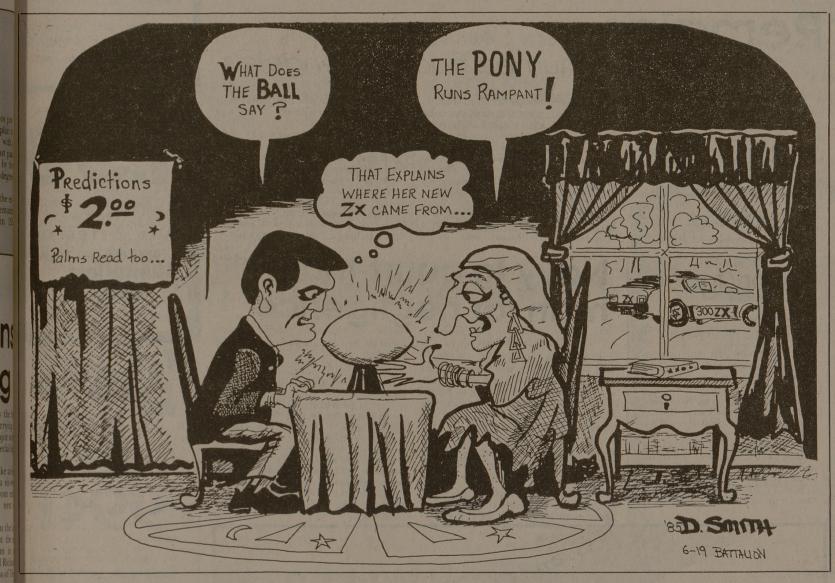
SPORTS



Atlanta Classic gives Chen chance to forget

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ATLANTA — Tze-Chung Chen says it's time to forget about his collapse in the U.S. Open and turn his thoughts to the business at hand—the \$500,000 Georgia-Pacific Atlanta Golf Classic beginning Thurs-

"If you remember everything in your head you'll be crazy," Chen said Wednesday when asked about blowing a major championship he had led for the first three rounds, building a comfortable four-shot advantage going to the final day.

"I really don't want to think about last week," he said. "Just forget it."
Chen opened the door to Andy North's Open conquest when the

little golfer from Taiwan took a quadruple-bogey on the fifth hole and then bogeyed the next three.

He got back within striking distance and finished in a three-way tie for second with two other foreign players — Dave Barr of Canada and Denis Watson of South Africa — one shot behind North.

All three of the Open runners-up are in the 156-man field that begins the quest for the \$90,000 first prize Thursday on the rolling hills of the 7,008-yard, par 72 Atlanta Country Club course

Lanny Wadkins, who ranks second on this season's money list and captured two of the tour's first three events in January, and defending

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champion Tom Kite are regarded as

"I lost the game Sunday, but I really made a lot of fans," Chen said. My heart is really very happy.

Kite also hopes to overcome a poor finish in the Open, where he bogeyed the final two holes to finish 13th.

'I could have bitten nails in two,' Kite said. "I just didn't particularly play well Sunday. I faltered around. I just couldn't quite make birdies. I just fought and fought and fought.

"I really am playing pretty well right now," Kite said. "I definitely feel better about my game than I did this time last year.

Bucks acquire next best thing to Patrick Ewing

Like Diogenes searching for an honest man, National Basketball Association teams are always in the hunt for the dominant center, the monster in the middle who can be a franchise player.

Four of the first six players chosen in Tuesday's NBA draft were cen-

ters. Seven of them went in the first round.

But, except for No. 1 pick Patrick Ewing, who operates at a level all his own, the best available big man may have been nailed down last week, well before the draft began. That was when the Milwaukee Bucks retrieved Joe Barry Carroll from Italy with a mammoth offer sheet that will push their salary cap to its limits. The numbers are in the neighborhood of \$7.5 million

Big men, though, don't come cheaply. Just ask the Golden State War-

Joe Barry Carroll was supposed to be their Patrick Ewing, the No. 1 pick in the 1980 draft, the franchise-maker. The Warriors wanted him so badly that they dealt Robert Parish and the draft's No. 3 pick, who turned out to be Kevin McHale, to Boston for the No. 1 choice.

Carroll averaged better than 20 points per game for four years, but critics pointed to what they considered his less-than-determined defense and

rebounding. He was not Bill Russell. But then, who is?

When his contract was up and free agency beckoned, Carroll was allowed to walk away — not only from Golden State, but from the whole league. There were no offer sheets.

"I think that encouraged the Warriors," Carroll said. "When that happened, they reduced their offer to my last year's salary — one-quarter of

what NBA centers were getting."

It turned into a rather nasty test of wills. Carroll either could play for what the Warriors offered or find some other job. He chose the latter, sign-

ing to play for Milan Simac in the Italian League. The money was considerably less than he could have had from Golden State. He was taking a little

Carroll averaged 25 points and a dozen or so rebounds a game, led his team to league and playoff championships, and was rediscovered by the NBA. Milwaukee pursued him — and if the Bucks hadn't, somebody else "I was looking at a bigger picture, the longer run, when I went to Italy," said Carroll, who spent draft day playing in a tennis tournament in Califor-

It took time, but Carroll got the kind of contract he wanted, a long-term

commitment for a lot of money

Why could he get that now and not a year ago?

"In the course of a year, things happen," he said. "Coaches change. Owners change. You have to look at the variables."

Golden State isn't done with Carroll yet, however. The Warriors have the option of matching Milwaukee's offer for him and then paying that large salary, or working out a trade with the Bucks that at least would provide some player compensation for his departure.

"Perhaps this will be an opportunity for the Warriors to get a center they feel more positive with," Carroll noted wryly.

The Warriors must think so. They spent their first round pick on St. John's All-American guard, Chris Mullin



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