

SPORTS

NFL vets upset by pay cuts

Players may refuse to report to camps

Associated Press
CHICAGO — Some top National Football League veterans in the option year of their contracts may not report to training camp to protest the club owners' attempt to "turn back the economic hands of time," a group of player agents said Monday.

"We're finding a lot of resistance (to negotiating contracts) for both rookies and veterans and we're considering having those veteran players not report to their clubs until they are signed," said Frank Murtha, one of about 30 agents or their representatives attending the unique meeting.

Murtha said there are 127 NFL veterans among the 28 clubs who are entering the final year of their contracts and they might be encouraged to stay away from training camp en masse. Most clubs open training camps in mid-July.

Murtha, the group's spokesman, said all of the agents representing the NFL's first-round picks as well as many veterans, gathered "to plan strategy ... and what we as a group need to do to negotiate better contracts ... There is a widespread attempt (by management) to roll back salaries, on the average, to 1983 levels."

He said the salary offers to both top draft choices and veterans are 40 percent below similar offers a year ago.

Murtha said the NFL owners were trying to "hold the line on salaries for all 336 newcomers and they are trying to reduce salary escalations for all the veterans whose contracts are coming up."

Murtha and Ed Sewell represent cornerback Richard Johnson, chosen by Houston in the first round. Also at the meeting were:

Jim Steiner, whose clients include Chicago's No. 1 pick, William Perry of Clemson, and Bears' veteran defensive linemen Dan Hampton and Steve McMichael; Leigh Steinberg, who represents Atlanta Falcons quarterback Steve Bartkowski and representatives of Mark McCormick's Cleveland-based International Marketing Group, whose clients include Lomas Brown, picked by Detroit, and Kevin Allen, selected by the Philadelphia Eagles.

Murtha said average first-round salary offers are down to \$125,000 from \$175,000 last year, and bonus offers have dropped to \$300,000-\$350,000 from \$850,000 in 1984.

'High noon' relived at Wimbledon

WIMBLEDON WRAP-UP

Associated Press
WIMBLEDON, England — It was "The Showdown" and "The Shootout."

And despite the bullets served up by West Germany's Boris Becker and American Kevin Curren in Sunday's "Shootout," the weapons were tennis rackets.

The "Showdown" on Saturday sent the world's top two women players, Martina Navratilova and Chris Evert Lloyd, against each other in a continuation of the game's longest-running rivalry.

Instead of a dusty street at high noon, these confrontations took place on the Centre Court grass court at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, precisely at 2 p.m., thank you.

Becker, appropriately nicknamed "Boom Boom" for his

rocketing serves, rewrote the record book when he blasted Curren 6-3, 6-7, 7-6, 6-4 to capture the men's singles title. He became the youngest Wimbledon winner, the first non-seeded player to capture the prestigious grass courts title and the first German to win in the tournament's 108-year history.

Navratilova and Lloyd were co-seeded No. 1, the first time in Wimbledon history that officials couldn't decide on a favorite. Navratilova took away the doubt, downing Lloyd 4-6, 6-3, 6-2 to post her fourth straight singles triumph here.

She also teamed with Australia's Paul McNamee to win the mixed doubles for the first time, although her dream of capturing the "triple" disappeared Saturday when she and Pam Shriver had their 109-match winning streak stopped in the women's doubles final by American Kathy Jordan and Australian Elizabeth Smylie.

But it was "Boom Boom" Becker who emerged from the fortnight as the hero, a role he both relishes and fears.

"Maybe now I am an idol for Germany, and I think it is good for Germany," said the 6-foot-2, strawberry blond Becker.

At the traditional "Champions Dinner" at the All England Club,

Buzzer Hadingham, the Wimbledon chairman, presented the teen-ager with an All England tie and said, "Boris, you are now a member of what we consider to be the finest club in the world."

The youngster, whose on-court composure and almost arrogant manner was a key to his victory, was clearly nervous.

"I find it strange to be standing here as champion because I never expected it," he smiled. "But I hope to be back with you again."

On Monday, his every step was recorded by reporters and photographers.

Becker, his parents, Karl Heinz and Elvira, and his sister Sabine,

who had come to Wimbledon for the championship match, checked out of their hotel and slipped out a side door.

He originally had been booked to fly from London's Heathrow airport to Frankfurt, Germany. Instead, he and his manager, Ion Tiriac of Romania, hurried to an earlier flight bound for Nice, France, which is near Monte Carlo, where he has an apartment.

Asked why he was not flying to Germany, Becker said: "I have no comment to make."

When asked why her son was going to Monte Carlo, his mother replied: "I'm sorry. My English is not too good."

Earlier, Tiriac had said: "He has given 18 interviews since yesterday. He just can't do it any more."

Child netter led men onto Centre Court

By HAL BOCK
AP Sports Writer

WIMBLEDON, England — And a child shall lead them.

One by one, the finest men's tennis players in the world — John McEnroe, Ivan Lendl, Jimmy Connors and the rest — found themselves eliminated from the prestigious All England Championships.

And when the once-lush green grass on Wimbledon's storied Centre Court had been beaten into brown dust, a child led them.

Boris Becker of West Germany, not yet old enough to vote or drive, today owns tennis' most cherished championship. He'd celebrate with champagne, but he's not old enough to drink either.

On the seventh day of the seventh month, at the tender age of 17 years, 7 months, and 7 days, Becker won Wimbledon.

He is the youngest player ever to capture a Grand Slam event and the first unseeded player to take this title. In fact, no unseeded player had ever won so much as a single final-round set in the 99-year history of these Championships before Becker came along to win the whole thing.

Becker's booming serve and acrobatic style punctuated a sun-splashed English afternoon, a day in marked contrast to the rainy fortnight through which this soggy tournament had slushed.

He subdued Kevin Curren 6-3, 6-7, 7-6, 6-4 on Sunday and, after

it was over, he looked like a football lineman who has spent a day in the trenches. His shirt and tennis shorts were grimy, crusted with dirt that he wore like a badge of honor.

"Getting dirty is my way to play," Becker explained simply. "When I am diving, then I am getting dirty."

What can you say? Kids get dirty.

Becker's accomplishment is like having a high school senior win the seventh game of the World Series or throw a touchdown pass in the Super Bowl. It just isn't done. But the blond kid from West Germany did it, with zest and with style.

If there was pressure, if he felt nervous to be in the Centre Court spotlight, it never showed. He played cool, controlled tennis, deliberate and decisive. After one point he whimsically retrieved a loose ball with a soccer kick that was a throwback to his sports' heritage, before he chose to concentrate on tennis.

Curren admired his opponent's poise.

"When I was 17, I was brought up in a totally different atmosphere and would have been totally intimidated," Curren said.

Becker won the Queen's Club, traditional grass court warm-up for the All England. Johan Kriek,

beaten in the final, sounded a warning for Wimbledon, saying that Becker would be a threat here.

No one took that seriously, not even Becker, who said Sunday that after Queen's he still didn't believe he could win Wimbledon.

But he weaved his way through the 128-player minefield, dispatching one opponent after another with his booming serve and masterful ground strokes.

And at the end, he was the only one left, alone at the top of tennis' most important tournament, younger than Wimbledon's junior champion, 18-year-old Leonardo Lavalle of Mexico. A child had indeed led them.

Marathon game frustrates Astros

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Following Sunday's 19-inning, 6-3 loss to the Montreal Expos, Houston pitcher Dave Smith could remember a more pleasant extra-inning game and Frank DiPino had trouble remembering the start of the game.

"Who started this game anyway?" joked DiPino, who pitched three hitless innings. "It was mind-boggling."

The Astros dued the San Diego Padres for 20 innings in 1980 with Smith emerging as the winner.

"But that was different because we won," Smith said. "I had to pitch three innings that night but I got the victory. This one was really frustrating."

Floyd Youmans, the last of five Montreal pitchers, got the victory and in a bittersweet quirk, was on his way back to the minors after his first major league victory.

"I feel good about my first major league victory but it's disappointing to have to go back to the minors now," said Youmans, whose departure will make room for pitcher Bill Gullickson to come off the disabled list.

Houston starter Joe Niekro singled to centerfield in the sixth inning, scoring Jerry Mumphrey for a 2-2 deadlock. Each team added runs in the 18th. Astros first baseman Enos Cabell's fielding error in the 19th finally allowed the winning run to score.

The game lasted five hours, 12 minutes and was the fourth longest in Astros history. Houston's longest game went 24 innings April 15, 1968 and ended in a 1-0 Astro victory over the New York Mets.

Houston Manager Bob Lillis utilized every non-pitcher in the game and even used starting pitcher Bob Knepper as a pinch hitter in the 18th inning with the potential tying run on second base. Knepper struck out.

"This was my longest game," Houston second baseman Bill Doran said. "I'm beat. But I feel sorrier for the umpires because at least we got to go off the field every half-inning. They got no break."

Fewer than 2,000 of the paid crowd of 14,493 fans remained for the finish.



Cardinal pitcher 'Tudored' by high school teammate

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Thanks to a call from his high school battery mate, left-hander John Tudor could turn out to be more than the St. Louis Cardinals bargained for.

Until then, however, it appeared likely he would be far less. The communique that revived him came in late May following a defeat that ranked as particularly distressing.

"He told me he'd seen me on television the night before and that I didn't even look like the same pitcher," said Tudor of former teammate Dave Bettencourt's advice.

"It was at my 'gathering' point where my mechanics were fouled up. It had to do with the way I was releasing the ball," said the 31-year-old pitcher. "Since that time, everything's just fallen into place. In fact, I've never been in a better groove

than I am right now."

Indeed, since Bettencourt's of the onetime Boston Red Sox star out has won eight straight times on a 5½-week span.

During June, as the Cards were compiling a 19-8 record, Tudor captured NL Pitcher of the Month honors with a 6-0 mark and a 1.34 ERA.

Since then, in two July starts, he pitched a three-hitter in a 4-0 victory over the Montreal Expos and an eight-hitter in a 7-1 success against the Los Angeles Dodgers. He now also has three shutouts among his five complete games. Suddenly, a season that started as a 1-7 disaster has blossomed prospectively into the best of his career.

"He's on a roll," said St. Louis Manager Whitey Herzog following Tudor's triumph Sunday over Los Angeles, giving him a 9-7 record.

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