
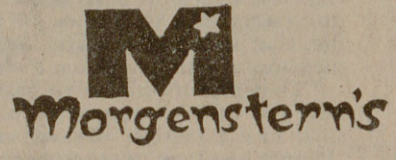



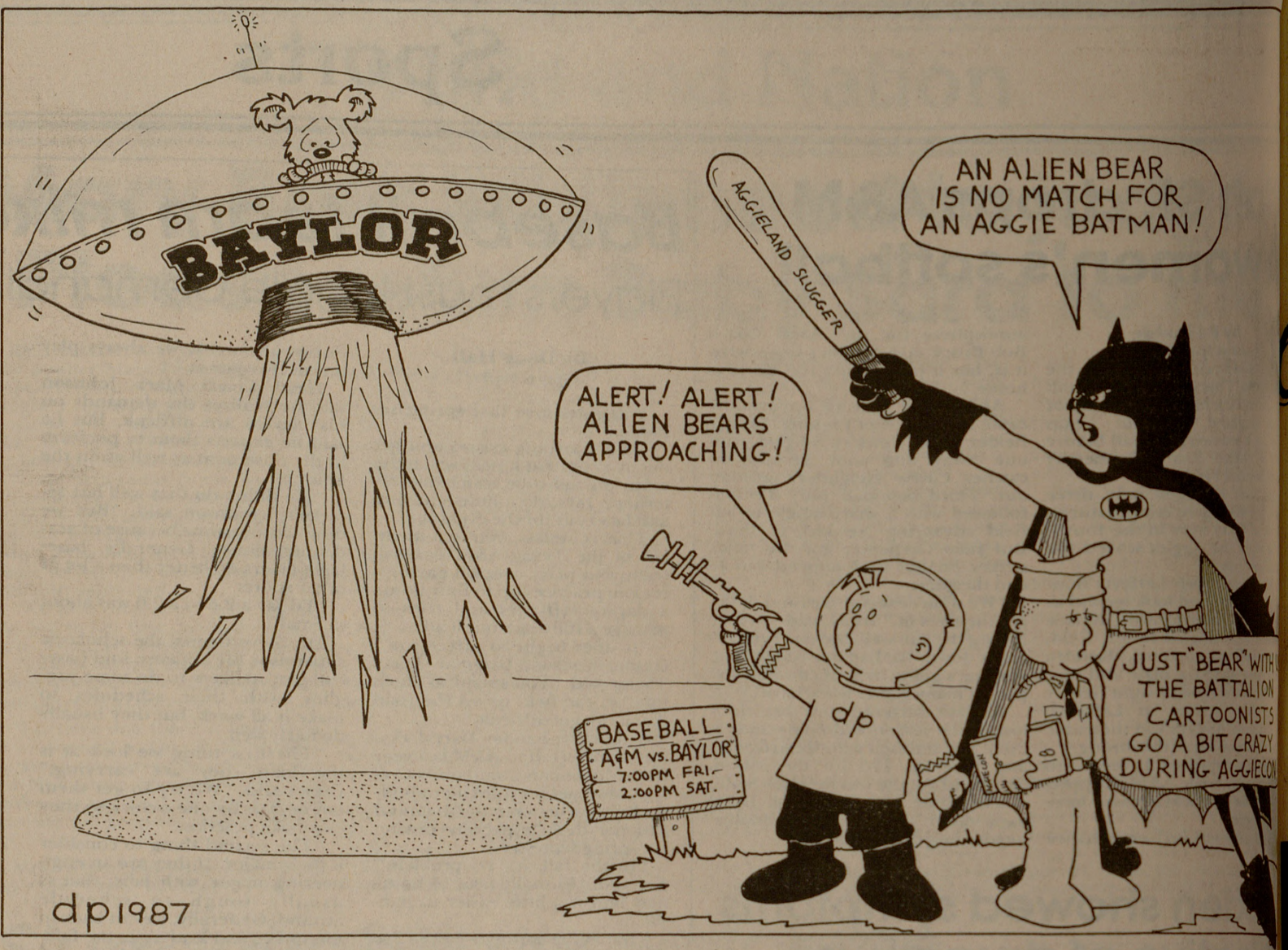
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Gooden

(continued from page 9)
 Despite rumors circulating during the 1986 season that Gooden was on drugs, his teammates said they never would have guessed.
 "I heard the same rumors that you heard," said Ray Knight, the Mets third baseman, now with Baltimore. "But I never saw any indication of any changes in his personality. But then again, I don't know what you look for. What do you look for?"
 "When I was in his presence, he was always the same," Knight told the *New York Post*, "and I observed him closely."
 Gooden's 1986 season was rife with erratic behavior that might have suggested drug use, Yancovitz said.

Before spring training even had begun last year, Gooden tried to hide an ankle injury. Then, he was fined for missing a spring workout. Initially, he said he was in a car accident, and that turned out to be untrue.
 In April, Gooden, his sister and his fiancée were detained by police at LaGuardia Airport after an argument with a rental-car agent.
 At the same time, Gooden's performance fell off. He was 24-4 in his Cy Young campaign of 1985, but 17-6 last year. After giving up 17 hits and eight earned runs in nine innings of two World Series losses, Gooden missed the Mets ticker tape parade. He said he overslept.

Last Dec. 13, he was arrested along with a nephew and three other friends after a late-night fight with Tampa police. Gooden had been pulled over in his silver Mercedes-Benz while on his way back from a basketball game. And, last month, Gooden's girlfriend, Carlene Pearson, pleaded guilty to possession of a stolen .38-caliber handgun that she had tried to carry through a metal detector at LaGuardia on Jan. 30.
 "Not waking up? That's glaring. Sweating? It could be a symptom," Yancovitz said. "The mood swings, inappropriate behavior, inability to tolerate the little troubles we have in everyday life... it's very symptomatic, very suspicious."

Gooden to begin rehabilitation

NEW YORK (AP) — Dwight Gooden checked into a New York drug rehabilitation center Thursday to begin treatment for cocaine use while the World Series champion Mets juggled their plans to start the season.
 Gooden walked briskly into the Smithers Alcoholism and Treatment Center accompanied by men who kept reporters from talking with him. A van had met Gooden's Delta Air Lines flight from his home in Tampa to LaGuardia Airport on the tarmac and whisked him to the facility on Manhattan's East Side.
 It was not known how long Gooden, 22, would remain at the center. The average rehabilitation period at Smithers is 28 days, said Joyce Walker, in charge of community liaison for the center.
 Gooden was placed on the 15-day disabled list. His attorney, Charles Ehrlich, said the pitcher "hopefully

will be back in four to six weeks" while Mets General Manager Frank Cashen said his "gut feeling" was Gooden would miss at least two months.
 "Cocaine is a very serious thing and not easy to conquer," said teammate Keith Hernandez, among 11 players who were conditionally suspended by Commissioner Peter Ueberroth in March 1986 for their connection with cocaine.
 Gooden checked into Smithers a day after the Mets said a voluntary test revealed their ace had a "drug use problem." Gooden chose to seek treatment rather than face suspension by Ueberroth.
 The announcement came less than a week before Gooden was scheduled to start opening day against Pittsburgh at Shea Stadium. Bobby Ojeda, 4-0 with an 0.68 earned run average against the Pirates last season, will pitch Tuesday

in place of Gooden, who is 6-0 with a 1.49 ERA in his career versus Pittsburgh.
 Gooden's trouble, along with hernia surgery Monday that will put reliever Roger McDowell out of action for two months, took a big chunk out of the best pitching staff in baseball.
 Johnson and his players maintain they had no idea Gooden had any kind of drug problem. Rumors linking Gooden and cocaine began surfacing last summer as he became inconsistent for the first time in his career.
 His record fell from 24-4 in 1985, when he won the National League Cy Young award, to 17-6, while his ERA rose from 1.53 to 2.84.
 Gooden also continued to be involved in a string of off-the-field incidents, capped by a fight with Tampa police Dec. 13 that led to felony charges. Gooden pleaded no contest and was placed on probation.

Expansion of NBA may occur in '88

NEW YORK (AP) — The NBA expansion committee recommended Thursday that the league expand to 26 teams, adding franchises in Charlotte, N.C.; Minneapolis and either Miami or Orlando, Fla., for the 1988-89 and 1989-90 seasons.
 The five-member committee recommended that Charlotte be admitted for the 1988-89 season, Minneapolis for the following season and the Florida team in one of those two seasons.
 A decision between Miami and Orlando will be made by the league in October.
 Each city would pay \$32.5 million for its franchise if the NBA Board of Governors goes along with the recommendation, which meets April 22 in New York. A three-quarters vote of the board is needed for a franchise to be accepted.
 "We're extremely delighted. We were such a long shot, can't date," said Dan Lohmeier, spokesman for NBA Charlotte. "People even locally didn't give much of a chance of even making it, much less coming out. No, of course, it still has to get by the NBA Board of Governors, but it still have some work to do."
 "We won't make any type of real decisions until after April 22," said Bob Stein, the attorney for the group which would represent pro basketball to Minneapolis where the Los Angeles Lakers franchise originated. "Now we're just hoping the rest of the league agrees."

SMU near decision on fate of football in 1988 season

DALLAS (AP) — Southern Methodist Interim President William Stallcup said Thursday he will decide within the next few days whether to scrap SMU's 1988 football season.
 "I haven't gotten all the information I need to make a decision," Stallcup said after a meeting of the interim executive committee of the board of trustees. "I'm trying to keep an open mind until I get all the facts."
 The NCAA has banned SMU's 1987 football season and limited the Southwest Conference school to seven road games 1988. The penalties, announced in February, stemmed from \$61,000 in payments to 13 Mustang football players.
 "I'm trying to talk to different constituencies of the university to get their feelings on (dropping football)," said Stallcup, adding that interim athletic director Dudley Parker has not yet determined how many players will stay at SMU to play next year.
 But even if there are enough players, he said he might decide to cancel the 1988 season out of safety considerations.
 "Even if there were enough to field a team, you've got guys playing against numbers four times as large," he said, adding that having a small team with walk-ons

who might not be in top condition increases the risk of injuries.
 Stallcup said the potential loss of football revenue in 1988 was not figuring in his decision.
 There may be an advantage in bringing the football program "to a complete halt and starting fresh and clean. If we give up the '88 season we could get off to a better start in 1989," Stallcup said.
 SMU officials have discussed scheduling fall events such as Homecoming and Parents' Weekend, which have traditionally centered around football, around soccer. Stallcup said such a decision has not been made, but that he supports the idea.
 "I like the idea of playing our sports events on campus," he said. The soccer team plays on Ownby Field on the SMU campus; the Mustangs football team had been playing in Texas Stadium in nearby Irving.
 Stallcup called the first meeting of the interim committee — appointed Mar. 20 after the board of trustees abolished the Board of Governors — routine. He said the committee heard progress reports from several trustee groups.

Hagler isn't intimidated by Leonard's comeback

LAS VEGAS, Nev. (AP) — Marvelous Marvin Hagler is aware of Sugar Ray Leonard's popularity, but he also is secure in his talent and in his place in boxing.
 "Just because he won a gold medal and became America's sweetheart, doesn't mean I'm a bum," said the middleweight champion, who will fight Leonard in a scheduled 12-round bout Monday night at Caesars Palace.
 Leonard is coming out of retirement for the challenge, and a lot of boxing people think the challenge is too late.
 Leonard, who won a gold medal in the Olympics almost 12 years ago, has had just two fights in almost 62 months. His last fight was a ninth-round knockout of Kevin Howard May 11, 1984.
 "I don't believe he has any business in there with me right now," Hagler said Thursday. "He's been sitting on the other side (outside) of the ring (as a television boxing analyst) and thinking he has the tools to do it. That's great. It makes me a lot of money."
 Hagler is guaranteed \$12 million, and promoter Bob Arum said that Hagler should get at least \$15 million. Leonard is guaranteed \$11 million.
 "I need a new breath of air, like something to motivate me," Hagler said of Leonard's challenge, which has been criticized in some quarters

because of retinal surgery on Leonard's left eye that prompted his retirement in 1982.
 "I'm not thinking about Leonard's comeback," Hagler said. "He's the one that has the choice. I'm going in there to win my job. My job is to defend the middleweight championship."
 "Just because he won a gold medal and became America's sweetheart doesn't mean I'm a bum," Marvelous Marvin Hagler said.
 Hagler is a 2 1/2-1 favorite in a bout at a sold-out 15,300-seat indoor stadium. It is being promoted as title fight by the World Boxing Council.
 The International Boxing Federation recognizes Hagler as champion, but would declare the champion should Leonard win.
 Leonard has said he doesn't know what titles are at stake because of challenge of fighting Hagler enough for him.
 Asked about his plans, Hagler said, "I like to take one step at a time. I'll see what happens. I'm not fighting from breaking Carlzon's record."
 Should Hagler beat Leonard, he would need two victories over Monzon's record of 14 middleweight title defenses.