

Breaking the color barrier

Augusta admits first black member into golf club

WASHINGTON (AP) — Ron Townsend, president of Gannett Television Group, has become the first black accepted for membership in the prestigious Augusta National Golf Club, a company-owned station reported on Tuesday.

The club, site of the annual Masters golf tournament, accepted a black member in this summer of racial discontent in the golf world. But it refused to identify him.

WUSA, the Gannett station in Washington, reported that Townsend had been accepted. An announcement from Gannett said Townsend has direct responsibility for six of the company's television stations.

Townsend was not immediately available for comment.

The Augusta Chronicle earlier had quoted an unidentified Augusta member as saying the new member was from Texas.

The world of pro golf was thrown into turmoil earlier this summer over the exclusionary membership policies of Shoal Creek Country Club, the site of last month's PGA Championship. Commercial sponsors threatened to withdraw their support from televising the tournament.

The club admitted a black member following the controversy.

Shoal Creek founder Hall Thompson said Monday that his club may never host another major tournament because of the controversy.

Civil rights leaders in Georgia had



announced plans to protest next spring's Masters if Augusta National, all-white since its founding by golfing legend Bobby Jones in 1932, was not integrated.

The New York Times reported that Augusta National's new black member joined on Friday. As late as Monday night, officials of the club refused to confirm or deny the story.

But Hardin said Monday that when the club did have a black member, "he should have a chance to be a member, rather than to be some

oddy."

In the wake of the Shoal Creek controversy, officials at CBS, who televises the Masters, talked with Augusta National officials regarding the membership issue.

CBS was assured by Augusta National that "they were taking steps to insure that the tournaments were televisable under non-exclusionary membership policies," said Bob Kerr, director of communications for CBS Sports.

At the time of the PGA Championship, Hardin maintained that Augusta National was already searching for a black member. He said then. "There wasn't any particular hurry about this until recently."

Following the events at Shoal Creek, the PGA of America, PGA Tour and the U.S. Golf Association adopted new guidelines requiring private clubs wanting to tournaments to demonstrate they do not discriminate against minorities or women.

The Masters, however, is a tournament under the auspices of Augusta National, not under the jurisdiction of the PGA.

The Masters invited its first black player, Lee Elder, in 1975, and an all-black caddy corps until 1981.

Southern Christian Leadership Conference president Joseph Lowery, who had vowed to protest Masters if the National remained white, said he was pleased to see the club was desegregating.

Johnson tabs rookie Smith for Sunday start

IRVING (AP) — Rookie running back Emmitt Smith, who rushed twice for two yards in Sunday's 17-14 victory over San Diego, was elevated to the first team on Tuesday by Dallas coach Jimmy Johnson.

Johnson also announced that he was moving Darryl Johnston from fullback to halfback as the Cowboys prepare for Sunday's meeting with the New York Giants in Texas Stadium.

"We've seen enough of Emmitt to know he has a grasp of the offense," Johnson said. "He was with us in quarterback school and all of our mini-camps. It was inevitable that he would start."

Superdome to make bid to host 1994 World Cup

NEW YORK (AP) — The Louisiana Superdome's general manager said Tuesday the stadium would bid to become the first indoor site ever for soccer's World Cup.

Bob Johnson said the 70,000-seat stadium, host to four Super Bowls and two NCAA Final Fours, probably would bid for either the final, the opening game or a semifinal in addition to first-round matches.

The tournament, the first to be played in the United States, will be held in between eight and 12 cities in June and July 1994. Cities will be selected next year by FIFA, soccer's world governing body.

"At this point our intentions are to bid," Johnson said Tuesday before meeting with officials of the New

Orleans Sports Foundation to discuss the group's proposal. He said the problem of installing grass over the artificial turf could be overcome.

"They've done indoor football with natural grass," he said. "That's one night. Here you might have a preliminary-round game and you lay idle to the semifinal game. The question is how do you maintain the grass without natural sun and being able to water extensively?"

The Superdome, opened in August 1975, originally did not intend to bid for the World Cup. But an organizing committee decided in June that it would entertain proposals from domes.

Pils

Blue Jays, who chased down the Baltimore Orioles at the end of last year, are slowly chipping away at Boston's lead.

The two teams play a pivotal three-game series in Boston at the

end of the month. It probably won't make much difference however, as the A's, who could have batting champions in both leagues in Rickey Henderson and McGee, will undoubtedly make their third

straight World Series appearance.

In the senior circuit, both divisions are awaiting a clear-cut winner. The Eastern division leading Pittsburgh Pirates and the New York Mets continue their summer long dog-fight. Both teams have held the top spot and the Bucs are presently in the driver's seat.

Pittsburgh may not have the offensive punch like the A's, but they come pretty close with power like Barry Bonds and Bobby Bonilla in the lineup.

Even with the Pirate surge of late the experience of the Mets makes them a threat to their playoff hopes. The two teams close out the season with a three-game series that could very well decide who will play the Cincinnati Reds in the playoffs.

Leading the division since day one, the Reds show no signs of letting the Los Angeles Dodgers of the San Francisco Giants, last year's National League champs, catch up.

Cincinnati plays 17 of its last 25 games at home, including a series with the Dodgers and Giants. They also have the benefit of playing two series against the hapless Houston Astros and one with the cellar-dwelling Atlanta Braves.

Aside from the heat of the division races, there are other interesting stories in progress.

In the National League, the big story is whether or not Philadelphia outfielder Len Dykstra will be able to hold on to his slim lead for the batting title. As of Tuesday, Dykstra held a two-thousandth point lead over McGee, who could win the title and make preparations for the American League division playoffs.

Should Dykstra hold on for the title, he would be the top Most Valuable Player candidate. However, there is no other clear-cut leader for the award should he falter.

In the American League, the big story of late is the father-son duo of Seattle with Ken Griffey Sr. and Ken Griffey Jr.

The elder Griffey, who retired from the Reds in August, was named the League's Player of the Week. He went 12-for-19 for a .632 average with seven RBIs. He also threw out Kansas City's Bo Jackson trying to stretch a single into a double.

With all the bone-crushing going on as football gets underway, don't forget there's still plenty of good nail-biting going as the pennant races heat up.

Fearless Prediction — The A's six over anyone the National League serves up, more than likely the Mets. Such a Series would be a repeat of the 1973 classic and solidify the A's as a dynasty.

Douglas Pils is a senior journalist and a sports writer for The Battalion. His weekly column appears on Wednesday.

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