

SOME NOTES: PERSONAL AND, IMPERSONAL: from A to Z

Lacy, Sam
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SOME NOTES: PERSONAL AND IMPERSONAL

In the course of my PA days (pre-arthritis), I did a lot of basketball officiating . . . A time came when friends and family pestered me with demands for an estimate of the distance I ran while working a game, especially in those where I worked as the lone official.

So, one Saturday I stopped in a sporting good store in Richmond while enroute to officiate a game at Virginia State College, and purchased a pedometer . . . With it strapped to my left leg, I chased the Trojans and their Lincoln University counterparts up and down the Petersburg (Va.) gym floor a recorded distance of 16.2 miles.

As I look back on an estimated 20 years of officiating a minimum of 40 games each winter (at Virginia State, Morgan, Howard and Virginia Union), added to eight years of caddyng (carrying 35 pounds of clubs and bags) over the huge Columbia Country Club (Md) course as a youth, I suppose I shouldn't be surprised that the old joints are now saying: "whoa, podner!"

Hondo also

The preceding came to mind when I ran across a note on John Havlicek of the Boston Celtics . . . Titled "Marathon Man," it said:

"As every NBA fan knows, Havlicek has spent few stationary moments on the basketball court . . .

Just how far Havlicek has run, however, may stun even Red Auerbach . . . Early last season, Havlicek received a pedometer for his birthday . . . In a game against Chicago, he strapped it on and, running with the zest that belies his 37 years, logged eight miles in 43 minutes' playing time . . . Applying these figures to Havlicek's 15-season career, Hondo probably qualifies as history's greatest distance runner — on wood.

"Counting his NBA regular season, playoff and All-Star Game appearances, Havlicek has a grand total of 50,815 minutes or 846.92 hours, of playing time. If he covered up to eight miles ever 43 minutes — and he undoubtedly ran more earlier in his career — that's a total of 9,453.95 miles, a distance

equivalent to 360 Boston Marathons . . . Throw in Havlicek's high school and collegiate games and it is reasonable to assume he has traveled more than 10,000 miles across the gym floors of America."

An even dozen

The recent induction of Gale Sayers and Bill Willis to the Pro-Football Hall of-Fame brought to 12 the number of black former players enshrined at Canton, Ohio.

As a refresher for those readers who need it, the hallowed dozen consists of Lenny Moore and Jim Parker of the Baltimore Colts, Jim Brown, Len Ford, Marion Motley

and Willis of the Cleveland Browns; Night Train Lane of the Detroit Lions, Ollie Matson of the Los Angeles Rams, Emlen Tunnell and Roosevelt Brown of the New York Giants, Sayers of the Chicago Bears, and Joe Perry of the San Francisco 49 ers . . . Lane and Matson, incidentally, played outstandingly with the St. Louis Cardinals, as did Perry with the Baltimore Colts.

Bits of irony

While on the subject of profootball, it is interesting to note once again the irony that dictated the dismissal of John Unitas by the

Pittsburgh Steelers in 1955 so that they might go with a quarterback rival for the job, Ted Marchibroda .

. . . What transpired during their respective playing careers — John at Baltimore and Ted nowhere — doesn't need repeating.

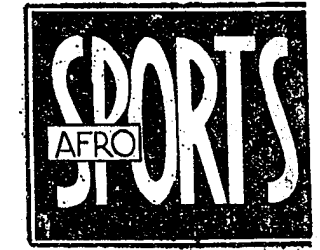
A somewhat similar irony touches the present Baltimore Colts scenario . . . Two of the team's quarterbacks, Bert Jones and Mike Kirkland, were contestants in the now popular "Punt, Pass and Kick" competitions of the late sixties . .

Jones, who is all-pro as the Colts quarterback, didn't advance beyond the local level of the competitions . . . Kirkland, Bert's No. 2 replacement behind Bill Troup, was the 13-year-old national champion.

Bernie who?

And that brings us to this revelation involving not football, but baseball.

In 1971, the Cincinnati Reds were very close to obtaining a ballplayer named Bernie Williams . . . Who's Bernie Williams? . . . Well, that's exactly what the Reds wanted to



know, but the San Francisco Giants who held his contract, weren't talking.

Because the major leagues have a network of spies which keeps on top of the prime prospects of the various farm systems, Cincinnati offered a variety of bait in its effort to pry loose young Bernie Williams from the Giants . . . But each time the San Francisco brass nixed the bid and countered with "anyone but" . . . Finally, the Reds gave up and dealt for another Giant outfielder. At last report, Williams was barely holding on to a job in Japanese baseball . . . The other player the Reds reluctantly settled for? . . . A fellow named George Foster.

