

Fishing

By



"The Crappie Catcher"

The papers have been filled with so much bad news about war, killings, riots, and other bloody mess, that this reader has required a big slug of booze to face the ordeal of reading the daily papers.

THE SPORTS page of the Sun on August 21 carried a cheerful headline that made us forget all the bad news. "Sifford Wins Hartford Open", was the brightest piece of news since June 22, 1937, when every paper in the land, and around the world, carried the headline, "Joe Louis Wins Title by KO".

The news of the Brown Bomber's victory came after a quarter century of including Negro heavyweights out of the championship picture. Joe Louis was the first Negro heavy to get a chance at the title since Little Arthur, better known as Jack Johnson, took a sunbath in the ring at Havana as he took the count, shading his eyes from the hot Cuban sun, holding one glove up as a parasol. Jess Willard was declared winner and new champion in the most obvious fix in fight history.

From the day of that tank job in Havana in 1912, all promoters overlooked the top Negro heavies when they matched the lilywhite champion against some other White heavy, even though all-time fistic greats like Harry Wills, George Godfrey, and Jersey Joe Wolcott were in their prime.

The sports world let down the race barrier in 1937 for the first Negro to fight for the heavy crown after 25 years of discrimination. Seventeen years later, the race barrier in Professional Golf was bent enough to permit a 31-year-old Negro caddy from North Carolina to enter a PGA-sponsored golf tournament.

FOURTEEN GOLF tours later, Charlie Sifford, the ex-caddy won his first major tournament on the PGA circuit. He fired 4 consecutive sub-par rounds of golf, shooting a fantastic 7 under, 64 in the 4th round to win the 20 Grand first money by a single stroke.

Charlie Sifford, nicknamed "The Cigar" by the golfers, and called "Charlie Horse" by his army of fans, had been grinding out a fair living with his golf sticks before winning the Hartford. He had won a little over 25 Grand on the 1967 PGA Circuit before he picked up the top money at Hartford.

Prior to the Hartford, The Cigar had been playing strictly for money rather than for tournament victories. Charlie had to win something in every tournament so that the family could eat. He had to make the safe shot to stay in the money. He could not afford to take the big gamble on shots that might move him up a stroke or two if successful, but knock him completely out of the money if not successful. He had to play them safe and close to his chest like a lock player plays poker. He could not take the gamble because he could not afford to lose. He played locks.

THE GOLF world should see a different Charlie Sifford from this date forward. The 45 Grand he has won so far in 1967 will keep the Siffords in good shape for the next 8 or 10 months and The Cigar will be able to take some gambles for top prize.

Some of The Cigar's gambles will pay off and he should win at least one more tourney before the '67 tour is over. If he should be lucky enough to pick up enough prize money to pay the bills for an additional 6 or 8 months before the 1968 tour begins, put The Cigar down as the best long shot to win the 1968 Tournament of Champions in Las Vegas.

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CRAPPIE CATCHER'S TIP OF THE WEEK

Smaller hooks catch larger fish. The big fellows are a bit older and wiser than the smaller fish and will spit out the bait when they bite down on it and feel that big hunk of steel. They

Like "Puddin' Head" Said (SIFFORD, from page 3)

By BENNIE THOMAS

BATON ROUGE, La. - (NPI)--When the New Orleans Saints marched into Louisiana State University's stadium last week to take on the Pittsburgh Steelers, two former Southern University players and an ex-coach were in the number.

And the trio--Tackle Jim Battle, End Rhome Nixon and Alva Tabor, formerly of the Jaguar coaching staff--figured in the history made by the New Orleans team which became the first expansion team in NFL history to win two exhibition games with the big 20-17 victory over the Steelers.

Battle, a former Jaguar team captain and star tackle, was drafted by the Cleveland Browns after his four seasons as a collegian at Southern University. The big Shreveport native played a season for the Browns, then was picked in the expansion draft by the fledgling Saints of New Orleans.

NIXON WAS drafted after the 1966 season by the Chicago Bears and mid-way through the current exhibition season, was traded to the Saints.

Tabor was a charter-member staffer of the Saints. The former Jaguar offensive coach is actively tutoring the Saints during the exhibition season, but once the regular season gets underway, his time will be taken by scouting junkets all over the Southwestern and Southeastern areas.

Both former Jaguar players came in for some of the action in the Saints' victory. Battle, who played straight offensive tackle in the Saints' Shreveport game two weeks ago, was used on the kicking team Saturday night, as was Nixon.

Nixon left the Chicago Bears nursing a hip ailment, and came into Baton Rouge for the Steeler clash slightly lame, but he played. He said that he was going full blast for the rest of the way because he wanted to remain with the Saints, adding, "There's quite a bit more cutting to come."


HOME COMING CLASSIC

MARSHALL, Texas - (NPI)--After clashing with traditional rival Bishop College in their season's opener Sept. 16, the Wiley College Wildcats will host Jackson State College in this year's Homecoming classic, Oct. 28.

Other arch-rivals in Wiley's 1967, 10-game schedule include Grambling and Prairie View Colleges and Southern and Texas Southern Universities.

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are less likely to feel the smaller hook and therefore are more likely to take the bait.

For bass, use a #1 hook instead of those 2-0 hooks you have probably been using. For Crappie, use #6 or #4, and catch more, and catch larger fish.

ing racial barriers to break into the PGA in 1954, the first of his race to do so. On the turf, Sifford, who can tee off with the best of them, had to go up consistently against the "Big Boys," which means Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer, Gary Player, Gene Littler, and several other top golfers--any of whom can win on a given day.

Against such an array of talent, "finishing in the money", as Sifford has consistently done, was a feat to be proud of. Up to the Hartford Open, Sifford had won \$20,000 in prize money in 1967.

Yet big money winnings came after a long, hard pull for Charley. When he first crashed the PGA, he had trouble winning admittance to enough tournaments to even earn his keep. In fact, he still doesn't play in a number of tournaments in the Deep South--the Greensboro (N.C.) Open being an exception.

Sifford himself confessed he almost gave up in disgust. "I was discouraged a lot of times but my wife, Rose, wouldn't let me quit," Sifford recalled as he wiped away the sweet tears of victory after winning the Hartford Open.

SIFFORD ALSO had other financial woes. Unlike other established pros, he was nearly always without a commercial golf sponsor to help finance his tours. One, a golf equipment company, dropped him after complaining that enough Negroes were not buying its Sifford-autographed golf clubs and caps.

Such has been the lot of Charley Sifford, but after his big victory in Hartford, he can be expected to be flooded with offers for "fat" television appearances, and lucrative advertising endorsements. And like the noted Catholic Negro priest who woke up the morning after his consecration as Bishop to find that his "cousins" had suddenly multiplied by the hundreds, Sifford friends also are expected to multiply. Such are the vagaries of life.

For all practical purposes, Sifford's future is rosy. On the course, he has vastly improved his game, flattening out his shot to eliminate the former "dovetailing" that had hampered him and sharpening his putting.

Besides, if he keeps "finishing in the money" as consistently as in recent months--with some major tournament victories sandwiched in between--Sifford could wind up a very wealthy man.

MEANWHILE, Sifford is helping to further the cause of good race relations by the sheer force of his ability. Some, dedicated to the great fight for justice and equality, make a lot of noise in the process. Sifford is a quiet man. He makes his biggest noise with the golf club.

Nice going, Charley!

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