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JANUARY 1, 1987



Sports Highlights

Basketball

The Cleveland Cavaliers waived their rights to World B. Free Tuesday in exchange for one of the Philadelphia 76ers' second-round draft picks in 1990. Free, who played the past four seasons with Cleveland, reportedly will receive \$250,000 in Philadelphia, where he started his pro career in 1975-76. As one of the NBA's top scorers, he refused to re-sign with the Cavaliers for this season at half his estimated \$800,000 salary...Darryl Dawkins, the New Jersey Nets' sidelined center, probably will miss at least two more months of the NBA season because of a broken right wrist suffered in a car accident, the team said Tuesday...Larry Bird of Boston and Dominique Wilkins of Atlanta have renewed their battle for the top spot in fan balloting for the NBA Eastern Conference All-Star team, according to figures released by the league Tuesday. Bird, the leading vote-getter last season, has received 300.75 votes, while Wilkins has 298.647 votes.

Philadelphia's Charles Barkley was third among East forwards with 164,589 votes. Michael Jordan of the Chicago Bulls led guards in balloting with 316,808 votes, followed by Isiah Thomas of Detroit with 268,246. Bill Laimbeer of Detroit had 193,917 votes to lead centers, followed closely by Moses Malone of Washington with 173,749...Former University of Georgia standout Cedric Henderson signed a one-year contract Tuesday with the Savannah Spirits of the Continental Basketball Association, the team said.

Boxing

Unbeaten Michael Olajide will face Richard Burton in a scheduled 12-round bout for the vacant Continental Americas middleweight crown at the Felt Forum Jan. 8, Madison Square Garden. Boxing officials announced Tuesday. Olajide, born in England but now fighting out of New York, has a 20-0 record with 14 knockouts. He is ranked sixth by both the World Boxing Association

and World Boxing Council.

Football

Los Angeles Rams running back Eric Dickerson, who was named the NFL's Offensive Player of the year, doesn't need another award to embellish his reputation with the coaches around the league. All he has to do is carry a football. "When Dickerson gets the ball, you just hold your breath," Miami Coach Don Shula said earlier this season of the league's leading rusher. Dickerson, who was named Offensive Player of the Year Tuesday by The Associated Press, may have received the ultimate compliment earlier this season when Dallas Coach Tom Landry was asked to compare his own star running backs, Herschel Walker and Tony Dorsett, with Dickerson...Wide receiver Al Toon, the only New York Jets All-Pro this season, was voted most valuable player by his teammates on Tuesday. Toon, the Jets' No. 1 draft pick in 1985, led AFC wide receivers with 85 receptions this season, good for 1,176 yards and eight touchdowns. He made only 18 catches in the Jets' final five games, all losses, and scored all of his touchdowns in the first 10 games of the season...New England Coach Raymond

Berry says he wants to make sure altitude is not a factor when the Patriots square off with the Denver Broncos at 5,200-foot Mile High Stadium. That is one of the reasons the Patriots are spending this week practicing at the Air Force Academy, elevation 7,200 feet...It was like manna from Cleveland Browns fans. The team says that 1,000 additional tickets would be made available Wednesday to local fans for the weekend AFC playoff game with the New York Jets. The game will be played Saturday at Cleveland Stadium...Coach Marv Levy, who cut five assistant coaches from his staff after the Buffalo Bills completed the 1986 National Football League season with a 4-12 record, took on three new assistants Tuesday. Team spokesman Dave Sanko said Levy named Dick Roach defensive backfield coach, Chuck Dickerson special assistant to the head coach, and Bob Ferguson director of pro personnel...Dallas Cowboys assistant Coach Paul Hackett, regarded as one of the leading candidates to become the next Southern Cal head football coach, has withdrawn his name from consideration for the job, a newspaper reported

Tuesday...The Peach Bowl, in its 19th season but its first under the direction of the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, announced Tuesday that Wednesday's game between No. 18 North Carolina State and Virginia Tech is officially a sellout...Legal maneuvering delayed the answer Tuesday to whether Louisiana State University defensive end Roland Barbay will play in the Sugar Bowl despite a drug test that showed he had used steroids last spring. Nick Noria, Barbay's lawyer, said the case was shifted from state court to federal court, postponing a hearing on the central issue...The Senior Bowl has snared a record 10 players from the University of Alabama, including All-American linebacker Cornelius Bennet. Senior Bowl Director Eric Tillman said also slated to play in the Jan. 17 all-star game from Alabama are quarterback Mike Shula, wide receiver Al Belle, center Wes Neighbors, linebacker Wayne Davis, nose guard Curt Jarvis, placekicker Van Tiffin, defensive back Freddie Robinson and Britton Cooper and wide receiver Greg Richardson...The Detroit Lions improved their performance at the Silverdome box office this season, despite racking up their worst NFL home record in 11 years and record-low attendance at one game.

Drug Use Dominated National Headlines

The blight of drugs, which took its toll in both lives and careers in 1986, has been voted the top sports story of the year by Associated Press Sports editors.

The story was woven through almost every sector of sports.

Cocaine took the lives of promising young athletes such as basketball player Len Bias and football player Don Rogers. John Drew and Michael Ray Richardson were banned from the NBA for life for drug violations. And baseball handed down drug penalties involving 21 players, including some of the game's biggest stars.

The subject of drugs received 1,474 points in balloting, in which AP member sports editors were asked to rank their top ten stories in order of importance. A first place vote was worth 10 points with nine points given for second, eight for third and so forth.

Drugs was named the top story on 101 of the 174 ballots cast. The New York Mets' comeback victory and yet another Boston failure in the World Series was second with 1,260 points.

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