

SPORTS BOARD

SPORTS, GAMING, HORSERACING

August 10, 1989



TENNIS, ANYONE?

by James Pyles

Lawrence "Cornbread" King

I first met Lawrence in the late 60s. I had requested to do part of my student teaching (in order to get a teaching credential) at a minority school. I had not been there a week when a young man walked up to the school tennis coach and myself with tears in his eyes, saying, "I didn't make the baseball team. Can I try out for the tennis team? The tennis coach whose name was Pete Brown said, "Sure, no problem." Lawrence saw that I was coaching the Varsity team and Pete was working with the Junior Varsity. He immediately wanted to go with me to the Varsity courts, but Pete said he couldn't until he could hit fifteen balls in a row on the backboard. So, he borrowed a racket and came back about fifteen minutes later and said, "I can hit fifteen. Now can I go with the Var-

sity, because I don't want to play Junior Varsity." Well, Pete went with him over to the backboard and said, "Okay, let's see you hit fifteen without missing." Lawrence could not hit fifteen in a row. Pete told him to stay on the backboard until he could hit fifteen without missing.

I did not hear from Lawrence King for about a week. He walked up to me with a very serious look in his eyes and said, "I can hit fifteen now!" Pete Brown took him back to the backboard where he not only hit fifteen without missing, but was willing to go far beyond that number. At this time Coach Brown gave me the young man the others called "Cornbread." Out of the seven students I was working with, he was number seven.

Each week his skill level

improved, each week he wanted to challenge the next person on the ladder. He won his first challenge, he won his second challenge and he finally won a position on the team...playing doubles. He noticed the better players were playing singles. He wanted to challenge the singles

worked as director (South Park) and work on strokes until I got off work at 9:30 p.m. After that we would go to Rancho and practice until after 11:00 p.m. I remember one night in the fog where I could not see him across the net and he could not see me. Yet, we were on the same tennis court. The ball would

Tech College where he won the Nation Public Parks Singles Championships in Los Angeles. They sent him to New York to represent L.A. against the rest of the U.S. He won the entire tournament. From this point he won almost every tournament he entered. He was called the best Black tennis player

against the top pros. In Los Angeles it is very difficult for a young Black man to get a sponsor with the kind of cash it would take to stay on the Pro Tour five years.

The rule is, if you have not been successful in five years in playing in England, France, Australia and the U.S., you should retire. Unfortunately he had no sponsor, so he had to teach tennis in Beverly Hills and Palm Springs, California and the state of Washington.

He is now in Las Vegas and hoping to find a permanent position at one of the clubs.

Ladies and gentlemen, I give you Lawrence "Cornbread" King.

P.S. If you want to know how he got his nick name...Ask Him!



SWITCH

From Page 3

ter 22 years on the force, has maintained a great popularity among the city's residents throughout his tenure, and has been widely praised for his leadership and administrative abilities.

KLAV Sports Schedule

Friday	8/11	Angels vs Oakland	7:25 p.m.
Saturday	8/12	Angels vs Oakland	12:20 p.m.
Saturday		Rams vs Denver	6:50 p.m.
Saturday		Raiders vs San Francisco	Following Rams Game
Sunday	8/13	Angels vs Oakland	12:55 p.m.
Monday	8/14	Angels vs Minnesota	7:25 p.m.
Tuesday	8/15	Angels vs Minnesota	7:25 p.m.
Wednesday	8/16	Angels vs Minnesota	12:55 p.m.
Thursday	8/17	Metro All Stars vs Arizona DTS	8:30 p.m.

players. His first year he could only manage doubles.

His second year he played number three singles and by the end of the year finally won a challenge to play number two singles. Our number one singles player (Marvin McDuffy) refused to let "Bread" beat him that year. It was McDuffy's senior year and junior year for Larry. In his senior year he worked like a demon, sometimes playing 8 to 12 hours a day. He won every match that year. Sometimes he and I would begin school practice at 2:00 p.m., leave school at 4:30 p.m. and go to the park where I

come out of the fog and somehow we would keep it in play. This is how serious he was and how much he wanted to learn. He wanted to be the best.

On Saturdays and Sundays we would go to Harvard Recreation Center in the mornings and back to Rancho in the afternoons. When he wasn't working with me, he was working with Pete.

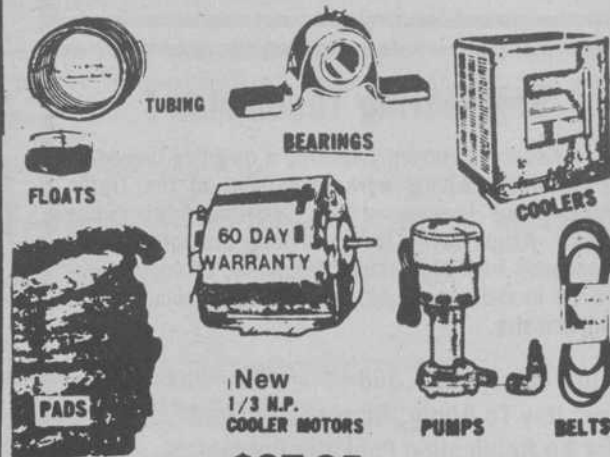
He finally met Earthna Jacquet (the best coach in the Black community) and his serve seemed to now explode off his racket and I could no longer defeat him.

After graduation from High School, he went to Trade

in the United States.

Unfortunately he did not have the money to travel in foreign countries to play

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