

Sprewell victim of racial double standard

By Earl Ofari Hutchinson
Special to Sentinel-Voice

For nearly an hour I listened to a sports talk jock call Latrell Sprewell every vile name in the book.

Finally near the end of the hour, one caller asked him why he didn't blast San Francisco 49ers owner, Eddie DeBartolo with the same vehemence for sullyng the sport for an alleged bribery attempt and associating with gamblers. The jock lamely croaked that it wasn't the same thing and cut to a commercial. When he came back on-air he instantly went back on the attack against Sprewell.

But the caller asked a fair question. One week I counted 57 Associated Press wire stories on Sprewell, and exactly 11 on DeBartolo. There were dozens of irate letters in the New York Times, Washington Post and the L.A. Times on Sprewell, but only a handful of letter writers made mention of

DeBartolo.

There's only one reason. One is White, rich and a well-connected team owner. The other is Black, for the moment poor, and one of many NBA players.

While no sane person would condone Sprewell's behavior, or suggest he shouldn't be stiffly punished, Sprewell is hardly the only "bad citizen" in sports to act up. Many Whites such as DeBartolo do too. But when they do, the double standard quickly kicks in.

It goes like this. When Black athletes are accused of, or are guilty of wrongdoing, their punishment is swift and harsh, the public is merciless, they are pounded pitilessly by the media and become the eternal poster boys for deviancy. When Whites admit to or are accused of wrong-doing there is much hand-wringing, apologetics, kid-glove rationalizations to explain their behavior and their

names quickly disappear from the headlines.

Sprewell, however, isn't the first Black athlete to get a hard lesson in this racial double-standard. Pete Rose bet on his team, the Cincinnati Reds, consorted with known gamblers and loan sharks and evaded federal taxes. He finally admitted that he had a gambling problem, got a five-year federal prison sentence and was banned from baseball.

Yet, when he was disqualified from baseball's Hall of Fame in 1991, baseball fans and sportswriters were enraged. "The Rose case," New York Times sports columnist Ira Berkow wrote, "has touched the emotions of a surprisingly large number of people." Berkow, fans and sportswriters, roundly criticized Commissioner Fay Vincent and the judges who voted to disqualify him.

By contrast, Michael Jordan

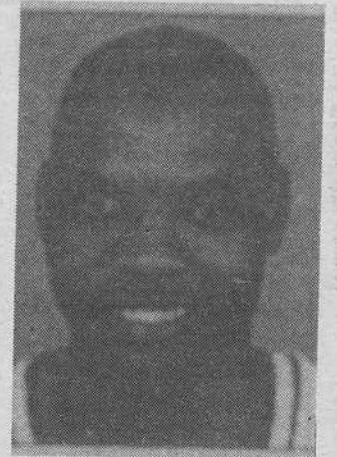
didn't bet on his team. But following an orgy of media speculation that Jordan was involved with gamblers, NBA commissioner David Stern quickly investigated. He found out that Jordan was not guilty of anything illegal and had committed no rule violations. It did not stop the rumors, innuendoes and accusations. When Jordan refused to respond to the allegations in the press many sportswriters pounced.

One sports columnist in a major daily twisted Jordan's silence to imply that he was guilty of wrongdoing. Another columnist in the same paper lectured him on his responsibility to uphold a public image. The pressure of the gambling controversy, and the murder of his father probably briefly forced Jordan out of the game at the height of his career. A less airborne Mike came back. The fans and the

sports establishment cheered again. But Mike probably knows that if he ever slips again those cheers could just as easily turn to jeers.

Although ex-Nebraska and St. Louis Ram's running back Lawrence Phillips admitted guilt and was sentenced for assaulting his girlfriend, the media and sportswriters did not forgive or forget. There were endless stories on the "troubled" Phillips. Any time his name crops up sports writers run through the whole litany of Phillips' off-field troubles. Meanwhile his White Nebraska teammate Christian Peter was accused of multiple counts of assault and rape. Yet there was scant media attention of it.

It's probably no consolation to Sprewell, but he now travels in select company. His misdeeds like those of disgraced Mike Tyson, Michael Irvin, Daryl



LATRELL SPREWELL

Strawberry, O.J. Simpson and Dennis Rodman will almost certainly be beaten to death, resuscitated, and beaten to death again by the media and the public. This while the misdeeds of White sports notables Andrew Golota, Marv Albert and Mickey Mantle are buried, or they become objects of pity. It's not fair, but who said racial double standards are.

Weight training in kids requires special precautions

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Strength training offers benefits for many people, but consider a few facts before you encourage your child or young teenager to head for the weight room, says the head of Stanford University's sports medicine program.

Before puberty, weight training is not likely to provide significant increases in strength.

And up to two years after puberty, kids are at increased risk for injury if they lift weights improperly, says Dr. Gordon Matheson, associate professor and chief of the Division of Sports Medicine.

"I would not prescribe a weight program for a preadolescent, aside from a general strength and conditioning program not specifically designed to increase bulk. Without the increased hormone levels (e.g. testosterone) that occur at puberty, the strength benefits are marginal at best in both

boys and girls. Kids who want to improve their athletic ability are better off developing skills by practicing and playing their sports," Matheson says.

"However, if your preteen is enthusiastic and wants to become active in weight training for its own sake, it can be safe as a sport if the child is training and appropriately supervised."

"In this age group, machine weights are safer than the freeweights, or barbells, because they are enclosed and designed not to fall or drop on the user," Matheson adds.

After puberty, boys gain strength and increased bulk from hormonal changes, and lifting weights can enhance these natural changes, Matheson says.

But until 18 months to two years after the onset of adolescence, "kids are at increased risk of injuring tendons at the point where the still-developing growth plate attaches to the tendons," he

says.

"The skeleton matures about 18 months before the muscles and tendons do, so during that period, the tendons and muscles are vulnerable to injury at the points where they attach to the skeleton," Matheson explains.

Sports activities of all kinds, not just weight training, can cause injuries in young adolescents, so caution and a prudent, supervised stretching and training regimen are important, he says.

While boys are more vulnerable to injury than girls

during this time because of male hormone production, the same general precautions apply to girls, who will gain strength — but not significant bulk — from weight training after puberty.

"Girls can benefit to some extent from weight training, particularly if they are engaging in sports such as basketball, wrestling or even soccer," Matheson says.

"But have your teen observe extra caution during the first two years of adolescence, when tendons and muscles are especially damage-prone."

Sports Quiz

By Larry Duncan

Special to Sentinel-Voice

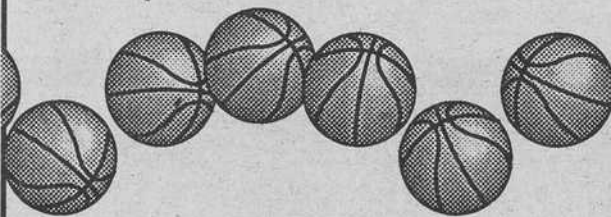
1. What team did Bob Cousy help to six NBA championships?
2. Who said, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going"?
3. What sport is referred to as "The Sweet Science"?
4. Who won all the men's Alpine skiing events at the 1968 Winter Olympics?
5. Who preceded Sonny Liston as world heavyweight boxing champion?
6. Whom did an Associated Press poll dub the greatest athlete of the first half of the 20th century?
7. Whose nickname was the "Duke of Flatbush"?
8. Who was the manager of the World-Series winning 1969 N.Y. Mets?

Sports Quiz Answers

1. the Boston Celtics; 2. Knute Rockne; 3. boxing; 4. Jean-Claude Killy; 5. Floyd Patterson; 6. Jim Thorpe; 7. Duke Snider; 8. Gil Hodges.

NBA stuffs slam dunk contest

The NBA cut the slam dunk contest from the All-Star weekend, citing the lack of creativity, diminishing flair and stagnant ratings. The league will replace the event with one called "2-ball." In this event, a team of two players from the same city, one will be from the NBA, the other from the WNBA, will compete in a shooting contest where points will be awarded for taking shots from different spots on the court. Though a big change from the traditional slam dunk contest, the NBA hopes "2-ball" catches on.



NOW EVEN BIGGER... TO SERVE YOU BETTER...

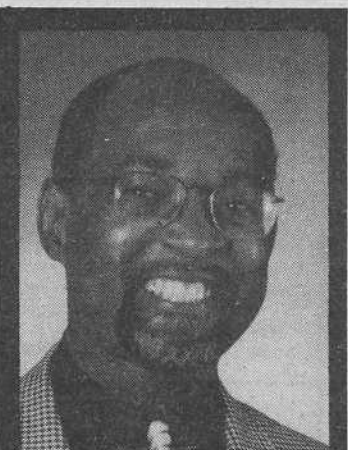
UNITED NISSAN CAN HELP RE-ESTABLISH YOUR CREDIT AND GIVE YOU A GREAT DEAL ON YOUR NEXT NEW OR USED VEHICLE. REPOSSESSION, BANKRUPTCY, CHARGE-OFFS CAN ALL BE OVERCOME. 99% APPROVAL! COME IN TODAY AND GIVE US A TRY!

No matter what the credit, we can help you. In fact, possibly with NO MONEY DOWN!

NISSAN UNITED NISSAN

E. SAHARA & BOULDER HWY. • 457-8061

Hours: Mon-Fri: 8:30a to 10:00p • Sat: 8:30a to 9:00p



LAWRENCE ENNIS
General Sales Manager

"Your Time Is Important To Me. Please Phone Ahead For An Appointment"

SPECIAL VALUES AND DEALS TO STATE, COUNTY AND CITY EMPLOYEES!