



SPORTS PACE

By Huel Washington

Let's Get Down To Businesses

During the past quarter century the wealth that has suddenly become prevalent among African-American athletes has reached such unimaginable proportions that even the recipients are reeling under the weight.

The idea of giving a youngster just leaving college, a six-year salary of \$60 million for his athletic prowess not only seemed preposterous but bordered on insanity only a few years ago.

Well, that's the case of Larry Fitzgerald, 20, of the Arizona Cardinals, a rookie wide receiver, and LaDainian Tomlinson, 25, the San Diego Chargers' star running back.

There also are others who have become wealthy beyond their wildest dreams, but the true test of their newly found abundance of cash flow will come when these athletes begin their distribution.

Will they follow the trail that Earvin "Magic" Johnson has blazed in the past few years? After leaving the Los Angeles Lakers he later became part owner of the National Basketball Association franchise.

Since his departure from the NBA favorite, Johnson has established businesses in 70 cities around the country and employs hundreds of people who otherwise wouldn't have gainful employment.

He established the Magic Johnson Foundation, hired a staff and has opened businesses such as Starbucks, 24 Hour Fitness, and the Magic Johnson Movie Theaters in Atlanta and Los Angeles as well as acquired more than 30 Burger King restaurants nationwide.

Johnson became famous as basketball player at Michigan State University, winning a national title in 1979, but envisioned becoming a businessman even before his sports fame. While at Lansing Everett High School, he worked as a janitor for well-known Lansing resident Gregory Eaton. After doing what he was paid to do, he said he would sit in Eaton's office, in the boss' chair and put his feet on the desk and imagine just how it would feel to be the head man.

Now that he is CEO, Johnson urges athletes and entertainers to get out in their communities and do more by making investments in projects that will employ more African-Americans in the cities where they play or work themselves.

Another example of an African-American succeeding in business and giving back to the community is Robert Johnson, founder of Black Entertainment Television. Johnson sold the network and has become the first African-American majority owner of an NBA team, the Charlotte Bobcats, who will begin play next season.

Johnson received several billion dollars for the BET network, but didn't take his money and live like a king. He wanted to continue to help other African-Americans so he established the team in the very city that had just forced the Charlotte Hornets to move to New Orleans.

The loss of the Hornets left plenty of people, especially poor African-Americans, without jobs. The town's people and Hornets owners disagreed over an arena. The owners badmouthed the town and the people causing the crowds to thin steadily with each game until the league allowed the Hornets to move to New Orleans, the former home of the Utah Jazz.

Now Robert Johnson and his investment partners hope the fans will support the Charlotte Bobcats so that employment opportunities can be generated for people who lost their jobs when the Hornets relocated. To begin building team loyalty, Bernie Bickerstaff was hired as head coach; a good start.

Ideas of providing jobs for African-Americans as the Johnsons are doing, is not new. Many years ago, football

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Sanders, Green inducted into NCAA Hall

SOUTH BEND, Ind. (AP) - Barry Sanders scampered right and threw a 20-yard pass that Joe Theismann stood waiting to intercept. Darrell Green bolted in front of his former teammate to catch the TD pass. All three were out of position, yet all were right where they belonged Saturday, playing in the annual flag football game before being enshrined into the College Football Hall of Fame.

"It's like coming home," said Theismann, who 34 years ago played just five minutes away, at Notre Dame.

Among the 17 players enshrined Saturday were late USC tailback Ricky Bell, Pittsburgh tackle Jimbo Covert, SMU receiver Jerry LeVias and Georgia quarterback John Rauch. Five coaches were also enshrined, including Doug Dickey, who coached at Tennessee and Florida, and Hayden Fry, who coached at SMU, North Texas State and Iowa.

For Sanders, the 1988 Heisman Trophy winner at Oklahoma State, it was his second hall of fame ceremony in six days. On Aug. 8, he was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Sanders said he hasn't had time to think about the significance of the honors.



Barry Sanders, Oklahoma State running back, gets ready to throw a pass during a flag football game at the College Football Hall of Fame Saturday.

"I have to get away for a couple of days and let it all sink in," he said. "To be inducted in both is beyond my wildest dreams."

Sanders said the college hall is just as special to him as the pro hall. Growing up, his dream was to play college

football, not pro football, he said.

"College to me is unique and special in its own right," he said. "You're not playing the game for a paycheck — at least not at Oklahoma State."

Green, who retired two years ago after playing 20 seasons with the Washington Redskins, showed his speed and athleticism in the flag football game, throwing three touchdown passes, catching another, intercepting a pass and breaking up another.

Green, who played only two years of football in high school and almost quit Texas A&I (now known as Texas A&M-Kingsville), said he still has a hard time believing how far the sport has taken him. "This is all a surprise," he said. "I was just fortunate to get the chance to play."

Dan Ross, a tight end at Northeastern who went on to play in the NFL with the Cincinnati Bengals, said being inducted into the hall was overwhelming.

"I've played in Pro Bowls. I've played in the Super Bowl. I hold the record for passes caught in the Super Bowl, and I thought I reached the top of the football ladder. But nothing, absolutely nothing, compares to this," he said.

Players' union challenging release of Carter

ASSOCIATED PRESS

The NFL Players Association has gotten involved in Quincy Carter's release by the Dallas Cowboys.

The union filed a grievance over the release Aug. 4 of the quarterback who started all 16 games and one playoff contest for the Cowboys last season, claiming the team had violated the collective bargaining agreement in releasing him.

Cowboys owner Jerry Jones, however, said he was willing to answer any questions from the union or the NFL's management council about the decision to cut Carter.

Olympics

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field equivalent of pointing out a homerun before the bat ever hits the ball, Johnson wore gold shoes during all his races.

2000 — Before Marion Jones even arrived in Sydney, Australia, she vowed to return home with five gold medals around her neck. In the end, all that glittered wasn't Gold but you can't feel too sorry for her, as she became the first woman to win five medals in one Olympics.

2002 — Going where the Jamaicans couldn't, American bobsledder Vionetta Flowers became the first Black athlete to earn a winter gold medal in Salt Lake City. Jarome Iginla also became the first Black man to do so, as a member of Canada's ice hockey team.

They may not have a lock on Olympic glory, but spurred on by racism, the chance to follow in a family member's footsteps, or the opportunity to better their family's economic status, Blacks have reached the pinnacle of athletic performance on the international stage.

Who'll be next to add their names to an already burgeoning list of greats?

Genoa Barrow writes for the Sacramento Observer.

"Basically the decisions were made because of what we wanted to do at that position this year and in the future," Jones said Monday. "They were well, in my view, within the area that I'm comfortable with regarding being able to defend it."

Jones didn't elaborate.

The case would be heard by professor Stephen Burbank of the University of Pennsylvania Law School. The union said the first step would probably be taking depositions from Jones and coach Bill Parcells.

The team has not given a reason for Carter's release, although there were wide-

spread reports that he had failed a drug test.

"You don't go from being a starting, playoff quarterback in this league to someone not

good enough to make the 80-

man roster the next summer," Richard Berthelsen, the union's general counsel, said in a statement.

Teen first Black to win USTA championship

KALAMAZOO, Mich. (AP) - Scoville Jenkins, a 17-year-old from Atlanta, became the first Black to win the 18s singles championship of the U.S. Tennis Association Boys Nationals.

Jenkins defeated Michigan teenager Scott Oudsema, 7-5, 6-1, 6-3 in the final on Sunday, earning him a spot in the U.S. Open. Jenkins, who turned pro in May, reflected on the significance of his victory.

"I'm the first. I'll always be the first," Jenkins said. "If there are other African-American winners, I'll still be the first. And the U.S. Open, that's the tournament I've always wanted." USTA spokesman Tim Curry said only one other Black player, James Blake in 1997, has made it to the finals of the USTA tournament since the event began in 1916.

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