

Given pressure, why coach?

To have the desire to be a coach in today's highly publicized athletic world whether it's high school, college or professional, the person must have a special determination to endure excruciating mental and physical pain that overwhelms the average citizen's perseverance and fortitude. In other words, being a coach is one step from the asylum.

Recently, when asked whether he had given any thought to returning to coach, Mike Ditka, a Pro Football Hall of Famer with the Dallas Cowboys and the head coach of the Super Champion Chicago Bears, answered, "Are you crazy?" No."

Football analyst John Madden was thrust into being the coach of the Oakland Raiders in 1969 after the team lost the Super Bowl to Green Bay.

The Raiders head coach John Rauch left to become the head football coach of the Buffalo Bills, so Al Davis picked the 33-year-old Madden who was an assistant to take over the team.

Under Madden's guidance, the Raiders won over 100 games and Super Bowl XI over the Minnesota Vikings in 1977 but retired in 1978.

When asked why he decided to give up his job as the Raiders head coach, Madden said he had a bleeding ulcer and had been suffering for years before finally calling it quits.

With sports like basketball, football, baseball, and soccer, the duties of the head coach require dealing with so many different personalities; members of the media; administrators, and the public attending the contest. The job of head coach has become more and more strenuous.

Each of the entities wants their various teams to be the winner when the contest is final in the record books. And if the team loses, because the opponents were much better, suitable explanations are often insufficient.

Years ago, sports fans held the coaches and managers in a rather reverent position in society and some were treated like deity.

At the University of Notre Dame, there was Knute Rockne, who even had a movie made about him and his coaching skills. Army coach Red Blaik was honored and so were a couple of his football players, Glen Davis and Felix "Doc" Blanchard, both Heisman Trophy winners.

Coaches like Woody Hayes at Ohio State Univer-



SPORTS PACE

By Huel Washington

sity, Glen "Bo" Shembechler at the University of Michigan, and Bobby Knight at Indiana University stayed with the teams for several decades. And they weren't paid half as much as today's current coaches receive.

A fine example of the unstable conditions was the firing of the University of Florida's head coach Ron Zook.

His team had a winning record although it didn't surpass his predecessor, Steve Spurrier.

The current coach of the Detroit Lions, Steve Mariucci had winning record at the San Francisco 49ers of 10-6 in the 2002 regular season and won the playoff game against the New York Giants before losing to Tampa Bay. He was let go after the loss to Tampa.

The New Jersey Nets won their division title with a record of 49-33 and played in the playoffs before losing to San Antonio in NBA finals four games to two but coach Byron Scott was fired after the team's lost the 2003 league championship.

Penn State's head football coach Joe Paterno has been at the school 55 years as an assistant and a head coach. The public and the media want him to step down. He's around 77 years old. His players just can't produce.

Most real fans remember coach Alonzo Stagg, who was the head coach at Chicago University when the team played football and then went to the College of the Pacific. Stagg loved sports and coached well into his 80's.

But times have changed. Take a look at today's benches in any sport and there are almost as many assistants as there are players. In football, the assistants are on the field and in the press box relaying strategies. In basketball, decisions are made after there has been a confer-

ence between the head coach and his assistants.

The nerve racking experience has caused coaches like Joe Gibbs and Dick Vermeil to retire early. But both have come back to their sports as if magnitized by the position of head coach of a football team.

In 1989, Art Shell, a Hall of Fame tackle with the Raiders, was chosen the first modern day African-American head coach by Al Davis, the team's general managing partner.

Davis fired Shell in 1994 after the team lost in the championship game to Buffalo.

Shell now works in the National Football League office in New York. There are currently five African-American head coaches in the NFL, but when there is an opening, Shell, who has the experience, isn't one of the candidates. He is about the same age as Gibbs.

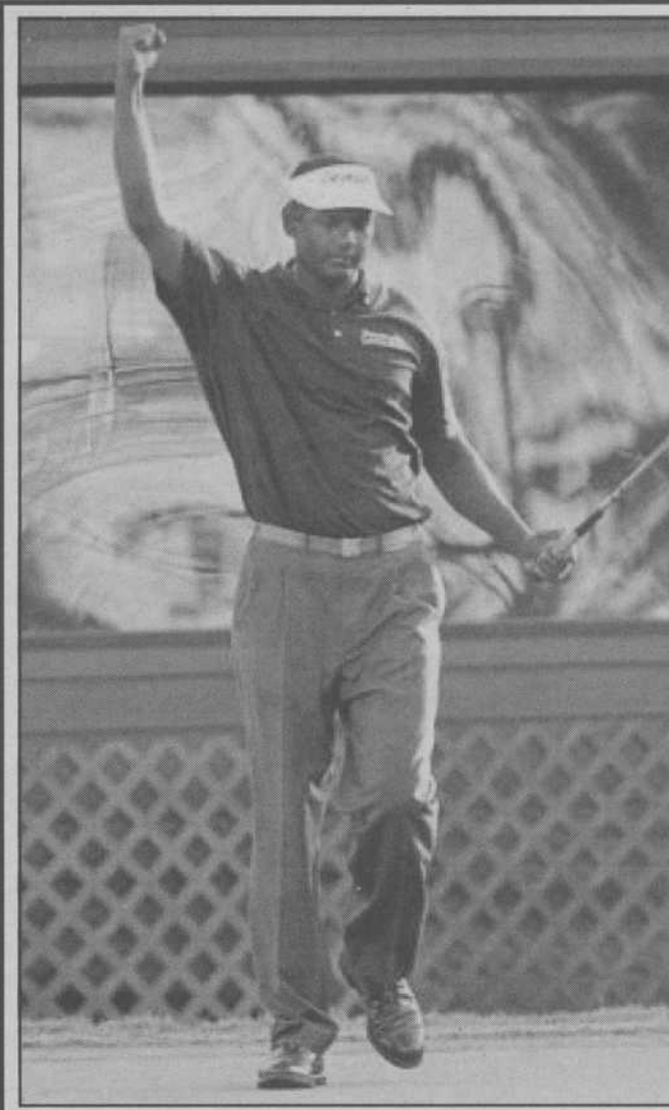
Probably because he witnessed the changes that it takes to be a head coach, he decided the job took much work dealing with players who don't take orders very well and are probably making more money than he is.

Now, the fans can protest on the Internet and, as in the case of Ron Zook, get the coach fired even before the season ends. Head coach. Who needs it?

A coach can only do so much and if he doesn't have a talented team, the blame goes to the players not the coaching staff. And in some sports the talent is sub par, and there is nothing Rockne, Gibbs, or even Bill Walsh can do.

Walsh after winning three Super Bowls with the 49ers, came back to coaching for several years at Stanford University.

A perfectionist, he just couldn't stand losing so he retired from coaching and isn't coming back.



GOLF'S FIRST \$10 MILLION MAN

Vijay Singh of Fiji celebrates after sinking a birdie putt on the 18th green during the final round of the Chrysler Championship Sunday on the Copperhead Course at the Innisbrook Resort in Palm Harbor, Fla. Singh shot a 65 on Sunday to win the tournament at 18-under 266.

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Req's grad 4-yr coll/univ w/major in communications, marketing, business, retail studies or related fld; + 5 yrs inc resp mktg related exp in prog mgmt, dvlpmt or coord w/at least 2 yrs exp equiv to the Preserve Program Specialist level; or equiv combo T&E. Qualifying exp in a museum, cultural or pub attraction venue is a +. A master's degree in above-listed majors or related fld is desired but not req'd.

Salary: \$41,537 - \$58,094 yr, DOQ + gen bnfts pkg. Filing Deadline: Immediately. Open till filled.

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Responsible for supervising, integrating & coordinating section staff & activities to provide billing services for a wide variety of customers & acct types & for monitoring qual control for acct readings, fld investigations & adjustments/customer complaint resolutions. Also resp for participating in & directing work of the Billing section in a way that minimizes adverse cust relations & maximizes collection of revenue for wtr svcs in accordance w/Dist rules & policies. Req's grad HS or GED equiv & 5 yrs inc resp ofc admin or cust svc exp involving cust acctg & billing processes; or equiv combo T&E.

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