

SPORTS

SPORTS COMMENTARY

SPORTS
PACE

By Huel Washington

Fans' hostility
spurs violence

Over the past few years with professional sports being popular in cities around the world, athletes, especially the super stars, have been the target of various forms of abuse from the fans who express their sentiments vocally more and more each year.

A number of Golden State Warriors fans were singled out to the management a few years ago as being very vocal in expressing their dislike of the opponents and were asked to remain civil not only for the other fans seated in their section with their remarks and their obnoxious behavior but also for the visiting athletes.

But as more fans came from different ethnic backgrounds and attended the contests, becoming more and more unruly has been the rule rather than the exception.

As the number of contests grew, the athletes participating came under a larger number of remarks during the contests, and sometimes after that, it could make even a reasonable person angry.

All of this badgering takes a toll on some athletes who have to play before the hostile crowds in various venues around the nation. In basketball's 82 game season, only 41 games are played before the home crowd. And football with 20 games including preseason, 10 are played at home.

Modern transportation allows the teams to fly to their road games on their own charter which takes away some of the contact in foreign or unfriendly surroundings.

Yet, the contests go on and that's where some of the crudeness and unsavory remarks are aimed at the opponents of the home team.

Earlier this year, a baseball player on the Texas Rangers became so angry with the constant belittling remarks aimed at him and his teammates that he threw a chair at the fans in a box at Network Associates Coliseum in Oakland that broke a woman's nose.

The husband of the woman said afterward that they had deliberately purchased those particular seats so they could harass the players on the opposing team and help their baseball team win games. That's some reason to spend hundreds of dollars to see baseball games.

One fan, who is a lawyer, bought seats behind the visitors' bench at the Sacramento Kings' Arco Arena and brought a cowbell to ring to make the visiting coach mad and the players not able to hear the instructions. He was finally asked to leave the bell at home after other fans started to bring them to games.

In a basketball game the fans behind the backboards are given pieces of paper to wave in the air when the other team is shooting their foul shots. Also in basketball and baseball, the fans are now given gadgets that make a thumping noise which are supposed to rattle the opponents.

Mark Cuban, the owner of the Dallas Mavericks, once had the music in his arena turned up loud when the opponents shot free throws. League commissioner David Stern told Cuban that would have to stop. Cuban might be rich but he isn't too bright.

Now, no one with an ounce of brain would justify the action taken by Indiana Pacers basketball player Ron Artest when he was hit by some beer and a plastic cup. He was nowhere near right when he went into the stands.

But the fan who threw the beer should also be banned from Detroit Pistons games for a year. Someone knows who it was and should turn him in, if they haven't already.

Sports fans especially football fans, remember how a New York Jets' fan was tracked down by the police in New Jersey and was disciplined for throwing a snowball onto the field during a game at the Meadowlands.

The security at all athletic events should be stepped up
(See Sports Pace, Page 11)

NBA fight: It's faaaaaan-tastic!

By Lloyd Williams

Special to Sentinel-Voice

I watched the videotape of last week's NBA melee repeatedly, analyzing it more closely than the Warren Commission's frame-by-frame examination of the Zapruder tape of the JFK assassination. And I have finally come to understand why White guys love hockey so much. A brawl is so far more compelling than a game. But remember the NHL all but went under despite daily highlights featuring fisticuffs both on and off the ice.

As an attorney, I can safely say that Ron Artest just put his lawyer into a higher tax bracket. Somebody oughta give the troubled Indianapolis Pacers star a saliva test. He might be rabid. How else do you explain his instigating, in rapid succession, all three incidents which turned an otherwise unremarkable NBA basketball game into an all-out brawl between his team and dozens of Detroit Pistons fans?

It all started with less than a minute left in a blow-out which Indianapolis was winning, when Artest, instead of trying to rebound a ball, smashed Ben Wallace from behind in the head, knowing full well that Ben's brother, Sam, had died a few weeks

ago after a long battle with brain cancer. Ben lost his mom last year and his grandmother not long before that.

Wallace, perhaps the Pistons' most admired player and ordinarily a model citizen, reacted by grabbing Artest by the throat for a moment and warning him not to try that bull (substance) again. Cowardly Ron ran away, hiding behind the refs and curling up in the fetal position with his eyes closed on the scorer's table.

Then, when a fan threw a beer on him, Artest ignited skirmish number two by running into the stands and flailing at anybody sitting in the general area where the drink came from, including ex-Piston-turned-team broadcaster Rick Mahorn. A few Pacers players joined the free-for-all in the seats, including Jermaine O'Neal, Stephen Jackson, and Fred Jones, who got his rear end kicked, by the way.

As the headhunting Artest made his way back to the court still looking for trouble, he found two trash-talking fans in Piston's jerseys. Though physically unprovoked, Ron started round three by knocking both of them to the ground. And, for good measure, O'Neal sucker-punched one of them

again square in the face just as he was struggling to get back on his feet.

An important question which simply must be asked is, Do either of those men have lawyers? If not, will someone please have them contact my office immediately.

The same goes for any kids traumatized by observing the mayhem and for any innocent fans who might have been mistakenly beaten by a multi-millionaire in the arena on the night in question. And a legal memo to that elderly

lady who was left woozy on the floor: You're rich!

As for Ron Artest, I'd even be willing to represent you, if you're interested in retaining my services. There's always the insanity defense. While that might not help with the lengthy suspension or all the civil lawsuits you're certain to be slapped with, I do have some good news. I just saved a lot of money on car insurance.

Attorney Lloyd Williams is a member of the NJ, NY, CT, PA, MA & US Supreme Court bars.

S. Carolina, Clemson
to miss bowl games

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — Clemson and South Carolina will not accept bowl bids, punishment for players who brawled toward the end of Saturday's game.

South Carolina athletic director Mike McGee said Monday that the Gamecocks' actions on the field were not consistent with the values and ethics of the school.

"This decision will have a significant financial impact on USC athletics. We will also lose a month of prebowl practice," McGee said. "It was a decision that had to be made."

Clemson athletic director Terry Don Phillips said in a statement the decision isn't fair to the majority of the players.

"But given the circumstances, I believe strongly that it is the right decision so that our university, our student-athletes, supporters and all people that love Clemson know without question what our values are," he said.

Both teams qualified for the postseason with 6-5 records.

The brawl, which broke out with about six minutes left in the game, started when Tigers defensive lineman Bobby Williamson took down South Carolina quarterback Syvelle Newton and appeared to linger too long on top of him.

South Carolina coach Lou Holtz, in his last game after a 33-year career, and Clemson coach Tommy Bowden tried to break up the brawl. Eventually, security and police officers were needed to restore order. Clemson won 29-7.

McGee said individual suspensions for players will be forthcoming.

Wright

(Continued from Page 1)

inside to negate the advantage Wright had with his right jab. It was the same jab Wright used in the first fight to win a clear unanimous decision.

"I had more energy and I was able to land more body shots," Mosley said.

Mosley fired his father as his trainer after the first fight, when Wright dominated behind his right jab on his way to a decision that gave him the undisputed 154-pound title. In Mosley's corner for the rematch was Joe Goossen, but that wasn't enough in the early rounds for Mosley to change the pattern set in the first fight.

Goossen did his best to urge Mosley on, but Wright kept his hands high in front of his face and matched him flurry for flurry.

"We're going to win this fight if it's the last thing we do," Goossen told Mosley after the seventh round. "It's

all a matter of willpower."

By the 11th round, though, Mosley was frustrated, yelling at Wright as he was warned by Cortez for holding him on the back of the head. The two hugged each other to start the final round, though, showing the respect of fighters who had both given it their all for 23 prior rounds.

"I thought we won the last round, thought we won the fight," Goossen said.

Punch stats showed Wright landing 273 punches to 154 for Mosley, but Mosley seemed to land the harder punches. The edge was in the jab, where Wright was credited with landing 138 to only 46 for Mosley.

The win was the second straight setback for Mosley, who seemed destined to fight big-money bouts after beating De La Hoya last year.

Both Wright (48-3, 25 knockouts) and Mosley (39-4, 35 KOs) weighed the class limit of 154 pounds.

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