

A Special Section of the Daily Nexus
May 2, 1990

Spring Sports 1990

Luck, Schmucks And Getting Cut: Baseball Realities

By Finnegan Jackson

I have a confession to make.

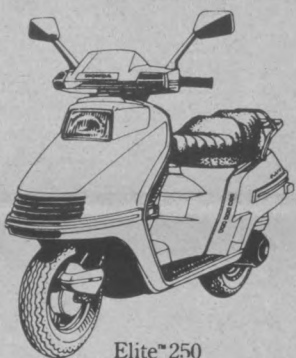
I've loved baseball more than life itself since I was old enough to wipe my own butt, and I have waxed semi-poetically on its symbolic and metaphoric value in life and in our society, often times in these very pages. I can still tell you the name of the 1911 Philadelphia Athletics' backup catcher, I can still spend an entire day at the ballpark watching, loving and studying the nuances of the second baseman, I can still root for the Angels like a hopeful, pessimistic fool. But I cannot

fool myself any longer. Baseball is the main source of most of my lingering bitterness in life. And I need to come to terms with that.

The story goes like this. I'm the fourth out of four kids, the third brother. My father played three sports in college (so he said) and his best was baseball. He was a catcher, a student of the game. He quickly fashioned my brother Wink, who's five years older than me, into a catcher. I used to hang out at Wink's Little League practices which Dad coached, studying everything quietly and sometimes participating in the drills. By the time I was finally old enough to play farm league I



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was the cleanup-hitting first baseman. I was also always the youngest person in my league by virtue of my July 31 birthday. The "League Age" deadline was August 1. If only I could have appreciated the symbolism then.

I made the majors at age 10, the youngest age possible. My Dad was the coach. I first made All-Stars when I was 11, and again the fol-

lowing year, this time playing first base and batting cleanup. I remember stepping up to the plate against Plaza Little League and having their coach yell "good hitter, back up." Life was rosy. I rocked.

The thing I remembered about my 13-year-old Pony League tryouts was that all the other kids were wearing their All-Star windbreakers

too. Undaunted, I overran the first ball hit to me in the outfield. My stock plummeted. I was moved to third base, where it was discovered I couldn't throw very well. I had a wonderful coach, God rest his civic soul, who spent the next two years tinkering with my throwing motion and my batting stance. I ended up with a powerfully erratic

arm and a consistently powerless batting stroke. For the first time in my life, I didn't make the All-Star teams. Much of that can be attributed to my refusal to play for my dumb junior high school team, which had a really, really dumb coach named Wibelmoe and a really, really fast guy named

See BASEBALL, p.10C



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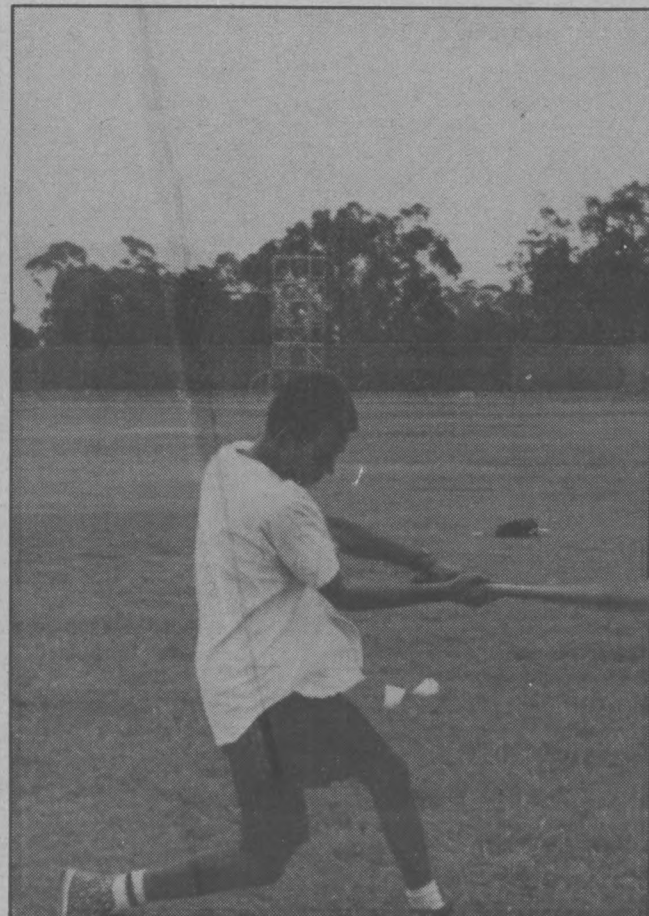
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Burn Baby Burn! It's Tannin' Time!

By Stephen Lynne-Bachelor

When my grandmother was growing up in the 1880s or the 1930s or whenever she was growing up, it was cool to be tan. To be tan was really "the cat's pajamas." And I'll tell you what, my grandmother could really make the scene: She was tan.

Back then, people didn't have much to do. They would sit around all day in the sun, singing "Ain't We Got Fun" till the stars came out, and then they would all go down to the speakeasy and show off their tan and wear funny hats. They had time to work on their tan.

Grandma was really tan. If someone had called her a "tan woman," it would have been an accurate description. She looked like a

Grandpa's tan wasn't so good. This was due, but only in part, to the amount of time he spent indoors eating well-seasoned and charred meat patties.

medium-well steak. She only wore white dresses so she would look even more tan, like the well-seasoned and charred meat patties that my grandfather enjoyed so much.

Grandpa's tan wasn't so good. This was due, but only in part, to the amount of time he spent indoors eating well-seasoned and charred meat patties. But when you include the time he spent outside at picnics and beach barbecues, as well as the time he spent trying to convince my grandmother to go

inside and cook him a number of said meat patties, he was not entirely colorless. But in those days, the 1890s or the 1920s or whenever it was, men had to wear those crazy striped bathing suits that covered the then-taboo chest, torso, and knee regions.

Uncle Cliff on the other hand, had a mean, mean tan. He was a truck driver, though, so his savage tan was restricted to his left forearm. He dreamed about going to England and driving around all day just to in-

dulge his right forearm for awhile, but he later became a mailman and his problem was solved.

But things change. People change.

Grandma is retired now, although she still has a job. She comes home and sits on the porch, as secluded from the sun as possible. Her skin is a muddled and marred mess of melanoma madness that breaks into huge, tissue-ripping shreds with little notice, like when she slightly bumps into blunt objects. Her doctor will not allow her to go out in the sun.

Uncle Cliff has had a number of operations and grafts and other bad skin-oriented, doctor-supervised procedures done on his forearms.

Still, sunbathing is, unde-

See THE BURN, p.6C



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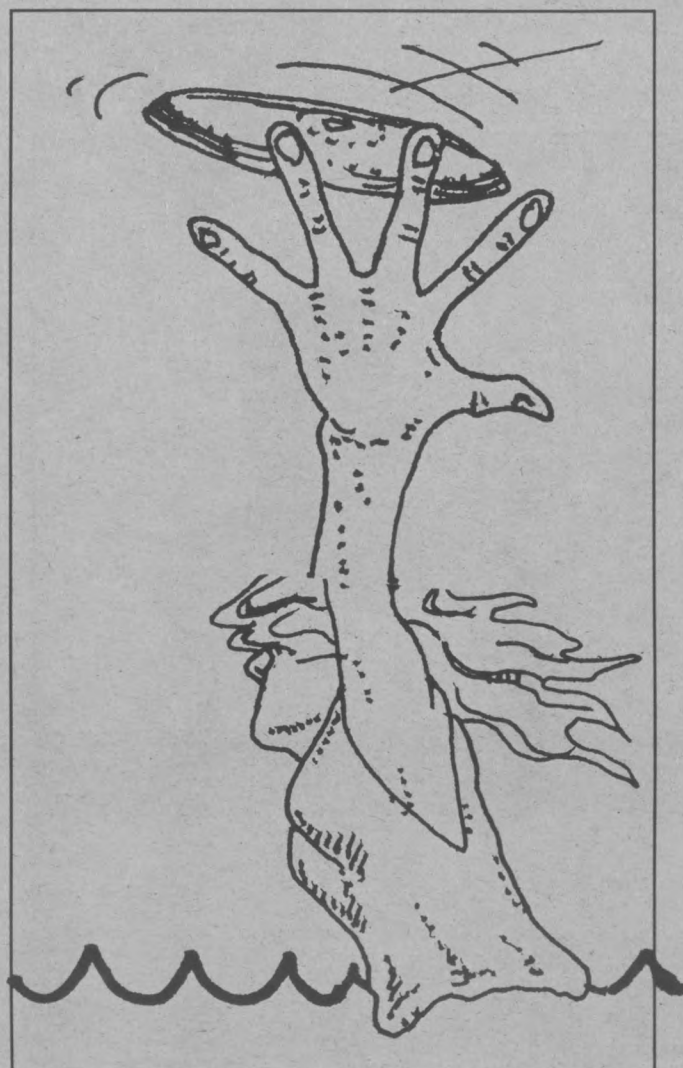
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Continued from p.5C
he really was. That's why Billy became one of the city's best junior league basketball players. Billy didn't laugh at kids and after he got good he let everybody who wanted play on his court. Even Ed was allowed to play, although he stopped showing up after Billy started playing the Ed game.

The game went like this: As happens in basketball games, somebody falls down and gets stepped on or kicked. Usually it's no big deal, but, if you're running with the right crowd, well, stuff happens. In this case it was Ed who landed on his back and — gosh, Coach, I didn't even see him, I think I was pushed — said Billy, whose knee descended from the blue above and plunged into a strangely exposed adam's apple. It was strange all right, everybody rippling around Boobie, the poor guy's pupils swishing to his eyelids and the eerie, wheezing whistle as he groped for air. I wasn't sure that Ed didn't die right there on the blacktop until he started spitting up blood almost a foot high. My mom made me scrub for hours trying to get Ed's stains off my shirt.

No one heard Ed's throat crack and splinter, but Billy told me later it was the purest sound he'd ever heard. He told me that when Ed's blood started to flow the color reminded him of fresh strawberries.

"Fresh," he said again. We had a good laugh.

Now don't get the impression that Billy was a bad kid or anything. He wasn't, in fact he was the kind of kid parents and teachers like best. He was generally a good guy, earnest, happy-

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Billy's victories weren't public, but they were fulfilling in their own simplistic way. In a way, his victories were my victories as well.

As he got older Billy didn't grow very well, and I suppose that's why he turned to running. It also probably had something to do with the fact that Roadrunner was one of the kids that laughed at him during the Ed tribulations. It wasn't that Roadie was a jerk, no, he was just cocky, popular, an epicenter of a

years of the best track rivalry in the city — Billy the Kid and Roadrunner — was starting to evaporate, vanishing with each spray of orange dust that followed each spiked twist. In every meet from every gun, in cross-country or track, Billy had been "fresh." Today's race would be the last and freshest.

As they churned hard into the last quarter, it was looking more and more like Roadie's turn. That would sure stir them up. There'd be jeers, a tearful farewell from Billy, a glad clasping of hands, a chorus of good lucks and well-meaning m a y b e - we'll-see-ya-on-down-the-r oads. But the acid would soon start to gnaw at Billy again, he'd pour a lot of poison sweat slogging through those lonely laps around an empty athletic oval, training for a meet that wasn't about to come.

I had lost control as they charged down that last shaded 100 yards: Billy clipping at Roadrunner's heels, his eyes not quite focused, and me only half-aware I was pulling off some sort of jitterbug dance toward the finish line, when I heard it. Billy was roaring, see, and he was taking these huge strides with this outrageous, sprinter-on-dope, arm-pumping motion and he was still screaming. And now the two runners are in a dead heat and suddenly there are just 10 yards left....

People are jumping over the fence onto the track and Billy and Roadrunner are bent over, hacking for oxygen with arms draped over each other. There's a crazy whine still in the air from all that tension exploding, but my smile is too big to worry about it and the grass and nascent night air smell way too good for this just to be another fresh Thursday afternoon.



somehow kept finding themselves under the soles of people who should be their friends. Enough years of that and a person develops a gentle, seething rage that periodically vents itself in quiet bursts of revenge.

In Billy's case it wasn't so much revenge as it was rubbing someone's face in the fact that he was good, better at something than anybody else, better despite the fact that he was ostracized and ignored. Billy was good in the classic, man-to-man sense that drives athletic competition among boys.

kind of athletic and spectral cool within the larger sphere, the sphere that had no room for Billy. Roadie was aloof, didn't say much, and won every race that Billy didn't enter. There were rumors that playing in a rock band was Roadie's real gig, just doing the running thing now "to stay in shape." That burned Billy even more.

Now, Roadrunner was on the verge of winning — for the first time.

Three years of kicking ass on Roadie and now Billy was behind. Three straight

PIZZA

Gacho centerfielder Mike Czarnetzki broke out of his slump last Saturday at the perfect time. Down 4-3 to UC Irvine, with two on and one out in the bottom of the ninth, the senior connected for a 3-run, game winning homer — his third of the season. He currently leads the team, batting .399.

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Billy the Kid and Roadrunner Down The Miracle Mile

By Thor Garcia

Billy the Kid and Roadrunner. They were kicking now, sprinting headlong into the final quarter. I leapt up and down, my hands jammed deep into the pockets of my red sweat bottoms, which somehow had snaked down to mid-thigh. As the stadium throng swooned and the rest of the athletes screamed, it became too obvious. This one was going down like all the others.

Billy nudged ahead once more, dainty hips swiveling to that unerring rhythm, jacking his knees with the extra flourish only fear could summon. I wanted another look at his face. Pure Bill again, all clenched jaw and dangerous eyes. He gave a quick head check to the Roadrunner, whom we all envied and hated.

Roadrunner was still beautiful.

He looked too much like an Englishman as he stretched 'round the turn: a blur of tan, slender limbs pocked with the mesh of his

blue and white colors, a dashing blond bowl-cut swaying, flawlessly in tune with the whole package. Crossing into an inlet of sunshine on the pumpkin-hued, sundown-shadowed track, Roadie didn't let on that he was behind.

Even as earth from Billy's spikes splashed his ankles, Roadie's expression said he would still get the girl. This time.

"Get it, Bill! You got it, just go out and get it!"

It was Billy's coach and he was spinning around on the infield, shooing away imaginary dragonflies with a metal clipboard that had lost its papers long ago. The entire infield was getting surreal. Both teams were aping out of control, on their knees slamming fists into the ground and shrieking because as the runners lengthened into the straightaway, Roadie had retaken the lead.

He had Billy by only a stride, but it was a good stride because as he broke for the inside Roadie glanced at Billy's right thigh and made like he wanted a



muscle game. They elbow-jostled into the third turn and then the fun really began.

I say fun because I know what Billy does in these situations.

"Fresh" he would say, grinning and pumping a rah-rah arm. He would say it whenever he saw me, some-

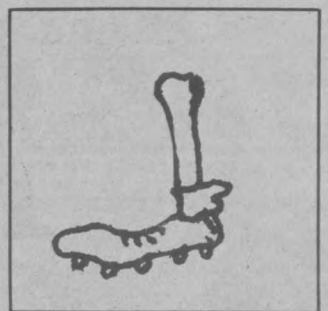
times over and over, as if the word was some kind of magic mantra only we shared.

Actually, that's exactly what it was. "Fresh."

People didn't like Bill much, didn't like me much either. We just didn't get it, I guess, but now, it seems like maybe it had something to

do with the fact we didn't care and didn't like them much either. Don't bother me about it. For Billy, though, "Fresh" was enough.

It started with a tall, freckle-faced kid named Ed Beaulac who had a convertible Mustang by 16 and thought himself the ulti-



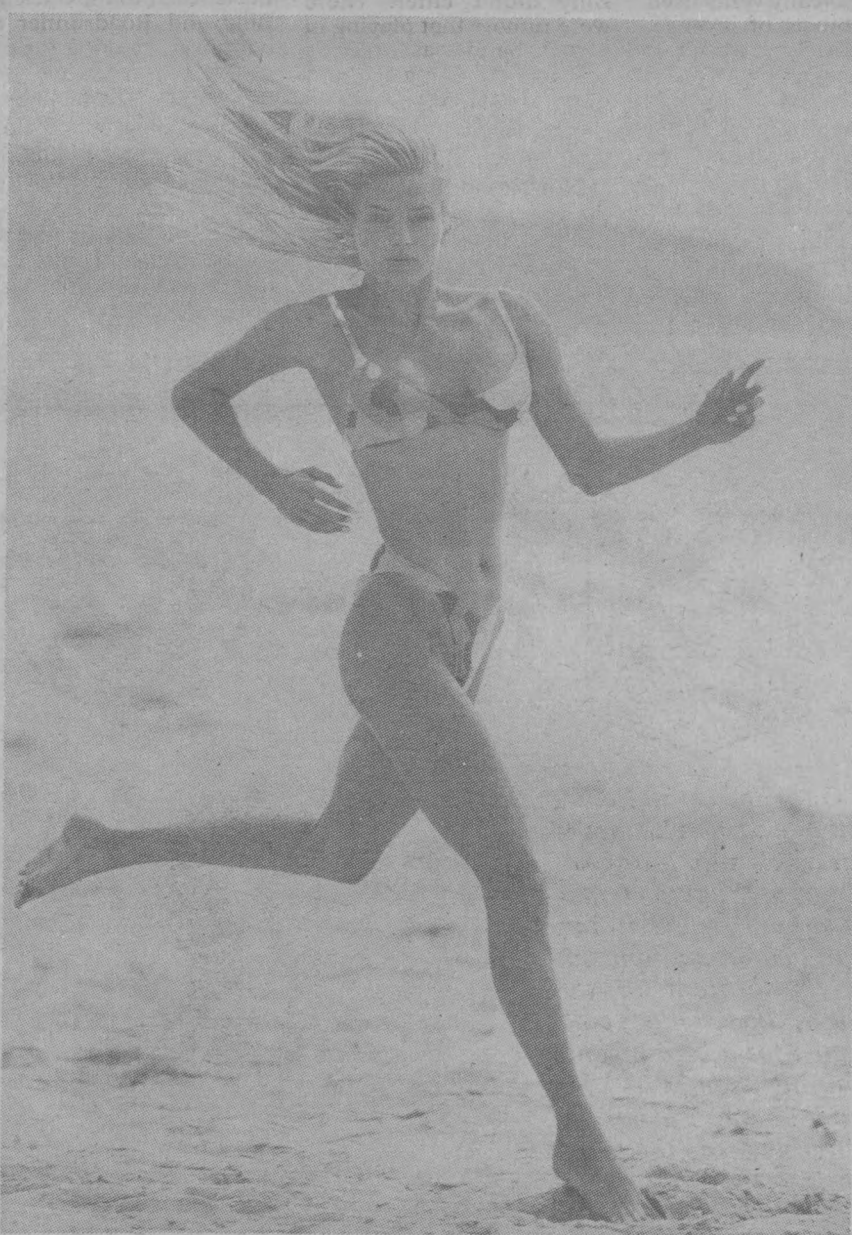
mate incarnation of surf culture. Neither charming nor witty nor exceptionally good-looking, Ed made up for his failings by slapping around people who just didn't have it together like he did.

The back of Billy's head was one of Ed's favorite targets.

A day came when Billy wanted to get in a basketball game Ed was dominating with his usual grace. Being that playing basketball is not a big deal, it therefore seemed natural that Ed made some jokes and then clocked Billy a good one in the mouth. Either that or he just heard some really good ones and felt Bill would look better with less teeth. Anyway, everybody laughed and Billy went home with a wad of crimson paper towels all over his face.

Billy learned a lot from that. Yep, Ed learned him real good, yeah, he showed Billy what kind of Q-tipped-neck nerd, with perpetually chapped lips and mommy-bought bad knit sweaters,

See THE RACE, p.4C



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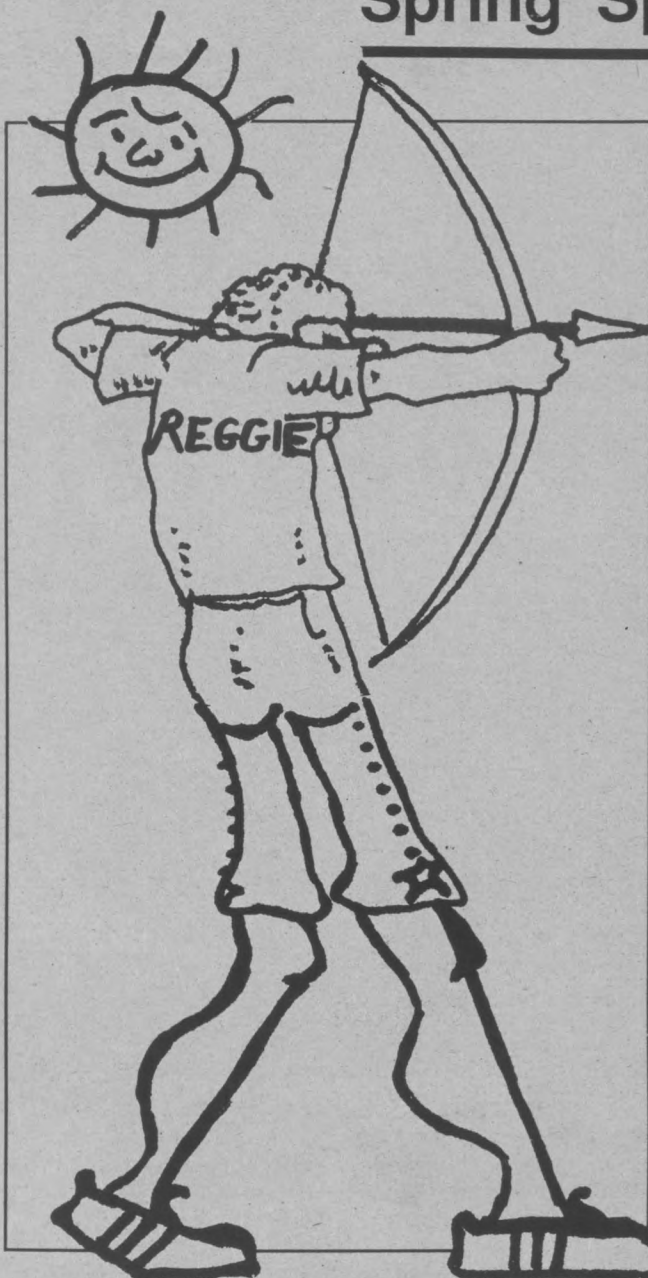
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THE BURN

Continued from p.3C
niably, fun. You have but to look around on any sunny day to find large sums of fun people sitting, slouching, standing, lounging, hunkering and just plain laying out in the sun. And these days, they're being safer.

They've got so many different squeeze-bottles of sun-block lotions out there that, odds are, someone somewhere is smoothing a fair amount of it on right now. Serious.

Gone are the days when the hedonistic melanin buffs would lather up in a big vat of greasy, greasy, hey, hey, greasy sun tan oil and baste themselves all day, smoothing more and more of the viscous oil over their tanned buttocks and breasts. Gone are the days when they would get one of those silvery cardboard reflector deals and lay on the ground looking like sad dogs with ear infections who have to wear big plastic cones on their head. Gone are the days of the chic St. Tropez tan.

Sun-block is the thing now. It comes in different levels of protection, different colors, flavors, bottles, and prices. Some are relatively cheap, compared to the more expensive ones.

Since God has hung his holy "Out of Order" sign on the ozone layer, you can't be too careful. It is time to realize that if we don't care for our skin, we won't have it anymore. They'll have to invent fake skin. There'll be forms to fill out. They'll ask you to list "Next of Skin." Skin flicks will take on a new meaning. You won't ask somebody to give you the skinny on something, *because they just might!* When somebody says "Well, no skin off my nose!" they'll mean it!

So take care of yourself. Sure, go out in the sun, just be careful! And remember, beauty is only skin deep.

Oh, and Grandpa? Yeah, he still eats a lot of well-seasoned and charred meat patties. It's just that now he washes it down with Lite beer.

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The Day Dad Had A Bad Stroke and Embarrassed Me

By Weston Briggs

It was fifth grade and Delp (Ms. Delp to parents — not Mrs. Delp, mind you — but just plain Delp to us), Delp was allowing us a little break from our strict blue-whales-and-redwood-tree curriculum. We were going to have a picnic, an escape from a yearlong course in superficial environmentalism, and the focus of the picnic and our excitement was that true game of summer — softball.

All the cliches are true for softball. Softball is long grass and bare feet, beer and hamburgers and gnats grouping lazily in the light of dusk. Softball is standing behind a four-year-old and helping him swing, then running behind him as he trundles out a base hit, narrowly beating out a mysteriously slow throw, to the wild cheers of everybody. Softball is your Uncle Tuck tripping over his beer and still making a tricky catch in foul territory.

While softball can be vicious as well (as any 14-year-old girls' or 40-year-old guys-with-guts team will tell

you), it is rarely sad. But it can be.

My dad was along that day, a chaperone as we walked down College Avenue and stopped in at Bott's ice cream for 10 cent kiddie cones. We then continued on our way, stumbling and licking, with at least two kids losing their scoops onto the hot cement and trying to act cool about it.

Finally we reached Chabot Park. It was a stunning day, an East Bay Indian summer kind of day, and it took a while to organize us kids into teams. I got picked third — after Auggie and Hoover — so I was feeling OK, not too low but still thinking about yesterday when I was picked first for prison ball.

So I went trotting out into left, because its always left, it's gotta be left. In baseball it might be pitcher or catcher but in softball it's left I desire.

Not that playing left field in third grade is particularly fun: no kid ever hits it out there at that age. But I associated left with the image I wanted: skinny, fast, left-handed. Left sounded good

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to me, a little bit off-kilter and a bit racy.

I had lots of time to daydream out there. I thought about Julie Glass and her cowlick that mirrored mine, I thought about her elfin features. I also thought about the day I brought my baby brother up to her at Open House — thinking she'd find him devastatingly cute and ask me to go with her — and she just absently stared at him toddling around the ping-pong table. Then, with utter disgust in her eyes, she paused before dropping the bomb on me: "Kids are gross."

Well, what the hell, I thought as I watched Henry hit a weak grounder to first: I just want her to kiss me,

not raise my children.

Reality reasserted itself as I caught the other outfielders stiffening abruptly. Checking the dugout — nothing more than an old bench — I saw that dumb Dale Parker was trying to get my dad to hit. My dad was protesting a lot but Delp was nudging him, kind of flirting with him in that way she had. He adjusted his glasses and went up to the plate.

I had never seen him play softball or baseball and was sort of morbidly curious. My dad has eyes that can only see one at a time, leaving him with no depth perception. In some sports this could be overcome: whenever we played basket-

ball he'd hoop my ass all over the court by shooting from the same spot, a crazy running one-handed jump shot from the right side of the key. It would go in every time.

But he looked pretty shaky today. He kept pushing up his glasses and he clearly didn't know how to hold a bat. He stuck his butt out a bit and folded his shoulders a sliver and called that a stance. I looked around a bit nervously. My fellow outfielders, respecting his dadliness, had retreated into the tall grass.

The first pitch was high and slow and my dad shouldn't have swung at it. But he was eager and he swung and missed. Badly.

I cringed, predictably.

The second pitch was a little low and outside — pitch it right, Rickey, you little moron! — and my dad missed again, a low sort of swooping cut that threw him off-balance.

Oh man. This isn't cool. I wanted to hide. Both swings had been far too early — it was clear he didn't have any sense of where the ball was. Delp looked concerned over on the bench. Donnie at third was laughing under his hand and trying to get the attention of the shortstop. I felt very far away from things, very much out in the outfield.

He missed. Strike three. Dog!

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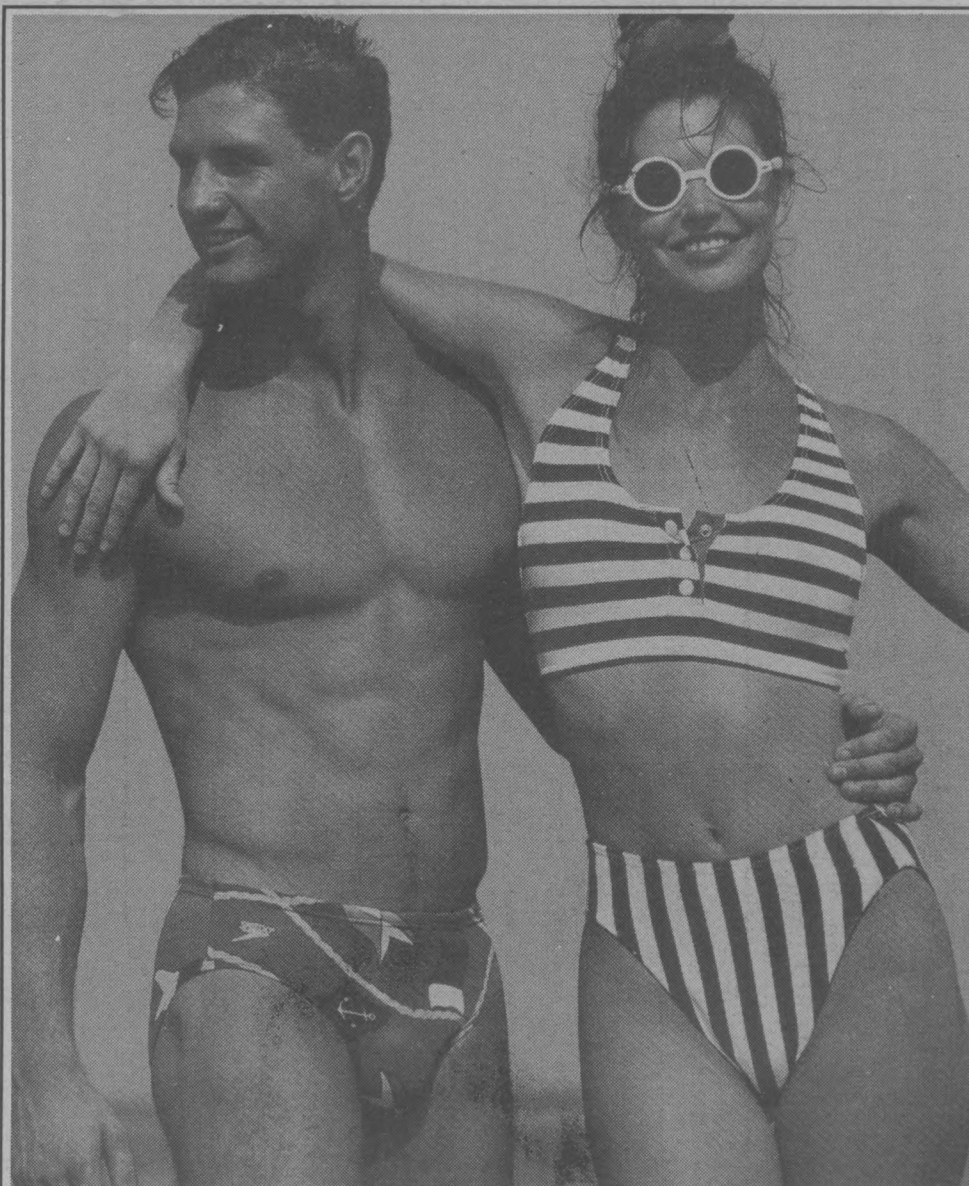


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Spring Sports 1990

Skateboard Poetry And the Closing Of the I.V. Mind

By Trip Dawkins

Ah, springtime, when a young boy's heart turns away from everything: from school, love and breeding, toward a more powerful and fulfilling draw.

Spring is the season of the skateboard in Isla Vista.

With Spring comes the longer days and the warm nights that make the hearts of I.V.'s skaters swoon and their feet sweat. Spring brings the blisteringly hot asphalt and the silky slick coating of new red paint on the curbs.

Everyday I wake up and go to class, turn in my work, take notes, eat, and head home. It is this trip home that I most enjoy. Not that I look forward to it — on the contrary, it is when I amble home, absent-mindedly, that I usually come across some of Isla Vista's best. The truly committed, people who like nothing better in the world than the rush of going fast and flying high.

I happen upon a pod of Isla Vista skaters. Suddenly it all rushes back over me like some sort of spiritual epiphany: I can skate! God is smiling on me! I can use

my body and this other tool to go fast and fly and slide and grind!

I rush quickly home and put on a pair of shorts and some sneakers. I charge out of my house hellbent for speed and after a few pushes I am going damn fast. I try to wheelie for the rest of the block, balancing all of my weight on the back wheels and struggling to stay centered. I make it to within five yards of the corner where I slide quickly to the right in order to avoid the rapidly opening passenger door of a station wagon. As I thank my lucky stars, I push a couple more times and continue down Camino Pescadero, the wind blowing through my hair, my wheels making a soothing click-clack on the lines of the sidewalk. God is still smiling on me.

Unfortunately, it's not as wonderful as that all of the time. There is also a bad side, a dark side, a tragic side.

While I was skating the other day, a man walked by carrying his young son. I heard the man say, "That's something for sixth graders," and my friend heard him say ten steps later: "I feel like I'm watching little

children."

After we waved at the little kid who was peering at us longingly from over his father's shoulder, I thought to myself, "What's all the hype? Why is everyone so down on us for just wanting to have fun and enjoy the power of acceleration?" Riding my skateboard makes me happy. That's all there is to it. If it stops making me happy, I'll stop doing it. As far as vices go, I think it's relatively harmless.

I may fall and hurt myself once in a while, but riding

my skateboard doesn't pollute the atmosphere, it doesn't make me want to fight everybody who walks by, it doesn't make me say rude things, and I can do it anywhere that there is concrete and it's not raining. So what's this guy's deal?

I sat down to think about it for a bit while my friend flew repeatedly off a driveway transition and through the air. I will save you the horror of describing the various stages of my extremely convoluted and possibly frightening thought process

and simply state my conclusions about this gentleman and his ill views.

Skateboarding began in the early 1960s when the surfers of Los Angeles took their hobby to dry land. Since then it has matured rapidly, and it is still so doing today. It is a completely accessible sport, needing no real facilities and no opponent. It's about personal achievement and individual improvement.

All of this leads me to conclude that this poor guy is just uptight because peo-

ple weren't skating in the street when he was in college. Or he objects to individual achievement. Either way, I don't think this man's views speak too highly of him. Either he is locked into the past, or he needs the security of a group. I hope his son has more sense.

I don't want to dwell on the bad side of skateboarding, since, besides bruises, it only comes in the form of the previously described ignorance. I'll depart with a

See SKATE, p.12C

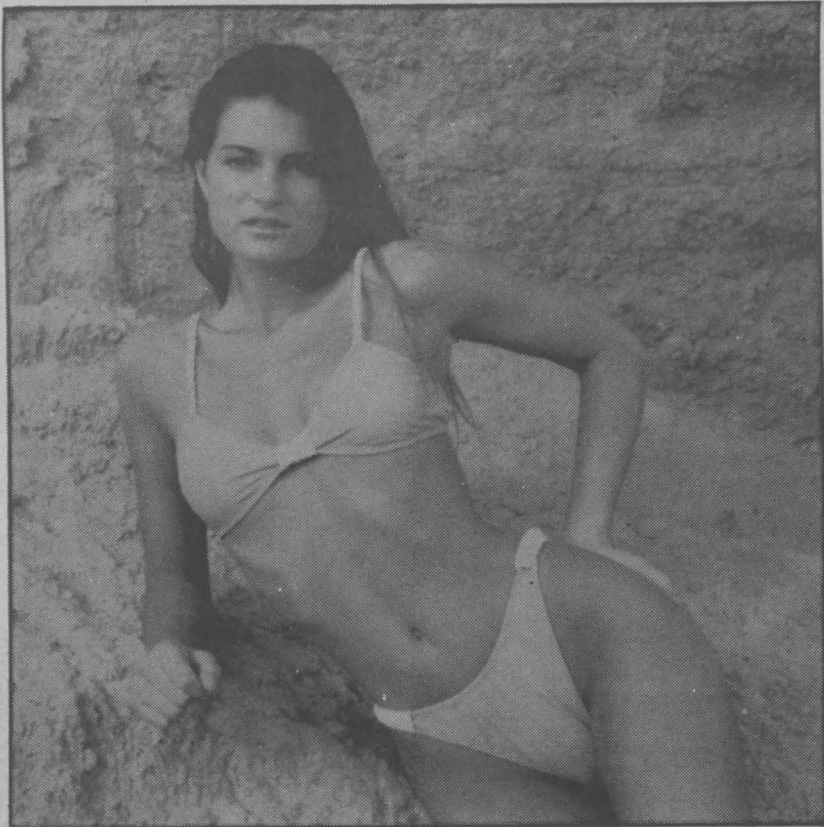


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What it Takes to Get a Touring Gig Out on The Road

By Brenton Kelly

The concept of bicycle touring cross-country evokes many diverse and imaginative responses from persons who have never had the opportunity to ride day after day while carrying all the gear that might be necessary for comfortable, sustained travel.

Seeing for the first time a fully loaded bicycle being peddled into a head wind by a sunburnt, wind-chapped, mile-worn, sinew-stretched cyclist can easily convince a bystander that the cyclist was either a masochistic super-athlete or a homeless vagabond or both.

Someone who rides their bike a lot—for fun and efficient transportation—might enjoy the idea of longer distance bicycle travel, but the thought of being so many miles from home or the next bike shop, and the thought of having to carry and provide adequate food and shelter for yourself can be extremely defeating.

Many people of all ages can be found hiking comfortably through what little

wilderness remains. These people travel wherever they choose, carrying a backpack containing only their simplest necessities for survival.

Anybody who is familiar with extended backpacking probably has a more realistic perception of bicycle touring. The truth is that there is no accurate, generalized, stereotypical cycle tour experience.

There are as many ways to do it as there are places and reasons for going. The experiential spectrum ranges from the lightly-loaded, restaurant-eating, hotel-sleeping, city-road rider, to the fully-loaded, backcountry-camping, fire-road rider. Every bike tour is unique to the choices made concerning destination, daily distances and terrain, and the degree of remoteness.

The most important considerations to be made when planning a bicycle tour can be simplified into two major categories. The quality of attention paid to these considerations, in any meaningful event, can mark the quality of that



experience.

The two major considerations are whether the available hardware and equipment fits the specifications of the touring goal, and whether the software and programmable conditioning is adequate for manipulation of the latter.

As for the first consideration, much can be said about what is the best type of the most important equipment, and whether or not some seemingly luxury item is worth its volume and gravitational drag in return for the pleasure of its resource.

There is the obvious—a sturdy bike that fits, preferably with 15 or more gears and heavy duty brakes; comfortable cycle apparel such as a helmet to be worn and not carried every mile; gloves; sun-bug glasses; cycling shorts and shoes; and depending on the type of tour either panniers filled with clothing, camping and cooking equipment, or some simple personal effects and a credit card.

The less obvious essentials might be: water (plenty of it), since good, cool, clean water is the purest fuel for the miles; basic bicycle tools; spare parts like tubes and cables; grease; and some know-how.

The second consideration is slightly more abstract than the first. It has to do with the fitness of both the mind and body of the rider. There is no sure success of a mission simply because all

See **CONDITION**, p.12C

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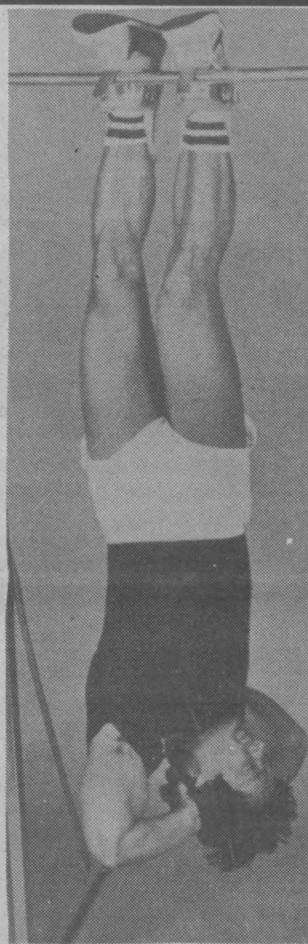
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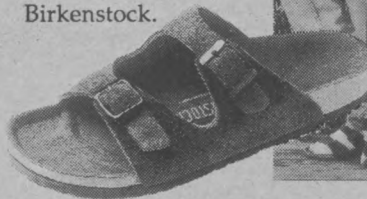
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Spring Sports 1990

BASEBALL

Continued from p.2C
Mark Carrier playing center field. I wasn't well-known and I didn't get the credit, although I might have deserved it when I was 14. Regardless, I had a good coach who taught me loads about the game. I was ready.

Anxious to party, I joined the junior high team my ninth-grade year, preparing myself for my upcoming high school career at Lakewood under legendary coach John Herbold, who had won 15 straight Moore League titles and had helped send guys like Mike Fitzgerald and Willie Norwood to the major leagues. I also played Colt League for 15-16 year olds. Problem was, I had two really, really stupid coaches. Wibelmoe was an annoying dweeb who got really mad one practice and starting crushing short-hop line drives at us on the wet, all-grass infield. One of the balls hit my middle finger straight on. I

sticky. You see, there's this Briggs guy, and I just got dogged at my prom, so I ... decided to get drunk for the first time ever on the night after my last day of school in ninth-grade. All I remember is the first shot of vodka. I woke up the next morning face first on Briggs' floor wearing a jacket and shoes with vomit, blood and urine crusted all over my body and hair. I looked up and there was Briggs, laughing. I had missed tryouts. It would be hours before I stood up again. I thought of calling up Herbold personally and swinging some deal, but then the word came that he was moving to Cal State L.A. Totally defeated, I decided to quit baseball forever.

In tenth-grade I went out for the tennis team, having

again to see if I had anything left. I finished fifth in the league in hitting with a .474. The comeback had begun.

For the next six months I worked my ass off until sunset every night, reteaching myself third base, taking grounders till my knees bled, taking fence balls till my hands blistered. I couldn't have worked harder. They put me on J.V., which was fine. I figured I needed the playing time. Unfortunately, the coach was this nose-picking goon who'd never coached anything but football before, yet assumed he knew twice as much as me about the game. He'd yell at me for teaching my backups how to play third. "You think you know everything, Jackson," he'd say. He was so smart he once started me on the bench, put in a wrestler at DH, and then *pinch hit* me for the DH, whereupon I hit a game-winning double.

competition consisting mainly of returning freshmen from big-time baseball schools and guys who threw 93. Both coaches told me I should be the starting third baseman on Varsity. That fall I worked harder and harder. Our coach, a guy very aptly named Spud, couldn't teach much more than how to use the "crossover step" and how to play "six outs," but I figured he'd recognize hustle, hard work and talent when he saw it. He didn't, I was cut, ignominiously, and to the shock of my teammates. I've been cruelly bitter ever since. My Dad had always told everyone that I was the best athlete in the family. And my brother played four years at UCSB. I couldn't tell my Dad for a week. I cried a lot.

It wasn't until four months ago that I found out that the nose-picking J.V. coach once told a student of his not to hang out with a friend of mine because my friend and "Jackson" were cocaine dealers. I'm a clean dude, I was Student Body President. Looking for any measure of redemption, me and my good friend Jill Weiskoff started coaching a Little League team. A little effort to give something back. We lost our first three games badly, the third by the score of 15-1.

But then something happened to give me hope. Last Thursday, our team jumped out to a 13-3 lead, squandered it miserably to be down 18-15 going into our last ups. After two outs, I had all but given up. Then the pitcher walked three batters. Peter, our best hitter, who hadn't got a hit all year, was up. After two strikes, Joe, the runner on third, leaned over and asked me if he should steal home if he got a chance. I said "No, you stay right here. Peter's going to hit a home run." The pitch came in slow motion. He swung and hit the ball fair for the first time all season. It was a deep fly ball to straightaway center. All my frustrations and bitterness were tied into one silly little 108-stitched round thing. The ball went over the fence. We won, 19-18.

I hate baseball.



told him about it, and he called me a "woman." So I played for two more days until I went to the hospital and found out it was broken. The other coach, a baseball-ignorant mustache man, thought I was a wimp. His assistant insisted on playing his talentless son at third base while I healed. After the splint was removed I broke a finger on my left hand. Then I got a hip pointer. I ended up with three at bats in junior high and maybe 17 in Colt. Both dumb coaches thought I was a stupid wimp.

Baseball had been my life for so long, and I knew so much about it. But Christ, here were these ignorant jerks talking to me about courage and "wanting it" and every other Pop Warner phrase they could think of while I did everything humanly possible to heal. I considered quitting forever, but then decided to stick with it and go to Lakewood tryouts the first day of summer after ninth-grade.

That's where it gets

never played the game before, but assuming I could walk all over the rich nerds who were good only because they'd been taking lessons since they were three. I was wrong, but I did make J.V. and did OK. But a funny thing happened along the way. The tennis courts were next to the baseball field, and all the cute girls that I was in love with were always sitting in the baseball bleachers and going out with guys I used to have for lunch. It hurt. That spring, I decided to go out for Colt

Then I tore cartilage in my knee. The coach thought I was a wimp and accused me of not wanting it. I was back in two weeks, but he thought I didn't want it and left me on the bench while I watched no-talent, no-brain oafs play terribly and start before me.

But I stuck with it. That summer, I played ball for two brilliant coaches, both former assistants for Herbold. I played great that summer, batted fourth, played third, learned tons about the game, all against

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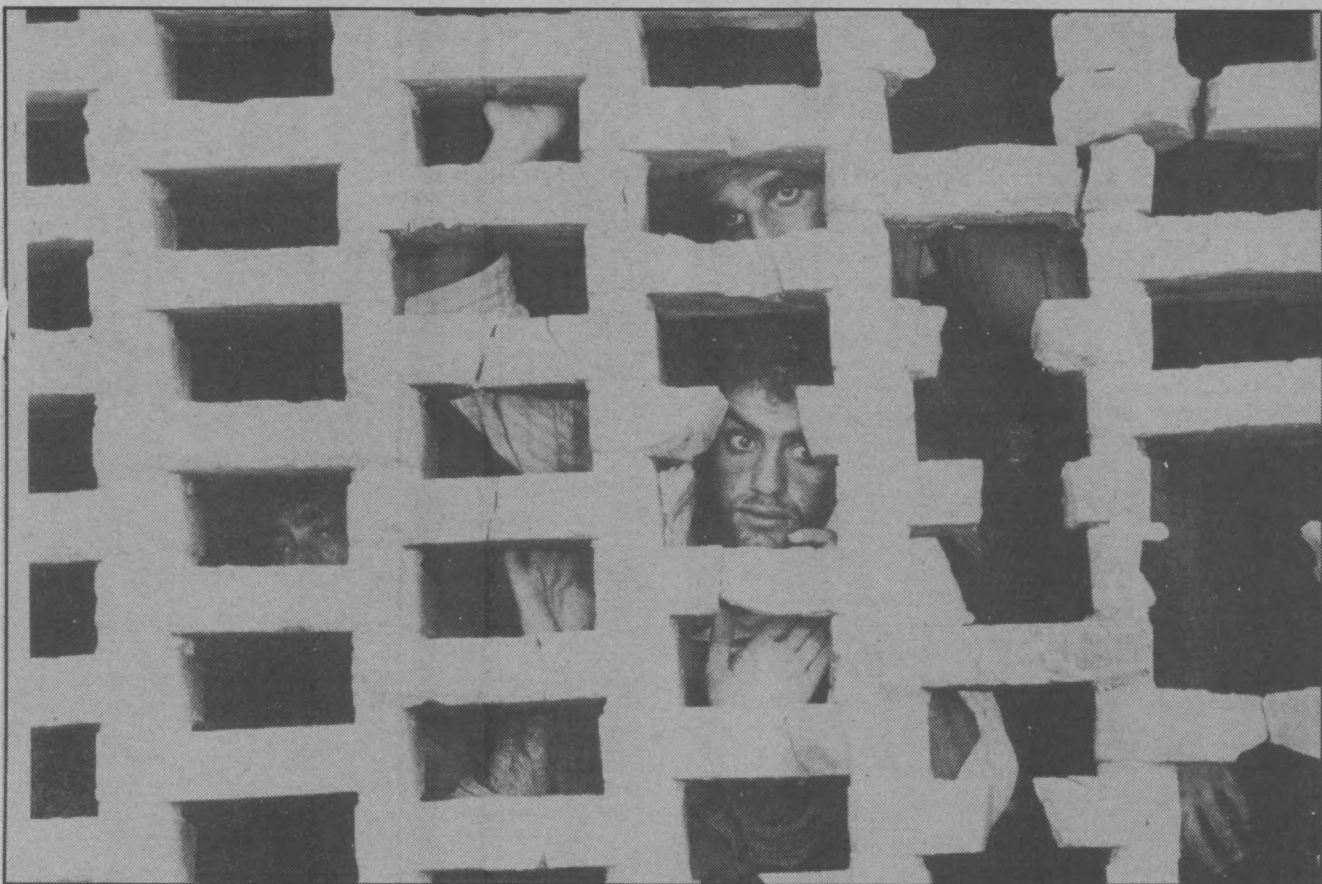
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For Couch Athletes: The Boob Tube

By Roscoe Clancy Cohen

Many years ago, the notoriously sedentary Cohen clan was unable to endure any form of recreation. Outdoor sporting took too much time, it was sweaty, and it involved stressful interaction with other people.

Now, of course, there is television — America's second favorite indoor sport. And the Cohens, as a clan, are glad.

There is a certain sweet rumination in the practice of watching television — even while leaves are turning green, mammals are passing through menarche, and tri-ethnic terrorists are holding decent people like you hostage.

Ah, television in the springtime. Makes you feel good to be alive.

If you know the Cohens, you know it takes more than a barnyard fire to get them up from the couch. In fact, we have a special spot on our couch where the bulbous butt prints of our beloved granduncle Duke Agnostosi Cohen remain to this day.

And those are deep prints, believe you me.

Television as sport. Dig it!

Last year's NBA playoffs were phenomenal because I watched them at Spike's with about 89 screaming, sobbing, whining Boston fans and whining, sobbing overpaid UCSB Bookstore employees.

Did I mention my current favorite show is *Twin Peaks*? I like the guy who plays the FBI agent. He reminds me of a Michael J. Fox from hell. And watching that show is a sport in itself — if you've kept up with the ever-expanding plot since the first episode, you can play *Twin Peaks* Trivia with your astonished friends.

If you're good, you can invent entertaining, alternative uses for the television. Turn it on its side, turn up the tint, color, and horizontal hold, and switch channels until you find a tennis game. Watching vertical rotating televised pink tennis is about the second funniest sport you can ever watch. And you don't really have to be stoned to enjoy it properly.

We all know that watching sports on television is almost always more entertaining (and safe) than playing sports in real life. Last year's

NBA playoffs were *phenomenal*, mostly because I'm from Los Angeles, but also because I watched them at Spike's with about 89 screaming, sobbing, whining Boston fans and whining, sobbing, overpaid UCSB Bookstore employees in attendance.

Magic Johnson never gets that privilege. No siree.

Even golf is more fun when viewed on television — mainly because you can change the channel at will.

In fact, television has even spawned a number of "sports" — some legitimate, some not. Correct me if I'm wrong, but *The Superstars* was a carefully concocted device employed by ABC to keep B-rate athletes in shape during the off-season. Let there be no mistake: it was my second favorite show of the 1970s (after *Almost Anything Goes* and before *The Bionic Woman*). But the idea of Hollywood Henderson running

an obstacle course and anchoring a three hour long tug o' war with other off-season legends simply did not tickle the Cohen telelibido. Even in the 1970s.

Of course, the Golden Age of television is long-gone. The upside is that there's lots more stuff to choose from. With cable TV boxes capable of accessing hundreds of channels, you can indulge in Home Shopping This and All-Sports That. Which of course lends itself to all manner of mockery.

Have you ever watched the Home Shopping Channel? I mean, *really* watched it? What kind of people buy their stuff? I can only picture shriveled, blue-haired people who live in dwellings lined with aluminum siding.

Which is OK — it has been proven that aluminum siding is the second best conductor of television signals.

But that's not to say that blue-haired people are bad, mind you. Some of my best friends are blue-haired. In fact, some of the finest Cohens are blue-haired (those who aren't dead, of course). But wherever they are, and whatever kind of hair they have, you know they're watching television.

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Spring Sports 1990

SKATE

Continued from p.8C
slightly more positive scene.

I stand up, having decided that the passing critic will have to go through life without this avenue for personal expression, but maintaining that I needn't deny myself this pleasure. My friend has been vaulting into the air over a pile of boxes upwards of three feet. I take a few steps back and jump on my board, heading towards the pile, concentrating on lofting myself as high as possible — to no

avail.

My back wheels catch on the top box, and the pile topples. I stack the boxes up again and go back to my starting point. My friend, who is eating an apple, gives me advice: "Think about jumping high and picture the ground on the other side of the boxes."

I race forward a second time, and once again catch my back wheel on the top box. Disgruntled, I decide maybe I have reached my physical peak, that this is as

high as I can go. I quickly dismiss this thought and return, setting up for my third try. I clear my mind and concentrate on the cement lump on the side of the driveway, and when I get to just the right spot, I hoist myself into the air. I watch the pile of banana boxes pass harmlessly under my board as I, with the wind in my hair, float lazily down to the street.

A perfect synchronization of mind and body has carried me once more to success. Almost everyone knows what success feels like, and for that one unfortunate fella: Sir, it feels damn good.

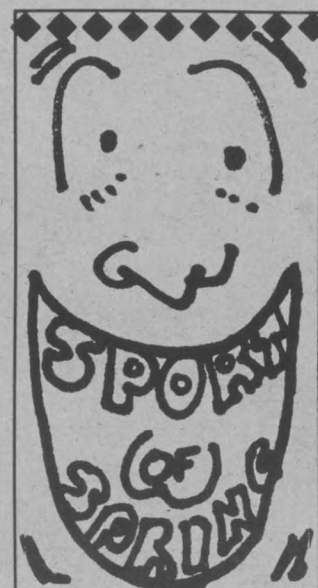
CONDITION

Continued from p.9C
the state of the art equipment is on hand. Nor is a many-mile journey made by fitness alone. In fact the conditioning of the material between the ears can easily prove to be the weakest link in any systematic expedition.

Surely the rider should be healthy and reasonably

accustomed to their bike, but actually, nothing can prepare a body's mind for spending some part of every day on a bike loaded for touring.

That kind of knowledge usually is attained after a period of years. Sometimes it's best to just start pedalling. Don't force it any more than feels right.



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