

The Sports Column

Accredited agents would solve problems

By BARRY COOPER
Syndicated Columnist

As slimy and unpalatable as some player representatives are, they are very necessary for today's uneducated players, some of whom are introduced to the world of checkbooks and savings accounts on or about their 22nd birthdays.

Apparently, Dallas Cowboys running back Tony Dorsett is one of those rich young ballplayers who continues to fumble away his earnings. Why else would he owe the IRS some \$400,000 in back taxes?

We must conclude that Dorsett is getting horrible advice from his counselors. He has poured \$600,000 into oil explorations that have turned up little more than big, dark holes. There have been other such losses for Dorsett, too.

His case points out the need for some kind of accreditation system for player representatives.

More often than not, the players are duped by slick, fast-talking agents who are in the business only for a quick buck. Let us hope that if that is the case with Dorsett -- and the Cowboys suggest that it is -- he can untangle this mess before he faces bankruptcy.

The last meeting of the USFL owners, held in Tampa recently, was supposed to be a session during which all unfinished business would be taken care of. The USFL failed to meet that objective, though, which is sadly the norm for the troubled league. If the USFL is to gain any credibility, it must move to find some leadership. Harry Usher, the commissioner who was supposed to bring a Midas touch to the league, has been little more than a puppet, just like former figurehead commissioner Chet Simmons.

- Bethune-Cookman College football Coach Larry Little was all set to leave B-CC for an offensive line coaching position at the University of Miami. But the deal was zapped when UM Coach Howard Schnellenberger suddenly left Miami for the USFL and then the University of Louisville.

- Florida A&M football Coach Rudy Hubbard recently felt the pinch of new school president Frederick Humphries. Reportedly, Humphries ordered the school's athletic department to quit subsidizing Hubbard's TV show. The school had been providing "The Rudy Hubbard Show" with about \$15,000 a year to pay for travel expenses, film and the like.

- So Gerry Cooney, the best white heavyweight fighter the media ever invented finally officially retired, eh? By the way, light heavyweight champ Michael Spinks says he will knock off Larry Holmes on Sept. 21 and then try to lure Cooney out of retirement. The reason? Money. Cooney may have been a mediocre fighter, but he could definitely sell some tickets.

- Give jailed boxer John Garcia (alias

Roberto Medina) credit for having a lot of heart. It takes courage to fight on national television when you are an escaped convict. Garcia, who was living in St. Petersburg, Fla., was arrested recently after a televised bout. Turns out that he had been arrested 61 times and had escaped from a Colorado prison. Garcia thinks his ex-girlfriend, with whom he had just split, turned him in.

- Is Muhammad Ali punch-drunk or what? He says the problem with boxing is that too many blacks are involved in the sport. Wonder why he didn't suggest that when he and Joe Frazier were making millions off their classic encounters.

- Northeastern University has started an admirable program that is catching on all too slowly. It is called a "Program for Pros Without Diplomas," and it gives former college athletes a second chance at earning a degree. Players who haven't turned pro are allowed to return to school and take classes for free. Those who have advanced to the pro ranks but have not finished their degrees are allowed to take classes at a discount. Only 11 schools -- most of them in the East -- have adopted the program.

- Auburn University football Coach Pat Dye on the need to pay players an allowance: "One of the problems we have is recruiting kids from very, very low-income levels, kids whose families may even be on welfare. I'm talking about kids who need more than their parents can give them just to be normal college students."

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The Notebook

- The more you tried to like the United States Football League, or at least give it a chance, the more the USFL showed its rump to you.

Baseball

From Page B1

but he jumped over the Brave runner.

Smith's The Best

Smith, winner of five straight Gold Glove awards, is clearly the best fielder to play the game in the last two decades. That includes Hall of Fame third baseman Brooks Robinson.

The veteran shortstop, who has been in St. Louis since 1982, gives the Cardinals one of three forms of intimidation; the other two are speed and Whitey Herzog's skillful managing.

Coleman's speed is the newest form of Cardinal intimidation. Without it, they might still be in the pennant race. With it, the are bent on winning a second World Series in only five years.

The former Florida A&M star singled and stole two bases in the first inning Saturday night. Braves' Manager Eddie Haas retaliated the next day by ordering Rick Mahler to throw at Coleman's head on the first pitch of

"I have a desire to want to steal a base. I have a manager who will give me the opportunity to steal"

-- Vince Coleman



the game.

That's pretty remarkable. After all, when was the last time you saw a pitcher throw at a base stealer?

What makes Coleman so intimidating is the ease with which he steals. The Jacksonville, Fla., native reportedly has run the 100-yard dash in 9.2 seconds. Through Sunday's games he had

86 thefts.

That the former Rattler all-America had been caught on 19 percent of his attempts is due to his relative inexperience in baseball. Coleman, cousin of Minnesota Viking punter Greg Coleman, wanted to be an NFL punter. He even tried out for the position with the Washington Redskins, who wanted to convert

him into a wide receiver.

"I have a desire to want to steal a base," Coleman said after Saturday night's 7-0 win over the Braves. "At the same time I have a manager who will give me the opportunity to steal and a batter (Willie McGee, who has a league-leading .362 average) behind me that will allow me the chance to run."

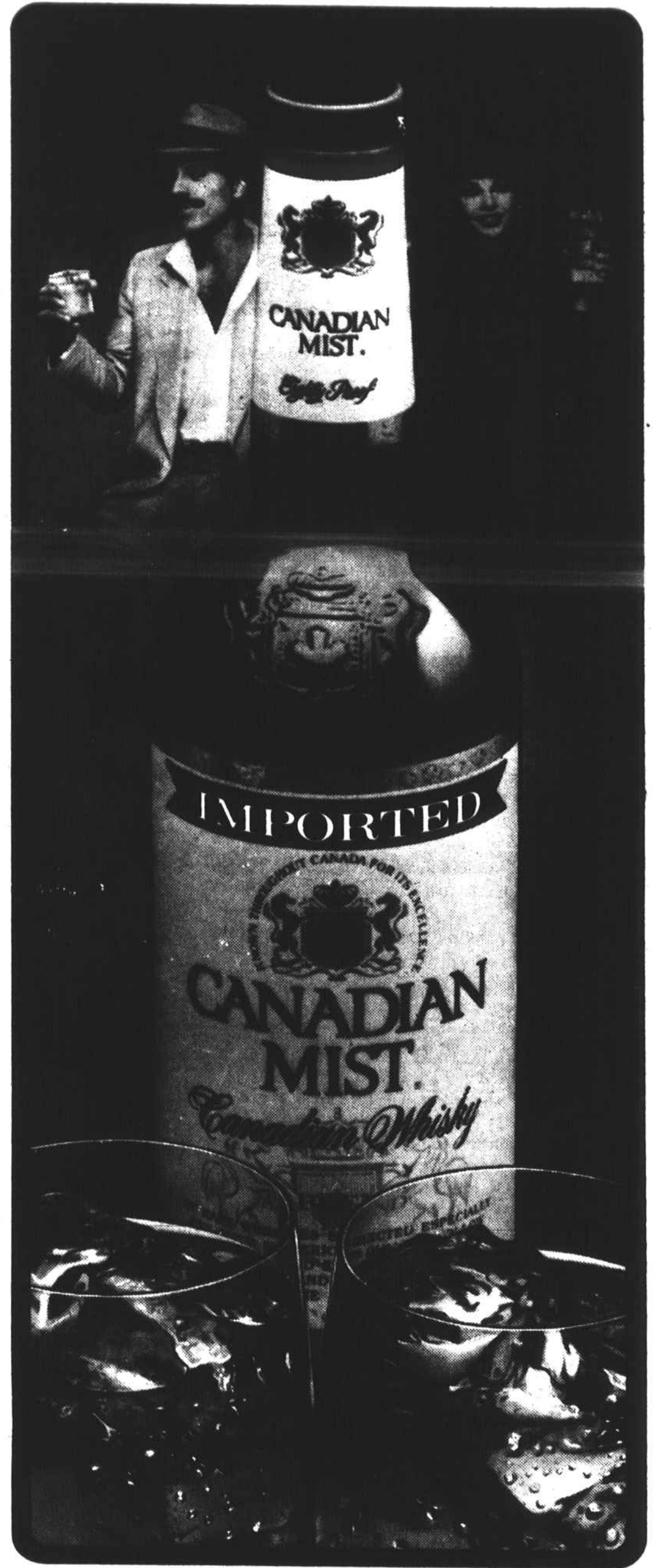
"All that's important and I guess that's why I have 86 steals and the next guy (Tim Lincecum) has 49."

It seems appropriate Coleman is supplanting Raines as the National League's master thief, for Coleman attended Raines High School in Jacksonville, Fla.

Vincent Van Go

Coleman showed his unique running ability in the minors, stealing a baseball record 145 bases at Class A Macon, Ga., in 1983 and 101 at AAA Louisville last year. Yet, skeptics wondered if he could make it in the majors, invoking "you can't steal first"

Please see page B10



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