

# Loyalty in pro sports "ain't what it used to be"

By John Grabowski

Loyalty in sports ain't what it used to be.

In an era of free agency, athletes are quick to jump to other teams that offer them more money, longer contracts or better playing situations.

On the other side of the coin, management nowadays is quicker to trade a star player having contract problems. It knows it might eventually lose him to free agency without getting anything in return.

When Johnny Bench and Carl Yastrzemski were recently elected to baseball's Hall of Fame, the point was made that, by coincidence, each had spent his entire career with a single team — a modern rarity. Bench was a

catcher for the Cincinnati Reds; Yaz was an outfielder for the Boston Red Sox.

What was overlooked by many was the fact that Yastrzemski is co-holder of the record for the most years played with one team in a career spent with just one club. This record is not only for baseball, but for all big-league sports.

Yastrzemski joined the Red Sox as a 21-year old rookie in 1961. When he retired following the 1983 campaign, he had appeared in 3,308 games for Boston over a 23-year period. The only major leaguer to match Yaz's mark was fellow Hall of Famer Brooks Robinson of the Baltimore Orioles. Robinson patrolled third base for the Birds from 1955 to 1977.

By way of comparison, consider Deacon McGuire, the catcher who holds the all-time mark for total major-league baseball seasons with 26.

McGuire performed for a dozen big-league teams from 1884 to 1912 — Toledo, Cleveland, Rochester and Washington of the American Association; Detroit, Philadelphia, Washington and Brooklyn of the National League; and Detroit, New York, Boston and Cleveland of the American League.

Of course, McGuire, who hit .278 during his career, ran out the string a bit. He appeared in just one game in each of his final two "seasons", and in just two games in the "season" before that.

When talk turns to hockey, the name of a former Detroit Red Wing pops up at the top of the longevity list in the one-team-only category. No, it's not Gordie Howe, but rather Howe's teammate, Alex Delvecchio.

Delvecchio toiled 23 seasons for the Red Wings, from 1951-52 to 1973-74, never playing a single minute for any other team.

The indestructible Howe spent his first 25 pro seasons with Detroit (1946-47 to 1970-71), then returned to the NHL as a member of the Hartford Whalers when the club entered the league in 1979-80. His 26 years in the league is the all-time record. If his six seasons in the WHA are added in (1973-74 to 1978-79), Howe's mark becomes even more mind-boggling.

Moving on to football, George Blanda's name usually comes to the fore when longevity is discussed. Blanda's 26 pro seasons easily tops the list in NFL-AFL annals. However, those years were split between four teams — the Chicago Bears, Baltimore Colts, Houston Oilers and Oakland Raiders.

For a pro football career spent with only one club, the mark goes to former center Jeff Van Note of Atlanta. All-told, Van Note spent 18 years with

the lowly Falcons, ending his career after the 1986 season.

No NFL player has performed for 20 seasons with just one team. Defensive end Jim Marshall holds the league mark, having spent 19 years with the Minnesota Vikings after entering the league as a Cleveland rookie in 1960.

Currently in his 20th and final NBA season, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar of the Los Angeles Lakers has rewritten pro basketball's record book. But he began his career with the Milwaukee Bucks — so the one-team record isn't his. It belongs to John Havlicek of the Boston Celtics: 16 seasons (1962-63 to

1977-78).

But Dolph Schayes should have an asterisk next to his name: He also played for 16 seasons with the same pro franchise — his Syracuse Nationals moved to Philadelphia to become the 76ers in time for the 1963-64 NBA season.

In Schayes' first season (1948-49), however, Syracuse was not a member of the NBA, but rather of the rival National Basketball League. Nevertheless, he is credited with 16 seasons in *The Sporting News Official NBA Guide*.

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## Playoff darts flying



### Darts

By ALEX TOUGH

Monday night's Halton division of the Peel Region League are officially over for the season, the playoffs continue with singles matches on Sunday, Apr. 23 at the Army, Navy, Airforce club at Lakeshore and Cawthra (turn left at Lakeshore, Al T.). Anyhow, Time Out I did finish the season undefeated and without a tie for a phenomenal season. However, the match of the night was for second and third places between Hollywood and McGibbon I at Hollywood. Home is not as much an advantage in darts as in some other competitions. Both teams approached the match with winning in mind and a battle ensued.

Rick Harden opened with a singles win over Randy Hunt to give the home team the lead. Brad Youmans struck back by beating Terry Hancock and the visitors went ahead with Ian McDonald taking Terry Kouyoumjian. Bruce Hope tied it up over John Reyce. Individual leader in the standings, Gary Rodda, stepped up to match wits with Stan Mathews and did what he had to do - win. Hugh Smid followed suit over Ron Duval. Hollywood came back with Ed Kouyoumjian and Doug Whichelo winning over Marty Wheeler and Wyman Somers. I believe that Somers was a no show and therefore the "dummy" came into play.

On to the doubles and Randy Hunt and Brad Youmans pulled off a win over the strong pairing of Kouyoumjian and Harden. Rodda and Reyce continued over Hope and Terry Kouyoumjian. Then McDonald and Smid beat Whichelo and Duval. The next was a crucial set for Hollywood - a loss and they were out of it, a win and they still had all to play for. Hancock and Mathews did not disappoint and they did not find it easy against Wheeler and dummy. Wheeler took them to three before going down. All tied up with the two teams, four men, to play. McGibbon sent up Rodda, Hunt, McDonald and Youmans to do the job. Hollywood sent up Harden, Ed K., Duval and Whichelo. The visitors won through and at least had had the tie. The home team then went with Hancock, Ed K., Hope and Mathews. McGibbon's threesome was McGibbon won through to take second place and end an epic match.

Time Out I had their last match with Brackens and came out on top rather easily in the end by 11-3 winning the league by a massive 61 points. Paul Sargent with three scores of 133 gave it a try. However, the leaders also had a few strong individual efforts with two 140s by Ged Williams and Ron Scarlett. Joe Cairns shot 135, Danny Fraser 132 and Brian Hicks 131 and self finished 107. No stirring moments in the McGibbon II/Time Out II clash at McGibbon. The mixed squad from Time Out defeated the all girls squad from McGibbon by 11-3. The final match between Copper Kettle and O'Toole was tied at 7-7. Mike Pep-

per came in with two 140s and Stu Engineer replied with 134.

Youmans and Reyce each scored above 130 as did Mathews, Harden, and the Kouyoumjians in the McGibbon/Hollywood battle.

The Wednesday Industrial League also came to a close of league play and the divisional winners are Snowjacks Hustlers in the first and Steep Rock in the second. There were no blood and thunder matches here although Exports were in the position of having to win at least two sets to finish in second place in the first division. In the second Acadian Pools needed a large swing between their game with Unknowns and Gasketmen Cutters' game with Aces in order to leapfrog into second place, it was not to be.

Snowjacks Hustlers maintained their winning form in beating Bulldogs 5-4 in a closely fought match. Al Telford shot 158, self 129 and Ron Scarlett 100. Don Easy shot 115 and Brad Hale closed 103. Exports 6-3 result over Golden Flights was enough for second place with Brian Hicks, Earl Maltby and John Maltby putting 140 each on the board. Barry Sproule also scored 140 and Al Murphy had three scores on or over the ton.

Ensigns ended up with a 6-3 win over High Rollers and Roy Rudiger came in with five starts, Trevor Williams shot 105 and Bruce Brown scored 140 as did Ken Baker. Stan Mathews opened with 100 and scored 125 and Derek Hedley shot 140. Panthers defeated Inter-County by one set, coming through with the last three in a row for the win. Jim Carter had four starts and three closes. Luke Heikamp had three and three with 140 in addition. Inter's Arch Anderson shot 121.

Steep Rock scraped through by one over Firemen, who had a strong showing. Ian McDonald opened with 120 and Gary Rodda shot two 140s. Cutters did what they had to do in winning 6-3 over Aces. Bruce Hope shot 140, Rick Harden had three over the ton, Mark See 105 and Keith Mallette 123. Lloyd Westlake shot 140, Dave Beaumont 140 and Hal Hills 120. Acadian Pools came in with a 6-3 result over Unknowns. Bob Tost opened with 122 and Grant Richardson, Mike Pepper, Mike Finn and Ian Boyer all shot the ton. Taxmen and Bandits fought closely to a one point win for Taxmen, the result being enough to allow Bandits to finish in second last place over Unknowns. Unknowns, I believe, lost two out of three to Bandits during the season. Tom Shamon shot 121 in the match. Power of Pain ended their season by inflicting 7-2 worth over Independents. Gord Bottoms opened with 106 and shot 116 and Jim Franks shot 140.

This week sees the beginning of a shortened version of the playoffs with three matches of the best of three sets over the next three weeks to close the season. Normally this column does not comment or opine much on the operation of the league. In this case, I feel the players and teams are short-changed somewhat by the format of the playoffs. However, the executive, no doubt, feel they have done the best in the circumstances. It will be very interesting the playoffs of 1989.



No floundering Seal

A member of the Newfie Seals beat this Guelph Screwball netminder during opening round action at the Men's Non-Contact hockey tournament at Alcott Arena last weekend. The Seals advanced to the "A" final but lost a 5-2 count to Mal Dodge ReMax while LePages dumped Brampton Blues 7-2 to earn the "B" crown. (Herald photo)

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