

SPORTS SLANTS

- By Ray Shank

Bobby Clarke has beaten Phil Esposito to about 75 per cent of the face-offs in that Boston-Philadelphia Stanley Cup Final series and that fact alone could go a long way in determining who carts off Lord Stanley's cup this year.

The west division champion Flyers, led by a diabetic named Clarke and a pudgy, French-speaking goalie called Bernie Parent, have taken the scoring magic out of the Big Bad Bruins and, as of this writing, were about to snatch the cup away from Bep Guidolin's Beantown gang.

Howie Meeker, analyst in the third game of the series, remarked that Esposito "looks tired" To my thinking, a fellow who makes close to \$200,000 a year can't afford to get tired at the most crucial time of the season.

I don't think Esposito is tired. If he's tired, so is Bobby Clarke, so is Bernie Parent and so are the other players on the two participating teams.

I think the story is that coach Fred Shero has psyched his players into thinking they are the best club in hockey and they believe it.

Man for man, the Bruins are the better team...two 50-goal scorers this season (Hodge and Esposito) and a third 50-goal man (Bucyk, last year), the best defenceman in the league (Orr) and some other top-notchers.

But the Flyers have that winning attitude and, tired or not, they're going to give their all to be the first expansion team to take the cup.

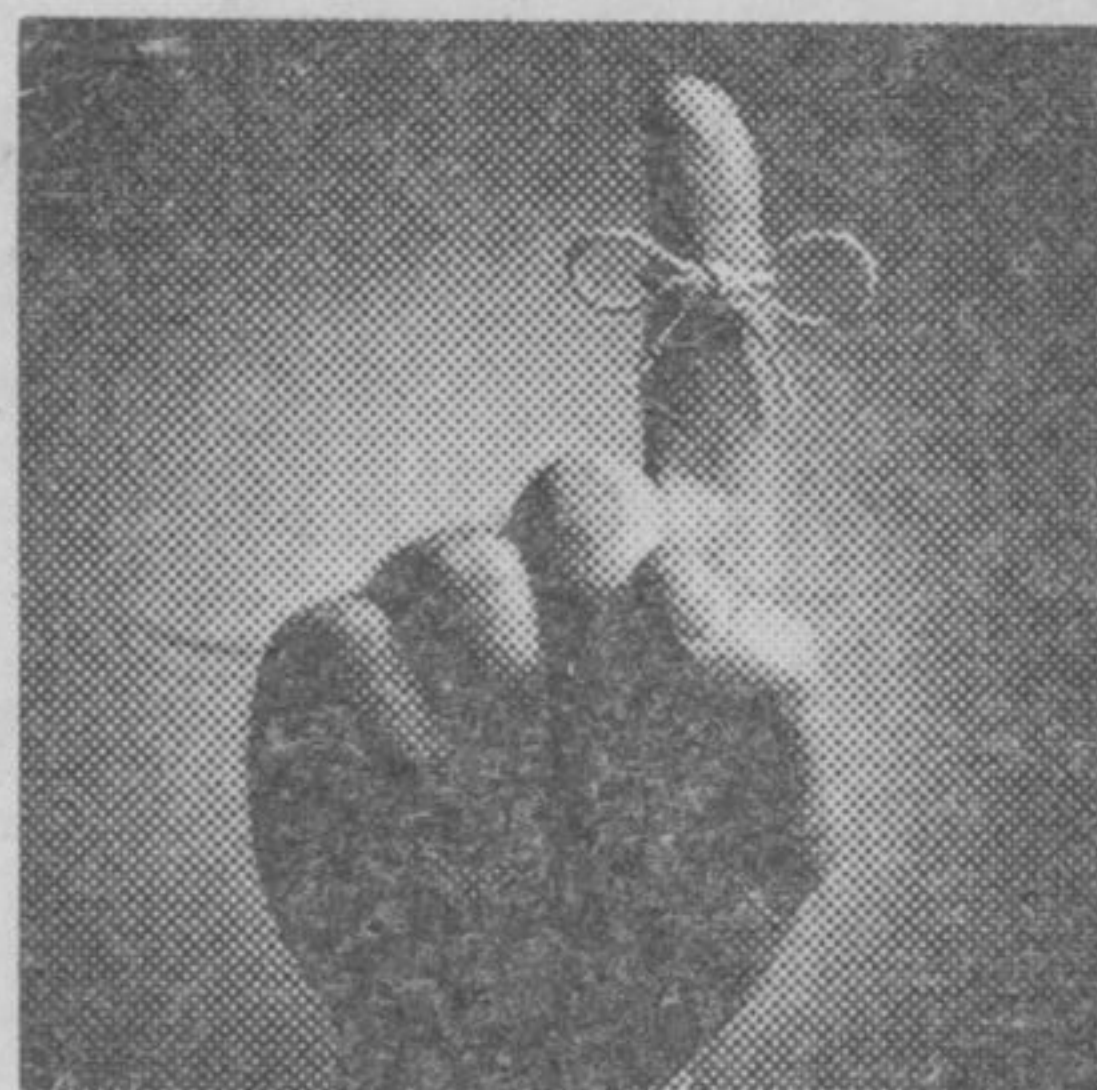
Let's hope so, anyway. I need the dough ...after that pile I lost on the Canadiens...

More comment about that when the series is over...

Do you have any idea what the baseball great, Babe Ruth's top salary was when he terrorized the base paths in the '20s and '30s? Word is that the Babe's top salary was even more than the President of the United States (Herbert Hoover), in 1931 and 1932. Ruth got \$80,000 those two years, \$5,000 more than Hoover. Of course many players make more than that nowadays, but with less income tax to pay and because of the changing value of the dollar, Ruth's annual salary then would be equivalent to \$300,000 a year today. In his 22 seasons, the Babe earned \$896,000 plus \$41,445 as his share of World Series receipts and about \$1 million from endorsements and movies ... But, it seems,

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