

COLEMAN

By Jim Coleman

Was it a mistake for the Boston Bruins to promote Bobby Orr to the National Hockey League when he was only 18? Are Orr's recurrent knee miseries the results of "too much, too soon?" Is it possible that one of the truly greatest hockey players in the history of the sport is in danger of being washed-up at the age of 28 because he was subjected to the pressures of the professional league before he had attained his full growth?

The above questions are pure speculation. These theories are not substantiated by any medical evidence—or, at any rate, Orr's surgeons certainly aren't making any confirmative statements.

Nevertheless, isn't it passing strange that Bobby Orr's knees continue to break down under him when the rest of his body is in such magnificent physical condition?

Or, is it possible that a delightful old coot, named Bonesetter Bissett, was correct in his scientifically baseless theories about "Vital Juices?" Bonesetter Bissett would have been unalterably opposed to letting a kid like Bobby Orr play in the National Hockey League until he was at least 20 or 21.

A mutual friend introduced me to Bonesetter Bissett during a rugged match between Harlequins and United Services at Twickenham, England, in the autumn of 1946. Bissett enjoyed a mysterious celebrity in athletic circles. He was an unlicensed physiotherapist in an era when, really, there were no athletic physiotherapists. He had traveled everywhere and he had seen everything.

He knew a great deal about North American sports, such as hockey and baseball, because he had spent most of 1932 on this continent when, as an unofficial trainer to British athletes, he attended the Winher Olympic Games at Lake Placid and he had stayed over for the Summer Olympic Games at Los Angeles.

Subsequently, I had many more conversations with Bonesetter Bissett in a hotel named The Moat in a little town down in Kent where he lived in comfortable semi-retirement. I kept notes of those conversations because I intended to write a book about him. A lady named Evie Pettifer distracted me from writing the book—but, I kept the notes.

Mr. Bissett concocted something called Cold Cranberry Vichysoise, to which he attributed his own vigorous longevity. When he arrived at The Moat each evening, he was carrying a bottle of crushed cranberry juice. This he laced liberally with gin which he purchased at The Moat's bar. Formidable! In fact, Magnifique!

"Boys Against Boys," Mr. Bissett always insisted, "And Men Against Men. That's the way it should be in sports. No boy should play against men until he's at least 20 or 21 and his internal system has produced his full quota of Vital Juices."

Mr. Bissett elucidated as follows: "I have a theory that the two most important joints in an athlete's body are his knees. I believe that the body generates a quantity of lubricant, which I call Vital Juice. I maintain that an athlete's body hasn't produced his necessary quota of this lubricant until he is 20 or 21.

"The mysterious glands which create this Vital Juice aren't reproductive. When an athlete begins to have trouble with his knees, it's because he's used up his supply of lubricant. Corrective surgery helps him only briefly. Those bones in his knee socket just keep grinding together—with no lubricant to ease their interaction. The poor chap tries surgery, again, but the grinding pain finally forces him to retire from his sport."

Bonesetter Bissett had seen many hockey games and many baseball games during his seven-month sojourn in North America for the Olympic Games of 1932.

"The baseball pitcher is a different breed of cat," Mr. Bissett theorized. "The most important joint in a baseball pitcher's body is not his knees but, the elbow on his pitching arm. Time and time again when I was in America I saw pitchers being forced to retire prematurely because they developed a 'sore arm.' I examined their records: in almost every case, those pitchers had been brought up to the Major Leagues when they were too young. They were throwing a fastball and a slider in the big leagues when they should have been playing sandlot baseball against boys their own age. They had exhausted their supply of Vital Juice which lubricated their pitching-elbow."

"With track and field men, the sprinters never last long. Those sprinters put terrific, sustained pressure on their knees and they use up their Vital Juice within a very few years. Distance runners and marathoners still can compete until they are, relatively, old men. They don't put the same kind of pressure on their knees. The Vital Juice in a marathoner's knees last forever. But, just mark my words, most sprinters will have chronic rheumatism before they're 35."

Bonesetter Bissett was equally adamant on the subject of hockey players. "The hockey player's vulnerable spot is his knee," he used to say in those conversations at The Moat. "Remember what I told you: It's Boys Against Boys and Men Against Men! If you set a boy to play against men in your National Hockey League, he won't have had time to develop his full supply of knee lubricant—and knee problems will force him to quit, before his time."

A few months ago, I was back in that Kent Village for the first time since 1946 and I asked about Mr. Bissett. "He was killed at 92," a mutual friend told me sadly. "The old boy insisted on going everywhere on his bicycle. He came out of The Moat one night after closing hour and, in the dark, he had a head-on collision with a great crashing ten-ton lorry. He was killed instantly. The autopsy revealed that he had his full quota of Cold Cranberry Vichysoise."

If Bobby Orr had met Bonesetter Bissett, Bobby might have played two extra years for the Oshawa Generals, instead of joining the Boston Bruins at 18. And, now, he wouldn't have those knee problems. His Vital Juices still would be lubricating his joints.

SPURNS AL'S WEALTH

Griffin gets dream

CINCINNATI (AP)—Two-time Heisman Trophy winner Archie Griffin, the all-time leading major United States college ground gainer, signed a multi-year contract Tuesday with Cincinnati Bengals of the National Football League.

Spurning a lucrative offer from Montreal Alouettes of the Canadian Football League, the five-foot-nine, 182-pound Ojio State all-American came to terms with the Bengals after a day of contract discussions.

Mike Brown, assistant general manager of the Bengals, said the contract was a long-term agreement. He added, "It wasn't one of the easiest negotiations I've been through."

Griffin said the Bengals' terms were substantially lower than the Montreal offer but he said "the dream is to play in the NFL."

Bengals head coach Bill Johnson said Griffin is projected as a factor in the Bengals' backfield next year. "We know some people questioned his size. But more and more the little man has made an impact in pro football. That's

not a detriment at all. How far Archie goes is strictly up to him."

Griffin said he "welcomes the challenge" of proving that he can stand up to the rigors of pro football.

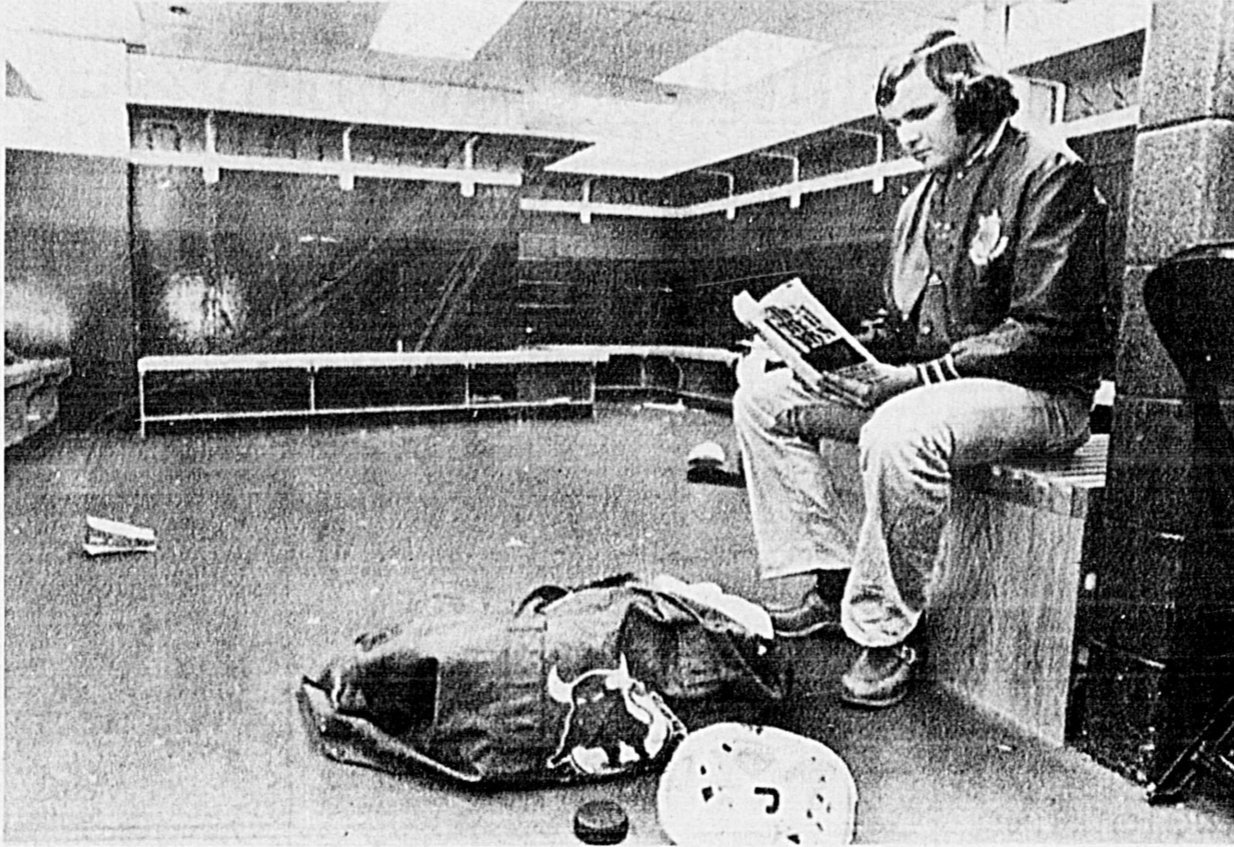
Passed over by five other NFL clubs because of his size, Griffin was Cincinnati's second first-round choice and the 24th player taken in last month's draft.

The Columbus, Ohio native was the first running back ever drafted in the first round by the Bengals, who were 11-3 last year despite the absence of a running game.

One report said the Alouettes offered Griffin a six-year contract in excess of \$800,000.

Griffin, a shifty speedster who surpassed the 1,000-yard mark three consecutive years, set an all-time collegiate record by amassing more than 100 yards in 31 consecutive regular season games, shattering the old mark of 17 set by Steve Owens of Oklahoma.

During his four seasons as a starter at Ohio State, Griffin had season rushing totals of 772, 1,428, 1,620 and 1,357 for a career sum of 5,177.



Toros leaving

Toronto Toros trainer Larry Ashley sits dejected in the dressing room at Maple Leaf Gardens. Ashley is reading an appropriately titled book, 'The Final Days,' as club owner John Bassett announced the team will play in another city next season. Bassett says it is uneconomical to play in Toronto and he wants to move the team to a city that would supply better fan support.

Some satisfaction in dismal year

TORONTO (CP)—It was a dismal year for Toronto Toros but Mark Napier and Vaclav Nedomansky achieved some measure of satisfaction when the World Hockey Association announced its individual awards Tuesday.

Napier, a 19-year-old right winger, was named rookie of the year and Nedomansky, a

centre from Czechoslovakia, was voted the most gentlemanly player.

Paul Shmyr, captain of Cleveland Crusaders and a WHA allstar, was selected as the best defenceman while Michel Dion of Indianapolis Racers was the winner of the best goaltending award.

Left winger Marc Tardif of

Quebec Nordiques, got the other award—the scoring championship. He had a record 148 points, including 71 goals, in the regular-season schedule.

Napier, had 93 points, including 43 goals, to finish among the top scorers in the WHA.

Nedomansky had 98 points, including 56 goals. In 81 games, he had only eight minutes in penalties with the Toros who finished last in the five-team Canadian Division.

Tardif will receive the Bill Hunter trophy. Runner-up for this year's scoring championship was Bobby Hull of Winnipeg Jets. Hull scored 53 goals and 70 assists for 123 points.

Napier's chief competition came from Dion and Cincinnati's left winger Claude Larose. At the all-star break, Larose was in front, but a fine second half by Napier overcame the early lead by the Cincinnati forward.

Last season's rookie winner was Anders Hedberg, Winnipeg's all-star right winger. Shmyr broke the stranglehold Quebec's J. C. Tremblay and Pat Stapleton of Indianapolis had on the best defenceman award. Shmyr had 50 points for the Crusaders.

Tremblay, who won the award in 1972-73 and last season, finished second in the vot-

ing, and Stapleton, the winner two years ago, was third.

Nedomansky won over Dave Keon, who plays for Indianapolis, and Hull.

The Ben Hatskin trophy for the best goaltender, a team award, was closely contested among Indianapolis, Winnipeg and Houston. This trophy is awarded to the team that has allowed the fewest number of goals during the regular season. (Indianapolis 247, Winnipeg, 254, and Houston 263).

The prize money is awarded to the team and divided between the goaltenders who have played at least 25 games. Dion, who played in 31 games, is the only Indianapolis goalie to qualify and therefore the prize money was awarded to him.

Dion played 1,860 minutes and had a league-leading goals against average of 2.74. Voting for the top rookie, best defenceman, and the most gentlemanly player awards was done by three members of the media from each of the WHA cities. Voters were not allowed to cast ballots for players on the team they covered. Each voted for three players for each award and points were awarded on the basis of five for first, three for second, and one for third.

Each winner will receive \$4,000.

STATISTICS STORY

Best-of-seven	semi-finals	G	W	L	F	A	Pt
NY Islanders	4	3	1	12	2	6	
Montreal	1	1	1	3	12	2	

Result	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
NY Islanders	5	Montreal	2			
NY Islanders	at Montreal	Game	Thursday			
NY Islanders	at Montreal	Game	Friday			
NY Islanders	at Montreal	Game	Saturday			
NY Islanders	at Montreal	Game	Sunday			

Philadelphia	G	W	L	F	A	Pt
Philadelphia	4	3	1	13	6	
Boston	1	1	1	3	12	2

Result	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Philadelphia	1	Boston	2			
Philadelphia	at Boston	Game	Thursday			
Philadelphia	at Boston	Game	Friday			
Philadelphia	at Boston	Game	Saturday			
Philadelphia	at Boston	Game	Sunday			

Philadelphia	G	W	L	F	A	Pt
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Boston	1	1	1	3	12	2

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Philadelphia	4	3	1	13	6	
Boston	1	1	1	3	12	2

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