

House Hunting Again

Going back to a team that once traded you can stir some strange memories. Just ask Dennis Maruk. Better yet, ask Dennis' wife, Joni.

The last time Joni visited the Twin Cities, she went to look for a new home and wound up boarding a plane for Washington after hearing that her husband had been traded by the Minnesota North Stars to the Washington Capitals.

That was October 18, 1978.

"I got there (after the Cleveland Barons merged with the North Stars in the summer of 1978) and I liked it," Dennis recalled. "I liked the players and I enjoyed myself. The next thing I know, it's the start of the season and I'm traded."

Actually, Maruk played in two games with the North Stars (both losses) before that trade. In the last five seasons in Washington, the 5-8, 165-pound center scored more than 30 goals four times, including 50 goals in 1980-81 and 60 goals in 1981-82.

Maruk was moved to left wing at Washington last season. His production dipped to 31 goals and 50 assists. Though he was still the Capitals' leading scorer, he felt uncomfortable at his new position and he was on the bottom rung on Washington's plus-minus statistics at minus 21. At center, Maruk has always been a tiny keg of dynamite waiting to go off. But the Caps were deep at center and thin on the left side.

Maruk, who was obtained by the North Stars from Washington for a second-round draft choice and an undisclosed amount of cash July 6, will be back at center in Minnesota.

"I think Minnesota is getting a steal of a deal," Maruk confidently told reporters shortly after the deal. "In my heart, I feel I'm worth a whole lot more than a second-round draft pick. I'm excited about coming back and proving it."

Rebuttal to NHL's Free Agency

When Maruk was traded by the North Stars to Washington back in 1978, Minnesota received a first-round draft choice in return. With that pick, Minnesota selected left wing Tom McCarthy. Now, with Maruk rejoining the North Stars, McCarthy is looking to head to greener pastures.

McCarthy is one of the 189 players who became free agents July 1. But McCarthy feels he is being confined on the free-agent market.

"Baseball is real free agency," McCarthy told Dennis Brackin of the Minneapolis Star and Tribune. "This is not complete free agency because of the compensation. It shouldn't even be called free agency. You're not making any decisions. It's all up



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to the clubs."

Detroit defenseman Reed Larson is another free agent who finds his status disconcerting. Larson, who has scored more than 20 goals in each of the last four seasons and is one of the best offensive defensemen in the NHL, is seeking a contract in excess of \$200,000 a year. Any team signing him would be forced to give Detroit two first-round draft choices or a first-round pick and its fifth-best player, according to the current compensation agreement, which is based on the amount of the new contract the free agent signs.

"I'm not very optimistic about getting an offer," Larson said. "If you asked me, I'd have to say there are only three players worth that much—Wayne Gretzky, Bryan Trottier and Mike Bossy."

The best hope for most of the free agents is that their old team can make a trade with another club and bypass the current compensation agreement.

McCarthy, though he is still governed by the old form of compensation, isn't much better off. He has to find a team interested in his services and then the North Stars and his new team have to come to an agreement on just compensation or else go to a league-appointed arbitrator.

Overtime Pros and Cons

Bob Nystrom of the New York Islanders has scored more overtime goals than any other active player in the NHL, four. But Nystrom doesn't like the new five-minute overtime that will be implemented in the NHL this season.

"I feel that a lot of times a tie game is very satisfactory," the hard-nosed right winger said. "If you work hard to come back and tie a game, you don't want to lose it in overtime. So many little things can happen."

The overtime proposal gained 145 approval by the NHL's Board of Governors June 23. Islanders General Manager Bill Torrey was one of the five members of the board who voted against the five-minute overtime concept (Boston, Detroit, New Jersey and Vancouver were the others who voted in the negative).

"First, I don't know how many games are going to be decided by going from 60 to 65 minutes," Torrey explained. "Philosophically, if you're going to have overtime, you should play to a conclusion like in the playoffs."

Torrey figures the weaker teams will be hurt by overtime. He feels it will widen the gap between the good teams and bad teams.

"Those who favor overtime figure it will create added interest," Torrey said. "I hope they're right and I'm wrong, but I feel it will give a definite advantage to the stronger teams."

Some governors actually wanted to award one point to the losing team in overtime games, but that proposal was unceremoniously dropped. . . . Calgary Coach Bob Johnson remembers overtime breaking plenty of ties when he coached at the

University of Wisconsin. While, he, too, worries that overtime might favor the better teams, Johnson feels there's enough luck involved in winning a sudden-death shootout that it will help the game. "You take a shot, it goes off skate and the game's over," Johnson said. . . . Flames goaltender Rejean Lemelin told Eric Duhatschek of the Calgary Herald that he thinks overtime will increase the intensity of play in the closing moments of regulation time. "The last five minutes of a game will definitely be more interesting," he said. "If a team knows it'll have to go into overtime anyway, it may just try to win it in regulation time and pull out all the artillery."

Hotline Hearsay

Minnesota reportedly is discussing a trade with the Philadelphia Flyers for hard-hitting right winger Paul Holmgren. Holmgren, who attended the University of Minnesota and hails from St. Paul, has long been a favorite of North Stars G.M. Lou Nanne. Holmgren, once considered an untouchable in Philadelphia, had only 19 goals and 24 assists last season. His 178 penalty minutes often got him in Coach Bob McCammon's doghouse. Now, McCammon has also taken on the Flyers' G.M. duties and he hinted to reporters recently that he might be very close to making a deal.

The Flyers were said to have their eyes on free agent McCarthy or winger Paul Guay, or both. Guay, Minnesota's sixth-round draft choice in 1981 from Providence College, recently made the U.S. Olympic squad.

Meanwhile, McCammon reports that Edmonton G.M. Glen Sather has been pestering him about the availability of veteran left winger Bill Barber. The way Sather, Nanne and the Flyers generally work, a three-way trade might be in the works.

Former North Dakota defenseman Mickey Volcan, 21, is the latest in the long list of players acquired by Calgary G.M. Cliff Fletcher during the off-season. Volcan was obtained from Hartford July 6 in exchange for defensemen Richie Dunn and Joel Quenneville. Quenneville had been obtained from New Jersey just two weeks earlier.

The most misleading name on the NHL's free-agent list is Marty Howe, who was one of Boston's most consistent defensemen last season. Marty, you see, was on loan to the Bruins and is expected to be welcomed back by Hartford for 1983-84. . . . With Howe gone and the iffy status of veteran Brad Park's knees, the Bruins are expected to sign Jim Schoenfeld, recently released by Detroit.

Boston's rugged right winger Terry O'Reilly is anxious to try his left knee, which was injured late last season and required surgery. The 33-year-old Bruin stemwinder says: "Here's how the doctors put it to me. They compare it to gluing two pieces of wood together. You know how you wait a few minutes then give the pieces a little tug, just to see if they're secure? And if the pieces come apart you say, 'Oops, guess the glue wasn't set.'"

OBITUARIES

Victor W. (Vic) Wertz, a slugging outfielder-first baseman who had a .277 career average and hit 266 homers in 17 major league seasons but who was best remembered for an out he made in the 1954 World Series, died in a Detroit hospital July 7 while undergoing surgery to replace a heart valve and complete a coronary artery bypass. He was 58.

Wertz came up with the Detroit Tigers in 1947 and played for five other American League clubs—St. Louis, Baltimore, Cleveland, Boston and Minnesota—before retiring in 1963. He made possibly the most famous out in World Series history when Willie Mays of the New York Giants chased down his long drive in center field at the old Polo Grounds in the 1954 Series opener and made an over-the-shoulder catch. Wertz went on to hit .500 for Cleveland in that Series, but the Indians were swept in four games.

First signed by the Detroit organization in 1942, Wertz spent the next three years in military service, 22 months of it with an infantry outfit in the South Pacific. He came home without being wounded, but prematurely bald at age 21 and was a regular in the Detroit outfield by 1947.

In 1949 Wertz drove in 133 runs for the Tigers while batting .304. He had two more productive seasons in Detroit, but went to the Browns in 1952 in a multi-player transaction that brought pitcher Ned Garver to the Tigers.

Wertz moved to Baltimore with the St. Louis franchise in 1954, and was delighted with his trade to Cleveland early in June of that pennant year for the Indians. At the end of the 1955 season, Wertz was stricken by a non-paralytic form of polio, but made a full recovery, driving in 211 runs over the next two seasons (1956-57) for the Indians.

While with the Indians, Wertz borrowed enough money to establish a beer distributorship in suburban Detroit, a business venture which grew quickly and made him financially independent of his baseball salary.

Wertz played in only 25 games in 1958 after fracturing his ankle during the exhibition season. The Indians traded him to Boston that December for outfielder Jimmy Piersall.

Wertz was reacquired by the Tigers in 1961, and in 1962 led the A.L. with 17 pinch hits. He closed out his playing career as a pinch-hitter and occasional first baseman with the Twins in 1963, having driven in 1,178 runs and compiled a .469 slugging



Vic Wertz pounded 266 homers and compiled a .277 batting average in a major league career that spanned 17 seasons.

percentage in 1,862 games.

In a 1979 interview, Wertz said that if he was 25 years old again and was offered a multimillion-dollar contract to play baseball, he would turn it down. "I'd say, 'No, thanks,' . . . I mean it from the bottom of my heart," he said. "In all the years I was in baseball, I never knew what it meant to be with a winner, a world championship team."

In addition to running his highly successful distributorship, Wertz was active in various Detroit charities, particularly for the benefit of retarded children and the polo foundation. He had been in apparent good health until suffering a heart attack June 23. Hospitalized for treatment, he was scheduled to undergo a surgical procedure July 6, but suffered another attack and succumbed the following day during surgery.

Madison (Matty) Bell, head football coach at three Southwest Conference schools, including the highly successful Southern Methodist University teams that featured Doak Walker and Kyle Rote, died June 30 at his home in Dallas. He was 84.

Bell coached at Texas Christian University from 1923 through 1928, at Texas A&M from 1929 through 1933 and at SMU from 1935 through 1941 and again from 1945 through 1949. Bell's teams compiled a 139-78-16 overall record and won or shared four SWC titles.

His first SMU team shut out eight opponents in 1935 and was

undefeated in 12 regular-season games before being beaten by Stanford in the 1936 Rose Bowl, 7-0.

Led by Walker, SMU won the conference title in 1947, finished the regular season unbeaten and tied Penn State in the Cotton Bowl, 13-13. Walker was a consensus All-America at running back that season as a sophomore.

The Mustangs were 10-1 the next season, won another SWC championship and defeated Oregon in the Cotton Bowl, 21-13. Walker and Rote were paired in the same backfield in 1949, but the SMU team was a major disappointment, finishing 5-4-1.

Bell quit after that '49 season and was named SMU athletic director in 1950. He retired in 1964. Bell was named to the National Sports Hall of Fame in 1955.

Heenes Weisweiler, coach of the New York Cosmos of the North American Soccer League from 1980 until 1982, and a successful soccer coach with both semi-pro and professional European teams, died of a heart attack July 5 at his home in Aesch, Switzerland, near Zurich. He was 63.

Weisweiler became a coach of the Cosmos five games into the 1980 season and led the NASL team to a 24-8 record and a Soccer Bowl title. The Cosmos made the final again in 1981, but lost in a shootout.

Weisweiler spent the major part of his coaching career in Europe, where he directed such clubs as Grasshopper of the Swiss League, Moenchengladbach and Cologne of the West German League and Barcelona of the Spanish League. His Moenchengladbach clubs won three West German Bundesliga titles and the UEFA Cup in 1975.

Norman G. (Norm) Gerdeman, a pre-World War II minor league shortstop who served as visiting clubhouse manager for the Houston Colt 45s and Astros, and later hosted a number of celebrity golf tournaments, most of whose participants came from baseball, died recently of cancer at a Veterans Administration center in Phoenix. He was 68.

Gerdeman was well-known in the Houston clubhouse for his postgame spreads of home-cooked food, all of which was prepared by his wife, Evelyn.

The Gerdemans staged 30 golf celebrity invitationals in Arizona, Nevada, California and Mexico, a number of them sponsored by gambling casinos where they worked in the winter.