

SPORTS

Mann Not Quite So Imposing

Nelson Beat Cancer

By Tom Friend
Washington Post Staff Writer

Charles Mann won't go sackless out of sympathy Monday night. On the other hand, he will find no special thrill in blowing past Karl Nelson either, not when Nelson most recently beat cancer.

Some players have pre-season injuries; last year, the New York Giants tackle had chemotherapy. He had been hospitalized last August for shoulder surgery, expected to miss a few weeks, and tests instead diagnosed Hodgkin's disease, which could have caused him to miss life.

His wife, like any sensible person, became hysterical. He became philosophical. Doctors advised that the disease had been identified relatively early, which meant recovery was 95-percent certain. Life was within sight, thank heavens, but, then again, so was the 1988 football season.

"It's what I was going to do all along," he said of playing right tackle Monday night in front of millions of people in a national television audience, not to mention the thousands at Giants Stadium for the Giants-Redskins season opener.

His job will be to get in Mann's way, easy for running backs to do, not so simple for linemen. In his hey—pre-1987—Nelson was a premier run blocker for a right-handed team and a right-handed runner, Joe Morris. But the team looked hort-handed last season without him. Morris slumped, the team lumped, and General Manager George Young said it can be directly attributed to Nelson's illness.

If anything, Young said, it made players come to tight grips with their own mortality, not what you want in a game like football, where attentiveness and too much thinking is a no no, especially along the defensive line.

On the other hand, now that Nelson is starting again, his Giants teammates shoot back with a rare collective confidence, smirks all around. Their new saying is: Don't worry, be happy.

Nelson is in what's known as remission. Of course, that's not discounting the continual discomfort in his left shoulder—the same injury that led to the disease being discovered—because surgery eventually was performed, and the pain there is eventually returned. The cancer is not the problem now; it's the unsettling tissue in the shoulder.

See REDSKINS, D7, Col. 5



Sixth-seeded Jimmy Connors, on his 36th birthday, hands a 6-0, 6-3, 3-6, 6-1 loss to Gilad Bloom.

Connors, Evert Breeze in Open

Agassi Also Victorious as Present, Future U.S. Stars Shine

By Rick Warner
Associated Press

NEW YORK, Sept. 2—The proud past and the promising future of U.S. tennis were showcased at the U.S. Open today.

Jimmy Connors and Chris Evert, who together have won 11 U.S. Open singles titles, easily beat youthful opponents to move into the third round at the National Tennis Center.

They were followed on center court by Andre Agassi, 18, who

showed why he is a rising star by beating Rick Leach, 4-6, 6-2, 6-3, 6-4.

"I'm happy I got things together as the match went on," Agassi said after winning his 20th consecutive Grand Prix match. "One more match under my belt and I'll start picking things up."

Connors celebrated his 36th birthday with a 6-0, 6-3, 3-6, 6-1 victory over 21-year-old Gilad Bloom of Israel, and Evert defeated 19-year-old American Halle Cioffi, 6-1, 6-0.

"I've been coming here so long, it's natural for me to be here on my birthday," said Connors, the No. 6 seed who is playing in his 19th straight Open. "But I don't look back. I'll have time to do that when I'm not playing anymore. Right now, it's still fun to go out there and play."

Agassi, who has won six tournaments this year, shows the same spirit as Connors even though he is half his age.

"I've always admired his deter-

See U.S. OPEN, D5, Col. 3

NFL Suspends Bills' Smith, 49ers' Taylor

By Dave Sell
Washington Post Staff Writer

All-pro defensive end Bruce Smith of the Buffalo Bills and second-year wide receiver John Taylor of the San Francisco 49ers yesterday were suspended for 30 days for violating the National Football League's substance abuse policy, bringing to 14 the number of players who have been suspended.

Both players are barred from playing or practicing until at least Oct. 2, which means they will miss the first four games of the regular season. Buffalo opens the regular season Sunday at home against Minnesota, while San Francisco begins the season at New Orleans.

The 30-day suspensions are the second phase of the league's substance abuse policy, meaning those players suspended have tested positive for drugs for a second time. A third positive test results in a lifetime suspension, though players can appeal after one year. Running back Tony Collins was the only one of the 14 to be hit with the lifetime suspension.

"We're talking about a guy's health here," Bills General Manager Bill Polian said, dismissing questions about what the loss of Smith will mean to the team.

The 6-foot-4, 285-pound Smith played at Booker T. Washington High School in Norfolk, and was an all-America and Outland Trophy winner while playing for Virginia Tech. He was the first pick in the 1985 draft and the most valuable player in last season's Pro Bowl. Only New England's Andre Tippett (38½) and Seattle's Jacob Green (34) have more sacks than Smith (33½) in the last three seasons.

"There are youngsters who look up to the players, and I feel terrible about that," Polian told the Associated Press.

"I agree with the policy," Bills Coach Marv Levy said, adding that Smith had been warned before. "This is the way to rid the league of drugs."

Taylor, who played at Delaware State, caught nine passes for 151 yards last year, and was to be used on punt returns this season by the 49ers.

"The team is supportive of the league policy in principle, but the timing of this announcement is unfortunate," said San Francisco Coach Bill Walsh. "We're aware of

See SUSPENSIONS, D7, Col. 3



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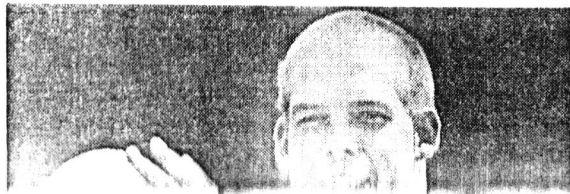
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See MYE

KEN DENLINGER

Crisscrossed Terrapins: Teams at the Crossroads



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