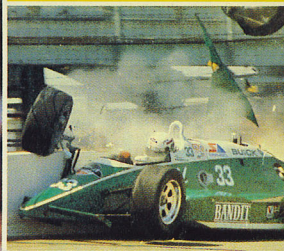


# Sports Illustrated

## CRASH WEEK AT INDIANAPOLIS



## SCORECARD Edited by Steve Wulf

### JUST A THOUGHT

This season, as baseball celebrates the 40th anniversary of its integration, the Baseball Writers Association of America should consider naming its Rookie of the Year awards after the first Rookie of the Year, Jackie Robinson. Like the Cy Young Award, the Jackie Robinson Award would have a nice sound to it.

### WITH THIS RING . . .

In the 1954 movie *On the Waterfront* the character played by Marlon Brando turns in anguish to his brother, played by Rod Steiger, and says, "I coulda been a contender." If that movie were to be made today, the brother would probably respond, "Are we talking the IBF, the WBA or the WBC junior middleweight title?"

*The Ring* magazine, "The Bible of Boxing," has decided to do something about the watered-down alphabet soup that boxing rankings have become. With its July issue *The Ring* is returning to the rating system developed by the late Nat Fleischer and used from 1925 to 1962: eight weight divisions, each with 1 champion and 10 contenders. *The Ring* is also eliminating the single, double and triple stars it has been using to denote the WBA, WBC and IBF champions, respectively.

"Our point is to restore boxing to the purity of the past," Nigel Collins, editor-in-chief of *The Ring*, says. "Multiple titles have diluted boxing to where it's almost on the level of professional wrestling." As things now stand, 40 boxers hold championship belts of one sort or another. Even boxing historian Jimmy Jacobs, who manages WBC and WBA heavyweight champion Mike Tyson, as well as WBA lightweight champ Edwin Rosario, says, "I can only name about half of the current champions."

Can anybody possibly object to this restoration of sanity? Yes—the boxing federations, each of which prefers to have its own stable of fighters. Also, the TV networks involved in boxing don't want any consolidation of rankings, be-

cause they make more money by promoting so-called "championship" bouts. And when the networks make more money, so do promoters, managers and fighters.

Who will like the new-old ratings? The fight fan, for one, who will be spared much of the confusion that now exists in the ratings. Collins also believes that the boxers themselves will eventually benefit. "Being *the champ* will really mean something," he says. And "I coulda been a contender" will have its old punch back.

### PAY DIRT

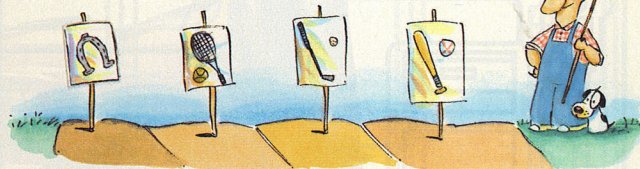
Ever wonder where the dirt on a baseball diamond mound or the clay for a tennis court or the cinders of a running track come from? Well, there's a place 50 miles west of New York City that "grows" sports soil. The Partac Peat Corp., run out of Jim Kelsey's 1,000-acre

farm in Great Meadows, N.J., supplies dirt for the fields of six major league teams (the Cubs, Mets, Yankees, Dodgers, Expos and Blue Jays) and 19 minor league clubs, and for countless golf courses, running tracks, racetracks, horseshoe pits, tennis courts and bocce courts. According to Bruce Shank, associate publisher of *SportsTURF* magazine (circulation: 17,500), "Jim Kelsey has taken dirt and turned it into something special."

Kelsey says he owes a large debt of gratitude to the Ice Age. "When the glaciers stopped here in New Jersey, they pushed sand and gravel ahead of them and carved out the lakes from which we get clay and peat." Jim's father, a commodities trader, bought the farm in the 1940s, but he grew mostly vegetables.

After his father's death, Jim began growing sod for commercial and residential use and started using the farm's peat for producing sterilized topdressing for golf courses, the stuff needed to grow putting greens. Then, in 1984, Jim bought out Art Kuntz's sports-dirt business in Berkeley Heights, N.J. "I couldn't have done this without Art's expertise," says Kelsey.

There is an art to producing sports soil. For instance, a pitcher's mound is heavy with clay because the pitcher needs to get a solid footing. The base paths are sandier, to facilitate safe sliding. Somewhere in between is the dirt for the batter's box. Then there's the material for warning tracks. "You want something crunchy," says Kelsey. The dirt comes in bags labeled, for example, PITCHER'S MOUND. To service a mound, a major league team will go through as many as 100 bags a year at \$6 apiece.



"It's a thrill knowing I'm contributing to the game," says Kelsey. "Besides, I don't mind getting my hands dirty."

### REF ON ICE

Kerry Fraser, the NHL referee who made the controversial, and correct, call nullifying a potential game-winning goal by Quebec in the fifth game of the Adams Division final two weeks ago (SI, May 11), has received an ill-timed vote of no confidence. Six referees were selected on merit for the final two playoff rounds. Fraser wasn't one of them.

John McCauley, the NHL's director of officiating, denies that Fraser's call and the furor it subsequently caused in Quebec had anything to do with the league's decision. "There were times in

# MR. C

## DETROIT PLAY