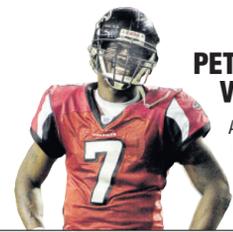


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PETA's dogging Vick

Activists want QB suspended over dogfighting indictment **D2**

SPORTS TICKER — CFL: Edmonton 21 Saskatchewan 20 **Northern League** — Fargo-Moorhead 10 Winnipeg 1 **MLB** — AL: Kansas City 10 Detroit 2 / Boston 10 Chicago 3 Tampa Bay 14 N.Y. Yankees 4 / Seattle 4 Toronto 2 / Minnesota 7 L.A. Angels 5 / Cleveland 3 Texas 2 / Baltimore at Oakland, late **NL**: Chicago 6 Arizona 2 / Florida 10 Cincinnati 2 Houston 2 Pittsburgh 1 / Colorado 5 Washington 3 / St. Louis 4 Atlanta 2 / San Francisco 8 Milwaukee 4 / Philadelphia at San Diego, late / N.Y. Mets at L.A. Dodgers, late

SPORTS ON TV / D10
SPORTS RECORD / D9-10



PETER MORRISON / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Eyes on the Claret Jug?

Canada's Mike Weir waves to the crowd after firing a three-under-par 68 Friday at the British Open in Carnoustie, Scotland. His round was the best of the day and rocketed him up the leaderboard. He begins today's third round tied for third place, only three shots behind leader Sergio Garcia. Please see stories on page D6.

Goal-line stand shows Big Blue boast true grit

Just might turn out to be season's defining moment

By Ed Tait

THERE'S a football adage that says a coach can learn a lot about his team as it hunkers down deep in its own territory to defend the end zone.

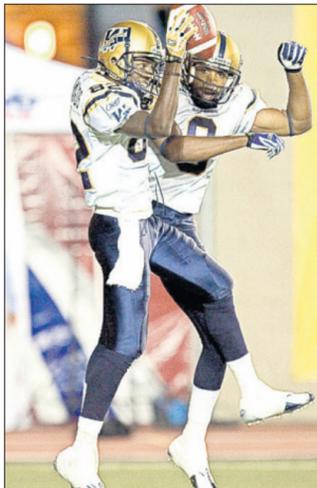
Little wonder, then, that Winnipeg Blue Bombers head coach Doug Berry — despite virtually getting no zzzz's following Thursday's 20-18 victory over the Montreal Alouettes — was sporting a perma-grin upon his return home from La Belle Province.

That's because it may very well turn out that if there is a defining moment to the Bombers 2007 season — and, yes, we realize there is a ton of football left to play — it may have taken place in the fourth quarter in the hornet's nest that is Molson Stadium.

Not only did the Bombers defensive dozen stuff the Als on three cracks from inside the two-yard line with less than 10 minutes to go, the offence responded with an eight-play, 109-yard drive that highlighted Kevin Glenn's continuing growth as a quarterback, Charles Roberts' under-rated toughness and a clutch catch by the legendary Milt Stegall.

And so in the matter of 10 minutes the Bombers went from being 1-2-1 and having a lot of fingers pointed at them, to 2-1-1 and having already won the season series with the Alouettes.

"We were faced with a situation and we stood up," said Berry, beaming with pride while re-living the series on Friday. "The defence was faced with third-and-goal at the one. Bingo. Stopped. The



PHIL CARPENTER / CANWEST NEWS

Terrence Edwards (left) does the TD dance with O'Neil Wilson.

offence is faced with first down and 109 yards. Respond. Huge momentum shift right there."

And it was also a quick character study in what the Bombers may be building here. Trailing — again — heading into the fourth quarter after another so-so start, the squad rallied with two fourth-quarter touchdowns and some inspired defensive play while winning a smash-mouth battle in the trenches.

"At this point being 2-1-1 after (playing) Edmonton and Montreal in four

games... we can say we've been playing pretty good," said Berry. "And as upset as I get for each single play, in the overall schematic I'm not upset because I know we'll eventually get things together."

"If the defence starts slow I'm confident they're going to come together. And if the offence starts slow I know we'll sort it out and come together."

But, again, Berry would be singing a much different tune today if the Bombers don't stuff the Als at the goal line. And where the Bomber boss is grinning at what that stand revealed about his troops, Alouettes GM and head coach Jim Popp has a different take on what he discovered about his own side in those three critical plays.

"You've got to get the ball in the end zone on the one-yard line," said Popp after the game. "If you can't move people one yard... we've got to look at everything. We're not good enough."

Asked what he said to his team after the win, Berry offered up a shrug. Translation: he didn't have to say diddly because what the Bombers learned about themselves in the fourth quarter in Montreal speaks for itself.

"These guys already know each other," Berry said. "I really think this team knows who they are and what they're capable of. I don't think there are going to be many surprises left. They are going to be ready to play every week."

"They know what it's all about. They believe in each other and they know what our mission is."

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NHL Jets owed it all to Fergie

His contacts and credibility helped team enter league

THERE was always more to John Ferguson than met the eye, but it turns out the former Winnipeg Jets patriarch — who will be buried today near his home in Windsor, Ont., in a ceremony that will draw the who's-who of hockey — was much more than the team's general manager.

In fact, it turns out that without Ferguson the Jets may never have entered the National Hockey League in the first place.

"The true story I don't think ever came out," noted former Jets marketing director Mark Cloutier, who was also instrumental in negotiations during 1978 and 1979 that eventually convinced the NHL's board of governors to reverse an earlier vote to block the merger of four remaining WHA teams into the senior league's fold.

Even former Jets part-owner Michael Gobuty conceded this week that without Ferguson's contacts and influence, the NHL might never have come to Winnipeg.

"Not knocking myself or any of the other partners, but hockey was not our business," Gobuty said, when reached at his home just north of Palm Springs, Calif. "And when we got Fergie it made us look pretty good. It helped tremendously."

"It made the NHL look at us a little more positive," Gobuty added. "We had someone who knew about hockey, not just Gobuty and the rest of the group who knew nothing about hockey. He did wonders for us and opened many doors."

The *Free Press* learned of Ferguson's behind-the-scenes politicking while compiling a tribute feature to the hard-nosed GM, which will appear in Sunday's edition.

Of course, it was never a secret that the NHL rejected the first merger vote, with the powerful Montreal Canadiens being the most vocal in opposition. Since the Canadiens were then owned by Molson's Brewery, Manitobans en masse boycotted any product produced by the prominent beer company. Molson sales across the province plummeted.

But while Manitobans were protesting with their boycott, Ferguson was using his clout in Montreal — particularly with the late Senator Hartland Molson, the former president of the brewery and part-owner of the Canadiens — to convince the NHL to rethink their position.

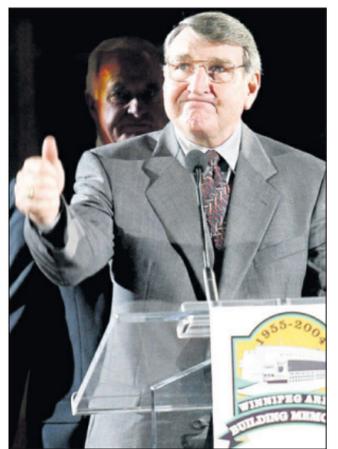
Remember, Molson was also at the time bankrolling *Hockey Night in Canada* broadcasts, and was therefore the undisputed power broker in the NHL.

Both Ferguson and Cloutier also lobbied distilling baron Charles Bronfman, then the majority owner of the Montreal Expos in hush-hush meetings designed to convince NHL owners that Winnipeg could serve as a legitimate NHL market.

"There's a whole unwritten book about that," said Ken Fenson, who at the time was the Jets director of public



Randy Turner



KEN GIGLIOTTI / WINNIPEG FREE PRESS ARCHIVES

John Ferguson at Winnipeg Arena's last hurrah in 2004.

In tomorrow's Free Press

- Randy Turner remembers John Ferguson and the Jets
- Tim Campbell reports on memorial service in Windsor, Ont.

relations. "There were a lot of people working in the background, I'm sure. (But) we probably don't get in (without Ferguson and Cloutier). We didn't have those channels and the ownership of the team would readily admit to that. Those channels turned out to be absolutely critical."

"I don't think a lot of people understand that, actually," added Fenson, now an institutional bonds broker in Houston. "When they think about Fergie, I don't think that they knew how influential he was at getting us into meetings with people we'd never, ever have a chance of meeting."

Meanwhile, Cloutier, who was brought into the Jets by Ferguson when he assumed GM duties in 1978 — the final year of the WHA — was a former marketing director with both the Canadiens and Expos. Cloutier, now retired and living in Ste-Agathe, Que., even secured the financing to cover the Jets entry fee.

When the cash call by the NHL went out, Cloutier turned to Molson's Brewery top brass and said, "We need five million bucks. We'll give you the television rights for the first two seasons."

So, ironically, the same company that didn't support the first merger bid ended up paying the Jets' cover charge to join the NHL.

The boycott ended and the Jets — along with the Hartford Whalers, Edmonton Oilers and Quebec Nordiques — were officially accepted into the NHL.

Both Fenson and Cloutier said they wanted to speak about Ferguson's involvement at the time of his passing to let Winnipeggers know just how integral the man they call Fergie was for the city's team — both up-front and behind the scenes.

"He was such a giant of a guy who left a giant shadow," Fenson said, "So for the (Jets) franchise that was important."

May they both rest in peace.

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Selig in stands to see Bonds

MILWAUKEE — Commissioner Bud Selig didn't even have to leave his own backyard to catch Barry Bonds' chase for the home run record.

The San Francisco slugger was two home runs from tying Hank Aaron's career mark of 755 on Friday, the 31st anniversary of the Hammer's final career shot — and Selig said he planned to attend all three of the Giants' games in Milwaukee unless Bonds is not in the

Giants' starting lineup this weekend.

"It's here, and I felt that it was the right thing for the commissioner to do," Selig said.

The Giants opened their three-game series against the Brewers at Miller Park on Friday, a short drive from the commissioner's downtown office. Bonds did not hit a home run in his five plate appearances Friday night.

— Associated Press