

Hawks fire coach

ATLANTA (AP) — "I think the right person has been let go," Cotton Fitzsimmons said yesterday concerning his dismissal as coach of the Atlanta Hawks.

Fitzsimmons, ending a four-year association with the Hawks, left without animosity toward the club and said he was looking forward to coaching again next season, "at any level."

The Hawks fired Fitzsimmons in Milwaukee Tuesday only hours before the National Basketball Association team lost its 11th straight game and its 18th in a row on the road, a 130-126 overtime decision to the Milwaukee Bucks.

"We had too many young players at one time to win consistently in the NBA," said Fitzsimmons, who

during 11 years of college coaching and two years at Phoenix in the NBA never had a losing season.

His first Atlanta team in 1972 had a 46-36 record but the last three seasons have been losing ones, including a 23-46 record this year when he was fired.

Fitzsimmons was 15 minutes late for a scheduled news conference. He immediately apologized and said, "I didn't realize how many people there were in the unemployment lines."

Fitzsimmons said his major disappointments in Atlanta were failing to make the team a championship contender, losing so many games and failing to sign last year's top draft choices, David Thompson and Marvin Webster.



Photo by Denise Gill

Paul Fagan performing on the rings during the Mideast Regionals. The Lion co-captain feels his teammates are ready for this weekend's NCAA Gym Finals in Philadelphia

Messersmith to ink with Yanks?

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — Do the New York Yankees own Andy Messersmith, or don't they?

The Yankees said yesterday they do. Others said they don't.

The tangled Messersmith case took on even more of an aura of mystery when the Yankees contended they had entered into a four-year agreement with the veteran righthander.

Others vehemently denied it, and the pitcher himself reportedly attempted to void the agreement.

Messersmith, declared a free agent in a landmark decision, won 19 games for Los Angeles last year and was a 20-game winner in 1974.

The Yankees said they had completed the agreement with Messersmith through his attorney, Herb Osmond, but had learned that Messersmith, a free agent for the past two weeks, "is now attempting to void the terms of the agreement."

"We intend to perform our obligations and expect Mr. Messersmith to do likewise," said Gabe Paul, the Yankees' president.

Dick Moss, the attorney for the Major League Players Association, said in New York that the Yankees' claim "was wholly without merit."

"There has been no agreement between Messersmith and the Yankees," Moss said, adding that the Yanks' claim will be challenged.

Moss said baseball Commissioner Bowie Kuhn had scheduled a hearing on the situation for today, at which time he hoped to resolve the matter.

At least seven clubs — the Yankees, Los Angeles, the New York Mets, Atlanta, California, Pittsburgh and the Chicago White Sox — were known to have made firm offers for Messersmith, who — along with pitcher Dave McNally — was declared a free agent by arbitrator Peter Seitz last December. The ruling later was upheld in federal courts.

Dunk back in amateur b-ball

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Dunking — the practice of stuffing a basketball through the hoop — was restored to the sport's amateur games by its rule makers today. It had been outlawed for a decade.

The National Basketball Rules Committee, which governs all amateur basketball in the United States and Canada, voted to allow dunking during games of the 1976-77 season.

Dr. Clifford Fagan, secretary of the 23-member committee which completed its two-day annual meeting in Philadelphia yesterday, said dunking will be permitted during a game but will be prohibited in warmups before the game and at intermission under penalty of technical foul.

The committee had outlawed dunking prior to the 1966-67 season in a con-

troversial vote.

The pros have always permitted dunking.

The committee also announced two other major rules changes.

Technical fouls charged to the coach which result from conduct on the bench will have a penalty of two free throws. Only one free throw was awarded this past season.

And time has been extended

to rectify correctable errors in officiating. The extension of time will come when the ball is put back into play after the error.

Dr. Fagan said the extra time will mean that the clock will be justified when a mistake is made.

The rules changes apply to all major and small colleges, junior colleges, high schools and YMCA leagues in both boys and girls competition.

McGinnis paces Sixers

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — George McGinnis scored 14 of his 25 points in a final period rally that carried the Philadelphia 76ers to a 107-103 victory over the Buffalo Braves last night and into second place in the National Basketball Association's Atlantic Division.

The 76ers, who have six games remaining, now lead the Braves by half a game in their hot battle for a second place playoff position. The Braves have five games left on their schedule.

Lion gymnasts travel to Temple for NCAA's

By BRIAN MILLER
Collegian Sports Editor

Last year about this time (NCAA championship time that is), Penn State's men's gymnastic team did not even qualify for the nationals. Only Kurt Pflieger made the trip to Terre Haute, Ind. for the 1975 NCAA's and he finished far out of the running in vault competition.



But the Lions returned in '76 with an Olympian in the personage of Gene Whelan and injury problems behind them. Penn State swept through the year with seven wins, the lone setback a late season loss to Indiana State.

Even that loss was avenged though, as the Lions stopped the Sycamores three weeks ago in the NCAA Eastern Regionals in Rec Hall. By winning the regionals with a 431.95 score, Penn State recorded the highest qualifying score of any team in this year's championships.

So the Lions have gone from the bottom to near the top in roughly a year and the State gymnasts hope to peak today, tomorrow and Saturday in the NCAA Gymnastic Finals, being held in Temple's McGonigle Hall in Philadelphia.

League champ; Minnesota, the Big Ten representative; Nebraska from the Big Eight; California-Fullerton, the Western Independent champ; Arizona State, the western Athletic Conference winner; and from the Pacific Eight Conference, California (Berkeley).

Penn State's Gene Whelan has won the 1976 Nissen Award which goes to the outstanding senior collegiate gymnast in the country, it was announced last night in Philadelphia.

now," Fagan added.

Problem areas for the Lions will be rings and parallel bars. Rings have been a year-long headache for the Lions. Bob Desiderio may not go here so Wayne Chandler will have to pick-up in his spot. Freshman ring specialist Tony Muffoletto has a slight injury so rings will remain iffy at best.

The compulsories are the weakest aspect of the Lion routines on the parallel bar, especially the power presses. Again, Desiderio and Chandler will be counted on heavily.

High bar will of course be looked over carefully. That is where the Lions almost blew it in the regionals and Wettstone does not want to see a repeat. Wettstone hopes the PSU gymnasts will treat the event conservatively, with shooting for perfection a secondary concern.

"You know, the gymnastic season is long and it's tough staying psyched nine months out of the year," Fagan said. "Right now, we're just staying on each other. We're in about the best shape we're going to get into."

Cal-Berkeley was the second highest scoring qualifier, coming into Philly by way of a 430.35 mark. LSU marked up a 425.25 in its qualifying championships. The lowest scoring qualifier was Arizona State with a 400.85.

Penn State gym coach Gene Wettstone really didn't want to hazard a guess on the winning meet score, but felt it might be a 429.

Wettstone's reluctance stems from the general score fluctuation possible when a meet of this size and importance is held. LSU wasn't really pressed in its qualifying meet and the Lions' 431.95 certainly was aided by the pressure Indiana State was putting on the Lion gymnasts.

The seven other squads are Temple, Eastern Intercollegiate Gymnastic League winner Louisiana State University, Southern Intercollegiate Gymnastic

Penn State's routines won't change very much for the NCAA's. "There are no major changes. We hit 431 plus with the routines we have so there's no sense in changing

Late score

PSU Baseball
Penn State 8, Lehigh 0

D
O
U
G



COLLOQUY**UNIVERSITY CONCERT COMMITTEE**UNIVERSITY

ARTIST'S SERIES**COLLOQUY**UNIVERSITY CONCERT COMMITTEE**COLLOQUY

CONCERT **COLLOQUY**UNIVERSITY CONCERT COMMITTEE**

the Magician
in
Illusion and Reality

April 21
8:00 PM

University Auditorium
Tickets on sale April 1
9:00 AM HUB Desk

\$1, \$2 and \$3 Reserved seats

H
E
N
N
I
G