

THE DALLAS POST

SportsWeek

Section 2



From the bullpen

Timothy J. Raub

Madden revives MNF

Dennis Miller was like a bad joke that just kept going on and on and on.

Dan Fouts just never did make a good transition into the broadcast booth.

Eric Dickerson never said anything insightful, and should never have done anything but carry a football.

But John Madden is a savior. Madden, who made his debut this week with mainstay play-by-play commentator Al Michaels, was a breath of fresh air in the Monday Night Football broadcast booth.

Madden brought a blue-collar atmosphere and bar-stool-style of broadcasting that's been his trademark for over two decades to a MNF that has been in a constant tailspin since Frank Gifford left the booth in 1998.

His "Boom!" and "Heck" replaced Miller's constant historical references to the Pope and Rosetta stone, and gave viewers exactly what they wanted — an enthusiastic and entertaining, yet informative color commentary from a man with the experience of an NFL coach and the lingo of a diehard fan.

When Madden commented on a rookie corner getting beaten on a pass, saying "He looked like a rookie all the way," his reply was simple, to the point and exactly what millions of viewers at home were thinking.

Another time, Madden, while breaking down a play in which Texans offensive lineman

DeMingo Graham make a great block on a pull to give running back James Allen room to run, provided entertaining and informative insight in a plain-spoken manner, saying, "He makes the block right there. Boom!"

That's what MNF needs to bring long-time fans back.

MNF executives have unsuccessfully scrambled to find the right mix of talent to work alongside Michaels since 1998, and have failed with the likes of Boomer Esiason, Miller, Fouts and Dickerson.

But Michaels and Madden are the best mix since chocolate and peanut butter.

Madden is exactly what MNF needs.

Although his four-year, \$20 million salary makes him a higher paid personality than all but 11 NFL players, Madden, along with Michaels, gives you the feel of two old chums talking football on a living room couch, and not the "I can one better you" feeling Miller brought to the booth the last two years.

It feels great to watch a MNF game with the volume up for once.

MNF executives said Miller was hired to bring irreverence to the booth, but it took them two years and a nose dive in the ratings before they realized irreverence will never make up for pure knowledge.

Madden was a success on Monday nights, going 11-1-1 during his coaching career with the Raiders. Now it looks as though he'll be a success on Monday nights once again — but this time in the broadcast booth.

Timothy J. Raub, a Dallas Post staff writer, can be reached at traub@leader.net, or by phone at 674-4658.

Send your sports reports by e-mail dallaspost@leader.net



Andrew George, left, and David Walters, played on the U-18 National Soccer Championship team.

Local soccer stars help team to U-18 national championship

Andrew George and David Walters, both starting members of the FC Delco Arsenal Soccer Team of Downingtown, PA., have won their first U-18 National Championship. The team ended the 2002 season ranked first in the country by the U.S. Soccer Club National Rankings.

The FC Delco Soccer Club is one of the premier soccer clubs in the United States and is currently sponsored by both Nike and Gatorade. This is the sixth National Championship for the FC Delco Club, which has placed more players in the MLS than any other soccer club in the United States.

The 48 top regional teams of boys and girls in age groups Under-14 through Under-19 competed in round robin play at the Maryland SoccerPlex in Germantown, Maryland from July 25 to 28. The top two teams in each age group as determined by points qualified for the finals. With a final record of 3-0-1, Arsenal was the only undefeated team in the U-18 age group outscoring their opponents 12-3.

In the opening game, Arsenal defeated the Classic FC Bandidios of Albuquerque, N.M. 2-0 and followed with a 4-1 victory over NFC Vincere of Omaha, NE. The final round robin game was

a 1-1 draw against the Texans, which Arsenal defeated in the championship match by a decisive score of 5-1.

Winning the national championship is a huge reward for the two local soccer players who have spent innumerable hours over the past three years traveling the Northeast Extension back and forth to practice in Philadelphia. In two weeks they will start their college seasons — Walters at Penn State and George at Cornell University. All of the members of the FC Delco Arsenal are continuing their soccer careers at Division 1 colleges and universities.

Winners overcome heat at Triathlon

Top regional male, female finishers are from Back Mountain

By TIMOTHY J. RAUB Post Staff

LEHMAN TWP. — Kevin Carter would settle for nothing short of total domination at the 21st annual Wilkes-Barre Triathlon on Sunday.

Carter of Silver Spring, Md., led the event from start to finish and was seemingly never challenged to win in two hours, two minutes and 45 seconds.

"I wanted to dominate the race," Carter said. "My strategy was to push the swim hard and have a really powerful and decisive swim to get my confidence level up for my next race, because it is a key event."

"I had a pretty solid race today, and am ready to rock and roll at nationals."

Carter, who finished more than a minute ahead of second-place finisher Christopher O'Donnell of Cambridge, Mass., tore away from the pack early in the swimming event.

After coming in almost five minutes before O'Donnell at the bike/run transition, Carter fought through extremely hot weather to keep his closest competitors off his heels and hold on for the victory.

"It feels excellent to win," Carter said. "I feel absolutely overjoyed. I haven't done a race for me and solidify why I do this sport for some time."

"Coming down to the run, I had to push myself harder than I wanted to. If I hadn't rallied from the little dip I had in the middle of the run, Christopher would have caught me."

Karen Smyers was equally as dominant, as she defended her

title as the top female professional in 2:11.50, three minutes ahead of second-place finisher Lauren Jensen (2:14.25) of New Berlin, Wis.

"I really love this course," said Smyers. "I actually ran really hard today, because I looked back and thought one of the relay guys was Jensen. I was digging deep the whole run because I thought she was right behind me."

"On this run course if you're not feeling good it is easy to lose a minute, and Lauren was about a minute behind me all day."

Smyers, one of the most deco-

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POST PHOTO/JIM PHILLIPS

Bob Baur, Dallas, rode the bicycle leg for his relay team in Sunday's Wilkes-Barre Triathlon.

KEYSTONE GAMES ROUNDUP

Taroli wins five swimming medals

Garry Taroli of Dallas Township won five medals in swimming events Saturday.

Taroli won two golds (50-meter butterfly, 100-meter breast stroke), a silver (100-meter freestyle) and two bronzes (50-meter freestyle, 50-meter breast stroke).

Taroli, competing in the male 45-49 age bracket, has now won

21 career Keystone Games medals. He is an attorney in Wilkes-Barre.

DIVING

HAZLETON — Sara Skammer of Dallas won a gold and silver medal in the 9-and under division of girls diving, held at Penn State Hazleton.

Skammer scored 120.65 points to win gold in the 3-meter competition. She scored 125.10 to win silver in the 1-meter.

In girls 10-11 3-meter competition, Erica Lisses of Dallas won gold with 158.80.

Former Bishop Hoban state champion diver Brian Ginocchetti of Forty Fort won silver in the men's 25-39 3-meter competition with 230.40.



Garry Taroli wears his medals



Long birdie putt clinches Potentate

By DAVID SHUCOSKY Special to The Dallas Post

DALLAS TWP. — Thomas Stitzer and Carlyle Robinson saved their best for last twice on Sunday.

Robinson made a 35-foot putt on the 18th hole to beat James Blinn and Brian Corbett at the Potentate Tournament, which concluded Sunday at Irem Temple Country Club.

Robinson has won the event nine times with five different partners.

"It never gets old," Robinson said. "You like to get going and see if you can still do it."

Stitzer won for the first time. "It's a dream come true to get your name up on the board," he said. "We did a little scrambling, but we got the job done."

In the morning match, it was Stitzer who came up big on 18. Leading Roy Smith and Mike Lazevnick by one hole, Stitzer knocked a gap wedge to the edge of the cup. Smith and Lazevnick then conceded, putting Stitzer and Robinson in the finals. Blinn and Corbett defeated Donald Francis and John Thomas in the morning to earn their spot in the finals.

Stitzer and Robinson found themselves in the same position in the championship match — up by a hole on 18. Blinn and Corbett needed to win the hole to force a playoff. Blinn hit his approach to within four feet, by far the best approach shot of the foursome. But the veteran Robinson wasn't fazed.

"I told Tom, That's what makes this exciting. Now we need birdie," Robinson said.

And true to his word, Robinson delivered. His putt from the back of the green was perfectly struck and found the bottom of the cup. Blinn never even got to attempt his four-foot birdie putt.

"The short ones make you more nervous,"

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POST PHOTOS/JIM PHILLIPS

Potentate photos, clockwise from top left: Bob Roberts watched the path of his putt; Sean Xenakis chipped onto a green; sign at hole 10; Dr. Jack Ellis followed the flight of his drive.

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