

IN SPORTS: BUCS DIG DEEP TO SIGN FORMER COWBOYS RECEIVER ALVIN HARPER

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WEATHER: High, low 70s; sunny. More, 6B

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25¢

COLUMN ONE

Buck O'Neil: a baseball homecoming

When he lived in Sarasota, Buck O'Neil couldn't attend his high school. Now his life is a lesson for all.

By TOM ZUCCO
Times Staff Writer

Buck O'Neil didn't ask for any of this. He would have been perfectly willing to stay home in Kansas City, look after Ora, his wife of 48 years, and maybe sneak in a little golf.

He had no idea they were going to go to all this trouble — rename the Baltimore Orioles training complex after him and bring in Hall of Famer Frank Robinson and Emmy Award-winning producer Ken Burns.

And the luncheon, and the "Evening With Buck O'Neil" reception. And to top the week off, the high school graduation.

Yes, at age 83, Buck O'Neil is about to get his honorary diploma from Sarasota High School.

When Buck lived here, he was allowed to watch Sarasota High bring him, and he was allowed to walk in front of the school, but he wasn't allowed inside.

Now all this fuss. But Buck knew how much it meant to everyone, including the 200 or so people who packed the Oriole cafeteria Wednesday.

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MAJOR LEAGUE DAY FOR TAMPA BAY



Why is Vince Naimoli smiling? Because today he expects his Tampa Bay ownership group to be awarded a major-league baseball team. That news would end the area's 18-year-long quest.

■ Today is the expected due date for the Tampa Bay Devil Rays.

By MARC TOPKIN and JOHN ROMANO
Times Staff Writers

PALM BEACH — Tampa Bay's 18-year quest for a major-league baseball team is expected to come to an end today with the award of expansion franchise.

Expansion committee chairman John Harrington presented a unanimous recommendation to owners in both leagues Wednesday that Tampa Bay and Phoenix be awarded teams to begin play in the 1998 season.

There were no reports of major discussion in either league meeting and several owners indicated privately they expect it to be approved, with an announcement expected shortly after noon. Three-fourths of the owners in each league (11 of 14) must vote for approval. Leaders of the Orlando and Washington/orth-

■ IN BUSINESS: Devil Ray attire for sale — 1E

■ IN SPORTS: A day of ups and downs — 1C

ers Virginia groups were told Wednesday they would not be receiving teams in the first round of expansion.

"I don't think anything can go wrong," Naimoli said late Wednesday.

Phoenix leader Jerry Calzagone was equally confident. "We've made our deal," he said. "I think it's all done."

The Tampa Bay team is expected to be called the Devil Rays, but there were indications late Wednesday that there may be a twist announced today involving the name.

Naimoli is planning to unveil not only the

Please see BASEBALL 9A

USAir jets won't fly intra-state routes

■ The announcement means that virtually all service from Tampa to other Florida cities will be on turbo-prop planes.

By BILL ADAMI
Times Staff Writer

Florida is taking a step backward from the jet age.

USAir, the state's dominant carrier, announced Thursday that it was cutting 5 percent of its schedule nationwide and eliminating jets on its intra-Florida routes.

The announcement means that virtually all airline service from Tampa to other Florida cities will be on turbo-prop commuter planes.

A few other airlines continue to use jets on a handful of intra-Florida routes from Tampa, but most of those jets are flying short "tag-outs" that are continuing from a major city like Houston or Los Angeles.

Increasingly, the skies over Tampa are filled with the buzz of propellers. About 55 percent of USAir's Tampa schedule is in commuter planes. When the changes take effect in June, the commuters will account for nearly 70 percent.

Nationwide, USAir plans to cut 240 unprofitable flights, including many non-stop jet flights that do not go through hub cities. That will mean layoffs of several hundred maintenance and customer-service employees, the airline said. About 250-300 pilots, who are protected by a no-layoff clause, will be forced to take sabbatical cuts.

USAir's move is part of a nationwide retrenchment by the major airlines. As they struggle to reduce costs and become profitable again, they are shedding unprofitable routes, consolidating flights at their biggest hubs and giving many of their short-haul flights to commuter airlines.

"We've gone back to the basics," said USAir spokeswoman Andrea Butler. "We simply have too many flights to be profitable."

The commuter planes allow airlines to offer more frequent service and fly into smaller cities. To fly a Boeing 737 for an hour costs USAir about \$2,100. A propeller-driven Dash-8 costs just \$850 per hour.

But the propeller-driven planes have some drawbacks. They are

Please see USAIR 10A

APPLAUDED: Baseball great Buck O'Neil returned to Sarasota this week to be honored by the city.

day at Twin Lakes Park.

He knew there would be a lot of healing during the next three days. That was worth it. So he stood at the microphone, straight, tall and proud.

"I've been able to do a lot of things," he began. "I'll home runs, hit grand slams, steal home. I've shaken hands with President Truman and President Clinton. I even hugged Hillary," he said with a smile.

"But let me tell you this. I would rather be right here, right now, talking to you, than doing anything else I've ever done."

■ ■ ■

This is a story about going home. That's what baseball is all about; you try to get home. That's what Buck O'Neil is doing this week.

It's also about history. The history of Sarasota. Of Negro League baseball. Of John Jordan O'Neil. At first they called him Foots, because of his size 12 feet. Later, he was Country, Cap and Jay. Legendary pitcher Satchel Paige, needing an alibi when his fiancée paid an unexpected visit to the team hotel, called him Nancy.

By the time he became one of the best hitters in the Negro League, he was Buck.

His father was the foreman of a farm crew, his mother a restaurant manager. His family moved to Sarasota when he was 12. "I have a lot of happy memories of Sarasota," he said. "Fishing, swimming, especially playing baseball."

His father took him to Payne Park to watch the New York Giants, who trained in Sarasota. Because the New York Yankees were based up the road

Please see COLUMN ONE 8A

Study: Body knows best when it comes to weight

Compiled from Times wires

BOSTON — The hardest part of a diet is keeping off the weight. Now researchers believe they know why.

The body simply burns up less energy after a weight loss. Scientists at New York's Rockefeller University discovered that a dieter's metabolism slows down after the pounds have been shed, so that doing the same amount of exercise at the new weight burns fewer calories.

"The body resists the change. It suggests that the maintenance of body weight is a biological phenomenon, not solely a voluntary activity," said Dr. Rudolph Leibel.

Leibel and his colleagues published their findings in Wednesday's issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*. They think an internal control tries to keep body fat at a reasonably constant level in people of all body types, from thin to obese.

No one knows how the body determines an individual's fat target. That explains why even

those who continue to eat moderately and exercise are likely to creep up the scale. The researchers found that after losing 10 percent of their body weight, patients expended 15 percent less energy than expected for someone of similar size.

But is weight destiny? An editorial in the *Journal* suggests otherwise, saying that the body's fat target can shift gradually over time in response to external factors. For example, eating a high-fat diet tends to raise the target; regular exercise tends to lower it.

The system also appears to work in the other direction: After a quick weight gain, the metabolism speeds up to make muscle activity burn more calories, quickly bringing the body back to its normal weight.

Leibel said dieters will have to get used to the idea that humans have evolved ways of keeping their fat levels constant to get them through times of famine and plenty.

"We evolved these systems to protect us," he said, "and now we are stuck with them."

TIMESline

What's in a name?

By early this afternoon, Tampa Bay is expected to have a baseball team. At the news conference, new owner Vince Naimoli is expected to unveil the team name (Devil Rays), colors and logo. We would like to know what you think. Using a Touch-Tone phone, call Timesline you can find the number for your area on Page 2A and punch in category #800 with your comment. Please leave your name, age and hometown. We'll run a sample of your comments on Friday.



Clinton will discuss the "new relationship" between the federal government and states.

■ THE SESSION: The state Senate passes anti-crime legislation — 1B

By LUCY MORGAN
Times Staff Writer

TALLAHASSEE — President Clinton will become the first U.S. president to address a joint session of the Florida Legislature.

The president, accepting an invitation from Gov. Lawton Chiles, is expected to discuss the "new relationship" between the federal government and states, said Chiles' press secretary, Jo Magidino.

Clinton wants to talk about welfare reform, block grants and other issues that are likely to change the way the state relates to the federal government. He may even visit the site of a Florida project, probably the welfare-reform pilot program under way in Pensacola, though White House officials said his schedule wasn't certain.

As it stands now, the president will arrive in Tallahassee on Wednesday, March 29, spend the night at the Governor's Mansion and address legislators on March 30.

Afterward, Clinton will fly to Miami, where he will spend the night before making a trip to Haiti on March 31 to celebrate the hundredth of the peace-keeping mission there to the United Nations.

Chiles' invitation came after he heard Clinton wanted to speak to a state legislature. In choosing Florida, he is coming to a state where Chiles, one of his fellow New Democrats, won re-election in a dismal 1994 for Democrats.

House Republican leader Dan Webster said he welcomes any president, though he hopes legislators will get to ask a few questions. "Like why doesn't he want a balanced budget and why would he come to a state that balances its budget?"

"And can we have Newt and Duke come too?"

Other sitting presidents have visited Tallahassee, particularly during campaigns, but only Jimmy Carter visited the Capitol.