

SHELL SHOCKED
A Mid-Summer Night's Dream
By Art Stevens

There must be something about Sanibel nights. I had a crazy dream last night. I dreamt that Bob Costas was giving the day's sports results on television and all the athletes he referred to were famous historical figures.

"In Sports today Joseph Stalin scored a 12th round TKO over European middleweight champion Benito Mussolini. Musso, or "El Dope" as he is popularly called by his followers was clearly the crowd pleaser going into this championship fight, a 4 to 1 favorite among the odds makers.

"Stalin, who was previously unknown outside his native Russia until his knockout of Adolf Hitler last year stung the champion repeatedly throughout the match with left jabs to the head. Stalin never trailed in the fight and finally won it when Mussolini's handlers threw in the towel at the start of the 13th round.

"After the fight I asked Joe what his plans are now that he captured the European championship. He told me that he thought he could unify the world middleweight crown by engaging in an elimination match with Frankie Roosevelt, the U.S. champ.

"I asked Stalin if he didn't think he lacked the experience and cunning that FDR had, but he said that all he needed were a couple of tune-up fights before he took on Frankie."

"In baseball, Napoleon "Nappy" Bonaparte hit a dramatic home run off Waterloo ace reliever Ludwig Van Beethoven to pull out a victory for the home team. Luddy hadn't been treated so poorly since Julius Caesar crossed the Rubicon on him last year.

"It was Beethoven's fifth straight appearance and he didn't have his usual lightning speed on his sonata"

I stirred in my sleep. Was I going mad?

"Aaron Burr beat Alexander Hamilton in sudden death this afternoon. Both men had been tied at the end of regulation play. Hamilton seemed on the verge of winning the whole thing when his number nine iron failed him. Burr, coming on strong, broke out of the pack with a birdie, and took it all with a doggie. Hamilton, needing a fishie to remain competitive, couldn't come up with the big shot."

I turned over on my side trying to turn my mind's faucet off. Nonetheless, Costas continued on in his droning voice.

"John Dillinger defeated J. Edgar Hoover in straight sets at the Alcatraz Open men's singles championship this afternoon. It was a classic confrontation between a serve and volleyer and a tenacious baseline player. Dillinger, forever the aggressor had a lot to prove. Eddie Hoover had beaten him six straight times and Dilly's fans, who had retained their confidence in their man throughout those defeats, found their patience wearing thin.

"But Dilly was a determined man today. The first set saw Dilly pinning Hoover to the base line and picking off his passing shots. He played masterfully and was rewarded with a take of \$150,000. Sure beats robbing banks, doesn't it, Dilly?

"In college football this afternoon, Benedict Arnold ran the wrong way and scored a touchdown for the other team leaving the crowd stunned and silent. His quarterback, Nathan Hale, was fit to be tied."

Come on. Let me wake up. This is maddening.

"And now, let's turn to the human side of sports. It's easy to knock professional sports because some players are overpaid and underperform. So when you find a sports superstar who not only performs on the playing field, but is a role model off the field as well to the kids, then you have a super person.

"Such is the case with George Washington, the star left fielder for the New York Yankees. Not only does Georgie hit for average and power season after season, but his under-publicized role with the anti- snuff coalition makes you say to yourself, there goes a great guy.

"As you all know, Georgie almost threw a great career away when he got hooked on snuff almost ten years ago. But he licked it like the true professional he is. So let's give a pat on the back to a super athlete, Georgie Washington."

No more, no more, a voice echoed at the back of my head. This is crazy. But it wouldn't stop.

"In auto racing, Paul Newman came in third in the annual Formula Two Lime Rock Classic."

I leaped out of bed. I was now fully awake. Thank God. The dream was over. I sat down at the edge of the bed trying to restore my sanity, trying to focus on reality. The clock radio had gone on and the announcer was wrapping up the news.

“Newman was taking some time off between movie engagements to take part in his second major love, auto racing.”