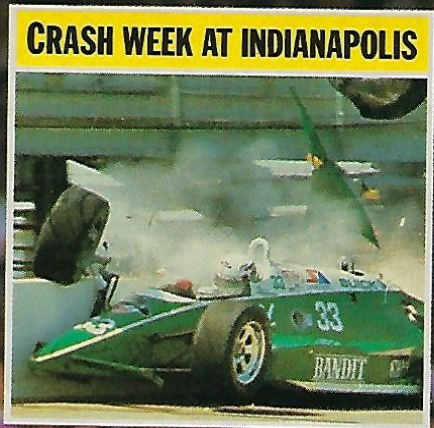


Sports Illustrated



MR. CLUTCH

DETROIT PLAYOFF HERO ISIAH THOMAS



there is a man who has been doing this for the past 20 years: Charlie Rose, of Charlie Rose Baseball Equipment.

I have seen the 75-year-old Rose put aside gloves he was working on in order to help a young man who had a game that afternoon. He will not sell a glove without restringing the webbing or adding support to it. I could recount other incidents but suffice it to say we are fortunate to have both Chilton and Rose.

DAN MORGAN
San Jose

■ WHAT'S A HOOSIER?

I can assure you there is no doubt about the origin of the term "hoosier" (*That Championship Touch*, April 13). It derived from "hoozer"—from the Cumberland County dialect of Old England—and its Anglo-Saxon root was "hoo," which meant "high" or "hill." Thus, a Cumberland hoozer lived in

the hills and was considered uncouth.

In the 1700s emigrant Cumberland hoozers settled in the Carolinas and then spread throughout the Southeast, where hoozer became a synonym for "cracker," which later displaced hoozer in Florida and Georgia. (One could still find "Alabama hoosiers" early in this century.) Southern hoosiers migrated to Indiana and brought the word with them; the first written use appears in a letter from an Oregon, Mo., resident to his uncle in Indianapolis in 1826. The writer tells of some Indiana hoosiers who had moved into the area.

While hoosier is still a malignant synonym for uncouth in Missouri (I've heard irate St. Louis Cardinal fans call an umpire a hoosier), its meaning in Indiana is now benign and, after this year's NCAA championship, glorious.

THOMAS KEISER
Normal, Ill.

■ FLY BALLS AND A BAT

Reading about the fly ball that hit a bird and fell for a double on April 12 at Shea Stadium (*INSIDE BASEBALL*, April 20) reminded me of a similar incident that occurred in the early 1950s in Carlsbad, N.Mex. During a Class C Longhorn League night game between the Carlsbad Potashers and a Midland, Texas, team, a drive to leftfield that could have been a home run struck a bat (the flying kind). In the case of this twice-batted ball, the hitter, like the Braves' Dion James at Shea, made it to second for a double.

JOHN F. ANDREWS
Washington, D.C.

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