

Will injury end Gretzky's career?



Bob McKenzie

Hockey

Has the most illustrious career in the history of the National Hockey League come to a painful end?

It is a question that must be asked now that Wayne Gretzky, 31, the NHL's all-time leading scorer, has been sidelined indefinitely with a bad back.

But nobody knows for sure. Not Gretzky, whose herniated disc in his upper back will keep him from starting his 14th NHL season next month.

Shock for the NHL/D1,D5

Not Dr. Robert Watkins, an orthopedic spine specialist who is one of the world's foremost authorities on back injuries.

Not anybody. "It has the possibility of being a career-ending injury," Watkins said last

night at a news conference in Los Angeles. "It can be very serious."

"But the prognosis is good. We believe he'll be able to return sometime this year. We are optimistic."

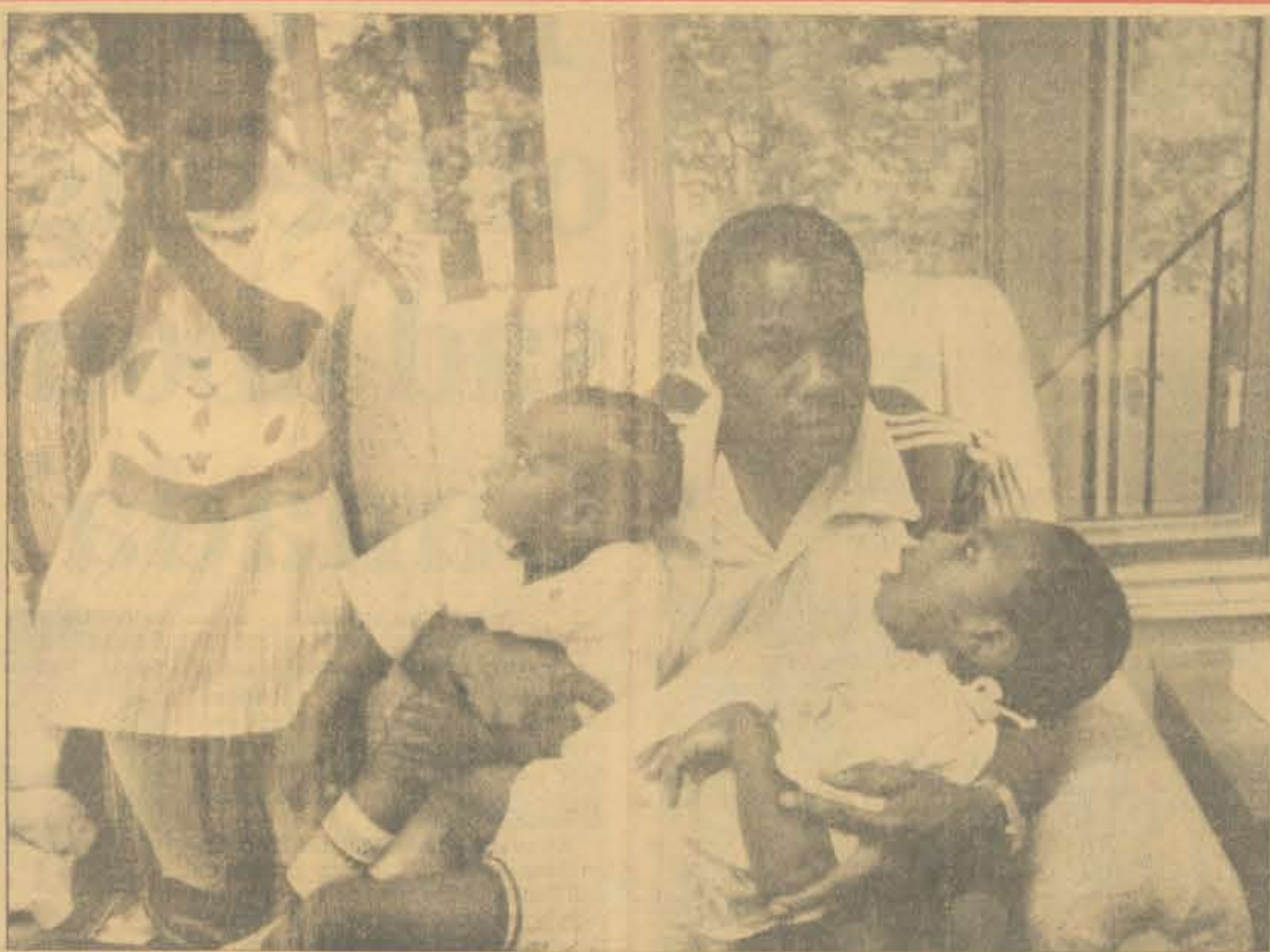
But uncertain. Watkins said Gretzky will receive "standard non-operative" care that will focus on first reducing the pain. Then, there will be rehabilitation and therapy on the bulging disc that is putting pres-

sure on a nerve that runs between his ribs, causing the intense chest and side pain.

"Surgery is not being contemplated," said Watkins, a member of the Kertland-Jobe Orthopedic Clinic, which has treated back injuries to Pittsburgh Penguin Mario Lemieux and Los Angeles Dodger Darryl Strawberry. "Time is on our



GRETZKY: Great One is out of play indefinitely.



HOPE FOR FUTURE: A \$9 million settlement may allow Javon Williams, 9, at right on his father Wal-

bert's lap in this earlier photo, to finally live at home with his sister Kentrell, left, and brother Tyrell.

Boy in coma awarded \$9 million

By Joseph Hall
TORONTO STAR

A young boy who has been in a virtual coma for seven years after undergoing a tonsillectomy is to receive what his lawyer says is one of the largest medical settlements in Canada.

Toronto lawyer Richard Sommers says Javon Michael Williams, 9, was last week awarded a minimum of about \$9 million from the North York General Hospital, where he suffered severe brain damage while recuperating from the relatively simple operation.

Madam Justice Mabel Van Camp made the judgment Sept. 15, based on an earlier assessment of damages agreed to by both parties.

"I don't know how to put this into words," said Javon's mother, Judy Williams.

"It has set my mind at ease because after seven years we finally know what happened to him on that day."

That day was March 13, 1985, when 17-month-old Javon had his tonsils and adenoids removed at the Leslie St. hospital.

He was placed in the hospital's tonsil suite, where he suffered a respiratory arrest that caused brain damage, Sommers said. "Our position was that the hospital failed to monitor his condition with sufficient care," Sommers said.

"He was placed in a semi-comatose state, unable to be aware of his surroundings, he's remained in that state until today and will remain that way forever."

Sommers said hospital staff not only failed to detect the boy's labored breathing in time but gave him an overdose of codeine, an inappropriate treatment.

Javon and his mother, whose husband Walbert is an unemployed laborer, will be paid in monthly instalments beginning at \$6,733 and indexed at 3 per cent a year.

But Javon's estate, Sommers said, is worth a minimum of \$9,010,183 right now and he could receive as much as \$14 million should he live to be 50.

While ordering the hospital to pay, Van Camp said a cross-claim between the hospital and some of its staff over damages would continue to be heard.

A hospital spokesperson refused to comment on the case, saying it was still before the courts and no final judgment has been given.

ment on the case, saying it was still before the courts and no final judgment has been given.

But Sommers said the battle was now solely between the hospital and staff involved in the incident over who should be responsible for the damages.

The hospital was also ordered to pay \$181,371 to the Ontario Health Insurance Plan and \$226,785 to the provincial community and social services ministry.

"I cannot tell you whether this is the largest settlement in Canada, but it is certainly one of the largest, without a doubt," Sommers said.

Williams, a homemaker who attended every day of the Ontario Court, general division, hearings, says the money may allow the family to take Javon home from Bloorview Children's Hospital.

"It would mean an awful lot, having him at home," she said.

"He would need a lot of care; he does not really know what is happening to him."

"We talk to him, but it is hard to tell what is happening. He does have a brother and sister though, and he should be with them."

Callwood urges Yes vote

'I'm tired of feeling sad about Canada'

By Edison Stewart
TORONTO STAR

OTTAWA — A blue-ribbon group of Canadians has launched a national campaign to sell the constitutional deal with a simple plea from social activist June Callwood: "I am tired of feeling sad about this country and I'm thrilled to be able to say Yes."

"We are convinced that, the more Canadians know about this agreement and the benefits for the country, the more convinced they will be to make the same choice we have and vote Yes" in the Oct. 26 referendum, Callwood said yesterday.

She is one of seven co-chairs of the committee, a non-partisan group set up by the three major political parties.

The others are former Liberal president Iona Campagnolo; Yves Fortier, former ambassador to the United Nations; Chinese Canadian community leader Joseph Wong, head of Toronto's United Way; Mary Simon of Quebec, past-president of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference; Michel Bastarache, a top Acadian businessman; and Ted Newall, head of the powerful Business Council on National Issues.

The seven were chosen at least partly for their ability to counter criticisms of the package.

Callwood, a Toronto feminist, disagreed with the National Action Committee on the Status of Women — and Simon disagreed with the Native Women's Association of Canada — that the deal threatens to undermine the rights of women.

Fortier, a former president of the Canadian Bar Association, underscored that view as he backed the plan to recognize Quebec as a distinct society, protect official-language minorities, overhaul Parliament, recognize aboriginal self-government, and create a so-called social charter. "The agreement will make us a stronger country, a more unified country, a more democratic country," Fortier said.

"This deal does not undermine the rights of any province or any group of Canadians."

In the background as committee members — and deliberately so — are people such as former premiers Bill Davis of Ontario and Peter Lougheed of Alberta

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CALLWOOD: One of 7 co-chairing Yes committee.

Markets eyeing Canada's big debt

By David Crane
TORONTO STAR

WASHINGTON — With the constitutional referendum debate under way, financial markets around the world are beginning to focus on the Canadian dollar, just as the French referendum on the Treaty of Maastricht led to intensified speculation in European money a week ago.

Canada got a taste of that this week when the dollar

plummeted more than a cent in a single day after polls showed gains for the No side in Quebec and former prime minister Pierre Trudeau criticized the constitutional accord.

And, as the Oct. 26 referendum nears, pension fund managers in New York, insurance firms in Tokyo and money traders in London are bound to heighten their attention on Canada, making the Canadian dollar more vulnerable to any whiff of bad news.

But why is Canada's dollar so vulnerable?

The big reason is something that no one wants to talk about but is bound to cause problems someday, even without the referendum: Canada's huge net foreign debt of about \$300 billion, a debt that is currently growing by \$30 billion a year and could exceed \$400 billion by

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Dollar falls to 80.93¢ Business Today/B1

SCOREBOARD

BASEBALL

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Brewers 3 Angels 2

Jays' magic number is now **7**

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Bonwicks



"When you've finished trying to get through to Lady Di, your supper is ready."

UP FRONT

Studies jolt thinking on heart hazards

By Marilyn Dunlop
TORONTO STAR

GO AHEAD, reach for that second (or third) cup of coffee, but maybe take a closer look at the labels on some of the food you eat.

For years, Canadians have been told what is supposedly good or bad for them when it comes to heart disease. Coffee — bad. Iron-rich foods — good.

But new research has doctors rethinking that advice and Canadians reassessing the impact of what they eat and drink.

The debate over whether coffee poses a hazard to the heart has gone on for years. But a new report by Dr. Martin Myers of Sunnybrook Health Science Centre may have settled the controversy.

Myers and his colleagues analyzed 11 previous coffee-heart attack studies, of which eight did not show a link and three did. He said a major study conducted in the United States in 1986, which showed the more coffee a person drank the greater the risk of heart attack, scared coffee drinkers.

But another large study in 1990, conducted at Harvard School of Public Health, involving some 46,000 people, found

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