

SPORTS LOOK Associated Press

NFL

■ RICHMOND, Texas — Prosecutors plan to press a misdemeanor assault charge against Warren Moon even though the wife of the Minnesota Vikings quarterback pleaded with the court to drop the case.

Moon, charged following a July 18 incident at the couple's Lake Olympia home, agreed to a series of court appearances before Fort Bend County Court-at-Law Judge Larry Wagenbach, but entered no plea in the case.

Felicia Moon, however, renewed her wishes after the hearing that District Attorney John Healey drop the case. Moon will return to court Jan. 18 for pre-trial motions and the trial is set for Feb. 13.

■ LAKE FOREST, Ill. — Richard Dent, the Chicago Bears' career sack leader, was released only a month after the team re-signed the 34-year-old defensive end.

Dent, who had 124 1/2 sacks from 1983-93 before leaving for an injury-filled season with San Francisco, had only one tackle in three games this season.

■ ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. — Buffalo running back Thurman Thomas is expected to be sidelined at least two weeks with a pulled hamstring sustained in the Bills' loss at New England on Monday night.

NBA

■ ORLANDO, Fla. — Shaquille O'Neal could be out at least a month after sustaining possible ligament damage in his right thumb during the Orlando Magic's exhibition game with Miami.

O'Neal said he was injured when he got tangled up under the basket with Miami's Matt Geiger. The All-Star center walked away flexing his hand, but played the next 1:27 before leaving for the locker room.

■ LANDOVER, Md. — Washington Bullets forward Chris Webber has decided to begin physical rehabilitation immediately on his injured left shoulder instead of undergoing surgery.

Webber, who last month signed a six-year, \$59 million contract, will miss at least four weeks. He was injured Saturday night in an exhibition against Indiana.

Baseball

■ NEW YORK — One week before his contract expires, New York Yankees manager Buck Showalter is still mulling his future.

He and team owner George Steinbrenner are discussing an offer for a two-year, \$850,000 extension, but Showalter reportedly is concerned about the fate of his coaching staff.

A team official speaking on the condition he not be identified said Monday night Showalter turned down an offer Monday to return for 1996. On Monday, the Yankees hired Bob Watson as their new general manager, replacing Gene Michael.

■ DENVER — Colorado Rockies right-hander Bret Saberhagen underwent arthroscopic surgery to repair ligament damage in his pitching shoulder.

Saberhagen, 31, a two-time Cy Young Award winner acquired from the New York Mets on July 31, also had dead tissue removed from his rotator cuff and shoulder area by Dr. David Altchek in New York.

Boxing

■ NEW YORK — A former accountant for Don King testified the promoter told him to designate \$350,000 of an advance paid to a boxer as training expenses to collect on an insurance policy.

Joseph Maffia, testifying before a federal jury in the government's case against King, said he never saw a contract for a 1991 fight between Julio Cesar Chavez and Harold Brazier. The bout was canceled after Chavez cut his nose, triggering an effort to collect on the policy with Lloyd's of London.

Prosecutors say King, charged with nine counts of wire fraud, faked the front page of the contract to include a phrase that described training expenses paid to Chavez as non-refundable to collect the insurance payout.

NHL

■ DETROIT — The Detroit Red Wings traded right wing Ray Sheppard, a 52-goal scorer in 1993-94, to the San Jose Sharks for center Igor Larionov.

Sheppard, 29, had two goals and two assists in five games for Detroit this season. Larionov, 34, who played on the Soviet Union's 1984 and 1988 Olympic champion teams, had a goal and an assist in four games.



JAMIE CLARK The Gamecock

The LSU game marked a turning point in the Gamecocks season, as they have won three straight games. The Tennessee game Saturday has been tabbed as the biggest game in USC's SEC history.

land, is not scared of bad environments. A few years ago, he was part of a Florida State 51-31 rout of Michigan in Ann Arbor, the nation's largest collegiate stadium, with a capacity of 109,000.

This game, regardless of the outcome, will push Steve Taneyhill into the national spotlight. ESPN was on campus earlier this week doing a spot on the nation's fourth most productive quarterback, and the H word is starting to float around in Gamecock country. If Carolina gets the win, this week or in two weeks against Florida, Taneyhill becomes a legitimate candidate.

■ Oh by the way. In case you didn't realize it, there are some other games going on this weekend. The biggest Top 25 game pits the No. 2 Cornhuskers of Nebraska against No. 7 Colorado in Boulder.

The Buffaloes are tough to beat at home, and have played well all year. The Huskers might be too lethal on of-

fense. A Nebraska-FSU Fiesta Bowl seems eminent.

■ Rambling wrecks. The ACC has got to be the most enigmatic conference in the country. First Maryland starts off 4-0 with a second string quarterback, but then falls apart when the starter comes back. Second, North Carolina starts the season slow but upset Virginia, only to fall to Georgia Tech a week later.

The Yellow Jackets host the boys from TigerTown Saturday in a key matchup. Both teams have played fairly well this season, but it is too hard to tell which teams will show up. Can Clemson's defense keep up the same intensity it had shutting out Maryland last weekend, or will Georgia Tech prove that North Carolina victory wasn't a fluke?

In one word: No. This game is going to be ugly.

■ Around the Graveyard. As both soccer seasons begin to wind down, its time to honor the best and the brightest on the Gamecock soccer squads.

Congrats to coach Sue Kelly on a fine Lady Gamecock soccer season. She came to Carolina just weeks before the signing date and put together a competitive squad. Debbie Smith has provided the veteran leadership while Lexi Tourtellote and Perry Moniuszko showed off their young talent.

On the men's side, the Gamecocks showed the pollsters why you shouldn't leave one of the nation's top programs off the preseason Top 20 with the upset win over Clemson. The Gamecocks have played their traditionally tough schedule well and should get another bid to the NCAA.

I have said it before: Clint Mathis has Player of the Year potential and another two years to prove it. This team is going to be a great squad for years to come.

POINT BLANK
Ryan Wilson

Monumental, mammoth, huge, big. These words can all be used to describe Saturday's meeting between the Gamecock and the Volunteers.

Before the season started, this game loomed more than any other game in Carolina's schedule. Two months ago I had written this game off as a rough road loss, with the Gamecocks succumbing to the mind-numbing confines of Neyland Stadium.

During the past week, I started to realize that there is a good chance the Gamecocks could pull the upset over the nation's fifth-ranked team. Granted, I have been dubbed the great optimist by my colleagues, but I really have faith in Brad Scott's squad.

Make no mistake about it, Tennessee is a fine team that has played well this season. Tennessee has only one blemish on their record this season, the 62-17 drubbing at the hands of the Florida Gators in the third game of the season. Big deal, right? I guess most think they were supposed to lose to Florida, but it is how they lost that is important.

In the first half of that game, the Vols dominated Florida like no other team has done this season. The Vols apparently didn't show up in the second half as the Gators rolled off 49 unanswered points and turned the game into a rout. The Vols rebounded from that game and beat the next four opponents by an average of over 20 points, but the collapse at Florida will be what defines their season.

As most of you know, Florida runs a high-octane offense that beats you with a dominant passing game. Sound familiar? The Gamecock offense is very similar to the Gators, a deliberate passing attack that opens up a quality running game. If the game against the Vols turns into a track meet, it favors the Gamecocks.

I know, you think I am being too optimistic considering the Gamecocks are 16 point underdogs playing in one of the nations loudest stadiums. Brad Scott, who has never coached in Ney-

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