December 12, 1991

I meant no harm, Magic tells women

BASKETBAll

NEW YORK; Wednesday

Magic Johnson was only joking

when he told sports illustrated

that he tried to "accommodate as

many women" as he could and

says "I respect women to the utmost"

in 'a broadcast interview to

air Wednesday.

Johnson also told CBS interviewer

Connie Chung he has suffered

no side effects from taking

the Aids drug AZT, and admitted

tennis star Martina Navratilova

was probably right in saying the

public would not have been supportive

of her if she had the aids

virus.

Johnson announced on

November 7 that he was retiring

from basketball with the Los Angeles Lakers because he had contracted

HIV, the virus that

causes Aids. Since then, the has

become a national spokesman for

the disease.

'Johnson authored *a Sports Illustrated*

article with Roy Johnson

for the issue that came out

after his announcement in which

he said he contracted the virus

through heterosexual, unprotected

sex.

In transcripts obtained by the

Associated Press, however, John-son told Chung: "We were just

talking and I said that in a jokingly

manner ... when you interpret that, you think 'ah, he's just

sleeping with everybody,' And

that's not like that. Not at all...

When you say I tried a accommodate

all these women, then

you get into a disrespect for

women, and I - I'm not like that.

I really respect women, and I just

should've been protecting myself,

as well as my partner, and I

didn't." Johnson said "I used a bad

choice of words," and admitted

again that he "lived a bachelor's

life at that particular time. And

I'm paying' the price for it."

Johnson said his AZT treatments

had produced no ill side

effects, which can include Anemia,

Nausea and muscle pain.

"I've run four miles a day, I lift

weights," he said. Shortly after

Johnson's ' announcement,

Navratilova, who is gay, complained

of a double standard in

American society. She said that

while Johnson was cast as a hero,

people would have said she deserved

it if she had made a similar

announcement - and society

would have castigated any heterosexual

woman found in such a

situation. (AP)