

the sports

viewpoint

By SEAN PETTY  
Battalion Sports Editor



Pitchers vs. batters; Who will win game?

Here we are sports fans, near the end of yet another long semester school. And once again, you have given it the old college try. Being a sportswriter of sorts, I find it interesting that you can relate most anything in life to sports. I mean, just think, you can compare most with a baseball or football game or any other sport. And now that it's the bottom of the ninth inning so to speak, it's time to take a look back at the first eight-and-a-half innings of this semester or you or I, the batter, saw it. You are also going to have to make a decision here in the bottom of the ninth as to what kind of strategy you will use to win the battle of the books.

But let's go back to the beginning of the season. It was early January and you left winter camp (your home at Christmas break) with hopes of finishing with a perfect record, or a 4.0, by the time May rolled around. Some of you had nifty slogans to get you fired up like, "3.9 in '79" or "9 and who knows, maybe even 1.9 in '79."

And some of you knew that this was a rebuilding year and that a 4.0 was impossible so you and the front office (your parents) might settle for something a little less than perfect. You might even be able to at least play .500 ball all semester and pull a 2.0. Plus you had to travel to college station and play the entire season on the road, away from the home crowd. Jimmy the Greek would definitely have to take those tangibles into consideration when he forecasted your final season standing.

And another thing, you had to face an experienced group of pitchers (teachers) who had an unfair advantage over you because they already knew all the material of the courses you were taking while you ventured into your 15 hours as a rookie.

Oh, you might have had some scouting reports on what kind of game they pitched from players who had played against them the previous semester but you still weren't sure how you would play them. Does that meteorology teacher still make you turn in those ridiculous reports about the weather in Olympia, Wash.? Or will he change his strategy this spring?

So you played for several weeks until that first big series. You knew this four-game (four test) stand would be crucial to the final standings so you brought the meat of the lineup in. You spent all night before each game, going over the pitchers' best pitches. And by the end of that first week of tests you were either on top of the division or floundering in the cellar.

But you continued to play on up to the All-Star break (spring break). You played the first half with nagging injuries such as hangovers. You played with three hours of sleep in three days. You even missed a few practices (classes) because you felt you needed to give your batters a rest. But there was no one to put in your place.

So after spring break you started to realize just how low you might finish and the front office let you know what they felt about your recent slump. And you knew you were going to have to rally after the break in order to save the franchise.

Just as you started your rally though, the sun came out. All of a sudden you found yourself spending afternoons away from practice. You ended up on softball fields, at baseball games, at the swimming pool. You started to get out of shape and the pitchers were getting ahead of you again.

And now, with approximately one week left in the season, it's time for the big push. Some of us have already been mathematically eliminated from having winning seasons but others are still hanging in here.

It's time for you to make the decision. It's the bottom of the ninth, you're one run down, have two men on, two outs and the count is three balls and two strikes. Will you strike out next week? Or will you knock both men in with a shot to right field? Well, it's up to you. Only you know how the pitchers will pitch.

As for me, well, it's a rebuilding year. Good luck slugger.

Spurs make history

United Press International  
SAN ANTONIO — George Gervin and Mike Green scored the critical points in the last 90 seconds Wednesday night to give San Antonio a 111-108 victory over the Philadelphia 76ers to send the Spurs into the NBA Eastern Conference championship series against the Washington Bullets.

The win gave San Antonio its first playoff victory in three years of NBA existence.

San Antonio let an 18-point lead slip away and fell behind, 104-100, with 3:33 to play.

But Louie Dampier hit a basket and Mark Olberding hit a free throw to tie the game at 104-104 and with 1:27 to play, Gervin hit a free throw that put the Spurs in front for good.

After a missed shot by Philadelphia's Maurice Cheeks, Green made two free throws to give San Antonio a three-point lead.

Julius Erving cut the 76ers' deficit to one with two free shots with a minute to play, but a crucial basket by Green with 43 seconds left raised the Spurs lead to three points.

Two free throws by Gervin with 11 seconds to play, following a missed shot by Philadelphia's Bobby Jones, clinched the game and the series for San Antonio.

Gervin, the NBA's leading scorer for the past two years, scored 33 points and Larry Kenon added 27 to the Spurs cause. Green, who started at center in place of the injured Billy Paultz, hit 18, including nine in the final period.

Erving scored 34 to lead the 76ers, who were hampered by the loss of Darryl Dawkins.

Dawkins injured a knee early in the game, returned to play most of the first and all of the second quarter, but left the game again early in the second half and finished with only 11 points.

San Antonio, which in 11 years of playing in the ABA and NBA had never won a seven-game series until Wednesday night, will open the Eastern Conference title round in Landover, Md., Friday night with the second game set for Sunday afternoon.

In addition to Green, the Spurs had an unlikely hero in Dampier, the 11-year veteran who had seen little action in the playoffs.

Dampier was called on to guard Cheeks through much of the second half and limited the hot-shooting Philadelphia guard to 20 points.

Dampier also made a long-range shot with 2:15 to play that cut Philadelphia's lead to one point and started San Antonio's momentum that carried the Spurs to the victory.

San Antonio's largest lead came midway through the second quarter at 43-25. But Philadelphia had cut that deficit to nine points by the end of the half and the 76ers went ahead late in the third period.

The lead changed hands nine times in the fourth quarter.

"If we had been knocked out this time we would have been crushed," said San Antonio coach Doug Moe, whose club had lost in the first round last year to Washington and in the opening round the year before that to Boston.

"As far as I'm concerned, Washington doesn't exist right now. When you win a big series, you just want to enjoy it."

Moe had special praise for Green, his lean center who had to battle the more muscular 76ers inside. "Mike is a good shooter," the coach said, "but he has been off. I think when he took that last shot I said 'oh no.'"

"One thing's for sure," said Philadelphia coach Billy Cunningham, "I couldn't ask the players to play any harder. It was a tough loss. There were two teams out there that really went down to the wire."

PHILADELPHIA (108)  
C. Jones 3-5-8 11, B. Jones 6 1-2 13, Dawkins 4 3-4 11, Erving 11 12-16 34, Cheeks 9 2-5 20, Mix 7 2-2 16, Bibby 0 1-2 1, Money 1 0-0 2, Totals 41 26-39 108.

SAN ANTONIO (111)  
Kenon 11 5-7 27, Olberding 2 5-6 9, Green 7 6-7 20, Silas 2 3-4 7, Gervin 12 9-10 33, Gale 2 1-2 5, Dampier 2 0-0 4, Dietrick 3 0-0 6, Brissett 0 0-0 0, Totals 41 29-36 111.

Philadelphia 20 27 34 27-108  
San Antonio 29 27 22 33-111  
Fouled out — Silas. Total fouls — Philadelphia 29, San Antonio 30. Technical foul — None. A — 16,055.

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