

the sports

Bosox catcher's future in question

Fisk fighting anxiety, pain on bench

NEW YORK — If he didn't try to ease the doubt, ease the anxiety, Carlton Fisk would be watching the Boston Red Sox check the dugout and you're likely to see how one man keeps from becoming a prisoner of his own mind.

Whenever the uncertainty of his position and his own restlessness inspire to gang up on Boston's big incapacitated catcher, he automatically gets up from the bench and walks over to the bat rack as if that's what he's programmed to do. Actually, he's not.

"I don't know how many times a day I get up and go to the bat rack," he says, laying aside a pocket book he is reading in front of his locker. Reading every chance he gets is another way he seeks to keep

from brooding about the muscle tear in his right arm which has interrupted his career and even threatens to end it.

Beyond all question, Fisk is one of the finest catchers in the game. Also one of the most durable, despite being on the disabled list for protracted periods twice during his career. His present arm trouble first drew attention during spring training when it was discovered that a tear in the wrist flexor muscle of his right arm, where that muscle is attached to his elbow, made it terribly painful for him to throw the ball. What it amounted to is that he could hardly throw at all, so all Red Sox Manager Don Zimmer did was use him as a designated hitter and pinch hitter from time to time.

Rest and later exercise were prescribed for his elbow and Fisk did exactly as he was told.

"I was patient for two months," he says. "I took my time coming back. The elbow was feeling good. What made me feel optimistic was the fact I was throwing well on the sidelines. Two weeks ago, I told Zimmer I was ready to catch and I did in a couple of games, playing seven innings in each game. Out side of my legs feeling a little stiff and my elbow being a little tender, I thought I did pretty well."

Well enough, so that Fisk was ready for his big test 12 days ago. He would go all the way if he could, catch the whole game against Detroit, it was decided.

"I caught nine innings with (Dennis) Eckersley pitching," says the strapping 31-year-old New Englander, "and didn't feel anything when I threw out (Steve) Kemp at third in the fourth inning. The following inning, though, I swung at

one of (Jack) Morris' off-speed pitches and missed, and I could really feel it in my elbow. A little later, (Ron) LeFlore stole second. I made a throw that bounced and I thought my arm was coming off. I knew then it was all over. I couldn't lift my arm for four or five days."

The aspect that worries Fisk most is not knowing how long, if ever, it will take for his elbow to be all right again, a day, a month, a year or maybe never again, which is something that's difficult for him to put out of his mind.

"They never told me how long it would take," he says, mournfully. "Yeah, I'm worried. Not so much about not playing at this time as not knowing when the elbow will heal. They said it'll take time and exercise. O.K., I did all that. If I listen to the doctors, they say, 'Take your time.' Don't force it. Don't rush

it. On the other hand, I'm the only one who knows how it feels. It gives you a useless feeling sitting and doing nothing like this. I caught 350 games the last two years and I'm not comfortable when I can't do anything."

With his elbow giving him the trouble it is, Fisk still feels he's capable of playing some position. The logical spot would be first base, but the Red Sox have Carl Yastrzemski and Bobby Watson playing the bag. If need be, Jim Dwyer also is available. Fisk has thrown the Red Sox some hints he wouldn't mind switching to first base. They act as if they haven't heard him.

Their feeling is they have the All-Star catcher and they'd like him to catch for them again before they resign themselves to trying him somewhere else.

Can you believe it?

United Press International
HOUSTON — July 13 is the last date baseball fans can buy Houston Astros season tickets and have an option to purchase National League playoff and World Series tickets. And talk of the World Series spreads as the Astros keep winning.

An Astros season ticket bought before the team returns to begin its next homestand July 10 was \$234 for field box, \$175.50 for mezzanine and \$139.50 for loge.

That price included 39 single games and two doubleheaders.

One season ticket entitled the holder to an option for one ticket for each game of the playoffs and the World Series. Astros spokesman Ed Wade said a season ticket did not always entitle a buyer to an option for the same seat during post-season play because of the large number of tickets which go to other ballclubs.

Americans pan gold at Pan Am games

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — The United States swimming and diving team, after raking in all 12 gold medals during the first two days of competition in the Pan American games took Wednesday off because of Independence Day, giving some other American teams a chance to shine.

The young U.S. men's baseball team, which defeated Mexico, 18-0, in its opener Tuesday, took on Canada at 3 p.m.; the women's softball team, which downed El Salvador, 10-0, in a game stopped by darkness after five innings, faced the Dominican Republic at 6 p.m., and the boxing squad sent two members into action with flyweight Jerome Coffee of Nashville, Tenn. facing Alberto Roman of Mexico and welterweight Ed Green of Fort Bragg, N.C. taking on Bradley Austin of Barbados.

The men's basketball team, fresh from two victories including Tuesday night's 85-53 romp past Cuba, took the day off as did the women. The men's softball team, which downed Canada, 3-0, also got a day of rest but competition in cycling, soccer, gymnastics, wrestling, rowing, softball, shooting, archery and

volleyball continued.

Tuesday night's swimming and diving stars were led by 15-year-old Cynthia Woodhead of Riverside, Calif., who broke her own world mark in the 200-meter freestyle. Woodhead's 1:58.43 beat the 1:58.57 she turned in during the world championships in West Berlin in 1978.

Kim Linehan of Sarasota, Fla., finished second in 2:01.92 while Canada's Gail Anundrud was third in 2:03.38.

The Americans apparently finished 1-2 in the 100-meter backstroke when Linda Jezek of Los Altos, Calif. defeated Kim Carlisle of Cincinnati by 1:03.33 to 1:04.64. Carlisle, however, was disqualified for failing to touch the end of the pool on her turn and Canada's Cheryl Gibson was moved up to second.

U.S. Coach Frank Keefe said he would lodge an official protest.

Tracy Caulkins, the 16-year-old U.S. star, was upset by 15-year-old teammate Tami Paumier of Columbia, Md. in the 100-meter breaststroke, with Paumier winning in 1:12.20.

Puerto Rican-born Jesse Vassallo of Mission Viejo, Calif. got an

enthusiastic and warm reception when he swam to a nine-second victory over Canada's Bill Sawchuk to take the 400-meter individual medley in 4:21.63. Alex Bauman of Canada was third and Glynn Perry of Jonesboro, Ga. was fourth.

"I didn't know what to expect," said Vassallo. "I was apprehensive until this morning's heats but the crowd was pretty enthusiastic then so I wasn't worried. I've always swum for the United States and I can't change now."

The U.S. continued to collect gold medals when the men's freestyle relay team of Jack Babashoff, David Larson, David McCagg and John Newton defeated Canada to win the 4x100 freestyle relay in 3:23.71. Canada was clocked in 3:29.64 and Brazil was third in 3:30.86.

In the men's springboard diving, 19-year-old Greg Louganis of Mission Viejo defeated three-time world and 1976 Olympic champion Phil Boggs of Miami for the first time in international competition. Louganis finished with 627.84 points to Boggs' 593.24.

In roller skating, new to the Pan American games, the United States continued to dominate with Tom

Peterson taking the 5,000-meter speed skating, Ken Sutton, Muskegon, Mich., winning the 500-meter round robin; and Fred Morante of Plainville, N.Y., winning the men's freestyle figure skating. Argentina's Nore Vega won the women's 500-meter racing over Linda Dorso of Kingston, N.Y. and Elaine Coley of Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

In shooting, the U.S. took all five medals available. Donald Mygord won the individual air rifle with teammate Donald Hamilton second. Lones Wigger, Camp Perry, Ohio, won the individual English match and in the team competition the U.S. took the air rifle, English match and skeet shooting.

The U.S. women's volleyball

team defeated Peru, 15-8, 15-12, 15-13, and the water polo team edged Canada, 6-4.

In tennis, Trey Lewis, San Pedro, Calif.; Fritz Buehning, Short Hills, N.J.; Susie Hagey, La Jolla, Calif.; Andy Kohlberg, Larchmont, N.Y.; Mel Purcell, Murray, Ky. and Ann Hendricksson, Mahtomedi, Minn., all were successful in their matches.

After the first two days of competition, the U.S. held a commanding lead over Canada in medals won, with 24 gold, 14 silver and six bronze for a total of 44. Canada has 19 medals, including three gold, five silver and 11 bronze while Argentina, with three golds and a total of 10, leads Cuba with one gold and 10 altogether.

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Astros 'Cruz' to 2-1 victory over Cincinnati

CINCINNATI — Jose Cruz doubled home Rafael Landestoy, took third on Enos Cabell's infield hit and scored the winning run on Jeff Leonard's pinch single in the seventh inning Wednesday to lead the Houston Astros to a 3-2 victory over the Cincinnati Reds.

The triumph was the fifth in a row

and 14th in 16 games for the Astros, who stretched their lead in the National League West to 10 games.

Joaquin Andujar, with relief help from Joe Sambito, notched his 10th victory against four losses. The save was the ninth of the season for Sambito, who blanked the Reds the last two innings to extend his string of scoreless innings to 32 over 22 games. Bill Bonham, 3-2, took the loss.

Ken Griffey led off the game with his seventh homer of the season and the Reds made it 2-0 in the fifth when Dan Driessen doubled and scored on Cesar Geronimo's single.

The Astros got one run back in the sixth when Art Howe singled, advanced to third when Hector Cruz muffed a ball for a two-base error and scored on Alan Ashby's infield out.

A free-for-all in the sixth inning resulted in the ejection of Reds third baseman Ray Knight and Astros first baseman Cesar Cedeño. The bench-clearing incident occurred when Andujar whizzed a ball past Joe Morgan's head in the fourth and Reds starter Bill Bonham retaliated with a pitch behind the Astro right-hander's back when he came to the plate in the sixth.

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