

the sports

Longmuir sets royal pace in Open

United Press International
 LYTHAM ST. ANNES, England — Defending champion Jack Nicklaus holed-in-one and U.S. Open champion Hale Irwin shot his best-ever round for the tournament Wednesday, but it was little-known British pro Bill Longmuir who stole the thunder with a pace-setting 6-under-par 65 to take the early first round lead in the 108th British Open Championship.

Longmuir, a 26-year-old Scot who kept his pro career going on the proceeds of two "Mr. Personality" contest wins at disco clubs and a six-month stint driving trucks, reeled off six birdies over the front nine to equal the Open record of 29 and then "hung on like grim death" coming back in the teeth of a biting wind in even par.

"My hat's off to him. What a round of golf, incredible," said Irwin, praising Longmuir's performance.

Nicklaus, seeking his fourth British Open title, was moved to comment: "Sixty-five? I don't believe the score or the person, it's fictitious. It's certainly some round, though. He did pretty well today."

Irwin, whose best Open finish in five previous attempts was ninth in 1976, was pleased with his round in which he picked up three birdies on the difficult back nine for a 33 after covering the first nine holes in even-par with one birdie and one bogie.

"It's my best round in the British Open," the 34-year-old bespectacled

American from Frontenac, Mo., said later.

"I drove reasonably well. I hit it solidly. I played the back nine reasonably well because all the shots downwind are very hard to control. Wind is not necessarily an asset on the opening nine — sometimes it is almost a hindrance. You can't control the ball and it gets away from you quite easily. On the second nine you are fighting against the wind all the time."

Irwin dropped a stroke at the 393-yard par-4 fifth when he three-putted from 40 feet, but then got

down in two from 30 feet at the 551-yard seventh, the longest hole on the 6,822-yard course, for a birdie four.

He started the back nine in scintillating style with birdies at three of the first four holes, including a 35-foot putt at the 11th, and then played the final five holes in even par.

"It was a well managed day, which could have got away from me," he said. "I made some good putts, but missed birdie chances on the fifth and sixth holes (where he missed two 10 footers)."

In contrast, Nicklaus felt he let a good chance slip away after making the 10th hole-in-one of his career at the par-3 212-yard fifth hole with his 5-iron tee shot. "Oddly enough I hit the ball well and when I saw it rolling I walked to the front of the tee and saw it disappear. I felt good," said the "Golden Bear."

"From one over-par (he dropped a stroke at the fourth where he missed an eight-foot putt) I was suddenly 1-under," Nicklaus then birdied the next two holes and reached the turn in 32.

Coaches head to 'Cowtown'

United Press International
 FORT WORTH — Almost 8,000 members of the Texas High School Coaches' Association, the largest high school coaching organization in the world, will gather next week to review past seasons, look ahead to the coming year and attend several clinics.

The occasion is the 47th annual coaching school opening Tuesday and continuing through Saturday in the Tarrant County Convention Center. Registration begins at 10 a.m., but officials said more than 5,000 have pre-registered.

From a meager registration of 251 at the first school in Dallas in 1935, attendance ballooned to 7,385 in Houston last year. L.W. McConachie, executive vice president of the THSCA, said membership now exceeds 8,500 and is growing every year.

"Each year we have more schools in Texas," he said, "and with more schools we have more coaches. We may be just short of 8,000 in attendance this year."

A THSCA directors meeting on Tuesday precedes the school. The high school basketball and football all-stars and coaches check in at Texas Christian University Sunday afternoon and begin workouts Monday.

This year the basketball game is scheduled at 7:30 p.m. Friday at the convention center. The football game will be Saturday at 7:30 p.m. in TCU's Amon Carter Stadium.

In addition to a number of outstanding Texas high school football, basketball and track coaches, the 1979 school will feature several university coaches of national importance.

Instructors for football include

Hayden Fry, University of Louisiana; Augie Tammariello, University of Southern Louisiana; and Lester Ler, defensive coordinator at University of Texas at Austin.

The basketball staff includes Gerald Myers of Texas Tech University and Dean Smith of the University of North Carolina. Les Blackwood of the University of Texas at Austin and Charlie Thomas of Texas A&M University head the instruction.

A full program for coaches of sports has been scheduled with Ridgway of the University of Texas at Arlington lecturing on volleyball. Miriam Sater of Texas Wesleyan College handling basketball, and Bert Lyle of Texas Woman's University discussing track.

Ross Bailey of TCU will be handling clinics and Joe Dean, promotion director for the Cooper Rubber Co., will be a special speaker.

Frank Bevers of Dallas Highland Park will head the North Texas ball coaching staff and Bob McCall of Temple heads the South Texas squad. The North leads the 25-15 and there have been four North wins last year, 7-4.

James Boynton of Abilene State will coach the North basketball and David Middleton of Brainerd the South. The North also leads series, 18-16, including a 18-0 victory last year.

"We expect a record attendance by our members," said Charles Qualls of Mesquite, president of the association.

Qualls will be replaced by president-elect Eddie Joseph Wharton at the final business meeting of the school. During that session new president-elect will be chosen.



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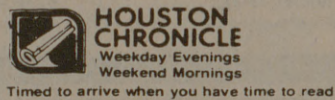
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Rested Astros hit the road

United Press International
 HOUSTON — The surprising Houston Astros begin post All-Star play today in first place for the first time in the team's history.

The Astros are 5 1/2 games ahead of the Cincinnati Reds and 8 1/2 games ahead of the San Francisco Giants.

"I was strong in the second half of last season," said pitcher J.R. Richard, who has been a disappointment so far this year. He will need to match his 10-2 record in the second half of 1978 to improve his current 7-10 record to the level of his finishes the past three years.

"But last year does not do much for me right now, although I do feel I am relaxed. Just look at what's happening now. I've pitched well for the last month and my record has gone downhill," he said.

Houston returns to action today for five road games at Pittsburgh and St. Louis, and this week's short rest could be the trigger for better hitting. Manager Bill Virdon thinks the layoff might help.

Richard was not the only Astros' pitcher to improve his record in the second half of last season. Joe Niekro was 8-6 and Ken Forsch was 8-3.

Generally, Houston's pitching has been excellent this season. But team hitting, which is currently a lowly .245, is off from last year's team .257 average. Jose Cruz, who hit .315 in 1978, is not hitting as well. Neither are Enos Cabell (.295 last year), Cesar Cedeño (.281), Art Howe (.293) or pinch-hitter Jesus Alou (.324).

"Funny things are happening," .286-hitting Terry Puhl said. "We are not hitting early as well as we did last year and we are in the lead. I wouldn't have believed it."

"The good thing is, we are going to come out of it and start pounding people."

Woodlands wants pro tennis action

United Press International
 HOUSTON — Oilman and real estate developer George Mitchell has offered to build a 10,000-seat tennis stadium at The Woodlands if professional tennis decides to develop a new tournament in the Houston area.

Mitchell, president of Mitchell Energy & Development Corp., which owns the Woodlands resort, said Tuesday he was not trying to replace the annual River Oaks Tennis Tournament, but he said "some day it will outgrow its facilities," a stadium on the grounds of River Oaks Country Club.

"We have told the ATP (Association of Tennis Professionals) that if River Oaks ever wishes to give it up, we'd be happy to build a tennis stadium at The Woodlands," Mitchell said.

Mitchell noted that in the last two years, top players including Jimmy Connors and Bjorn Borg, have skipped River Oaks, and he said ATP inability to guarantee star appearances would be a barrier to developing a new tournament.

"The sponsors don't know if they're going to show up," Mitchell said. "You can't plan a facility unless they're required to play in certain tournaments and professional golfers are."

The Woodlands hosts the Houston Open golf tournament.

Harry Parten, head professional at River Oaks, said recent complaints about a shortage of River Oaks tournament tickets available to the public have arisen only during the tournament.

"There are plenty of seats available for the first six days, but the public complains when it can't get to see the finals," Parten said. "Public in this case is anyone who can't get a ticket."

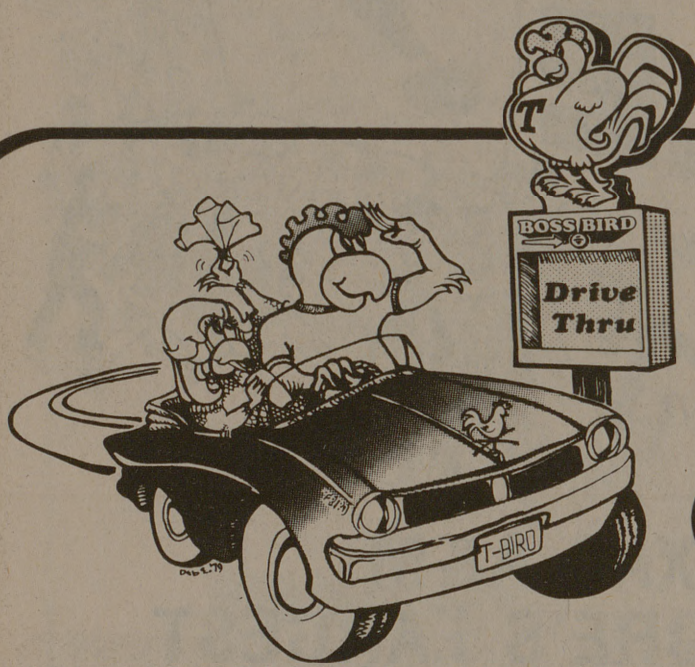
Parten also said the main reason players skip River Oaks is "they need the money and can suit themselves. I think there's too much talk about whether a tournament Borg or Connors and about the size of the stadium."

"George Mitchell is one of the greatest promoters of tennis in the world, but there's a tradition involved in the River Oaks. It's more of a social event than an athletic event."

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