

Weaver: the baseball wizard

United Press International
BALTIMORE — You look at Earl Weaver and see how everyone is raving on his bandwagon now, it's hard to imagine you're looking at a man who could go into the record books as one of baseball's greatest managers.

What makes it so hard to think of him in that context is because he doesn't fit into the same general mold as the vast majority of great managers before him, men like Tom Seaver, John McGraw, Miller Huggins and Joe McCarthy.

For the most part, all of them were austere, solemn and not really given to laughing or joking around with their players. Earl Weaver does both.

It doesn't seem to impair either their effectiveness, though. Weaver begins participating in the sixth American League playoff against the California Angels tonight in Baltimore, in what he hopes will lead to their fourth pennant and second world championship under him in 12 years.

His winning percentage of .597 for that period, representing 1,101 games compared with only 743

losses, is higher than the figures compiled by Mack, McGraw or Huggins and isn't that far off McCarthy's astronomical .614.

Weaver becomes a bit self-conscious whenever someone asks him how it feels to be regarded the best manager in baseball.

"I try not to think about it because there's a lotta people in the country who don't think so," laughs the Orioles' stocky little pilot. "Generally, the only thing I ever think about is how to win the next one — like tonight's game with California."

If Weaver does go on to rate with the greatest managers after he's all finished, he'll have one thing in common with Joe McCarthy. Neither ever played a single game in the major leagues.

"That was my dream — to be a big league ballplayer," says the 49-year-old Weaver. "I never made it."

Weaver grew up in St. Louis, which had two big league clubs at the time, the Cards and the Browns. His father, Earl Sr., had a dry cleaning shop not far from old Sportsman's Park and the senior Weaver did the uniforms for the players of both clubs.

"I was a pretty fair second baseman around St. Louis as a kid and my Dad wanted me to sign with the Browns," Weaver says. "I worked out with them. My Dad was a good friend of Freddie Hofmann, who was a scout for the Browns, and after Freddie watched me for awhile, my Dad said to him, 'I want you to tell me the truth — how good is he?'"

"Freddie told him, 'Class A — tops.'"

"My Dad was so mad, he didn't speak to him for a year."

Weaver and his father then went over to the Cardinals where Walter Shannon, now with the Brewers, was overseeing the club's farm system.

"Shannon is a helluva salesman," Weaver says. "He took me over to one of the windows in the office where I could look down onto the field, and he said to me, 'See second base out there. You'll be playing there in four years. That was all I had to hear.'"

Weaver's father felt they should check the Browns once more, so they did. Jim McLaughlin who was the farm director was completely up front with him. So was Bill DeWitt, who was running the club.

"They told me they didn't know if I could hit good enough," Weaver remembers. "They said 'Your speed is questionable and we don't know if your arm is good enough, but we'll give you a Double A player's contract with San Antonio. That's the best we can do.'"

Weaver decided to sign with the Cardinals, who optioned him to West Frankfort in the Illinois State League. He didn't break down any fences there as a rookie in 1948 nor at St. Joseph or Winston-Salem the following seasons.

When Red Schoendienst, the Cardinals' regular second baseman, held out early in 1952, Weaver was invited to spring training with St. Louis.

"I hit .260 or .270 in spring training and had some outside hope, but after Schoendienst signed, I was sent back to the minors and never got another shot," Weaver says.

"Now I look back and say Jim McLaughlin and Bill DeWitt were just being honest with me. As a manager, I appreciate that more than ever now. I'll tell you one thing about my not making the big leagues as a ballplayer. Nobody could've tried harder than I did."

A&M-Tech to be seen in G. Rollie

Tickets are on sale now for the closed-circuit showing of the Texas A&M-Texas Tech football game Saturday night in G. Rollie White Coliseum.

The tickets are \$3 for A&M students, faculty and staff and \$5 for the general public there will be no reserved seats and the coliseum can accommodate about 7,000 fans. The game will be in color and shown on a 16-foot screen.

The ticket office in G. Rollie White Coliseum will be open from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 to 4 through Friday.

Tickets will also go on sale at the coliseum at 6:30 p.m. Saturday, one hour prior to the game's kickoff in Jones Stadium in Lubbock.

Stargell's homer and Pirates beat Reds, 5-2

The Pittsburgh Pirates won the first game of the National League playoffs, beating the Cincinnati Reds 5-2 on a three-run home run by Willie Stargell in the 11th inning.

Phil Garner started the scoring for the Pirates when he blasted a home run over the right-field fence in the third inning. Then Omar Moreno scored on a sacrifice fly giving the Bucs a 2-0 lead.

The Reds tied the score in the bottom of the third on a George Foster home run and the score remained tied until the 11th inning when Pirates' Tim Lincecum hit a single. Dave Parker followed with a single. Stargell brought both of them in with his three-run shot off Cincinnati reliever, Tom Hume.

The Reds loaded the bases in the bottom of the 11th but the threat was killed when Ray Knight struck out to end the game.

The second game of the best-of-five series will be played in Cincinnati again, starting at 2:15 (CDT) today.

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Volleyballers host Horns

The Texas A&M women's volleyball team, ranked eighth in the nation and second in the state, will host the University of Texas tonight at 7:30 p.m. in G. Rollie White Coliseum.

The Aggies are 9-7 on the year and defeated the Longhorns in Austin earlier this year, winning three out of five games.

"Texas had a very strong, hard-hitting team," said A&M coach Dave Schakel. "We will have to play good defense and be consistent to win."

Tonight's match is free to the public.

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Pitching could decide AL series

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BALTIMORE — California's Nolan Ryan, scheduled to pitch against Baltimore's Jim Palmer in the American League playoffs, like most short series, will turn on pitching.

"I think our pitching is going to have to keep us in the ballgame," said Ryan, the righthander, who can throw a baseball close to 100 mph

despite his 32 years and a history of occasional injuries.

"Baltimore pitching has been very tough on us all year," he continued. "Our pitching is going to have to give our hitters a chance to score some runs."

Baltimore, which won the East Division by eight games with 102 victories, most in baseball, features

a deep, well-balanced pitching staff that includes not only Palmer but lefthander Mike Flanagan, the favorite for the Cy Young Award.

By contrast, the Angels are the hittingest team in the game, scoring 866 runs or 5.3 per outing en route to an 88-74 record and their first-ever divisional title. Nevertheless, Ryan feels pitching is the key.

"I have the feeling that everything is coming together at the right time," said Ryan.

Lefthander Frank Tanana and righty Chris Knapp, two starters who endured virtually lost seasons, are both healthy and pitching well. Mark Clear, the 23-year-old reliever who was in the running for the Rookie of the Year Award until he hurt his shoulder, says he feels nearly 100 percent.

Still, the Angels' No. 1 hope is Ryan, who has not had good success against Baltimore.

"They've been one of the tougher teams in the American League for me," Ryan admitted. "I don't have any reason for it. But I feel very comfortable starting this game."

California will be without infielder Willie Aikens (knee surgery), outfielder Joe Rudi (right Achilles tendon), and pitcher Jim Barr (bad knuckle on pitching hand).

For Baltimore, outfielder Cary Roenicke was examined Monday after being struck in the left elbow during batting practice Sunday and X-rays proved negative. He should be able to play Wednesday as should shortstop Mark Belanger and outfielder John Lowenstein, both of whom have been injured.

Whitey isn't rehired

United Press International
KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The Kansas City Royals, who failed this season to make the American League playoffs for the first time in four years, said Tuesday manager Whitey Herzog would not be rehired for the 1980 season.

The Royals' spokesman said Herzog had met with executive vice president and general manager Joe Burke yesterday in the day to discuss his situation.

"We did not offer Whitey Herzog

a contract," the spokesman said. "Joe said he made the decision for the best interests of the Royals organization. The coaches are also free to seek employment elsewhere."

This season the Royals finished second in the American League West, three games behind the front-running California Angels.

Herzog had guided Kansas City to the Western Division championship in his three previous full seasons at the Royals helm.

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