

Reflections

by Richard Oliver



All-Star game is big debacle

I wonder what Houston Astros' manager Bill Virdon must have felt in the top of the ninth inning while coaching the National League All-Stars from the first base coaching box.

On the mound, Chicago's Bruce Sutter was mowing down the American League's finest, and the National League bench was already buzzing over the plays and memories that had been made this Tuesday evening.

As Virdon probably moved his gaze down the National League dugout bench, he saw soiled uniforms and happy grins, undoubtedly. But when he reached the end of the dugout bench, one spotless white uniform could be seen — none other than the first place Astros' Jose Cruz.

Cruz, the consistent, exciting Houston left fielder who after several premiere seasons had finally reached one of the pinnacles of baseball, sat unused and most likely disappointed — the only National League regular who didn't see action.

If one remembers last year when the only unused player in the All-Star game was Houston's Joe Niekro, it hardly seems fair. Even then, more than one baseball fan wondered quizzically what the National League's winningest pitcher was doing sitting on the bench throughout a game that is billed as being a contest of the major league's best.

Perhaps it can be argued that not playing is all part of the game. But a ballgame that is supposed to give the fans a representative sample of the best ought to do just that.

Cruz is enjoying his finest season ever, batting fifth in the league with a .315 average, and performing almost flawlessly in the field, committing only two errors this season so far.

Undoubtedly, the National League coach's reasoning leaves much to be desired. Not to mention the fan's picks, which are already under fire from the players and coaches.

The Houston Astros, with the best pitching staff in the National League, were represented by only J.R. Richard in this year's "classic." What a sensical selection process (he said cynically).

The fact that Cruz was left as the only regular on the bench, representing the second Astro to reign in that capacity in the last two years, is not the primary fault.

The primary and principal fact remains that the best players in both leagues are not being selected by the fans, or the coaches. The All-Star game is not a classic confrontation of the best of both leagues pitted against one another, it's simply become another novelty money-making failure for the major leagues.

It's too bad the "best of both leagues" were sitting at home watching it on the tube.

NL wins 4-2 over AL to claim 9th in a row

United Press International
LOS ANGELES — They staged a Disneyland extravaganza prior to the All-Star Game Tuesday night and the players took their cue from it.

The hitting was strictly Mickey Mouse on both sides and the defensive play of the American League a little goofy. But, for the ninth year in a row — and 17th time in the last 18 years — the NL came out on top in the mid-summer showcase event and, as usual, it was simply a case of the winners playing better fundamental baseball.

The NL went almost five innings without getting a runner to first base yet won the game, 4-2, because they hit in the clutch, took advantage of their opponents' mistakes and got the big out on defense.

The AL did none of the above. They committed two errors — both by second baseman Willie Randolph — two wild pitches, one passed ball and struck out 11 times, including three times to end innings with a runner on third base.

"It was very disappointing, especially since I was managing the club," said AL Manager Earl Weaver. "We went out and did everything we could to win, but we just didn't score enough runs ... there's not much we can do about that."

"We just played a solid game and took advantage of their mistakes," said Cincinnati's Ken Griffey, whose solo homer and single earned him the game's Most Valuable Player award. "We have a great team and lots of depth."

Griffey was certainly not the only hero. Winning pitcher Jerry Reuss of the Los Angeles Dodgers and reliever Bruce Sutter of the Chicago Cubs also played key roles in the victory by turning in strong efforts. Reuss pitched only one inning but struck out the side while Sutter, the winning pitcher in the previous two All-Star games, worked the last two innings to get the save. Over the last four innings, the AL got only one hit — a single by Randolph in the seventh inning.

"I'm supposed to come in with a lead and hold it," said Reuss. "That's the way it's supposed to work. It was an honor to be here and to play with these guys."

When Sutter came into the clubhouse after the game, the first man to congratulate him was Reuss, who thanked him for the save. Sutter handed Reuss the ball and Reuss said, "You saved it, you keep it."

"You won it, you keep it," replied Sutter. Reuss agreed to keep the ball but only after Sutter autographed it for him.

'Too Tall' is back in NFL

United Press International
DALLAS — Ed "Too Tall" Jones, who retired from football a year ago to enter the ring, Tuesday said boxing caused him too many personal problems and, with Coach Tom Landry smiling over his shoulder, signed a multi-year contract with the Dallas Cowboys.

The contract was negotiated in New York between the Cowboys' director of player personnel Gil Brandt and Jones' agent, Don Cronson. Terms of the agreement were not released but Jones said it was a multi-year agreement.

Jones' heavyweight career thus ended at six wins and no defeats.

"After fighting a year I experienced many personal problems and a few family problems and I felt I had to take off awhile from boxing," he said. "I feel football is the best thing for me now."

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Slavens looks to 1981 to better 11-1 record

by RICHARD OLIVER
Sports Editor

For Robert Slavens, the 1980 Texas A&M University baseball season was a good one. But the lanky right-handed pitcher is not satisfied.

Instead of taking the summer off to lounge on the beach and forget about athletics for awhile, Slavens grabbed a suitcase and took off along with fellow freshman teammate Joey Szekeley for the Central Illinois Collegiate League to play for the Danville Roosters.

"I have some improvements to make," he said Tuesday. "Right now I'm working toward making myself a better player."

For Coach Tom Chandler's Texas Aggies, an improvement by Slavens could mean a Southwest Conference title.

In 1980, the 6-foot-8 Slavens surprised everyone with an 11-1 record, allowing only 2.92 runs per game and anchoring the "Fabulous Freshman" trio which also included Rick Luecken (9-5, 2.70 E.R.A.) and David Flores (4-2).

His presence in Danville has caused a stir also. He went 4-1 in the first half of the 54-game summer season to lead the Roosters to the first half championship.

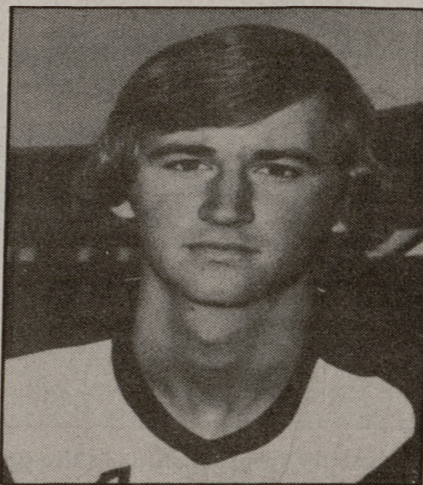
"He's pitched real well," said Roosters' coach George Latinovich. "He's helped us tremendously."

Szekeley, the catcher who shared duties with Doug Teague during the season, is also aiding Danville, hitting over-.300 as catcher and designated hitter.

"I thought by far we were the best team the first half," said Slavens. "Joey's playing really well. In the last game I pitched, he hit a bases-loaded double, and the game before that he had a home run."

Slavens said despite his success, the competition in the Central Illinois League isn't as good as he's used to.

"I don't think it's quite as good as the SWC," he said. "There's a lot more runs scored. The hitting is pretty close to the SWC, but the pitching isn't as good. There's good batting, but the pitchers aren't Keith



Robert Slavens

Creels (of Texas) or Steve Kruegers (of Arkansas)."

Last season's success hasn't spoiled Slavens.

"I'm working on my pitching," he said. "Really, I'm working mostly on control and hitting the spots a little better. Also, I'm working on a straight change-up."

Although Slavens is mostly concentrating on improving himself as a player, his main thoughts center on next spring at Texas A&M.

"We should have stronger pitching," he said. "Rick and David Flores have pitched for a year, and we've been through it once."

After last year's Aggie success, six Aggies were lost — Simon Glenn, Mike Hurdle, Teague and Randy Woodruff to graduation, and Bryan "Twig" Little and Harry Francis to the major league baseball draft.

The loss of Little will hurt the Aggies most, he said.

"We're going to miss him a whole lot," said Slavens. "You can't really replace a guy like Twig. What a talent."

And what does Slavens think about Robert Slavens next year?

"I'm working now toward making myself better," he said. "There's not that much pressure up here. It's mainly learning about yourself, making yourself individually better."

"I'd love to have another 11-1 season, though."

Intramural entries begin tomorrow

After logging a record number of entries in the intramural tournaments the first summer session, the Intramural department is now gearing up for round two.

Entries for the second summer session open Thursday, July 10, and some changes have been made.

Activities for the session include: Three-man volleyball, Three-man Basketball, Slow-pitch Softball, Racquetball Singles, Tennis Doubles, Handball Doubles, and Golf Doubles.

Softball entries this session must be limited to 70 teams, but additional entries will be accepted after the tournament is full. The extra entries will be placed in the tournament when an open space occurs. The Duncan softball fields will be used while the Penberthy fields are being shaped up for the fall.

One of the highlights of the summer is a new softball division that uses a 16-inch softball. This game is different because it can be played without softball gloves and is offered for only CoRec teams.

There will also be CoRec competition offered in golf, tennis and hand-

ball, among other sports.

Although the softball entries are limited, there is not limit on the entries in other activities. Entries will close on July 14, and play will start July 16.

Recreational facility hours through Aug. 31:
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Major League Standings

National League				American League				
East	W	L	Pct.	GB	East	W	L	Pct.
Montreal	42	34	.553		N.Y.	51	27	.656
Philadelphia	41	35	.539	1	Detroit	42	33	.560
Pittsburgh	42	37	.532	1 1/2	Milwau	43	34	.558
New York	38	40	.487	5	Balt	42	36	.538
Chicago	33	43	.434	9	Boston	41	36	.530
St. Louis	34	46	.425	10	Clev	37	39	.487
West	W	L	Pct.	GB	Toronto	33	43	.434
Houston	45	33	.577		West	W	L	Pct.
Los Angeles	46	34	.575		Kan City	47	33	.588
Cincinnati	41	38	.519	4 1/2	Chicago	38	41	.481
Atlanta	37	40	.481	7 1/2	Texas	37	42	.468
San Francisco	37	43	.463	9	Oakland	36	45	.444
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					Seattle	35	45	.438
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