Rose ties record as Phillies take third straight over Astros

United Press International

PHILADELPHIA — Garry Maddox said he walked up to the batter's box in the eighth inning just thinking about saving one more plate appearance for Pete Rose.

Maddox goofed — but in a happy sort of way for the Philadelphia Phillies.

The Phillies' centerfielder lined a three-run homer to cap a five-run rally off reliever Frank LaCorte with two out Wednesday night that carried Philadelphia to its fifth straight win, a 5-4 victory over the Houston Astros.

The Veterans Stadium crowd of 57,386 came to see Rose break Stan Musial's National League record for career hits. The Phillies' 40-year-old first baseman halfway obliged them right away, lining a single to center off Nolan Ryan in the first to tie Musial at 3,630.

But Rose, who had fanned just eight times in 217 at-bats entering the game, struck out in his next three appearances. The final strikeout was the Phillies' second out in the eighth and the crowd started streaming for the exits.

Pinch-hitter George Vukovich then cracked a single up the middle for Philadelphia's second hit and first since Rose's. But Ryan felt his lower back cramp as he dodged Vukovich's hit and had to leave the game with a 4-0 lead.

The Phillies then pounded LaCorte, 3-2. Gary Matthews doubled home Vukovich, Mike Schmidt walked and Dick Davis knocked in Matthews to make it 4-2. Maddox then cracked his third homer of the season into the leftfield bullpen.

While the homer gave the Phillies the lead, it also cost Rose another swing at the record since they didn't have to bat in the ninth.

"The thing I remember about that inning is that we were trying to save an at-bat for Pete," Maddox said. "We wanted him to have another shot. He's been so good all the time through this. He' taken a lot of the pressure off us. We're playing well because he's handling most of the pressure.

"I didn't go up there trying to hit a home run. I was trying to get a base hit, but I was able to turn on the ball and it went out of the ballpark.

"So as it turned out, I guess I cost him an at-bat," Maddox grinned.

The win went to Steve Carlton, enabling him to tie Los Angeles Dodgers' rookie Fernando Valenzuela for the most victories in the majors this season — nine. Carlton allowed six hits and struck out nine in eight innings.

But the pitcher of the night was Ryan.

"That was no amateur out there," Phillies' Manager Dallas Green said. "His location tonight was excellent and his fast ball was cracking."

Ryan struck out seven and was well on his way to his eighth career one-hitter and 47th shutout until the injury to his back.

Ryan strikes out Rose 3 times after record hit

United Press International

PHILADELPHIA — At 7:46 p.m. EDT Wednesday night, Pete Rose sent more than 57,000 people into a frenzy by tying Stan Musial's National League record for career hits with a line-drive single to center field.

After a lengthy standing ovation, the fans started making bets among themselves. Would Rose break the record of 3,630 hits in his second at-bat? How about his third? Or will he display his flare for the dramatic by doing it in his final at-bat?

Well, no one bothered to ask Nolan Ryan.

The Houston Astros' fireballing righthander saw to it that his name would not be the answer to the trivia question, "Who yielded the 3,631st hit to Pete Rose?" Ryan punched out the Philadelphia Phillies' first baseman three times on strikes, twice looking.

And if the 57,386 in attendance, including Musial, Willie Mays and Rose's mother, Mrs. Laverne Noeth, had come to see history made in the fall of Musial's record, they saw it in the form of Rose's three strikeouts in the Phillies' 5-4 victory.

"I don't usually strike out three times in a game," said Rose, who had struck out only eight times in 217 prior at-bats. "I don't know if he (Ryan) was throwing the same speed to everybody, but the way he pitched tonight, if I had to face a pitcher like that every night, I'd only be going for 1,000 hits instead of 3,631."

Rose never took the bat off his shoulder in the third, looking at three straight pitches, the final one a blazing fastball on the outside corner. With a 2-2 count in the fifth, Ryan ripped off a nasty curveball that Rose took for strike three.

In the eighth, Rose swung and missed at a 1-2 fastball on the inside corner, showing his frustration by angrily banging his bat on the turf.

"I was a little bit embarrassed," he said of his night. "I felt I let a lot of people down. My mother never saw me get a hit in a Phillies' uniform until tonight and I didn't get another one.

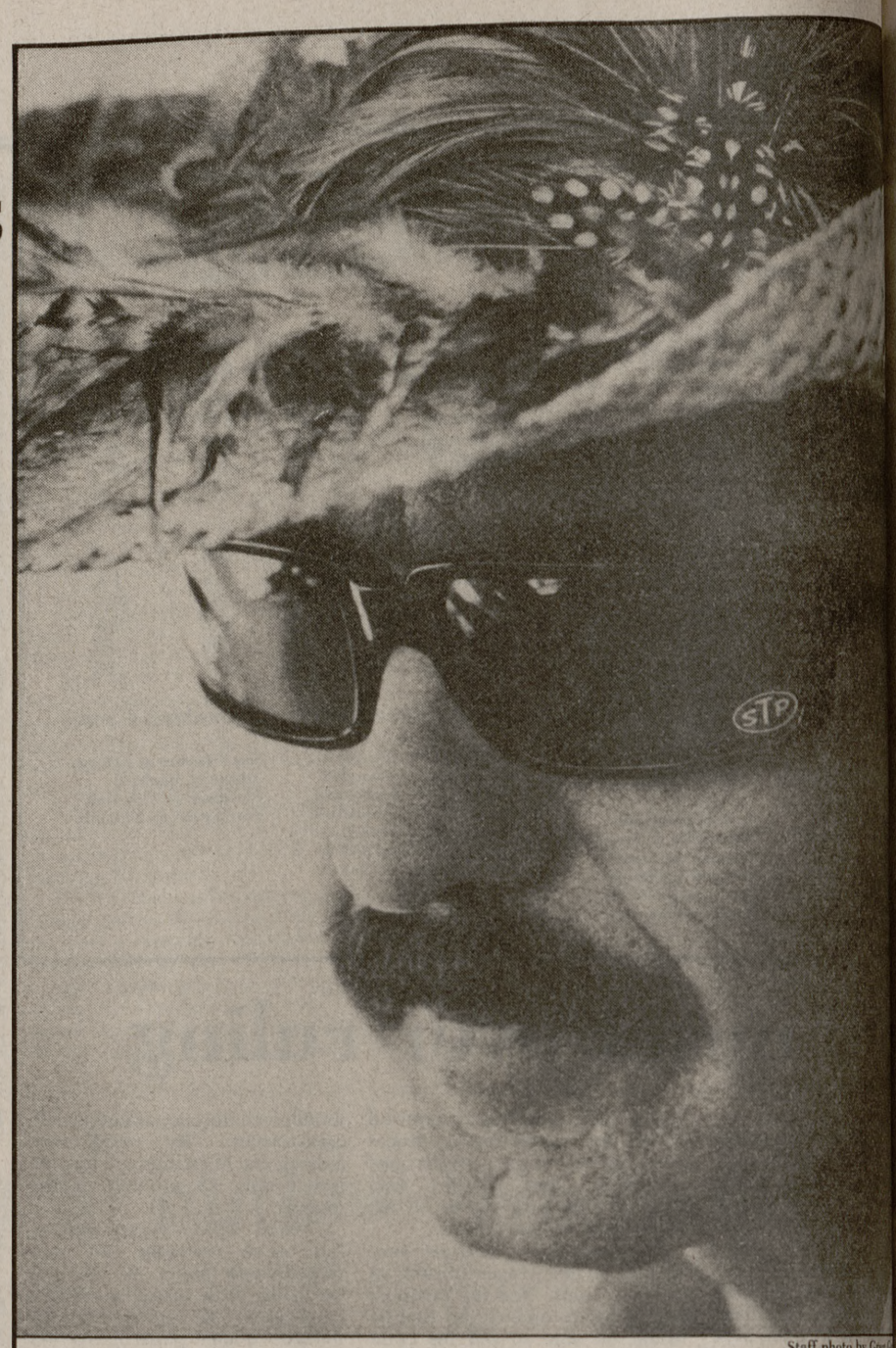
"But he pitched me good. On that second at-bat, it was good morning, good afternoon, and see you later. Maybe that single made him mad. On that third pitch, I don't think there's a white man alive who could have hit that pitch. He had some giddyup on that ball.

"I'll tell you, on that third strikeout, I felt 40."

Ryan, who left the game with a two-hitter and a 4-0 lead in the eighth after his lower back cramped up on him, was satisfied with his performance against Rose.

"I threw the pitches to Pete right where I wanted to," he said. "I was glad I was able to make the pitches I wanted to his last three times up. If he got a hit off me I would tip my hat to him.

"I pitched him as well for three at-bats as I've pitched anybody for three at-bats in my life. It's a situation where you just have to make him earn it. You know he's going to battle you."



Staff photo by Greg

Strategy — the mark of a champion

Richard Petty, all-time leading money winner on the NASCAR racing circuit, seems to be in deep thought before last Sunday's Budweiser NASCAR 400 at Texas World Speedway. Petty has won over 190 races and $4 million dollars in his career, which spans some 21 years. Petty, driving familiar No. 43 STP Buick, finished fourth in the race.

Rangers bury Brewers

United Press International

MILWAUKEE — Manager Don Zimmer watched his hothitting Texas Rangers Wednesday chalk up their 14th win in 19 games, and acknowledged there was one thing that might cool his team down — a baseball strike.

The major league players association has set Friday as a deadline.

"We've been playing well since spring training," Zimmer said after Texas rolled over Milwaukee Wednesday night, 12-5. "Hopefully we're going to continue to play well after tomorrow."

Tonight's game would be the last played if the players go with their Friday strike deadline.

Doc Medich, who raised his record to 5-3 with relief help from Bob Babcock, agreed with Zimmer.

"For us it's a bad time (for a strike) because we're playing well and we're playing teams that aren't so good," Medich said.

One of the powers behind the bat for Texas Wednesday was Buddy Bell. Bell brought in three runs, two on a single and then a homer, to raise his season total to 42.

The Rangers took a 2-0 lead in the second inning. Pat Putnam singled, Bill Sample doubled him in and Roberts singled in Sample. Bell delivered a two-run single in the third and Roberts chased starter Moose Haas, 5-4, by singling off the fourth with his third hit to give Texas a 5-0 lead.

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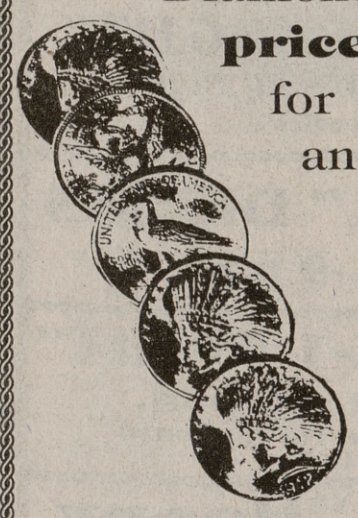
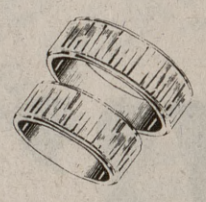
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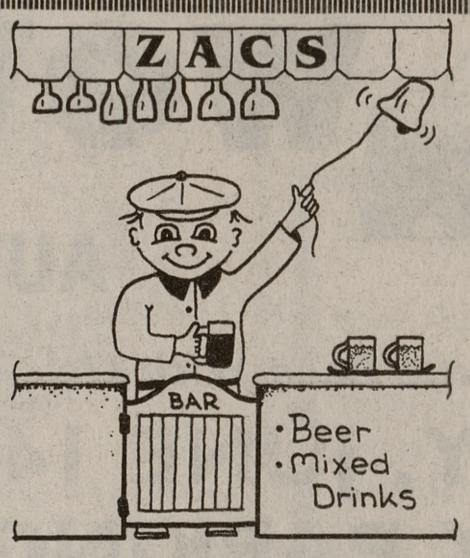

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