

Sports

Rangers score late to win 9-4

OAKLAND, Calif. — How many times have you heard a coach say, "He's the kind of player we would like to make try and beat us?"

Texas' Bill Stein is just such a player and, unfortunately for the Oakland A's, he did beat them. Stein ripped a high fastball from reliever Jeff Jones into the bleachers for a three-run homer in the ninth inning to highlight a seven-run rally that powered the Rangers to a 9-4 victory over the A's Wednesday night.

"I knew when I hit it, it was out," Stein said of his second homer of the season. "My only concern was that it would stay fair."

Stein's homer hugged the left-field foul line, eluding the glove of outfielder Rickey Henderson, whose spectacular defensive play had robbed the Rangers of two potential scoring opportunities earlier in the game.

Jones fell behind on Stein by a 3-1 count before he tried to bust a fastball down the middle.

"I threw a pitch up and in," Jones said. "This is going to stay with me for a while."

The late rally made a winner out of Ranger reliever Paul Comer, 6-1, and tagged Oakland's Pat Underwood, 3-6, with the loss.

The A's had entered the ninth leading 4-2 but then the roof fell in. Al Oliver ripped an RBI single after Mark Wagner and Bump Wills had singled, and Mickey Rivers walked to load the bases. Bell then hit a sharp grounder that went through third baseman Dave McKay's legs for an error, bringing home the second run.

Stein then ripped his three-run blast and shortstop Rob Picciolo's two-run throwing error closed out the scoring.

Major League Baseball

American League

East			
Detroit	19	11	.633
Baltimore	17	12	.586
Milwaukee	18	13	.581
New York	17	13	.567
Boston	16	13	.552
Cleveland	16	15	.516
Toronto	13	15	.464

West			
Kansas City	16	14	.533
Oakland	14	14	.500
Texas	12	16	.429
Minnesota	13	18	.419
Chicago	12	17	.414
Seattle	12	18	.400
California	11	17	.393

National League

East			
St. Louis	15	12	.556
New York	15	15	.500
Chicago	15	15	.500
Montreal	14	14	.500
Philadelphia	12	17	.414
Pittsburgh	12	20	.375

West			
Houston	19	11	.633
Los Angeles	18	12	.600
San Francisco	17	12	.586
Atlanta	16	13	.552
Cincinnati	15	14	.517
San Diego	9	22	.290

Wednesday's Results	Thursday's Games	Wednesday's Results	Thursday's Games
Texas 9, Oakland 4	Seattle at Toronto	Atlanta 9, Houston 0	No games scheduled
New York 5, Milwaukee 2, 1st	Cleveland at Baltimore	San Francisco 6, Los Angeles 3	
Milwaukee 5, New York 3, 2nd	Chicago at Milwaukee	Cincinnati 5, San Diego 4	
Cleveland 8, Baltimore 5		Philadelphia 11, Montreal 8	
Boston 6, Detroit 5		New York 5, Pittsburgh 3	
Seattle 3, Chicago 1		Chicago 7, St. Louis 3	
Minnesota 3, Toronto 1			
Kansas City 7, California 3			

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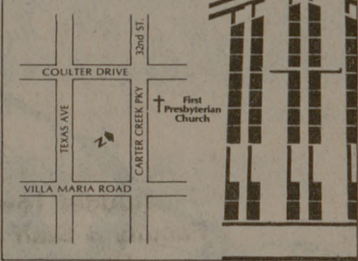
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Astros knuckle under, 9-

ATLANTA — Phil Niekro earned his 240th career victory Wednesday night, but he was more concerned with the effect of Atlanta's 9-0 win over the Houston Astros.

"The bottom line is we pick up a game on Houston," Niekro said of his eight-hitter. "If we didn't win this game we'd be 3 1/2 out."

The Braves' record is now 16-13, which puts them 2 1/2 games out of first place behind Houston in the tight National League West race.

"When you get down to a stretch drive like this, every game is just as important as the last two games of the season," Niekro said. "They are very important ball-games right now."

Niekro, 7-5, struck out two and walked three in earning his third complete game of the year. The knuckleballer picked up his 41st career shutout.

The Braves took a 2-0 lead in the first off starter and loser Nolan Ryan, 8-4, on a two-run single.

Glenn Hubbard. After Bob Lerner singled, Chris Chambliss Dale Murphy walked to load bases before Hubbard singled left.

Atlanta went ahead 5-0 in the second when Rafael Ramirez led and went to second on Lerner's sacrifice. One out later, Butler walked and Horner pitched a 1-1 pitch over the leftfielder for his ninth home run of the season and the 110th of his career.

"I think that the runs produced in that particular inning really helped push us over top," Horner said.

The Braves added RBI singles by Ramirez in the seventh, eighth, and an eighth-inning scoring single by Murphy.

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Cedeno appeals NL suspension ruling

HOUSTON — Houston Astros first baseman Cesar Cedeno has appealed his indefinite National League suspension for going into the Atlanta Stadium stands and grabbing a heckler, saying he did it because his family was there.

"If I had been here alone, I probably would not have reacted that way," he said Wednesday from Atlanta.

"But my family is with me on this trip. Cora has been subjected to the same language and treatment. She was near tears. I don't think any man would want to have his wife hear people call him that."

Eyewitnesses said a line within hearing range of Cedeno's wife Cora continually yelled "ler" and "boy" at him during the game. When the manager continued his criticism in the ninth inning Tuesday night, Cedeno threw down his glove and ran into the stands, grabbing a heckler. No punches were thrown.

"I just wanted to see if I had the nerve to call me that face. He didn't. He was stable," Cedeno said.

Smith's heckling referred to Cedeno's Dec. 12, 1973, voluntary manslaughter conviction in his native Santo Domingo for a motel room shooting death of a teenage girl.

The suspension announced Wednesday was open-ended because National League President Chub Feeney said he had reviewed films of the Tuesday incident or received a report by umpires who helped suspend Cedeno and the fan, identified as Raymond Smith of Atlanta.

Smith and two other fans voluntarily left the stadium at request of security guards. Cedeno was ejected from the game.

Club officials said they hope to decide by Friday whether Cedeno's appeal meant he still can play until Feeney made a decision. Cedeno did not play Wednesday night's game.

An Astro spokesman said the full extent of the penalty levied against Cedeno will be determined by the league president following a full review of film reports submitted by the umpire crew. No date has been set for a decision in the case.

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