

Nailbiter

Thon, Ryan help Astros slip past Atlanta, 4-3

United Press International
ATLANTA — The power is still there and the glory may yet be his, but Nolan Ryan isn't too excited about his strikeout race with Steve Carlton.

"There's no reason to think about it. In fact, I wouldn't know it was going on if it wasn't for you guys," Ryan told reporters Tuesday night after allowing only two hits over eight innings while striking out five Braves to pace the Houston Astros to a 4-3 nailbiter in Atlanta.

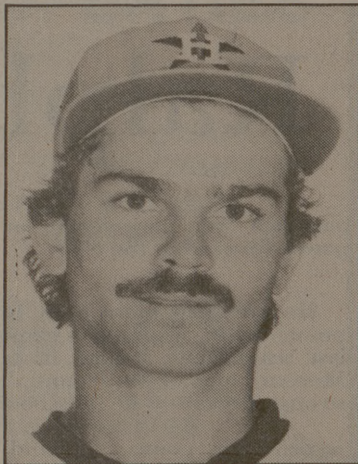
Ryan, 6-1, continued the seasaw battle with Carlton and raised his all-time leading strikeout total to 3,553, but said, "I don't give it any thought. It's really going to come down to the guy who pitches the most innings between now and the time he retires."

"Nolan was throwing the ball well tonight," said Atlanta outfielder Brett Butler, who reached Ryan for a home run in the fourth — his second homer in two nights after not connecting in 581 major-league at-bats.

Houston's shortstop, Dickie Thon, slapped a pair of home runs, including the two-run shot in the eighth inning that snapped the Braves' five-game winning streak.

"I've been playing more this year than I've been playing before," Thon said. "I've been aggressive and I try to hit the ball hard. I don't have that much power, but I try to hit the ball hard when I get to the plate."

In the bottom of the ninth inning, with the bases loaded and two out, pinch-hitter Bob Watson was at the plate with a 3-and-2 count. The next pitch appeared to be ball four which would have tied the game, but Watson was called out, prompting a heated argument from



Astros' Dickie Thon slugs two home runs in 4-3 win

Watson, teammate Chris Chambliss and Atlanta Manager Joe Torre. Watson threw his bat and was fined \$100.

In other games, the New York Mets and St. Louis split a double-header, with the Mets winning, 10-1, then losing, 8-1, the Chicago Cubs edged Pittsburgh, 8-7, in 11 innings, Cincinnati nipped San Francisco, 5-4, and Los Angeles defeated San Diego, 9-5. The first game of Montreal's double-header at Philadelphia was suspended in the bottom of the 11th inning with the score at 5-5, and the second game was postponed, because of rain.

In the American League, it was: Boston 11, Cleveland 3; Detroit 5, Milwaukee 4; Minnesota 5, Toronto 2; Texas 3, California 1; Oakland 4, Kansas City 3; Seattle 6, the Chicago White Sox 2; and Baltimore at the New York Yankees, rained out.

METS 10-1, CARDINALS 1-8 — At St. Louis, David Green and Andy Van Slyke hit home runs to help the Cardinals break their eight-game losing streak in the second game. In the opener,

Darryl Strawberry hit two home runs and drove in five runs to lead New York.

CUBS 8, PIRATES 7 — At Chicago, Johnnie Ray's throwing error on Larry Bowa's grounder with none out in the bottom of the 11th allowed Leon Durham to score from second base and help the Cubs snap Pittsburgh's nine-game winning streak.

REDS 5, GIANTS 4 — At Cincinnati, Wayne Krenchicki snapped a 4-4 tie with a pinch-hit, bases-loaded single in the eighth inning, helping the Reds snap a five-game losing streak.

ODDGERS 9, PADRES 5 — At San Diego, Pedro Guerrero hit the first grand slam of his career and his 16th homer of the season in the fourth inning and Mike Marshall and Steve Yeager also homered in the same inning for the Los Angeles' win. The Dodgers travel to Houston Friday for a key four-game series with the Astros.

Hough, Rangers knuckle down to take 3-1 victory over Angels

United Press International
CHARLIE HOUGH'S knuckler is helping the Texas Rangers throw the American League West a curve.

Hough and Dave Schmidt combined to shut down California on four hits and Buddy Bell

hit a fourth-inning home run Tuesday night, to give the surprising Rangers a 3-1 victory over the Angels.

"I just threw the ball like I have in the past couple of weeks," said Hough. "I have a good defense behind me. I made the pitches when I had to until the end when I ran out of gas."

The knuckleball specialist, 7-6, struck out six and walked three in winning his fourth straight. He has yielded only eight earned runs in his last 54 innings.

The Rangers' seventh triumph in eight games gave them a one-game lead over the Angels in the American League West and avenged an 8-0 drub-

bing at the hands of Bruce Kison Monday night.

"When you get beat like last night, it's easy just to sit down," said Texas Manager Doug Rader. "They did a great job, I'm really proud of them."

The 35-year-old Hough restricted the Angels to two singles by Fred Lynn until the eighth, when Bob Boone doubled with two out and Rod Carew walked. Schmidt came on to get the final four outs, earning his second save despite allowing Lynn's 14th homer of the year.

In other AL games, Boston hammered Cleveland, 11-3, Detroit edged Milwaukee, 5-4, Minnesota defeated Toronto, 5-2, Seattle beat Chicago, 6-2, and Oakland nipped Kansas City, 4-3. Baltimore's game at New York was rained out.

In the National League, it was: Chicago 8, Pittsburgh 7, in 11 innings; Houston 4, Atlanta 3; Cincinnati 5, San Francisco 4; and Los Angeles 9, San Diego 5. New York and St. Louis split a double-header, the Mets taking the opener, 10-1, before falling, 8-1. In a scheduled double-header, Philadelphia and Montreal tied 5-5 in a game halted in the 11th inning because of rain.

The second game was postponed.

RED SOX 11, INDIANS 3 — At Cleveland, Tony Armas belted his 10th home run in his last 20 games to highlight a five-run boston fifth inning.

TIGERS 5, BREWERS 4 — At Milwaukee, Marty Castillo hit his first major-league home run, a solo shot with two out in the ninth for Detroit to snap Milwaukee's three-game winning streak.

TWINS 5, BLUE JAYS 2 — At Minneapolis, Houston Jimenez and Randy Bush each hit two-run doubles to lead the Twins.

MARINERS 6, WHITE SOX 2 — At Seattle, rookie Spike Owen from the University of Texas cracked two triples and a single and the Mariners took advantage of nine walks by Chicago pitchers to post only their second victory in their last 12 games and snap a three-game White Sox winning streak.

A'S 4, ROYALS 3 — At Oakland, Calif., Marshall Brant, called up earlier in the day from the minors, got his first major-league hit and RBI for the A's to lead them to a 4-3 victory.

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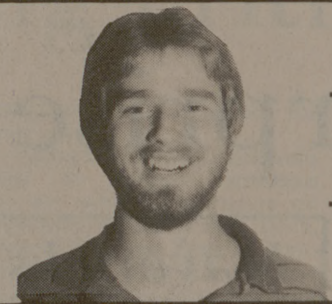
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Meet America's Newest Millionaire



john wagner

Say hello to America's Newest Millionaire.

"I want," said Ralph Sampson before the NBA college draft, "to be in a situation where I'm me."

So the Houston Rockets called out Ralph's name, and the 7-foot giant from Virginia became a Rocket. Rocket No. 50, to be exact. But will he be in a place where he can be "him"?

Sampson explained his feelings in a press conference Monday.

"I don't want them (the Houston management and fans) looking to me as a savior," Sampson said. "I'm part of an 11-man squad. I can't do it by myself. I hope I won't be compared to Moses."

That's Moses, as in Malone. As in former Rocket-carrier Malone. As in since-departed Malone. As in where Malone went, so went the Rockets. And when Silent Mo (he doesn't really like to talk) went to Philadelphia, so went the Rockets' chances of success.

But if Sampson is hoping his pre-draft soliloquy will take some of the pressure off his very, very tall shoulders, he's dribbling up the wrong court. Houston fans got a taste of victory during the Malone era, and the Sampson-hype has got them foaming at the Summit again. Season ticket sales are up, and overall interest in the Rocket organization has boomed.

The fans are putting a lot of faith in America's Newest Millionaire's ability to take the Rockets to the top.

It will, of course, be a gradual process, and that's where the problem lies. The pressure of Sampson's rookie year, along with the media attention that follows him closer than many defenses can, could cause problems. The best thing that could happen would be for the Rockets to slug along at a .500 clip—not too spectacular, not too disastrous.

Still, Sampson learned a great deal in the pressure-packed world of college basketball. His every move was watched, recorded and discussed in great detail. He's used to being the center of attention. Anybody who's 7-4 has to be used to it. It comes with the territory.

And owner Charlie Thomas hasn't left all the keys to the franchise to Ralph. Thomas made sure Sampson will have some help.

The Rockets, owning both the first and third picks in the draft, chose Louisville forward Rodney McCray next. The 6-foot-220-pound McCray — known for his passing ability — was selected to compliment Sampson's style of play.

If Sampson is hoping his pre-draft soliloquy will take some of the pressure off his very, very tall shoulders, he's dribbling up the wrong court.

Rocket coach Bill Fitch agreed McCray's passing was the clincher.

"I coached Larry Bird (at Boston), and with Larry his passing made him a better shooter. I think McCray falls into the same category with Bird. He looks to make the play first before shooting. And when he does that in an all-star game (McCray was named Most Valuable Player in the Aloha Classic, a pre-draft showcase for college seniors), then he can be expected to do it in the heat of battle."

Ah, the heat of battle. Does Fitch expect things to get a little warm in the Rocket camp this season? Maybe not, but they again — if both Sampson and McCray get much playing time that means someone else isn't. The worst thing you can do to an athlete is cut his playing time.

That, however, might be doing several of the Rockets a favor. They struggled to a tie for the worst record in the NBA last season (winning only 14 games), and no amount of coaching or coaxing by former coach Del Harris helped. Fitch shouldn't have the same problem.

But 1983-84 won't be all slam dunks and roses for the Rockets. It's going to take a while for America's Newest Millionaire to bring success to Houston, and it's worth the wait, considering the price.

Oh, sure, Sampson will make enough money to dent the national debt. But all he really wants is a place where he can be "him." Moses, no Kareem, just Ralph.

Houston, meet America's Newest Millionaire. I think you get along just fine.

McEnroe, Mayer meet today at Wimbledon

United Press International
WIMBLEDON, England — Second-seeded John McEnroe, bidding for a semifinal berth against third-seeded Ivan Lendl of Czechoslovakia, today met 31-year-old unseeded veteran Sandy Mayer in the \$1.4 million Wimbledon tennis Championship.

Twelfth-seeded South African Kevin Curren faces 16th-seeded Tim Mayotte of the U.S. in the other men's quarter-final, the only other feature match being played.

The two women's semifinals pitting top-seeded and defending champion Martina Navratilova against South African teenager Yvonne Vermaak, and third-seed Andrea Jaeger against 10th-seeded veteran Julie King, who is chasing seventh singles title, are scheduled for Thursday.

King said Tuesday she was feeling "fantastically fit and healthy." The veteran has played Jaeger once before, winning in three sets in New York earlier this year.

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