

ANK McNAMARA

by Jeff Millar & Bill Hinds



Greensboro weather harsh

North leading tourney

United Press International
GREENSBORO, N.C. — Andy North birdied four of the last nine holes to tie tour rookie Willie Wood Thursday for the first-round lead in the \$400,000 Greater Greensboro Open at 4-under-par 68.

Wood, who finished first in the PGA qualifying school last year and hasn't let up, got a break in the weather playing early in the day. North, who has struggled the past two years, was among the late starters who

had to contend with a stiff wind, but he caught Wood with a birdie on the 18th hole.

One shot behind the leaders were Buddy Gardner, Tony Sills and Al Geiberger with 3-under-par 69s over the 6,984-yard Forest Oaks Country Club course where unpredictable and sometimes harsh early spring weather traditionally provides an additional challenge.

Wood, the tour's top rookie, shot a 33-35—68, while North,

who has missed five cuts in nine tournaments this year, had a 36-32-68.

"I haven't played well in a long time," said North, an 11-year tour veteran who last won in 1978 when he captured the U.S. Open. "It was nice just to shoot a decent score."

"I've been working real hard and I've been close the last two weeks. I think when you're working that hard it takes a while for it to make a difference."

Olympic hopefuls in Austin

United Press International
AUSTIN — The Texas Relays — the Southwest's largest annual track and field extravaganza — open Friday with 62 colleges and universities represented at one of the major stops en route to the NCAA championships and the Los Angeles Olympics.

The highlight of the meet could well come in the final event of the weekend — the 1,600-meter relay.

Southern Illinois and Baylor, teams which own the two fastest times in the world this year in that event, will face each other along with TCU and Alabama — the 1-2 finishers in the 1983 NCAA championships.

Counting the colleges, junior colleges, women's teams, high schools and competitors in the open division, there will be more than 2,400 athletes representing 177 schools.

The invitational 100 will feature two runners who hope to

spring from the pack of top American sprinters and earn a berth on the Olympic team. Rod Richardson of Texas A&M has returned from a football injury to become a factor in the sprints, having won the NCAA indoor 55-meter dash last year in Syracuse.

Baylor's Bruce Davis could push Richardson, having already run a 10.2 this season.

Among the missing, however, will be pole vaulter Billy Olson, who pulled a hamstring

muscle two weeks ago and who does not plan to compete again until May. Olson, a former world record holder and one of the United States' hopes for an Olympic gold medal, jumped 18-8 1/4 at last year's Texas Relays.

One of the top individual performances could come from Texas' Einar Vilhjalmsen of Iceland, whose father owns the only Olympic track and field medal ever won by an athlete from that country.

Carlton winning race against time

United Press International
ATLANTA — With Steve Carlton, it's a race against time. Carlton is 39 years old. For a ball pitcher, which he was most of his career, that's the twilight zone. But thanks to some other pitches he's picked up in recent years, especially the slider, there's reason to believe there's still a few good years remaining in his left arm.

Carlton, a 6-foot-5, 220-pounder who works out frequently to stay in top shape, has thrown a lot of pitches during his 20-year major league career. "He's always been a hard worker," says his Philadelphia manager, Paul Owens. "He pitched nearly 300 innings in each of the past two seasons and his usually averages about 15 pitches an inning."

"But don't let last year's won-loss record mislead you (when Carlton dropped from 23-11 in 1982 to 15-16)," said Owens. Look at his other stats. His earned run average, strikeout-to-walk ratio, hits, were all the same. The difference last year was that we went through a long spell where we weren't getting any runs.

"Any shutout is impressive," said Owens. "But shutting out a team like Atlanta in a ball park like Atlanta Stadium, now that's really something. His performance was outstanding."

Carlton shared that shutout with reliever Bill Campbell, so he didn't get credit for No. 56 which would have tied him with former teammate Bob Gibson, Don Sutton and Tom Seaver for ninth place on the all-time list. And if he had allowed one less hit in those seven innings, he probably would have resisted coming out since he's only one shy of the modern National League record (7) for one-hitters.

"That's why we figure he has good chance at another fine season this time. I don't believe he will go through a long period of not hitting again. We have too many capable people for that to happen. If we get a few runs, he'll do the rest."

Carlton's 1984 debut was a great one. Working the first seven innings in a 5-0 victory in Atlanta, he allowed only two hits, a pair of singles separated by 11 straight outs, walked only one and struck out six.

Every time Carlton, who holds the major league record for consecutive starts (465), goes out on the mound, he has a chance to move up among the leaders in one category or another.

His win over Atlanta was his 301st, moving him ahead of Early Wynn and Lefty Grove and only four behind Eddie Plank. Those six strikeouts in that game raised his already record career total to 3,715.

As usual, he wasn't talking, Owens, pitching coach Claude Osteen and Braves manager Joe Torre, who caught Carlton in 1969-71 when they were teammates with the St. Louis Cardinals, were — and all three felt the veteran left-hander was better in some ways than he was in some of his 20-win seasons.

"He throws more breaking balls now," said Torre. "He keeps his slider down and throws it for strikes. Lefty has

matured into a Hall of Fame pitcher."

"He's had some physical problems in the past, but I don't see any sign of them now," said Osteen. "I know he feels good. He's throwing easy and he's getting his pitches where he wants them. In those seven innings against Atlanta he threw only 83 pitches. That's barely 80 percent of what you figured he'd throw."

"Steve continues to amaze me," said Torre. "He's a special left-hander. When he's pitching against you, you have to hope he won't have the kind of control he had against us. When he gets ahead of the hitters like that, he's got them biting at his pitch. I never saw him that sharp this early in the season."

"He helps his team's offense in that when he's in the game the opposing pitcher, knowing he's not going to have much to work with, has a tendency to put pressure on himself. Carlton (who refuses to talk to the media) not only silences himself, he also silences his opponents."

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