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Sports briefs

Baseball player hit by pitch, dies

MCALLEN — A high school baseball player died Wednesday of a head injury he suffered six days before from a baseball hurled by a pitching machine during batting practice.

Rey Reyes, 16, a junior varsity baseball player, was a junior at McAllen High School.

He had been in a coma at McAllen Methodist Hospital since he was struck while collecting balls in front of the batter's box on April 5.

Funeral arrangements were pending.

Thon undergoes successful surgery

HOUSTON — Houston Astros shortstop Dickie Thon Wednesday underwent successful minor surgery to repair a bone fracture near his left eye, officials said.

Thon was hit by a pitch Sunday from New York Mets' pitcher Mike Torrez in the third inning.

"This surgery in no way changes the total outlook and was under taken after it was felt it would not adversely affect visual function," said team physician Bill Bryan.

Doctors at Methodist Hospital said they are still concerned about Thon's left eye blurred vision.

But Dr. Dan Jones, chairman of ophthalmology at Baylor College of Medicine, said "the pace and the degree of visual recovery is unpredictable."

Thon is scheduled to be released from the hospital Thursday.

Waxahachie star heading north

MINNEAPOLIS — A pair of high school basketball stars — from Texas and Minnesota — have signed letters of intent to enroll at the University of Minnesota, the school announced Wednesday.

The signers were Todd Alexander, a 5-11 guard from Waxahachie and Tim Hanson, a 6-5 forward-guard from Prior Lake, Minn.

Alexander scored more than 2,400 points in high school for Waxahachie.

Hanson set a three-year career school record at Prior Lake High School with 1,238 points. In his senior year he averaged 23.5 points and 12.6 rebounds per game.

Hanson is the third player Minnesota Coach Jim Dutcher has signed from Prior Lake since he came to Minnesota.

Stockton named new Trinity coach

SAN ANTONIO — Dick Stockton, the first man to win a national singles tennis championship at Trinity University, Wednesday has named head coach of Trinity's men's tennis team.

School officials said Stockton, a two-time All American, will begin his coaching job with the nationally-ranked Tigers next fall.

Stockton replaces his former Trinity doubles partner, Bob McKinley, who left the team for a position with the Wilson Sporting Goods Company.

Stockton, a 1972 Trinity graduate, won the NCAA singles title his senior year and helped lead the Tigers to national team championship, the only one captured by a non-California college since 1960.

Watson confident of Masters chances

AUGUSTA, Ga. — Tom Watson says although he hasn't played up to his usual standards, he feels he has a shot at winning his third Masters title.

"I'm playing better than my recent record indicates," Watson said Tuesday after getting

in nine holes of practice for the 48th Masters, which starts Thursday at Augusta National.

"Augusta always brings the best in me," said Watson. "This is my type of course, never have thought of it that easy. Just because you done well on a particular course doesn't mean you'll do the next time. But I have well here."

That's no exaggeration, the past seven Masters, the five-time British Open champion and 1982 U.S. Open champion, won this prestigious tournament in 1978 and tied for second in 1979.

Lady Longhorns sign top prospects

AUSTIN — The Texas Longhorns basketball team Wednesday signed one of the nation's top prospects, Beverly Williams of Del Valle.

Williams, an all-American, averaged 27 points and 10 rebounds a game as a senior at Louisiana Tech before signing with the Lady Longhorns.

Texas Coach Jody Conrad also believed to be recruiting foot-2 center C.J. Jones of Vegas, 6-foot-4 Michelle Linger of Houston and Cathy Nixon of Duncanville.



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Glad to be alive

Miller not worried

United Press International

AUGUSTA, Ga. — Johnny Miller isn't concerned about how well he plays in this week's Masters.

He's just happy to be here at all.

Miller showed up at Augusta National with stitches in his forehead and recounted details of the jeep accident last week in Utah which almost ended his golf career.

"I never saw the other vehicle until we collided," said Miller. "It was a crossroad with no stop signs. After we hit, my jeep (which had a rollbar) flipped over twice."

"I was surprisingly calm, calmer than later when I thought about what had happened," said Miller. "I thought, so this is what it's like when you're about to die." It was pretty exciting, actually."

Miller said he made up his mind he was coming to Augusta whether or not he could play in the Masters.

"It was something I had to do," he said with a wry grin. "I had too many people I had gotten passes for, people who expected to see me here and who

might have lynched me if I hadn't shown up."

Once in Augusta, Miller was determined to play in the Masters, even though he had been unable to practice for nearly a week before going out in the cold and damp on Tuesday, two days before the tournament began.

"I'll just have to play it by ear, see how it goes," said he. "My injuries aren't bothering me all that much now. I've played with worse. The biggest problem may be my medication. The doctors have me on Percodan and I may have trouble putting — seeing three or four holes instead of one."

Miller, who turns 37 later this month, has 22 PGA Tour victories to his credit, including a U.S. Open crown he won 11 years ago when he was one of the hottest players in the game.

His game went into decline in the late 1970s, but has come back to win at least one tournament in each of the past four years.

He hasn't won so far this year. But he has earned more than \$71,000 by virtue of a third place finish in the Hope Classic and ties for sixth at Los Angeles and Doral.

"I don't have any particular expectations about how I'll play this week," said Miller, who tied for second in the Masters in 1971 (his first year here as a professional), 1975 and 1981 and tied for 12th last year. "I don't figure I'll be first, but I also don't figure I'll be last."

Miller, who joined the Tour in 1969 and picked up his first victory in the 1971 Southern Open, has a long history of injuries and ailments.

He developed a hiatus while winning the 1972 stage Classic ("brought a stress"); missed some time a few years later because of a motorcycle accident; was in an accident just before the 1981 Masters (still in second), and had to have a bladder operation last year.

"It just seems to be one after another," said Miller. "I went over the \$2 million in career winnings two ago when he tied for 23rd in the 1971 Masters. But, enough, I sometimes see play better when I'm hurt."

"I'm not worried about competitive this week," he continued. "I never feel sorry for myself. I've been worse than I am now. You should have me a week ago."

Miller said he's grateful the accident didn't turn out that it did.

"I usually would have had a little (4-year-old) boy with me. If he had been, I know what might have happened. I was sitting enough up in the jeep didn't hit against the dashboard my boy (Todd) probably have."

"The accident was my fault," he said. "She (the other driver) was on my right and I was right of way. But since I was speeding or anything, I was given a ticket. I didn't see she had a broken leg and I was glad she wasn't hurt worse."

Miller said he used to drag races when he was younger and still likes to ride his motorcycle.

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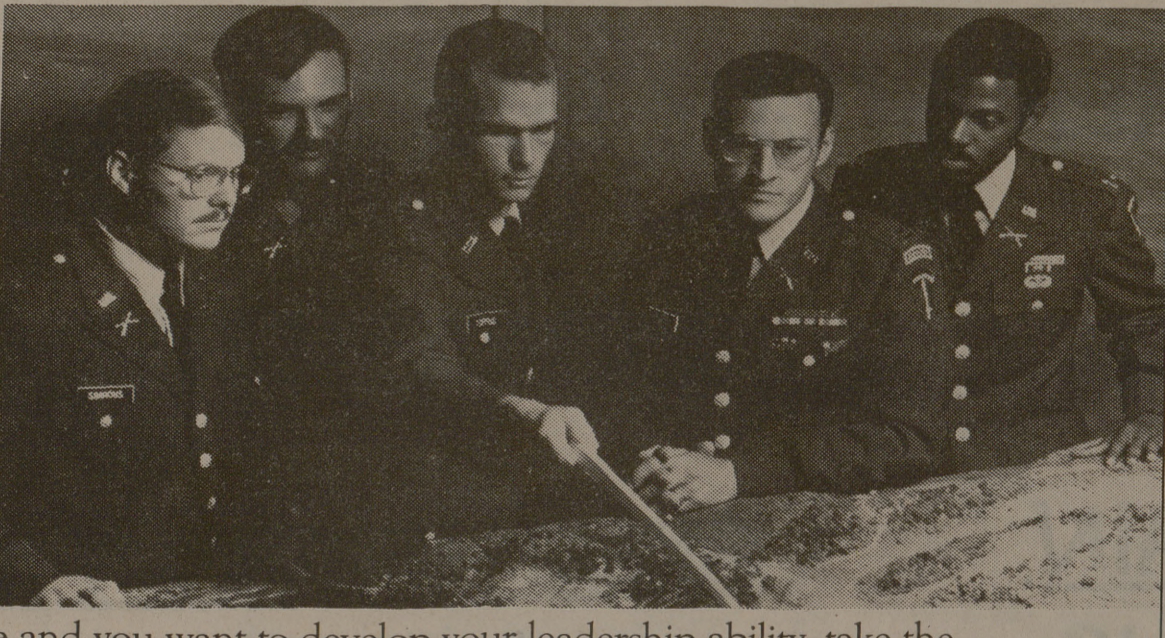
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