

Astros' LaCoss suffers first defeat of '84

San Francisco's hitting thrashes Houston

United Press International
Giants 7, Astros 3

Chili Davis, Scot Thompson and Bob Brenly each drove in two runs and Jeff Robinson won his second straight game to lead the San Francisco Giants to a 7-3 victory over the Houston Astros Wednesday.

The Giants scored three runs in the first to hand Mike LaCoss (5-1) his first loss of the season.

Dan Gladden beat out a bunt single and stole second. Manny Trillo blooped a single to right with Gladden advancing to third on right fielder Terry Puhl's error. Davis then drove in Gladden with his first of three singles. Thompson singled in Trillo and Brenly scored Davis with a groundout.

Davis beat out a bunt single and stole second in the third inning and scored on a single by Thompson. Brenly then doubled in Thompson.

Davis singled in Gladden in the fourth for the Giants' sixth run and Trillo had an RBI double in the eighth to complete their scoring.

Houston manager Bob Lillis noted the hits that produced those first three runs were not hit hard.

"The Giants did the job," Lillis said. "They found some holes and scored some runs. There were a lot of groundballs that went through the infield. That's going to happen when you keep the ball down like Mike does. You just hope not as many go through."

Robinson (6-11) allowed nine hits

in eight innings for the victory with Greg Hinton coming on with two on and none out in the ninth and yielding a sacrifice fly to Mark Bailey for the Astros' final run. Jerry Mumphy drove in two runs with an RBI single and sacrifice fly.

Jose Cruz doubled in his final at bat for Houston to increase his hitting streak to 12 games.

Cubs 9, Phillies 4

Leon Durham drove in three runs with a homer and a double to lead the Chicago Cubs to a 9-4 win over the Philadelphia Phillies Wednesday behind the pitching of Dennis Eckersley.

The victory kept the Cubs within 3 1/2 games of the first-place New

York Mets in the National League East. The third-place Phillies fell 5 1/2 games off the pace.

Eckersley served up a two-run homer to Juan Samuel in the first inning, then blanked the Phillies through the seventh to pick up his fourth victory in 10 decisions.

Durham followed a Garry Matthews single with his 14th homer to give the Cubs a 2-0 lead in the first inning. Greg Gross doubled and Samuel connected for home run No. 7 to tie it in the bottom of the inning.

The Cubs jumped on starter Charles Hudson (8-8) for two runs in the third. Ryne Sandberg singled and after stealing his 17th base of the season scored on a single by Matthews. Matthews was cut down a sec-

ond on the throw to the plate but Durham walked and scored on a Keith Moreland double.

Mets 9, Cardinals 3

At New York, Darryl Strawberry hit his 16th homer and drove in four runs to lead the Mets to their fifth straight victory and 16th in 19 games. Rookie Sid Fernandez pitched five innings and allowing four hits for the victory. Ed Lynch went four scoreless innings for his second save as New York swept the three-game series.

In late games, Pittsburgh was at Montreal, Atlanta played in Los Angeles and Cincinnati visited San Diego.

Ali, Jenner may bear torch in LA

United Press International

LOS ANGELES — For an emotional few minutes Saturday, the biggest star in this land of movies and television will be the person who bears the Olympic torch the final mile.

At the Opening Ceremonies, an unannounced person — or persons — will accept the torch and end its odyssey from Greece by carrying it overhead and into the Los Angeles Coliseum.

Imagine the swell of enthusiasm in the 92,500-seat arena if the bearer turns out to be Muhammad Ali, three-time heavyweight champion and a former Olympic gold medal winner.

Other possibilities include Wilma Rudolph, former Olympic sprint star; Al Oerter, three-time gold medalist in the discus; two-time decathlon winner Bob Mathias, who grew up in Los Angeles; world long jump record-holder Bob Beamon; Mark Spitz, who won seven gold medals in Munich; another Californian, decathlon gold medal winner Bruce Jenner; and Rafer Johnson, another decathlon gold medalist.

As a special guest, former Rumanian gymnastics star Nadia Comaneci could play a part in the ceremonies. But if she helped to carry the torch, she would be the first non-native to do so.

Only once since the torch relay from Olympia in Greece began has more than one individual carried the flame. Ueberroth himself has indicated as much, saying if the bearer is a celebrity, no announcement will be made. If the torch bearer is lesser known, the identity may be released in advance.

Comaneci, the 1976 Olympic charmer, would carry special symbolic value in this year of the East Bloc boycott. Honoring her would also be a way of thanking the Rumanian team for attending the Games, despite the Soviet-led boycott. She arrived in Los Angeles earlier this week.

Mary Decker appears fit for Summer Games

United Press International

LOS ANGELES — The air quality deteriorated slightly Wednesday and the International Olympic Committee considered the idea of sanctions against boycotting nations, but just three days before the opening ceremonies of the '84 Summer Games, the American contingent was worried most about Mary Decker.

America's distance running heroine, who won at both 1,500 and 3,000 meters in last year's inaugural World Track and Field Championships, strained an Achilles tendon during the Olympic trials last month and her condition since then has been a matter of concern.

Now, with the potential pinnacle of Decker's often troubled career a little more than a week away, her condition is a matter of debate.

A report surfaced in London this week questioning Decker's fitness, but her coach in Eugene, Ore., promptly denied it.

"She is currently training well and looking forward to the games," said Dick Brown, coach at the Athletics West track club. "She is not taking any additional treatment."

Sources close to the track and field competition in Los Angeles said, however, they felt Decker's training had been hampered by the tendon strain and that the injury was at the core of Decker's decision not to try and run in both the 1,500 and 3,000 meters at the Olympics.

Decker and her fans, however, got some good news Wednesday with the announcement that there were not enough competitors entered in the 3,000-meter run to warrant an opening round of heats.

That means Decker, who will not come to Los Angeles until next week, will have to run only two races instead of three in order to go after the gold medal. The 3,000 semifinals will be held at 8 p.m. (PDT) on Aug. 8, with the finals set for 6:40 p.m. on Aug. 10. The heats had been scheduled for Aug. 6.

Despite the boycott by most Soviet bloc countries, Decker will have plenty of competition in her race from South African native Zola Budd, who will be running for Britain, and from Romania's Maricica Puica, who has the best time in the world at 3,000 meters this year.

TANK McNAMARA

by Jeff Millar & Bill Hinds



Studley 'immersed' in Dolphin defense

United Press International

MIAMI — Chuck Studley isn't looking back. His dismal tenure after he replaced Ed Biles as head coach of the Houston Oilers last year isn't forgotten, but he doesn't have time to think about it these days.

Studley is immersing himself in another challenge — replacing the cerebral Bill Arnsparger as the defensive chief of the Miami Dolphins under head coach Don Shula.

"There is nothing I look forward

to more than this season," Studley said.

Last year the Dolphins had trouble with "physical" teams who liked to run up the middle. Now that Arnsparger is gone to take the head coaching job at LSU, Studley is tackling that problem.

"He wants to make offenses adjust to our defense rather than adjusting our defense to an offense," said nose guard Bob Baumhower. "He wants us to challenge people, do what we do best, and I really like what he's doing."

Veteran safety Glenn Blackwood also is pleased with what he has seen

in the first few days of the Dolphins first training camp without Arnsparger in nine summers.

"It's unfair to compare two men," Blackwood said. "I'll say this, though, both of them love the game of football and both are winners. I think everybody on the defense is looking forward to this year because we believe we're going to have a good defense."

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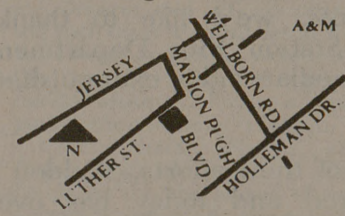


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