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SPORTS

'85 Pennant Races

Division leads in hands of many surprise teams

Associated Press

NEW YORK — It has been a tough year so far for defending division champions in major league baseball, most notably the Detroit Tigers.

"Our problem is we're not beating the West," Detroit Manager Sparky Anderson said at the All-Star break. "You have to win in the West. I'd just as soon play .500 in the East and beat the West. We're going about this backward."

The Tigers so far have the best intra-division record — 24-13 — among American League East teams. However, against supposedly weaker West Division teams, Detroit was only 24-24.

At this point last season, the Tigers had a 57-27 record and a seven-game lead in the East after a spectacular 35-5 start. The Tigers went on to win the American League pennant and World Series.

This season, Detroit is in third place, 3½ games in back of the front-running Toronto Blue Jays, who finished second to Detroit last year.

Similar problems have plagued the other 1984 division winners.

At the All-Star break the California Angels have taken over

first place in the AL West from Kansas City, the Chicago Cubs have been supplanted by the surprising St. Louis Cardinals in the National League East and the San Diego Padres have been replaced by the nearly-as-surprising Los Angeles Dodgers in the NL West.

The performances of the Montreal Expos in the NL East and the Oakland A's in the AL West have raised some eyebrows as well.

After losing one of baseball's best relief pitchers, Bruce Sutter, in the free agent market, the Cardinals were not expected to go far this season, particularly with their general lack of long-ball power.

But the pitching of Joaquin Andujar (15-4), the hitting of Tommy Herr and ex-San Francisco Giant Jack Clark and the major league-leading 63 stolen bases of rookie in Vince Coleman had the Cardinals blazing at mid-season.

The New York Yankees, an also-ran last season, were in the thick of the AL East race with the help of outfielder Rickey Henderson, the free agent acquired from Oakland who had stolen 41 bases in 44 attempts and scored an incredible 77 runs.

Some of the reasons for Cali-



fornia's success has been the speed of Gary Pettis, both in the outfield and on the bases, and a bullpen staff headed by Donnie Moore's 17 saves, one more than he had in 1984 with Atlanta.

Montreal must be considered the biggest surprise in the NL East, especially considering the losses of catcher Gary Carter and pitcher Steve Rogers, the team's top two symbols of the 1980s, and an injury to star hurler Charles Lea. The Expos, however, boast one of baseball's top relief pitchers in Jeff Reardon, who had a major league-leading 22 saves at the All-Star break.

In the National League West, the Padres were sitting pretty until the Dodgers made a move over the last month, largely on the hitting of Pedro Guerrero. Guer-

ero hit a NL-record 15 home runs in June and had 21 for the season.

In addition to the use of speed and relief pitching, baseball at the halfway point was characterized by the American League's edge over the National in hitting, and the NL's statistical advantage over the AL in pitching.

Kansas City's George Brett leads the American League in batting with a .358 average, followed closely by Henderson's .357. St. Louis' Willie McGee led the National with a .340 average, but only five other hitters were above .300.

Chicago White Sox catcher Carlton Fisk, enjoying a resurgence in his career at age 37, is the AL leader in home runs with 23, while Atlanta's Dale Murphy had a like number to pace the National League. Murphy and the Yankees' Don Mattingly each had 69 runs batted in to top their respective leagues.

Andujar, 15-4, led the majors in victories, the New York Mets' Dwight Gooden (13-3) topped both leagues with a 1.68 earned run average and 153 strikeouts, and San Diego's Andy Hawkins, after a spectacular 11-0 start, had baseball's best winning percent-

age, .846., with an 11-2 record.

New York's Ron Guidry, 12-3 — including 11 in a row — led the AL in wins and winning percentage. Toronto's Dave Stieb led in ERA at 1.87 and Detroit's Jack Morris and Cleveland's Bert Blyleven shared the strikeout lead with 111. Willie Hernandez of Detroit led in saves with 19.

The first half also featured the historic exploits of Houston's Nolan Ryan, Cincinnati's Pete Rose and California's Reggie Jackson. Ryan became the first pitcher in major-league history to record 4,000 strikeouts. Rose moved within 35 hits of Ty Cobb's career record of 4,191 and Jackson improved his lifetime home run total to 518, 10th on the all-time list.

Four managers didn't make it to the All-Star break. Yogi Berra was fired by the Yankees and replaced by Martin, Doug Rader was replaced at Texas by Bobby Valentine, Ray Miller replaced Billy Gardner at Minnesota and Earl Weaver returned to lead the Orioles taking Joe Altobelli's spot in Baltimore.

The issue of a new contract for players was unresolved during the first half and the possibility of a strike hung like a cloud over the second-half schedule.

Houston fights for Horford

Coogs to investigate own recruiting plays

Associated Press

HOUSTON — University of Houston Athletic Director Tom Ford announced Wednesday that the school will conduct an internal investigation into its recruiting and signing of local schoolboy basketball star Tito Horford.

"We are investigating the ramifications with regard to Tito's eligibility if the violations were in fact committed," Ford said. "We are in the process of advising the Southwest Conference and NCAA of our internal investigation and will advise them of our findings."

Sports Illustrated, in its current issue, reports that UH assistant basketball coach Donnie Schverak broke NCAA rules by visiting Horford on July 25, 1984 in Santo Domingo.

The magazine also said Schverak also rented a car and drove Horford to his mother's home in LaRomana, about 70 miles from Santo Domingo.

Under current NCAA rules, face-to-face meetings with recruits are prohibited between July 1 and Aug. 1. If UH violated the rule, Horford could be released from his scholarship agreement.

Horford, a 7-foot former Houston Marion High School star, signed a letter of intent with the Cougars at the early signing date last November following an intense recruiting battle.

Ford told Schverak and basketball coach Guy Lewis not to comment on the incident pending completion of the internal investigation.

Horford is playing basketball this summer in his native Dominican Republic.

Horford would be the second star athlete to become ineligible at UH this year.

Bay City sprinter Joe DeLoach currently is ineligible to attend Houston after an illegal visit to his home by Olympian Carl Lewis.

That case is under appeal to the NCAA Committee on Eligibility.

"Our coaches need to read the rules a little better," Ford said. "In this case (Horford), we feel there were rules stated and changed over a three-year period over the evaluation period of upcoming high school seniors."

Irishman sets course record to capture British Open lead

Associated Press

SANDWICH, England — A bit of advice from "Himself" helped Christy O'Connor Jr. to a spectacular, record-breaking 64 and a four-stroke lead Thursday in the first round of the British Open Golf Championship.

"He's a hero in Ireland, a very brave player with nerves of steel," O'Connor said of his uncle, Christy O'Connor, a boisterous, carousing figure who reached the status of a legend during the 50s, 60s and 70s and was known throughout the land simply as "Himself."

"He told me how to win the Open," said Christy Jr., a journeyman pro who has played his life in the shadow of his famous uncle, winner of scores of European tournaments and in 1965 the runner-up in the British Open.

"He said you must be brave enough to attack the course, brave enough to be positive and not negative, brave enough to play each hole and each shot one at a time."

"I kept that in mind," said the younger O'Connor, 36, a veteran of 16 years of unremarkable activity on the European circuit.

And it worked, worked so marvelously well this chilly day on the rainswept links of the Royal St. George's Golf Club course.

"I just tried to make as many birdies as I could. I tried to keep going the way I was. I never played safe," said O'Connor, who had 10 birdies, four bogeys and only four pars.

Christy Jr. reeled off a British Open record of seven consecutive birdies, on the fourth through the 10th holes.

He broke, by one stroke, the course record set by Henry Cotton in 1934 and was rewarded by a "well done, lad; did you play all 18?" from the 78-year-old Cotton.

And he matched the largest first round lead ever established in this ancient event. The last to lead the first round of this tournament by four shots: Cotton in 1934.

"That's the best I can play," O'Connor said.

While O'Connor, whose last individual victory came in the 1975 Irish Open, was enjoying his finest hour, some of the game's more famous figures were thrashing and scowling in damp, bedraggled misery through the knee-deep rough and over the wet dunes.

Jack Nicklaus, who counts three British Open crowns in his record collection of 17 major professional titles, went out of bounds on the 14th and had to make a three-foot putt for double bogey. He finished with a 77.

Seve Ballesteros of Spain, the defending titleholder and pre-tournament favorite, bogeyed five out of six holes during the worst of the rain and came in with a 75.

And Lee Trevino had it two under par after three holes, then took a double bogey on the fourth and came in with a 73.

Former U.S. Open and PGA champion David Graham, an Australian now living in the United States, led a group of five tied for second at 68.

Also at that figure were Sandy Lyle, Philip Parkin and Robert Lee, all of Britain, and Tony Johnstone of Zimbabwe.

The leading Americans were Fuzzy Zoeller and D.A. Weibring, in a group at 69, one-under-par and five back.

Larry Nelson, Corey Pavin, Payne Stewart and Mark O'Meara, a two-time winner on the American tour this year, had 70s. Peter Jacobsen had a 71 despite a fat 9 on the 14th hole, where he suffered a lost ball and a tee shot out of bounds.

Tom Watson, a five-time winner of this title, pulled his first shot of the tournament into deep rough, opened with a double bogey and came home with a 72 that, he said, "isn't too far back."

Andy Bean also shot 72. So did Bernhard Langer of West Germany, the Masters champion.

Sports scattershooting

Vacation via Landry, Six Flags

By DENNE H. FREEMAN
AP Sports Writer

DALLAS — With apologies to Blackie Sherrod, I'm post-vacation scattershooting while wondering what ever happened to the pickup truck I drilled with a golf ball.

On vacation, it was learned that:

- Dallas Cowboys' Coach Tom Landry was in Salado, Texas, dined at the Stagecoach Inn and the Tyler House restaurants and may become a member of Mill Creek Golf Club.
- Cowboys' quarterback Gary Hogeboom will be a much improved player this season, according to his old college coach.
- Sports are easier to write about than to play.

Landry was in the Salado area on vacation recently and fell in

love with the Mill Creek Course. The waitress at the Stagecoach Inn said Landry had applied for membership at the course and was interested in buying property.

A four-course dinner and the Stagecoach Inn's famed "strawberry kiss" dessert kept this intrepid vacationer from pursuing more "vital" information on Landry's Central Texas visit. (Landry has already bought a mansion at The Hills of Lakeway.)

Then there was a round of golf with a foursome that included Hogeboom's college coach Herb Deromedi of Central Michigan, who said, "Gary will be a different player this year."

"He was too tense and too mechanical last year. It was a new experience for him being the

starter, but he learned from it.

"He's worked hard in the off-season learning to throw the soft pass over the linebackers instead of just drilling the ball. He'll be a relaxed, confident player in 1985. Gary will be back."

Your intrepid vacationer dutifully wrote all the quotes on the back of a scorecard so they could be reported within a reasonable amount of time.

This column is also an open apology to the driver of a blue pickup truck which I hit with a hooked three-wheel during a practice round.

The ball traveled out-of-bounds onto an access road, banged the bumper of the rolling truck and bounced back onto the fairway. Thank you, pickup truck man, despite the bad things you yelled at me.

Also, it should be noted that radar clocked my best fastball at 35 miles an hour at the pitch-and-guess booth at the Six Flags Over Texas amusement park — or just 60 mph below Nolan Ryan's best effort.

At this particular booth, you pay a dollar and throw two baseballs with the radar clocking both. Then you win a major league batting helmet if you can guess the exact speed of your third effort.

My first two fireballs were pretty well in the groove — 34 and 35 mph. I guessed 35 on my third pitch and hit it right on the button.

However, the only batting helmet left was a Texas Rangers' model. I'd hoped for something a little loftier in the standings.

Also, I write this with a sore right arm.

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