

TANK McNAMARA

by Jeff Millar & Bill Hinds



NL opens its playoffs in Los Angeles

Associated Press
LOS ANGELES — Left-hander Fernando Valenzuela opens the National League playoffs for the Los Angeles Dodgers Wednesday night and his appearance on the mound may force St. Louis to bench rookie speedster Vince Coleman.

Cardinal Manager Whitey Herzog said Monday he was considering using right-handed hitting Tito Landrum in place of Coleman, who stole a rookie record 110 bases as St. Louis' leadoff man this season.

Coleman is a switch hitter but has more success batting from the left side. Landrum batted .280 as a part-timer for the Cards this season and is best remembered for the home run that won the pennant for Baltimore in the fourth game of the 1983 playoffs.

Herzog said he would start righty-swinger Cesar Cedeno in right field against Valenzuela. Cedeno batted .434 with six home runs and 19 runs batted in for the Cards after being acquired from Cincinnati Aug. 29.

While Herzog considered loading up for Valenzuela with righty bats, Los Angeles Manager Tommy Lasorda predicted the best-of-seven matchup with St. Louis will be "a very, very exciting playoff."

"The Cardinals are the best in the league in hitting and in defense," Lasorda said. "And they have two 21-game winners."

The Cardinals have the NL's top hitter this season, Willie McGee at .353, who, batting second behind Coleman, stole 56 bases.

3-hitter by Jays' Stieb stifles Royals in Game 1

Associated Press

TORONTO — Dave Stieb held Kansas City to three hits through eight innings and the Toronto Blue Jays, showcasing the blend that brought them their first-ever division title, beat the Royals 6-1 Tuesday night in the first game of the American League playoffs.

The Blue Jays, the AL East champions in just their ninth season, scored all their runs in the first four innings and finished with 11 hits in the first AL postseason game outside the United States.

The loss in the opener of the best-of-seven series saddled Kansas City Manager Dick Howser with an 0-10 record in the postseason as his Royals crumbled under the Blue Jays' early mix of speed, power and aggressiveness.

Stieb shut out the Royals through eight innings. Tom Henke, the Jays' surprise bullpen star this season, gave up two hits to lead off the ninth, and Willie Wilson scored the lone Kansas City run on a fielder's choice.

The game featured the two starting pitchers who led the league in earned run average. But while the top-ranked Stieb, with a 2.48 ERA, looked every bit the part, the Blue Jays ripped Charlie Leibrandt and sent him to his earliest exit of the season.

Stieb, whose lack of run support during the season produced a misleading 14-13 record, gave up a two-out double to George Brett in the first inning and a one-out single by Eric Sogard in the eighth ended a

streak a 12 straight batters retired by Stieb.

Stieb allowed only one other runner, a walk to Pat Sheridan in the fourth, and struck out eight. The hard-throwing Stieb fanned eight different Royals, all except Sheridan, before Henke came in to pitch the ninth.

Leibrandt, meanwhile, lasted just two full innings and was driven from the mound in third with the bases loaded and no outs. The Blue Jays, who were 0-2 against Leibrandt during the season, ripped the 17-game winner for five runs on seven hits.

Aggies

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and Baylor, UH has illustrated every way in the book to move the football and still come up short on the scoreboard. They've had penalties (Tulsa), fumbles (Washington) and a little of both (Baylor).

The only constant so far for UH this season is a defense that seemingly always gets caught with its pants down.

Dubbed the "dorkiest defense in the country," by *Houston Chronicle* sports writer Al Carter, the Cougars are giving up an average of 28 points per game. And this UH defense lists eight of 11 defensive starters from last year's Cotton Bowl squad.

But Aggie offensive lineman Doug Williams expects the Houston defense to put its best "cheeks" forward on Saturday.

"It doesn't matter what Houston's record is, they always play Texas A&M tough," Williams said.

Meanwhile, A&M Defensive Coordinator R.C. Slocum said the Cougar offense could meet the Aggie defense at a better time.

"It's one of those things that we preach to our guys all the time — we can't give up the big play," Slocum said, "but it seems we've given up at least one in every game this year."

Sherrill agreed, "Houston's ability to make the big play really concerns me because that's something we have not done a good job with defensively."

"It could be because we have confidence in our offense's ability to move the ball and put points on the scoreboard. Our defense never really feels the pressure."

"We're going to get better and I've felt all along that it won't be until the sixth or seventh game that we really reach our peak. But we have to line up and play this week and Baylor next week, so the time is now."

"You look at our next two opponents, Houston and Baylor, and I still say both of those teams are



Texas A&M's Roger Vick, who gained 134 yards on 41 carries against Texas Tech, puts his head

down and heads for the goal line. Vick hopes for a repeat performance Saturday against Houston.

Photo by JOHN MAKELY

going to have a big say in what happens at the end of the season and who goes to Dallas.

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