

Ryan hits game-winner as Astros zap Giants, 4-1

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Nolan Ryan had a routine day on the mound with nine strikeouts, but the 39-year-old fireballer came up with something special at the plate — the first game-winning hit of his 19-year career.

Ryan, who had a .122 career batting average, lined a two-out, two-run single with the bases loaded in the second inning Wednesday to pace the Houston Astros to a 4-1 victory over the San Francisco Giants.

National League

"I didn't realize that was it," Ryan said of his game-winning RBI. "A big RBI man like me, that is pretty surprising," he added with a wry smile.

The game-winning RBI statistic has been used only since 1980, when Ryan went to Houston after eight years in the American League. But he said he couldn't recall ever having one in his four years with the New York Mets from 1968 to 1971.

Second-year Giants pitcher Roger Mason said he gave Ryan a "way too fat" fastball over the middle of the plate on the first pitch and Ryan punched it to left.

"It was a mistake pitch on his part," said Ryan, 2-1. "A pitcher needs to take advantage of every opportunity that arises."

That was all Ryan needed. He allowed six hits, three walks and one unearned run before leaving after 7 1/2 innings. Reliever Dave Smith

came in to record his league-leading third save with one-hit pitching the rest of the way.

Ryan, the all-time major league strikeout king, boosted his career strikeout total to 4,101 before a crowd of 3,590.

Ryan avenged his opening-day loss to the Giants in Houston after ending a first-inning threat by striking out Bob Brenly following a double by Joel Youngblood and a walk and wild pitch to Jeff Leonard.

Kevin Bass opened the second-inning rally against Mason, 0-1, with a one-out double off the right field fence. Mason then walked Denny Walling and Mark Bailey and struck out Dickie Thon before giving up the hit to Ryan.

Rain started to fall in the third inning when the Astros made it 3-0 on Phil Garner's double and Bass' grounder up the middle which careered off second base for a single.

The Giants scored an unearned run off Ryan after a walk and an error in the eighth as second baseman Bill Doran lost Brenly's RBI pop fly single in the first bright sunshine of the day.

"I just couldn't see it," Doran said. "I felt bad because it cost (Ryan) his shutout."

Reds 5, Braves 3

ATLANTA (AP) — Dave Concepcion hit two home runs and drove in three runs, and pinch-hitter Tracy Jones drove in the tie-breaking run with a sacrifice fly as the Cincinnati Reds beat the Atlanta Braves 5-3 Wednesday night.

With the Reds trailing 3-2, Concepcion opened the seventh inning by lining Rick Mahler's first pitch for his first homer of the year. He also hit a first-pitch homer off reliever Bruce Sutter in the eighth.

Bo Diaz followed the seventh-inning homer with a single. He was replaced by pinch-runner Eric Davis, who raced to third on Ron Oester's single to right, chasing Mahler, 1-2.

Jones greeted reliever Paul Assenmacher with a fly, scoring Davis with the go-ahead run.

John Denny, 1-0, allowed six hits, walked two and fanned four in six innings. John Franco, the third Cincinnati pitcher, worked the final inning for his second save.

Phillies-Pirates (ppd)

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — The game between the Philadelphia Phillies and Pittsburgh Pirates, scheduled for Wednesday night at Veterans Stadium, was postponed because of rain. It was the second straight postponement of the series, and the games will be made up in two-night double-headers Aug. 15-16.

Mets-Cards (ppd)

NEW YORK (AP) — Wednesday's scheduled game at Shea Stadium between the St. Louis Cardinals and the New York Mets was postponed because of rain. The game was rescheduled as part of a two-night doubleheader Aug. 14.

Royals ride 2-hitter, nip Red Sox

BOSTON (AP) — Steve Balboni belted a long homer and Bret Saberhagen allowed only two hits Wednesday as the Kansas City Royals posted their fourth victory in a row with a 1-0 decision over the Boston Red Sox.

Balboni's second home run of the season, which led off the second inning against Boston's Al Nipper, was all Saberhagen needed for his first victory of the season.

American League

Saberhagen, the 1986 American League Cy Young Award winner and the World Series MVP, allowed only singles by Tony Armas with two out in the second and by Don Baylor leading off the fifth. Neither Armas nor Baylor advanced beyond first.

The only other Red Sox runner was Wade Boggs, who walked and was erased as Jim Rice grounded into his third double play in eight games in the fourth.

Saberhagen struck out six and walked just one in outdueling Nipper, 1-1, who went the distance.

the Minnesota Twins to a 7-5 victory over the A's.

With two outs in the 10th, Mark Salas reached on an infield hit. Gaetti then hit a two-strike pitch deep over the left-center field fence as the Twins snapped a four-game losing streak.

Ron Davis, 1-0, earned the victory in relief of Twins starter Burt Blyleven with 1 1/2 innings of one-hit work. Atherton, 1-1, took the loss.

Salas had hit a one-out homer in the eighth inning off Jay Howell, the third A's pitcher, to tie the game 5-5.

White Sox 10, Tigers 4

CHICAGO (AP) — Ron Kittle drove in four runs with a three-run homer and a sacrifice fly and Carlton Fisk also homered Wednesday night to lead the slump-ridden Chicago White Sox to a 10-4 victory over the Detroit Tigers.

The triumph, behind the four-hit pitching of Floyd Bannister, Bill Dawley and Bob James, was only the second in eight games for the Sox and came at the expense of Walt Terrell, 1-1.

The game was disrupted in the seventh inning when a Bannister pitch sailed behind Dave Collins. Collins charged Bannister, 1-1, as both benches emptied, but order was

quickly restored. Collins was ejected.

Two innings earlier, Detroit's Randy O'Neal had hit John Cangelosi with a pitch.

Blue Jays-Orioles (ppd)

TORONTO (AP) — Rain forced postponement of Wednesday's scheduled game between the Baltimore Orioles and the Toronto Blue Jays. A Blue Jays' spokesman said that the game was rescheduled for Thursday as part of a day doubleheader starting at 2:35 p.m.

Rangers-Brewers (ppd)

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Wednesday night's game between the Milwaukee Brewers and Texas Rangers at Milwaukee County Stadium was postponed due to cold weather, a Brewers spokesman announced.

The temperature at 4:30 p.m. was 41 degrees, with winds of 23 mph, a team spokesman said. The game will be made up as part of a two-night doubleheader at County Stadium on Aug. 1.

Yankees-Indians (ppd)

CLEVELAND (AP) — Rain forced postponement of Wednesday's scheduled game between the New York Yankees and Cleveland Indians.

Twins 7, A's 5
MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Gary Gaetti hit a two-run home run in the 10th inning off Oakland reliever Keith Atherton Wednesday, lifting

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