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Team came close

### Lanier: Astros not ashamed

HOUSTON (AP) — Although the Houston Astros were beaten in the National League playoffs, Manager Hal Lanier says the team has nothing to be ashamed of following their six-game loss to the New York Mets.

"We don't need to hang our heads to anyone," Lanier said. "We have a great ball club and all we have to do is look forward to next year. If we had to lose a ball game, I'm glad we did it the way we did, swinging

Lanier was referring to Wednesday's dramatic 7-6, 16-inning loss to the Mets in the sixth game of the se-

The Astros disbanded Thursday and headed into the off-season, thinking about how close they had come to winning their first NL pen-

The Mets won the series 4-2 and will face the Boston Red Sox in the World Series, beginning Saturday night, while the Astros were left wondering what happened to their pitching relief and their clutch hit-

Astros relievers pitched well during the regular season, but faltered in the playoffs.

After winning the NL's West Division with aggressive running and timely-hitting, the Astros left 39 run-

ners stranded in six playoff games. The Astros had the tying and winning runs on base in the 16th inning Wednesday when Kevin Bass struck out to end the 4-hour, 42-minute

marathon game.
"I took it personally when they (Mets players) said there was a big difference between the middle re-lievers on the two teams," Astros re-liever Larry Andersen said. "I think people will remember this as a great series, not as a series the Astros' bullIn six playoff games, the Astros' relievers had a 4.17 earned run average in 151/3 innings.

Dave Smith, who set a club record with 33 saves during the regular season, yielded a game-winning home run in the third game and Charlie Kerfeld allowed the game-winning

single in the fifth game. Smith also had a tough 13/3 inning performance in the final game, walking three batters.

"In the third game, I threw a terrible pitch, but today (Wednesday) I thought I pitched well," Smith said. "If I get the call, I should get the game over

Smith disputed calls by home plate umpire Fred Brocklander when he was trying to protect Houston's lead in the ninth inning

"I threw it four inches over the plate and he called it a ball and then I threw it four inches outside and he called it a strike," Smith said.

Lanier brought in Jeff Calhoun during New York's game-winning 16th-inning uprising with Jim De-shaies and Danny Darwin still avail-

When you go 16 innings, you're not going to have your No. 1 reliever in there," Lanier said. "I brought Calhoun in because there were a bunch of left-handers coming up. He's proven he can get left-handers

The Astros left seven runners on base in the fifth game, which they lost 2-1 in 12 innings.

"Our biggest problem was our inability to get a base hit with runners in scoring position," Lanier said. "We left a lot of men on base, especially in the fifth game and we did it throughout the series.

#### Family hopes Redskin's death will help in fight against AIDS

SILVER SPRING, Md. (AP) -The family of former Washington Redskins' tight end Jerry Smith, who died of complications from AIDS, said Thursday they hoped the All-Pro's death brings "something positive" in the fight against the deadly

Smith, 43, died at Holy Cross Hospital at 8:15 p.m. Wednesday, 11 months after learning he had acquired immune deficiency syn-

At an emotional press conference, Smith's sister, Bonnie Gilchrist, read a statement from the former star re-ceiver and said: "Like Jerry, we hope that something positive will come out of all of this. That way, what happened to Jerry and thousands of other men, women and children like him won't have been for nothing."

Most days have been hard, difficult, bad, but there is never anything so bad that something good doesn't come from it," Smith's message said. My own experience with AIDS has shown me that life is important -every life. I am trying hard to fight AIDS the best way I know how, by

letting people know how terrible it

Smith is the first professional athlete known to have died of the disease that has claimed approximately 13,000 lives in five years in the

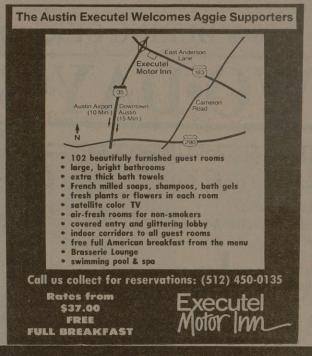
Smith died of an infection known as cytomegalovirus, a complication of AIDS, according to Dr. Bernard Heckman. The doctor said he did not know how Smith got the disease, which afflicts mostly homosexuals and intravenous drug users.

When his disease was publicized in August, Smith refused to discuss his lifestyle, saying only that the ill-ness "just happened."

Former teammates recalled Smith, who once held the record among tight ends for pass receptions, as a courageous and hardorking player

"He was a person who could never tell anyone no," said former Redskins'safety Brig Owens, now an official with the NFL Players Association, who was Smith's roommate for 11 years on the team.

"He was a fighter, a person who never gave up," Owens said.









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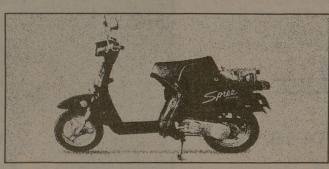
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