

# Sports

## Ice Hockey loved up North, but lacks national interest

By Homer Jacobs  
Sports Editor

It's mid-spring, and it's time for the NBA playoffs, the Kentucky Derby, Opening Day in baseball and that sport they play up North.

That sport with the ice, the French players and the blue and red lines.

It's the sport where people mainly go to watch the gloves and punches fly.

It's the sport of hockey.

The word alone is about as foreign to this Texan as "y'all" is to a Minnesotan.

I think I know as much about hockey as I do about nuclear physics.

Sure I know Wayne Gretzky plays for the Edmonton Oilers; but which team plays in the Smith, or is it the Smythe Division? And who or what is the Adams Division named after?

And don't forget the Norris and Patrick divisions. Come on, Norris and Patrick?

Wasn't Norris a cat on TV?

But what really gets to me about hockey is that people actually love this sport. Just watch a hockey crowd when a player scores a goal.

Put Hog hats on these fans and you'd think you were in Arkansas.

I guess watching a sport with ice skating in it while I'm in College Station in April just doesn't tickle my fancy.

### Viewpoint

Give me Larry Bird or Mike Schmidt, but don't give me Jacques LaFontaine de la Fleur from the Canucks or Nordiques.

And that brings me to the illustrious nicknames of these hockey teams.

A Canuck. Now a Canuck is either a rare red-bellied bird in southern Australia or the French translation for "Achoo." But a hockey team it can't be.

So I don't understand these nicknames or know many of the players. But I do know the rules of the game like the back of my hockey stick.

The object of the game is to skate around and smack that little Sbisahamburger pattie past the guy who looks like Jason from "Friday the 13th: Part III".

And if at first you don't succeed, skate around and hit somebody.

Just as fans go to car races for the spectacular crashes, hockey buffs

frequent arenas for one reason — they want to see a nasty fight.

Don't let hockey fans tell you about the graceful skating and unbelievable athleticism that accompanies a hockey game. The fan really wants a good old-fashioned brawl, complete with blood and/or broken bones.

And another thing about hockey that confuses me is why point totals are kept for assists and goals.

Why not just call them assists and goals instead of converting them into points?

The main problem with hockey, though, is that nobody south of St. Louis ever gets to see a hockey game in person.

Granted Lake Sommerville does freeze over in early November and thaws in May so Texas A&M students can enjoy this leisure activity of hockey almost year round. But without any professional franchises, hockey will go unnoticed in these parts.

I guess I can live with football, basketball and baseball for now.

But in the meantime, I'm going to brush up on my hockey and go feed my Canuck.

## Ex-Cowboy Bethea found dead after apparent suicide incident

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. (AP)

Larry Bethea's troubled life began when he left pro football. It ended Thursday when he apparently shot himself in the head within hours after he was identified as the gunman in two robberies.

Drug abuse was blamed for the problems of the former Dallas Cowboys defensive lineman, a first-round NFL draft pick.

"This man, who had so much going for him, lost everything, including his life. I believe that Larry Bethea would be alive today if he had been able to stay away from drugs," Newport News Police Chief Jay A. Carey said in a statement read by Sgt. Lynn Pearson, a police spokeswoman.

On Jan. 23, Bethea was given a four-year suspended prison term for his guilty plea in December to stealing his mother's life savings of \$64,000.

Newport News Circuit Judge J. Warren Stephens also ordered Bethea to spend two years on probation and repay the money.

Betha was arrested by Dallas

police on Aug. 4 with \$61,375 in cash in his pockets after he allegedly accosted his estranged wife, Gloria. She summoned police, who found her with bruises and a bloodied lip.

Betha's mother reported the next day that her \$64,000 was missing.

Betha said in January that he was grateful for his lenient sentence.

"I got a little confused in the big picture, and I hurt my family," he said. "I didn't mean to hurt them."

Betha pleaded guilty in 1985 to setting three fires in Mount Rainer National Park in Paradise, Wash. He was ordered to pay \$1,000 to the park to cover the cost of fighting the fires.

In the latest and final incident, police were called by an unidentified friend of the former football player while officers were still questioning witnesses who said Bethea robbed two convenience stores shortly before midnight Wednesday.

Betha, 30, was found in the friend's backyard with a gunshot

wound to his right temple and a .38-caliber automatic pistol near his body. He was taken to Hampton General Hospital, where he was pronounced dead at 2:08 a.m., said Jan Dunning, a hospital spokeswoman.

The friend told police that Bethea had given no warning that he was going to commit suicide. He left no suicide note, Pearson said.

The gun used in the shootings and the two robberies is believed to be a weapon that was reported stolen from a parked vehicle in the city Wednesday, she said.

Witnesses said a lone gunman took an undisclosed amount of cash from the two stores, which are near the house where Bethea lived with his mother, Alice Bethea.

His body was taken to the Norfolk crime lab for an autopsy to determine the cause of death and whether he had drugs in his system.

Betha was the 28th overall pick in the 1978 NFL draft and played for the Cowboys until 1983.

## Dallas destroys Seattle 151-129 in opening round of NBA playoffs

DALLAS (AP) — Dallas' Mark Aguirre led nine teammates in double figures with 28 points Thursday night in a 151-129 NBA first-round playoff rout of the Seattle SuperSonics, the most points the Mavericks have ever scored in a game.

Dallas took a 1-0 lead in its best-of-five Western Conference playoff series, with game two scheduled for Saturday night in Reunion Arena.

Dallas scored 149 points twice in 1985 for its previous high total in a game. Reserve guard Dennis Nutt hit the 151st point with 10 seconds to play on a driving layup for the record.

Roy Tarpley scored 25 points, Derek Harper and Rolando Blackman each had 18 points, James Donaldson scored 15 and Sam Perkins had 12. Brad Davis, Detlef Schrempf and Bill Wennington all had 10 points each.

Tom Chambers was high for the Sonics with 35 points, and former Maverick Dale Ellis scored 22 points before fouling out late in the fourth quarter.

The Mavericks surged to a 77-59 lead by intermission, the most points they had scored in a half this season and the most ever in a playoff game. The game was over early.

Seattle led 2-0 on Xavier McDaniel's dunk after the opening tip, then it was all Dallas. The Mavericks hit 12 of their first 18 shots to pull away before 17,007 fans in a sold-out Reunion Arena.

Dallas' biggest lead was 77-57 as Aguirre scored 20 in an explosive first half. The Mavericks shot 59.6 percent from the field as Tarpley added 11 rebounds.

Seattle's Xavier McDaniel added 18 points and 13 rebounds.

Dallas, a 10-point favorite, had defeated Seattle all five times it played the Sonics during the regular season.

## Houston defeats Atlanta 5-3 Bass gets 3 hits, 3 RBI to pace Astros

HOUSTON (AP) — Kevin Bass had three hits and drove in three runs as the Houston Astros won their ninth straight home game, beating the Atlanta Braves 5-3 Thursday night to sweep a three-game series.

Rookie Dave Meads, 1-0, got the win in relief, striking out the only batter he faced. Dave Smith recorded his fifth save, pitching 1 1-3 innings of scoreless relief. Rick Mahler, 2-1, was the loser, going 6 1-3 innings and giving up four runs on eight hits.

Terry Puhl started things off in the Astros' three-run seventh with a pinch-hit double and moved to third on Bill Doran's groundout. After a walk to Billy Hatcher, pinch-hitter Phil Garner doubled in Puhl. One out later, Bass bounced a two-run single into right field.

The Braves had moved ahead 2-0 in the first. Gerald Perry singled with two out, stole second and scored on a Dale Murphy double. Ken Griffey singled in Murphy.

Houston tied the score with runs in the second and third. Bass led off

the second with a single, Jose Cruz walked and Bass advanced to third when Alan Ashby forced Cruz at second. Craig Reynolds doubled in Bass.

Hatcher extended his hitting streak to all 16 games with a leadoff single in the third inning. He later scored on Bass' groundball forced Davis at second.

The Braves cut their deficit to 5-3 in the eighth when Rafael Ramirez doubled off reliever Charlie Kerfeld and scored on pinch-hitter Graig Nettles' single.



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