

Sports

Seaver rejoins Mets after 10-year hiatus

NEW YORK (AP) — Tom Seaver's storied career with the New York Mets has been filled with tears and cheers.

The right-hander, who is bound for baseball's Hall of Fame, came back home over the weekend.

It's the third time he has been employed by the Mets and Seaver III seems headed for a happy ending, even if he can't make it on the mound.

"If I cannot contribute and pitch credibly then I am going to retire," the 42-year-old Seaver said. "It wouldn't be fair to the fans or those individuals in the clubhouse wearing uniforms."

During the past weekend at Shea Stadium, Seaver was given back his old locker by pitcher Ron Darling, and donned his familiar No. 41 — a uniform number no other Mets' player has worn since 1967.

"This was not a deal made out of marketability or sentimentality," Mets General Manager Frank Cashen said. "Although parenthetically, let me add that I have always believed Tom Seaver deserved to end his career here."

A lot of good things happened to Seaver while not playing for the Mets.

He pitched his only no-hitter June 16, 1978, against St. Louis while pitching for Cincinnati. On April 18, 1981, he became the fifth pitcher in

major league history to strike out 3,000 batters, again while pitching for the Reds, and Aug. 4, 1985, while pitching for the White Sox, he won his 300th game at Yankee Stadium.

"That's a day I'll never forget, it was a beautiful thing," Seaver said of his 300th victory. "It was great to have it in New York and I enjoyed playing with the White Sox. It was great."

Seaver has always helped the Mets — in the standings, at the gate and in the record book.

He helped turn one of the worst franchises in baseball history into a world champion in 1969, and he is the Mets' all-time winner with 198 victories.

Seaver rejected a \$610,000 offer from the Boston Red Sox for 1987 and became a free agent. But no one was knocking on the door of his Connecticut home and he was ready to retire from baseball.

"The only time I did miss it (baseball) was about 10 days ago, when things started to break," Seaver said. "I picked up the ball and played catch and that got some juices flowing."

Sure, Seaver came back for the \$500,000-\$700,000 the Mets will pay him for the rest of this season. But he also returned because he has always been a boy at heart — and a Met.

Celtics hope to slow Lakers, even championship series

BOSTON (AP) — The Boston Celtics stacked up the sandbags in time, but the waters still are churning behind them.

The Los Angeles Lakers, who seemed unstoppable in the first two games of the NBA championship series, remained confident Monday after being stopped in the first of three games at Boston Garden.

"They're in the driver's seat," Celtics' Coach K.C. Jones said.

The Lakers lead the best-of-seven series 2-1. Boston must win at home both Tuesday and Thursday night to avoid having to return to Los Angeles needing to win two games.

"We're still upbeat," Los Angeles guard Byron Scott said. "... We're just a little disappointed that we didn't do well" Sunday.

"We did some bad things in the first two games, but you didn't notice it because we won. Now you go back and see what you did wrong in those games. We got out-rebounded in Game 2."

Until Boston's 109-103 victory Sunday, the Lakers had lost only one game in 45 days and were 13-1 in the playoffs.

The key to the next game for Los Angeles is improved rebounding, guard Michael Cooper said. Boston had a 48-32 advantage in that category Sunday, enabling it to convert

second shots and keep the Lakers from running.

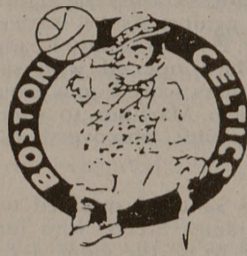
"Their confidence level is much higher than it was," Lakers guard Magic Johnson said, "but we're still up 2-1."

Still, after Los Angeles romps in the first two games sparked talk of a sweep, the Celtics are now in much better shape.

"We have more confidence," Boston guard Danny Ainge said. "It'll shake you up a little when you see what the Lakers did in Game 2."

The Celtics are 85-2 in their last 87 games at the Garden. One of those losses was to the Lakers, who broke Boston's 48-game winning streak in the building Dec. 12.

Ainge said there is a literal advantage to Boston's home court that could hurt the Lakers' running attack. Hidden within the unique parquet design of the floor are some



Hextall gets MVP award as rookie

NEW YORK (AP) — Philadelphia Flyers goaltender Ron Hextall, confessing that he still was carrying the burden of losing the Stanley Cup, settled for a car Monday as a consolation prize.

"It hasn't gotten any easier for me," Hextall said, alluding to his team's tough, seven-game loss to the Edmonton Oilers in the Stanley Cup finals last week.

Hextall, named winner of the Sport Magazine Most Valuable Player Award, was in town to collect his car and the trophy of a silver-colored skate that went with it.

Losing the playoffs "was like getting hit by a truck," Hextall said. "It was the biggest disappointment of my career. It was even tougher to take, because everyone on the team gave so much."

Except for the ending, Hextall, 23, had what many would consider a dream season.

The rookie goaltender, whose grandfather, father and uncle also played in the NHL, virtually was handed the goaltender's job at the start by Coach Mike Keenan and proceeded to live up to expectations.

Hextall played 66 games during the regular season, 92 including the playoffs, breaking the league record of 90 games in a season by former Flyers goaltender Bernie Parent (1973-74). He led the league in wins (37) and save percentage (.902).

"Everyone kept asking me if I was tired," Hextall said. "I know a lot was written about it. But I wasn't. Mike (Keenan) gave me rest days when I needed them, and I still felt very strong at the end of the playoffs. I feel I could have played another series."

Hextall became only the fifth goaltender in NHL history to record 50 or more wins in a season (including playoffs) and his 37 wins during the regular season was the fourth highest total by a rookie goaltender in NHL history.

Big inning keys Stanford CWS win

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — While Oklahoma State was the team noted for the big inning, Stanford came up with an even bigger one to win the NCAA College World Series.

"I thought the fifth inning was the key," Oklahoma State Coach Gary Ward said of No. 2-ranked Stanford's 9-5 victory over the No. 3 Cowboys Sunday night.

"We get back-to-back homers and have a chance to take control. They come right back and put four runs on the board and went back in control."

Stanford, 53-17, had a 2-1 lead when Oklahoma State's Benny

Castillo and Brad Beanblossom hit solo homers off Cardinal starter Jack McDowell, 13-5, in the fourth.

Then Stanford rallied for four runs in the fifth on a walk, doubles by Toi Cook, Paul Carey and Ed Sprague, two wild pitches and a sacrifice fly off losing pitcher Pat Hope, 13-3.

"The turning point was after the two home runs," said Stanford Coach Mark Marquess, whose team was making its first appearance in a national championship game.

"That was a big inning," Cardinal first baseman Ron Witmeyer

said. "It really picked us up."

When McDowell walked the first two Cowboys in the eighth inning, Steve Chitren came in to strike out the next two batters, walked another and struck out Oklahoma State's Ray Ortiz, ending the threat.

"After I walked those two guys in the eighth, I needed help," said McDowell, an All-American and a first-round pick in last week's major league draft by the Chicago White Sox.

"Steve Chitren picked me up big time," McDowell said.

Flyers' Clarke misses NHL

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Former Philadelphia Flyers center Bob Clarke acknowledged Monday that his induction into the NHL Hall of Fame is the greatest honor an individual can earn, but he said he'd still rather be playing.

"I miss it now more than the first year," said Clarke, who has been vice president and general manager of the Flyers since his retirement in 1984. "I think it gets worse the farther you get from playing."

As a soft-spoken, 37-year-old executive, Clarke watched a young Flyers' team he built take the Edmonton Oilers to the seventh game of the Stanley Cup finals after falling behind three games to one.

Clarke said retirement meant

more than being reduced to a spectator, though. "It's not just watching the game," he said. "It's the life and everything else. I really envy what those guys went through this year."

In an informal meeting with reporters before going to Detroit for the NHL draft and next week's induction ceremony, Clarke downplayed his achievements.

"I just liked to play," he said. "I just wanted to play hockey — nothing else. I didn't want to go to school. I didn't want to work. I just wanted to play hockey. So it was easy."

Clarke will become the second member of the two-time champion Flyers to be inducted into the Hall of Fame at Toronto. Goaltender Bernie Parent was inducted in September 1984.

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