

Sports

Rose may activate himself for lefty pinch-hitting duties

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Cincinnati Reds Manager Pete Rose is taking batting practice again, and says he will activate himself as a player if he thinks he can help the Reds by playing.

But the 46-year-old Rose, who holds baseball's career record for hits with 4,256, says he wouldn't resume as a player simply to add to his record.

"Let's be honest," Rose said. "Our left-handed pinch-hitters haven't exactly been setting the world on fire and it's not for a lack of opportunity."

General Manager Bill Bergesch says the decision is up to Rose, who says he could be ready in as little as two weeks. But no date has been set for his return.

"I don't know if Pete can do it," Bergesch said. "But I do know that if he thinks he can't, he wouldn't try. I

do know that Pete won't embarrass himself or make a fool of himself in any way."

Before Wednesday's games, the Reds led the National League's West Division by four games over the San Francisco Giants.

"This team is going to be in the playoffs — I know that — and I have one of the best playoff records in baseball," Rose said.

Rose has a .381 batting average in seven National League Championship Series. He must be activated by Aug. 31 to be eligible for the playoffs.

"I would never think about activating myself in September," Rose said. "It doesn't matter to me if I get one or two or three more hits. It doesn't matter to me if my last at-bat is a hit."

Rose started taking batting practice this week during the Reds' series

in Philadelphia. Before Monday, he hadn't swung a bat since spring training.

He hasn't played since he struck out last Aug. 17 in a pinch-hitting appearance against San Diego reliever Rich Gossage. Rose, who in 1985 broke Ty Cobb's old record of 4,191 hits, had 52 hits in 1986 while hitting .219.

Reds' pinch-hitters are 26-for-140 this season, for a .186 average. The left-handers — Paul O'Neill, Terry Francona and Kurt Stillwell — are hitting .181.

Bergesch said Rose's presence in the lineup could help the team play more consistently. The Reds were 64-46 in games Rose played in 1985.

"Certainly time runs out on those things, but who knows what effect this might have on our team? I'm of the opinion that it could give our team one hell of a shot in the arm," Bergesch said.

Kingman: inking with majors not 'life or death' situation

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Dave Kingman, trying to prepare for a major league comeback with a brief stint in the Pacific Coast League, says he doesn't care if he fails to land another shot at the big time.

The moody slugger, who has 442 major league home runs, winds up his cameo minor league appearance this weekend with the San Francisco Giants' Class AAA affiliate, the Phoenix Firebirds.

"It's not life or death if no one signs me," the 38-year-old Kingman said Tuesday night after going hitless in four at-bats against Portland. "There are a number of things I've been able to do in the summertime for the first time since high school, like fishing and traveling."

Kingman says he's enjoying his chance to "swing the bat for a couple of weeks and play baseball."

"The Giants were nice enough to let me work out and get into shape," he said of his contract with Phoenix, which allows him to sign with a team other than the Giants. He says if no one calls, his last game will be this weekend against Tacoma.

Going into Wednesday's game with the Portland Beavers, he's hitting .242 with two home runs, eight runs batted in and seven strikeouts in 10 games.

The 6-foot-6, 210-pound Kingman says he still would like to achieve a couple of goals — playing on a pennant winner and a chance hit 500 home runs.

"The way I've been going the last three years, I don't see why I can't attain that number," he said.

Tuesday night, he grounded out twice, loping with apparent disinter-

est to first base. Next came a long fly ball to the deepest part of the ballpark that brought a gasp from the crowd of 1,852. Finally, there were three looping swings that resulted in an eighth-inning strikeout.

With each at-bat, Kingman strode disdainfully to the plate, oblivious to derisive calls from the crowd. And with each out, he returned placidly to the dugout.

"I've got real peace now," Kingman said. "I still have the same desire. I put in the same effort I always have. It's all part of the game. Everybody changes. I've mellowed out a lot. We all mellow out."

In addition to the 442 home runs, Kingman has 1,210 RBI and a .236 lifetime batting average in a 16-year major-league career with seven different teams.

Scott tosses 4-hitter as Astros win 7-0

MONTREAL (AP) — Mike Scott pitched a four-hitter, struck out 10 and drove in a run as the Houston Astros defeated the Montreal Expos, 7-0, Wednesday night.

Scott, 11-6, increased his major league-leading strikeout total to 165. The Astros right-hander walked three batters en route to his third shutout and fifth complete game.

On May 8 at Montreal, Scott beat the Expos with a two-hitter.

Billy Hatcher, just off the disabled list, led off the game against Bob Sebra, 6-10, with a single and stole second. Hatcher took third on a wild pitch and scored on Gerald Young's groundout.

With one out in the fourth, Alan Ashby walked and moved to second one out later on a wild pitch. Rookie Ken Caminiti made it 2-0 with a single, scoring Ashby.

Ashby's ninth homer, to open the sixth, gave Houston a 3-0 lead, and after two outs in the inning, Craig Reynolds doubled and scored on Scott's single to left.

The Astros made it 5-0 in the eighth when Jose Cruz hit a one-out triple off reliever Tim Burke and scored when first baseman Andres Galarraga bobbled a grounder by Caminiti.

Bill Doran hit a two-run homer in the ninth for the Astros' final runs.

The Astros closed within 3½ games of first-place Cincinnati as the Reds lost 5-3 against the Phillies in Philadelphia.

Houston also took sole possession of second place from the San Francisco Giants, who were shut out by Rick Reuschel and the Pittsburgh Pirates.

The Astros' travel to Shea Stadium Friday to take on the defending World Champion New York Mets.

Thomas to write book on Cowboys' history

THOUSAND OAKS, Calif. (AP) — For the first time since his ill-fated attempt to return to the Dallas Cowboys in 1976, the once-silent Duane Thomas is back with the team — this time as a member of the press.

Coach Tom Landry and owner Tex Schramm have forgiven the mercurial running back for the grief he gave them in the early 1970s, when he called Schramm "sick, demoralized and totally dishonest," and said Landry was "a plastic man, not a man at all."

Thomas — a key member of the 1970 team that lost Super Bowl V to Baltimore and the one that came back the next year to defeat Miami, 24-3, in Super Bowl VI — joked with Schramm and ate lunch with Landry at the Cowboys training camp this week as he worked on a book about the franchise.

"This will not be a fictional format," Thomas said. "It will not be a book that is slinging mud around or pointing fingers. It will be one that is uplifting and one that is informative. But it will be the truth."

Thomas said he would be at every Dallas game this season to gather information for his book, which will cover the path he and the Cowboys have taken since they were together in the early '70s. He is collaborating with Paul Zimmerman of Sports Illustrated and said he has received a six-figure advance from the publisher.

"I'll tell you," Landry said, "I may have a place in that book. You never know. It could be a plastic chapter."

Thomas, the Cowboys No. 1 pick out of West Texas State in 1970, was a sensational rookie in his first year with the team and rushed 1,596 yards in his first two seasons.

In 1971, he skipped the preseason in a contract dispute and didn't report until just before the season opener. For an entire season, he refused to talk to the press and only on the rarest occasions to teammates. Only after Dallas had won its first Super Bowl did Thomas finally talk, and his conversation with CBS' Thomas Brookshire is now part of broadcast history.

Brookshire stammered through a long-winded question that finally ended up something like: "Duane, you don't look that fast the way you run, but then you're able to outrun the defensive players. Are you really that fast?"

Thomas' reply: "Evidently."

End of interview.

Thomas' time in the fast lane had just about run out. After Super Bowl VI he would never again carry the ball for the Cowboys, and his time with San Diego and Washington was not memorable.

He made his disparaging comments about Landry and Schramm at a Dallas news conference in 1972 after a contract hassle led to his being traded first to New England, then, after that fell through, to San Diego.

He bounced around for a while, winding up in Washington, where he scored a touchdown against the Cowboys. He tried to make a comeback with the Cowboys in 1976, failed and retired.

"I'll be honest. I think those things will always lay in the back of my mind," Thomas said. "But knowing that those things are over and that you have to keep moving forward, those things are buried. They no longer exist."

Schramm and Landry say they've forgiven Thomas.

"We get along very well," Landry said.

"I've had a very nice relationship with him since then," Schramm said. "To me, it was nice seeing him and very comfortable and everything, talking to him."

"The Duane Thomas story is a sad one. It's nothing you get mad about. I might have had a few temper tiffs at the time, but it was never really a bitter type of situation. There was just something wrong," Schramm said.

"To me, he was a sick person. I don't know if he realizes that, even to this day, but he was a sick person for a couple of years there. But now he seems to be very balanced. He's trying to work and make a go of things."



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