

Sports

Giants turn back Astros in 11 on costly Biancalana error

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Robby Thompson doubled with one out in the bottom of the 11th inning and scored on a two-out throwing error by Houston shortstop Buddy Biancalana, giving the San Francisco Giants a 7-6 victory over the Astros Thursday.



Biancalana fielded a grounder off the bat of Kevin Mitchell, who was awarded an infield single, and threw the ball into the dirt, past first base, and Thompson scored the winning run easily. The error made a winner of Giants reliever Craig Lefferts, 3-4, and a loser of Rocky Childress, 0-1.

The victory was the seventh in eight games for the Giants, who remained tied with the Cincinnati Reds for the National League West lead.

Astros pinch-hitter Davey Lopes tied the score at 6-6 in the top of the ninth with a one-out RBI single. He was the first batter to face Lefferts, who relieved Scott Garrelts after Garrelts struck out a batter and then walked Jose Cruz and Glenn Davis.

Kevin Mitchell hit a three-run homer off reliever Larry Andersen with two out in the seventh inning to

give the Giants a 6-5 lead.

Mitchell's 15th homer of the season came after Houston infielders made two misplays in the seventh. Mitchell was the first batter to face Andersen, who was attempting to save a victory for Nolan Ryan.

Ryan, who has not won since June 12, pitched four-hit ball and struck out 10 over 6½ innings. He left after walking leadoff hitter Chris Speier and striking out pinch-hitter Harry Spilman in the seventh.

Juan Agosto relieved to face pinch-hitter Chili Davis, who hit a sharp grounder to shortstop. Speier

was forced at second, but second baseman Bill Doran threw the ball into the dirt trying for a double play.

Joel Youngblood, the third consecutive pinch hitter, reached base when shortstop Craig Reynolds booted his grounder.

Reynolds, Billy Hatcher and Glenn Davis hit home runs off Giants' starter Mike Krukow. Hatcher's ninth homer, a two-run drive in the sixth, gave Houston a 4-3 lead.

Ryan struck out 10 or more batters for the 171st time in his career and raised his season strikeout total to 181 in 142½ innings, tying teammate Mike Scott for the National League strikeout lead. Baseball's all-time strikeout leader, with a total of 4,458, did not allow a hit after the second inning, when the Giants scored three times to take a 3-0 lead.

Hatcher doubled in the fourth and scored Houston's first run when Doran singled. Reynolds' fourth homer of the year, all of which have come at Candlestick Park, made the score 3-2 in the fifth. Hatcher hit the go-ahead homer in the sixth after Gerald Young's leadoff single, and Davis opened the seventh with his 19th homer.

Steinbrenner says he has regrets about hiring Piniella as manager

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — New York Yankees owner George Steinbrenner, while saying he has not made up his mind on a managerial change, feels he may have made a mistake by hiring Lou Piniella for the job last year.

"I've done everything for this guy. I gave him a chance to manage the New York Yankees without going to the minors. In retrospect, maybe that was a mistake," said Steinbrenner.

The Yankees owner began publicly criticizing his manager last week, starting a familiar countdown in New York, where Steinbrenner has made 12 managerial changes in 10 years.

The Yankees, who led the American League East by five games on July 5, have lost six of their last seven games and have dropped to third place.

"We will not allow our team to get blown out of this race," Steinbrenner was quoted as saying Thursday in the *Tampa Tribune*.

The deteriorating relationship between the owner and Piniella was put in the spotlight last Saturday when Steinbrenner issued a

statement during a nationally televised game in Detroit. Part of his complaint was that Piniella was not in his hotel room to receive a pre-arranged phone call from him.

Steinbrenner said the two had problems before then.

"That was not the first time he missed (a telephone call) from me," he said.

Piniella said earlier this week the criticism had "taken a piece of my heart away" — but the owner made it clear he has little sympathy for his manager.

"Lou Piniella has no reason to be hurt — I do," Steinbrenner told the *Tribune*. "I've made every player move, every shift he's asked for since Day One of this season, and this is what happens. If anyone should feel hurt, it should be me — not Lou."

Steinbrenner said that no managerial change is imminent, although he added: "In most companies you can't do what he's done to the boss and get away with it. But I don't know what I'm going to do. I'm still wrestling with it."

games behind Boston. He signed a two-year contract extension last October for \$250,000 a year.

Steinbrenner says the first time he could not contact Piniella when he wanted him was on July 23, when Steinbrenner said he made a pre-arranged telephone call to him while the Yankees were in Chicago. But the conversation never came off.

"Lou was at Arlington Park (a Chicago horse track)," Steinbrenner said. "We had the day off and, sure, that's his privilege to go to the races if he wants to. But we were in a slump and we had some things we needed to talk about. I was concerned about fixing my ball club and he was at the horse races."

Last week, they had disagreements over personnel moves, though the owner said he would go along with the manager's decisions.

Yankee players expressed support for Piniella, but the owner noted: "Poor little Lou; all the players are sticking up for him. But if they're so supportive, why are they losing the way they are? They're not just getting beat, they're getting blown out."

Pozderac 'holds' on with Cowboys

THOUSAND OAKS, Calif. (AP) — Phil Pozderac was the NFL's most famous lineman in 1986 for all the wrong reasons.

"Holding No. 75" became an official's call that made Dallas Cowboys' fans cringe.

Pozderac, who played the critical left tackle position in the Cowboys' offensive line, says, "The holding calls I got in the New York Giants game put us in a slide for the rest of the year. That was the turning point of the season."

With Dallas trailing the Giants 17-14 in the ninth game of the season, Tony Dorsett took a screen pass to the New York six-yard line. It was called back by a holding penalty on Pozderac.

On the next play, the officials called, "holding, No. 75."

The drive was over and, for all purposes, the season was gone. The Cowboys finished the second half of the season 1-7 and were 7-9 overall.

"I felt worse than anyone," Pozderac said. "And nobody let me forget. I was the joke of morning disc jockeys the rest of the year. It was really a tough time for me."

Pozderac, who had to live with the shame in the off-season, has renewed hope and confidence under new offensive line coach Jim Erkenbeck.

"I can't wait to redeem myself," said Pozderac, who has been switched to right tackle and will

start Saturday night's preseason game against the San Diego Chargers.

"Erkenbeck has been pretty tough on us but I like it," Pozderac said. "We have a new style now — we attack the defense instead of it being the other way around. We just don't sit back and wait on the defense."

"I'm in favor of it. I like it tough."

Asked if he thought it would help if he changes numbers so the officials couldn't find him, Pozderac laughed.

"Well, I'd sure like to be harder to find out there," he said. "That number certainly has some notoriety. I want to keep the number, though, and have a season where

an official never calls it."

Pozderac said he thought he might be "marked" by the officials.

"Officials talk to each other and I'm sure my number got around," he said. "I did have some technique problems last year. I was doing some wrong things in the way I blocked. It's going to be different this year."

Erkenbeck said he believes Pozderac will bounce back strong and have a good year.

"I admire him for not giving up when everybody and his brother were taking shots at him," Erkenbeck said.

Pozderac was a fifth-round draft pick out of Notre Dame in 1982.

Landry says Dorsett to start in preseason

THOUSAND OAKS, Calif. (AP) — Dallas Coach Tom Landry, in a change of mind, said Thursday that he would start Tony Dorsett at running back in Saturday night's NFL preseason game against the San Diego Chargers.

Landry had said earlier in the week that Robert Lavette would likely start.

Dorsett will start "just to get him a feel" of game action, Landry said.

"Dorsett will play a series or two," Landry said. "We've got to work him in there sooner or later." Landry said Lavette will

play most of the game.

Timmy Newsome will start at fullback in place of the injured Herschel Walker.

Landry also announced that defensive tackle Don Smerek has such a bad hamstring pull "he may be out several weeks before he's ready to do anything. He really tore a hamstring up, high."

He said Danny White will start at quarterback and play at least a quarter.

White, who missed the last seven games of 1986 with a fractured wrist, has been watched closely in training camp.

Little-used Walk makes presence known in shutout of pennant-chasing Cardinals

PITTSBURGH (AP) — The St. Louis Cardinals were playing for the pennant. The way Bob Walk saw it, he was pitching for something even more important: his job.

Walk, a self-described journeyman right-hander who has pitched little for the Pittsburgh Pirates' youthful staff, did something Wednesday night that no other National League pitcher has done in 113 games this season.

He shut out the Cardinals, whose 69-44 record entering Thursday night's game at Philadelphia was the best in the major leagues. The Cardinals became the last big-league

team to be blanked this season as Pittsburgh beat them 11-0.

Thanks to their most productive inning of the season, an eight-run fourth, the Pirates won in a Walk.

"I didn't know they hadn't been shut out," said Walk, 30, whose shutout was only the fourth of his eight-year career. "Of course, it helps when you don't have to pitch to Jack Clark. Any shutout against them is tainted when he's not playing."

Clark, who has 30 homers and 94 runs batted in, sat out his second game in a row with arm and shoulder problems that date back to his July 29 collision with Mookie Wilson

of the New York Mets.

Walk's start was only his second since he moved into the Pirates' rotation last week. He pitched a four-hitter, allowing only two hits over the first eight innings, and was helped by four Pirates' double plays over the final five innings.

"Walk pitched us tough," said Cardinals Manager Whitey Herzog.

Walk knows that any start for the Pirates could be the last, since several contending teams have expressed interest in All-Star pitcher Rick Reuschel and Walk, who pitched in the 1980 World Series for the Philadelphia Phillies.

U.S. loses Ethridge to knee injury

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Kamie Ethridge of Texas, the starting point guard for the U.S. women's basketball team at the Pan American Games, will miss the rest of the competition because of a knee injury that is more severe than first thought, a U.S. Olympic Committee spokeswoman said Thursday.

Ethridge, one of the four members of U.S. Coach Jody Conradt's undefeated 1986 national championship team on the U.S. roster, suffered the injury early Wednesday night in the United States' 110-41 victory over Peru as it opened defense of the gold medal.

The injury to Ethridge's right knee was originally diagnosed as a

mild ligament sprain, but USOC spokesperson Chris Plonsky said Ethridge was examined Thursday by three doctors and "the injury is more serious than first indicated."

"There is some ligament damage they are not sure of the extent," Plonsky said. "Surgery is a possibility and she definitely will not play in the Pan Am Games."

Plonsky said Ethridge would remain in Indianapolis Thursday night and then decide whether to remain with the team or return home to Lubbock.

Conradt had said earlier Thursday that there was swelling overnight and "in my opinion, I don't think she'll play here."

Ethridge, who was the starting point guard on the World Championships and Goodwill Games gold-medal winning teams last year, suffered the injury when she landed hard after making a pass.

The loss of Ethridge affects the team on both ends of the court, according to Conradt.

"She was more knowledgeable about what I wanted to do offensively," said Conradt, whose team next plays Saturday against Brazil. "But the offense isn't my biggest concern, the press suffers so much."

"I now have the dilemma of making wholesale changes or more subtle changes."

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