

Pirates extend streak at expense of Astros

PITTSBURGH (AP) — The Pittsburgh Pirates couldn't have picked a better time to get hot — at least as far as the National League West — as the San Francisco Giants are concerned.

Doug Drabek pitched a three-hitter for his first major league shutout and John Cangelosi hit a three-run homer, leading Pittsburgh over the lumping Houston Astros 7-0 Sunday for the Pirates' sixth straight victory.

The victories have come at the expense of the Astros and the Cincinnati Reds, the two teams chasing the Pirates in the NL West.

"I don't know why we've played better against the West," said Manager Jim Leyland, whose Pirates are more-than-respectable 36-30 against the NL West but only 23-41 in their own division.

"All I know is that right now we're playing the way we're capable of

playing, we're getting the hitting and the defense to go with the pitching," he said. "I've thought all along that it was just a matter of time until our pitchers started pitching the way they are."

Drabek, 7-10, didn't allow a hit after Bill Doran's leadoff single in the fourth in winning his fifth consecutive game as the Pirates' extended Houston's losing streak to five games. The skid matches the Astros' longest of the season and evened their record at 65-65.

"I knew it would come sooner or later but I'm glad to get the first one (shutout)," Drabek said. "I've relaxed and settled down and I'm pitching the way I think I can pitch."

"We just stopped swinging the bats when we came in here," said Houston Manager Hal Lanier, who held a closed-door team meeting after the game.

Whitaker paces Tigers to win over Rangers

DETROIT (AP) — Lou Whitaker scored four of Detroit's seven unearned runs Sunday and Doyle Alexander pitched a three-hitter as the Tigers beat the Texas Rangers 7-0 to maintain their one-game lead in the American League East.

Texas knuckleballer Charlie Hough, 14-10, allowed only three hits in seven innings, but catcher Geno Petralli was charged with six passed balls, tying an 85-year-old major-league record and leading to the unearned Detroit runs.

The record of six passed balls was set Oct. 4, 1902 by Harry Vickers of the Cincinnati Reds. The previous NL record for passed balls was five several teams.

Hough struck out six and walked six and also was charged with a wild pitch.

Alexander, 3-0, making his fourth start since coming to Detroit in a trade with the Atlanta Braves, struck

out six and walked none. He retired 22 consecutive batters before allowing a double to Tom O'Malley with two outs in the ninth.

Whitaker walked in the Detroit first, went to second on Bill Madlock's single, moved up on a passed ball and scored on Alan Trammell's grounder.

Whitaker doubled in the third, moved up on Madlock's sacrifice bunt and scored on another passed ball.

Whitaker struck out in the fifth, but reached first on a passed ball. He stole second, took third on a Petralli's fourth passed ball and scored his third unearned run on a grounder by Evans. Madlock, who was hit by a pitch, scored on Trammell's 21st homer for a 5-0 lead.

A wild pitch by Hough and two more passed balls led to Detroit's final two runs in the seventh.

Bicycle race becomes top attraction in Wichita Falls

WICHITA FALLS (AP) — The annual "Hotter n' Hell Hundred" bicycle race has turned into the biggest tourist attraction on Wichita Falls' calendar. Thousands came to town for this year's event.

It started six years ago as a celebration of the city's centennial, and participation has almost doubled every year since.

Accommodations were booked months in advance for Saturday's activities.

Alan McCormack, of Boulder, Colo., won in record time this year, finishing the 100-mile-race in three hours, 33 minutes and 45 seconds. The old record of four hours and one minute was set last year by John Toward of San Diego, Calif. McCormack is a professional cyclist who will compete next week in the World Cycling Championship in Austria.

Friday night, about 3,500 people gathered for a "carbo-load" — slang

for pigging out on spaghetti, bread, frozen cake and salad — and then gathered on motel parking lots all over town to talk bikes.

About 11,300 people were drawn into this North Texas city of 98,000 people for the bicycle race itself.

The first "Hotter n' Hell Hundred" in 1982 drew 1,300 cyclists.

"It's well organized," said Bobbie Boland, 27, who came in with a group from Houston. "It's pretty here. It's not polluted, and people are friendly."

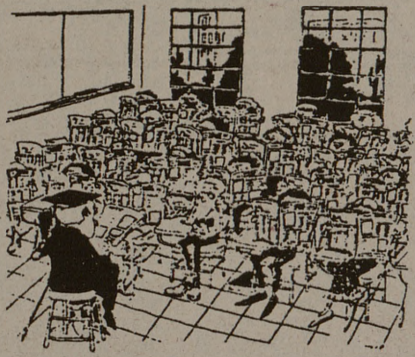
Roby Christie, 44, a postal employee, put the bicycle race together in Wichita Falls.

He took a gamble, he said.

"In 1982, we were talking to a guy about a rocking chair marathon. He said you'd have 200 with a rocking chair marathon. The largest bike ride we'd been to was 250, but we said we could draw 1,000," Christie said.

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