

Blue Jays make MVP Bell \$4 million man

NEW YORK (AP) — George Bell of the Toronto Blue Jays settled a brink of salary arbitration once Wednesday, but Dwight Gooden went through with his hearing against the New York Mets.

Bell, the American League's Most Valuable Player, agreed to a two-year contract for a guaranteed \$4 million in the room where the arbitration was to hear arguments. The hearing was delayed 25 minutes for last-ditch effort to avoid arbitration.

Bell's deal includes an option year in 1990 that could raise the value of package to \$5.8 million, and he earns more than \$400,000 a year in incentive bonuses.

Bell was asking for an arbitration-estimated \$2.105 million salary this year, while the Blue Jays offered to pay him \$1.75 million. Andre Dawson, the National League MVP, lost out to get a \$2 million salary from the Chicago Cubs, whose \$1.85 million offer was accepted by an arbitrator Sunday.

Bell batted .308 last season with 47 homers and a league-leading 134 runs batted in. He will get \$1.9 million this season and \$1.9 million in 1989. Toronto had an option for 1990 at \$2 million but must pay Bell a \$200,000 buyout if it does not exercise the option.

If Bell is traded, his salary would increase to \$2 million in 1989 and \$2.1 million in 1990. He also gets the use of an automobile paid for by the club.

"I can go home now, have a couple of Presidents and sit in the backyard," Bell said, referring to his favorite cigar.

Gooden and the Mets argued their cases in an adjoining room for four hours before arbitrator Richard Bloch. A decision is expected Thursday or Friday.

Gooden was confronted with his past cocaine use in his hearing with the Mets.

"They brought it up, but it went OK," he said as he left the building. "It was not bad, it really went OK."

Gooden is asking for \$1.65 million, a \$150,000 raise. The Mets submitted \$1.4 million. The sides went into the hearing \$40,000 apart on a settlement. The club's last offer was for \$1.45 million — similar to the \$50,000 cut taken by Ron Darling. Gooden's last proposal was for a cut to \$1.49 million.

Gooden missed 11 starts because of cocaine rehabilitation but returned June 5 and was 15-7 with a 3.21 earned-run average.

Three arbitration decisions were announced Wednesday. Gary Redus of the Chicago White Sox won and was awarded \$460,000 by John Simpkins, who rejected the club's offer of \$370,000. Mark Gubicza of the Kansas City Royals won and was awarded \$635,000 by Simpkins, who rejected the club's offer of \$525,000.

Chris Brown of the San Diego Padres lost and was given \$265,000

by Frederick Reel instead of his requested \$410,000.

Owners have won nine of 13 cases decided this winter.

In addition to Gooden, Frank Tanana and the Detroit Tigers presented their arguments Wednesday before Reel. Tanana, a free agent who accepted Detroit's offer to arbitrate, is asking for \$1.1 million. The Tigers are offering \$800,000.

Reliever Roger McDowell and the Mets agreed to a one-year contract for \$615,000, a \$310,000 raise. McDowell had requested \$800,000 while the Mets offered \$555,000, but McDowell's case was weakened when relievers Tom Henke of Toronto and John Franco of Cincinnati lost in arbitration.

Also Wednesday, Tony Gwynn's contract with the Padres was renegotiated. He will get \$1.09 million this season instead of the \$840,000 under his old contract, and \$1.19 million in 1989 instead of \$940,000.

Ballesteros starts season early with Andy Williams Open

LA JOLLA, Calif. (AP) — It is a chilly in northern Spain at this time of the year.

But that's not the reason Seve Ballesteros decided to start his season a year early.

"I'm not here for a holiday," the Spanish golfer said after a practice round for the \$650,000 Andy Williams Open, which starts Thursday at the Torrey Pines Golf Club.

"I'm here to enjoy the competition, to play as hard as I can. I want to win if I can," said Ballesteros, the 30-year-old Spaniard who ranks among the world's leading players.

He is coming off a 1987 season that Ballesteros said was "very good. It was very close to being a great year, a fantastic year."

As it was, he won three times, two of those in Spain. But he did not win in eight starts in the United States, though he was runner-up three times, twice losing in playoffs. It was very much the same in Europe, he said, three wins, five seconds, six thirds.

"Every time someone had a chance to beat me, he did," Ballesteros said.

And that, he indicated, was largely due to two factors: luck and putting.

"My luck was not so good as it used to be in previous years," Ballesteros said. "With a little bit of luck I could have won two, perhaps three times in eight starts in America last year."

"I am very optimistic my putting will be much better this year," said Ballesteros, who also plans to play in next week's Los Angeles Open before returning to Spain for two tournaments, including the defense of his title in the Spanish PGA.

The Andy Williams is being played on both the North and South courses at Torrey Pines. The field of 156 will play one round on each course before the field is cut for the final two rounds at the South course.

Among the others in the chase for a \$117,000 first prize are defending champion George Burns, Tom Watson, Fuzzy Zoeller, Ray Floyd, Curtis Strange, Bob Tway, Tom Kite, U.S. Open titleholder Scott Simpson and Masters champion Larry Mize.

Teenage boxer picks 'gold' over luxuries

SHERMAN (AP) — Kevin Bowden, a sophomore at Sherman High School, is a semi-professional boxer who already has won \$55,000 in prize money, a Mercedes Benz and a Rolls Royce.

But the 16-year-old is willing to give up the cash and the cars for the ultimate goal — a shot at the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul, South Korea, he said.

To maintain his amateur status, Bowden must give all of his prizes and earnings to the federal government if he is to try out for the Olympic boxing team.

But a chance at the gold medal is what matters in his life right now, not the idea of cruising the streets of Sherman in a fancy car, he said.

"I don't care about the car and the money," Bowden said. "I just want to go to the Olympics."

Bowden has been boxing since he was 12, an age when most kids are hanging out at the video arcade.

However, the gym has been Bowden's fun house for the past four years.

He boxed in his first bout at 13 as an amateur. A year later, Bowden was touring the Golden Gloves semi-pro circuit. And during the past year as a 16-year-old middleweight, he has proved to be a fighting machine.

In fact, he doesn't even box in the 16-17 age group of Golden Gloves tournaments because the competition is far too inferior.

His record in the 16-17 age division was 22-0 with 19 knockouts. Bowden has been fighting the past few months in the 18-19 age group and his results have barely dropped off. His record is 38-3 with 18 knockouts.

He is ranked No. 2 in Texas, behind 19-year-old Carlos Jack-

son, who defeated Bowden by disqualification recently in a Golden Gloves tournament in Midland. But Bowden still believes he should be No. 1.

"I was disqualified for too much grease on my face and too loose a belt around my midsection," he said. "Other than that, I was dominating him."

Bowden says he is not one to talk and boast of his ability like boxers have been known to do. He's not into floating like a butterfly and stinging like a bee, ala Ali.

What he does like to do is wait patiently in the ring until he sees what type of fighter he is facing. Then he moves in for the kill.

"Once I catch their form, then that's how I know it's the right time to try and knock them out," Bowden said.

"To be honest, I get scared boxing these guys that are 6-foot-1 and 6-foot-2 ... until the match starts," he said.

Bowden said he is always nervous until he gets or gets hit in a forbidden spot. Then it's time for opponents to throw in the towel.

"My biggest weakness is getting hit in the throat," he said. "Once I get hit in the throat, it makes me mad, and it's knockout time after that."

Bowden has a rigorous workout schedule in his effort to win a spot on the U.S. Olympic team in Seoul.

Bowden trains three days a week — in which he will jog six miles, jump rope 300 times in three minutes, do 500 sit-ups and 90 pushups, and then lace up the gloves to spar with his coach, James Johnston.

"You have to have a lot of will, if you want to do it," Bowden said.

Alexander's 3-pointers guide SMU past Rice

DALLAS (AP) — Todd Alexander hit six 3-point shots Wednesday night to carry Southern Methodist to an 86-68 Southwest Conference victory over Rice and give the Mustangs their third 20-victory season in the last five years.

SMU increased its overall record to 20-5 and improved its league leading record to 9-3. Rice dropped to 6-17 and 3-9.

Kato Armstrong had a game-high 22 points for the Mustangs but it was Alexander's long-range bombarding that broke the game open midway through the second half.

Alexander scored 20 points and Carlton McKinney added 18 points for the Mustangs who tied a school record with nine, 3-point shots for the game. The school record was set in December against Louisville.

Ronald Robertson led the Owls with 21 points and David Willie added 12, all in the first half.

SMU, a 15-point favorite, was 37-32 at halftime as Willie kept the Owls close with two late 3-point shots.

The Mustangs led by as many as 10 points in the first half with Alexander coming off the bench with three, 3-pointers.

Houston center lifts Coogs to 66-47 walloping of TCU

HOUSTON (AP) — Houston center Rolando Ferreira scored 17 points, including four 3-point shots on five attempts, as the Cougars overwhelmed Texas Christian 66-47 in the Southwest Conference Wednesday.

Houston, which sports a record of 13-9 and 7-4 in conference play, used big scoring stretches at the beginning of both halves to subdue struggling the Horned Frogs.

Houston hit its first four shots of the game on its way to building a 10-0 lead. Hollis hit two 3-pointers for his only scoring of the half.

Texas Christian came back with a 9-0 run led by Rod Jacques, who had 12 points, as the Horned Frogs closed in at 14-11, but Ferreira connected on three straight jumpers on the lane to give the Cougars a 32-22 halftime lead.

A&M men golfers open year

The Texas A&M men's golf team opens its 1988 spring season today in the Pan American Intercollegiate tourney in Monterrey, Mexico.

The 15th-ranked, defending Southwest Conference champion Aggies will compete in a 21-team field including Texas teams Baylor and Houston Baptist.


The Aggies are led by junior All-America selection Roy Mackenzie

and senior Neil Hickerson. Hickerson was the most consistent player in the fall with a 73.00 stroke average.

A&M Coach Bob Ellis said the team is ready for the meet.

"We've played well in Monterrey in the past, and I see no reason why we can't do it again," he said. "Against that type of competition, we'll have to get four strong scores each day to have a shot at it."

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