

Sports

Major Leaguers spell relief for fan

Relief is on the way — to soothe my aching head and upset stomach caused by an overdose of sports excitement.

For weeks now I have sat on the edge of my couch consuming an incredible amount of snacks, yelling at the top of my lungs, giving and

receiving high-fives from friends while ignoring my studies and possibly losing a dollar or two in friendly wagers.

I've become a basketball junkie — switching back and forth from ESPN to CBS, searching for one more culminating dunk off a fastbreak or another shot rejected all the way back to last week.

Thanks to the three-point shot and prevalent use of pressure defenses, this year's National Collegiate Athletic Association's tourney games have been some of the highest-scoring and fastest-paced ever.

At least nine teams scored 100 points or more in a game and 20 have broken the 90-point mark.

There were nail-biting upsets like Murray State's 78-75 victory over North Carolina State that made me dizzy.

There was the thrilling fall of giants like Syracuse's Rony Seikaley, and North Carolina's J.R. Reid, who were slain relatively early in the tourney.

If you're like me, the NCAAs made you hungry for NBA action. And Michael Jordan's season high 59-point performance in the Bulls 112-110 victory over the Pistons Sunday

was a perfect intermission for the final rounds of the tourney.

With all this action no wonder my head aches and my stomach is upset.

How do I spell relief?
B-A-S-E-B-A-L-L.

For those of you who didn't know, the major league baseball regular season started Monday. There's nothing like watching a pro baseball game on the tube to return my heart rate back to normal and calm my nerves.

The major leaguers don't have to worry about fans being distracted by the NCAAs. With only 161 games left in the season, these openers are sure to have a profound effect on the penant races.

Yeah, I know baseball is a thinking-man's game. And I have to admit that when I watch it I think — my mind wanders and wanders.

Cerebral sports fans, however, might be interested in some of the rule changes for the '88 season.

The strike zone has decreased in size from last year to give pitchers an advantage over batters who hit a record number of homers last season. The decrease in the strike zone will help pitchers because it is an increase in the zone actually called by umpires, which was half the size of what the rule book originally called for, the assumption being that umpires will now call strikes by the book.

Confused? Also, umpires have been instructed to enforce the balk rule more strictly.

So those little extra moves by the pitcher that only the thinking-man and the umpire are aware of will result in runners advancing one base.

I'm so glad the major league season is underway — I needed a break between the NCAAs and NBA playoffs.



Curtis L. Culberson
Sports viewpoint

Manning leads Kansas to upset of Oklahoma

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Danny Manning scored 31 points and grabbed 18 rebounds as unranked Kansas won its second national championship with an 83-79 victory over No. 4 Oklahoma Monday night to become the losingest champion in NCAA history.

The Jayhawks, 26-11, played fast and slow and withstood a record-setting 3-point performance from Oklahoma's Dave Sieger to avenge two losses to the Sooners, 35-4, during the regular season.

This was the third championship game played between two teams from the same conference and it was the third this decade in which a heavy underdog managed to win the title.

Kansas was an eight-point underdog but in the first half the Jayhawks ran with the Sooners, the nation's second-leading scoring team and the regular-season and tournament champions in the Big Eight. Then they showed patience in the second half, running down the 45-second clock before taking good percentage shots. The Jayhawks shot 64 percent for the game, 35 of 55, and they cooled off after a first half in which they made 17 of 20 at one point.

But for all the strategy of Coach Larry Brown it was Manning, the two-time All-America who carried the Jayhawks to the title in a year in which they overcame injuries and academic problems.

Milt Newton added 15 points for Kansas, while Kevin Pritchard had 13. Sieger led Oklahoma with 22 points, while Stacey King had 17 and Harvey Grant and Mookie Blaylock 14 each. But King and Grant, the two leading scorers, had just four each in the second half.

Kansas took the lead for good at 69-68 on a hook shot by Manning with 8:50 left in the game. It was the last of seven straight Kansas points scored by the 6-foot-10 center and the play started with Manning standing at midcourt with the ball waiting for Oklahoma to come out and apply pressure.

Manning handed the ball off, cut

to the basket and hit the hook.

Chris Piper then hit a jumper to give Kansas a four-point lead. The Sooners tied the score on a free throw by Sieger and a turnaround jumper by Grant with 5:55 left.

Pritchard hit a baseline drive with 5:34 left and the Jayhawks were on the way to the first national championship for a team from west of the Mississippi River since UCLA won in 1975.

Manning sealed the victory with four free throws in the final 14 seconds. He gave Kansas an 81-77 lead with the first two. Scooter Barry had missed the second free throw of a 1-and-1 but Manning tapped the rebound and was fouled by King.

Sieger made seven 3-pointers, six in the first half, to tie the championship game team and individual record set last season by Indiana's Steve Alford.

The game was played in Kemper Arena, the site of the Big Eight tournament and just 35 miles from the Kansas campus.

Manning picked up his third foul just 25 seconds into the second half but he never got his fourth.

Sieger made his seventh 3-point shot of the game on his 10th shot from that range but then he went cold.

Sieger missed two in a row on one possession and seemed ready to take a third when the ball bounced back to him. But he hesitated and passed the ball inside to King who scored for a 65-60 lead, Oklahoma's largest of the game.

Brown called a timeout just before King's basket. The Jayhawks scored five straight points to tie the game, the last three coming on a three-point play by Manning.

Kansas made 22 of 31 shots in the first half, 71 percent, including 17 of their first 20.

Sieger was the hot hand for Oklahoma as he made six of eight 3-point attempts while the Sooners made 48.7 percent as a team, 19 of 39.

The first half was played at Oklahoma's tempo as the teams finished tied at 50-50.

There were eight lead changes

and neither team led by more than six — and that was when Pritchard hit a 3-pointer to give the Jayhawks a 31-25 lead with 9:35 left in the half.

Sieger, who finished 7-of-13 in 3-pointers, answered with his third 3-pointer and King added a baseline drive and the Sooners were within one again.

Manning picked up his second foul with 10:44 remaining in the half and with the two-time All-America on the bench, the Sooners couldn't capitalize as they outscored Kansas 12-10 with Manning out of the game.

Oklahoma had beaten Kansas twice during the season, 73-65 and 95-87.

Villanova in 1985 and North Carolina State in 1983 both won the national championship with 10 losses each.

Those teams were also the heavy underdogs, Villanova beating Georgetown and North Carolina State beating Houston.

Villanova's victory was the second meeting of two conference teams for the title. Indiana and Michigan of the Big Ten met for the championship in 1976.

Aggies face SHSU tonight

The Texas A&M baseball team will take a break from Southwest Conference play when it takes on the Sam Houston State Bearkats tonight at 7 at Olsen Field.

Third-ranked A&M is 33-7 overall and 5-1 in SWC play. The Aggies went 5-1 in games last week, losing only to top-ranked Oklahoma State and defeating North Texas State and Texas Tech.

SHSU is 22-17 on the year and lost to A&M 12-2 in a previous game in Huntsville.

Manning named MVP honors

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Even though the game was over, Danny Manning knew he had won.

The score was 79-77 two seconds left, an eternity for Manning had been 1-for-3 at the foul line until that point. But he dropped in two free throws for a four-point lead.

Oklahoma came right back with a basket by Ricky Grace and five seconds left, the 6-foot-6 Manning found himself at the foul line again.

At that moment, with the 81-79, the game was still tied. But not according to Manning.

"I was thinking, it's me," Manning said.

Was that before or after he calmly dropped the two shots?

"Before."

Manning, selected the Outstanding Player, then completed a sensational game by grabbing the final rebound in desperation to give Kansas' 83-79 victory by a 1-point margin.

Manning finished the game with 31 points, 18 rebounds, two assists and two steals.

"I knew Danny wanted to win," Oklahoma's Stacey King said.

Manning committed his personal foul just 11 minutes into the first half and sat on the bench for the next three minutes.

Kansas stayed with Oklahoma during that span and, by time, with a stilling pace score was 50-50.

In the second half, Kansas Manning doing everything to bring the ball upcourt.

"We have the greatest player in the game," Kansas coach Larry Brown said. "With a great player like him, you've always got a chance."

The game was the final of Manning's brilliant college career.

MAN'S INHUMANITY TO MAN:

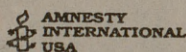
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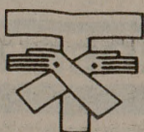
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