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Sports

Take me out to the ballgame, make a break from football

Well, it's starting already. Football, I mean. Seems like every year it gets earlier. Before you know it, it'll be preseason in April. Kinda like the days of the good old USFL. I know you miss that as much as I do.



Hal L. Hammons
Sports viewpoint

The real pity of the matter is that our society, and particularly our state, gets so enthralled with the advent of the real sports season, we forget that another season is reaching the peak of its excitement instead of going through the bumbling and stumblings generally associated with preseason football.

Of course, I have reference to major league baseball. You know, the game with the little ball with red seams? Monday night I had the pleasure of going to see the Astros in the Dome. I hadn't been in a couple of years, and I wasn't going to have another chance this year in all probability. Why not get back in touch with America's favorite pastime, I asked myself.

It was all still there: the drama, the excitement, the fan interaction, all of it. Just like when I went to see them after exhausting afternoons at Astroworld as a kid.

I and some friends got seats right behind the plate — once a year, why not splurge? Dinner was the traditional stadium hot dog and Coke. (I don't drink beer.)

Baseball is just different from other sports. I'm not saying it's better. I'm saying it's different. And I like the differences.

The casualness, for lack of a better term, is refreshing. Sure, it's nice to get all riled up at a

football game, but frequent visitors to Olsen Field will back me up when I say there is a time for watching healthy competition in a laid-back atmosphere.

Maybe it's just me, but I feel like it's easier to involve myself in my neighbor's conversations at a baseball game. My friends and I had some good conversations with a friendly gentleman in front of us about Enos Cabell, the answer to the evening's trivia question, and various other topics. Cabell, a former 'Stro, was the worst player in the history of the franchise, this man informed us with little hesitation.

But that's the kind of person you meet at a baseball game. I don't mean opinionated, although they can be that way; I mean people friendly enough to include total strangers in their entertainment of the evening.

Some people get bored at the lack of constant action on a baseball field; I rather enjoy it. It gives the fan more time to analyze the game, make comments, get refreshments, and lower his blood pressure.

The slow-paced nature of the game allows fans to pick the game apart detail by detail if they choose. Or they can give token attention to it while conducting business or having an important conversation, and still be able to catch the big plays and enjoy the action.

I suppose the casual nature of the game stems in part from the non-critical nature of each encounter. After all, big hairy deal if the home team reeks from time to time. The old cliché, "There's always tomorrow," is going to apply 161 times every year.

That, of course, results in better sportsmanship in the stands and on the field — something that's all too rare in our competitive society. The attitude of "It's only a game" will be seen much more frequently at a baseball game than at practically any other sporting event. And after all, it is only a game.

LA gets Tudor from Cardinals

ST. LOUIS (AP) — The run-starved St. Louis Cardinals acquired slugger Pedro Guerrero from Los Angeles on Tuesday in a one-for-one deal that sent pitching ace John Tudor to the Dodgers.

"Basically, it's a premier pitcher for a premier hitter," Cardinals Manager Whitey Herzog said after the trade was completed.

Tudor, 34, is 50-24 in 3 1/2 seasons with the Cardinals and 101-65 in his 10 seasons in the major leagues. In 1985, he was 21-8 and led the Cardinals to the National League pennant. This season he is 6-5 with a league-leading 2.29 earned run average.

"A lot of days John went out there when he wasn't really 100 percent," Herzog said. "He always took the baseball. It really was a pleasure to manage him. You hate to lose a guy like that."

Guerrero, 32, has a .309 career batting average. He has missed 59 games this season because of a pinched nerve in his neck and is hitting .288, but with only five home runs and 35 runs batted in.

"In Pedro Guerrero, we feel that we have a proven run producer," Maxvill said. "Guerrero has led the Dodgers to three divisional titles and has been a consistent .300 hitter throughout his career. We think that he'll be a big asset to our lineup for years to come."

Los Angeles General Manager Fred Claire said.

See Trade, page 9

Major League Baseball

Coleman, Terry highlight Card shutout of Astros

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Vince Coleman got two singles, stole three bases and scored two runs Tuesday night and St. Louis beat the Houston Astros 3-0 for the Cardinals third shutout in six games.

Scott Terry, 3-3, allowed five in 6 2-3 innings in his second start of the season. Ken Dayley, the third Cardinals' pitcher, threw two innings for his fourth save.

Jim Deshaies, 8-10, allowed six hits and all three runs in six innings. St. Louis made the first triple play of the National League season in the eighth when pinch-hitter Jim Pankovits grounded to third off Dayley with Gerald Young on second and Bill Doran on first.

3-run 7th carries Rangers to 5-4 win over Royals

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Curtis Wilkerson and Scott Fletcher hit two-out triples during a three-run rally in the seventh inning Tuesday night, leading the Texas Rangers over the Kansas City Royals 5-4.

Charlie Hough, 10-13, gave up six hits in 8 2-3 innings. He walked seven and struck out eight. Mitch Williams got the final out for his 15th save.

Cecil Espy singled to open the Texas seventh against Mark Gubicza, 14-7. Wilkerson's triple pulled the Rangers within 4-3. Oddibe McDowell doubled home the tying run and Fletcher followed with his triple. McDowell, Fletcher and Ruben

Davis homer carries Reds over Cubs 6-4

CINCINNATI (AP) — Eric Davis hit a two-run homer in the seventh inning off reliever Les Lancaster Tuesday night, and the Cincinnati Reds rallied to beat the Chicago Cubs 6-4.

Frank Williams, 3-1, got one out for the victory before John Franco, the Reds' fourth pitcher, threw one inning to set a club record with his

Davis, McGwire lead A's to win over O's

BALTIMORE (AP) — Storm Davis won his seventh straight decision and Mark McGwire got three hits and drove in two runs Tuesday night as the Oakland Athletics defeated the Baltimore Orioles 6-3.

Davis, making his first career start against his former team, helped Oakland win for the sixth time in seven games and 11 of 13.

Twins continue to dominate Tigers, win 4-1

DETROIT (AP) — Bert Blyleven pitched six shutout innings and Kent Hrbek hit his 22nd home run Tuesday night as the Minnesota Twins continued their domination over the Detroit Tigers 4-1.

The Twins, who eliminated the Tigers from the American League

playoffs last year in five games, 7-1 against Detroit this season, Minnesota has defeated Jack Morris 12, four straight times, going back to Game 2 of the playoffs last year.

Blyleven, 8-11, had lost his previous decisions and was making his first start since July 29.

Tech a wreck? Dykes deals with loss of 11 starters

LUBBOCK (AP) — After losing 11 starters last season, more than any Southwest Conference team, Texas Tech coach Spike Dykes was scared.

Beginning spring practice, he was left with a depleted corps of linebackers, no cornerbacks and virtually no offensive line.

"A big priority we have at Tech due to lack of depth is to get our best players on the field all the time," said Dykes, in his second year as Red Raider head coach.

To do that, 16 Tech players changed positions, including eight who moved to the opposite side of the line of scrimmage.

"Depth is something that sort of is matter-of-fact to some teams," Dykes said. "Right now we're in a position where we have so little depth in certain areas that it's sort of scary."

Dykes helped shore up the linebacker position, which lost All-SWC selection Michael Johnson among others, by moving fullback Isaac Garnett to that slot. Garnett did well enough to earn a spot on the two-deep chart.

James Mosley also shifted from defensive end to linebacker, and Charles Lott made the move from fullback to tight end.

"Hopefully the vaccination took," Dykes said. "We'll certainly know more about it after the first ball game."

At cornerback, senior Dean Marusak will move up from his backup position to start, along with sophomore walk-on Quinton Rhodes.

For the array of newcomers on the offensive line, just getting spring playing time under their belts was an accomplishment.

"Right now we're talking about total unknowns," Dykes said.

Kimball 'won't give up' because of charges

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Diver Bruce Kimball said Tuesday he would compete in the U.S. Diving Championships at Indianapolis.

"I can't give up and I won't give up," said Kimball, who faces alcohol-related manslaughter charges in Florida.

Kimball's car crashed into a crowd at a popular teen-age hangout on Aug. 1, in Brandon, Fla., leaving two dead and six injured, authorities said.

Flanked by his family, Kimball occasionally was near tears and his hands shook as he read a prepared statement.

"I've dealt with adversity in my life. I won't give up and I don't give up. I can't live with myself if I do," he said.

Kimball refused to answer questions or elaborate on the statement, Kimball, whom many consider second only to two-time Olympic gold medalist Greg Louganis in platform diving, was charged Monday in Tampa, Fla.

Authorities said he could face up to 45 years in prison if convicted on all five felony charges.

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