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Fisher reaches goal; named UM coach

ANN ARBOR, Mich. (AP) — Finally, Steve Fisher is just plain coach. Named as Michigan's interim coach two days before the NCAA tournament, and he was officially rewarded on Monday when the "interim" was removed from his title.

Fisher, an assistant for seven years, took over on March 15 after Bill Frieder accepted the job at Arizona State and was told he could not finish out the season with Michigan. The Wolverines responded with six victories, including an 80-79 overtime victory over Seton Hall in the title game at Seattle.

"The dream lives on," Fisher, 44, said at a joint news conference with Bo Schembechler, the football coach who doubles as athletic director. "I said before, 'Pinch me on Tuesday,' but I didn't want to wake up. I still don't want to wake up."

"This defies description in words. There's no finer job in America."

There was overwhelming support for Fisher, both locally and by the national media, after the polite, red-faced man led a talented group of underachievers through six tournament games. But Schembechler wouldn't be stampeded.

"I wasn't going to be pressed into an emotional decision," Schembechler said. "I wanted to be cool, calculated, and study it from every angle. It always came up Steve Fisher."

Schembechler, a beacon of integrity in big time college sports, wanted most of all to be sure rumors of improprieties in Frieder's program either were untrue or didn't involve Fisher.

For example, a high school player whom Frieder had recruited for Michigan recently began driving a new Mustang. The prospect had to convince Schembechler his mother bought the car.

"I think Steve is a forceful disciplinarian even though he doesn't give

you that impression," Schembechler said. "Let's face it, tomorrow the honeymoon is over and it'll really be over when the season starts next fall. Coaching's a tough business, I can tell you that."

Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski and Evansville coach Jim Crews were believed to be other candidates in whom Michigan was interested, but they were never interviewed.

"The more I thought about it, the more I was convinced we had the right guy right here," Schembechler said. "He was thrown into the breach and showed a lot of moxie."

Terms weren't disclosed, but Fisher is expected to receive a one-year contract, which is standard for all Michigan coaches. Fisher probably will be paid about \$85,000 a year, but an expected shoe contract worth about \$100,000 plus money from basketball camps and radio shows could push Fisher's income to an estimated \$450,000 annually.

"His contract is the same as mine, which is forever," Schembechler quipped. "And his pay will be commensurate with an institution of this kind. He'll be adequately paid, so he doesn't have to be worried about that."

Fisher, who said he lost 15 pounds off an already-lean frame during the tournament and his subsequent wait, said he would retain Mike Boyd as his No. 1 assistant and move Brian Dutcher up to a full-time position.

Boyd and Dutcher were brought into the program by Frieder, who angered Schembechler with the timing of his defection.

Fisher was an assistant at Western Michigan for three seasons before coming to Michigan. He began his coaching career at Rich East High School in Park Forest, Ill., where he coached for eight years. During his tenure, Rich East was 141-70 and won four conference championships.

Adviser: Johnson broke IAAF rule by removing money from trust fund

TORONTO (AP) — Sprinter Ben Johnson withdrew thousands of dollars from a private safe after his career skyrocketed in 1986, his financial adviser told a Canadian inquiry Monday.

In his second day of testimony before a probe into drug use by Canadian track and field athletes, Ross Earl testified that Johnson, the world record-holder in the 100-meter dash did not deposit all his earnings to a special trust fund set up under the rules of international amateur sport.

Instead, Earl said he stored thousands of dollars in cash and bank drafts in a safe at his home. Johnson later bought a safe of his own, Earl testified.

"He came to me on several occasions when he was short of money," said Earl, a family friend of Johnson's for 12 years. "I kept cautioning Ben that the money had to be there when it came time to send it to the (trust account)."

The International Amateur Athletic Federation, the governing body of track and field, requires athletes to deposit their earnings in such trust funds, allowing them to withdraw living expenses until they retire or turn professional.

Earl said the sprinter bought two sports cars worth nearly \$400,000. It costs about \$10,000 a year just to insure them, he said.

"The IAAF rule stated he was allowed a 'reasonable mode' of transportation," Earl said, adding that Johnson also withdrew \$10,000 last May to pay his personal physician, Dr. Jamie Astaphan, for unspecified services.

Johnson won the men's 100-meter dash in world-record time at the Summer Olympics last September but had the gold medal and record taken away when he tested positive for steroids.

The Canadian Track and Field

Association, which administered the trust fund, periodically asked Johnson for deposits based on European contracts, Earl said.

"Ben would sometimes delay sending (money) to the CTFA because he would cover bills and then notify them that this was what the money was spent for. It would be the same as putting it in and drawing it out."

Despite the withdrawals, Johnson was short the cash required by the association only once, just before last fall's Olympics, he added. The sum was \$16,000, he said.

Earl said he kept account of the money on slips of paper, which he discarded as funds were withdrawn. He said he never gave Johnson receipts and was never paid for his services — a statement disputed by Johnson's lawyer, Edward Futerman.

Last July, the Canadian association authorized payments to Astaphan from Johnson's trust account totalling more than \$60,000 over six months, plus expenses.

Earl also submitted as evidence two contracts in which Astaphan and Johnson's physiotherapist, Waldemar Matewzewski, acknowledged bonuses of \$25,000 each from Mazda, the Japanese automaker that sponsored Johnson's track club.

The contracts, drawn up at the Canadian national championships in Ottawa last August, outlined each man's role in Johnson's entourage and said they operated within the rules of international sport.

Said one clause: "I realize that in working as closely as I do with this athlete I may find myself from time to time to be privy to private and confidential information which will be treated as such."

A month later, Johnson was stripped of an Olympic gold medal in Seoul after failing a drug test.

Improved Rangers gaining confidence

ARLINGTON (AP) — Texas Rangers manager Bobby Valentine said "confidence ... a new feeling of knowing that somehow we were going to win" was in the air for the club's season-opening homestand.

The last act in the drama was played out Sunday afternoon, when Ruben Sierra hit a two-run home

run in the bottom of the ninth to give Texas a 3-2 victory when defeat seemed a sure thing.

"We tried to give it to them, but then Rafael (Palmeiro) and Ruben decided to take it back," Valentine said. "And to beat Tom Henke ... I guess this is a new year."

With the win, Texas ended its first week with a 4-1 record — its second-best start ever — and all alone atop the American League West standings for the first time since July 6, 1986.

Palmeiro doubled ahead of Sierra with one out in the ninth. That triggered a call to Henke in the Toronto bullpen. Henke has been a Rangers nemesis ever since they left him unprotected five years ago and the Blue Jays drafted him.

Sierra, a switch-hitter, had a walk and two singles earlier Sunday, when he was batting from the right side of the plate. But against the right-handed Henke, Sierra moved

to the left side of the plate, where he was hitless in 10 at-bats in the young season.

However, Sierra drove a two-strike fastball from Henke six rows into the right field stands for a homer that turned what seemed like a sure defeat into victory.

The blast brought the crowd of 19,498 roaring to its feet.

"It's good to end a homestand like this," Palmeiro said. "I was hoping to tie the game, but I wasn't expecting that (Sierra's homer)."

Three of the Rangers' four victories were by one run, as was the one loss. The earlier triumphs were led primarily by leadoff Cecil Espy and the No. 2 hitter in the order, Scott Fletcher, who found themselves among the league's leaders for the frequency they got on base.

Fletcher's .438 hitting over the first five games was among the league's best. The Rangers also got good starting pitching from Charley Hough, Nolan Ryan, Jamie Moyer and Kevin Brown — everyone except Bobby Witt. Jeff Russell came away with two saves in his new role as a bullpen stopper.

Hough and Moyer were particularly impressive. Hough baffled Detroit with his knuckler on Opening Day, and Moyer stymied Toronto with his changeup. Moyer, acquired from the Chicago Cubs off season, struck out a career-high 13 in his American League debut on Saturday.

Moyer had a no-hitter for four innings, and Brown retired 10 of the first 11 batters he faced.

Julio Franco, another off-season acquisition, did not contribute significantly to any of the wins. In fact, he erased Sierra three times on double-play grounders on Sunday. But

Sierra's hit keys Texas to win over Milwaukee

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Ruben Sierra doubled in the go-ahead run in the 10th inning Monday as the Texas Rangers spoiled Milwaukee's home opener by beating the Brewers 6-4.

Sierra's hit off Milwaukee reliever Chuck Crim, 0-1, followed a walk to Rafael Palmeiro. Cecil Espy singled in the final run for the Rangers, who won for the fifth time in six games.

The victory went to Texas reliever Jeff Russell, 1-0, who struck out Robin Yount with two on and two outs in the bottom of the ninth and then retired the Brewers in order in the 10th.

Pete Incaviglia tied the game for the Rangers with a two-run homer off Milwaukee starter Chris Bosio in the sixth. Incaviglia's first homer of the season, a 430-foot shot, followed a single by Geno Petralli.

After Scott Fletcher singled in the first, Palmeiro hit his first American League homer to give Texas a 2-0 lead.

But the Brewers came back with four runs in the second off

Texas starter Charlie Hough, who gave up three hits and three walks in the inning before being replaced by Brad Arnsberg.

Rob Deer led off with his second homer to cut the deficit to 2-1. After Hough walked Glenn Braggs and Bill Spiers, Jim Gantner singled in the tying run.

Hough, who had lost nine straight to the Brewers, walked Mike Felder to load the bases. B.J. Surhoff then singled to right, scoring Spiers and a sliding Gantner to make it 4-2.

Spiers got his first major league hit in the seventh and moved to second on a sacrifice by Gantner. Felder walked before Kenny Rogers replaced Arnsberg and struck out Surhoff. Cecil Guante then retired Robin Yount on a fly to center to end the threat.

The Rangers put men on first and third in the top of the ninth with two-out singles by Steve Buechele and Jeff Kunkel. But Crim relieved Paul Mirabella and retired Julio Franco on a fly ball to end the inning.

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Franco hit a pair of two-run doubles in the Rangers' one loss, a 10-9 setback to Toronto on Friday night.

Texas fans sold out Arlington Stadium on Opening Night. Liking what they saw, they continued to flow through the turnstiles as the week went on — averaging 26,919 compared to 21,773 for the first five games of last season.

General Manager Tom Grieve

noted that in Detroit and Toronto, the Rangers started with two feared opponents.

"I don't know what it means in the long run, but we play two teams from the Eastern Division, both with front-line pitching, and we win four of five. That gets me charged up, and it has been a long time since I've seen our fans this charged up. After the last two years, this is fun."

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