

Friday, July 21, 1989

## Stephens ties course record, takes lead in '89 British Open

TROON, Scotland (AP) — Wayne Stephens shocked the field and the fans with a course record-tying 6-under-par 66 Thursday for a two-shot lead after the first round of the British Open.

Stephens, who hasn't even come close to winning a tournament in 11 seasons on and off the European Tour, did not make a bogey in his assault on the sandhills of Royal Troon.

The 28-year-old Englishman, one of the more unlikely leaders this ancient event has ever seen, has made seven tries at the European Tour qualifying school,

course record set by Sandy Lyle, Tom Purtzer and Bobby Clampett in 1982, left old pro Lee Trevino and six others in a tie for second at 68.

Also at 4-under was a group made up of Spaniards Jose-Maria Olazabal and Miguel Martin, Eduardo Romero of Argentina, Wayne Grady of Australia and Americans Paul Azinger and Fred Couples.

Stephens' late rush put him at the top of the standings but failed to overshadow the long-absent American influence in the oldest of all the world's golf tournaments.

American players — some of them more than a little miffed by pre-tournament predictions of doom — dominated opening play in the tournament that has provided them with nothing but frustration and embarrassment for five years. They held five of the first 15 places.

Tom Watson, seeking a record sixth British Open title, scored an eagle-three and birdied the last hole for a 69 that left him in a large group three strokes off the pace.

U.S. Open champion Curtis Strange and Tom Kite were tied with several others at 70. That's very much in the title chase.

"I'm loving it. Isn't it great. And aren't you hating it?" Kite

chided British reporters in a mass interview.

Earlier in the week, some of Britain's legal bookies posted odds of 3-1 that an American — any American — would not win this title.

The British press pounced on it with glee, and all but wrote off American chances.

"We can still play. I'm not saying we'll win. But we'll have some strong scores. We had some strong scores today. Just as we'll have every day we play," Kite said.

But a couple of American heroes from other eras all but wrote themselves out of it.

Arnold Palmer, now 59, who won this title on this course in 1962, struggled to an embarrassing 82.

Jack Nicklaus, 49, three-putted his way to a 74 that put him far, far back in the field.

Two of Britain's big three also had problems on the baked-out, brick-hard fairways.

Sandy Lyle of Scotland had a triple-bogey on the final hole and shot 73. Ian Woosnam of Wales was one stroke higher at 74.

Masters champ Nick Faldo of England scored 17 pars and a two-putt, birdie-four in a round of 71.

Defending champion Seve Ballesteros of Spain had to work hard to match par 72.

### British Open Golf

hasn't finished higher than 22nd in any event this year.

But Stephens produced the round of his life to break an eight-way tie for the lead with a 12-foot birdie putt on the 15th hole and went two in front of 155 of the world's finest players with an 18-foot birdie putt on the 17th hole.

"A marvelous feeling," said Stephens, who was chain-smoking in something approaching shock after his career-best effort.

"I don't think it's sunk in yet," he said.

His heroics, which tied the

## Kite's 1st round in Scotland haunted by U.S. Open finish

TROON, Scotland (AP) — Tom Kite was burning up the course at the British Open Thursday with five birdies and an eagle when he came to the par-4 15th hole.

Suddenly, memories of last month's U.S. Open came flooding back.

As he did on that Sunday at Oak Hill, the American made a triple-bogey 7. It pushed him down the leader board and out of contention for the first-day lead at Troon.

"There are some difficult holes on the back side, though not quite as difficult as I made it look," he said.

It was a final-round drive into the water at Rochester, N.Y., last month that stopped Kite's attempt to win his first major after years in the top bracket of world golf.

He led the U.S. Open by three strokes when he came to the fifth

hole on the last day. His tee shot looked good but the ball sliced wide and landed in a creek.

Kite never recovered, shooting a final-round 78 and handing the title to Curtis Strange.

On Thursday, Kite's driving cost him dearly again.

After chewing up the front nine in 31, including an eagle-3 at the fourth when he putted home from 18 feet, Kite came home in 39.

He bogeyed the 10th, 13th and 17th holes as well as his triple-bogey, blaming his tee-shot for every one of the lapses.

"Driving is usually one of the strongest if not the strongest part of my game. Right now, it's probably my weakest," Kite said. "At the 15th, I blocked it to the right and hit out of bounds. It landed short and bounced over the road. I was trying to make sure I kept it

out of the bunkers. But my foot slipped a little bit."

Kite, 5-under-par before that, finally finished on a 2-under-par 70, four strokes off the lead.

His problems on the back nine were not shared by the other leading Americans. Lee Trevino came back in 33, as did Paul Azinger, both of whom shot 68 for a share of the first-round lead.

Strange said he found it no problem either because of the wind.

"All the sting has been taken out of the back side because the wind is helping," Strange said.

But Kite, the leading money winner on the U.S. tour, didn't find the long return to the clubhouse nearly so easy.

"Ten, 13, 15 and 17... are all very difficult," Kite said. "For me to play them well, I've got to get that drive on the fairway to have a chance. Today I didn't, and it cost me."

## Decision in Rose court case delayed until end of month

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — There won't be a decision in Pete Rose's court case until at least the end of the month.

A federal judge said Thursday that he won't decide before July 31 whether Rose's lawsuit against baseball Commissioner A. Bartlett Giamatti belongs in the state or the federal court system.

The timetable set by U.S. District Judge John D. Holschuh means the Cincinnati Reds' manager will be protected from suspension or firing for at least two more weeks.

No developments are expected in the court case during that time.

Holschuh heard arguments for one hour and 45 minutes on Thursday from lawyers for Rose and Giamatti, who are at odds over which court should hear Rose's legal challenge to the commissioner's powers.

The arguments were delivered in a packed federal courtroom exactly five months to the day after Rose was called into the commissioner's office in New York to discuss allegations he bet on his own team.

Rose could be banned from base-

ball for life if Giamatti decides he did.

Rose's lawyers want the lawsuit heard by a state judge in Cincinnati who issued the order protecting Rose from suspension.

Baseball's lawyers want the case moved to the federal courts, where the commissioner's powers have been upheld in previous decisions.

The case will come down to whether Holschuh believes the dispute is technically between Rose and the Reds, as part of major league baseball. That would make it a dispute between two Ohio entities, properly settled in the state court system.

If Holschuh believes the dispute technically is between Rose and Giamatti, who is a resident of another state, he could retain control of the case.

Cases involving entities from different states fall under federal court domain.

While the judge weighs voluminous court briefs and the nearly two hours of arguments, Rose will remain manager of the plummeting

Reds, who have fallen to fourth place in the NL West by losing 25 of their last 35 games.

Baseball lawyer Louis Hoynes Jr. said after the hearing that he's not sure whether Reds owner Marge Schott could fire Rose for the team's performance as the court case drags on.

"I don't have any idea," Hoynes said. "I haven't thought about that."

Hamilton County Common Pleas Judge Norbert A. Nadel granted Rose a temporary restraining order on June 25 protecting him from suspension by Giamatti or firing by the Reds. Although the order technically has expired, the two sides have agreed to keep its terms in effect while the case is heard.

Rose lawyer Robert Stachler said he didn't think the team's recent skid — caused in part by disabling injuries to 10 players this season — will become a problem, given Rose's protection from firing.

Schott has declined to comment on Rose's performance since the lawsuit was filed. The Reds are remaining neutral in the lawsuit.

## Fignon extends lead over LeMond after 18th stage of Tour de France

VILLARD-DE-LANS, France (AP) — Laurent Fignon of France tightened his grip on the leader's yellow jersey Thursday and extended his lead over Greg LeMond in the 18th stage of the Tour de France.

Fignon grabbed the advantage in the leg from Bourg d'Oisans to Villard-de-Lans, near Grenoble, covering the 57 miles in 2 hours, 31 minutes, 28 seconds.

More importantly, he increased his advantage over LeMond to 50 seconds with three stages left in the 2,020-mile, 23-day event.

"The important thing is not to win

a stage, but the overall victory," Fignon said. "The 50 seconds is not a lot but it's good to have in my favor, but I haven't won yet."

LeMond, the 1986 winner, agreed. "I did my best today," the American said. "But it's not over until Paris."

LeMond finished sixth in a group 24 seconds behind Fignon for the day.

Pedro Delgado of Spain, last year's champion, is still third but is now 2:28 behind overall after dropping 33 seconds to Fignon on Thursday.

Fignon, the 1983 and 1984 overall

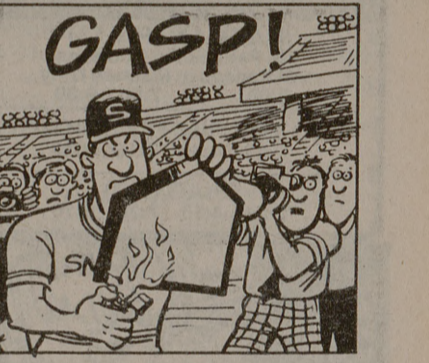
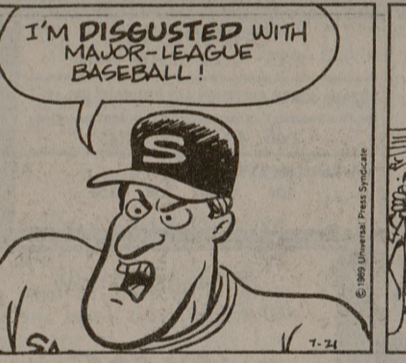
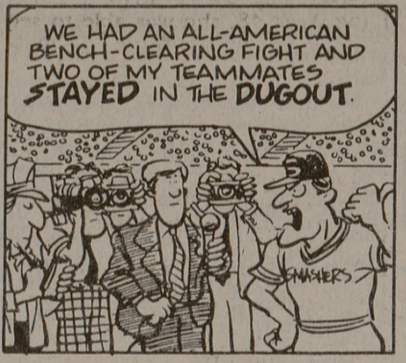
champion won the leg with an attack about 12 miles from the finish, moving away from the leader's group and passing early leaders Gert-Jan Theunisse and Steven Rooks of the Netherlands.

"I saw the Dutch climbers go and I saw others were in difficulty so I decided to attack," Fignon said. "But I had some difficulty in the last climb."

Friday's stage is similar to Thursday's with some hard climbs over 78 miles. Saturday's leg is a relatively flat one, with a final time trial, that LeMond hopes to do well in, closing the event on Sunday.

### TANK McNAMARA

by Jeff Millar & Bill Hinds



## Rangers faithful will have to wait for the team's first pennant

Although 1989 has been one of the most exciting seasons in history for Texas Rangers fans, it doesn't look like the Rangers have put everything together just yet.

Over half the season has been completed, and the good news is the Rangers are only four games out of first place. The bad news is that they are in fourth place, behind some extremely tough competition in the Oakland A's, California Angels and Kansas City Royals.

The Rangers chances have definitely improved with the now that star pitcher Nolan Ryan and Rafael Palmeiro are with the team. Both players have provided plenty of excitement for fans, and increased attendance shows it. With a lot of up and coming talent, the future looks



Jeff Osborne Assistant Sports Editor

good for a team that has wallowed in mediocrity.

However, the Rangers day at the top hasn't come just yet. The A's, Angels and Royals have an arsenal of their own talent, so it looks like Ranger fans will have to wait a little longer for the team's first pennant.

I've followed the Rangers since the late '70s, and have seen history repeat itself too many times. Texas always seems to jump out to a great start in their best seasons, and stall at the critical time.

This year, the Rangers roared to a 17-5 start in April, and proceeded to plummet in the American League West standings.

When the Rangers play good baseball, not even the fire of heralded pitcher Roger Clemens of Boston can slow the them down, and they seem on top of the world.

Other times, when they falter, humiliating defeats to the lackluster Cleveland Indians bring everything crashing down to reality.

If the Rangers play to their potential, fans see one of the most explosive and exciting ball clubs in the major leagues. When they don't quite have their act

together, only divine intervention could save the fans and team from embarrassment.

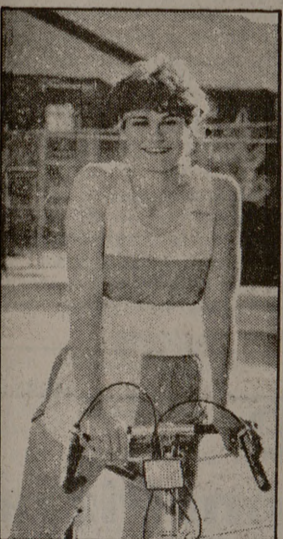
Julio Franco, who was voted to the All-Star team and has been fantastic for the Rangers this year, deserved all the recognition he received. But teammate Ruben Sierra who has also been among the league leaders in batting and RBI and had a great year as well, was snubbed by All-Star voters as he finished sixth in balloting at his position. It's been that kind of year for the Rangers.

In addition to the inspiring pitching of baseball legend Nolan Ryan, Kevin Brown has shown the potential to also shine for the Rangers. Although he hasn't hit on all cylinders yet, he has put in some pretty good performances. Brown is still young and inexperienced when contrasted to the seasoned Ryan, but has what it takes to be a major force for the Rangers in the future.

The strength of the AL West will most likely keep the Rangers from making the playoffs this year, but will bring character and a winning tradition to this team on the rise.

Even with the high-powered division competition and inconsistent play of the team, the Rangers are still within reach of first place. This is an indication of the team's talent and determination. The race for the pennant is still wide open, and as baseball fans know, nearly anything can happen. But it would be a big surprise for me if the Rangers finished any higher than third place this year.

I hope the Rangers prove me wrong, but I just don't think this is their year. A solid foundation has been laid, but until I see a fantastic finish to match their start I won't be convinced. So far, it's been as predictable as the summer heat in Texas.



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