

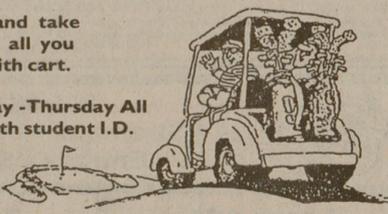
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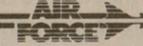
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Stanford edges past Auburn for women's title

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Stanford completed a five-year climb to the top of women's basketball Sunday by defeating Auburn 88-81 in the NCAA championship game behind the record 3-point shooting of Katy Steding and Jennifer Azzi.
 Steding made six 3-pointers and Azzi four as Stanford won its first national title and handed Auburn its third straight loss in a championship game.
 The Cardinal did it by going over the top of Auburn's zone defense instead of trying to go through it, and Steding, Azzi and Sonja Henning made that approach work.
 Steding and Azzi both shattered the previous championship game record of two 3-pointers by Auburn's Ruthie Bolton against Louisiana Tech in 1988. Steding finished the five-game tournament with a record 12 3-pointers, topping the old mark of 10 by Stephen F. Austin's Mozell Brooks in 1988.
 The game also produced an attendance record. There were 20,023 tickets sold and 16,595 people in the arena. The previous high for a women's championship game was 15,615 at Austin, Texas, in 1987.
 The Stanford victory capped a building project that Coach Tara VanDerveer began when she took the job five years ago. Stanford was 13-15 in her first season, 1985-86, but improved each year thereafter and finished 32-1 this season.
 Henning finished with 21 points to lead a balanced Stanford offense. Steding scored 18 and Azzi, who is from nearby Oak Ridge, Tenn., added 17. Azzi was named the outstanding player of the Final Four.
 Trisha Stevens contributed 16 points and 10 rebounds for the Cardinal.

Auburn, which lost to Louisiana Tech in the 1988 title game and to Tennessee last year, closed at 28-7. Carolyn Jones led Auburn with 24 points, 16 in the first half.
 Stanford overcame an eight-minute shooting drought and nine-point deficit in the first half to get control of the game early in the second half.
 The Cardinal ended the first half with a 9-0 run to tie the score at 41. Then, with Auburn leading 46-43, Steding nailed a 3-pointer from the left of the key to start a 9-0 run that put Stanford ahead to stay.
 Stanford went on to outscore Auburn 22-7 over an eight-minute stretch to open a 65-53 lead in Henning's jump shot with 10:13 left. Azzi's 3-pointer made it 70-57 with 7:54 left.



And then there were two ... Duke, UNLV square off for title

DENVER (AP) — When the nets are cut down following Monday night's NCAA championship game, a few things will be certain.
 Either UNLV or Duke will have won its first national title; a lot of points will have been scored; and some of the best man-to-man defense in the game will have been played.
 It sounds incongruous but this title game should be the highest-scoring one since 1978 when Kentucky beat Duke 94-88 and probably the one with the most tenacious defense since 1980 when Louisville beat UCLA 59-54.
 "Both teams will play great defense but I don't think it will be a low-scoring game," UNLV coach Jerry Tarkanian said Sunday, the eve of his first championship game in three trips to the Final Four.
 "For the past eight years, next to UNLV, Duke has been my favorite team," said Tarkanian, who could be the first Western coach to win the title since John Wooden's UCLA dynasty ended in 1975. "Their defense is very similar to ours and we're probably the only two teams I can think of still playing the type of de-

fense we do. We pressure the ball at halfcourt, deny the lead pass and front the post. There aren't very many teams doing that. College basketball has changed."
 Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski, making his second appearance in the title game for a school 0-7 in Final Fours, agrees with Tarkanian.
 "We both have real good ball pressure," he said. "We deny wing entries, are very active and help inside. The principles of both are exactly the same. They look a little different but are pretty much the same defenses."
 The offenses are close with Duke averaging 89.5 per game, 14 more than the opposition, and UNLV gets 93.2 per game, 14 more than the Runnin' Rebels allowed.
 UNLV, the only top-seed to reach the Final Four this season and just the first preseason No. 1 to reach the final game since North Carolina in 1982, waited until the second half against Georgia Tech on Saturday before giving a defensive clinic in its 90-81 semifinal victory.
 The Runnin' Rebels (34-5) smothered Kenny Anderson and bothered Dennis Scott enough to overcome a

seven-point deficit and hand the Yellow Jackets their first loss of the season by more than five points.
 "We weren't moving quickly in the first half and so we went with zone," Tarkanian said. "We're going in against Duke thinking about playing zone but if the game dictates we will."
 Duke (29-8) wore down Arkansas outscoring the Razorbacks 24-9 in the last seven minutes of the 90-81 semifinal win.
 "Our depth really helped in our foul trouble actually turned out to be a blessing for us," Krzyzewski said.
 Both teams had foul trouble Saturday and neither can afford on Monday night with the mile-high altitude of Denver being such a factor in the players' stamina.
 Most of the Duke opportunities are created by freshman point guard Bobby Hurley, who was forced to leave the Arkansas games because of stomach troubles.
 The most exciting NCAA tournament — 23 games, decided by 10 points or less — is going to come down to defense.

Portugal's pitch Astros hurler out to prove 1989 was no flash in pan

KISSIMMEE, Fla. (AP) — Mark Portugal made good on his vow last season that he would not return to the minor leagues.
 His battle cry for 1990 is to prove that his emergence as a Houston Astros starting pitcher wasn't an accident.
 "I can't take last year for granted," Portugal said. "I still have a lot to prove that last year wasn't a fluke. "It was only a half season and in this game you have to do things for a whole season."
 Portugal was recalled from Houston's Class AAA team at Tucson on July 15 last season, and he rewarded the Astros by winning seven straight decisions.
 In 17 games after the All-Star break, Portugal had a 7-0 record and 2.39 earned run average.
 Portugal's 7-game streak was the longest since Nolan Ryan won eight games in a row in 1983.
 He finished the season 7-1 with an ERA of 2.75 and the security of a starting job going to spring training this year.
 "My plan is basically to win ball games," Portugal said. "I'll be competitive every time I pitch and if I have a bad day, I'll come back five days later and redeem myself."
 Portugal spent parts of four seasons on the Minnesota Twins roster before coming to the Astros in December 1988.
 He was called up from Tucson on June 5 but by June 12 was back in the minors.
 Portugal arrived in Houston just in time to lose to San Diego, snapping Houston's 10-game winning streak.

When Portugal was recalled a second time, he informed Manager Art Howe that he was in Houston to stay.
 "It was more determination than cockiness. "I've still got it in the back of my mind that if I go out there and don't pitch well through the first month of the season, things could go sour for me," Portugal said.
 Portugal already has received a setback that caused him to miss a turn in Tuesday's spring game.
 Pitching in a minor league game on Saturday, Portugal was struck on the right knee but he doesn't consider the injury serious.
 He is scheduled to pitch in Thursday night's game against the Kansas City Royals.
 "I don't see this as a longtime injury," Portugal said. "I feel great but I'm not going out there and push myself. I'm not going to hurt my arm because my leg is hurting."
 Portugal posted several career firsts in his memorable half-season.
 His second victory was a 3-hitter over San Francisco for his first National League complete game.
 Portugal was 4-0 in September, including a 1-0 victory over Cincinnati for his first major league shutout.
 He also was dazzling at the plate in September hitting .375 for the month that included his first major league homer. He earlier got his first major league hit.
 Repeating such a magical performance could be difficult but Portugal says he's starting from a more comfortable position in 1990.

Maleeva downs Sanchez Vicario for Slims title

HOUSTON (AP) — With just a few hours of sleep and one upset victory already behind her, Katerina Maleeva was a little tired Sunday when she knew she had what it takes to win.
 After blitzing No. 5 Arantxa Sanchez Vicario in the first set and the losing just as badly in the second, Maleeva came back and took the third set to win the Virginia Slims Houston 6-1, 1-6, 6-4.
 It was another upset victory for the 12th-ranked Maleeva, who had beaten No. 2 ranked Martina Navratilova in the semifinals Saturday night. Maleeva said after Sunday's match that it was her best performance yet.
 "I thought I was the better player," she said. "But in the third set, it could've gone either way."
 "When it gets tight, she gives everything she's got," Maleeva said of her opponent.
 Fourth-seeded Maleeva won \$45,000 in the \$225,000 tournament at the Westside Tennis Club. Sanchez, the third seed, took home \$22,500.
 Maleeva went to bed at 3:30 a.m. Sunday because the semifinal match didn't end until about 12:30 a.m. Instead of her usual 10 hours sleep she had just six.
 "It was really very hard," Maleeva said. "I knew that against Arantxa it's not going to be easy because we play long points."
 Maleeva next plays in the Family Circle Cup, which begins Monday at Hilton Head, S.C.
 Sanchez also played Saturday, but she put on two thigh wraps during the match because of strained muscles from the previous match.
 "I didn't have much time to rest," Sanchez said. "I came back pretty good. I tried to do my best."
 "She played really good," Sanchez said. "She's changed her game. This year she was more aggressive."
 Maleeva, of Bulgaria, and Sanchez, of Spain, are now 1-1. Sanchez beat Maleeva in straight sets in the 1988 Eckerd Open in Tampa, Fla. Both matches were played on clay courts.
 On Sunday, the two played before a sellout crowd of 6,014.
 The match lasted about two hours and 20 minutes. Play was suspended for about 15 minutes in the third set because of rain, which also caused delays earlier in the week.

Rangers' Pettis looking to fit in

PORT CHARLOTTE, Fla. (AP) — Gary Pettis says he can fit into any situation and the Texas Rangers have several situations — primarily center field — for him to fit into this season.
 Pettis signed a free agent contract with the Rangers after four seasons at California and two with Detroit.
 The Rangers expect Pettis to lead off, steal bases and continue making circus catches in the outfield.
 "He gives us one of the best defensive center fielders in baseball and he got on base 38 percent of the time last year," General Manager Tom Grieve said. "That's better than we've had as a leadoff hitter."
 Pettis finished out his Tiger career with a string of 51 errorless innings and has a history of making highlight film catches.
 He had an over-the-fence grab

last July 22 that took away a two-run homer from California's Brian Downing.
 "I'm a pretty easygoing guy," Pettis said. "I feel I can fit into any situation. "I know these guys from playing against them."
 "I won't try to change anything. I'll just try to keep doing what I've done in the past."
 Playing good defense means not worrying about making errors, Pettis said. Continuing his errorless string is not primary on his mind.
 "I like playing defense as much as offense but I don't go out thinking about setting records for errorless games," Pettis said. "I don't like to make errors but sooner or later you make one."
 "I don't get uptight when I do make an error. I think that helps me a lot."

Pettis is a career .239 hitter who hit .257 at Detroit last season. He missed the first 34 games with a sprained thumb and still stole 43 bases.
 Since 1984, Pettis has not dropped below 40 stolen bases in a season; his high was 56 in 1985.
 "Hopefully, he'll give us a guy at the top of the order that can get on base regularly and a center fielder who made all the plays," Grieve said. "That'll be a real positive addition to our team."
 Prior to Sunday's exhibition game, Pettis was hitting .385 with one stolen base and several outstanding catches.
 Pettis thinks he'll adjust quickly to his new surroundings in Texas.
 "It was a good feeling to know that somebody out there really wanted me," he said.