

Astros break slump, 6-2

Houston stopped a three-game losing streak by defeating the San Francisco Giants

HOUSTON (AP) — Mike Hampton allowed four hits and struck out eight in eight innings, leading Houston over the San Francisco Giants 6-2 Monday night and stopping the Astros' three-game losing streak.

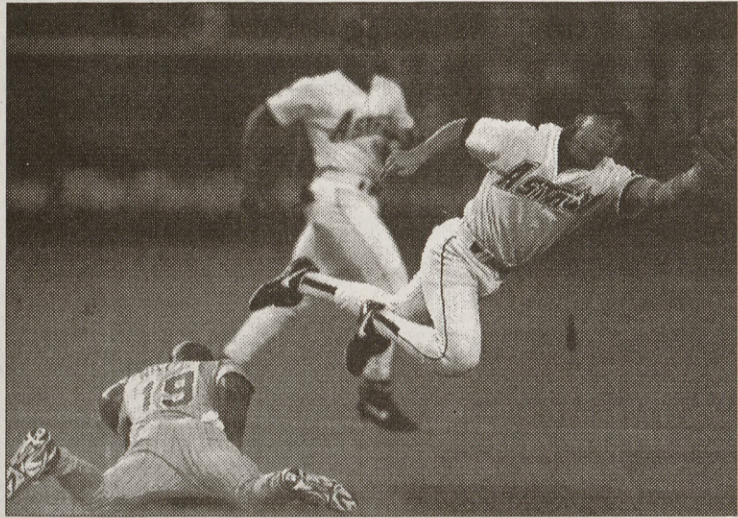
Houston, rebounding from a 17-2 loss to San Diego on Sunday, got a strong performance from Hampton (2-0), who didn't allow a runner past second after the third inning and struck out three of his last four batters.

Todd Jones finished with a hitless ninth. William VanLandingham (0-2) walked six in six innings for the Giants, allowing four runs and four hits. He has nine walks in 9 2-3 innings over two starts.

Matt Williams' two-run double put San Francisco ahead in the first after Shawn Dunston doubled and Barry Bonds reached on a throwing error by shortstop Orlando Miller.

Houston came back in the fourth. Jeff Bagwell doubled with one out, and walks to Derek Bell and Rick Wilkins loaded the bases with two outs.

James Mouton, off to an 0-for-7 start, hit a two-run double to left that tied the score



AP PHOTO

Houston Astro second baseman **Craig Biggio** makes a diving leap after an errant throw to second base. The Astros beat the Giants, 6-2, Monday.

and Miller followed with a two-run single to center for a 4-2 lead.

The Astros got two more runs without a hit in the seventh when Mark Dewey walked Bell with the bases loaded and Sean Berry's groundout to deep shortstop scored Hunter.

After they committed five errors in Sunday's loss, the Astros had only one against the Giants and had a pair

of outstanding catches by Bell in right and Brian Hunter in center.

The Giants have won two of their last 11 games in the Astrodome.

Sarah Swindell, wife of Houston pitcher Greg Swindell, gave birth to daughter Sophia on Monday. She weighed in at 7 pounds, 4 ounces.

In tonight's game, ace Doug Drabek will make his first start.

Buffin

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needs to send the message that drug usage will not be tolerated in any shape or form.

While many players claim drug testing is an invasion of privacy, when it comes to the good of the league and what it represents, athletes should be subjected to what other workers are. An accountant does not have an offseason. He/she is subjected to drug testing throughout the year. Athletes are not special or unique, they are a part of the same workforce which encompasses, bankers, lawyers, doctors, construction workers, truckers and others.

There are no special exemptions for truckers,

so why should there be exemptions for athletes. Just because they have multi-million dollar contracts and endorsements, does not mean athletes are allowed to do drugs.

Athletes must realize that the kid who asks him to sign a ball, paper, or glove is the same one who dreams to be just like him every night. While it should be up to the parents to make sure that their children is guided along the right path, it is inevitable, that the child is more likely to listen to the athlete. For a child an athlete is their parental figure. They emulate their actions and are mesmerized by their every word.

When leagues do not punish athletes for breaking the law, they are sending the message to kids everywhere, that just because you are an athlete, there are no repercussions.

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