

Yankees pitcher David Cone reaches perfection in pinstripes

NEW YORK (AP) — David Cone picked a perfect day for a perfect game. With Don Larsen sitting behind home plate, Cone dazzled the Montreal Expos with a wide assortment of pitches yesterday, throwing the 14th perfect game in modern history to lead the Yankees to a 6-0 victory.



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On the very same field where Larsen pitched a perfect game against Brooklyn in Game 6 of the 1956 World Series — the only one in Series history — Cone pitched the first no-hitter in the three-year history of interleague play. Cone got Orlando Cabrera to hit a pop-up for the final out. He dropped to his knees and was mobbed by his teammates, just as David Wells was last year when he pitched the only other regular-season per-

fect game in Yankees' history. "Once we got that big lead, I really relaxed," said Cone, whose career almost ended three years ago because of an aneurysm near his right armpit. But in the ninth, he said, he could feel his heart "pounding through his uniform."

"You probably have a better chance of winning the lottery than this happening," he said.

Larsen was at Yankee Stadium for Yogi Berra day and even recreated his perfect day in 1956 by throwing out the first pitch to Berra. Right after that pitch, Cone made his only mistake of the day.

"I asked him if he was going to jump into Yogi's arms again," Cone said. "He told me I got it all backwards. Yogi jumped into his arms. Mr. Yankee history got it all wrong."

Cone did everything else right yesterday. He got through the first inning with help of a diving catch in right field by Paul

O'Neill to rob Terry Jones of a hit. He didn't need any more help from his fielders until the eighth inning. Jose Vidro hit a hard grounder up the middle with one out in the eighth.

Second baseman Chuck Knoblauch, who has 16 errors this season, ran to his right to backhand the ball, pivoted and made a perfect throw to first baseman Tino Martinez to get Vidro.

"As soon as he hit it, I said, 'There it goes,'" Cone recalled. "When Knoblauch made the great play, I decided there was some kind of Yankee aura. Maybe this was my day. Maybe there is something to this magic."

Cone (10-4), who got his first shutout in exactly four years, didn't go to a three-ball count all day and struck out 10.

When Wells pitched his perfect game against Minnesota on May 17, 1998, Cone sat next to him between innings, calming

his teammate. "I already talked to Boomer and he welcomed me to the club," Cone said just minutes after the game ended. "He said he wanted to fly down here and party with me all night."

In Toronto, Wells said: "He's overcome a lot of obstacles in his career and for him to do it in New York, where he is well loved, he is the man of New York City." Cone was given a standing ovation when he walked to the mound in the ninth, and the crowd of 41,930 remained on its feet.

Cone struck out Chris Widger, then retired pinch-hitter Ryan McGuire on a fly to left that Ricky Ledee almost dropped. "I really didn't want it hit to me," Ledee said. "I was having a tough time seeing the ball."

Needing just one more out, Cabrera worked the count to 1-1, then hit a pop-up that third baseman Scott Brosius gloved in

foul territory halfway toward the plate for the final out.

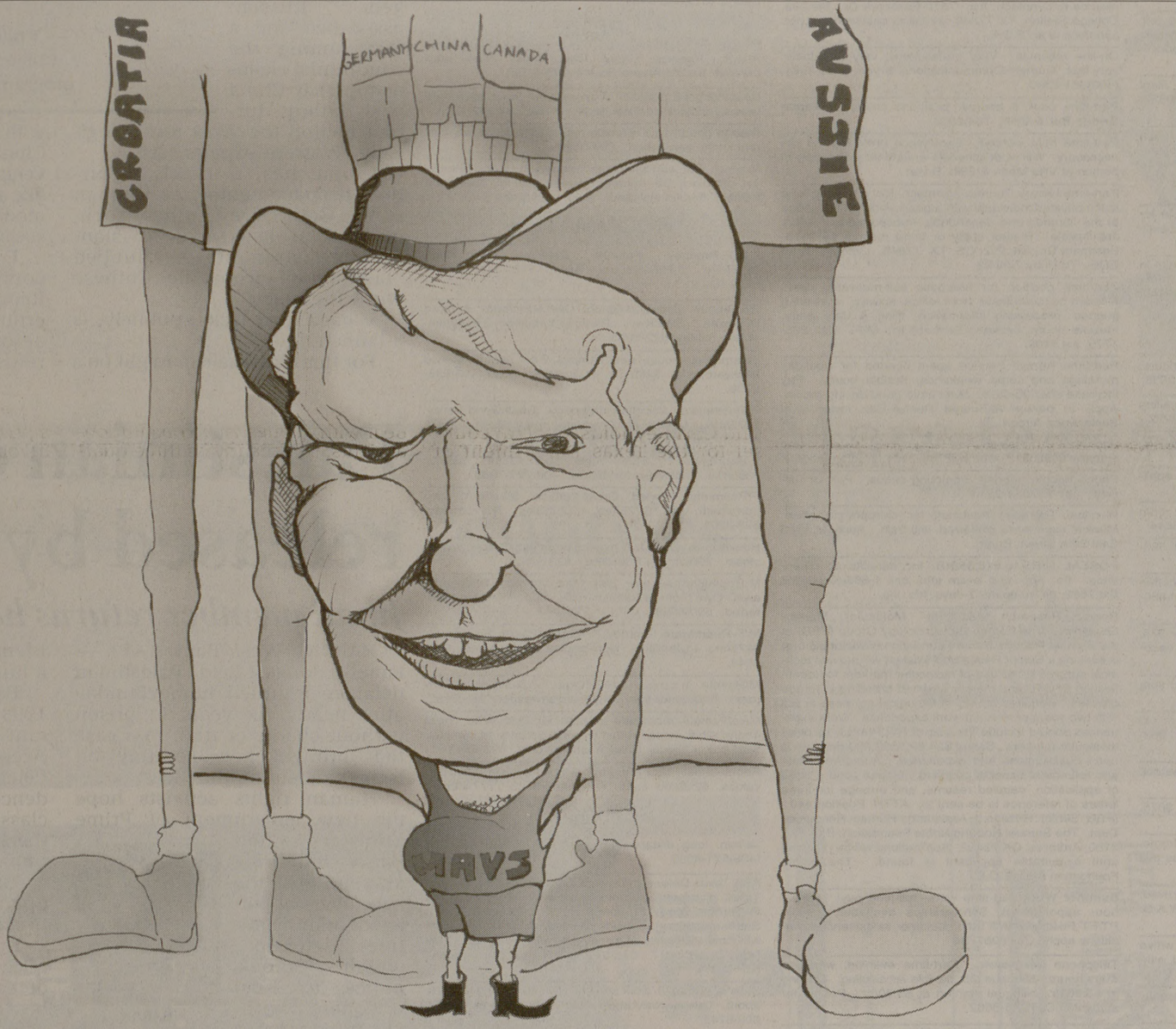
Cone immediately dropped to his knees by the side of the mound, grabbed his head in disbelief and saw catcher Joe Girardi sprinting toward him. Girardi pushed cone down and the celebration began.

"I have been under a lot of piles," said Girardi, who caught Dwight Gooden's no-hitter in 1996. "I didn't want him to be at the bottom of that. He is more important than I am. I wanted to protect him."

The rest of the Yankees rushed out of the dugout and bullpen and mobbed him. They lifted him on their shoulders and carried him to the edge of the dugout as the crowd stood and waved wildly.

Larsen watched from a luxury box behind the plate and applauded the latest chapter in the Yankees' storied history. This was the 16th perfect game overall, including two in the 19th century.

Mixed-up Mavericks



MARK MCPHERSON/THE BATTALION

Dallas management, coaches' player selection leading team toward extended period of futility

What is the most fundamental difference between the *Titanic* and the Dallas Mavericks? The *Titanic* only sank to the bottom once; the Mavericks do it yearly.



MARK PASSWATERS

After this year's NBA draft, it looks like S.S. Maverick, under the fearless leadership of Don Nelson, has gotten a head start on the rest of the league on its trip to the basement.

Even a passing NBA observer would take a look at what Dallas did in the 1999 NBA entry draft and have a desire to walk up to Dallas management and quote Monty Python: "You're a looney!"

What insanity has Coach/G.M. Nelson brought upon those long suffering Mavericks fans (if there are any) this time? The names Leon Smith and Wang Zhi-Zhi not only sum up this year's draft for the Mavericks but can also be used as an illustration of what the team has been doing since Nelson, and his son Donnie, took over the team.

Smith was taken by the Mavericks with the 29th pick in the draft after making a trade with the San Antonio Spurs to move up to get him. Smith was labeled by draft experts from various media outlets as "nowhere near ready" and as someone who "won't contribute for years — if ever."

The Mavericks, who did not have a first-round pick, probably could have gotten Smith with either of their two second-round picks,

considering that Smith was not expected to even be drafted. Now, Smith, an 18-year-old, is guaranteed to garner at least \$2 million from the Mavericks over the next three years just for being picked in the first round.

Why did the Mavericks trade up to pick him? Because they were bored, seriously. Donnie Nelson has been quoted as saying that the management (in other words, he and his father) were tired of waiting around and wanted to do something.

Now that they have Smith, what do the Mavs want to do with him? Send him to Europe, of course. There, he can work on some fundamentals, like dribbling and shooting. Dallas has selected a player in the first round who cannot do the most basic thing in basketball.

But it gets worse. Wang Zhi-Zhi, at 7 feet, 255 pounds, was their second-round pick. Zhi-Zhi plays for a Chinese Army team, and there is no guarantee that the Mavericks can even obtain his services. Even if they do, he will join a growing group of players on the Dallas roster that have foreign passports and cannot pass.

This past season, the Portland Trail Blazers made big news by being able to put out two entirely different squads on the court due to their depth. Now Dallas can do the same, with their "really tall" lineup and their "international" lineup. With Wang, Chris Antsey, Shawn Bradley, Bruno Sundov and Dirk Nowitzki, the Mavs can put a team on the floor that are all over 7 feet. Also, they are so slow that they could not cover Dunkin' Donuts much less Tim Duncan.

Or, Nelson could pull Bradley and put in

Steve Nash to play point guard, to show Dallas' international talent (or lack thereof). With an Australian, Croatian, German, Canadian and now a Chinese, the Mavericks are well on their way to being the UN's favorite team as well as the NBA's worst. Nelson is to be commended for scouring the world for talent, but should also be reminded that the best players on earth are still American.

While stockpiling a team that has become an announcer's nightmare, Nelson has passed up some quality players in the draft. Last year, the Mavs took Nowitzki, whom Nelson would like to make a "point forward," and traded their first round pick this year to Phoenix for Nash, who promptly flopped. As a result, the Mavs missed out on picking someone like Jason Williams, who may be the best point guard in basketball for the next 10 years, or Paul Pierce, an explosive scorer. With such adventures in drafting, as well as almost all of Dallas' players of quality being free agents (with the exception of Michael Finley, the one true star on the team), the future looks very bleak for the Mavericks.

As for this year's first round stud, Leon Smith: he may not be as lacking in brainpower as his SAT scores indicate.

In his very first practice as a Maverick, Smith got mad and stormed out of the gym. Keep walking, Leon. Save yourself the pain of many future losses.

Mark Passwaters is an electrical engineering graduate student

Lawrie 2nd Scotsman to win British Open

CARNOUSTIE, Scotland (AP) — The most stunning collapse in golf gave way to the greatest comeback in the history of major championships.

Paul Lawrie, 10 strokes behind when the final round began yesterday, became the first Scotsman to win the British Open in his native land in 68 years — but only after a three-way playoff caused by Jean Van de Velde's triple bogey on the 72nd hole.

Lawrie won the four-hole playoff over Van de Velde and Justin Leonard, making birdies on the last two holes to win the claret jug before a delirious, shell-shocked gallery at Carnoustie Golf Links.

"I thought no way," Lawrie said when asked if he ever imagined a playoff. "Incredible."

The biggest comeback in a major until yesterday was Jackie Burke Jr., who was eight strokes behind amateur Ken Venturi in the 1956 Masters.

Van de Velde was no amateur. The 33-year-old Frenchman just played like one on the final hole when he tried to be a hero and lost a chance to be a champion. He bounced balls in the rough, off the grandstand, in the water of Barry's Burn and in the bunker.

It all added up to a 7 when all he needed was a 6. "Maybe next time I'll hit the wedge," he said. "And maybe you will all forgive me."

Van de Velde made a gallant bid in the playoff, but Lawrie matched his birdie on the tough 17th hole and ended 90 minutes of unimaginable drama with an approach into 3 feet on No. 18. He became the first Scottish-born player to win an Open in Scotland since Tommy Armour at Carnoustie in 1931.

"To birdie the last two holes in a playoff is such a fairy story," Lawrie said.

As for Van de Velde, he was the first player to lose a five-stroke lead in the final round of an Open since Jose Jurado, also in 1931.

Leonard, who won the 1997 British Open at Royal Troon with a five-stroke comeback, almost matched that feat. But he made bogey from the watery burn on the 72nd hole for bogey, and again in the playoff.

Lawrie played the playoff holes — Nos. 15-18 — in par. He closed with a 4-under 67, tied for the best score of the tournament on the toughest links golf course in the world.

That put him at 290, the first time over-par has won an Open in 14 years. Leonard had a 72, while Van de Velt staggered home to a 77.

Not since John Daly won the PGA Championship in 1991 had a player come out of nowhere to win a major championship. Lawrie has won twice on the European tour, including the Qatar Masters, but he was a mere 159th in the world rankings. Daly was 168th when he won at Crooked Stick.

"Obviously, 10 shots back ... I didn't think I had a chance," Lawrie said. "But you know, strange things happen, especially around here."

Lawrie also became the first qualifier to win the Open since it started giving exemptions in 1963. Before that, everyone — even Ben Hogan — had to qualify.

Lawrie is an exception to the established champions Carnoustie has produced — Armour, Henry Cotton, Hogan, Gary Player and Tom Watson.

Holding the claret jug as darkness and rain fell around the 18th green, Lawrie, who grew up about an hour's drive from Carnoustie, thanked his wife and "everyone who knows me — which is a lot of you now."

Everyone is more likely to remember Van de Velde, a charming man who carelessly tossed away his chance for fame. The only Frenchman to win the British Open was Arnaud Massy in 1907.

"There are worse things in life," Van de Velde said. "Some terrible things are happening to other people. This is only a golf tournament. Yes, I blew it on 18. All it proves is I was capable of being three ahead of the best players in the world on 18."

Van de Velde gave the French a dubious piece of golf history. No one will ever forget who was behind the greatest collapse in the game, maybe in all of sports.

1999 British Open Final Scores

Paul Lawrie*	\$577,500	73-74-76-67	— 290
Justin Leonard	\$305,250	73-74-71-72	— 290
Jean Van de Velde	\$305,250	75-68-70-77	— 290
Angel Cabrera	\$165,000	75-69-77-70	— 291
Craig Parry	\$165,000	76-75-67-73	— 291
Greg Norman	\$115,000	76-70-75-72	— 293
Tiger Woods	\$82,500	74-72-74-74	— 294
Davis Love, III	\$82,500	74-74-77-69	— 294
David Frost	\$82,500	80-69-71-74	— 294

*won in playoff