

SPORTS

THE BATTALION

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Fassero's wild pitch give Rangers 7-4 win in 10 innings

CHICAGO (AP) — Cubs reliever Jeff Fassero blamed his sweaty hand for making him lose his grip on the ball and the game.

Fassero threw a wild pitch with the bases loaded to let the go-ahead run score and the Texas Rangers win for the first time in extra-innings this season, beating Chicago 7-4 in 10 innings Wednesday.

With one out in the 10th, Fassero (1-5) was ahead of Ryan Ludwick (0-2). But on a warm and sticky day at Wrigley Field,

Fassero failed to properly wipe his left hand of sweat before the next pitch, and he threw it to the backstop on the fly.

"I didn't have my hands dried up," said Fassero, who tried to throw a splitter. "I squeezed it, let it go and it slipped out. It's happened before. It depends on the humidity."

Ludwick, who was making his first career pinch-hitting appearance, got another splitter and drove it to center for a two-run single.

The wild pitch "took a lot of

pressure off me to get the lead run scored," Ludwick said. "I took it from there. I was sitting on the split and he threw the split and I poked it up the middle."

The Rangers were 0-7 in extra-inning games before Wednesday.

Rafael Palmeiro and Michael Young hit solo home runs for the Rangers, who had lost 17 of 21 on the road.

Hideki Irabu (3-6) pitched one inning for the win, and Francisco Cordero pitched the 10th for his first major league save.

Sammy Sosa hit his major-league leading 26th homer for the Cubs, who got five innings out of starter Mark Prior in damp, 82-degree heat.

Sosa's two-out homer to right off Dave Burba tied it in the bottom of the first, and Joe Girardi and Delino DeShields hit RBI doubles in the third to give the Cubs a 3-1 lead.

Michael Lamb hit a two-out RBI single in the fourth, and Palmeiro tied it in the fifth with his second homer in as many games, a pop-up to left

that rode the breeze into the bleachers.

Prior was pulled after 107 pitches. He allowed three runs and six hits, walked four and struck out seven.

"They were making him throw a lot of pitches, making him throw strikes," Cubs manager Don Baylor said. "They were trying to wear him down."

Young struck out twice against Prior, but hit Joe Borowski's first pitch over the wall in left to lead off the sixth.

The Cubs tied it in the eighth

when Fred McGriff hit a one-out single off Jay Powell, and Alex Gonzalez — who won Tuesday night's game with a ninth-inning homer — hit an RBI double.

Fassero walked Herbert Perry to lead off the 10th. After two failed bunts, Kevin Mench hit a check-swing single to right. Perry pulled up at second, and was replaced by pinch-runner Jason Romano.

Gabe Kapler bunted the runners to second and third, and

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Korea's win overcame history

DAEJEON, South Korea (AP) — South Korea's shocking upset of Italy at the World Cup was far more than a victory for a soccer team.

The entire nation needed this one, a historic morale-boosting triumph that thrilled millions and sent a message to the rest of the world — and that other co-host, Japan.

The South Koreans advanced to the quarterfinals for the first time with the 2-1 overtime win Tuesday, while the Japanese were eliminated, losing 1-0 to Turkey.

Those combined results were especially sweet for a country that was a Japanese colony from 1910-45 and still harbors some anti-Japanese resentment.

"Because we're competitors with Japan, when they win or lose, that affects us," said South Korean midfielder Lee Young-pyo, who set up the game-winning goal.

The South Koreans already had a jump on the Japanese after brokering a deal to have "Korea" in the naming rights for the first World Cup in Asia. That means that "Korea" is listed first in any official material relating to the Cup, a small yet important point for South Koreans.

South Korea got the tournament's opening game in Seoul, but Japan gets the final, June 30 in Yokohama.

South Korea, winless in five previous trips to soccer's premier event, could be in the final if it continues to play the way it has in its first four games, three

victories and a tie.

Italy's Christian Vieri scored on a header in the 18th minute and the three-time champions were on the verge of victory when the unthinkable happened. Seol Ki-hyeon pounced on a deflection by a defender in the penalty box with just two minutes left in regulation and put the ball in the corner of the net.

In sudden-death overtime, Ahn Jung-hwan, who had missed a penalty shot in the first half, scored the game-winner with a header off a long pass from Lee.

Having reclaimed its status as Asia's No. 1 team, a position that had belonged to Japan, an estimated 4 million people poured into the streets under skies illuminated by fireworks to celebrate a victory they believed brought international recognition to South Korea.

Thousands of fans partied all night in honor of the "Red Devils," the team's nickname.

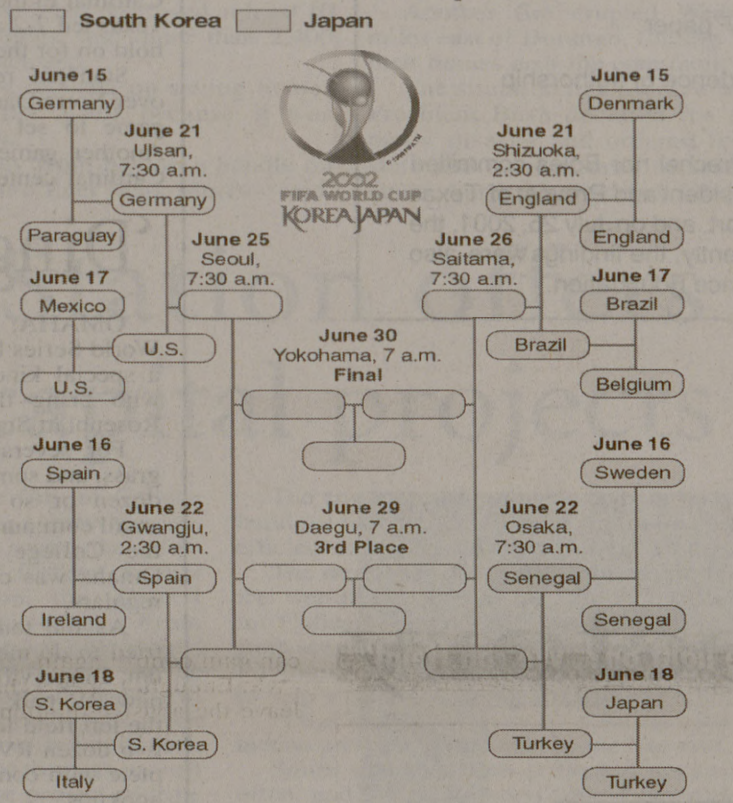
Most wore "Be the Reds" shirts, and many had their faces painted red and wore the national flag tied around their necks like a superhero's cape. Others hung out of curb-crawling cars, screaming "Dae Han Min Kuk!" — "Republic of Korea!" — until they were hoarse, some of them ecstatic.

South Korea won on the same day Japan was eliminated.

"I'm glad the Japanese lost. I want Japan to be a step behind South Korea always, in everything," said Park Chang-ho, a 53-year-old taxi driver.

President Kim Dae-jung said the victory was a good omen for

The road to the World Cup final



SOURCE: Associated Press; FIFA

his country, which overcame the 1997-98 Asian economic crisis and is trying to reconcile with communist North Korea.

"Tonight, I feel that a new path of prosperity is opening for our country," Kim said. "We South Koreans are fortune's favorites."

They might also have won over some fans in Japan, despite

the countries' run-ins through the centuries. With Japan out of the tournament, many fans have turned their hopes to their neighbor.

"Come on Korea!" chanted one group of Japan supporters, rallying in Tokyo's Shibuya shopping district during the

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Rockets assured one full season from Ming

HOUSTON (AP) — Chinese center Yao Ming would be able to play the entire season and playoffs in the NBA if the Houston Rockets pick him in the upcoming draft, team attorney Michael Goldberg said Wednesday.

"We also assured them that he'd be able to play in the Olympics," Goldberg said as he arrived home from negotiations with Chinese basketball officials in Beijing.

The Rockets want to take the 7-foot-5 center in the June 26 NBA draft but they had been seeking assurances that Yao would not be recalled during the season to play on China's national team.

The Chinese wanted to be sure their best-known player would be able to play for them in international competition.

With that part of the negotiations completed, Goldberg said the Rockets were now waiting a release by FIBA, the international basketball governing body.

The China Basketball Association and the Shanghai Sharks, Yao's current team in China, are working to complete their approval process, hopefully leading to a release by FIBA, allowing Yao to play in the NBA.

"The CBA and the Sharks understand that we have to have the FIBA release in time to make

our decisions before the draft," Goldberg said. "The Sharks would be losing their No. 1 player so they wanted to make sure things can be worked out."

Team physician Dr. Walter Lowe accompanied Goldberg to Beijing and performed a complete physical examination of Yao. He found no health problems that would affect his playing.

"This is something that we do with all players," Lowe said. "We couldn't get a complete examination of him at the workouts in Chicago. We wanted this to be a basketball decision and not about health."

Lowe said he was satisfied with results of the examination.

"He's a very tall guy. He's very engaging and he's healthy," Lowe said.

"There were things that worried me on paper that didn't worry me after we saw him in person," Lowe said. "The Chinese medical system is super. They allowed me to make a complete examination."

Lowe said Yao had normal injuries and fractures that were related to playing basketball.

While the Rockets moved closer to a deal with China, Yao and his agent John Hizuanga were in separate talks with the Sharks over compensation Yao must agree to pay the Sharks for his departure.

"We are actively exploring every possible creative solution that we can try to get this deal completed," Hizuanga said.



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Friday, June 28, 2002 Cross Canadian Ragweed w/Jason Boland