

SPORTS

THE BATTALION

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'Stros end first half atop NL central

HOUSTON (AP) — Tim Redding was already tired in the third inning. Once he got out of his toughest jam, he had plenty left to beat the Pittsburgh Pirates.

Redding pitched shutout ball into the seventh inning and Lance Berkman homered, leading the Houston Astros over Pittsburgh 5-2 Sunday.

The Pirates loaded the bases in the third for Aramis Ramirez on a pair of hits and a walk.

"My heart was racing then and I was taking real short breaths," Redding said. "I couldn't calm myself down."

"(Catcher) Brad (Ausmus) came out and asked how I was feeling and I said, 'I am tired.' I felt I had hit a wall. But I was fortunate enough to get Ramirez to fly out and I was able to pull things back together after that."

Redding (6-8) scattered five hits in winning his second straight start following a four-game losing streak. He struck out five and walked one as the Astros held onto the NL Central lead heading into the All-Star break.

"I didn't feel very good warm-

ing up in the bullpen before the game," Redding said. "But I've learned that even when you don't feel good in the bullpen, you can still come out smelling like roses when you go in the game. I felt fine when I was on the mound."

Houston manager Jimmy Williams took Redding out after he gave up a leadoff single to Randall Simon in the seventh on his 96th pitch of the game.

"To me, he had done his job at that point," Williams said. "He had just gotten through running the bases (after a sixth-inning double) and he had nearly 100 pitches. He has pitched back-to-back strong games for us and the bullpen has come in and done its job."

Brad Lidge pitched a scoreless seventh, and Octavio Dotel gave up a two-run homer to Ramirez in the eighth. Billy Wagner got three straight outs for his 25th save in 28 chances.

The Pirates were impressed by Redding.

"He threw real good today," Jason Kendall said. "He kept the ball down and stayed in there. When you keep the ball down (in Minute Maid Park), you're going to do all right."

"He used all of his pitches, but nothing really stood out. He just used the right pitch when he needed to. He mixed them all in there and changed locations. When you do that you win."

Josh Fogg (5-4) went only two innings and gave up three runs on five hits and two walks.

"Josh didn't have any command today," manager Lloyd McClendon said. "He fell behind a lot of hitters and he left the ball up. He just didn't have it today. We would have liked to have won today. It was a chance to take two of three and

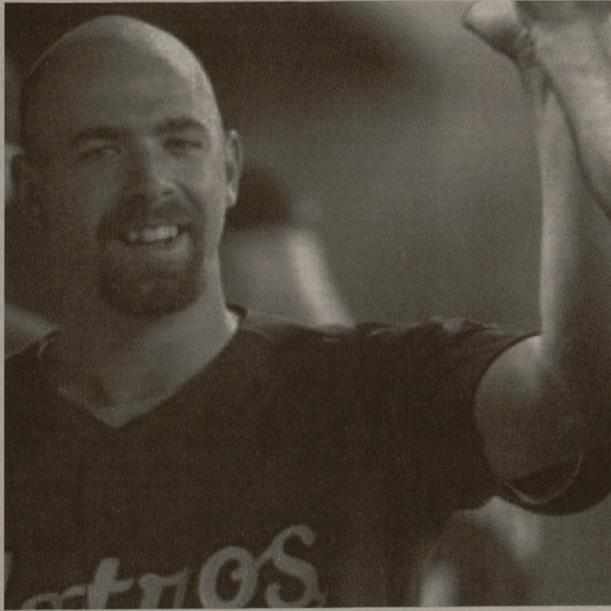


PHOTO COURTESY OF MLB.COM

Houston Astros pitcher Tim Redding is greeted in the dugout after hitting a double and scoring a run in the sixth inning against the Pittsburgh Pirates Sunday in Houston. Redding earned his sixth win of the season with the 5-2 win.

they are a very good team at home. But today their pitcher just pitched a little better than ours and they executed."

Fogg ran into control problems in the first inning, walking Jeff Bagwell and Berkman and hitting Richard Hidalgo and Morgan Ensberg with pitches in consecutive at-bats. The latter drove in the first run, and the Astros made it 2-0 on Craig Biggio's RBI single in the second.

Berkman's 17th home run leading off the third tied him with Bagwell and Ensberg for the team lead.

Hidalgo helped protect the 3-0 lead in the fourth when he threw out Randall Simon trying to stretch a single into a double with a long throw from the right-field corner. It was Hidalgo's 12th assist of the season, second among major league outfielders to Jose Cruz Jr.'s 13 for San Francisco.

Simon was playing his first game after serving a three-game suspension for hitting a Milwaukee Brewers' sausage mascot with his bat last Wednesday.

Bagwell had an RBI single in the fourth, and Geoff Blum added a run-scoring single in the sixth.

NATIONAL LEAGUE CENTRAL STANDINGS				
	W	L	PCT.	GB
Houston	50	44	.532	-
St. Louis	49	45	.521	1.0
Chicago	47	46	.505	2.5
Cincinnati	43	50	.462	6.5
Pittsburgh	41	50	.451	7.5
Milwaukee	37	56	.398	12.5

RUBEN DELUNA • THE BATTALION

Kenny Perry wins third event in four PGA starts

By Arnie Stapleton
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MILWAUKEE — Kenny Perry isn't about to analyze the hottest streak of his career.

"I don't know why all of a sudden I'm winning golf tournaments," Perry said after his victory Sunday at the Greater Milwaukee Open, his third win in four starts. "It's just my time, and I believe in my heart I'm going to win."

Perry sank a three-foot birdie putt for a one-stroke victory over Steve Allan and Heath Slocum at the GMO.

He won the Colonial and Memorial tournaments and finished third at the U.S. Open before taking three weeks off leading up to the GMO at Brown Deer Park, where he shot a 4-under-par 66 Sunday for a 12-under 268 total.

Brett Quigley finished in fourth, two strokes back. Allan, Slocum and Quigley all were vying for their first PGA Tour victory.

"I had nothing to lose and those guys are fighting to win their first," said Perry, a seven-time winner on Tour who sur-

passed \$13 million in career winnings.

Perry had to rally after his one-shot lead over Allan turned into a three-stroke deficit over a 16-minute span thanks to a bogey on the 12th hole and a double-bogey on No. 13.

Over the final four holes, Perry, who began the day with a one-stroke lead over six golfers, including Allan, had three birdies and a par and Allan shot three pars and a bogey.

Allan was on the practice range hoping for a playoff when he watched on a big screen as Perry hit his iron shot into thick rough 20 feet past the hole on 18 and then chipped to within three feet of the hole.

"When I saw the chip, I pretty much expected him to make it," Allan said. "He's a good putter."

Slocum, who had already birdied 18, also knew there would be no playoff.

"He'd been putting well all day," Slocum said. "I expected him to make it."

Perry felt great about his chances. "I blasted out of that stuff and I had a 3-footer straight uphill to win," he said. "What kind of putt would you like to win the golf tournament but straight in under the hole uphill?"

Perry birdied No. 17 after seeing that Allan had bogeyed the hole.



PERRY

Armstrong takes lead in 'Tour de Lance'

By John Leicester
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

L'ALPE D'HUEZ, France — Lance Armstrong took the overall leader's yellow jersey for the first time in the Tour de France, but he showed signs that he may not be the dominant force of years past.

The four-time champion struggled up the legendary ascent to the Alpine ski resort of L'Alpe d'Huez — a grueling climb he mastered just two years ago — and finished third in the eighth stage of the Tour.

"If you'd asked me a month ago: 'Are you going to suffer like that on L'Alpe d'Huez?' I would have said, 'No way!'" Armstrong said Sunday. "It was a hard day."

He did, however, complete the stage close enough to the winner, Iban Mayo of Spain, to take the overall lead in the race.

"I'm perhaps not as strong as the other years," said Armstrong, who usually leaves rivals in his wake in the punishing mountains. "Let's hope that things get better and not worse."

In overall standings, Spain's Joseba Beloki, the 2002 Tour runner-up, is second, 40 seconds back; Mayo trails Armstrong by 1 minute, 10 seconds.

"A dream has become reality," Mayo said after winning Sunday's stage. "L'Alpe d'Huez is a mythical stage."

Armstrong didn't respond Sunday when Mayo broke away dramatically from the champion and other riders up the 8.5-mile climb, with its 21 hairpin bends.

Peaking at 6,105 feet, L'Alpe d'Huez is a renown part of the Tour's 100-year history. In 2001, Armstrong toyed with his rivals, making them think he was exhausted, before powering up the mountain to win.

Sunday's race was different. "I didn't have the greatest sensations or

the greatest legs today — no bluffing," said Armstrong, who is trying to match Miguel Indurain's record of five straight titles.

With Mayo racing ahead, Armstrong was left to battle moves by Beloki and American Tyler Hamilton, who riding with a broken collarbone, the result of a crash on the Tour's second day.

The sensational to-and-fro dogfight between Beloki and Armstrong carried them up the mountain, to the delight of tens of thousands of cheering fans who lined the narrow, twisting route.

"I decided to just let Mayo go and limit my losses and cover Beloki because he's close on the classification — and that worked out OK," Armstrong said.

The 135-mile stage from Sallanches included the Col du Galibier, which towers 8,728 feet. Armstrong said he could tell going up the huge climb that he wasn't having a great day.

"It was a really hard stage from the start," he said. "The whole pack attacked."

Armstrong finished the stage 2 minutes, 12 seconds behind Mayo. Alexandre Vinokourov of Team Telekom was second, 1 minute and 45 seconds behind Mayo.

"The attack by Beloki was very strong," Armstrong said. "The attack by Mayo wasn't too serious because he was a bit behind in the standings."

Mayo said he expects Armstrong will watch him closely now.

"He will try and control me more and won't let me go," he said. "The Tour is very long with some difficult stages, so I will take it day by day."

Armstrong blamed teammate Manuel Beltran for some of his difficulties at L'Alpe d'Huez. Beltran, a newcomer to the U.S. Postal Service squad, powered into the climb at top speed, hoping to help Armstrong shake

Ohio State star RB questioned about exam

By Jonathan Drew
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Ohio State's athletic department will investigate a report that star Maurice Clarett received special assistance to help him pass a class before the Fiesta Bowl.

In a story Sunday in The New York Times, an associate professor said Clarett was allowed to take two oral exams for the African-American and African studies class after he walked out of the fall midterm.

It wasn't clear whether university or NCAA rules were broken. The associate professor, Paulette Pierce, said she has taken similar steps with students who are not athletes.

"We recognize that the spotlight will always be on the national champion," university president Karen Holbrook said at a news conference Sunday. "Being in the spotlight makes it even more important for us to respond quickly and appropriately to these allegations."

Calls place by The Associated Press to the home of Clarett's mother in Warren went unanswered Sunday. The Times said he did not respond to its requests for an interview.

Athletic director Andy Geiger said he was not aware of any NCAA violations, and that Clarett — then a freshman on the Buckeyes' national championship team — was not given preferential treatment.

"There are no special considerations for student-athletes," Geiger said Sunday.

Holbrook said Geiger and incoming interim provost Barbara Snyder will lead the investigation, which will examine athletes' athletic performance, tutors who work with the program and the relationship between athletes and faculty members. No time frame was set.

Clarett finished high school a semester early and enrolled at Ohio State in January 2002.

Despite numerous injuries, he set Ohio State freshman records with 1,237 yards rushing and 16 touchdowns last season as the Buckeyes beat Miami 31-24 in double-overtime for the national title.



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