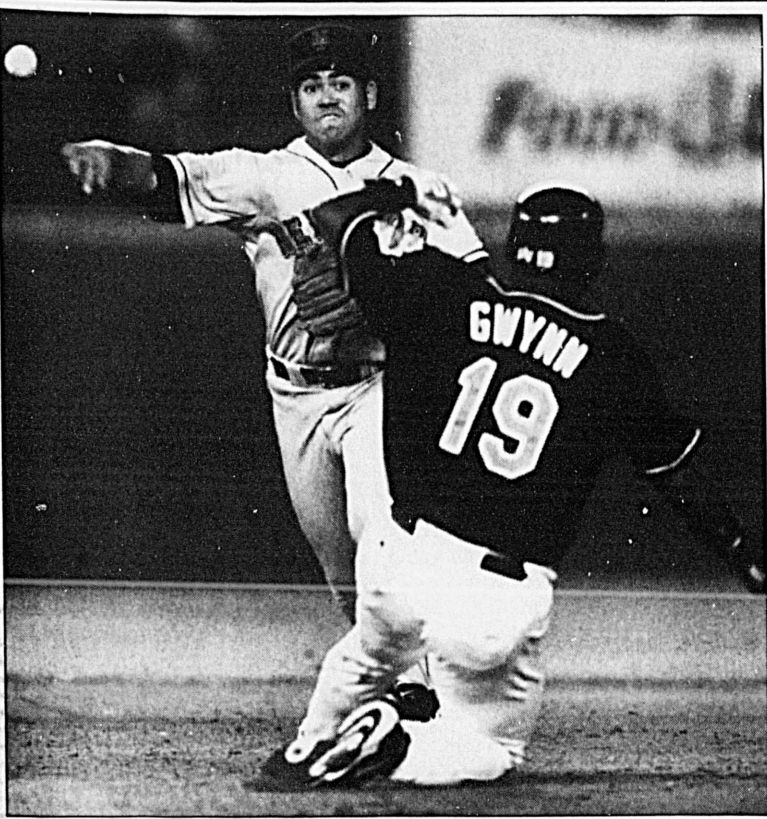


SPORTS



AP photo

3,000 MEANS NOTHING – Mets infielder Edgardo Alfonzo showed no respect to San Diego's Tony Gwynn Tuesday night, turning a double play in front of the Padres' hitting machine. Gwynn and the Padres had the last laugh, beating New York 3-2.

Long ball helps Expos

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — In the midst of an overpowering, precision display by San Francisco and Montreal pitchers, Robb Nen lost control of one throw. It turned the course of the game.

Nen was one out from teaming up with Shawn Estes on a shutout when he threw a wild pitch that allowed Montreal to tie it, and Brad Fullmer hit a leadoff homer in the 12th as the Expos rallied past the San Francisco Giants 2-1 Tuesday.

"I take a lot of the blame for what I do," said a subdued Nen, who blew a save for the eighth time in 35 opportunities. "I haven't pitched well. I should have done my job. I made a mistake pitch and I lost it. It's been a tough day and a tough season. Hopefully, it will

change."

Dan Smith (4-6) pitched three hitless innings for the victory and Ugueth Urbina got three outs for his 28th save.

Pitchers from both teams were dominant, combining for 29 strikeouts, including a rare four-strikeout effort in the seventh by Montreal reliever Steve Kline.

"Sometimes, guys have days where they have good stuff and you get guys to swing and miss," said Smith. "The guys out of the bullpen were aggressive and they went out and went at guys."

Montreal had 15 strikeouts, while San Francisco had 14. The Giants, denied in their bid for consecutive wins for the first time since July 26-27, fanned 12 times in the last six innings. It was San Francisco's 22nd loss in 32 games.

Rookie Daubach a quiet star in Boston clubhouse

BOSTON (AP) — The mail is piled waist-high next to Brian Daubach's locker, a leaning tower of cards and letters in danger of being knocked over in the next media crush.

And every one of them is addressed to Nomar Garciaparra.

Daubach? His mail fits neatly into the general delivery cubbyholes provided for the more mortal Boston players. But at the rate the rookie first baseman is going, he could join Garciaparra in the hearts of Red Sox fans — and in the record book as well.

After nine years in the minor leagues — and then being released by the lowly Florida Marlins — Daubach is among the top contenders for the AL rookie of the year award, an honour his clubhouse neighbour won in 1997. The 27-year-old Daubach was batting .339 entering Tuesday night's game, with 19 homers and 68 RBIs — driving in 15 runs in the last four games alone.

"The boy can hit," Oakland designated hitter Matt Stairs of Frederickton

said Monday night after watching Daubach beat his A's with a two-out, full-count, three-run double. "He's my rookie of the year, that's for sure."

Other contenders for the award voted on by the Baseball Writers Association of America include Kansas City outfielder Carlos Beltran, who's hitting .292 with 18 homers and 80 RBIs, and Toronto closer Billy Koch, who has 24 saves and a 2.35 ERA (both players' stats through Monday's games).

Originally a 19th-round pick by the New York Mets in 1990, Daubach bounced around the minors for nine years and filled in as a replacement player during the 1994-95 strike. He led the International League with 35 homers and 124 RBIs last season, then had 15 at-bats with Florida as a September call-up.

"Once you spend a lot of time in the minor leagues, you get labelled a triple-A player," Daubach said. "That's what you doubt more than anything else: whether you'll get the opportunity."

Penguins have enough money

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Mario Lemieux doesn't have to close on his plan to buy the bankrupt team by the end of the week because the Penguins have enough money to stay afloat through the end of August.

The team's line of credit with a French bank runs out Friday, but the Penguins can borrow enough money to keep running if Lemieux's deal doesn't close by the end of this week, said James Walsh, a bankruptcy lawyer representing the Penguins.

resenting the Penguins.

The team could get more money from Societe Generale, the French bank that has financed the team since it filed for bankruptcy in October, Walsh said.

More relief for the franchise came Tuesday night, when the Allegheny Regional Asset District Board voted 6-1 to earmark sales tax revenue to help the city and county pay \$16 million in bond debt on the Civic Arena.

Bruins choose to walk away

BOSTON (AP) — In an unprecedented move, the Boston Bruins decided Tuesday to let forward Dmitri Khristich become a free agent rather than pay the \$2.8 million US that an arbitrator set as his salary.

"We strongly disagree with the arbitrator's assessment that Dmitri is a \$2.8 million player," Bruins general manager Harry Sinden said. "We had a player almost triple his salary in two years. It just didn't add up."

The "walkaway" rights were negotiated into the collective bargaining agreement that ended the 1994-95 lockout. It gives a team the right to reject a limited number of arbitration decisions and make the player a free agent instead.

The Bruins retain the right to match for any contract Khristich signs that is less than 80 per cent of the \$2.8 million arbitration award, or \$2,240,000.

"This was put in to handle what people refer to as a runaway decision, like a runaway judge," Sinden said. "In case that happens, you had to have some way out."

But in the four arbitration seasons since then, no team had chosen to let a player go without compensation, according to NHL spokesman Frank Brown. The Bruins tried to trade Khristich during the 72 hours allotted for a decision but found no one willing to take on the \$2.8 million salary, either.

That left Sinden, who had been active in negotiations during the lockout and a vocal opponent of rising player salaries, to make the ground-breaking move.

"I didn't have that in mind, I can tell you that," he said. "The way teams conduct their business is none of my business."

Khristich made \$1 million in 1997-98 before winning a \$1.95 million arbitration award last season, when he scored 29 goals and had 41 assists. In a nine-year NHL career, the 30-year-old left wing from Kiev, Ukraine, has scored 225 goals with 282 assists for a total of 507 points.

Sinden left open a slim possibility that Khristich would return to the Bruins for a lower salary. Otherwise, the team is prepared to enter the season with the forwards it has; the Bruins signed Dave Andreychuk as a free agent earlier this summer.

Jays drop another game

TORONTO (CP) — The Toronto Blue Jays desperately need someone to step up and stop the bleeding.

Any thoughts that Pat Hentgen would come to the rescue vanished on a 2-1 curve ball that Edgar Martinez sent to left for a three-run home run in the first inning Tuesday night, his first of two as the Seattle Mariners handed the Blue Jays their season-high sixth-straight loss with an 8-5 victory.

"I try to go about the first inning the same way I have all my career," said Hentgen, who has given up 31 of his 87 earned runs in the first inning and sports a 10.73 ERA in the opening frame this season. "It just makes it so tough on the whole team. It puts us in a hole and forces us to play catch-up all game."

Despite the loss, the Blue Jays still trail Boston by 2 1-2 games in the American League wild card race. The Oakland Athletics, who trail Boston by one game, hammered the Red Sox 12-1.

For the sliding Blue Jays, the task of turning around the club's fortunes now fall into the left hand of David Wells, who gets the start in the series finale Wednesday.

"Our starting pitching has been somewhat disappointing this season," said Blue Jays manager Jim Fregosi. "It was supposed to be one of our strengths coming out of spring training."

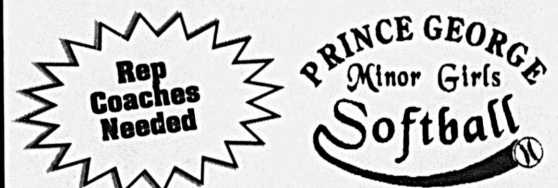
The starters have been anything but strong in August, sporting a 6-9 record with an ERA close to 7.00. The staff as a whole has given up an American League-high 32 home runs this month.

Martinez put the Blue Jays in an early hole, hitting Hentgen's 2-1 pitch to left for his 17th home run of the season, a three-run shot to left for a 3-0 lead in the first.

After David Bell walked to start the third, Ken Griffey Jr. hit his American League-leading 37th home run of the sea-

son, a two-run shot to right-centre. One out later, Martinez hit his 18th home run of the season, taking Hentgen to the opposite field in right for his 19th career multi-homer game and a 6-1 Seattle lead.

Paul Abbott (4-0) struck out a career high nine batters over 6 1-3 innings. He allowed four runs on five hits and a walk, and Jose Mesa, the last of four Seattle relievers, pitched the ninth for his 27th save of the season.



Prince George Minor Girls Softball is accepting applications for the positions of Head Coach for each of the "Thunderbird" Rep. Teams ("B" level fastball); Squirt, PeeWee, Bantam and Midget; as well as Head Coach for the Midget "Angels" ("C" level fastball) playing in the Senior Ladies league. All applications must be returned to the league no later than August 27th. Applicants will be notified of interviews to be held during the first week of September with final selection immediately following. Applications can be picked up by calling Matt Carter at 561-9401.

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