

Taking the game outdoors



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

The basketball court at Fike Park was a popular place Tuesday as kids enjoyed a game of pick-up hoops. Many people were enjoying the park after a weekend of cool, wet weather.

Daunting task faces Royals' new manager

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Buddy Bell faces a daunting rebuilding project with a team that could be headed for record losses, and he's promising no quick turnaround for the Kansas City Royals.

Bell took over the 13-37 Royals on Tuesday and won his first game against the New York Yankees. He was given a contract only through 2007, even though returning the Royals to respectability could take longer.

"I really don't think the length of the contract has anything to do with the situation here," said Dan Glass, president of the Royals and son of owner David Glass.

"If he performs well and we all perform well and give him the ammunition he needs from the front office standpoint, we'll all be in good shape. Two and a half years in today's baseball world is a long time."

Bell met David Glass' insistence that the new manager have previous major league managerial experience. Bell replaces Tony Pena, who resigned on May 10.

"It's going to take some time to figure this out," Bell said in a news conference at Kauffman Stadium. "Right now we are looking for small victories."

Bell, a five-time All-Star third baseman, was bench coach with the Cleveland Indians. He takes over a struggling franchise that hasn't made the postseason since winning the 1985 World Series and is on pace to have one of the worst seasons in modern baseball history.

"We're very excited about this," general manager Allard Baird said. "If you look at his career — 18 years in the big leagues — he's a teacher, a communicator."

"He's been there and has experienced it as a player and as a teacher. He has patience but is extremely demanding."

Bell will need patience.

"He loves to teach baseball," said Clint Hurdle, the Rockies hitting coach who took over as manager when Bell was fired by Colorado in 2002. "He's well aware of the situation there. All your major league experience in the past prepares you for the future, and I think it's a good fit."

Lacking speed, power and experience, the Royals are 20 1/2 games behind the Chicago White Sox in the AL Central. Their record after 51 games was the same as the 1962 New York Mets, who lost a major league record 120 games, and one game better than the 2003 Tigers,

who lost 119.

The 53-year-old Bell managed at Detroit in 1996-98 and Colorado in 2000-2002, compiling a record of 345-462. He is the first Royals manager in about two decades with previous experience as a major league skipper.

Around The Circuit

•BASEBALL

WASHINGTON (AP) — Outfielder Raul Mondesi was designated for assignment by the Atlanta Braves, a move that could signal the end of his major league career. Atlanta has 10 days to trade Mondesi, put him on waivers or send him outright to the minors, if he consents. The 1994 NL Rookie of the Year was told he had lost his starting job over the weekend, when the Braves called up outfielder Kelly Johnson from the minors and put him in the lineup. Mondesi said Saturday he's been limited by a sore right knee, which he attributed to a torn right quadriceps muscle that limited him to 34 games last season. This sea-

son, his first with Atlanta, Mondesi was hitting .211 (30-for-142) with four homers and 17 RBIs.

GRAND CHUTE, Wis. (AP) — Wisconsin-Whitewater beat Cortland State 11-4 to win the NCAA Division III title. After Whitewater loaded the bases in the bottom of the first on two walks and an error, Eddie Adamson hit a three-run double off the left-field wall, then scored when a collision at home knocked the catcher down.

•HORSE RACING

NEW YORK (AP) — Trainer Nick Zito was elected to the National Museum of Racing's Hall of Fame. Zito, voted into the hall in his eighth year of eligibility, will be

inducted Aug. 8 at Saratoga Springs, along with three standouts in steeplechase racing — jockey Thomas Walsh, trainer Sidney Watters Jr. and five-time champion Lonesome Glory.

•SOCCER

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP) — Michael Owen scored three goals, including one off a cross from David Beckham from the far right flank, and led England over Colombia 3-2 in the finale of a two-game exhibition tour. Owen scored in the 36th, 44th and 58th minutes for the second three-goal game of his international career. Colombia, preparing for World Cup qualifiers against Peru on Saturday.

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