

Flying leap



JOHN VAN NOSTRAND

Colby High School freshman April Gee practiced the triple jump in preparation for the state track meet this weekend at Cessna Stadium in Wichita.

Royals lose against Cleveland

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Jeremy Sowers had already seen what the Kansas City Royals could do to an opponent's early lead.

He gave them little chance to do it to him.

Given a five-run cushion in the first inning, Sowers scattered six hits over seven innings and earned his first win of the season in the Cleveland Indians' 10-3 victory Thursday night.

"We played great defense, hit the ball well and I actually pitched decent, finally," said Sowers, who won for the first time since beating Toronto 7-2 on Sept. 5, 2006. "Whether it's a turnaround, time will tell — but it's a step in the right direction."

Despite Sowers' early-season struggles, manager Eric Wedge said he had not lost confidence in the young left-hander.

"I trust him, first of all — as a person, in his ability and as a kid who does the work," Wedge said. "He's very cerebral in his work, which for a young player can work against you at times. But I think he's pointing in the right direction."

The Royals, who came back from first-inning deficits of 2-0 and 3-0 to win the first two games of the series, couldn't get out of the hole this time.

Jason Michaels capped

Cleveland's five-run first inning with a three-run homer. Casey Blake added a three-run triple and also doubled for the Indians, who have the majors' best home record at 17-4 but are still two games under .500 (11-13) on the road.

Ryan Garko had three hits for Cleveland, including a two-run single in the first.

Sowers, who had one walk and one strikeout, was relieved by Roberto Hernandez to start the eighth.

Hernandez gave up Shane Costa's RBI single and left after walking Alex Gordon to load the bases with two out. Aaron Fultz walked Ryan Shealy, forcing in a run that got Kansas City within 10-3.

Mike Koplove relieved Fultz and ended the threat when he got John

Buck, who had already homered twice in the series, to line out to left field.

The Indians, who also denied Kansas City its first series sweep of the year, took advantage of early control problems by starter Jorge De La Rosa (4-4) as the Royals lost for just the third time in their last 11 games.

De La Rosa allowed a career-high seven walks — one intentional — and hit a batter in 4 1-3 innings. He gave up nine runs and six hits with two strikeouts, and his ERA went up from 3.59 to 4.65.

"He didn't establish his fastball early," manager Buddy Bell said. "He didn't get a strike call here or there, and he didn't know where to go with it. You've still got to keep throwing the pitch. He didn't seem like the same guy."

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Baseball game inspired by historical rules

TOPEKA. (AP) — It took nearly 128 years to do it, but Wichita got its baseball revenge over Topeka.

The Wichita Bull Dozers beat the Topeka Westerns 9-4 in a game played this month in a native grass field just south of the Kansas Museum of History.

Staged in conjunction with "Game Faces: Kansans in Sports," the museum's special exhibit on the history of sports in Kansas, the competition was played according to the rules in effect in 1860. The special exhibit runs through Dec. 30.

"The Topeka Westerns were the elite in Kansas" in those days before "base ball" became "baseball," said Vance "Bull" Davis, a co-founder of the Old Cowtown Museum Vintage Base Ball Club of Wichita.

So the outcome wasn't surprising in August 1879 when the Westerns took the train to Wichita for a game at the fairgrounds, where, the Wichita City Eagle newspaper reported, "there were about three hundred ladies and gentlemen in waiting to see the game."

"The Westerns proved too much for (the Bull Dozers), and at the end of the seventh inning they were compelled to stop the game on account of the lateness of the hour, the Westerns having beaten the Bull Dozers nearly four to one," the Eagle said.

It was a different story before about 100 spectators on the Kansas History Museum grounds.

The Wichita players had the advantage of being used to the obsolete rules as the Bull Dozers and another club team, the Red Stockings, routinely play one another at the Old Cowtown Museum and combine efforts in road games against other vintage baseball

teams.

The Topeka Westerns, which were organized just for the game, had a learning curve with which to contend.

"Probably the hardest thing is remembering not to overrun first base," said Russell Burton, who pitched the first few innings for the Westerns.

The 1860 rules call for a runner to stick to the base upon reaching it or be called out.

There were other differences with which to contend.

If the ball, whether hit fair or foul, is caught in the air or after one bounce, it is an out.

Pitching must be underhand like in modern softball, and you couldn't advance to a base on balls. A batter could stand at home base and let pitches — good and bad — go by until he took a swing at one to his liking.

"It's much more of a gentlemanly game," Burton said. "The batter can actually call where he wants the pitch, whether he wants its high or low, and your job as a pitcher is to put it there for him."

"In modern baseball, your job is to keep it away from where they want it," Burton continued. "That's quite a difference. It makes it more of a friendly kind of game in ways."

There was a least one old rule players on both sides were probably pleased was eliminated in 1845. That was when "plugging the runner," which was done by throwing the ball at the runner to put him out, was banned.

There was talk after the game about Topeka trying to organize a Vintage Base Ball Association-sanctioned team so the competition with Wichita could become an annual event.

SportsBriefs

OLYMPICS
VIENNA, Austria (AP) — Austrian Olympic leaders pledged to crack down on national ski team officials after being hit with a \$1 million fine by the IOC for the doping scandal at the 2006 Turin Games.

The International Olympic Committee fined the Austrian Olympic Committee for failing to prevent the blood doping violations at last year's Winter Olympics. It is the largest fine to be levied by the Switzerland-based body. The decision came a month after the IOC issued lifetime Olympic bans on six Austrian cross-country skiers and biathletes involved in the doping.

The scandal also cast a shadow over Austria's bid to host the 2014 Winter Olympics. The Austrian city of Salzburg is competing against Sochi, Russia, and Pyeongchang, South Korea.

CYCLING
FRANKFURT, Germany (AP) — Eric Zabel and Rolf Aldag, former teammates of two Tour de France winners, admitted they took

performance-enhancing drugs while riding for the Telekom team in the 1990s.

Zabel, who is still active, and Aldag were support riders for the Telekom team when its top cyclists won the Tour de France — Bjarne Riis in 1996 and Jan Ullrich in 1997.

Speaking at a nationally televised news conference, Zabel and Aldag said they took the blood-boosting drug EPO. Both said they were ashamed of their actions and apologized. Zabel broke into tears during his confession.

Aldag is now sporting director of the T-Mobile team, previously known as Telekom. Zabel, a prominent sprinter, now rides for Milram.

GOLF
FORT WORTH, Texas (AP) — Whatever Anthony Kim said to himself made quite an impact.

After walking off the 12th green with a bogey, Kim birdied the last six holes — the PGA Tour's longest birdie streak this season — for a 7-under 63 and a one-stroke lead in the suspended first round of the Crowne Plaza Invitational.



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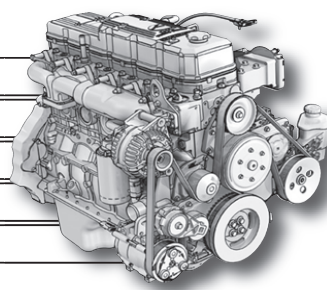
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