

National League wins All-Star game

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP) — Brian McCann, Scott Rolen or Heath Bell might really appreciate what happened on this July night come October. Charlie Manuel, too.

An All-Star win the National League thought was long overdue. And with it, home-field advantage in the World Series.

McCann earned MVP honors with a three-run double in the seventh inning, right fielder Marlon Byrd alertly threw out David Ortiz to slow a ninth-inning rally and the NL captured its first Midsummer Classic since 1996 with a 3-1 victory Tuesday night.

In a year of dominant pitching, young starters David Price and Ubaldo Jimenez set the tone — and got even more help from the tricky shadows. Nearly the entire field at Angel Stadium was bathed in odd patterns of sunlight for a twilight first pitch, creating more awkward swings and misses than usual in baseball's annual talent show.

Even that bouncing Rally Monkey on the big screen in a red AL jersey couldn't change things this time.

Manuel, the NL skipper, talked to his team about the importance of home-field advantage.

"It's a big deal. I think home teams play better at home," said Manuel, whose Phillies have reached the last two World Series and won in 2008. "It feels good, it feels real good."

The AL didn't go down without some ninth-inning drama, started by Ortiz's leadoff single. But Jonathan Broxton sealed it, helped by Byrd's defense and shaky baserunning by Big Papi.

Ortiz was on first with one out when John Buck hit a blooper that Byrd scooped up and threw to second for a forceout on the slow-moving Boston DH.

"Wrong place, wrong time — and the wrong guy, too," Ortiz said. "I saw where he was playing, but I didn't know that Marlon Byrd's a guy who has great speed in the outfield. So I saw him coming in and I thought he was going to catch it. I just didn't want to get caught in a double play, so I got in between, it bounced in front of him and he made a good throw to second base."

With Alex Rodriguez standing on the steps in the AL dugout, Ian Kinsler flied out and the NL had its win. A-Rod never got in the game.

"It felt awesome for us to get the win and break the streak," Broxton said.

Washington closer Matt Capps got the win with just five pitches, striking out Home Run Derby

champion Ortiz. Yankees starter Phil Hughes took the loss after allowing two hits before Matt Thornton yielded McCann's decisive double.

Until McCann cleared the bases, Robinson Cano's fifth-inning sacrifice fly stood as the lone run in a game expected to be decided by the loaded pitching staffs on each side. McCann's deep fly ball to the warning track in right gave the NL hope in the fifth. When he made good with that bases-loaded double off Thornton, Atlanta's steady catcher hit second base and pumped his right fist. The three guys who scored headed to the dugout with a renewed swagger.

McCann hopes this result might later help his Braves, who lead the NL East.

"The game counts ... it means more to me this year because we're in first place," said McCann, a five-time All-Star relatively unknown before this night.

Rolen, who singled twice and scored on McCann's hit, and his NL Central-leading Cincinnati Reds also might benefit from this win.

Cano and his fellow Yankees All-Stars wore black armbands after the death of longtime New York owner George Steinbrenner from a heart attack earlier Tuesday in Tampa, Fla., at age 80. Pictures of The Boss showed on two video screens before a pregame moment of silence, and flags hung at half-staff.

"It's a difficult time, on a great day for baseball, the All-Star game, something everyone looks to," Yankees and AL manager Joe Girardi said.

Owning the New York Yankees, George Steinbrenner liked to say, was a lot like owning the Mona Lisa.

Not that he always treated his team like a piece of fine art. Some of the things "The Boss" did would have wiped the smile right off the famous model's face.

This was a man who belittled players, infuriated fellow owners

and drove managers to the depths of despair. Twice he received lengthy bans from baseball, and many in the game would have been happy had it been for good. Steinbrenner threw money at weak-armed pitchers and changed managers almost as often as he changed ties. He gave "Mr. October" a stage to shine and mocked "Mr. May" when he didn't. *Newsweek* featured him on its Aug. 6, 1990, cover when he was suspended from baseball for more than two years as "The Most Hat-

ed Man in Baseball." His death, fittingly enough, came on the day of the All-Star game, with the usual complement of Yankees in the American League lineup. It wasn't long before friends and former foes began swapping tales of all things George. Most, of course, were about the legendary feuds and the clubhouse rants. The times he fired Billy Martin and the times he kept hiring him back. Lost in it all, though, is this: For



ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press
Courtney Reilley prepared to fire a throw to first during the Sweet Thunder's practice on Tuesday at Carl Adams Field on the Colby Community College campus.

Softball team heads to state

Sweet Thunder, the Colby 12-and-under girls softball team, has made great strides this season.

After losing four of their first five games, the girls have won 13 out of 19, leaving them with a 13-10 season record.

The girls took second place in a tournament at Hays on June 26, winning two of four games. They pounded Phillipsburg 17-5 and hammered Russell 17-8 but dropped two close games to Hays, losing 1-0 and 6-3.

Coach Alan Sager said the 1-0 loss was the best-played game the girls had been in this season.

They finished third in a tournament at Beloit on June 3 and 4. They erased a 10-point deficit on their way to a 14-13 win over the Neon Crunch and beat Beloit 9-4.

Danielle Foster gave up one hit, struck out two and allowed three runs in two innings against the Crunch. Desi Schippers gave up 10 runs on three hits while striking out four in one inning. Brooklyn Bange had two singles.

The Crunch went up 10-0 in the top of the first inning. The girls cut the lead in half in the bottom of the first. Neon scored again in the top of the second to make it 11-5. Then Colby scored

five runs to narrow the gap to 11-10.

The Crunch scored two more in the third, extending their lead to three. The Colby girls scored three runs in the bottom half of the inning. Colby scored one in the fourth to give the girls a 14-13 win under the 75-minute time limit in effect.

Schippers allowed three runs in two innings while striking out six against Beloit and Foster gave up one run on two hits in one inning. Brielle McKee and Darby Sager both singled.

Colby lost to Clay Center 5-1 and suffered a tough 9-8 loss to the Salina Thunderstix in overtime. Desi Schippers turned in a strong performance on the mound. She allowed two hits in five innings while striking out nine. Schippers doubled and Sager and Cayla Carter both singled.

Danielle Foster went the distance on the mound against Salina, recording four strikeouts. Elissa Zerr, Sager and Amber McDonald singled and Bange had two singles.

The team will play the Wichita Explosion in the first round of the state tournament at 6:30 p.m. on Friday in Topeka.

Controversial owner changed baseball

By Tim Dahlberg
AP Sports Columnist

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all his bluster and all his blunders, Steinbrenner was always a man ahead of his time.

He rescued the pinstripes and restored a once proud franchise to greatness. Not afraid to spend money to make money, he changed forever how baseball did business.

Most important to the man driven by an insatiable will to win at all costs, though, had to be this:

On the day he died, his beloved Yankees were in first place.

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