

Rockies to show off star pitcher

DENVER (AP) – The National League West boasts some of the best arms in the game in Clayton Kershaw, Tim Lincecum, Matt Cain and Jhoulys Chacin.

Wait, Jhoulys Chacin? The Colorado Rockies' hard-throwing righty, who has 20 career wins, one fewer than Kershaw had in his Cy Young Award-winning season a year ago?

Yep, that one. Don't chuckle, because Chacin could very well be the next big thing in a division that's already loaded with elite pitchers.

The ace in the making has even more electric stuff this year, and it will be on display in Colorado's home opener today against the San Francisco Giants.

That's why manager Jim Tracy gave Chacin this stage: To show off the 24-year-old youngster to the capacity crowd donning purple pinstripes.

"We're going to send him out there where expectations will be high," said Tracy, whose team finished up a season-opening, three-game series Sunday in Houston. "He's come a very, very long way and is starting to show some signs. With the right development, he could become one of those next big names out of the NL West."

That's lofty praise, too, especially since five of the last six NL Cy Young Award recipients have come out of the division.

Such chatter won't go to Chacin's head, though. Too many other things to worry about.

In the buildup to the home opener, he's just trying to keep the butterflies at bay.

"I just want to go out and do my job," Chacin said. "I can't worry about all the people, just go out and pitch. It will be good to see how I do after all the work in the offseason and in spring training. You just want to go and throw how you throw."

"You try to just go and throw and go deep in games, and that's how you have to think."

Chacin showed glimmers of his budding talent last season when he finished 11-14 with a 3.62 ERA. He was making steady progress this spring as well, until a bothersome blister surfaced on his right

index finger.

He said the crack near his cuticle won't be a concern as he goes up against Barry Zito today and a Giants lineup led by star catcher Buster Posey.

"It's been good the last few times I've pitched," said Chacin, the lone Colorado pitcher to remain in the rotation the entire 2011 season. "I think it will be fine. It's healed. Everything's good."

All spring, Chacin has been concentrating on one area – keeping the ball down. That way, he can get more groundouts, which is quite valuable at Coors Field.

He said his problems last season surfaced when he tried to blow his fastball by hitters. This time around, he's not afraid of contact and is willing to let his fielders do more of the work.

"I just wanted the strikeout. Now, I try to use my pitches and just make my pitch, and don't worry about what happens," explained Chacin, whose team was 38-43 at home last season. "In the beginning, that was a little bit hard to say, 'OK, don't think about striking this guy out.'"

"I've been practicing and I'm just happy with the hitter making contact, as long as I feel like I made the pitch I wanted to make. I feel pretty comfortable with it."

Good thing, too, because that's one way to go deeper into games. Quick outs always help keep the pitch count low.

"If you throw a lot of pitches early in games, you've got less chance to win," Chacin said.

He's got two role models preaching the importance of that principle. In one ear is Jamie Moyer, the 49-year-old ageless wonder who's long gotten by thanks more to his smarts than his strikeouts. The other is Jeremy Guthrie, an innings eater who frequently goes deep into games.

"You saw what Guthrie did the other day: He allowed three runs, but he went seven innings and we won," Chacin said. "That's a really good example of what I need to do."

"Things won't always be all good, so you just keep working and keep trying to get better."

Golf tournament to support recreation

The second annual Colby Recreation Golf Tournament will be held Friday, May 11, at Meadow Lake Golf Course.

The four-person scramble will cover 18 holes. Cost is \$240 per team and tee off will be at 10 a.m.

Recreation Director Stacy Lee said the proceeds will be used to help pay for Recreation Department classes and equipment.

"We are hoping to raise funds for fitness equipment such as weight sets, mats, stability balls, etc. for the CRD Boot Camp and Yoga classes, as they keep growing and growing," said Lee.

Lunch will be provided and an auction will be held following the tournament. Lee said the department

is looking for corporate and family hole sponsors.

"The corporate levels are Bronze \$100, Silver \$250 and Gold \$500, which all include different advertising options through the Rec," she said. "The Gold offering includes a free team entry."

"The family levels are Bronze \$50, Silver \$75 and Gold \$100, which all include advertising and the Gold offering a free individual entry."

Lee said only a limited number of teams will be accepted, and encouraged people to register soon.

For information, to register a team or to sponsor a hole, contact Lee at 460-4440 or colbyrecreation@gmail.com.



JUDY ROGERS/Golden Plains High School
First grader Breanna Rath went up for a shot March 30 while during an elementary demonstration basketball game at the Dylan Bice, Landen Vogler and Sidney Taylor played defense Rexford gym.

Kids get chance to show off skills

By Angela Ritter

Golden Plains High School

On March 30, Golden Plains Elementary students in first through fifth grades got a chance to show off their basketball skills at the gym in Rexford.

Physical Education Teacher Laura Rush has been working on basketball skills with

the students over the last five weeks. She said they focused on dribbling, passing and shooting, along with offense and defense.

Each class divided into two teams and played four quarters of basketball.

"I had a lot of fun playing basketball," fifth grader Jacob Ritter said. "It was cool to actually be able to play in front of a crowd. I can't wait to play sports next year!"

"It went awesome," Rush said. "The kids did a great job and they had fun. They can't wait until next year to do it again."

Admission for the event was a donation to the Lions Club Eyeglass fund. The Rexford Lions Club held a raffle and supper that evening to help raise money for its community projects.

Deadline soon for Scott City Shootout

The Scott City Recreation Commission will hold the Scott City Shootout basketball tournament for kids in third through sixth grades on Saturday, April 28.

There will be two divisions, third and fourth graders in one, and fifth and sixth graders in another.

Games will begin at 8 a.m. and cost is \$100 per team. Teams need a minimum of seven players and can have up to 10.

There is a limit of eight boys teams and eight girls teams for each age group, and teams will be accepted first come, first served.

Games will consist of two 16-minute halves for the fifth and sixth grade division and two 12-minute halves for the third and fourth graders, with a continuous running clock except for timeouts, injuries and free throws if the lead is 10 points or less in the final minute of each half.

Only shooting fouls will be shot, each team will get four 1-minute timeouts per game and there will be 4-minute halftimes.

In the event of a tie, overtime periods will be 3 minutes with continuous clock, except in the final minute if the difference is 10 points or less.

Each team must furnish someone to keep the scorebook or run the clock. Players need to arrive 30 minutes before their first game

to check in and teams will have a seven-minute warm-up before each game.

First and second place individual medals will be awarded.

Admission is \$1 for parents and fans, and kids 5 and under are free. Concessions will be available throughout the day.

The deadline to register is Friday, April 20. For information or to register, call Danny Morris at (620) 872-5015.

Both dark teams triumph in All-Star Classic

The 19th annual Northwest Kansas All-Star Classic basketball game was held Sunday, April 1, at the Community Building, with seniors Morgan Bell and Dalaan Organ of Colby High, Cole Christensen of Golden Plains and Kasey Hoyt of Brewster participating.

In the girls game, the Dark Team beat the Light Team 73-58.

The coach for the Light Team was Brandon Gehring of Logan and the coaches for the Dark Team were Parker Christensen and Steve Shaw of Golden Plains.

The Most Valuable Player of the Light Team was Mackenzie Mense of Hoxie and for the Dark Team, Lexi Riedel of Trego Community High.

Mackenzie Weiser of Oakley won the three-point contest for the girls. Most Valuable Player of the game was Haley Dietz of Trego.

Dark also beat Light in the boys game, with a score of 79-76. The coach for the Light Team was Cody Wilmath and the coach of the Dark Team was Rusty Grafel,

assistant coaches for the Colby Community College men's basketball team.

The Most Valuable Player was Ryan Hillmer of Goodland and the three-point contest was won by James Black-Persinger of Hugoton. Black-Persinger won a shoot-off with Weiser by one point.

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