



Royals' closer is final touch

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — Roberto Hernandez had every reason to feel comfortable.

It was the ninth inning, the Kansas City Royals closer was back on the mound where he prepared for the past three seasons and he couldn't wait to go to work — in this case, against his old team.

"I was so anxious to pitch against them," Hernandez said after striking out the side to finish Tuesday's 9-3 victory over the Tampa Bay Devil Rays. "I wanted to get it out of the way in spring training instead of when it really counts."

Tampa Bay sent Hernandez to the Royals as part of the three-team deal that sent Johnny Damon from Kansas City to Oakland and Ben Grieve from the A's to the Devil Rays on Jan. 8.

The 36-year-old reliever probably was Tampa Bay's most consistent performer over the last three seasons. He saved 43 of 69 wins in 1999 and 32 a year ago when the Devil Rays also won 69 games.

Tuesday wasn't a save situation, but was significant nevertheless because

Hernandez pitched on consecutive days for the first time this spring.

"I was ready about two weeks ago," he said.

Dee Brown went 2-for-4 and drove in four runs for the Royals, who scored four runs off Devil Rays starter Travis Harper.

Brown had a two-run single in the second inning and a two-run double off Trevor Enders in the sixth.

Royals starter Brian Meadows allowed one run on five hits and struck out five in 5 1-3 innings, while Jon Nunnally finished Kansas City's scoring with a solo homer off Dan Wheeler in the eighth.

It was the second straight disappointing outing for Harper, who figures to begin the season as the Devil Rays' fourth or fifth starter.

The right-hander had only allowed one run in 11 innings before giving up three homers and five runs against the New York Yankees last Wednesday. He walked four and allowed four runs on five hits in four innings against the Royals.

The Devil Rays made two cuts after

the game, reassigning outfielder Josh Hamilton to minor league camp and optioning right-handed pitching prospect Matt White, who had control problems this spring, to Triple-A Durham.

"I knew it was coming. It was just a matter of when," said Hamilton, the No. 1 overall pick in the 1999 draft. "It was getting frustrating. It was taking too long. I just wanted to get it done and go down and play."

Hamilton, who was 0-for-1 Tuesday, hit .226 with no homers and 6 RBIs this spring and likely will begin the season at Double-A Orlando.

White spent most of camp working on throwing mechanics after struggling in an exhibition against Notre Dame. In his only appearance against major league hitters, he faced six batters and did get any of them out — allowing four runs, two hits, walking one and hitting the last three batters with pitches.

"He's a pitcher with major league stuff," Devil Rays manager Larry Rothschild said. "He just needs to get his feet back on the ground."

Chicago Cubs beat up Colorado Rockies

MESA, Ariz. (AP) — Jason Bere had his best outing of the spring, and Ricky Gutierrez drove in four runs as the Chicago Cubs beat the Colorado Rockies 6-1 Tuesday.

Rockies manager Buddy Bell and outfielder Ron Gant were ejected for arguing balls and strikes with plate umpire Doug Eddings.

Bere allowed five hits in seven scoreless innings, evening his spring record at 2-2.

Gutierrez went 3-for-4 with a two-run homer, a two-run single and a double.

Gutierrez's second homer of the

spring came against Ron Villone and put Chicago up 3-0 in the sixth. With one out, Sammy Sosa walked.

Villone, 1-3 this spring, allowed three runs and four hits in six innings with five strikeouts.

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Softball has strong start

By Rachel Miscall

The Goodland Daily News

The Goodland Cowgirls' new softball team, formed this year, swept its first games, a doubleheader against Syracuse last Tuesday, stomping their opponents 32-2 in the first game and 16-0 in the second.

Britany Pettibone pitched a no-hitter in the second game, missing a perfect game by one walk in three innings.

They went on to Colby on Friday, where they took their third game of the season 26-15. It was scheduled as a doubleheader, but coach Terry Daise said the second game was canceled because of weather.

The Cowgirl junior varsity also faced a Colby team Friday, beating them 11-10.

The Goodland girls will play their first home game Friday, taking on Garden City at 3 p.m. at the baseball complex.

In the first game at Syracuse, the Cowgirls had 32 runs with 17 hits and 22 walks.

Stephanie Fairbanks had two turns at bat, three runs, two hits and two walks; Mary Lewis one turn, two runs, no hits, two walks; Pettibone, one turn, three runs, no hits, three walks; Stevielee Raymer, one turn, two runs, one hit, one walk; Evann Hardy, two turns, three runs, one hit, two walks; Adrienne Garcia, no turns, two runs, no hits, two walks; Shanae Calkins, three turns, five runs, three hits (two singles and a triple), three walks; Jennifer Mentzer, two turns, three runs, one hit, three walks; Yvette Acosta, three turns, three runs, one hit, three walks; Tammy Weeter, five turns, three runs, four hits (three singles and a double), one walk; Colleen Koehler, four turns, one run, one hit, no walks; and Alissa Schields, two turns, no runs, one hit, no walks; and Lindsay Price, six turns at bat, two runs, two hits (one single, one double), no walks.

Hardy and Garcia pitched, striking out a total of nine batters and giving up five hits.

In the second game at Syracuse, the team had 16 runs with 13 hits and 11 walks.

Fairbanks had three turns at bat, two runs, two hits (a single and a double) and one walk; Pettibone, two turns,

three runs, two hits (a single and a triple), one walk; Hardy, two turns, one run, two hits (a single and a double), one walk; Shanae Calkins, three turns, one run, two hits (two singles), no walks; Schields, two turns, no runs, one hit (a single), one walk; Weeter, one turn, three runs, one hit (a single), two walks; Garcia, no turns, three runs, no hits, two walks; Acosta, one turn, one run, one hit, two walks; and Osborn, two turns, two runs, two hits (two singles), one walk.

In the Colby game, the Cowgirls had 41 turns at bat, with 26 hits, 19 runs, five homeruns and eight walks.

Fairbanks had six turns at bat, five runs, four hits (all singles) and no walks; Pettibone, five turns, one run, two hits (a single and a homerun), no walks; Lewis, no turns, two runs, no hits, no walks; Hardy, four turns, five runs, two hits, (both singles) two walks; Calkins, five turns, four runs, four hits (two singles, a double and a homerun), one walk; Raymer, four turns, one run, one hit (a single), two walks; Mentzer, four turns, one run, one hit (a single), two walks; Schields,

five turns, three runs, three hits (a single and two homeruns), no walks; Weeter, four turns, two runs, one hit (a homerun), no walks; Acosta, four turns, two runs, one hit (a single), one walk; and Price, no turns, hits, runs or walks.

Pettibone pitched, striking out seven batters and giving up eight hits and eight walks.

In the junior varsity game, the team had 10 turns at bat 11 runs, one hit and 13 walks.

Jessica Osborn had two turns at bat, one run, no hits and one walk; Garcia, no turns, hits, or runs, one walk; Kristi Boyce, no turns, two runs, no hits, two walks; Tomi Windell, one turn, two runs, one hit, two walks; Schields, two turns, two runs, no hits, one walk; Deanna Livengood, one turn, one run, no hits, two walks; Ashley Engel, one turn, no runs, no hits, one walk; Megan McCall, one turn, one run, not hits, one walk; Jessica Vignery, one turn, one run, no hits, one walk; and Lauren Gray, one turn, one run, one walk.

Garcia and Gray pitched, striking out seven batters and giving up one hit.



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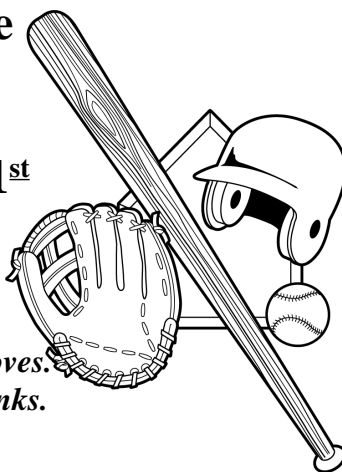
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Emporia has new head coach

EMPORIA (AP) — Assistant Colorado coach David Moe, son of long-time former Denver Nuggets coach Doug Moe, is the new head coach at Emporia State.

Emporia State athletics director Kent Weiser made the announcement at a news conference on Tuesday.

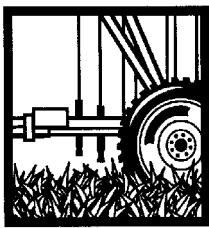
"I've prepared my whole life to become a head basketball coach," Moe said Tuesday.

Moe replaces Marc Comstock, whose contract was not renewed after the Hornets finished 9-17 (3-15 Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association) last season.

Moe, 37, has spent 13 years as an assistant.

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