

Rockies thwart Smoltz

ATLANTA (AP) — John Smoltz is back. He's not yet the pitcher he was before elbow surgery.

Smoltz struggled in his first start since the 1999 World Series, giving up five runs in three innings as the Atlanta Braves lost to the Colorado Rockies 8-3 Thursday night.

Jeff Cirillo hit a two-run homer in the first inning and Todd Walker added a two-out, two-run single in the second. Smoltz gave up six hits, walked two and struck out two before his night was done.

Still, the sight of No. 29 on the mound was a reminder of better times for the Braves, who have struggled so far in their quest for a 10th straight trip to the postseason.

After rallying to beat the Rockies in the first two games of the series, Atlanta was denied its first three-game winning streak of the season.

This is the deepest into the season the Braves have gone without winning three in a row since 1988, when they were one of the baseball's worst teams.

Todd Helton hit a two-run homer in the sixth against Chris Seelbach after the Braves closed to 5-3. Helton had three RBIs in all.

Former Brave Denny Neagle (4-1) went six innings for the Rockies, allowing eight hits and three runs to improve his career record at Turner Field to 20-6.

Smoltz, the winningest postseason pitcher in major league history, managed to thrive for years with a shaky elbow. In his last start, Game 4 of the 1999 World Series, he had 11 strikeouts in seven innings but lost a duel with Roger Clemens as the New York Yan-

kees completed a championship sweep.

Smoltz finally succumbed to ligament replacement surgery — the dreaded "Tommy John" operation — in spring training last year.

Smoltz missed the entire season and tendinitis this spring forced him to spend another 6 1/2 weeks on the disabled list. After two successful rehab starts in the minors, he finally made his comeback with the Braves.

Smoltz's fastball was clocked as high as 96 mph and his control was acceptable — 45 of his 70 pitches were strikes.

But he didn't rely much on his breaking pitches, allowing the Rockies to hone in on the fastball.

Smoltz started the game with a 93-mph pitch to Juan Pierre but got a little too enthusiastic when the leadoff hitter dribbled a slow roller toward first.

Smoltz dove to the ground to make the grab in front of first baseman Wes Helms, leaving no one to cover the bag while Pierre coasted to an infield hit.

He moved to second on a chopper to the mound and scored when Helton lined a single to left.

Smoltz got two quick strikes on Cirillo before the third baseman connected with a high, inside fastball. The 367-foot drive barely cleared the wall in left for Cirillo's seventh homer of the season.

The Rockies had four hits in the first, batting around before Neagle struck out with the bases loaded.

Smoltz gave up two more hits in the second, including Walker's single that made it 5-0.

Smoltz needed 30 pitches to get

through each of the first two innings before settling down with a perfect third inning.

Manager Bobby Cox allowed Smoltz to bat leading off the bottom half — he struck out — before bringing in Kerry Ligtenberg to begin the fourth with the Braves trailing 5-2.

Smoltz faced the top-hitting team in the majors but caught a break when Larry Walker (.368, 14 homers) was scratched from the lineup with an upset stomach.

Smoltz won the NL Cy Young award in 1996 and his 12-4 record in the postseason was especially missed last fall, when the Braves were swept by St. Louis in the division series.

It was Atlanta's earliest exit from the playoffs since a run of nine straight postseason appearances began in 1991.

Smoltz shaved off his beard before the game, taking the mound with only a mustache. He was clearly anxious as the first pitch approached, asking a reporter for the time just to make sure the clubhouse clock was correct.

Smoltz's teammates tried to ease the tension. Chipper Jones reminded the pitcher that he had to cover first on grounders hit in that direction.

Brian Jordan had a two-run single for the Braves in the third and Andruw Jones added his eighth homer, a solo shot in the fifth.

Notes: Pierre scored four runs for the Rockies.

Braves reliever Matt Whiteside made two errors in the eighth, allowing Pierre to score an unearned run.

Neagle fought hard in his second at-bat, forcing Ligtenberg to throw 14 pitches before flying out.



Larned's Trixi Rodrigues touched home after being tagged by Cowgirl catcher Tammy Weeter in semi-final action Wednesday in the Class 4A softball tournament in Colby. Rodrigues was out, but the Indians defeated the Cowgirls 11-1 to advance to the finals. Larned qualified for state by defeating Ulysses 4-1 in the championship.

Photo by Jay Kelley / Colby Free Press

Cowgirls finish first season

By Lester Bolen
The Goodland Daily News

The Goodland Cowgirls ended their softball season on Wednesday with a 11-1 loss against Larned.

The Cowgirls had won their last two games to advance to the regional semi-finals in their first year.

Larned went on to win the championship game over Ulysses and ad-

vance to state. Evann Hardy was the losing pitcher for Goodland, hurling five innings. She allowed eleven hits and five earned runs. Hardy walked one and struck out one.

Hardy also had the team's only extra-base hit, a double. The Cowgirls' offense struggled throughout the game, and no player had more than one

hit. Stephanie Fairbanks, Shannae Calkins, and Jessica Osborn each had a single for the Cowgirls, who managed only four hits total. Merry Lewis scored the team's only run.

The Cowgirls finished their first-ever season with an impressive 2-1 post-season record. The team defeated Thomas Moore Prep on Monday and Larned on Tuesday.

baseball scoreboard

By The Associated Press

AMERICAN LEAGUE				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	23	17	.575	—
New York	22	19	.537	1 1/2
Toronto	20	20	.500	3
Baltimore	18	23	.439	5 1/2
Tampa Bay	11	29	.275	12

NATIONAL LEAGUE				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Philadelphia	23	16	.590	—
Atlanta	19	22	.463	5
Florida	18	21	.462	5
Montreal	17	24	.415	7
New York	15	25	.375	8 1/2

Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
St. Louis	24	15	.615	—
Houston	23	16	.590	1
Milwaukee	23	18	.561	2
Chicago	21	19	.525	3 1/2
Cincinnati	17	23	.425	7 1/2
Pittsburgh	13	27	.325	11 1/2

West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Seattle	31	9	.775	—
Anaheim	19	21	.475	12
Oakland	18	22	.450	13
Texas	14	26	.350	17

Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Los Angeles	23	18	.561	—
Arizona	22	18	.550	1/2
San Francisco	22	18	.550	1/2
Colorado	20	20	.500	2 1/2
San Diego	20	20	.500	2 1/2

West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Los Angeles	23	18	.561	—
Arizona	22	18	.550	1/2
San Francisco	22	18	.550	1/2
Colorado	20	20	.500	2 1/2
San Diego	20	20	.500	2 1/2

Wednesday's Games

Baltimore 3, Detroit 2
Cleveland 4, Texas 3
Minnesota 4, Boston 3
Kansas City 9, Tampa Bay 5
Anaheim 3, Toronto 1
Oakland 4, N.Y. Yankees 3, 10 innings
Seattle 7, Chicago White Sox 2

Thursday's Games

Minnesota 5, Boston 3
Texas 12, Cleveland 7
Oakland 8, N.Y. Yankees 3
Seattle 5, Chicago White Sox 1
Detroit 7, Baltimore 5
Kansas City 4, Tampa Bay 2
Anaheim 4, Toronto 2

Today's Games

Minnesota (Milton 5-2) at Baltimore (Johnson 2-2), 5:05 p.m.
Detroit (Santos 0-0) at Tampa Bay (Sturtz 1-2), 5:15 p.m.
Boston (Martinez 5-0) at Kansas City (Stein 1-3), 6:05 p.m.
Toronto (Carpenter 3-1) at Texas (Myette 0-0), 6:05 p.m.
Cleveland (Burba 5-2) at Anaheim (Rapp 1-3), 8:05 p.m.
N.Y. Yankees (Lilly 1-0) at Seattle (Halama 3-3), 8:05 p.m.
Chicago White Sox (Wells 0-0) at Oakland (Heredia 2-5), 8:05 p.m.

Saturday's Games

Minnesota (Mays 5-2) at Baltimore (Mercedes 0-6), 11:35 a.m.
N.Y. Yankees (Hernandez 0-4) at Seattle (Moyer 6-1), 2:05 p.m.
Chicago White Sox (Baldwin 2-2) at Oakland (Mulder 4-2), 2:05 p.m.
Detroit (Holt 3-3) at Tampa Bay (Lopez 3-3), 2:15 p.m.
Toronto (Loaiza 4-4) at Texas (Helling 1-6), 6:05 p.m.
Boston (Nomo 4-2) at Kansas City (Reichert 3-4), 6:05 p.m.
Cleveland (Wright 0-0) at Anaheim (Washburn 2-4), 8:05 p.m.

Sunday's Games

National League

Detroit at Tampa Bay, 11:15 a.m.
Minnesota at Baltimore, 11:35 a.m.
Boston at Kansas City, 12:05 p.m.
Toronto at Texas, 1:05 p.m.
Chicago White Sox at Oakland, 2:05 p.m.
N.Y. Yankees at Seattle, 2:35 p.m.
Cleveland at Anaheim, 6:05 p.m.

Arizona (Batista 1-2) at Chicago Cubs (Wood 1-4), 12:20 p.m.
Cincinnati (Reitsma 2-3) at Houston (Miller 5-1), 12:35 p.m.
San Diego (Serrano 0-1) at Montreal (Yoshii 1-0), 5:05 p.m.
Colorado (Thomson 0-1) at Florida (Penny 3-0), 5:05 p.m.
San Francisco (Jensen 0-0) at Atlanta (Perez 2-4), 5:05 p.m.
Milwaukee (Wright 4-4) at Pittsburgh (Wengert 0-1), 5:05 p.m.
St. Louis (Benes 3-2) at Philadelphia (Person 3-4), 5:05 p.m.

Sunday's Games

Colorado at Florida, 11:05 a.m.
San Francisco at Atlanta, 11:05 a.m.
Los Angeles at N.Y. Mets, 11:10 a.m.
San Diego at Montreal, 11:35 a.m.
Milwaukee at Pittsburgh, 11:35 a.m.
St. Louis at Philadelphia, 11:35 a.m.
Arizona at Chicago Cubs, 12:20 p.m.
Cincinnati at Houston, 12:35 p.m.

Runner has anxiety disorder

By Lester Bolen
The Goodland Daily News

Ricky Williams, college football's all-time leading rusher, has been diagnosed with a social anxiety disorder and begun taking medicine for depression last week.

The disorder is not expected to effect the New Orleans Saints running back's football career.

The disorder began in 1999, his rookie season in the NFL, and according to Williams means only that he is extremely shy. Hearing negative comments about himself made him depressed, he said, and he wasn't able to handle the pressure of being labeled the Saints savior. In 1999, Saints coach Mike Ditka, traded his entire draft to move up for the rights to draft Williams.

Williams rushed for exactly 1,000 yards last season and eight touchdowns before a broken ankle ended his season.

Royals climb out of last place

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Look who's not in last place in the AL Central anymore — the Kansas City Royals.

A 4-2 victory Thursday night over Tampa Bay allowed the Royals to creep a few percentage points ahead of Chicago and out of the cellar. Of course, it was the Devil Rays they beat for their first three-game sweep since last September and not the Yankees or Indians, who they're 1-11 against so far this year.

"It just feels good to win," Royals manager Tony Muser said. "We swept the series, but we took it one day at a time."

Being a few percentage points above dead last doesn't excite the Royals skipper either.

"There's a long way to go. The order you finish only matters on the first day of October," he said.

Chad Durbin (2-2) won his second straight start for the Royals, who scored two runs, including the go-ahead tally, on two wild pitches by

Brian Rose (0-2). The Royals also turned three double plays, raising their league-leading total to 51.

After the Devil Rays' first two batters reached in the eighth, Jason Grimsley relieved Durbin and coaxed a 4-6-3 double play from Ben Grieve. Then Roberto Hernandez, who worked the ninth for his seventh save, got another double play.

"It's a great feeling knowing we've got the kind of infielders who can turn double plays like these guys can," Durbin said. "You know that if you do get a runner on first, all you have to do is get them to hit a grounder and there's a good chance both runners will be erased."

Play was halted for about 10 minutes in the seventh while Tampa Bay's Jose Guillen was carted off the field after injuring his left knee stepping on first base trying to beat out an infield grounder.

"I don't think it's as bad as we first thought," Tampa Bay manager Hal McRae said. "He's up and walking around. They'll look at it tomorrow."

Rose, a young right-hander fighting for a spot in the Tampa Bay rotation, was downcast after allowing two runs on wild pitches.

"I've hardly had a wild pitch my entire career and now all of a sudden I've had three in two games," said Rose, who was claimed on waivers from the New York Mets on April 25.

Rose gave up four runs and seven hits in four innings and has thrown five wild pitches in 15 2-3 innings this season.

"I don't understand it. I tried to make a good pitch and choked it a little too much and I wound up throwing it right in the dirt," he said. "I've always been a control pitcher. That kinda hurts."

Both his wild pitches came on sliders. "Maybe I'm trying to be too fine," he said.

Tampa Bay dropped to 11-29, the worst start by an AL team since the 1994 Oakland Athletics began with the same record.

After Jermaine Dye's RBI single put the Royals ahead in the first, John Flaherty tied it with a run-scoring single off Durbin in the second.

Rose's wild pitch allowed Luis Alicea to score in the third, then Tampa tied it in the fourth on Flaherty's bases-loaded double-play grounder.

Dee Brown scored to make it 3-2 on Rose's wild pitch in the fourth, and Carlos Beltran added an RBI triple.

After that, the Royals did not get a hit.

"I was trying to throw that good slider. But I ended up burying it in the dirt," Rose said. "That was the game."

Notes: The Devil Rays returned home after the game for a 10-game homestand, their second-longest this season.

Mike Sweeney's one-out single in the third stretched his hitting streak to 10 games.

The Devil Rays also went 1-5 on a trip last July 30-Aug. 4 at Oakland and Seattle.

The Royals hadn't swept a three-game series since a trip to Detroit last Sept. 26-28.

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When you enter the Goodland store, about the busiest area you'll see is Freshway Deli. Tonya is truly a pleasant new member of the C-Store/Deli team. She's always in constant motion and full of ideas, yet never too busy to let you know she's glad you stopped in. Willingness to listen and work well with customers and employees are just a few of her qualities. The work pace in the Deli can be fast, and she doesn't seem to lose even a half step while keeping her positive attitude. She's just so enjoyable to be around that you'll probably become one of the breakfast and lunch regulars. Congratulation Tonya Flock; you deserve to be employee of the month. Please continue to let us know when you're pleased with the exceptional performance of any employee. Nominate employees at the point of sale counters at any of our locations.



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