

Astros pound Rockies

HOUSTON (AP) — The Houston Astros need more of what Shane Reynolds provided.

Lance Berkman and Jeff Bagwell each had four RBIs, and Reynolds turned in his fourth consecutive solid pitching performance as the Astros beat the Colorado Rockies 13-5 Monday night.

The Astros matched their highest run total this season and made some outstanding defensive plays.

Houston has struggled to get a consistent pitching rotation all season. Manager Larry Dierker liked the way Reynolds kept getting out of trouble.

“He got into some jams, but he got out of them,” Dierker said. “Shane did a great job. They never hit him hard. When he went around the bases (in the sixth), I didn’t know if he could go back out, but he got us through the seventh.”

Reynolds (7-5) won for the third time in four starts, allowing three runs and 10 hits in seven innings.

“It was a total team effort, we had great hitting and they scored some runs for me,” Reynolds said. “Sometimes you feel good and things don’t work out. We had great defense, and those double plays that helped too.”

The Astros had double plays to end the fifth and sixth innings. Center

fielder Richard Hidalgo threw out Todd Helton trying to stretch a single into a double to end the third inning.

“Reynolds made some pitches with guys on base,” Helton said. “That’s the mark of a veteran pitcher and a good pitcher. We had our chances. He made a good pitch to me and forced me to hit into a double play.”

Berkman had a bases-loaded walk in the first, a run-scoring double in the fifth and a two-run double in the sixth. Bagwell hit an RBI single in the sixth and a three-run homer in the eighth, his 16th of the season.

Pedro Astacio (5-8), pitching on three days’ rest, wasn’t making excuses about giving up nine runs — seven earned — and seven hits in 5 2-3 innings. Astacio, whose ERA rose to 5.63, is 1-6 in seven starts since May 8.

“This was just a bad game,” Astacio said. “I have no excuses. The three days’ rest had nothing to do with it. I got behind in the count and I had to pitch in the middle of the plate.”

Craig Biggio doubled in his final at-bat, in the eighth inning, extending his career-best hitting streak to 18 games, Houston’s longest this season.

Astacio got off to a wild start in the first inning. He hit Biggio with a pitch

leading off the game, allowed a single to Julio Lugo, then walked Bagwell and Berkman, forcing in a run. Moises Alou’s double-play grounder made it 2-0.

Brent Mayne had an RBI single in the second, but Houston made it 4-1 in the bottom half on Reynolds’ run-scoring grounder and Biggio’s sacrifice fly.

Colorado closed to 4-3 when Ron Gant hit the 300th career homer in the fourth and Larry Walker had an RBI grounder in the fifth, but the Astros got two runs back in the fifth on Berkman’s RBI double and Richard Hidalgo’s sacrifice fly.

“It means you’ve been around a long time,” Gant said. “Considering that some of the things that have happened to me, it’s a big accomplishment.”

Bagwell’s RBI double in the sixth chased Astacio, and Berkman hit a two-run double off Craig Dingman that made it 9-3.

Tony Eusebio homered in the seventh, and Bagwell connected in the eighth off Justin Speier.

Juan Pierre hit a two-run homer in the ninth off Jose Lima, the 12th homer off Lima in 53 innings this season. Lima, who has an 11.88 ERA, allowed an NL-record 48 in 196 1-3 innings last year.

sports briefs

Baseball’s Iorn Man will retire this year

WASHINGTON (AP) — Cal Ripken said he intends to retire at the end of the season, The Washington Post reported on its Web site.

Ripken broke Lou Gehrig’s record of 2,130 consecutive games played on Sept. 6, 1995, and played 2,632 straight games before voluntarily ending the streak on Sept. 20, 1998.

He is one of seven players in major league history with 3,000 hits (3,107) and 400 home runs (421)

Lakers’ stars promise three-peat next year

LOS ANGELES (AP) — More than a half-million fans celebrated the Los Angeles Lakers’ second straight NBA championship as Shaquille O’Neal and Kobe Bryant promised to do it all again next year.

“Three-peat, three-peat, three-peat,” rap master Shaq exhorted a purple-and-gold throng massed outside Staples Center in a rousing hip-hop performance that capped the festivities.

Baking heat couldn’t keep fans from flocking downtown to celebrate the Lakers’ out-of-town victory over the Eastern Conference-champion Philadelphia 76ers.

WIMBLEDON, England (AP) — Wimbledon ignored the ATP rankings and made seven-time champion Pete Sampras the top-seeded player in the tournament’s new format.

Sampras slipped one place to fifth in the rankings announced earlier in the day.

South African wins U.S. Open

TULSA, Okla. (AP) — For Retief Goosen, the tortuous ordeal lasted just one day.

When given a chance to atone for one of golf’s most embarrassing moments, the soft-spoken South African made sure he wouldn’t have to go through life as the guy who missed a 2-foot putt to win the U.S. Open.

No, he’ll be remembered as a U.S. Open champion.

“I felt like I needed to win this because of what happened,” Goosen said Monday, savoring a 2-stroke victory over Mark Brooks in the first Open playoff since 1994. “When the putt went in, it was great relief. In a way, I was a little bit shocked that I won it.”

That’s understandable, considering what Goosen went through Sunday evening. Just 12 feet from his first major victory and given two putts to make it happen, he needed three.

Suddenly, a golfer who was barely known on this side of the Atlantic at the beginning of the tournament was linked with Jan Van de Velde, Scott Hoch, Ed Sneed and Doug Sanders — all the victims of unspeakable collapses that let major victories slip away.

The others also had a chance to make amends, only to stumble under the weight of bitter disappointment. Goosen was different, responding with rock-solid play in the 18-hole playoff to beat the 40-year-old Texan.

With the trophy in his hand, the new champion could even poke fun at his misfortune.

“(Sunday) was quite funny, actually,” Goosen said. “I sort of laughed to myself when I missed that short putt to win, like I couldn’t believe what just happened.”

A day later, Goosen walked to the final hole with a 3-stroke lead over Brooks, having erased all memories of the Sunday debacle. He even pulled out that dreaded putter while still 100 feet

off the green, taking a conservative approach.

“I knew this time I had it in the bag,” Goosen said.

He could afford a 3-putt from 25 feet to clinch a belated victory, but needed only two, rolling the second try into the middle of the cup from 6 feet for bogey and an even-par round of 70.

“I know now what Jean Van de Velde went through at Carnoustie,” Goosen said, referring to the Frenchman who triple-bogeyed the final hole of the 1999 British Open when a double-bogey was good enough to win.

“You play so well for 71 holes and then suddenly on one hole you lose the tournament. But I was just trying to put that behind me.”

Amazingly, what the putter took away, the putter gave back.

Through the first eight holes, Goosen was erratic off the tee, but saved himself with three wonderful shots from the sand. He also made three putts in the testy five- to 10-foot range, casting aside whatever doubts may have lingered in his head from the 72nd hole.

Goosen went to No. 9 with just a 1-stroke lead, but the playoff got away from Brooks in a hurry.

One of his strengths — accuracy off the tee — went astray, leaving him next to an oak tree. He wound up with a bogey, losing 2 strokes when Goosen rolled in a sweeping 15-footer for birdie.

At No. 10, Goosen picked up another 2 strokes. Brooks tried to cut off too much of the left-to-right dogleg and was blocked by trees, leading to another bogey. The South African made a 12-footer for his second straight birdie and a 5-shot lead.

Goosen earned \$900,000, nearly as much as his best season on the European tour, and became only the second international player in the past 20 years to win the U.S. Open.

Royals start new losing streak

CHICAGO (AP) — With Magglio Ordonez over his nagging injuries and Mark Buehrle pitching like a veteran, the Chicago White Sox keep trying to get back in contention for a playoff spot.

Ordonez homered for the sixth time in seven games and Mark Buehrle won his fifth straight start as the Chicago White Sox beat the Kansas City Royals 5-4 Monday night.

Ordonez made 2-for-2 against Chad Durbin, making him 7-for-7 against him in his career, and is hitting .429 (27-for-63) with 15 RBIs in June. 1/4 “Magglio is the type of hitter who’s

always dangerous. I have as much respect for him as any hitter in the American League,” Kansas City manager Tony Muser said.

Bothered by wrist and hand ailments during the first couple months of the season, Ordonez has raised his average from .258 on June 1 to .303.

“I’m being more patient,” he said. “I’ve been feeling really good in the last couple weeks, and (the injuries) are in the past.”

Jeff Liefer hit a two-run shot for the White Sox, who despite getting swept over the weekend at St. Louis, have won 17 of 23.

After the game, the White Sox announced that left-hander Kelly Wunsch likely has a torn rotator cuff and will be out for the season.

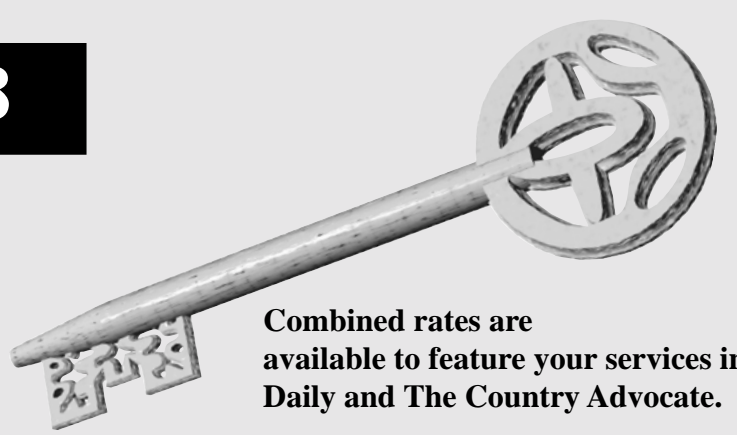
Buehrle (6-3) allowed three runs and nine hits in seven innings. Buehrle, who has given up four earned runs in his last 39 2-3 innings, hasn’t lost in 10 starts since April 24 at Oakland.

Keith Foulke pitched the ninth for his 14th save in 15 chances. He walked Wilson Delgado with one out and Raul Ibanez reached with second baseman Ray Durham dropped the throw from shortstop Royce Clayton on a potential game-ending double play.

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