

# Player gets gold in tennis

The Cowgirls' junior varsity tennis team concluded its season Monday with a third-place finish in Tribune and one player winning a gold medal.

In No. 2 singles play, Leslie Knitig won the gold with a 3-0 record. She defeated Jordan Miller of Tribune 6-1, had a forfeit from Colby and beat Emily Christmas of Garden City 6-5 (7-3) in a tie break.

In the No. 1 singles, Amber Ridder went 1-2. She won the fifth match by defeating Rosin of Scott City 6-1.

In the No. 1 doubles, the team of Lauren Gray and Kristi Boyce beat Woodall and Talsma of Colby 6-4. They won fourth place even though they lost the medal round match to Ulysses 6-3.

In the No. 2 doubles, Jenna Roane and Jenna McGinley were 0-3 but played well, Coach Wallace Hansen said, and showed improvement through the season. They gave the Colby team of Nicholson and Yoon a good match, he said.

The junior varsity team won over 50 percent of its matches for the season and captured 14 medals along the way.

The varsity team concludes its regular season Thursday at the Scott City Invitational. Regional play will be on Monday at Scott City.



Trista Lalicker was ready to volley for the Cowgirls junior varsity tennis team Saturday in Colby. The Cowgirls finished fourth at the tournament. Photo by Patty Decker/The Colby Free Press

# Royals beat playoff-bound Indians

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Even with earplugs, John Rocker must have heard the crack of Mike Sweeney's bat.

After Carlos Beltran hit a tiebreaking RBI single with two outs in the eighth, Sweeney hit a three-run shot off Cleveland's troubled reliever, lifting last-place Kansas City to a 5-1 victory over the playoff-bound Indians.

"He just left a curveball up," said Sweeney, who needs one RBI to become the first Royals player with 100 in three straight seasons.

Rocker (3-7) was wearing earplugs, even though the small crowd was hardly big enough to boo loudly.

Acting manager Grady Little said Rocker wears the earplugs often.

"I think there are a lot of players in the major leagues who probably do that," Little said.

Heading into the playoffs, Rocker has hardly inspired confidence.

"He hung a breaking ball to Sweeney that hurt him," Little said. "He'll be back out there tomorrow. We'll try to get him going."

The Indians, in their first game since clinching the AL Central title, got five shutout innings from rookie Ryan

Drese, who gave up only Mark Quinn's third-inning double. He was relieved by Dave Burba starting the sixth after striking out four and walking one.

Sweeney hit a 1-2 pitch from Rocker for his 29th home run of the season and 99th of his career as the Royals beat the Indians for just the second time in seven home games.

Pinch-runner Donnie Sadler stole second and went to third when Rocker threw a wild pitch with a 3-2 count to Angel Barroa, then Beltran singled into left. Roberto Hernandez (5-6) got the last five outs.

Beltran singled off Paul Shuey leading off the seventh, just the second Kansas City hit. He stole second and third and came home on Raul Ibanez's opposite-field double for a 1-0 lead.

Royals starter Blake Stein allowed just four hits in seven shutout innings while striking out six and walking four.

Stein walked No. 9 hitter Eddie Taubensee leading off the sixth, then walked Milton Bradley. After John McDonald popped out to catcher Gregg Zaun trying to sacrifice, Alomar singled into center and Taubensee took off for home.

Beltran's throw home was high and Zaun made a sweeping behind-the-back tag. Taubensee was called out by plate umpire Phil Cuzzi although replays clearly showed he had missed the sliding runner.

The Royals then got out of the inning by catching Bradley too far off second.

# Record may not last 37 years

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Only three years ago, Mark McGwire shattered baseball's single season home run mark, captivating the nation as he added nine homers to Roger Maris' 1961 record to seemingly put the mark out of reach for at least another 37 years.

The media circus that followed him from city to city was enormous, especially as he closed in on No. 62. The Maris family was on hand at Busch Stadium when the historic record fell and St. Louis Cardinals owners, grateful for the immense gate attraction the big man had become, presented McGwire with a cherry red 1961 Corvette.

Historic home run ball No. 70, hit off Carl Pavano of the Montreal Expos at the end of a five-homer, three-day flurry to end the season, sold for more than \$3 million.

It's likely that soon, that ball will plummet in value. Instead of the home run king, McGwire will be known as a trail blazer, the guy who paved the way for Barry Bonds and whichever fence-buster comes after that.

Bonds entered Tuesday night's game at Houston only one long ball away from tying McGwire's mark with six games to play.

"Mark's been hitting a lot of home runs for a bunch of years," manager Tony La Russa said. "So I think you

give him credit for showing some new levels were possible."

That his record probably won't last is not a big disappointment to McGwire, who turned 38 on Monday, because home runs seem to come so much easier for everybody these days. In 1997 McGwire ended up only three homers shy of Maris' record, and in 1999 he hit 65.

Sammy Sosa chased McGwire to the finish line in '98, ending with 66, and again in '99, ending with 63. Sosa hit 50 in 2000 and has 59 this year.

"After I hit 70, I pretty much was sure it wouldn't happen again," McGwire said. "But when I came back the next year and hit 65, that was pretty much a re-evaluation, saying 70 is going to be broken."

"I'm very realistic about things. I've said since Day 1, records are made to be broken."

So, McGwire said he is actually rooting for Bonds to top 70. Over the weekend, he predicted 72 or 73 for the Giants star and marveled at the fact Bonds has only 462 at-bats and also has broken McGwire's NL walks record with 167 — five more than McGwire had in 1998.

"He's doing it routinely," said McGwire, who had 509 at-bats in 1998. "His pace is unbelievable. He's

totally blown away what I did."

Sosa also said he is cheering for Bonds.

"Always, yes, that's good for baseball," Sosa said. "It's amazing what he's been accomplishing."

At the risk of being accused of sour grapes, La Russa believes Bonds has it a lot easier in his record chase because the record is not nearly as big of a deal. Again, thanks to McGwire. The manager chooses his words carefully on the subject.

"I watched every day what Mark went through from the first day of spring training to the last day of the season and that was a real special burden he had to carry," La Russa said. "Sammy didn't have it the same way because Sammy caught it about midseason."

"And Barry hasn't had it the same way, maybe because Mark's shown the way, whatever."

Earlier this month, McGwire was criticized for saying essentially the same thing. Now he's keeping quiet.

"I'm not going to get into that because I've already talked about it and people have already ripped me on it," McGwire said. "All I'm going to say is he's got an excellent chance, I'm rooting for him and if he gets it, it'll be a phenomenal feat."

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# Arizona beats Rockies 10-1 to keep up with Giants

PHOENIX (AP) — Arizona wins, San Francisco wins.

For weeks now, the pattern has been the same in the NL West, and the Diamondbacks wouldn't mind if it continues for five more days.

Randy Johnson won his career-high 21st game, but managed just six strikeouts in seven innings Tuesday night as the Diamondbacks beat Colorado 10-1 for their fifth victory in six games.

San Francisco won 4-1 at Houston to remain two games behind Arizona with five to play.

"It's pretty amazing, when we win, they win. When we lose, they lose," Johnson said.

Since Sept. 7, a string of 17 games, each day the Giants and Diamondbacks both played, both have either won or both have lost.

"I can't recall ever seeing anything like it before," Arizona manager Bob Brenly said. "All I know is if it's going to continue that way for the next five ballgames, I'm glad we're at where we're at."

Johnson (21-6) allowed four hits with no walks and matched teammate

Curt Schilling and St. Louis' Matt Morris for the most victories in the majors, improving to 16-2 since May. He also got his 200th career victory.

However, his low strikeout total means he won't break Nolan Ryan's season record unless he is needed for extended duty Sunday for Arizona to clinch a postseason spot. Otherwise, Johnson will throw two or three innings, at most.

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