

Baseball attracting Canadians

By John Mossman
The Associated Press

DENVER — For the first time, two Canadians were selected in the first round of baseball's amateur draft. One of them, left-handed pitcher Jeff Francis, is confident that trend will continue as scouts pay more attention to a neglected area.

Francis and the Colorado Rockies agreed to a contract even before his selection as the ninth player in the draft on Tuesday.

The deal, which will pay him a \$1.85 million signing bonus as part of a standard minor-league contract, is contingent on his passing a physical. Francis says that won't be a problem.

Another left-handed Canadian pitcher, Adam Loewen, was the fourth player taken, by the Baltimore Orioles. Loewen and Francis are the highest drafted Canadians in draft history; Dave Wainhouse was the previous highest choice, going 18th to Montreal in 1988.

"I think it will keep getting better," Francis said Wednesday. "I think other kids will see how you can play baseball in Canada and get noticed."

"That was a problem in years past. But in the last three to four years, there have been a lot of players coming out of Canada, and that means we're seeing more scouts up here."

Francis, 21, who just completed his junior year at the University of British Columbia, said he was anxious to meet another Canadian athlete, Colorado slugger Larry Walker.

"I've followed his career," Francis said. "He's one of the premier players in major league baseball, and he's really proud of his Canadian roots. Hopefully, I'll get a chance to meet him soon."

The 6-foot-5, 200-pound Francis likely will start his professional career in Pasco, Wash., with the Single-A short-season Tri-City Dust Devils.

"I'm really excited about getting my career going," he said.

Francis threw 12 shutouts last year, six in NAIA competition and six more as a member of the Anchorage Bucs of the summer Alaska League, where he was the league's pitcher and player of the year.

After going 7-1 with a 1.20 ERA in the Alaska League, Francis was named the top pro prospect among dozens of more renowned NCAA Division I players.

He then worked 14 scoreless innings to earn MVP honors in the National Baseball Congress World Series in Wichita.

Colorado wins one

By John Marshall
The Associated Press

DENVER — Benny Agbayani wasn't looking to do anything special in his return from the disabled list. It just happened.

Agbayani hit a grand slam in his first game in nearly a month, and Jason Jennings won his sixth straight decision as the Colorado Rockies beat the Los Angeles Dodgers 8-6 on Wednesday.

Agbayani had a single in his first at-bat, then hit his second career grand slam in the fourth inning. He finished 2-for-3 with four RBIs before being replaced by Todd Hollandsworth in the seventh.

"You just want to make sure, with guys on base, that you drive them in. That's money on the bases," said Agbayani, who had been sitting out games since May 13 with a strained right hamstring.

"You get a grand slam, that's just a big plus for yourself. When you get a chance like this you gotta make sure you do something so everybody knows you're ready to play again."

Los Angeles had beaten the Rockies in the previous two games.

The Dodgers nearly did it again, but Rockies closer Jose Jimenez wouldn't let them.

The Dodgers closed to 7-6 in the eighth inning on a two-run single by Mark Grudzielanek and sacrifice fly by Chad Kreuter. Jimenez then struck out Dave Hansen and got Alex Cora to ground into a fielder's choice before pitching a perfect ninth for his 16th save.

Jimenez had a string of 15 straight saves end Monday when he had a two-run error in the eighth inning that led to an 11-5 loss to the Dodgers.



Learning to strike 'em out



Lauren Gray (left), a pitcher for Goodland High School, threw to Jason Hickson, city/county recreation director, at a softball pitching clinic Wednesday at Centennial Park. Shabree Schwartz (above), a 12-year old from Sharon Springs, warmed up before getting her pitching tips.
Photos by Doug Stephens/The Goodland Daily News

Area softball players get pitching advice from expert

By Doug Stephens
The Goodland Daily News

About 25 area girls learned a few things about pitching from a nationally recognized softball coach Wednesday.

Dallas Kuhlman, junior college softball coach and former Goodland resident, gave a clinic at Centennial Park to Goodland and Sharon Springs girls interested in improving their pitching.

The girls, who ranged from age 10 to high school athletes, listened closely to a man who has led his team at Phoenix College to two national championships.

Kuhlman gave each girl individual attention, and showed them ways to improve their hurling.

"You have to find what works," he told the girls. "I like to give individual lessons. I'm not good at clinics with 50 to 60 people. Not every pitcher throws the ball the same way. I find that sometimes, if we adjust the way you hold the ball one-quarter inch, the ball will drop an extra six inches."

Pitching is the most demanding position on the softball field, Kuhlman said, and takes more practice than any other aspect of the game, except maybe hitting. A pitcher should practice about three times a day, he said.

The important thing, though, is to have fun. "This is a lot of work," he said, "and if you're not having fun, it won't be worth it."

Kuhlman said he used to pitch in baseball and fast-pitch softball leagues, and he has spent a lot of time learning what makes the ball move.

"I wish I knew then, when I was younger and could move the ball a little faster, what I know now," he said.

He said he went to as many pitchers as he could find, and asked them how they made the ball move the way they did.

"A lot of them didn't know," Kuhlman said. "They just threw it."

Jason Hickson, city/county recreation director and Kuhlman's nephew, asked the coach how he started pitching.

"I used to throw to an old wooden garage door," Kuhlman said. "I almost broke it in half."

Hickson told the girls that he knew how his uncle started out, but he wanted to make a point.

"You don't need to play catch to practice your pitching. You can do it by yourself," Hickson said. "Dallas used to throw against an old door."

Before the girls started throwing, Kuhlman showed them several techniques to develop their pitching muscles. He showed them how to toss a miniature football underhand, and how to spin a little basketball on the tips of their fingers, which he said would help them learn pitches later.

"You may not understand it now," Kuhlman said, "but this will condition your arms so that when you get better, you can learn pitches more quickly."

He also urged the girls to practice with a weighted softball, but cautioned them against going more than three ounces over the standard weight without supervision, because they might develop bad mechanics.

"A weighted ball will trick the arm into throwing faster," Kuhlman said. "When you go back to the light ball, you are going to throw it

through the backstop."

After the girls warmed up their arms by throwing 10 to 15 overhand pitches, Kuhlman warmed up underhand, and dazzled some of the younger girls with his speed.

He used a ball with a red stripe, which showed the girls how the ball rotated on the different kinds of pitches. At the end of the clinic, he showed some of the girls how to throw the fancier pitches, but that wasn't the main point of the class. Most of the girls are still learning how to throw strikes.

"These clinics get their interest and teach them the basics," Kuhlman said. "It sounds like a lot of kids were amazed at some of the things they can do, and some of the things they have to do."

Kuhlman, who has coached for 14 years, says it is hard for Goodland girls to compete nationally, because they cannot practice year-round.

He says he is glad Goodland High School started a softball program a few years ago, because it gives the girls another chance to get an athletic scholarship. Girls have become more intense athletes in recent years, he said, and any opportunity they get helps.

baseball scoreboard

By The Associated Press

NATIONAL LEAGUE Wednesday's Games

Colorado 8, Los Angeles 6
San Francisco 12, San Diego 2
Atlanta 6, N.Y. Mets 4
Montreal 3, Pittsburgh 1
Florida 2, Philadelphia 1
St. Louis at Cincinnati, ppd., rain
Chicago Cubs 5, Milwaukee 1, 10 innings
Arizona 5, Houston 4, 13 innings

Today's Games
St. Louis (W. Williams 2-1) at Cincinnati (Haynes 5-5), 10:35 a.m.
N.Y. Mets (D'Amico 4-4) at Atlanta (Glavine 9-2), 11:05 a.m.
Florida (Dempster 3-5) at Philadelphia (Duckworth 2-4), 5:05 p.m.

Friday's Games
Colorado (Hampton 3-6) at Toronto (Halladay 6-2), 5:05 p.m.
Arizona at Boston, 5:05 p.m.
N.Y. Mets at Cleveland, 5:05 p.m.
Los Angeles at Baltimore, 5:05 p.m.
Milwaukee at Pittsburgh, 5:05 p.m.
San Francisco at N.Y. Yankees, 5:05 p.m.
San Diego at Tampa Bay, 5:15 p.m.
Atlanta at Texas, 6:05 p.m.
Montreal at Chicago White Sox, 6:05 p.m.
Cincinnati at Anaheim, 8:05 p.m.
Chicago Cubs at Seattle, 8:05 p.m.
Houston nat Oakland, 8:05 p.m.

**AMERICAN LEAGUE
Wednesday's Games**
Boston 11, Detroit 0
Tampa Bay 8, Toronto 6
Baltimore 4, N.Y. Yankees 3
Cleveland 6, Minnesota 4

Chicago White Sox 6, Kansas City 1
Anaheim 7, Texas 5, 10 innings
Seattle 5, Oakland 0

Today's Games
Tampa Bay (Kennedy 3-5) at Toronto (Prokopec 2-7), 10:35 a.m.
Boston (Arrojo 3-1) at Detroit (Redman 2-5), 12:05 p.m.

Kansas City (May 0-3) at Chicago White Sox (Ritchie 3-7), 12:05 p.m.
Seattle (Baldwin 4-4) at Oakland (Zito 6-2), 1:35 p.m.
Baltimore (Lopez 5-1) at N.Y. Yankees (Mussina 8-2), 5:05 p.m.
Cleveland (Colon 7-3) at Minnesota (Lohse 5-3), 6:05 p.m.
Texas (Rogers 6-3) at Anaheim (Appier 5-3), 8:05 p.m.

Friday's Games
Milwaukee (Sheets 3-5) at Pittsburgh (Beimel 0-1), 5:05 p.m.
Philadelphia (Padilla 7-4) at Detroit (Weaver 4-7), 5:05 p.m.
San Francisco (L. Hernandez 5-5) at N.Y. Yankees (Lilly 2-5), 5:05 p.m.
San Diego (Lawrence 5-3) at Tampa Bay (Rupe 5-6), 5:15 p.m.
Florida (Olsen 0-3) at Minnesota (Santana 0-0), 6:05 p.m.
Atlanta (Moss 2-2) at Texas (Park 2-2), 8:05 p.m.
Montreal (Armas Jr. 5-7) at Chicago White Sox (Wright 5-6), 8:05 p.m.
St. Louis (Kile 3-3) at Kansas City (Byrd 8-3), 8:05 p.m.
Cincinnati (Reitsma 3-2) at Anaheim (Sele 5-3), 8:05 p.m.
Chicago Cubs (Prior 1-1) at Seattle (Pineiro 4-2), 8:05 p.m.

Magic Johnson named to Hall of Fame

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Magic Johnson flashed that million-dollar smile countless times Wednesday — and no wonder?

The man who set the standard for point guards with his all-around brilliance in leading the Los Angeles Lakers to five NBA championships in the 1980s was introduced as a member of the 2002 class elected to the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame.

"To represent the Lakers organization is truly a blessing — a kid from Lansing," Johnson said of his Michigan hometown. "All I wanted to do was be the best I could be."

And what he turned out to be was one of the best of all time.

Others who will be inducted into the Hall on Sept. 27, are Philadelphia 76ers coach Larry Brown; University of Arizona coach Lute Olson; the late Drazen

Petrovic, a star with the Portland Trail Blazers and New Jersey Nets; North Carolina State women's coach Kay Yow, and the Harlem Globetrotters.

STAR WARS
EPISODE II
ATTACK OF THE CLONES

Rated: PG

The SHERMAN THEATRE

1203 Main • Goodland, KS
Phone: 899-6103

Nightly at 7 p.m. MT
Sunday Matinee at 1:30 p.m. MT

Movie Bucks Make Great Gifts!
www.goodlandnet.com/movies

Bridal Registry

Julie Sherlock & Justin Dautel
June 1, 2002

Sarah Melia & Trevor Linton
June 15, 2002

Mann's Jewelry & Gifts

1005 Main Street • Goodland, KS 67735
(785) 899-6100