

**doug
stephens**

• talking sports

A lot happened in summer of '02

Summer time sports have wound down and school practices haven't started yet. The sports desk is pretty well cleared off (as clear as my desk ever gets) and this week is pretty well devoted to the fair.

It's a good time to think back to the good times of the summer of '02.

It's been a great summer. The American Legion baseball team won more games in two weeks than it did in all of last year's regular season. The swim team had several members win high-point trophies, and did very well as a team considering their low numbers.

Three Goodland wrestlers, Jordan Bedore and Bryce and Blayze Bahe, did outstanding at the USA Wrestling national tournament in Fargo, N.D. Bedore finished up second and third in two divisions and the Bahe brothers both finished up one spot short of winning All-American titles.

Bedore has been invited to a Olympic training camp. I see a lot of high school championships in the future for these guys, and I'm looking forward to seeing how Bryce does in college next year.

Michelle Smith, a 10-year-old track and field prodigy, went off to Knoxville, Tenn., this past weekend to show the country what a Goodland girl can do. She gets longer distances on the discus and shot put than some high school students. Michelle has blazed her way through local, state, bi-state and regional tournaments this summer, winning a handful of medals she says her father has promised to build a shelf for.

She practiced every day this summer, sometimes once in the morning and again in the afternoon. I haven't gotten any results for the Knoxville tournament, but I'd be willing to put money on her coming back with a medal or two.

Aaron Gittinger represented Kansas on a USA Junior Nationals team in Columbus, Ohio. He helped them get to the championship round where they lost two of three games to a Pennsylvania team. There were 48 teams from 35 states in the tournament, including some of the best high schools players in the country.

I don't know about you, but I'm impressed. The Young Guns, a Mid-America Youth Basketball team made up of Goodland, Sharon Springs, Tribune and Oakley eighth graders, finished out their season with a 68-9 record and won the consolation round of a tournament in El Dorado and Augusta this weekend. Goodland players include Jase Herl, Bobby Miller and Jon Beeson. These guys should make a great addition to the basketball team this upcoming year.

Let's not forget the K-18 baseball team, the fast-pitch softball leagues and all the people who joined a city recreation team. There was a lot ball-playing going on at Centennial Park this summer. Not to mention T-ball sponsored by the Goodland Activities Center.

There were golf lessons at Sugar Hills Golf Club, tennis lessons given by the recreation department, and several sports camps: boys' and girls' basketball, soccer, football and volleyball.

The camps were good for getting in a little practice, working the freshmen into the programs and maybe learning a new play or two. But for the volleyball players there was a little more at stake. They were being watched over by a possible college recruiter.

The guy who ran the camp, Brad Settle, is the head coach of Seward Community College in southwest Kansas. He said quite a few of our girls would be perfect for his team. There are several refined players who know their way around the court, he said, and a few more with explosive raw talent who could be molded into championship players.

There was a heck of a lot of sports going on this summer, and it looks like we'll have quite a school year. I'm looking forward to it. I need something to brag about to my rival sportswriter in Colby.

Oh, by the way, Dick Liess, athletic director of the high school, is looking for referees and umpires for football, volleyball, wrestling, basketball and softball. The pay isn't much, but I think it would be worth the effort if you have the time.

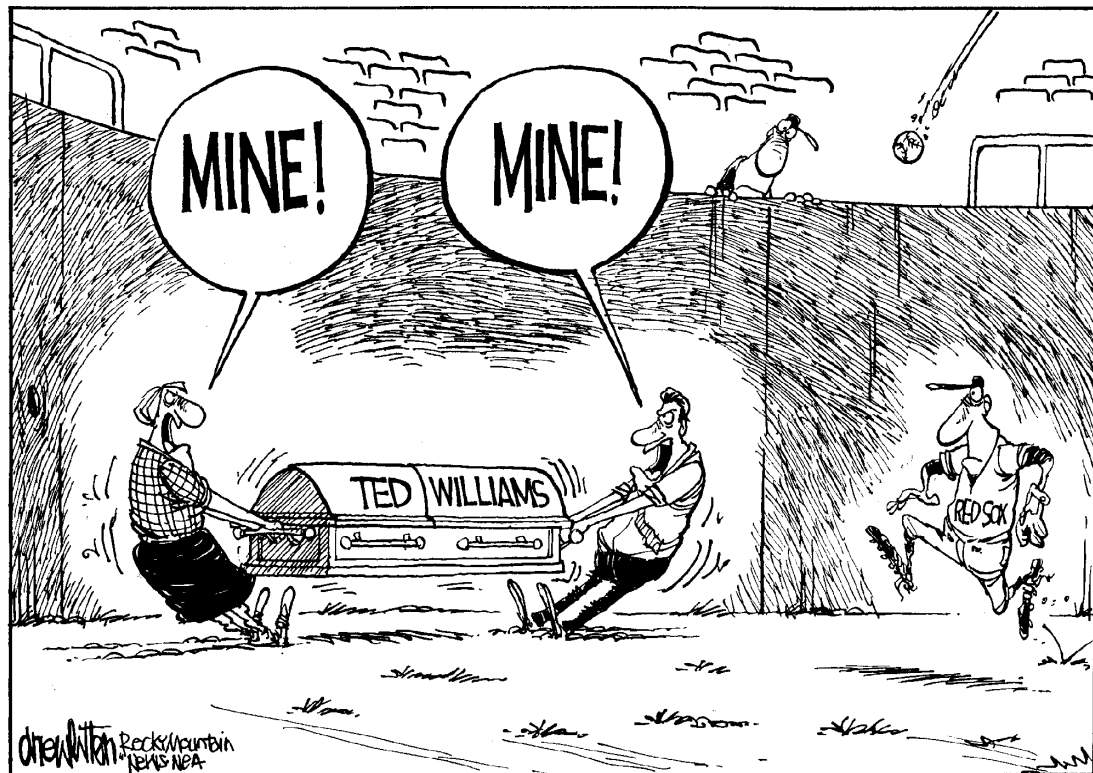
Jayhawks to be on television in 14 games

LAWRENCE (AP) — The Kansas Jayhawks will play at least 14 games on national television this season, including home games against perennial national powers Arizona and UCLA. Kansas released its 2002-03 season schedule on Wednesday.

Kansas, which finished 33-4 last season and lost in the Final Four to eventual national champion Maryland, opens its regular season against Holy Cross on Nov. 19 in Allen Fieldhouse in the first round of the Preseason NTT.

Kansas opens with home exhibition games against the EA Sports All-Stars on Nov. 4 and Washburn on Nov. 12. Kansas has home games against Division II Central Missouri State on Dec. 4 and Emporia State on Dec. 14 before playing UCLA on Dec. 21.

The Jayhawks, who beat Oregon 104-86 in the NCAA Midwest Regional final last year, play the Ducks in Portland, Ore., on Dec. 7.



Chiefs doing well at camp

RIVER FALLS, Wis. (AP) — Dick Vermeil calls it the "flash."

It's that moment when a player catches the practiced eye of the Kansas City Chiefs' coach.

"All of a sudden you see this jersey just flash by, just flying," Vermeil said — and in his second training camp with the Chiefs, he said Wednesday, he's seeing a lot of such moments.

"When you know what to do, you can do what you know," he said. "And they're starting to really know what they're doing."

Vermeil said the opportunity to practice with the Minnesota Vikings, which the Chiefs didn't do last year, was one factor in the team's progression.

But he said the Chiefs are also a more cohesive unit this training camp, and have a better understanding of the system he's trying to implement.

"I've seen (safety) Jerome Woods flash much more in this camp than last year," Vermeil said. "He

just seems like a better football player. I've seen (guard) Will Shields flash, especially in the run blocking. 'Wow! Who was that?' 'It was Will Shields.' I've seen Willie Jones do some things at right tackle that I haven't seen done since I've been here."

But returning players like Jones, Shields and Woods aren't the only ones catching Vermeil's eye.

"But I've seen a lot of different things," he said. "I saw (offensive tackle) Willie Roaf pull out in one drill. You know, he walks like he is ready to go get two crutches, but boy, when he comes out of a stance, can he move. It startles you to see that kind of movement."

Vermeil also singled out wide receiver Curtis Jackson — "It seems like every day he makes a play" — and said this week's practices have been among the best he's seen since taking over as the Chiefs' head coach.

40-year old Clemens still has heat

NEW YORK (AP) — Roger Clemens pitched in his 40s for the first time — and resumed throwing in the 90s.

Clemens came off the disabled list with seven sharp innings, getting home run support from Jorge Posada and Derek Jeter as the New York Yankees beat the Kansas City Royals 6-2 on Wednesday night.

Three days after turning 40, Clemens flashed a 94 mph fastball and showed no ill effects of the injured right groin that had kept him out since July 13.

Driving off the rubber with strength and purpose, the Rocket struck out eight in his 289th victory — passing Tommy John for sole possession of 21st

place on the career list.

"I don't feel 40," Clemens said. "I've taken pretty good care of myself. It was a pleasure and a privilege to pass Tommy John, although it took a little longer than we wanted. It's great to be back. I expect to be back for the duration. I don't like down time."

Posada drove in four runs with a three-run homer and a bases-loaded walk, while Jeter went deep for the first time in a month. The Yankees increased their lead in the AL East to five games over Boston — matching a season high.

Clemens gave up two runs and six hits, walking one. He threw 105 pitches, 73 for strikes.

Retired baseball star in critical condition

DURHAM, N.C. (AP) — Baseball Hall-of-Famer Enos "Country" Slaughter remained hospitalized in critical condition Wednesday after undergoing two emergency surgeries in the past two weeks.

Slaughter, 86, was in the intensive care unit at Duke University Medical Center, hospital spokesman Richard Puff said. He had colon surgery July 25 and surgery to repair perforated stomach ulcers July 29.

Slaughter's daughter, Gaye Currier, said that neither surgery was related to Slaughter's treatment for non-Hodgkins lymphoma, which was diagnosed in June.

He has been undergoing combined treatments with chemotherapy and radiation to fight the disease — a cancer of the lymphatic system, which is part of the body's immune system.

"His blood counts are down," said Currier, a nurse at Duke. "He's very weak, and he's very fatigued. But he's shown some improvement in the last couple of days."

Currier said her father remained on a ventilator and could not speak, but he recognized family members and understood when they spoke to him.

"He's really hanging in there," she said. "It'll be a slow process, but the doctors said he should be able to recover."

Slaughter, who grew up and still lives in Roxboro, batted .300 in 19 seasons, 13 of them with the St. Louis Cardinals. He played in five World Series and for four World Champions.

Rockies win game with grand slam

DENVER (AP) — Todd Helton won't forget the show of disrespect. Neither will the Cincinnati Reds.

One inning after Colorado slugger Larry Walker hit a three-run homer, the Reds elected to intentionally walk him, even though it loaded the bases with Helton coming up.

Helton responded with a grand slam — and some angry words — as the Rockies beat the Reds 7-2 on Wednesday night.

"I don't like it," Helton said of the slight. "I do take it personally. Any ballplayer should."

But Helton agreed it was sound strategy, since he has been struggling at the plate in the past month while Walker is the NL's leading hitter at .360.



"It was a good move for them," Helton said. "If I was in the other dugout, I would have done it, too. I haven't been swinging the bat that well, and he's been swinging better than anybody in the league. I wasn't surprised (with the intentional walk). I was actually more surprised when I hit the ball."

Rockies acting manager Toby Harrah sympathized with the Reds' plight.

"Pick your poison," Harrah said. "Those are two really great hitters."

Jason Jennings (12-5) went eight innings, limiting the Reds to five hits, including solo home runs by Ken Griffey Jr. and Aaron Boone. He struck out seven.

Contract and baby arrive on same day for manager

DENVER (AP) — Colorado Rockies manager Clint Hurdle agreed Wednesday to a two-year contract extension, then skipped a news conference to be with his wife for the birth of their first child.

Hurdle and his wife, Karla, welcomed their first child, a daughter, Madison Riley, born at 3:28 p.m. at Swedish Hospital.

The Rockies had scheduled a news conference for Wednesday afternoon to make the contract announcement, but the guest of honor was suddenly unavailable.

Thirty minutes before the scheduled news conference, Hurdle rushed from Coors Field to be with his wife, who had gone into labor.

Hurdle and Rockies general manager Dan O'Dowd had been discussing an extension, which includes club options for the following two seasons, for several weeks.

Hurdle, the Rockies hitting coach since 1997, was promoted to manager when Buddy Bell was fired on April 26 after the team started a franchise-worst

6-16. The club promptly went on a six-game winning streak and put together a 24-10 record in Hurdle's first 34 games as manager.

Since then the Rockies have slipped back to .500 under Hurdle, going 45-45.

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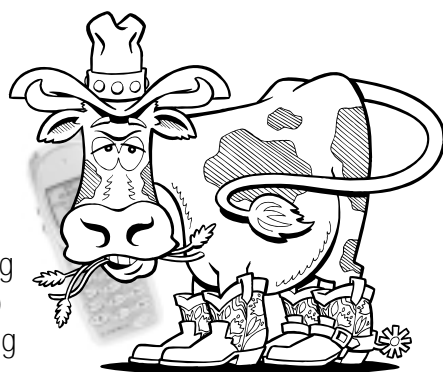
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