

Hebner glad to be in 'exciting' Philly

By BRIAN MILLER
Collegian Sports Writer
PHILADELPHIA — He walks with a swagger, a former grave digger that shows off chunky arms under the red pinstripe shirt. Kids lean on the dugout roof and yell, "Richie, hey Richie" and the former Boston Bruin prospect, former Pirate, present Phillie, sticks out his hand, spits some tobacco juice and says, "Yeah, hey, hey." After spending eight years with the Pittsburgh Pirates, Richie Hebner played the option game last winter and, after finding the free agent pot that much sweeter in Philadelphia, came across the state to add another lefthanded hitter to the National League's Eastern Division champ's arsenal.

In Pittsburgh, Hebner had been one of the mainstays of the Pirate's "Lumber Company," a group of hard hitters that annually terrorized most of the National League pitching staffs. Hebner played in a World Series with the Pirates, as well as numerous playoff games and was a permanent fixture at the "hot corner" for the powerful Pittsburgh teams of the early 1970s.

He was also one of the crowd favorites in Three Rivers Stadium, where his antics at third and at bat drew raves and sometimes boos. He has admitted to playing the game "loosey-goosey" which was fine when the Bucs were on top. But as Pittsburgh fortunes soured in the past few years, especially in 1976 when the Phillies finished nine games ahead, Hebner also fell into a hitting slump last season, and with all things considered, Hebner's glad to be in Philadelphia.

"Well, they draw more people here," Hebner said in an interview last Saturday before the Phillies-Pirates game. "It's a more exciting place to play." Hebner leaned out on the dugout steps to squirt some Red Man on the astroturf.

Hebner denies that he had any verbal battles with the Pittsburgh fans, but has little remorse for the Pirate audiences.

"Ah, they'd boo anybody in Pittsburgh," he said. "They'd get on a guy for anything. They'd boo the guy that cured cancer." Hebner enjoys his new employer.

"They're much more friendly," he said.

"The owner here, he's a young guy, cheez, he's almost like one of the players." Hebner squints out at the Pirates who are taking batting practice, squirting some juice on the dugout steps in the meanwhile.

"That can be good, can be bad," Hebner says in reference to owner Ruly Carpenter's close affinity with the Phillies. "You know, being that close, it depends on a lot of things. Hell, if I was the owner of the club, I might be around a lot of the time too."

Hebner was known as a loose guy when he was at Pittsburgh. In fact, the Pirates themselves were often referred to as playing "loose," an attribute that Hebner feels the Phils have yet to attain.

"Yeah, well during my Pirate years, they'd seem like a looser club," Hebner said. "That's cause all those years we used to win all the time. You know, the Phillies have just started to win, it takes time. Hell, teams used to come in here and make hay."

Hebner has been making some hay of his own this season as he's been hitting over .300 most of the year. In 50 games that Hebner

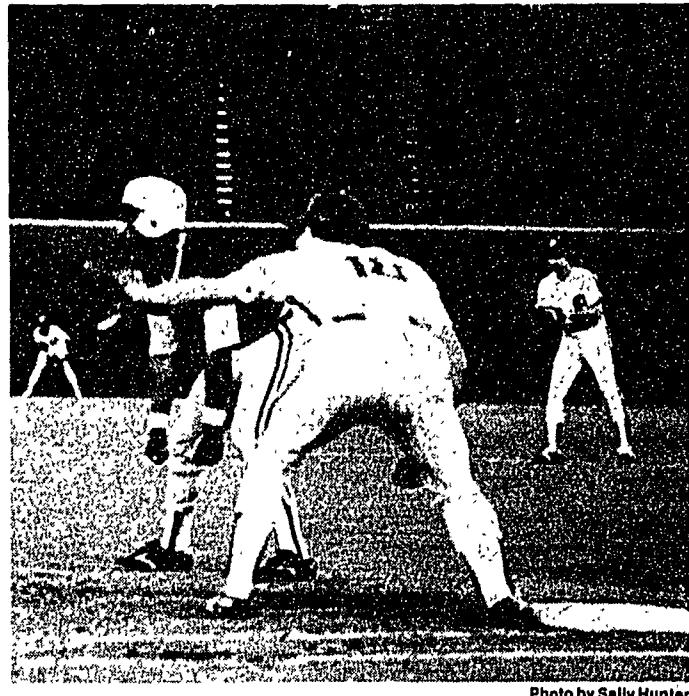
has played, he's collected nine home runs, 28 RBI's while scoring 33 runs. And as a transplant at first base, he's made just three errors.

Hebner hesitates at talking about his feelings on the Pirates. During the recent series, he continually jawed with many of them, especially first base coach Jose Pagan.

So far this season, Hebner has hit Pirate pitching fairly consistently (above .250), and contributed with some hard and timely shots last weekend.

He also give Phillies' manager Danny Ozark some infield flexibility. Hebner can give Mick Schmidt breathers at third or he can fill in as a late inning pinch hitter. And, when he does start at first, Hebner makes pitchers think before throwing around Schmidt and Greg Luzinski.

As one Pittsburgh official said about the former Pirate during the weekend series, "No matter what price you paid for Hebner, it was a bargain."



Richie Hebner (18) holds on a former teammate, Rennie Stennett of the Pirates, during last weekend's series at Veterans Stadium in Philadelphia.

Borg-Connors final highlighted tournament

Plenty of thrills featured in 100th Wimbledon

A Hollywood screenwriter could not have written a better script for the year's Wimbledon tennis championships.

Something for everyone was included: a treat for the home crowd, a touch of bad manners for the cynics, some upsets and surprises by the underdogs for the idealists and most of all — lots of excellent tennis for the serious followers of the sport's premier tournament.

The final scene was a showdown at center court between the world's top two in men's singles — Sweden's Bjorn Borg and America's Jimmy Connors. It was no surprise to see either of them in the finals. Borg was the defending champion and Connors was the number one seed. For them and the 15,000 onlookers, it was anyone's match until the tenth game of the fifth set when Borg delivered his final blow for a 3-6, 6-2, 6-1, 5-7, 6-4 win.

Even when he had to stand aside and watch Borg cradle the

But Connors does have a point. Barring any mishaps, expect to see him and Borg in the finals at Forest Hills. Borg is on top at the moment, and if he nets the Forest Hills crown he'll be King of the Hill without question. If Connors wins, he and his followers will dub him number one.

The suspense and pressure weighed heavily on both competitors. It was Borg's icy control that eventually made the difference. He had to persevere through three hours and 12 minutes on the sweltering grass before he could collect \$25,000 and join the elite quartet of Rod Laver, Lew Hoad, Rex Emerson and John Newcombe who had previously won consecutive Wimbledon crowns.

Connors was a very stubborn man Saturday afternoon. At one point, in the final set, he trailed 0-4 and evened the game score before eventually conceding. He had a rough week, to say the least. The crowd was against him, not having completely forgotten his refusal to attend a ceremony earlier in the week for past Wimbledon winners. He claimed an appointment for therapy on his injured right thumb kept him away. The English have a charming way of sticking to protocol and ceremonial duties and expect the same of their guests.

A book of etiquette should be thrown very hard at Ilie Nastase. His antics this year at Wimbledon included obscene gestures to fans and court officials, delaying the game unnecessarily by romping around the court like a spoiled child, and deliberately intimidating his opponents. Nastase is one of the best in the game and only degrades himself and the sport by his inexcusable behavior. His actions should not be tolerated, for he only does as much as he knows he can get away with. The quickest solution to Nastase would be for the

judges and referees to impose the stiffest fines and penalties allowed as soon as he steps out of line.

A couple of dramatic performances by Americans John McEnroe and Tracy Austin gave the tournament a preview of the future's top stars. Eighteen-year-old McEnroe was lucky enough to be on the court. He had to win three qualifying matches to merely enter the tournament. The New Yorker reached the quarter-finals before Connors put him out of the race.

Tracy Austin made her Wimbledon debut at the frighteningly young age of fourteen. She bowed to top-seeded Chris Evert, but her defeat was only on the scoreboard. Austin was cute, all the way down to her braces and pinafore. But she fell victim to the "here comes another . . ." stigma that is too often draped over young athletes. Austin has been christened the next Chris Evert. No matter how much talent she has, Austin is still a child. Hopefully, she will be allowed to grow up before people expect her to win championships.

Virginia Wade picked the perfect year to win the women's singles crown. It was the Queen's Jubilee, the 100th Wimbledon and just what the home crowd ordered. Wade, 31, beat Betty Stove of Holland 4-6, 6-3, 6-1, to take her first Wimbledon title after fifteen previous starts. She can finally bury all the claims of her losing control and not being able to cope with the pressures of a big match, which is what she's been trying to overcome this past year.

Wade got all the security she would need at the center court awards ceremony. Queen Elizabeth presented her with the silver and gold plate. The fans broke out in unison with a surprisingly chummy chorus of "For She's a Jolly Good Fellow" to complete what Wade described as being a scene "like a fairy tale."

Nicklaus in tough British Open field

TURNBERRY, Scotland (AP) — There have been hints and whispers that Jack Nicklaus' iron-fisted domination of pro golf may be diminishing.

At age 37, he faces a relentless tide of newly-matured stars — Tom Watson, Hubert Green, Johnny Miller, Hale Irwin, Ben Crenshaw — who are surging into a position of control in the game the Golden Bear has ruled so long. He hasn't won one of the majors — the "Big Four" events of the Masters, U.S. and British Open, the PGA — in almost two years.

Some critics have gone so far as to suggest he'll never again win in those tournaments around which he has built his unmatched career.

Nicklaus disagrees. "At this age, I am in the middle of the prime of my career," he said after a practice round over Turnberry's 6,875-yard, par 70 Aisla course, site of the British Open championship that gets under way today.

Britain's legal bookies also disagree. They've installed Nicklaus as a 6-1 favorite in the 156-man international field. Other top choices, all tough, tested veterans of the American tour, are: Masters champ and leading money-winner Watson at 8-1; Tom Weiskopf at 12-1; defending title holder Miller and U.S. Open king Green at 14-1; Crenshaw and Irwin at 16-1.

Although he has been overshadowed by Watson's heroics this season, Nicklaus' spectacular history in the British Open makes him the man to beat.

And he's definitely ready for this one. "I've played very well this year," he said. "Actually, it's one of my best years. I've won three tournaments and had a good Masters. Tom just played better, that's all."

Kape Tomana

championship cup, Connors refused to name the Sweden number one in the world. "Forest Hills is yet to come," he claimed.

The soft-spoken Borg was too polite to make any rash statements and remained uncommitted on the issue. He beat top-seeded Connors to defend his Wimbledon title and shied away from the debate that followed.

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