Morris not finicky about baseball jinx

By JOE MOOSHIL
AP Sports Writer

CHICAGO — Baseball is a game filled with superstitions, but Jack Morris defied them all while pitching a no-hitter.

Morris, a 28-year-old Detroit Tigers' right-hander who won 20 games last season, laughed at the fans who tried to jinx him in the process of hurling his 4-0 masterpiece Saturday against the Chicago White Sox.

"They started leaning out of the stands and saying, 'Morris, you got a no-hitter going.' I guess they were trying to jinx me," said Morris.

"But I'm not superstitious, so I hollered back at them and said, 'I know it.' "

Then Morris, backed by Chet Lemon's two-run homer in the second inning, went against the very core of all of baseball superstitions. He not only mentioned the no-hitter in the dugout, but told pitching coach Roger Craig "Roger, I'm going to get it."

That was after he had gotten through the eighth inning, when a great play by first baseman Dave Bergman on a smash by pinch batter Jerry Hairston helped preserve the no-hitter.

"When I said it," said Morris, "I was half cocky and half joking and I was trying to break the tension."

Morris, who walked six and struck out eight, said he knew from the fifth inning on that he had a no-hitter going.

"Usually, I don't get that far into a game with a no-hitter," said Morris, who in 1980 pitched a one-hitter against Minnesota.

"Yes, I remember that one. Rob Wilfong got a bloop hit in the first inning," said Morris.

Morris almost lost his no-hitter in the first inning Saturday when Rudy Law hit a line shot toward the right field wall, but Kirk Gibson made a fine, one-handed running catch.

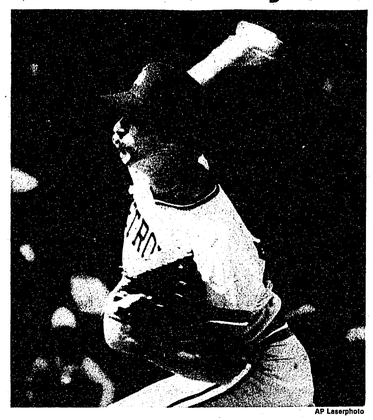
"It was a mistake pitch. He hit it good," said Morris. "At that time, I wasn't thinking of a no-hitter."

Morris went through the first three innings in perfect fashion, then ran into trouble in the fourth when he walked the bases full with none out. But he got Greg Luzinski to bounce back to the mound to start a home-to-first double play and struck out Ron Kittle to end the threat.

Luzinski drew a walk to open the seventh, and one out later, Tom Paciorek hit a line drive on which Bergman made a one-handed stab for the out.

"I was more nervous in the seventh inning than I was in the ninth," Morris conceded. "I still had three innings to go."

The ninth was easy. Morris got Carlton Fisk on a grounder to first, then threw out Harold Baines. After Luzinski walked, Morris struck out Kittle to end the game and complete the first no-hitter by a Detroit pitcher since Jim Bunning accomplished the feat in 1958.



AP Laserphoto

Detroit's Jack Morris bears down on a Chicago batter during Saturday's game with the White Sox. Morris pitched the 1st no-hitter of the young season as the Tigers won 4-0 in Chicago.

Caps' defense sweeps Flyers from playoffs

By RALPH BERNSTEIN
AP Sports Writer

PHILADELPHIA — The Washington Capitals proved once again that a good defense is the best offense, holding the Philadelphia Flyers to five goals in three games as they swept the best-of-five first-round NHL playoffs.

Saturday night's final 5-1 game was typical of the series. The Capitals grabbed an early lead and then checked the Flyers into submission. The No. 1-rated defense in the NHL managed to completely shut down the likes of Philadelphia's Tim Kerr, who had 54 goals in the regular season, and Brian Propp, who had 39.

The Capitals now await the winner of the Patrick Division series between the New York Rangers and New York Islanders to see who their opponent will be in the best-of-seven division final.

The surprising Rangers hold a 2-1 lead over the Islanders, Stanley Cup winner the past four years.

This was the first time in the 10-year history of the Washington franchise that the Capitals moved beyond the first round of the Stanley Cup playoffs. For the Flyers, it was the ninth consecutive playoff defeat over the last three seasons.

Capitals Coach Bryan Murray felt Saturday night's game turned on some questionable Flyers' strategy.

Philadelphia was outplaying the Caps with 11 shots on goal to two through the first seven minutes. Later, the Flyers' Darryl Stanley got into a fight with Washington's Mike Gartner, the Caps' leading scorer.

The fight put Gartner in the penalty box for five minutes.

But before the melee was over, five players, including three Flyers, were ejected from the game. And when all the penalties were completed, the Flyers were one man short.

Fifty-three seconds later Craig Laughlin scored on the power play for a 2-0 Washington lead that the Flyers never were able to overcome.

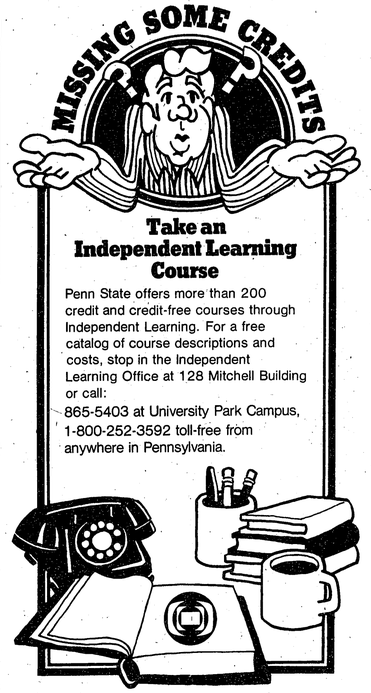
"It seems to me our confidence went up and their poise was shattered," observed Murray.

"I have no explanation why they did what they did," he said. "We were being outplayed badly. They had all the momentum. All we had was our goalie (Al Jensen) keeping us in the game.

"I think they took a stupid penalty that changed the complex of the game. I think we got a fortunate goal from that situation."

The penalty was roughing on Stanley, who also received fighting and game misconduct assessments.

Rod Langway, who starred on defense for Washington with Scott Stevens, also said the Stanley-Gartner confrontation was the key to the game.



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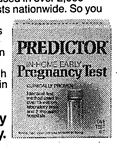

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Softball team sweeps twinbill

By RAY ECKENRODE
Collegian Sports Writer

Before the season started, Head Coach Sue Rankin was worried about the softball's team inexperienced pitching staff. Those worries have faded, however, as Penn State's freshman-dominated staff has been impressive in the early going.

Any reservations Rankin had before this weekend were laid to rest Saturday when three Lady Lion pitchers baffled Liberty Baptist during both ends of a doubleheader which Penn State swept 1-0 and 14-0.

Rankin said the pitching was excellent against the Lady Flames. Penn State did not surrender an earned run for the third and fourth straight games. The two wins also marked the Lady Lions second and third shutouts in a row and their fifth and sixth consecutive wins.

Penn State (8-4) was once again led by the strong mound work of freshman Beth Devlin, who gave up two hits while going the route to win the opener. Devlin struck out five and walked two in picking up her third win of the season against two losses.

The Lady Lions scored their lone tally of the first game in the bottom of the sixth inning. Michelle Turk tripled and later scored, beating a throw to the plate after a Carol Fultz ground ball.

Rankin said the Lady Lion hitters looked sluggish in the first game but "luckily the pitching was there."

The pitching was also "there" in the second game, but the bats were no longer sluggish. Penn State jumped all over Liberty Baptist by scoring four runs in the first, eight in the third and two more in the fifth. The fifth-inning runs ended the game because of the ten-run rule.

Freshman Aileen Polanis and senior Betty Jo Maule combined to one-hit the Lady Flames in the second game. Polanis ran her string of hitless innings to nine by working the first two innings without allowing a base hit.

Polanis was coming off a no-hitter against West Chester. Maule hurled the final three frames and allowed only one hit to pick up the win against the Lady Flames.

Rankin said defense also played a big part in the twin shutouts. She said the Lady Lions committed one miscue in the first game and played mistake-free ball in the second.

Carol Fultz led Penn State's offensive barrage in the second game. Fultz, a junior infielder, had two triples in as many at bats, scored twice and drove in four runs.

Stars rally to edge Arizona, 22-21

By DAVE GOLDBERG
AP Sports Writer

Chuck Fusina threw an 11-yard touchdown pass to Willie Collier with 1:40 left yesterday as the Philadelphia Stars rebounded from a 15-point halftime deficit to beat the the Arizona Wranglers 22-21 in a United States Football League game.

Playing without the injured Kelvin Bryant, the league's Most Valuable Player last year and second-leading rusher this season, Philadelphia fell behind 21-6 at halftime.

The Stars still trailed 21-15 when Sam Mills recovered a fumble by Wrangler quarterback Greg Landry at the Stars' 35 with 3:31 to go in the game. After Fusina hit David Riley with a pass that carried to the Arizona 11, he fired to Collier in the left corner of the end zone to tie it and David Trout kicked the winning extra point.

The victory was the fourth straight for the Stars, who improved their record to 6-1. The win kept the Stars in a first-place tie in the USFL's Atlantic Division with the New Jersey Generals, who topped the Memphis Showboats 35-10. It was the second straight loss for Arizona, which fell to 3-4.

In the other USFL game yesterday, Tim Mazzetti's field goal with 12 seconds left gave the New Orleans Breakers a 27-24 win over the Pittsburgh Maulers.

On Saturday, Efren Herrera kicked a 32-yard field goal on the game's final play to give the Oklahoma Outlaws a 20-17 win over the Michigan Panthers and move them to within a game of Michigan in the Central Division. It was the first loss in seven games this season for the defending league champion Panthers and their first loss in 12 games dating back to last year.

In other Saturday games, the Chicago Blitz won their second straight after five losses, beating the San Antonio Gunslingers 16-10 on an eight-yard Vince Evans' to Kris Haines touchdown pass 5:35 into overtime; the Birmingham Stallions topped the Jacksonville Bulls 24-17 on Joe Cribbs' 11-yard touchdown run with 2:17 left; and the Tampa Bay Bandits shut out the winless Oakland Invaders 24-0 as John Reaves threw for 284 yards.

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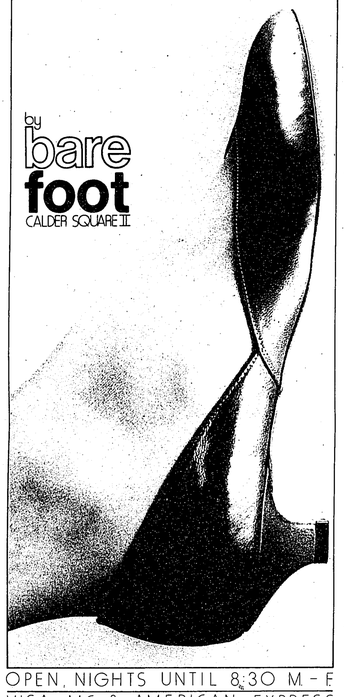

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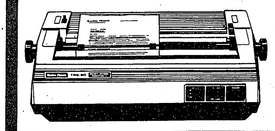

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