

First move pending in baseball trades

By BEN WALKER
AP Baseball Writer

HOLLYWOOD, Fla. —The scramble for talent, particularly pitching, continued yesterday at baseball's winter meetings with the Kansas City Royals and San Diego Padres doing most of the shopping.

There were no trades, but several rumors, by mid-afternoon. There was further speculation that big-name free agents such as Andre Dawson and Lance Parrish may face tough times.

In other business, American and National League owners unanimously approved the sale of the Cleveland Indians to the Jacobs brothers, who own or operate 40 shopping malls across the country.

Mark Gubicza and Danny Jackson, two of the Royals' talented young pitchers, seemed to head every team's swap list, while San Diego General Manager Jack McKeon — nicknamed "Trader Jack" — prowled the Diplomat Hotel lobby for prospects.

"Someone's going to panic soon and make a trade in a few days," McKeon said with a confident smile, puffing on a cigar. "It's not going to be us."

The Padres and the Royals were said to be the only teams offering pitchers. San Diego, needing an

outfielder who could bat leadoff, had talked to Philadelphia about Gary Redus and seemed close to making some sort of trade.

"We need hitting," Royals General Manager John Schuerholz said. The Royals were discussing a deal with the New York Yankees to exchange Gubicza for a package including power-hitting Dan Pasqua. Kansas City also has expressed interest in San Francisco outfielder Chili Davis.

At last year's meetings, following the Royals' victory in the World Series, it was thought Kansas City's young pitchers were untouchable. But after an off-season, apparently all are now available, including former Cy Young winner Bret Saberhagen.

"Every deal we hear has Gubicza or Jackson in it," a Royals official said. "Our camp is split. Half wants to trade Jackson and half wants to trade Gubicza."

The Cincinnati Reds and Chicago Cubs spent a lot of time huddling, Chicago, overlaid with old players, would like clear out its roster with a 3-for-1 trade, possibly for Nick Esasky.

The Reds also were shopping second baseman Ron Oester. One of the teams interested could be Atlanta, and Cincinnati may want pitcher Zane Smith in return.

The Braves showed some interest in Toronto second baseman Damaso Garcia but apparently backed off when reports circulated that Garcia had a bad shoulder. Garcia, anxious to leave the Blue Jays, made an appearance yesterday afternoon, seemingly ready to show he could still throw.

Also at the meetings was Montreal outfielder Tim Lincecum, a free agent who has rejected the Expos' contract proposal and has been offered salary arbitration. If Lincecum declines, the Expos have until Jan. 8 to sign him, or they will lose that right until May 1.

"Jan. 8 is going to be Armageddon for somebody," Tom Reich, Raines' agent, said. "If there is going to be a free market, it will assert itself after that date."

Last season, free agents such as Kirk Gibson complained they had not gotten offers from any clubs other than their own, which resulted in the players' union filing a charge of collusion against owners.

Reich also represents Parrish, an All-Star catcher. Parrish is also a free agent and has been offered salary arbitration by the Tigers.

But St. Louis Manager Whitey Herzog, whose team needs a catcher, shook his head when asked if the Cardinals would go after Parrish if he had not signed with the Tigers.

"Dal (GM Maxvill) has already stated our club policy. We're going to try to sign our own free agents, that's it," Herzog said.

Another prominent agent, Dick Moss, said one of his clients had heard an ominous story.

"Late in the season, Andre (Dawson) was told by someone in the front office that he had better sign with Montreal because if he didn't, he wouldn't play baseball next year."

Several trades that had been talked about earlier in the week fell through. Montreal, knowing Los Angeles needs bullpen help, offered Jeff Reardon to the Dodgers and asked for a package that included Orel Hershiser. Los Angeles instead dangled Rick Honeycutt and Alejandro Pena for Tim Wallach.

Also, the prospects of a Willie Hernandez-for-Tom Brunansky trade seemed to dim.

The one concrete action taken yesterday came from baseball's scoring rules committee, which voted to abolish the game-winning RBI as an official statistic. The stat, which has been criticized as meaningless since its inception in 1980, must be voted out by the scoring rules committee and the Players' Association before it is removed.



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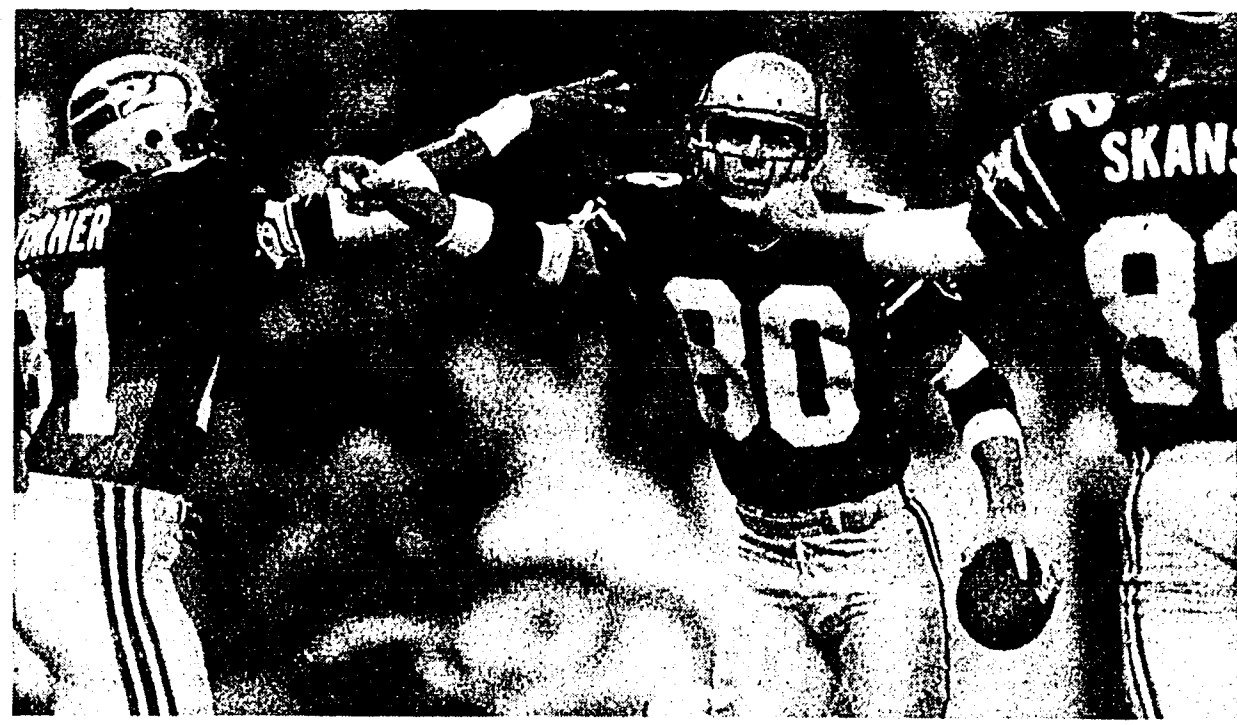
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Seattle wide receiver Steve Largent (center) celebrates a touchdown catch in the Seahawks 37-0 victory over the Los Angeles Raiders Monday night.

Raiders' beating blamed on turf

By JIM COUR
AP Sports Writer

SEATTLE — Howie Long, the all-pro defensive end of the Los Angeles Raiders, blamed the Kingdom's artificial turf for their embarrassing 37-0 loss to the Seattle Seahawks.

"They play very well up here," Long said after the Raiders' long evening was finally over Monday night. "Their defensive line plays better on AstroTurf."

"Curt Warner is better on AstroTurf. I wonder if the AstroTurf wasn't in on the whole thing. I'd like to body slam the guy who invented it 49 or 50 times and see how he feels."

Long wasn't the only Raider who was happy to leave the Kingdom, where a noisy crowd of 62,923 made life unbearable for the Raiders when they had the ball on offense.

"The Seahawks were ignited from the first snap by the crowd," said Raiders Coach Tom Flores.

"Noise was really a problem," added quarterback Jim Plunkett. "We were getting our plays off late."

"The crowd was fired up after the Cowboys' game," said defensive end Randy Edwards of the Seahawks, referring to Seattle's 31-14 Thanksgiving Day triumph in Dallas. "They got to show off for the whole country on Monday night football."

"The Seahawks' fifth win in a row over the Raiders in the Kingdom kept their NFL playoff hopes alive and dealt a blow to the Raiders' playoff chances."

It was the third win in a row for the Seahawks after losing four straight, while the Raiders lost their second consecutive game.

"The Seahawks are the hottest team in football," said O.J. Simpson, a Kingdom visitor for the game.

The Raiders no longer are in control of their own destiny.

The Raiders, Seahawks and Kansas City Chiefs, all 8-6, trail Cincinnati, 9-5, in the race for the last AFC wild-card berth. The Raiders host the Chiefs Sunday, while Seattle travels to San Diego.

The Denver Broncos, 10-4, who lost in Kansas City Sunday, backed into the AFC West title with Seattle's victory.

"We just have to keep winning and everything else will

take of itself," said Seahawks' quarterback Dave Krieg, who passed for two touchdowns and 243 yards.

"We're all professionals," said Plunkett, who started, left with an injury, returned to start the second half and was knocked out again. "We all better bounce back. Special teams, blocked punts. It doesn't matter how. We have to find a way to win."

The one-sidedness of the game left Long dazed. He went back in time to his college football days at Villanova and a big defeat against Clemson.

"At least they were more charitable," Long said of Clemson. "They put their third team in in the third quarter."

Krieg, benched for two games during Seattle's four-game nose dive, completed 14 of 21 passes and was not intercepted. He passed 12 yards to Ray Butler and 10 yards to Steve Largent for scores as the Seahawks rolled to a 24-0 halftime lead.

Warner, the AFC's rushing leader, put together his sixth 100-yard game of the season, gaining 116 yards on 23 carries. He scored on runs of 5 and 3 yards.

Norm Johnson kicked field goals of 53, 51 and 46 yards. His 53-yarder was one yard short of his club-record 94-yarder.

"It's exciting to start playing well when we need to," said Johnson. "Things are clicking."

Meanwhile, the Seahawks' defense logged a team-record 11 sacks, two more than it racked up against Philadelphia's Randall Cunningham three weeks ago in the Kingdom. Seattle had three pass interceptions, two by Kerry Justin.

It was the first shutout of the Raiders since 1981, when Denver, Detroit and Kansas City blanked the Raiders on successive weekends. The Seahawks recorded their second shutout of the season.

Seahawks' Coach Chuck Knox wanted to dwell on the victory afterward.

"I'm not thinking about the playoffs and I'm not thinking about the San Diego Chargers (the Seahawks' next opponent)," Knox said. "The only thing I'm thinking about is what a great effort we got out of our people in this game. We went out and won a big football game and that's what it's all about."

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