

LINEUP

MLB

Philadelphia vs Colorado
7:05 p.m., CSN

Pittsburgh vs San Diego
7:05 p.m., FSN

SOFTBALL WORLD CUP
U.S.A. vs Japan
8 p.m., ESPN

BASEBALL HITS (AP)

Rose's bat sells at auction

The black Mizuno bat that Pete Rose used to get his final hit has been auctioned for \$158,776, less than expected for the 32 ounces of baseball history.

Rose used the bat for hit No. 4,256, a single off San Francisco's Greg Minton on Aug. 14, 1986. His final hit stands as the major league record.

Lelands.com auctioned the 34-inch, 32-ounce bat online this month. Seven bids were received.

Lelands.com president Mike Heffner expected the bat to fetch a bigger price. He thinks the tough economy and Rose's controversies — he's got a lifetime ban for betting on baseball — held down the price.

Mavs owner Cuban may bid on Rangers

A bankruptcy judge has ruled that the Aug. 4 auction of the Texas Rangers won't be delayed, and Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban may be among the bidders.

The starting bid will be from the group led by Hall of Fame pitcher Nolan Ryan and sports attorney Chuck Greenberg. Major League Baseball endorsed the Ryan-Greenberg group after it was selected in the original bidding process last year, but the \$575 million deal has been stalled by creditors.

Cuban's attorney said his client has been approved by MLB and hopes to submit a bid.

THOUGHTS

Paul's demand for trade mistimed

Chris Paul has every right to want out of New Orleans.

Had he asked out a little bit sooner, the NBA could have looked totally different.

Maybe.

Paul is close friends with LeBron James, Chris Bosh and Dwyane Wade.

Consider the chaos that would have ensued had Paul demanded a trade around July 1. While the Hornets have publicly said they won't trade their All-Star point guard, they would have surely received some enticing offers with James set to become a free agent.

Maybe.

While it's all speculation at this point, having a player of Paul's caliber on the market would have changed the way several teams attacked free agency and maybe LeBron doesn't sign in Miami.

Maybe.

However, none of that happened the list of suitors for Paul has shortened. But the New York Knicks will certainly make a push.

With Amare Stoudemire in place, cap room to spare and potentially Chris Paul, Carmelo Anthony would have to give the Big Apple a look in the summer of 2011.

Maybe.

TRIVIA

Q: Who is the only person to be elected to both the Pro Football and Pro Baseball Hall of Fame?

Thursday's Answer: When Penn State and Navy last met in football in 1974, Navy beat No. 8 Penn State 7-6 at Beaver Stadium.

Top of order drives Spikes

By Jake Kaplan
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

When Mel Rojas Jr. and Gift Ngoepe hit back-to-back doubles and Adalberto Santos singled to start the bottom of the first inning, it was a sign of things to come for the State College Spikes.

Rojas, Ngoepe and Santos, the top third of the lineup, accounted for nine of the Spikes' 11 hits as State College beat the Auburn Doubledays 8-4 Thursday night at Medlar Field at Lubrano Park.

The trio scored half of State College's runs, and had five of the Spikes' seven RBI. Rojas, the centerfielder, had a career-high four hits and three runs scored, and Ngoepe, the shortstop, finished the game a home run away from hitting for the cycle.

"We were hitting the ball good from the beginning of the game," Rojas said. "We were staying inside the ball, staying behind the baseball, so that's why we got a couple of good hits."

In the first inning, Ngoepe doubled home Rojas to give State College (17-17) a 1-0 lead. Santos, the left fielder, helped double the lead in the third, hitting an RBI triple that bounced right in front of the wall in left-center field.

Ngoepe hit his second extra-base hit of the contest in the sixth. After Rojas reached first on a single and then stole second, Ngoepe took a full count fastball into right center field for a triple, increasing the lead to 5-2.

SPIKES

State College

Auburn



Steph Witt/Collegian

Gift Ngoepe (sliding) beats a throw to first this season. The top of the Spikes order went 9-for-13 on Thursday.

The shortstop said he has been working on waiting back on pitches with State College hitting coach Brandon Moore, and it paid off Thursday night.

"Normally I would've got out front and hit probably a ground ball to the second baseman," Ngoepe said. "And I've been working with [Moore] and he taught me to stay back. And today we worked on that stuff and I put it in the game and it worked."

Ngoepe moved from the leadoff spot to the No. 2 hole when Rojas joined the team, a position

Ngoepe said he likes better.

"You get to see more what the pitcher has and you kind of help out your teammate because if the leadoff guy gets on, he may steal, you may have to drop one down the line to get him over, put him in scoring position or hit one somewhere somehow," Ngoepe said.

With his four-hit performance, Rojas, a 2010 third-round pick by the Pittsburgh Pirates, improved his batting average to .391 through his first five professional games.

"He's a good kid. He's good to be around. He came in with a big

smile and he's been a good addition to team," Santos said. "He brings a lot of tools, speed, power, agility and he's going to be a great player."

The Spikes hope the top of their order stays hot when they play the Doubledays (13-21) in the second of their three-game set at 7:05 tonight.

"It's a great feeling that that confidence is building up and we actually believe in each other and are having fun," Santos said.

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Cain, Decker mesh well in win

By James Nicol
FOR THE COLLEGIAN



Steph Witt/Collegian

Kevin Decker throws a pitch.

Colton Cain and Kevin Decker combined for six innings of two-run baseball to aid the State College Spikes in their 8-4 win over the Auburn Doubledays.

Cain started Thursday night's game in his first career start as a Spike. He had previously thrown two scoreless relief appearances this season, including his last appearance against the Doubledays.

Cain was an eighth-round selection in last year's MLB draft and is coming out of off-season back surgery. He was perfect through the first three innings, which he attributed to hitting his spots with his fastball and a defense that made the outs on seven of the first nine batters.

"Just pound the inside of the plate," Cain said of his strategy. "And using my defense, defense was outstanding."

He ran into trouble in the fourth inning when Doubleday centerfielder Jonathon Jones led off with

a single. The next batter, second basemen Oliver Dominguez, tripled on a 1-0 pitch to score Jones. Dominguez scored on a Carlos Perez sac-fly.

Cain said his trouble in the fourth was because losing some of the command that gave him success early.

He closed out the inning by giving up a double to right fielder Marcus Knecht, before managing to work out of trouble and retire the next two batters to get out of the inning. Cain was glad to be making his first start since coming to the Spikes and is looking to build on his success.

"I just had to get that first one under my belt and learn from it," Cain said.

Kevin Decker came into the game in the top of the fifth with the game tied at two. The first batter he faced, Doubledays catcher Jack Murphy, lined a pitch straight back off of Decker's leg for an infield single. The incident gave the Spikes a scare, as manager Gary Robinson went out to check on Decker. He stayed in the

game and pitched two innings of scoreless relief before being taken out.

"It didn't feel like it affected me for a while," Decker said. "I started leaving the ball up and away".

Decker said his pitching won't be affected by it though.

The last time Decker pitched was last weekend, when he gave up eight runs in a start against the Doubledays, where he only pitched an inning. He had no trouble with them this time around, limiting them to 3 hits, while not walking a batter.

"After outings like that the best thing to do is just to be out there on the mound and be out there again," Decker said. "When I found out I was pitching against them again I was really excited to get out there."

Decker has seen time this year both as a starter and out of the bullpen. He has not allowed a run as a reliever with the Spikes.

"The whole thing is mentality of coming in as a reliever. You just want to leave your team within a swing of the bat," Decker said.

Hornets' Paul asks out of New Orleans

By Brett Martel
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

NEW ORLEANS — Chris Paul has requested to be traded and the New Orleans Hornets have scheduled a meeting with the star guard on Monday, according to a person familiar with the situation.

Paul will sit down with new head coach Monty Williams, new general manager Dell Demps and team president Hugh Weber in New Orleans, the person told The Associated Press on Thursday. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the team had not made plans to meet with Paul public, and because Paul has not publicly demanded a trade.

Paul, 25, cannot opt out of his contract for two years. However, he said at a recent charity golf tournament that he will be unhappy playing for the Hornets if they fail to demonstrate a commitment to winning immediately.

The Hornets also have made it clear they have no intention of trading Paul.

Weber said earlier this month, while attending a community

service event with Paul, that there was "no question" Paul would be in a Hornets uniform when next season opened.

After the Hornets came within one game of advancing to the 2008 Western Conference finals, Paul agreed to a four-year, \$68 million extension that went into effect last season includes a player's option for the fourth year.

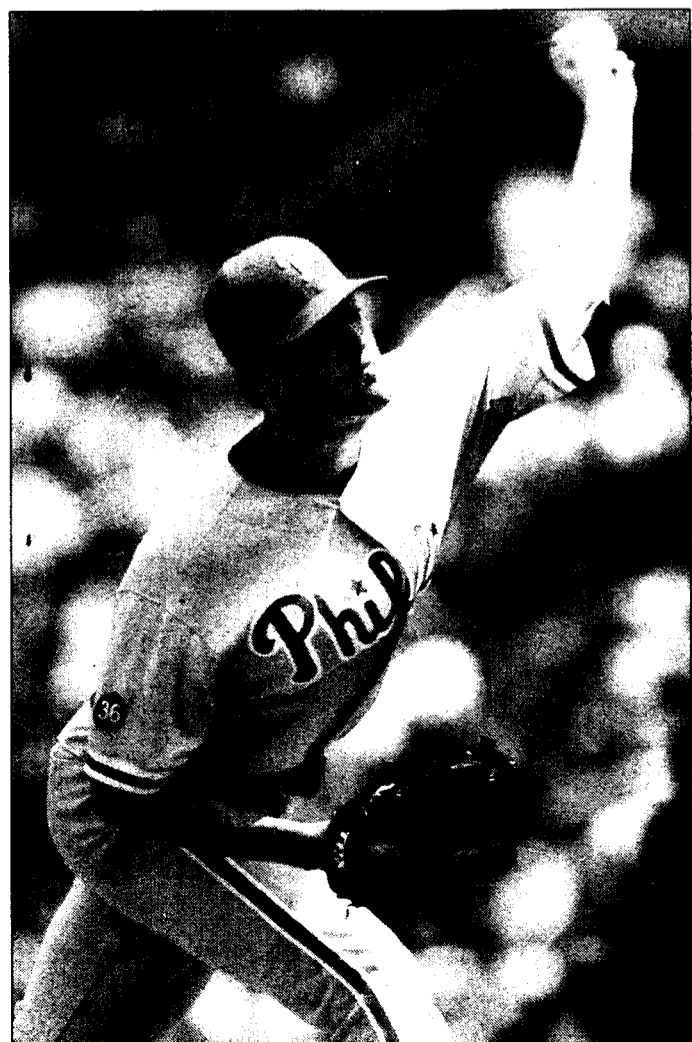
Since then, however, the Hornets have traded center Tyson Chandler and fired coach Byron Scott, who both were close with Paul, all while the club's performance went into steady decline.

The Hornets were bounced from the first round of the 2008-09 playoffs, then missed the playoffs entirely last season, during which Paul missed 37 games with three separate injuries.

Earlier this month, Paul cut ties with his basketball and marketing agents at Octagon and joined LRMR Marketing, an agency founded by his close friend and NBA superstar LeBron James.

Meanwhile, the Hornets have made several key changes since June, starting with the hiring of Williams, a former NBA player and first-time head coach. Williams has said Paul's presence on the Hornets' roster was one of the main reasons he wanted to start his head coaching career in New Orleans.

KING COLE



Jeff Roberson/Associated Press

Cole Hamels delivers a pitch Thursday. Hamels threw nine shutout innings as the Phillies beat the Cardinals 1-0.