

Sports Week

Section 2

Wednesday, August 7, 1996

Oliver growing accustomed to pro ball life

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Post Correspondent

PRINCETON, W. VA. - Johnny Oliver's first two months as a professional baseball player might best be described as a period of adjustment.

After all, the Cincinnati Reds' first-round draft choice out of Lake-Lehman High School has had to deal with a number of changes both on and off the field throughout the summer.

As the starting center fielder for the Princeton (W.Va.) Reds of the Appalachian League, the most obvious change Oliver has had to deal with is the talent level of his opposition.

"This is an advanced rookie league and the caliber of play is very high," said Oliver, who was recently moved to the leadoff spot in the batting order upon his return to the lineup after missing eight games with a pulled right calf muscle.

"The pitching is outstanding," Oliver said. "Most of the pitchers have a 90-mph fastball or a breaking ball that drops off the table and some have both."

Despite batting leadoff during his senior season at Lehman, Oliver began his pro career in the number three hole with the Reds and has found the switch back to the top spot in the order very challenging. "At this level, it is really tough to judge the pitcher the first time around," he explained. "But the Reds would like me to get as many at bats as possible since my injury and I'll do whatever they ask me to do."

Another drastic difference at the plate has been the switch to a wooden bat from the aluminum bat used in amateur baseball. "I had practiced with a wooden bat, so it wasn't a totally new experience for me," said Oliver. "But, there is a difference. I've hit some balls that I thought were through the hole and ended up as outs. I'm starting to feel more comfortable though."

There have been some adjustments on defense as well, including reacting to the crack of the wooden bat and playing under lights for the first time since Little League. "I had trouble picking up the ball at first because I wasn't used to the lighting," Oliver ex-

"We're very pleased with John's play thus far."

Brad Coleman
Cincinnati Reds assistant director of baseball operations

plained. "I get more accustomed to the lights every game and am learning how to play the hitters and get a good jump on the ball as opposed to just relying on my speed to run the ball down."

While all of these changes have been challenging, don't get the impression that Oliver isn't meeting them.

Prior to his calf injury, he was one of just two Reds' players hitting over .300. Through Sunday's action, which saw the Reds lose their fourth consecutive one-run game, he is hitting .240 with four doubles and one home run in 27 games. He has scored 17 runs and driven in seven more.

The Reds were 19-27 and in fourth place in the five-team Appalachian League East Division as they departed Monday for a week-long road trip.

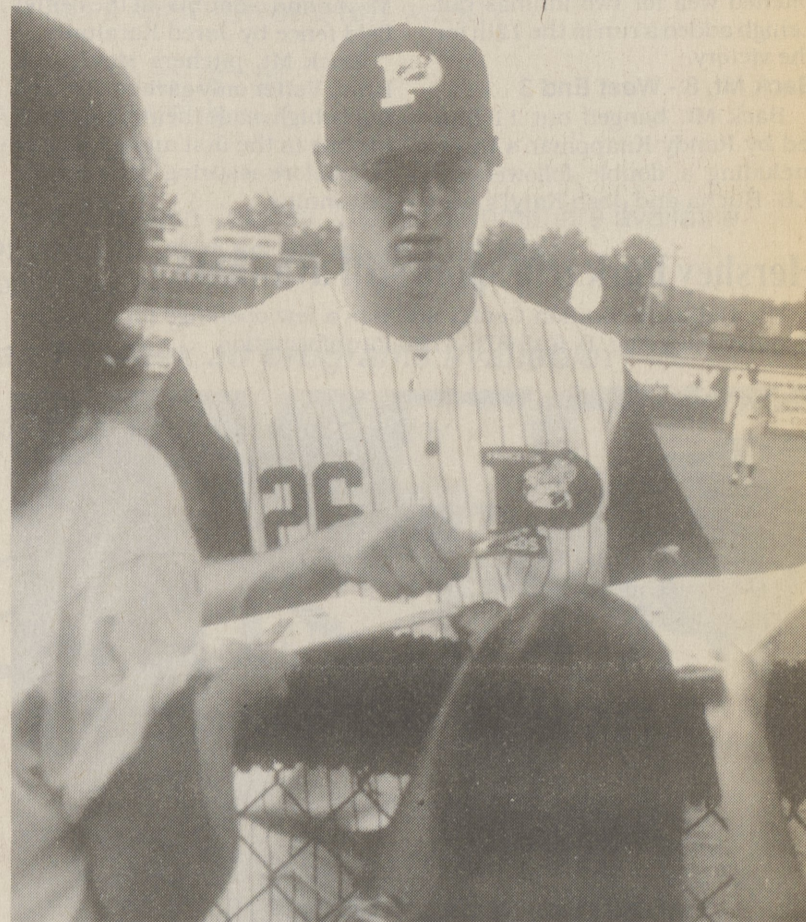
In addition to the on-field obstacles, Oliver has had to cope with being away from home for the first time while becoming accustomed to the odd schedule of a professional baseball player.

"I'm still learning the ropes," he explained. "I struggled at the beginning, I was a little homesick and I'm learning how to live on my own."

Well, not totally alone. Oliver and teammate Demond Denman both rent rooms in the home of Peggy Lambert, the treasurer of the Princeton Reds Booster Club, and her two teenage children. "The fans have been very supportive," said Oliver. "They have made me feel at home."

In addition, Oliver has had several local fans make the 7 1/2 hour trip to Hunnicutt Field, including Lake-Lehman faculty members John and Gerri Baranowski, Bob Rogers, Flossy Finn, Rodger Bearde and Lehman baseball coach Chip Sorber.

"It's always good to see a familiar face," said Oliver. "It is a very good feeling to know that people from my hometown are behind



John Oliver is now on the other side of the fence. He signed autographs before a Princeton Reds game.

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POST PHOTO/JIM PHILLIPS

Mark Millington hauled down a rebound in Monday's game against Camp Orchard Hill.



POST PHOTO/JIM PHILLIPS

Jay McGovern of Camp Orchard Hill went high for a layup as Dan Nichol, left, and Steve Smith watched for the rebound.

Triathlon returns to Back Mt. August 18

The 15th annual Wilkes-Barre Triathlon will take place on August 18. More than 600 professional and amateur athletes will compete in what has become one of the top races in the world. The Triathlon is one of the largest and best known athletic competitions in the area.

The swim begins at the Harveys Lake Beach Club at 8:15 a.m. The bike race follows Rt. 415 North from Harveys Lake, along Rt. 29 through Noxen, back to Harveys Lake and then through Kunkle past Lake Catalpa to Demunds Road, along Overbrook Road to Huntsville Reservoir to the finish area at the Penn State Campus in Lehman. The run course is a loop through Hayfield Farm and along Mountain View Drive. The runners return to Penn State for the finish and awards ceremony.

More than 600 individuals and team competitors, ages 14 to over 60, from the U.S. and abroad are expected.

The top men's and women's finishers will receive \$2,500 each. The total prize purse is \$15,000.

Individual competitors will compete for prizes awarded by age group and sex. Team awards are given in all male, all female, mixed and corporate divisions.

A Health and Sports Expo will be held on Sat., Aug. 17 from noon to 5 p.m. and Sun. from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The Expo will feature Health, Nutrition and Fitness presentations, sales and demonstrations of athletic products and equipment and appearances by world ranked professional triathletes, at the Penn State Campus, Lehman, Saturday, 12-5 p.m. and Sunday, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Hosey's, Camp win playoffs

Title tilt will be rubber match for season

Blowouts were the order of the evening in the playoff semi-finals of the Dallas Rec. Summer Basketball League Monday.

In the opener Hosey's A.C. used a suffocating defense to whip the Knights 63-35. The victors jumped out to a 33-13 halftime lead and never looked back. John Duesler led the way with 17 points and Derrick Johnson chipped in with 15 as Hosey's moves to the title game for the

third straight year.

Jesse Martin had 13 and Rich Davis 11 for the Knights, who reached the semi-finals by losing only one second half game.

Camp Orchard Hill vaulted into the finals by dumping Woychick Acc. 75-59. Jay McGovern's nine first half points jump started the winners to a 36-21 halftime lead. The "Hill" placed five players in double figures with McGovern scoring 15, Dan Nichol and Brian

Brade 14 each, Dennis Perlis 13 and Steve Smith 11.

B. Siminovich had 17 for the accountants.

Wednesday's title game will be the rubber match between Hosey's A.C. and Camp Orchard Hill. Hosey's won the first half game while "The Hill" took the second half game in overtime.

This game tipping off at 5:30 Wednesday promises to be a barnburner.

Camp Orchard Hill - 75

	FG	E	Total
S. Smith*	4	2	11
Perlis**	5	1	13
Michalek*	2	0	5
Nichol	7	0	14
Brady	6	2	14
J.J. Smith*	1	1	3
McGovern	5	5	15
	30	10	75

Hosey's A.C. - 63

	FG	E	Total
Hage	3	0	6
Johnson*	7	0	15
Duesler	7	3	17
Jaster**	4	0	10
Debona*	2	0	5
Pincofski	2	0	4
Hosey	0	0	0
Hoover	0	2	2
	17	5	63

Woychick Acc. - 59

	FG	E	Total
Wilson	5	0	10
Millington+	2	1	6
Woychick	2	1	5
Sutliff8	4	0	9
Race+	2	0	4
Siminovich	8	0	17
Zawatski	3	0	6
	26	2	59

Knights - 35

	FG	E	Total
Vigoritto	1	0	2
R. Davis	5	1	11
Martin*	4	4	13
Panuzka	1	0	2
R. Wilson	1	1	3
D. Wilson	0	2	2
M. Davis	0	0	0
	12	8	35

* 3 point goal + 4 point goal

Gridiron Club slates "Meet the Team Night"

The Dallas Gridiron Club is pleased to announce their annual "Meet the Team Night" will be held on Thursday, Aug. 15 at the Dallas Mountaineer football field. Photo sessions will be held at 6 p.m. with introductions at 7. At this time the 1996 Mountaineer football team and coaching staff will be introduced for the first time. Anyone interested in Mountaineer football is invited to attend. Refreshments will be served.

General Hospital golf tournament Aug. 19

The Wilkes-Barre General Hospital campus of Wyoming Valley Health Care System will hold its 18th annual Golf Tournament and Dinner on Monday, Aug. 19 at the Irem Temple Country Club, Dallas. The tournament will once again feature a "Captain and Crew" format with morning tee-off at 7:30 a.m. and afternoon tee-offs at 1 p.m.

Sponsorship opportunities are available. For more information, please contact Jane Danish at 552-3000.

Greulich-Byron wins 5 gold medals

Joan Greulich-Byron of Dallas won five gold medals in master swimming, age 45-49 category, at the Keystone State Games. Along the way she set three state master swimmer records, giving her state marks in all events except backstroke.

Byron won gold in the 50 and 100 meter freestyle, 50 and 100 meter butterfly and the 200 meter individual medley.

Daughters Caroline and Elizabeth also swam in the age group meet, with Elizabeth taking 5th place in the 25 meter freestyle and Caroline finishing 7th in the 100 meter individual medley and eighth in the 50 meter butterfly. She was also on the 200 meter medley relay team that finished second and the 200 meter freestyle team that took third.

"I think it was pretty neat," Byron said, and noted that she won despite having little training time.

DeRojas makes all-star basketball team

J.C. DeRojas, an eighth grade student at Gate of Heaven School, was selected to the All-Star Basketball Team at the Pocono Invitational Basketball Camp.

He was selected among 400 participants and was the winner of the One-on-One championship and the winner in the foul shooting contest.

J.C. is the son of Dr. and Mrs. Juan DeRojas of Dallas.

LCCC golf tourney set for Oct. 7

The Luzerne County Community College Foundation will hold its annual Scholarship Golf Tournament - Medico Family Invitational on Monday, Oct. 7, at Fox Hill Country Club.

For more information about participant registration, hole sponsorship and/or dinner reservations, call the LCCC Foundation Office at 740-0360 or 740-0325.