

Player-Bashing Approved by Boss

Anybody naive enough to think George Steinbrenner might alter his self-defeating, negative approach toward his ballclub after Don Mattingly's outburst Sunday should reconsider. For the past couple of games, a new negative category has been introduced on the Yankee notes handed out to reporters.

There was a breakdown on Page 7 Wednesday under the heading of Team Fielding. "Yankee club fielding is 13th in AL at .977," the paragraph started. "At the All-Star break, the Yanks had 69 errors in 85 games (.81 errors per game); since then, 37 errors in 38 games (.97 errors per game). Yanks have not gone more than three games without an error since [May] 11-16 (5 games)."

Most ballclubs don't print "neggies" in their media notes or have considerably less emphasis on them than the Yankees. Rarely, if ever, does one appear on the Mets' sheets. That's frustrating to the reporters, who can make use of the negative notes as well as the positive ones in hoping to present a balanced overall perspective.

Baseball is a sufficiently demeaning game to begin with. If you bat 3-for-10, you're doing well. But why would Steinbrenner, who is definitely behind the distribution of the negatives, authorize their use?

Protest though he might, it serves no other purpose than to remind the public of his players' shortcomings. If that's not self-defeating, what is? And then he wonders why Mattingly and many of his teammates have a negative reaction to him. Now, that's confusing.

■ That useless feeling

Bobby Meacham is able to play but can't because the Yankees miscalculated the time it would take for him to recover from the slipped disc in his neck that was pinching a nerve. It is frustrating for Meacham, who likely would be playing ahead of Randy Velarde as the fill-in for Willie Randolph at second base. Meacham also could occasionally be spelling shortstop Rafael Santana, who plays daily with a sore throwing arm.

On Aug. 3, when he had two more days to serve on the 21-day disabled list, the Yankees moved Meacham to the 60-day DL without consulting him. The decision was made because the Yankees needed room on the DL for Ron Guidry and Randolph. Since a team may have only five on the 15- and 21-day DLs and Meacham made six, he was moved to the 60-day list because it was thought he would be the last to recover.

Not so. Meacham has been ready to play for about 10 days. When treatment by the Yankees' physician and a neurologist failed to improve his condition sufficiently, he went to a chiropractor on his own. The chiropractor did the job.

But the Yankees won't even let Meacham

take batting practice or ground balls because, having placed him on the 60-day list, they feel they could be sued if he reinjures himself. He would even pitch batting practice if they would let him, but all he is permitted to do after suiting up for pregame practice at Yankee Stadium is run.

"I think it's kind of strange that you can end my season without letting me know," Meacham said. "It doesn't seem right. I got hurt in May, and I felt better a week ago than when I was playing in June. They should have explained various options to me. I would rather have gone to Columbus than this."

"If you're going to end somebody's season, which is messing with their career, you ought to let them know. I'm just starting to see the repercussions of what can happen if you're not able to play. Let's face it. Even if they don't want me next year, there doesn't figure to be much marketing value for a player who has been out the entire second half. I don't think anything malicious was intended on their part. But how this has unraveled is not good."

■ When the sinker works

Scott Nielsen resembled a righthanded version of Tommy John when he obtained 12 grounders for 14 outs in his 7½ innings of relief Wednesday against the A's. Nielsen impressed Lou Piniella, who will likely start him a second time if John Candelaria's balky right knee prohibits him from taking his next turn.

The Yankees could use a younger version of John, who is still effective at 45. "Nielsen may have to go somewhere where a club will put him in its rotation and leave him there," said a Yankees official who spoke with granted anonymity. "He had that opportunity at Columbus this season, and look what he did. When his ball isn't sinking just right or he gets behind in the count and has to come in, he may get lit up on occasion. But he'll give you three good ones between spotty starts."

Nielsen, 29, was 13-6 at Columbus this season with a 2.40 ERA. He pitched eight complete games and averaged more than seven innings a start. John, who concedes Nielsen remains an intriguing property, said, "Righthanders have to be a little more exact [with their sinker] than lefthanders. That's because with a righthander, the sinker is always going back in toward righthanded hitters."

Of course, it's somewhat the same with lefthanders pitching to lefthanded hitters. But then, lefthanded batters don't hit lefthanders nearly as well as righthanded hitters hit righthanded pitching. A defect in being a lefthanded hitter — perhaps the only one — is that they don't see much lefthanded pitching until they get to the big leagues.

Nielsen knows there is an added premium on being sharp with his sinker. If he gets one up just a little bit, it can be crushed, as Jose Canseco proved Wednesday in Nielsen's eighth inning of work. In the second inning, Nielsen got Canseco to bounce into an inning-ending double play.

Schiraldi Strikes Out 12

The Associated Press

Atlanta — A little frustration proved most beneficial for Calvin Schiraldi last night.

Schiraldi (8-8) struck out a career-high 12 batters and allowed eight hits as the Cubs beat the Braves, 6-1.

"I walked two in the second inning," Schiraldi said. "I was pitching well then. It frustrated me when I didn't throw the ball the way I want to."

The righthander spent the rest of the game throwing the ball where the Braves couldn't get it. It was his second complete game, and he has 109 strikeouts in 127⅓ innings.

The Cubs took the lead for good in the third inning against German Jimenez (1-5) on Ryne Sandberg's 13th homer.

REDS 4, CARDINALS 1 Impressive Start for Rookie

Cincinnati — Keith Brown made a successful major-league debut, allowing four hits in seven innings. Brown, 24, struck out three and walked two as he completed the jump from Double-A to the majors in one season. He made just 12 starts for the Reds' Triple-A Nashville club before his recall. John Franco pitched two innings for his 27th save.

The Reds announced they didn't put starter Jose Rijo (elbow tendinitis) on the 15-day disabled list, as they'd announced earlier this week. They are hoping he can make his next start on Monday.

ARENA

Nets Sign No. 1 Morris, Who Boasts He's Ready

The Nets play in East Rutherford, hardly a remote location that's just a full-court pass from Manhattan. But first-round draft choice Chris Morris, who signed with the Nets yesterday, said he wants to "come in and put the team back on the map. It's going to be a tough battle, but I think I can handle it."

The 6-foot-8 forward from Auburn, who missed the Nets' strength and conditioning program and its summer league for rookies, did not reveal details of the contract. Morris, picked fourth overall, averaged 20.7 points during his senior year. Morris said he will be in shape when training camp opens Oct. 7. He said he has been keeping fit by playing in a summer league in Houston.

Coach Willis Reed said he will use Morris' rebounding and scoring skills to help build a running team. The Nets finished 19-63 last season. "Chris is going to add to a team that you will see will be a scrappy, hustling bunch," Reed said. "We may have — *may have* — gotten the best small forward of all of them, and that includes Danny Manning."

Morris joins Buck Williams, Roy Hinson, Tim McCormick and Keith Lee on the front line. "Morris can score, he can rebound and he can really run the floor," general manager Harry Weltman said. "He will complement our other players very well."

Lewis Will Run 4 X 100 Relay in Seoul

Carl Lewis definitely will run on the 4 X 100-meter relay team, Olympic track coach Stan Huntsman confirmed from Santa Barbara, Calif. Huntsman also said Calvin Smith and Dennis Mitchell would be a part of that team for the final, but the fourth runner has not been decided upon. "We have three sprinters who have proven themselves without a shadow of a doubt — Carl, Calvin and Dennis," Huntsman said.

Sports Agents Plead Innocent

New York-based sports agents **Norby Walters** and **Lloyd Bloom**, charged with **racketeering** and **extortion** in their dealings with college athletes, pleaded innocent before U.S. District Judge George Marovich in Chicago. Marovich, who released the defendants on their own recognizance, scheduled trial for Feb. 27.

Cash Is Out; Lendl Draws Mansdorf

Pat Cash, who lost in the first round last year, withdrew from the U.S. Open because of a foot injury. The Open, which starts Monday at the National Tennis Center, announced that men's top seed Ivan Lendl will open against Amos Mansdorf, and women's top seed Steffi Graf will play Elizabeth Minter. . . . Katerina Maleeva advanced to the quarterfinals of the \$200,000 United Jersey Bank Classic in Mahwah by ousting Bettina Fulco, 6-0, 6-2.

McCallister Leads Series of Golf

Blaine McCallister started with two birdies and finished the first round at 3-under-par 67 to take a one-shot lead in the \$900,000 World Series of Golf in Akron, Ohio. Mark Brooks, like McCallister a first-time competitor in the international field, and Ian Baker-Finch of Australia shared second at 68. Tom Watson came in with a 74. . . . Bill Britton and Roy Biancalana each shot a 7-under 63 to tie for the lead after the first round of \$450,000 Provident Classic in Chattanooga, Tenn.

Lopez 5-Under in 4-Hole Streak

Nancy Lopez scored an eagle and three birdies on a four-hole stretch that started on the 14th hole to gain a share of the lead with Ayako Okamoto of Japan at 5-under 67 after one round of the \$265,000 LPGA World Championship in Buford, Ga. Lopez' eagle-3 on the 16th hole came on a chip-in from 25 feet.

Kiwi Points a Smoking Gun at Conner

While New Zealand's America's Cup challenger, Kiwi, was scratched by the race chairman from Sunday's benefit regatta on San Diego Bay, the American Cancer Society invited them back. Kiwi flew the message, "Quitting Smoking Now Greatly Reduces Serious Risks to Your Health," on a sail in a possible dig at American skipper Dennis Conner. He has sponsorship from Marlboro for the Cup regatta that starts Sept. 7.

Furthermore . . .

Sebastian Coe, with his final shot at a third straight Olympics 1,500-meter gold medal gone, said he probably has run his last race for Britain. "It would be silly of me to consider the needs of the British board in my training," he said. . . . Tai Chung, Taiwan, rolled to a 16-1 win over Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, to advance to tomorrow's final of the 42nd Little League World Series in Williamsport, Pa., against Pearl City, Hawaii, which beat Spring, Texas, 5-4. . . . **Kenny Miller**, the first freshman to win an NCAA rebounding title (13.6), will return to Loyola of Chicago even though the sophomore center has been declared academically ineligible for the fall semester.

Edited by Marshall Weiner