

A variety of stories for midsummer sports fans

Now that the World Cup is graciously over, the midsummer doldrums are here. Baseball is still around, but the pennant races don't realistically start heating up for another month. NFL teams are lazily getting into their pre-season camps, preparing for the season that is about a month away as well.

Considering all this, unless one is prepared to finally mow the lawn or take care of some much needed home improvements that have been on the shelf since the final four ended, into the NHL playoffs, carrying on into the NBA playoffs and finally the World Cup, it is time to lie on the couch and grab a Big Gulp in an air-conditioned room waiting for Sportscenter to deliver some real sports stories.

Oddly enough, this week provided the average sports fan with a wide variety of midsummer headlines.

On the frozen pond, a pleasant thought in 100 degree weath-

er, the New York Rangers will have to defend their Stanley Cup next year without coach Mike Keenan. The controversial Keenan jumped ship this past weekend to the St. Louis Blues, claiming that the Rangers breached his contract. Anyone who follows the NHL knows that Keenan's deal with the Blues could be nixed. The Blues have been notorious for jumping on deals too early in the last couple of years. The Rangers have filed suit and conceivably could end up with some compensation from the Blues.

Keenan's fiery personality has hindered him throughout his coaching career, often resulting in conflicts with management over who should run the team. The sad part of this is that it took the Rangers 40 years to finally win the Stanley Cup again, and what should be an off-season of celebration and relaxation has become, only a month after winning it all, a systematic disman-



CHRIS METZ

ting of the team. The Rangers can't seem to do anything just right.

A few miles south, the New York Jets are the latest to catch "World Cup fever" this week signing U.S. soccer player Tony "No, I've never sung for Black Sabbath" Meola. An interesting move considering that the NFL traditionally hasn't required a goaltender. Maybe goalies are required along with the new two-point conversion? A logical question for the Jets then: Why sign Nick Lowrey if his leg isn't strong enough to even hit a 45 yard field goal? Just a thought.

In Seattle the sky is falling at the Kingdome. Why stop at a few insulation tiles? Clear everyone out of that god-forsaken park and blow the whole damn thing up. Then maybe the Mariners can build a real dome that we "purists" can really appreciate. They can call it the Grunge Dome and erect a statue in the beer garden of Eddie Vedder and Ken Griffey Jr. standing arm in arm, swilling Ranier.

This week's "I didn't think anybody would notice" award goes to Albert "you can call me Joey, and you can call me Albert, but never, ever call me Corky" Belle of the Cleveland Indians. With all the talk of the impending strike, who would have thought that old Albert was corking his bat.

Baseball needs more light-hearted controversy. Guys like Gaylor Perry used to bring an innocently villainous feel to the game. A few spit/ Vaseline balls here and there never hurt any-

body and neither does a corked bat, especially if it's used by a Cleveland Indian. Belle has had enough controversy in his career that didn't match the schoolboy feel that this "prank" carries with it. Hats off to Belle. The guy tried to get away with one and now has 10 games to sit and "feel shame." At least there were no guns or drugs in his bat. After all, it is the 1990s

This week's "sibling rivalry" award goes to Ems relief pitcher Tim Grieve. Grieve faced his younger, and noticeably wealthier, phenom brother Ben in Tuesday night's game and struck him out. One can imagine how good it feels to beat on a little millionaire brother, so congratulations Tim, you are the winner of this week's summer doldrums award for outstanding achievements in the face of million degree weather.

Chris Metz is the sports editor for the Emerald.

Cowboys adjust to new coach, new offensive coordinator

AUSTIN (AP) — The Dallas Cowboys have a new coach and a new offensive coordinator. And they still have a solid shot to win a third consecutive Super Bowl — as long as Troy Aikman is happy.

For the time being, Aikman is at peace with the change that saw Barry Switzer take over for Jimmy Johnson.

"I owe a lot to Coach Johnson but everything will be fine with me and Coach Switzer as long as we win," Aikman said. "I think everybody is over the shock of Barry

being the coach. He is our head coach now and we accept it. I hope Barry has the answers."

Aikman sees Switzer adopting a role much like the one Johnson had.

"I think Coach Switzer can be effective like Coach Johnson," Aikman said. "Coach Johnson wasn't a big X and O guy. He let his assistants do that."

"But make no doubt, Coach Johnson put his stamp on the team. He got the team motivated. Right now Barry is observing. Eventually, he has to put his stamp on the

team. It will be tough on him."

Aikman said not only does Switzer have to learn the players, he has to mesh with the staff.

"These are assistants he inherited and he has to find a way to fit in," Aikman said. "It's tough on a new coach when he can't bring in his own assistants."

Aikman is ready to do all he can for Switzer, his first college coach. Aikman, however, had to transfer from Oklahoma to UCLA to polish his passing skills.

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