



Second baseman Angel Espada was the offensive spark that the Eugene Emeralds needed Monday night as they beat the Yakima Bears. Espada had two hits, two stolen bases and scored two runs in the 5-4 victory.

MARK MCTYRE/Emerald

## Ems close in on division lead with 5-4 win

■ **EMERALDS:**  
Eugene's aggressive play leads to one-run victory over Yakima

By Chris Hansen  
Sports Reporter

Even though the game time temperature was 20 degrees cooler than the 99 degrees that opened Sunday night's 17-4 scorching of the Yakima Bears, the Eugene Emeralds were still too hot to handle.

Displaying the fundamentals of baseball, the Ems used timely hitting, good pitching, and aggressive play to squeak out a 5-4 victory against the Bears to take the four-game series, extend to a three-game win streak and improve to 17-10 overall. Yakima, meanwhile, dropped to 10-17, tied for last place in the Northwest League's North di-

vision.

Ems starter P.K. Koehler pitched five strong innings, striking out seven while giving up only two runs, including getting himself out of two separate jams with runners in scoring position and no outs.

In both the fourth and fifth innings, Koehler gave up consecutive singles to the first two batters. He was able to strike out the next three batters, all swinging, to get out of the fourth, and was helped by third baseman Brian Rust's heads up double play to get out of the fifth.

"The first three innings I didn't feel good at all," said Koehler. "The fourth was also a little rough, but in

the fifth it started to come around. My change-up was working great for me all night."

Manager Jim Saul was also pleased with the performance of his starter.

"This is the third game he has gone out and started for us," Saul said. "He gave us everything he had tonight and got us into the sixth inning."

And after battling back-and-forth all game, it was the Ems aggressiveness in the sixth inning that sealed the victory.

Koehler left the game with a 4-2 lead but the Bears battled back,

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## Irvin enters no-contest in drug trial

■ **FOOTBALL:** Dallas Cowboy Michael Irvin will stay out of jail after striking deal in cocaine possession trial

By Jaime Aron  
The Associated Press

DALLAS — Dallas Cowboys receiver Michael Irvin struck a deal Monday in his cocaine possession trial that keeps him out of jail but requires him to undergo frequent drug testing.

Irvin pleaded no contest to second-degree felony cocaine possession in exchange for four years' deferred probation, a \$10,000 fine and dismissal of misdemeanor marijuana possession charges.

The deferred probation means if he stays out of trouble for four years, the charge is

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## Third base new home for Ironman

■ **POSITION CHANGE:** Cal Ripken moves to third in effort to improve Baltimore's record

By David Ginsburg  
The Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Cal Ripken's reign as the Baltimore Orioles' shortstop is over.

Orioles manager Davey Johnson, in an effort to shake up his slumping team, started Ripken at third base in Monday night's game against Toronto.

The switch ended Ripken's string of 2,216 consecutive games as Baltimore's starting shortstop, a streak that began July 1, 1982. Last week, Ripken started his 13th straight All-Star game at shortstop.

Ripken played that game with a broken nose, and he jokingly made a reference to

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## Trail Blazers ditch Strickland, Grant for youthful hopefuls

BLAZERS

■ **NBA:** Trade brings Rasheed Wallace and Mitchell Butler to Portland from the Washington Bullets

By Landon Hall  
The Associated Press

PORTLAND — The Portland Trail Blazers finally moved Rod Strickland, trading the disgruntled point guard and Harvey Grant to the Washington Bullets on Monday for Rasheed Wallace and Mitchell Butler.

Strickland walked out for six games last season saying he would no longer play for coach P.J. Carlesimo, but returned to help the Blazers reach the playoffs. He averaged 18.7 points and 9.6 assists in 67 games.

"Rod's a talented player and we'll be weak at this position until we do something," Blazers president and general manager Bob Whitsitt said.

Wallace, a former North Carolina forward selected fourth overall in the 1995 draft, averaged 10.1 points and 4.7 rebounds in 65 games.

"To get a quality player like that is very, very important," Whitsitt said.

Grant averaged 9.3 points as a backup small forward last season and Butler averaged 3.9 points as a backup guard.

Strickland, an eight-year veteran, had wanted out

of Portland since he and Carlesimo had a feud during camp prior to the 1994-95 season. His walkout came after the Blazers let the trade deadline slip by without trading him.

Rumeal Robinson replaced Strickland during the walkout, averaging 15.3 points and 7.7 assists during the six games.

Strickland, who played four seasons for the Blazers, has averaged 14.3 points, 7.5 assists and 3.9 rebounds in his career with New York, San Antonio and Portland.

Whitsitt said Wallace's enthusiasm will be welcome in Portland.

"He's energetic. He's excitable. I don't see that as a negative," Whitsitt said. "It's pretty hard to get a high lottery pick nowadays without being high up in the lottery."

The Blazers (44-38 last season) appear to be focusing on young players.

The team decided last month not to exercise their option to keep Buck Williams, the 36-year-old power forward who was the last remaining player from the starting lineup of the Portland teams that made

it to the NBA Finals in 1990 and 1992.

Portland drafted 17-year-old Jermaine O'Neal with the 17th pick in the first round of this year's NBA draft.

The Bullets (39-43 last season) haven't had a winning record for nine years, but they improved their record by 18 wins last year. Washington will try to take advantage of Strickland's considerable play-making skills next year.

"Strickland is an outstanding point guard who is one of the league's best perimeter shooters," said Bullets head coach Jim Lynam. "He's the type of player who makes his teammates better, because of his ability to penetrate the defense and create."

Grant returns to the Bullets after playing the last three seasons for Portland. The twin brother of Orlando's Horace Grant averaged 9.3 points and 4.8 rebounds in 76 games for the Blazers. Harvey Grant was drafted by Washington and played his first five seasons with the Bullets.

Lynam called him "a versatile wing player who has shown to be equally effective defending both

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