

# Baseball: Brewers lose NL debut

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The Tampa Bay Devil Rays, however, looked exactly like the expansion team it is in an 11-6 loss to Detroit at St. Petersburg, Fla.

The Devil Rays fell behind 11-0 after five innings and the sellout crowd of 45,369 at Tropicana Field had little to cheer except for Wade Boggs' home run.

"This is one of 162. Unfortunately, it was a big one — opening day — but the others won't all go like this," Tampa Bay shortstop Kevin Stocker said.

The new team, though, had something that no one else in the majors has: A cigar bar inside its ballpark.

"It's a fabulous place," said Devil Rays owner Vince Naimoli. "Tampa was known as the cigar city a long time ago. We wanted it to reflect that heritage. That's why we put it in."

In Phoenix, some fans at the Bank One Ballpark also had a unique view — from a pool, heated spa and a swim-up bar beyond the right-center field fence.

The aquatic area, which holds 35 people and costs \$4,000 per game to rent, was ready to make its

debut when the Arizona Diamondbacks played host to the Colorado Rockies.

One warning: Fans in the pool had better bring their gloves, along with their swimsuits. Colorado Rockies star Larry Walker hit a ball into the water during batting practice Monday.

Other highlights on opening day:

■ The Tigers won in their first game since shifting from the AL East to the Central to accommodate the Devil Rays.

■ Milwaukee lost to Atlanta 2-1 in its first game since becoming the only team to switch leagues this century. The Brewers seemed to handle the National League style just fine; with no designated hitter, pitcher Cal Eldred singled off four-time Cy Young winner Greg Maddux.

■ In the longest scoreless opener in NL history, pinch-hitter Alberto Castillo's single with two outs and the bases loaded in the 14th inning gave the Mets a 1-0 win over Philadelphia.

■ Pokey Reese tied an opening-day record for shortstops with four errors, helping San Diego and newcomer Kevin Brown beat Cincinnati 10-2.

# Mariners: Johnson lasts just six innings

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Mesa pitched 2 1/3 perfect innings for the win as a setup man and Jackson got the save. Last October, Mesa failed to hold a ninth-inning lead in Game 7 of the World Series, and Florida wound up winning in the 11th.

"I've been thinking about it the last 10 days or two weeks of spring training," Hargrove said. "I just never really saw Jose turn it up to where I felt like he was prepared to go back into the closer's role. But that doesn't mean in two weeks he's not going to be the closer again."

"Going into spring training, we realized that probably the last three to four years that the strength of our pitching has been our bullpen," Hargrove said. "So far so good. These guys are good pitchers."

In the ninth, Mesa struck out Alex Rodriguez, Assenmacher got Griffey to foul out and Jackson got Martinez to ground out.

"I take the same mentality every time I go out and pitch," said Jackson. "In my heart, I felt like I was the closer anyway coming into the game in the ninth inning."

Piniella insisted this spring that his bullpen was vastly improved over last season. He struck by that view after the game.

"It's only one game. I still contend we're going to have good pitching," Piniella said. "I'm a little disappointed tonight, but it will get much better."

He said criticism of Seattle's bullpen by the media was "unmerciful."

"Give these guys a chance," Piniella said. "They're going to pitch well."

The Mariners set a major league record with 264 home runs last year, and used their power to take a 9-3 lead after five innings.

Griffey, who hit 56 homers last season in becoming the American League MVP, Buhner and Davis each connected off Charles Nagy in a six-run fifth inning.

But Randy Johnson, Seattle's opening-day starter for the sixth and presumably final time, also was ineffective. He allowed six runs and 11 hits and two walks in 5 2/3 innings.

"I usually lick my chops when I have a lead that big," Johnson said. "When you've got that big of a lead, the offense has done its job."

The Mariners took a 9-6 lead into the eighth. Ayala walked pinch-hitter Jim Thome and Kenny Lofton hit an RBI triple. After Omar Vizquel walked, Fossas came in and walked David Justice.

Timlin relieved, and a two-run double by Manny Ramirez tied it at 9. Pinch-hitter Brian Giles was intentionally walked to load the bases, but Timlin walked Travis Fryman on five pitches to force home the go-ahead run.

Kenny Lofton, reacquired by the Indians in the offseason, was the only left-handed hitter in the starting lineup against Johnson. Thome and Justice began the game on the bench.

The Mariners appeared to break open the game in the fifth. Griffey hit a 404-foot homer into the Kingdome's right-field third deck and Buhner homered after newcomer David Segui's second double. Davis homered after a walk by Glenallen Hill and a single by Dan Wilson.

The Indians came back against Johnson in the sixth, chasing him with three runs.

Sandy Alomar doubled and Jeff Manto hit an RBI single. Enrique Wilson doubled, Lofton had an RBI groundout and d Manto and Vizquel singled home a run.

Martinez gave Seattle a 2-0 lead in the first when he homered over the center-field wall after Nagy hit Griffey with a pitch in the ankle.

The Indians went ahead 3-2 in the fourth on Alomar's homer. The Mariners tied the score in the bottom half on doubles by Segui and Buhner.

# Johnson still a fan favorite in Seattle

After an offseason of turmoil, the former Cy Young award winner received the loudest ovation of all Mariners before their season-opener

The Associated Press

SEATTLE — Randy Johnson's future with the Seattle Mariners may be uncertain, but he was the clear fan favorite as he took the mound in Tuesday's opening night contest against Cleveland.

"I'd much rather trade Woody Woodward than Randy Johnson," said fan Jason Weber of Seattle, referring to Seattle's general manager.

"I kick the cat when I think about the Big Unit leaving," said Kevin Borgquist of Seattle.

Although Johnson received the loudest, longest ovation as the team lineups were announced — surpassing the hearty receptions given Ken Griffey Jr. and Alex Rodriguez — he didn't deliver his usual dominant performance.

The 1995 American League Cy Young Award winner allowed 11 hits and six runs, five earned, in 5 2/3 innings.

Johnson received a standing ovation when he was lifted for reliever Bobby Ayala after struggling in the sixth.

"We were trying to show Randy that we really do care and we want him to stay," said John Ishmael of Redmond, Wash., one of a regular-season record 57,822 fans in the Kingdome.

"Heartwarming," Johnson said of the applause. "It felt really good."

He is in the final year of a contract that pays him \$6 million this season. The Mariners have made no move to extend his contract and Johnson expressed a strong desire to be traded as recently as two weeks ago.

During spring training Johnson said, "I don't want to be here ... I'm just not happy."

But Tuesday night he was philosophical.

"The sun will come up tomorrow and in five days I'll be pitching again," he said.

"I don't think we need to put this game under a microscope and analyze it too much," Johnson added. "We'll bounce back — it's the first game."

Since joining the Mariners in 1989 after a trade with the Montreal Expos, Johnson has won four AL strikeout crowns and

*"I kick the cat when I think about the Big Unit leaving."*

Kevin Borgquist  
Seattle fan

leads the major leagues in strikeouts during the 1990s.

"We didn't see a typical Randy Johnson performance tonight," Cleveland manager Mike Hargrove said. "Usually when Randy gets a couple of runs you can pretty much shut it down and get ready for tomorrow."

"Randy didn't have as good of stuff as he usually has," Seattle manager Lou Piniella said.

"I'll get better as the season progresses," Johnson said. "I just hope I'll have another six-run lead to protect."

The Mariners entertained trade offers for Johnson throughout the off-season, most notably from the New York Yankees, the Indians and Los Angeles Dodgers, but were unable to reach a deal.

Seattle management has since expressed a willingness to let Johnson play out his contract in Seattle if an acceptable deal is not reached.

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