

No Pedro, no problem: Red Sox drop Mariners

By Bob Finnigan

The Seattle Times

BOSTON — It is one thing to lose to Pedro the Great. It is another to lose to one of his underlings.

But on a New England day that was as dazzling as Saturday was dreary, it was not the who of the outcome but the how.

On the surface, it appeared Seattle lost, 3-2, to the Boston Red Sox on Sunday because Luis Ugueto was thrown out to end the game on an attempted steal of second base.

Hardly. When a club lives by the running game, sometimes it loses with it.

"We play that way," Seattle man-

ager Lou Piniella said. "If we hadn't played that way, we wouldn't be in first place."

In fact, the Mariners lost because the Red Sox slid two extra-base hits inside the first-base bag, leading to a run in the first and two runs in the third.

The Mariners lost because they went 2-for-10 with men in scoring position early against John Burkett, who's no Martinez on the mound but got the win.

The Mariners lost because Tony Clark, no Baryshnikov on defense, made two superb defensive plays, the biggest a rally-gutting dive-left on Jeff Cirillo's ball with the bases

loaded in the second.

The Mariners lost because the Red Sox came up correct on two pitches to Ruben Sierra in the ninth, with Ugueto running for Cirillo, who had drawn a two-out walk.

On the first pitch, Boston closer Ugueth Urbina threw the slugger a first-pitch changeup, which he slammed far out to right field-foul.

"I thought he'd throw a first-pitch fastball there," Sierra said, with a rueful smile. "If he throws a first-pitch fastball there and I hit it well, it goes for a home run."

On the second pitch, Ugueto went for second and catcher Jason Varitek threw him out — barely.

Later, Sierra had a quiet word for Ugueto, who had stolen successfully all four times previously.

"I told him not to let that bother him," Sierra said of the conversation he had with Ugueto in the clubhouse. "I told him the pitch was a 96 mph fastball and it was up high, a perfect ball for the catcher to make a throw. He almost stole the base anyway, don't let it stop him."

It may not have been the only lesson of the day. After the Red Sox, who had scored their run in the first on a wild pitch, got two-out hits from Nomar Garciaparra and Brian Daubach to overcome Seattle's 2-1 lead in the third, Piniella went to the mound.

The Seattle loss closed a home-home stretch in which by far the two best road clubs in baseball each lost twice in the other team's park.

When the 3-3 split in the two series was brought up to him, Piniella, whose ace pitcher, Freddy Garcia, had been unable to provide a win to make it a 4-2 trip, retorted:

"You guys (in the media) make so much of a damn series early in the year. They're on the damn schedule, so you play them, April series, May series, June series. Let's wait to the end of the year and see what happens."

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Men's

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Holliday ran a half-second personal best in his event, and his effort typified the effort of many Oregon athletes who stepped beyond their potential at the conference finale. Holliday ran a 50.73, where his previous best had been 51.29. His time was an NCAA automatic-qualifier.

"I just concentrated on my race and didn't stress and let it come out," Holliday said. "You can't ask for much more than a win for the team and an NCAA provisional mark in the process."

On Saturday, the Ducks got a surprise Pac-10 championship from javelin thrower Nick Bakke, who had been ranked 12th in the conference heading into the meet. Bakke launched a throw that was more than 20 feet longer than his season best and an NCAA provisional qualifier to win the conference crown. His toss made up for the loss of the injured John Stiegeler, who won the Pac-10 title this past year.

"I knew we needed the points, so I came in focused on scoring and not the place," Bakke said. "I hadn't competed since the Oregon Invitational, and coach (Bill Lawson) wanted us to shut the arm

down so we could try to get it as healthy as possible. I was more concerned with helping the team."

Duck hammer thrower Adam Kriz also threw a personal best in his event, though his improvement wasn't as dramatic as Bakke's. Kriz improved by 3 feet and easily took the conference title by more than 10 feet.

"I was really nervous coming in," Kriz said. "So I took a different approach during the competition and forced myself to sit down and try to relax, and that seemed to make a big difference."

Oregon's fifth individual title came courtesy of decathlete Billy Pappas, who won the multi-event title May 12.

While the Ducks got 50 points from the champions, the rest of their points came from the supporting cast of runners-up and top-5 finishers. Micah Harris came perhaps the closest of any Duck to winning his event. The senior finished second in the 110 hurdles by 0.01 seconds.

In the triple jump, Foluso Akinradewo finished second to top-seeded USC jumper Julian Kapek. Sophomore Trevor Woods finished fourth in the pole vault Saturday, though his jump would have been good enough for second if he'd had

fewer misses than the second- and third-place finishers.

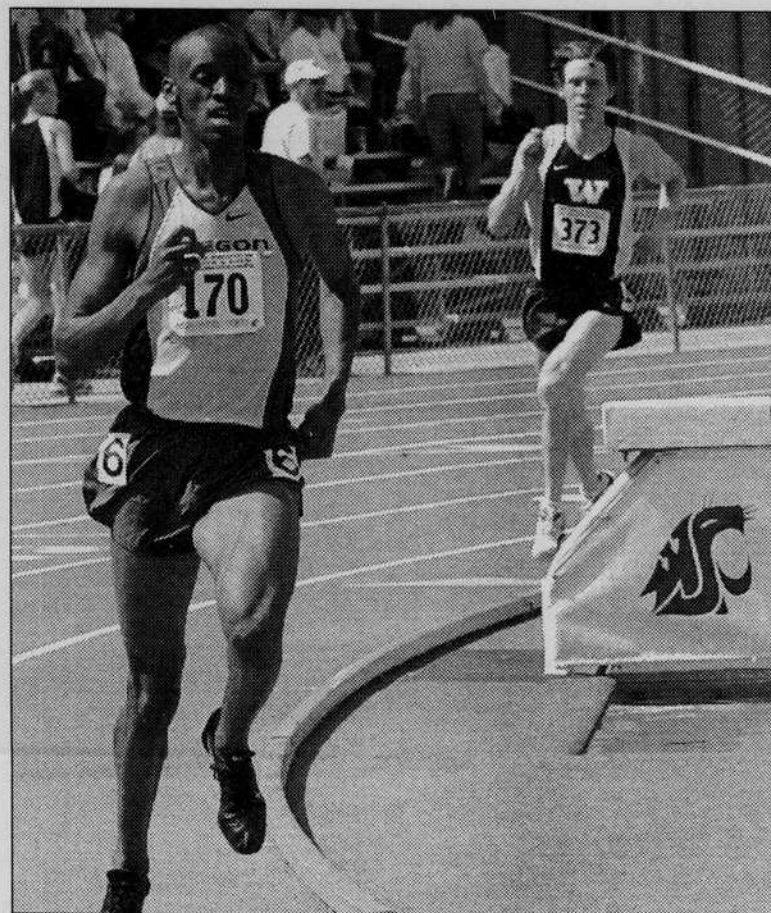
Sophomore Jason Hartmann had an impressive showing in the star-studded 10,000. He finished second to Stanford's Jonathon Riley.

The Cardinal accumulated most of their points in the distance events. Stars like Riley and Gabe Jennings led Stanford to 88 total points in the four events between 1,500 and 10,000 meters, including 56 combined points in the 5,000 and 10,000.

USC finished third with 103 1/2 points, while Arizona State and Arizona rounded out the top five. UCLA was the biggest surprise of the meet. Expected to finish near the top and possibly even contend for the team title, the Bruins finished sixth overall with 91 1/2 points.

The Ducks will spend the next two weeks preparing for the NCAA Championships. Several Oregon athletes, including Bakke, sit on the edge of the NCAA qualifying list. When conference meets conclude this week, those athletes will find out whether or not they are headed to Baton Rouge, La., for the national meet starting May 29.

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Courtesy Washington State Media Services

Simon Kimata won the 800-meter conference title Sunday in Pullman.

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Horoscope by Linda C. Black

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (May 20). When you get the feeling this year that you ought to slow down, slow down. You know that nagging little voice in your head that tells you to always do more? Ignore it. Trust your experience and your intuition, not your mind. You'll still get a lot accomplished, and you'll end up with more to show for it.

To get the advantage, check the day's rating: 10 is the easiest day, 0 the most challenging.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) - Today is a 6 - You're committed to serving others, and today you could get your chance. It isn't easy, though. Be prepared to move quickly, and always have an escape route in mind.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) - Today is an 8 - It'll soon be a little easier to communicate exactly how you feel. That's a blessing, because just as you're getting clear, others are getting confused. Makes you look good, doesn't it?

GEMINI (May 21-June 21) - Today is a 5 - You're stalled, but don't despair. Life will get easier on Wednesday. Don't start new projects or try to explain things until then. And watch out for unpleasant surprises.

CANCER (June 22-July 22) - Today is a 6 - Keep quiet about what you're doing. The others don't need to know yet. You're still in that awkward learning phase. Be smart and silent.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) - Today is a 5 - You may have to just say "no" to a loved one's expensive request, at least until you can find a better deal. That could happen later this week.

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