

stuff shots

Baseball season is here again

by MARK FLOYD
Sports Editor

While Oregon was rusting away in a month-long series of torrential downpours, the rest of the nation was celebrating the opening of the major league baseball season last week.

Most of the country has been basking in warm temperatures, and beer, the former unusual for this early in the season. And the play of some teams has been unusual as well.

The Los Angeles Dodgers got off to a hot start, winning their first four games, including three against defending division champ Houston. L.A. has vowed to turn things around this season and it looks like the Dodgers are well on their way. Too bad, who likes the Dodgers?

The surprising Atlanta Braves are right behind in second. Surprising, because they have already won three games. It took them until nearly May last year to accomplish that feat. Atlanta is the local favorite, since 147 Braves games will be shown on cable TV this season. Now if their two 40-year-old pitchers can last the season, the Braves could be interesting.

Houston, meanwhile, has done a complete turnaround and is mired in last. In between are the too-old Reds, the too-young Padres and the too-flaky Giants.

In the east, those Amazin' Mets are again on top. But don't mortgage your house on them. Philly is right behind, barely ahead of Montreal and St. Louis. But the dreaded Pirates of Pittsburgh will probably win. Who can like a team from Pittsburgh? Go Montreal and New York!

In the American League, everybody's favorite team, or it should be, is Oakland. Billy Martin has the A's playing Billy-ball, which is running, stealing, punching and throwing your starting pitcher for nine innings regardless of the score. It works, though, and Oakland rolled up a 5-0 record through the first week. The A's are the most exciting team in baseball.

But when the season gets old, so will those pitchers' arms. If Oakland doesn't come up with some relievers, look for Kansas City to come through again. George Brett hasn't really had a chance to explode yet, and with his medical problems, that could be dangerous.

A dark horse team is the Chicago White Sox who, rid of Mr. Veeck's monetary control, opened their wallets to buy a pennant. It may work, but not this year. California is bound to be better than last year, Texas and Minnesota the same and Seattle can't be mentioned in mixed company.

In the east, the Milwaukee Brewers are on top, but like so many other teams, they lack pitching depth. Time will tell at the end of summer, during the doubleheader days. Baltimore, which could be a fun team if Earl Weaver wasn't such a grouchy old man, will come on and probably win. The New York Yankees (now who's the manager?) could also be up there if Dave Winfield bats with his wallet and Detroit could surprise a few people, probably those who don't know a lick about baseball. As for Toronto, Boston and Cleveland, wait until next decade.

Four sentimental picks for the playoffs would be the Atlanta Braves and Montreal Expos in the National League and the Oakland A's and Detroit Tigers in the American League.

More logical picks, however, would be Los Angeles and Philadelphia in NL and Kansas City and Baltimore in the AL.

Now the best bet in baseball this season is that their will be a big old dispute between the players and owners come the end of May. In which case, all of the above predictions won't mean a thing.



Waiting their turn on the court, the Sandy High girls junior varsity tennis team takes a little sun and watches the varsity action.

Photo by Mark Floyd

Paola, Martin slug homers as Pioneers take 9-5 win

The Sandy batting attack exploded Monday as the Pioneers downed host Molalla 9-5 in a Timber Valley League baseball game.

Sandy took advantage of the fact that Molalla had no outfield fence as Mitch Paola and John Martin cranked out home runs to pace the Pioneers. Mo Contreras would have had one too, but the umpire ruled that the Sandy sophomore failed to touch third base, a decision that Pioneer coach Curtis Heath disputes.

Nevertheless, the Pioneers won easily as Kraig Gifford went the distance on the mound. He gave up a dozen hits, but scattered them and walked just one Molalla batter.

Paola led the offensive attack, scoring three runs and smacking a double in addition to his home run. The four-bagger came in the third, when the junior walloped a shot over the centerfielder's head.

Paola hit a double in the fifth and scored when Martin poked a shot into the right centerfield power alley for another homer.

Contreras knocked in a pair of runs with his shot and made it home, but apparently missed third base and was called out. That ended Sandy's sixth inning rally, but it mattered little as the Pioneers rolled on to the win.

The Pioneers lost a TVL contest Tuesday to Silverton by a 12-1 score. Sandy scored its lone run in the first when Contreras stole third and scampered home on a throwing error.

But the Pioneers couldn't halt the Silver Fox bats. Silverton pounded 13 hits for its 12 runs and Sandy helped the hosts out by committing five errors.

The real problem on offense was Sandy's inability to get to pitcher Mark Antonson. The southpaw shut down the Pioneers on two hits and held them scoreless after the first inning. He also recorded 14 strikeouts to silence the Sandy bats.

Sandy also suffered a Friday loss to Oregon City, 13-1. Sandy scored its lone run in the sixth when Dave Kirkland singled and Paola singled him to second. Kirkland was then put out on a fielder's choice but Martin singled Paola in for the Pioneer run.

Oregon City picked up three in the first and seventh innings and exploded for six in the third to put the game away.

Sandy's record now stands at 1-4 in TVL play. The Pioneers are tied for sixth place with Estacada, one game ahead of the winless Indians of Molalla.

The Sandy junior varsity has won three of its last four games, including a 9-4 win over Silverton. The Sandy freshmen team is undefeated in league play and beat Silverton by a 19-6 score.

calendar

SANDY HIGH	April 16 - Estacada at Sandy 4 p.m.
GIRLS SOFTBALL	April 21 - Sandy at Oregon City 4 p.m.
April 20 - Canby at Sandy 4 p.m.	April 23 - Sandy at Centennial 4 p.m.
TRACK	
April 16 - Sandy at Canby 3:45 p.m.	BOYS TENNIS
April 23 - Sandy at Oregon City 3:45 p.m.	April 16 - Sandy at Estacada 4 p.m.
VARSITY BASEBALL	April 20 - Molalla at Sandy 4 p.m.
April 16 - Sandy at Canby 3:45 p.m.	April 21 - Canby at Sandy 4 p.m.
April 18 - West Linn at Sandy 12 p.m.	April 23 - Sweet Home at Sandy 4 p.m.
April 21 - Molalla at Sandy 4 p.m.	GIRLS TENNIS
FROSH BASEBALL	April 16 - Estacada at Sandy 4 p.m.
April 16 - Canby at Sandy 4 p.m.	April 20 - Sandy at Molalla 4 p.m.
April 18 - Sandy at West Linn 12 p.m.	April 21 - Sandy at Canby 4 p.m.
April 21 - Sandy at Molalla 4 p.m.	April 22 - Sweet Home at Sandy 4 p.m.
BOYS GOLF	April 23 - Sandy at Sweet Home 4 p.m.

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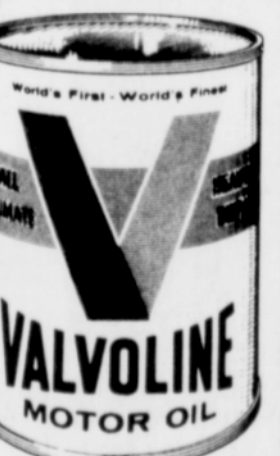
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Local soccer team formed

A team is being formed in the Sandy area for the Gresham Youth Soccer League.

Registration for the league, which is for kids ages 5 to 12, will be held in May. Games will begin this summer.

Anyone interested in forming a Sandy team should contact Susan Knotts after 6 p.m. at 637-3197 or Colleen Taylor at 668-7889.

LETTERS POLICY:

The Post asks that all letters to the editor be typed, double-spaced and signed. Deadline is noon, Tuesday. Letters should be accurate, free of libelous remarks and in good taste. This newspaper attempts to publish all letters it receives and may edit material lightly to conform to guidelines. Maximum length is 200 words.

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