

SPORTS BRIEFS

Jays' Beeston to step down

Paul Beeston will step down as president and chief executive officer of the Toronto Blue Jays, clearing the way for his long-awaited appointment as a key executive for Major League Baseball.

Beeston will resign his post with the Blue Jays and take over as baseball's chief operating officer, a position that puts him in charge of the business side of baseball. In his new role, Beeston will oversee all departments of baseball except the American and National Leagues. An owner's search committee supposedly has been working on finding a new commissioner.

Milwaukee DA to review Mark Whiten case

The Milwaukee district attorney's office is expected to decide whether to charge New York Yankees outfielder Mark Whiten with second-degree sexual assault.

According to Lt. Jerianne Fetein of the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Department, the 30-year-old Whiten, whose wife gave birth last week, was arrested Monday and later posted \$10,000 bail on the sexual assault charge, a felony.

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, citing a unidentified police source, said that Whiten "admitted having what he called consensual sexual relations with the woman." The source added that "probable cause was established" to arrest Whiten.

Tour De France sets mark

Frenchman Christophe Mengin pedaled from his homeland into Switzerland to claim the 16th stage of the world's most prestigious cycling race, the Tour de France.

Mengin claimed the 111-mile stage with a final sprint, holding off Belgium's Franck Vandenbroucke and countryman Richard Virenque on the jaunt from Morzine to Fribourg, a former fortress situated on a rocky headland. Mengin led the leaders with a time of four hours, 30 minutes and 11 seconds.

Report: Fraud

John Spano, whose attempt to purchase the New York Islanders turned into an embarrassment for the team and the National Hockey League, reportedly is being sought by federal agents on fraud charges.

Newsday reported that federal agents visited Spano's mansion in a Dallas suburb on Monday with a sealed arrest warrant, but were unable to find him. Citing unidentified sources, Newsday said the charges claim that Spano used fraudulent claims to obtain an \$80 million loan from Fleet Bank in Boston that he used to purchase the team.

Agassi at Infiniti Open

American Andre Agassi again tries to get his career back on track tonight at the \$303,000 Infiniti Open at Los Angeles. Agassi has won just six of 13 matches in 1997 and did not participate in any of this year's Grand Slam tournaments.

He missed the Australian Open while taking a two-month sabbatical from tennis and withdrew from the French Open and Wimbledon, citing a wrist ailment. Agassi will play countryman Justin Gimelstob. Australia's Mark Philippoussis, the third seed, will try to improve on his 31-9 match record in 1997 when he faces Roberto Jabali of Brazil.

SPORTS

LEONARD WINS, WOODS HAS COMPANY AT TOP

British Open winner is third major golf champion under age 30 this year

Justin Leonard's British Open victory was just another indication of the changing of the guard in golf.

Leonard, 25, became the third major championship winner this year under age 30, joining Masters champion Tiger Woods, 21, and 27-year-old U.S. Open winner Ernie Els.

And the trend went deeper. Darren Clarke, Jim Furyk, Padraig Harrington, Retief Goosen, Lee Westwood, Robert Allenby - all in their 20s - had strong showings at Royal Troon, where eight of the top 19 finishers were under 30.

At the same time, perennial contenders in the majors like Nick Faldo, Greg Norman, Nick Price, Bernhard Langer, Seve Ballesteros, Ian Woosnam and Colin Montgomerie were never a factor.

In fact, except for Montgomerie they have been a factor in none of the three major championships this year.

And where were the familiar names at Troon like Corey Pavin, Payne Stewart, Mark Brooks and Tom Lehman? They were in the field but they never challenged.

For the young, winning seems contagious. They are not in awe of the men who have dominated the game the last decade.

"Maybe going in there today, having seen Tiger and Ernie do it," Leonard said. "I thought it was OK to go out and win a tournament like this even being the age I am."

He won it with the kind of round that will make other players take notice. Of the 16 players who started the final round under par, Leonard's 65 was the only round in the 60s.

"This win won't change Justin one bit," his coach, Randy Smith, said in Dallas. "He'll still be the same great kid. He'll still work hard. He'll win some more majors."

Then Smith said something that must be crossing the minds of Norman, Faldo and Price, who have 57 British Opens and six victories among them.

"Everybody talks about Tiger Woods," Smith said. "But there are some other kids who can play, too. Remember, Justin is only 25."

And remember that Phil Mickelson and Paul Stankowski are both only 27.



Peninsula major all-stars finished a spectacular run in the playoffs Sunday, falling to Rose City, 4-2 in a semi-championship Little League game at Columbia Park Annex in north Portland. (Photo by M. Washington)

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