

# SPORTS

## Mark McGwire, Count'em For Homerun #53!

PITTSBURGH—Mark McGwire is hitting home runs so fast, he's rewriting history with almost every prodigious swing of his bat.

McGwire hit his 53rd homer — moments after Sammy Sosa hit No. 50 in Chicago — to become the first National League player to hit that many in 49 years Sunday as St. Louis lost 4-3 to the Pittsburgh Pirates.

McGwire became just the third NL player to hit as many as 53 homers in a season, joining the Pirates' Ralph Kiner (54 in 1949) and the Chicago Cubs' Hack Wilson, who hit a league-record 56 homers in 1930.

McGwire, who broke Babe Ruth's record for homers over three consecutive seasons with a tape-measure homer Saturday, hit a 2-2 pitch from Ricardo Rincon deep into the left-field seats with two outs in the eighth inning.

The high drive initially looked like it might reach the seldom-reached upper deck, and the estimate of 393 feet seemed to be way off.

McGwire's sixth homer in five days left him eight short of tying Roger Maris' record of 61 in 1961 with 32 games to play, and it rated him the rarest of ovals — a curtain call on the road.

"They kept clapping for about a

minute, so I ducked my head out and gave them a wave," McGwire said. "I hope the Pirates didn't mind. I wish everybody in baseball could feel the reception I'm getting."

McGwire acknowledged after hitting his 50th last week he has a legitimate shot at baseball's most storied record, but he wishes people would quit conceding it to him.

"I'm not close to it yet," he said. "It's a long ways away."

Still, Pirates starter Jason Schmidt says every opposing pitcher realizes he might soon be in the record books, too.

"Jon Lieber and I were talking about that," Schmidt said. "We're part of history. This will be with us for the rest of our lives, but I don't care. He's such a great guy, everybody is excited."

Except the fans who bought tickets for Monday afternoon's game in Pittsburgh. McGwire plans to take the day off, the second game he would skip off in a four-day span.

McGwire said the day off has been planned for a week, and he probably will skip only one more game the rest of the season.

"We get together and rate what's happening at the time, how the games are going, what the weather's like, all

that stuff," Cardinals manager Tony La Russa said. "Last year, we had one planned, we went against it, and it worked out against him and against us."

McGwire's timing Sunday couldn't have been more perfect. Sosa, chasing McGwire and Maris, had connected on his 50th in Chicago literally minutes before McGwire's shot.

"Really, that's really cool," McGwire said.

McGwire's homer was the 440th home run of his career, the 22nd most in major league history, and left him two homers behind Dave Kingman, his favorite player as a youngster.

Before homering, McGwire, who helped lure the Pirates' first consecutive regular-season sellouts since they moved into Three Rivers Stadium in 1970, grounded out, walked twice and doubled ahead of Ron Gant's run-scoring grounder in the fifth.

That was one of the few runners the Cardinals managed to get home as they stranded 14 — at least two runners in every inning from the second through the seventh.

La Russa's strategy of batting his pitcher eighth to provide more

protection in front of McGwire backfired as Kent Mercker (8-11) struck out with two runners on and two outs in both the second and fifth innings.

Overshadowed by McGwire's run on baseball's most storied record were Fernando Tatis' 5-for-5 day for St. Louis and the Pirates' season high-tying seventh consecutive victory.

Schmidt said he is too much of a competitor to pitch around McGwire, even though the Pirates have walked him 10 times over the last two weekends.

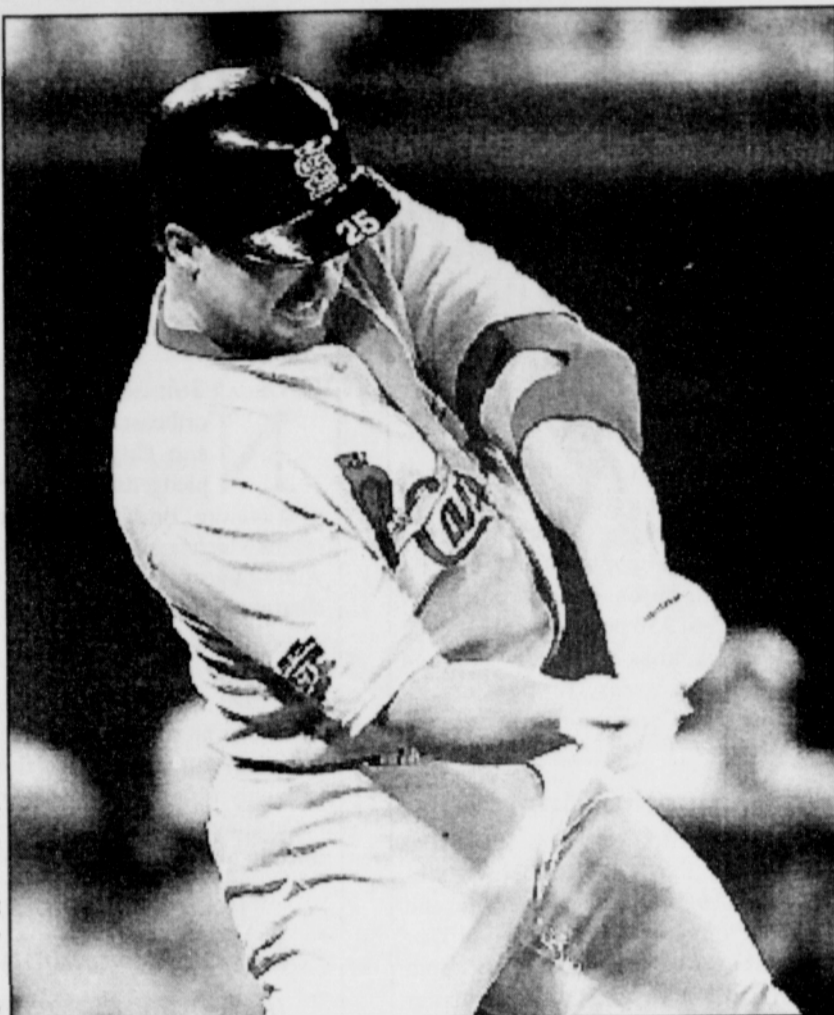
The Cardinals have 13 homers in seven games against the Pirates, two by McGwire. . . .

McGwire has walked 10 times in five games against Pittsburgh over the last two weekends and is within 33 walks of tying Babe Ruth's record of 170 walks in 1923. . . .

McGwire has 163 homers over the last three seasons, two more than Ruth hit from 1926-28. . . .

McGwire's 111 homers the last two years are the most in history by a righthanded batter. . . .

For the second day in a row, McGwire didn't take batting practice.



Mark McGwire

## THE Big UPSET IN THE Little League

WILLIAMSPORT, Pa. — Mike Erickson hit two home runs and reliever Jeff Duda didn't give up a hit over three innings as Langley, Canada, beat Guadalupe, Mexico, 4-3 Monday to hand the defending champion its second loss of the Little League World Series.

Duda held Guadalupe scoreless in the final three innings of the rain-delayed game, striking out eight batters — including all three in the sixth.

Erickson went 2-for-3, and one of his home runs broke a 3-3 tie in the fifth inning.

Jorge Trevino hit a two-run homer for Guadalupe.

Guadalupe, who lost 6-1 to Kashima, Japan, on Sunday, is now 0-2 in pool play. Langley is 1-0.

Langley took a 3-0 first-inning lead behind back-to-back home runs by Erickson, a two-run shot, and starting pitcher Sean Sargent.

But Guadalupe starting pitcher Daniel Baca settled down, strik-

ing out Karl Reddick with the bases loaded to end the threat. He would retire 11 of the next 12 batters as his teammates rallied on offense.

In the bottom of the first, Sargent walked Carlos Garza, who came home on a passed ball. In the second, Trevino's two-run homer tied the game 3-3.

Baca gave up just two hits after the first inning — but one was the game-deciding homer by Erickson.

Guadalupe is trying to repeat the feat of the last Mexican team to win the World Series, Monterrey, which won back-to-back championships in 1957-58.

A Canadian team has never won the World Series.

In later games Monday, it was: Jenison, Michigan, Greenville, N.C.; Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, vs. Kashima, Japan; and Cypress, Calif., vs. Poms River, N.J.

Rain threatened Monday's game, but the first game was halted for an hour.

## Moon Wins debut for Seahawks

So that's what was missing. Inconsistent and not quite convincing in their first three preseason games, the Seattle Seahawks were none of the former and a whole lot of the latter in Saturday night's preseason trashing of the Arizona Cardinals in Tempe, where the temperature at kickoff was 106 degrees.

The reason: Warren Moon, who was almost as hot as the weather.

Making his summer debut after missing 25 days in a contract holdout, Moon, 41, made this quarterbacking stuff look a lot like the old line about riding a bicycle.

Moon completed 8 of 15 passes for 202 yards, including TD strikes of 55 yards to James McKnight and 69 yards to Joey Galloway as the Seahawks rolled up 31 first-half points.

What gives? This game can't be as easy as Moon makes it look, can it?

"I don't know if it's easy, but it's natural for me," Moon said. "I just look at it as being natural. Those (six) practices this week really helped me as far as getting my sharpness back and seeing things that you need to see. When you recognize the things you need to see, then your natural ability is going to take over."

His best throw was one even his teammates didn't think Moon could make. It was the 69-yarder to Galloway, who blew past Cardinals free safety Kwamie Lassiter and cornerback J.J. McCleskey.

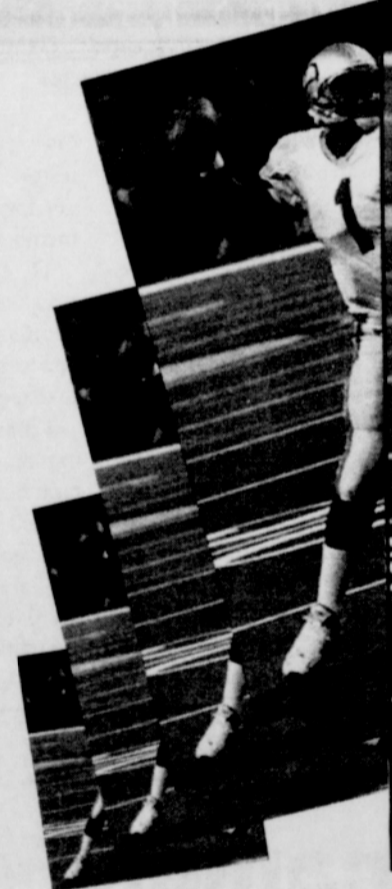
"I saw Joey take off and I thought, 'Oh man. Joey's just outrun another quarterback,'" guard Pete Kendall said. "There aren't many in the league who can get him that ball, but Warren did. He hit Joey in

stride."

It just goes to show that Moon — even at 41, especially at 41 — is not just another quarterback.

"That pass was Exhibit 9,000, right there," Kendall said. . . .

With Moon finally in camp and picking up where he left off during his record-setting season last year, the only decision is whether Friesz or Kitna is No. 2.



Warren Moon

## Singh at the Sprint International PGA

CASTLE ROCK, Colo. — Nursing a slim lead, all Vijay Singh wanted down the stretch was one more birdie. He got an eagle instead.

Punctuating his final round with an eagle 3 on the 17th hole, Singh won the Sprint International on Sunday for his second title in as many weeks.

Singh, 35, shared the first-round lead with Jim Carter and was the outright leader after the second and third rounds. The newly crowned PGA champion began the final day with 33 points and a narrow 1-point lead under the modified Stableford scoring system used in this event. He never relinquished that advantage.

The native of Fiji birdied five holes on his front nine, increasing his point total to 43 for a 7-point lead over Willie Wood at the turn. His potential runaway didn't materialize, however, and the victory wasn't clinched until eight holes later.

With a 1-point lead over both Wood and defending champion Phil Mickelson, Singh played the 492-yard, par-5 17th hole perfectly.

He drilled a 3-wood 306 yards uphill to the middle of the fairway, then hit an 8-iron to the back fringe. His downhill, curving putt from about 25 feet found the cup for a 5-point eagle, increasing his point total to 47.

"I made some really nice putts the first nine holes, and I think that was the key to my victory," Singh said. "I was very confident after the ninth hole that I was going to win."

"I knew sooner or later I was going to make a birdie somewhere down the stretch. All I needed was one more birdie to seal things up."

"Give credit to Willie. He stuck in there and made some birdies, and it was a really close match until I was lucky to make eagle on 17 that turned everything around."

Wood and Mickelson tied for second at 41, and Tiger Woods, who fashioned four eagles in the first three rounds but none on Sunday, finished

at 38. Rocco Mediate was next at 37.

Singh's early birdie barrage gave him a seemingly comfortable lead. But after Singh's poor drive on No. 10 and subsequent bogey, Wood ran in birdie putts at the 11th and 12th holes, and the lead was trimmed to two points.

Wood three-putted the 14th to fall another point behind, but the diminutive Oklahoman sank a 15-foot birdie putt at No. 16 to cut the deficit to 1.

The 17th hole is a birdie and eagle opportunity for most players, but Wood's lack of length hurt him there. His drive found the right rough, and his second shot, a long iron, was short of the green. He pitched to 20 feet but two-putted for a disappointing par.

Singh's eagle seconds earlier already had decided it.

Wood, 37, owns just one victory in his 14 full seasons on the PGA Tour.

"I played well, but Vijay's eagle on 17 just shut the door on me. He has always driven the ball well. Now he's putting really good," Wood said.

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