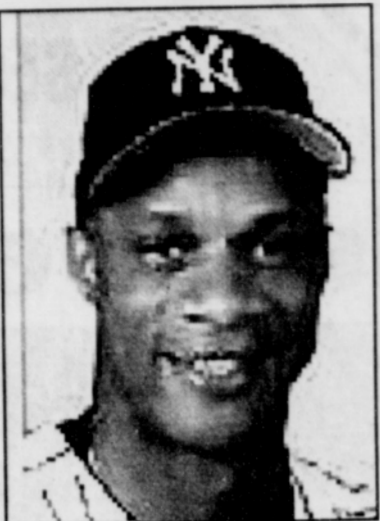


# SPORTS BRIEFS

# SPORTS

## Darryl Strawberry Diagnosed With Cancer of the Colon



Darryl Strawberry, the 36-year-old Yankees outfielder, was diagnosed with cancer of the colon Thursday. Doctors say his prognosis for recovery is excellent, according to Charisse Strawberry, the player's wife.

Strawberry hopes to have surgery Saturday, or Monday at the latest, for the removal of a walnut-sized tumor, and according to his wife, doctors at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center in New York are confident he will be able to resume his career next season.

Strawberry's teammates, who will play Game 3 of their American League Division Series against Texas here Friday night, were informed of his condi-

tion by Manager Joe Torre before an afternoon workout here Thursday. Torre's voice cracked as he spoke, and several players began weeping.

Shortly thereafter, the Yankees emerged from their clubhouse and went through their workout in almost complete silence, the only sound being that of bats striking balls during batting practice. Their communication was inferred.

Pitcher David Cone, Strawberry's longtime teammate with the Mets in the past and now with the Yankees, stood alone, emotion covering his face. "Darryl is going to have a lot of confusion and he is going to be scared," said Cone. "We are all scared. But the prognosis is good. From what we hear, there has been early detection and there is an excellent chance of full recovery."

In a statement, Yankees' owner George Steinbrenner said: "I have always said that this is a good man of great character and this has certainly proved to be true. He is facing a serious crisis and his concern is for his teammates. This is extremely upsetting to me and it really shows that baseball is only a small part of life."

Strawberry, expected to be replaced on the team's roster by the outfielder Ricky Ledee, will remain in the hospital for six days following his

surgery. According to his wife, doctors believe the tumor is of Grade A or Grade B variety, rather than the more serious Grade D, and that a colostomy — removal of part of the colon — won't be required. Charisse Strawberry, speaking in a telephone interview from the Strawberry's New Jersey home, said doctors believe the tumor has existed for about two years, developing from a polyp; and that regular chemotherapy treatment won't be necessary. They added that Strawberry would need only a one-time radiation treatment.

Eric Davis, a longtime friend of Strawberry's since both grew up in Los Angeles and, recently, an outfielder with the Baltimore Orioles, was diagnosed with colon cancer in 1997, and a third of his colon was removed. He rebounded this year to rank among the American League batting leaders.

Strawberry has evolved in his adult life under the constant scrutiny of New York baseball fans and media. Selected by the Mets as the first pick in the 1980 draft, Strawberry ascended to the majors three years later amid great expectations, which he seemed destined to fulfill. He hit 26 home runs in his rookie season and played center stage when the Mets won the World Series in 1986.

But his inability to cope with the success led to problems with drugs

and alcohol. Within two years after Strawberry left the Mets in 1990, he had become a shell of the player he once was, riddled with injuries and overwhelmed by his personal problems. Strawberry was suspended from baseball in 1995 for substance abuse, and he lost what remained of his fortune after being charged by the Internal Revenue Service with owing substantial back taxes. At 33 years old, Strawberry was an untouchable in baseball, his career seemingly over.

Steinbrenner agreed to give Strawberry another chance, however, and in 1996, he hit 11 home runs in 202 at-bats, re-establishing himself. He had become more devoted to his faith and was a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. A knee injury sidelined him for virtually the entire 1997 season, but this year, Strawberry slugged 24 home runs in only 296 at-bats, and he had become a quiet leader, deeply respected by teammates.

Late in the season, Strawberry's playing time decreased, and Torre had a sense something other than a chronic knee problem was bothering Strawberry. In fact, Strawberry suffered from abdominal pains for about two months, pain that he didn't reveal to teammates or the club's medical staff.

Strawberry wanted to remain on the roster for the playoffs, wanted to remain a productive member of the lineup. But on Monday, he decided to tell the Yankees of his pain.

A CAT scan performed Wednesday afternoon revealed a mass in his colon, and Strawberry told Torre he wouldn't be able to play in Game 2 of the Division Series, but that he hoped that after a colonoscopy Thursday, doctors would clear him to play in Game 3 Friday. Following the procedure Thursday morning, however, a physician informed the Strawberrys that the walnut-sized tumor found in his colon was cancerous.

### Green Bay Investigation

Packers reportedly are being investigated by the Internal Revenue Service for not disclosing autograph income.

The station also said the IRS is investigating other professional athletes in the Milwaukee area, current and former, who were paid to participate in autograph sessions.

### WNBA in Brazil

New York's Rebecca Lobo scored 13 points in the second half Friday night to lead a WNBA team to a 90-77 victory against Parana in the finale of their three-game Brazilian tour.

Lobo, who finished with 19 points, scored two baskets with 14 minutes remaining in the game to give the WNBA squad the lead for good.

### Tyson Psychiatric Reports Delayed

Nevada boxing authorities will have to wait a little longer to see what a team of psychiatrists has to say about the state of Mike Tyson's mind. Reports from a five-day evaluation of the former heavyweight champion sent four days after they were due.

"There's going to be some embarrassing things in the report, I'm sure," Jimmerson said.

### Basketball Hall of Fame

Bird has always deflected attention toward his teammates. Larry Bird is a coach now, and a good one at that. But his legacy as one of the game's greatest forwards follows him into the Basketball Hall of Fame induction in Springfield, Mass.

Even in his shining moment, Bird always a team-first player gives credit to others. "It's not about me playing. It's about me and my team," he says.

### NBA regular season virtually assured of late start

The start of the NBA season is almost certain to be delayed for the first time in history, with labor talks not scheduled to resume until Oct. 8.

The good news on the NBA lockout front is that the sides are back speaking to one another. The bad news is that time is getting short.

### Monica Seles, Overcoming

The quest to regain her former No. 1 ranking, however, is "uncharted territory."

In Toyko, she defeated Sanchez-Vicario for the Toyota Princess Cup title for the third year in a row.

"She's a fighter, she never gives up and she keeps improving," Seles added. "I'm a fighter too, and it brings out the best in both of us."

### Andre Agassi saved four match points

11 games to beat a tiring Karol Kucera in five sets Saturday and reached the final of the Grand Slam Cup.

Kucera sent a forehand into the net to drop the game and Agassi gained momentum, winning 11 games in a row to close out the match.

### Buckeyes defeat Penn State

Ohio State turned to its defense on a rainy day, and linebackers Jerry Rudzinski and Joe Cooper came through with fumble recoveries for touchdowns Saturday as the top-ranked Buckeyes beat No. 7 Penn State 28-

## Elkington defeats Funk

PINE MOUNTAIN, Ga. — When healthy, Steve Elkington is tough to beat.

It's been a while between trophy presentations for Steve Elkington.

Plagued by viral meningitis and sinus surgery earlier this year, Elkington was forced to miss nearly two months on the PGA Tour.

With his ailments behind him, Elkington came from four shots off the lead in regulation Sunday, then parred the first hole of a playoff with Fred Funk to win the Buick Challenge.

"I've had a frustrating year with my health, but when I'm not sick I play pretty good," said Elkington, who finished third in PGA championship in August. "I've played pretty good of late and my confidence has been building for four months."

He closed with a 5-under-par 65 to match Funk at 21-under 267 on the

7,057-yard Mountain View course at the Callaway Gardens resort. Funk finished with a 69.

Elkington players on the bubble also the 1994 winner, parred the 432-yard, par-4 18th hole in the playoff. Funk's tee shot wound up in a fairway bunker, and his second shot hit the lip and bounded sideways about 20 yards.

The Australian, who makes his home in Houston, became only the third two-time winner in the tournament's history (Hubert Green, 1975 and 1984; and Jerry Pate in 1977-78 when it was known as the Southern Open).

Despite the four-shot deficit entering the final round, Elkington felt he had a chance after shooting a 65, including a 30 on the back nine, in the third round Saturday.

"The last 27 holes have been the best I could play," he said.

"I've been around long enough to know that no lead is safe. No lead is big enough. You can always be caught," said Elkington, who won for the ninth time in his career, the first since last year when he won the Doral-Ryder Open and The Players Championship.

The \$270,000 first prize gave Elkington \$695,000 for the year in 15 events and raised his career total to more than \$7 million.

Bill Glasson shot a 69 to finish third at 268, one shot behind the leaders. J.L. Lewis had a 68 and was another shot back at 269. Skip Kendall, who had the day's best round with a 63, was next at 271.

Leading money-winner David Duval was another two shots back at 273 after a 69.

Elkington had seven birdies without a bogey in his round, including five birdies on the back, keyed by a 15-footer on 18 that forced the tie.

## College Football

PSU (vs) Montana 17-20  
Oregon State (vs)  
Utah State 20-16  
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