

Pitcher shines in debut

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Daisuke Matsuzaka looked about as carefree after his highly anticipated major league debut as he did before taking the mound. In between, he validated the heavy price tag and huge expectations.

Matsuzaka struck out 10 in seven innings, allowed six hits and walked one to lead the Boston Red Sox over the Kansas City Royals 4-1 Thursday before a crowd that appeared to be as interested in the Japanese pitcher as it was in the Royals.

The 26-year-old right-hander spent the hours leading up to the first pitch lounging on a leather sofa in the clubhouse, occasionally laughing and pointing at an ESPN segment that talked about his mystical, perhaps mythical, gyroball. If the \$103 million rookie had any indication the entire baseball world was waiting for his performance, he never let on.

“For me it didn’t quite feel like the very first time,” Matsuzaka said through an interpreter. “I was able to approach the game as usual.”

Sports Briefs

CHICAGO (AP) — Darryl Stingley, paralyzed after a vicious hit during an NFL exhibition game nearly 30 years ago, has died. He was 55.

Stingley was pronounced dead at Northwestern Memorial Hospital after he was found unresponsive in his Chicago home, according to Tony Brucci, an investigator with the Cook County medical examiner’s office.

The cause of death was not immediately available. An autopsy was scheduled.

Stingley, a star receiver with the new England Patriots, was left a quadriplegic after he was hit from behind by Oakland’s Jack Tatum while trying to catch a pass.

The hit on Aug. 12, 1978 broke Stingley’s neck, and he spent the rest of his life in a wheelchair. Stingley regained limited movement in his right arm and operated his electric wheelchair on his own.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL
GAINESVILLE, Fla. (AP) — Florida coach Billy Donovan is staying. His star players are leaving. Donovan spurned a chance to return to Kentucky. Corey Brewer, Taurean Green, Al Horford and Joakim Noah will enter the NBA draft.

Softball scores

Colby Community College softball team split a doubleheader with Garden City Wednesday in Colby. Colby won game one 5-2. Garden City won game two 8-1.

Colby tennis postponed

Colby High boy’s tennis match Thursday at Cimarron were postponed because of the weather. Although the match was rescheduled, Colby will not play.

Colby is scheduled to play 1 p.m. Tuesday at Larned.

In junior varsity play, several Colby players placed Monday at Garden City.

Number one singles: Gray Henry, fourth; Sam Matzek, 10th.



COLBY FREE PRESS FILE PHOTO

Colby High golfer R.J. Ladenburger prepared to swing during a 2006 golf meet last season. Ladenburger is one returning member of the team that placed 11th at the state meet last year. Colby’s season starts Tuesday.

State-meet experience vital for boys

By John Van Nostrand
Colby Free Press Publisher

Colby High boy’s golf team coach Tom Bowen wants this year’s team to remember last season’s success — but still be ready to play.

Last year, Colby boys finished 11th at the state meet. A majority of that team returns to the greens.

“The experience those kids had, getting second at substate and playing at state was a real plus,” Bowen said. “But I just want them to remember what it took to do that.”

That memory lesson starts with the new season 2 p.m. Tuesday at Goodland.

Colby only lost one senior from last year’s team, Chris Staley. He led Colby at the state meet with an 80. Returning players are R.J. Ladenburger, Cole Finley, Kyle Molstad and Tanner Corder.

“We’ve got the same ones as last year,” Bowen said, “plus four freshmen.” Those freshmen are Ryley Haas, Shawn Phillips, Collin Rous and Dylan Stithem.

The four returning players will be

the core to the team. More help is needed based on scoring.

“We’ve got to find at least four golfers. We need six,” Bowen said. “If there is a tie, we need that fifth golfer.”

Having that much experience return helps Bowen and coaching.

“I will still watch them when they swing and tell them to make little changes. Golf is more a mental game. If we work on a technique and they have a good swing, I’ll tell

them to use it. This is a difficult game to master.”

Every little bit will help a golfer’s game Bowen said. He appreciates those who play golf during the summer and hopes the upperclassmen will be good role models and teachers to the younger ones.

“We are going to have make sure older ones have some positive influence,” he said. “And the younger ones that played over the summer, that gives them an idea.”

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Wildcats coach leaves for West Virginia

MANHATTAN (AP) — Kansas State gave Bob Huggins a second chance.

So did West Virginia, the school Huggins spurned five years ago.

Huggins took them both, a year apart. On Thursday, he resigned to become the Mountaineers’ basketball coach after one season with Kansas State.

Although administrators thanked Huggins for turning around the Wildcats’ fortunes, they weren’t too happy about his dash out of town.

“Bob is a good guy. I think he made a bad decision, but he is a good person,” athletic director Tim Weiser said. “He was great to work with. He is much different than I think he is portrayed as being.”

Huggins flew from Manhattan to Charleston, W.Va., on Thursday evening. Upon his arrival, he got into a car without speaking to reporters. He said late Thursday in a news release that he took the job because he wanted to come home.

“I’m incredibly happy to be coming back to West Virginia,” he said. “I left a great situation at Kansas State with wonderful people who are as close to West Virginia people as you can get.”

Huggins replaces John Beilein, who left the Mountaineers on Tuesday to become Michigan’s coach.

“You should know that we moved heaven and earth to keep Bob Huggins here,” school president Jon Wefald said. “Tim in effect said, ‘You tell us what your salary should be. Whatever West Virginia is offering, we will match it and then some. Same for the assistant coaches.’”

Huggins told Weiser and Wefald of his decision Wednesday night, after returning from Cincinnati.

“I asked him, ‘Bob, do you think leaving now is the right thing to do?’ And he said, ‘No,’” Weiser said. “Then I said, ‘How many times in your life have you known what the right thing is to do and not done it?’ And he said, ‘Never.’”

West Virginia athletic director Ed Pastilong said school officials were delighted that Huggins was returning to his alma mater.

“I am so happy to have Bob Huggins back at West Virginia,”

Pastilong said in the news release.

“Bob’s record speaks for itself.”

Huggins was born in Morgantown, W.Va., although he grew up in Ohio. He played his last two college seasons for the Mountaineers and holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees from West Virginia, where he was a graduate assistant for the 1977-78 season.

Before arriving at Kansas State, Huggins coached for 16 seasons at Cincinnati, leading the Bearcats to 14 consecutive NCAA tournaments and one Final Four. He stayed on despite a massive heart attack in 2003 — missing only two weeks before returning to the team — but couldn’t overcome other issues.

His arrest and conviction for drunken driving in 2004 upset president Nancy Zimpher, and he was forced to resign over issues that included players’ arrests, suspensions and low graduation rates.

Huggins was out of coaching for a year before he was hired at Kansas State. Had the school known he would be gone again so soon, Wefald said, he wouldn’t have been the Wildcats’ coach at all.

“If Bob had indicated to us about a year ago this time that he needed something in his contract about his alma mater, then we would have gone on,” Wefald said. “We would have looked at somebody else.”

Huggins’ contract requires him to pay Kansas State \$100,000 for leaving early.

Given that Beilein’s paying a lot of money to leave West Virginia, Weiser said he anticipated criticism for not including a similarly hefty penalty in Huggins’ contract.

“I’m sitting here and looking at a \$2.5 million buyout that John Beilein had,” Weiser said. “Boy, that did a lot of good, didn’t it?”

Weiser also said he would not consider granting releases to Huggins’ recruiting class — considered one of the nation’s best with 6-foot-9 Michael Beasley — until a new coach has been hired.

Huggins’ arrival in Manhattan last spring injected a massive dose of enthusiasm into a program that had fallen into mediocrity with the creation of the Big 12 Conference.

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