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The SENTINEL-VOICE, June 22, 1989



AARON AT BAT

Curveballs

I think there were once those who tried to claim curveballs didn't really curve but were optical illusions. As a player who watched thousands of them coming toward the plate, I can tell you they really bend. They start out going in one direction and curve over to a different point. Where the ball begins to curve is the spot players say the ball "breaks."

But there is not just one pitch called a curveball. There are many different types. Some curves break very, very big. Some break very late, that is, close to the plate. Some are called "lazy curveballs," which are the opposite of the ones that have good snap to them.

One pitcher who threw curves with a good snap was Sandy Koufax. He was more famous for his fastball, but he developed a very good curve and struck out a lot of batters with it. He threw so hard that his curve was more of an "obstacle illusion" than an optical illusion.

But Koufax didn't have the best curveball on the Dodgers' pitching staff, or even the second best. They had two of the best curveball pitchers I ever faced in Carl Erskine and Johnny Podres.

The player who had the best curve I ever saw was Sam Jones, who played for the St. Louis Cardinals, the Chicago Cubs and the San Francisco Giants. "Sad" Sam Jones was so tough because he could throw the curve all kinds of ways. Sidearm, overhead, Sam could throw the curve from all these different motions.

Now, many young pitchers come into professional baseball able to throw the curveball. But they don't have what we call a "controlled" curveball. Oh, they have a big curve that high school or college batters will swing at. But the higher they go in professional baseball, the more disciplined the hitters get. Pitchers have to have their pitches "under control," knowing where they are going to be when they get to the plate.

Instructors work with them to develop control. It's like most good tennis players have a "second serve." After their best hard serve hits the net or goes across the back line, they use a second serve that they know will stay in play.

Baseball pitchers get in situations where they have to get the ball over the plate for a strike, but they know the batter is sitting back waiting on a fastball. So they have to throw a breaking pitch for a strike. That's when a controlled curveball is like a tennis player's second serve.

You see, a breaking ball is not all that hard to throw, but it is hard to control. And it is a pitch that will get kids in trouble if they don't know how to control it. **ll**

Hank Aaron is the top home run hitter of all time with 755 homers. A member of baseball's Hall of Fame, Hank is vice president of the Atlanta Braves.

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Negro League Player Dead at 88

WILMINGTON, Del. - Judy Johnson, a standout Negro League third baseman in the 1930s and the sixth black player elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame, died Wednesday at age 88 of complications arising from a stroke, according to his niece.

Johnson batted over .300 in seven of the nine seasons in which the Negro Leagues kept statistics, retiring with a

lifetime average over .340. He played for the Philadelphia-based Hilldale Daisies for much of his career, finishing as player-manager of the Homestead Grays. His best season was 1925, when he batted .392.

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WHO'S NEWS

High School Athletes Take Top Honors



Carlton Gray (left) and Courtney Cox (right) are winners of the 1988 Dial Award.

America's most coveted award for high school athlete/scholars, The Dial Award, was presented to Courtney Cox, basketball and golf star and honor student of Noblesville, Indiana, and Carlton Gray, outstanding defensive end and wide receiver and honor student of Forest Park High School, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Cox and Gray were chosen as the top winners of the 1988 Dial Award by a nationwide panel of coaches, college recruiters and sports writers who based their selections on academic and athletic accomplishments.

In basketball, Cox made first team *Street and Smith* All-American, AAU All-American, *USA Today* Top 10 and is listed among Dick Vitale's *Basketball* top prepsters. She's also first team All-State in golf and has been named *Seventeen* magazine's "Most Likely To Succeed." She was interested in sports from an

early age. At ten, she became the only girl on an all-boys YMCA basketball team that traveled around Indiana. An excellent student, she is a member of her high school's Student Government and the National Honor Society.

In football, Gray is a *Street and Smith* honorable mention, Regional Defensive Player of the Year, All-State, All-League and All-Area. In basketball, he plays guard, is a *Street and Smith* honorable mention, All-State and has a 16 ppg average. Captain of both football and basketball teams, Gray is also a member of the National Honor Society, Student Council and participant in the National Achievement Scholarship Program for Outstanding Negro Students.

The Dial Award was established in 1979 by The Dial Corporation, makers of Dial Soap. Many winners have gone on to become pro athletes or are successful in a variety of exciting careers.

Crowd Pleasers Are the Winners in Body Building Championship

In what might be described as the ultimate in audience participations the Pro Bodybuilding Championship let's the crowd decide who takes home the prize money and coveted title. Unlike other competitions, there are no official judges. The outcome of the contest is accomplished by the use of a sophisticated sound meter and computer, which measure audience response to each contestant.

Bodybuilding fans will have the opportunity to join in on the judging process on July 1. The Sahara Hotel and Casino along with Hoko Productions will host the First Annual Sahara Professional Bodybuilding Championship in the Sahara Hotel's Grand Ballroom. Top professionals from throughout the United States will try for \$10,000 in first place prize money.

The crowd's reactions, applause and attention to each competitor are the determining factors in the final outcome of the competition. Fans at the championship will have the chance

to see Marlon Darton, former Mr. Universe and 1988 P.B.A. Women's Champ Mishay Santos. Both hold numerous state and national titles. Other featured performers include Mike Sable, Victor Terra, Cathy Butler and Donna Thornton.

The men's and women's events are sanctioned under the auspice of the Professional Bodybuilding Association. The P.B.A. tour culminates with the Coors Extra Gold Pro Building Championship with a grand prize of \$50,000.

Tickets are available beginning June 18 at the Great Earth Vitamin stores, all Ticketron outlets and the Sahara Hotel. Tickets will also be available at the door July 1. General admission is \$15, reserved \$25 and special VIP seating \$50. Doors open at 4:30 p.m. and event action begins at 6 p.m. For further information call 702/737-2111.

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