

SPORTS

Bonds is first four-time MVP

NEW YORK (AP) - Barry Bonds became the first player to win four Most Valuable Player Awards, capping a record-breaking season in which his 73 home runs set the biggest mark of all.

The 37-year-old outfielder, who hit .328 with 137 RBIs for the San Francisco Giants, received 30 of 32 first-place ballots and 438 points in voting for the National League award announced Monday by the Baseball Writers' Association of America.

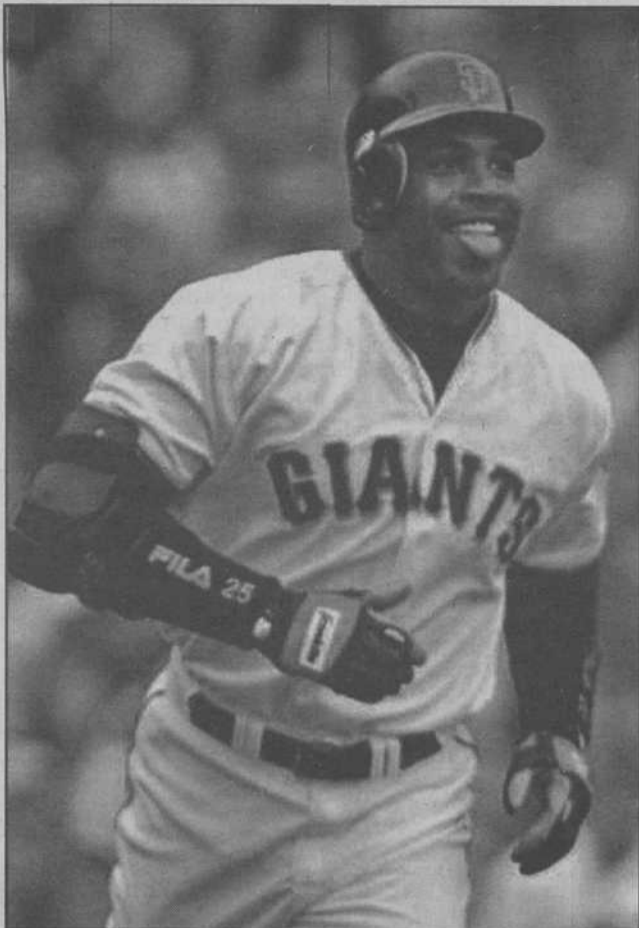
The American League MVP is announced Tuesday.

Chicago Cubs outfielder Sammy Sosa got the other two first-place votes and finished second with 278 points, followed by Arizona outfielder Luis Gonzalez (261) and St. Louis infielder-outfielder Albert Pujols (222), who became the first NL rookie to finish as high as fourth since pitcher Joe Black was third in 1952.

Bonds, who became a free agent after the World Series, also won the MVP award for Pittsburgh in 1990 and 1992 and for the Giants in 1993. He finished second to Atlanta's Terry Pendleton in 1991 and to San Francisco's Jeff Kent last year.

The only other three-time winners were Roy Campanella, Stan Musial and Mike Schmidt in the NL, and Jimmie Foxx, Joe DiMaggio, Yogi Berra and Mickey Mantle in the American League.

Bonds broke two of Babe Ruth's records last season,



San Francisco Giant Barry Bonds smiles and sticks his tongue out as he rounds the bases after hitting his 73rd home run of the season against the Los Angeles Dodgers at Pacific Bell Park in San Francisco.

walking 177 times - seven more than Ruth's total in 1923 - and finishing with an .863 slugging percentage, 16 points higher than Ruth's percentage in 1920. Bonds has 567 career homers, seventh on the career list.

He also broke the season home run of 70 set three years ago by Mark McGwire.

Sosa, who hit .328 last season with 64 homers and a major league-leading 160 RBIs, got the first-place votes of Teddy Greenstein of the

Chicago Tribune and Mike Kiley of the Chicago Sun-Times.

It is not yet clear how much of an effort the Giants will make to retain Bonds, who has failed to lead them to the World Series. The last reigning MVP to change teams was Bonds, who left Pittsburgh in 1992 to sign with San Francisco.

Bonds gets a \$100,000 bonus for winning the award, while Sosa gets \$100,000 for finishing second.

Baseball accused of racist hiring policies

NEW YORK (AP) - Dave Stewart, angry Toronto didn't promote him to general manager, quit as assistant GM of the Blue Jays and insisted baseball owners use racist hiring policies in filling their top front-office jobs.

Stewart, a four-time 20-game winner, was assistant GM with Toronto since November 1998. The Blue Jays hired J.P. Ricciardi, Oakland's former player personnel director, to replace general manager Gord Ash, who was fired during the final week of the season.

"They think the only people capable of doing these jobs are white people, not minorities," Stewart, who is black, said from Ontario.

The only black general manager in the major leagues is Kenny Williams of the Chicago White Sox, and the only other black GMs in major league history were Bill Lucas, Frank Robinson and Bob Watson.

After quitting Wednesday, Stewart agreed to become pitching coach of the Milwaukee Brewers, turning down a similar offer from the Texas Rangers.

Blue Jays president Paul Godfrey denied race was a factor in the decision to hire Ricciardi.

"Why did I give it to somebody else other than the guy inside? Because J.P. Ricciardi had something no other candidate had - he had a game plan and a strategy both for the major league team and the minor league team," Godfrey said.

"I feel terrible about it because Dave was given serious consideration and was on the short list. This decision isn't personal. If I would have done it on personal friendship, I think Dave Stewart would have gotten the job."

Stewart is among several minority candidates bypassed for general manager jobs since the end of the season in favor of whites.

The Los Angeles Dodgers promoted Danny Evans from their front office to GM; Texas hired GM John Hart, who left Cleveland; and the Indians promoted Hart's assistant, Mark Shapiro, as part of a transition planned last spring.

While other candidates for the Rangers' job were interviewed by team owner Tom Hicks, New York Mets senior assistant general manager Omar Minaya was interviewed only by a headhunter hired by the Rangers.

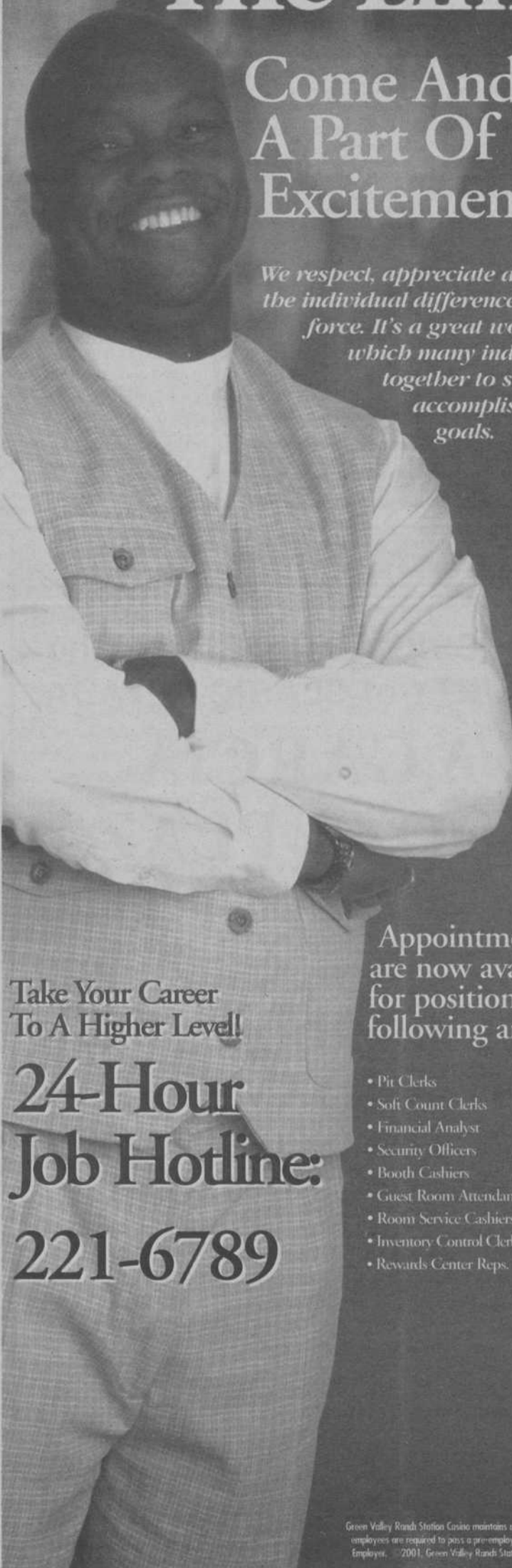
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