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All-stars get taste of big time

By Brad Emons
staff writer

baseball

Pete Rose, not to be confused with the Montreal Expo version, will tell his grandchildren some day that he hit a home run at Tiger Stadium.

This Rose was in full bloom Monday morning in the annual Adray All-Stars game held at the corner of Michigan and Trumbull.

A starter at second base for the Livonia Collegiate Baseball League (LCBL), Rose drilled a solo homer over the left-field fence in the fourth inning, but it wasn't enough as the LCBL lost to the Lansing All-Stars, 6-5.

"I was just trying to hit the ball hard," said the Livonian. "I was looking for a fastball. It was a decent pitch — near the belt."

Rose, a sophomore reserve this season at Michigan State, is one of the leading hitters on the first place Livonia Adray club.

"I was thinking about it last (Sunday) night — that it would be great to hit one out at Tiger Stadium," he said.

MEANWHILE, another Michigan Slater, center-fielder Todd Bidelman, was putting on a hitting show of his own for Lansing.

He took Dave Rodriguez' first pitch of the game and sent a shot over the 385-foot sign for a homer. In the second inning, Bidelman singled in another run to make it 4-0.

"I told them (his teammates) that I was hitting the first pitch out," Bidelman joked. "I've been hitting well lately. Really, I was just trying to get

a hit here. That was my goal."

The homer seemed to shake up Rodriguez, the Livonia Adray ace who has never been beaten in the LCBL.

This is the first time Lansing has won," said Livonia Adray manager Ron Heller. "This is a better ballclub than they've had in the past."

"But our guys stayed with it."

AFTER ROSE'S homer cut the deficit to 4-3, Lansing struck for two runs in the fourth after two were out. Walter's Appliance pitcher Jeff Barnett got wild for Livonia, walking four batters and tossing four wild pitches.

The Livonia All-Stars, however, battled back and made a game of it by scoring three runs in the fifth on an RBI single by Redford Caesar's Carl Ruffino and a two-run single by Garden City's John Boelen.

The loss, however, did not dimlith some solid performances turned in by the Livonia All-Stars.

Pitchers Jay Bobel, Bill Matthews and John Recker, all from Livonia Adray, kept Lansing off the scoreboard. Michigan National Bank's Clint Scollard singled twice and Walter's Bob Foust just missed a home run in the first inning when the ball caromed off the screen in left field, just below the foul pole.

Foust settled for a double.



John Recker, a Farmington Harrison graduate, hurried two innings of scoreless relief in the rain at Tiger Stadium Monday. He hopes his performance will catch the eye of a Major League scout.

Ex-Hawk does best to catch scouts' eye

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

Adray All-Star Game at Tiger Stadium fit the latter description.

The Adray Baseball League serves a multitude of purposes for its players. To most, it provides a competitive atmosphere wherein they can work on their game and prepare for the upcoming fall college baseball season.

To others, though, it is perhaps a final chance to showcase their skills for professional scouts — one last shot at fulfilling the dream of somebody wearing a Major League uniform.

Two of the players performing for the Livonia Adray team in Monday's

Don Dornbey and John Recker went into Monday's game with one expressed purpose — impress the scouts.

Recker, a 1981 graduate of Farmington Harrison High School, has not found college to his liking. After helping the Hawks to the Class B state semifinals as a junior and a district championship in his senior year, Recker enrolled at Oakland Community College.

Please turn to Page 4

Judges' ruling staggers Payne

C.J. Risak

IT WAS MARCHING ON. Even for Craig Payne, who looked so deflated, so betrayed, when the announcer delivered the most crushing blow he's suffered in his boxing career.

"It's the red corner," it was all that could be heard. It was enough. Because Tyrrell Biggs occupied the red corner, not Craig Payne. That devastating announcement, declared at the close of Saturday's Olympic Box-offs in Las Vegas, ended Payne's amateur career.

It might have extended it three or four more bouts, had the boxer from Livonia been proclaimed the winner instead of Biggs. Payne would be training in earnest for the Olympics. Instead he's listed as the alternate. His job is to help Biggs prepare.

PAYNE'S FINAL weekend as an amateur fighter was packed with peaks and valleys. The peak came Friday night when he pounded Biggs into submission, forcing a rematch Saturday with the Olympic team berth at stake.

Indeed, Payne's manager and coach, Paul Soucy, could scarcely believe that Biggs survived Friday's onslaught still standing. But the top super heavyweight did, and that proved costly for Payne. As the No. 1-rated boxer, Biggs had to be beaten twice to lose his spot on the Olympic team.

Had Payne knocked Biggs out Friday, Biggs would have been forced to forfeit Saturday's rematch. Amateur rules deem it so, stating all KO'd fighters must wait 30 days before stepping into the ring again.

Still, it seemed Payne had the psychological edge so vital in this game. He surprised Biggs with an aggressive attack Friday, beating him to the punch constantly and dominating the battle thoroughly.

And yet, a forboding omen was forthcoming: Payne won 4-1. One judge, Paul Konnor, actually ruled in favor of Biggs.

SUCH POLITICS have haunted Payne throughout his career. They did again on Saturday.

There was a slight delay before the opening bell. Soucy noticed one of the judges was Carmen Williamson. He recalled a remark Williamson made after a previous Biggs-Payne bout.



"He said Craig couldn't beat Biggs in a million years," Soucy said. Such a prejudiced comment was enough for Soucy to object to Williamson's presence as a judge Saturday. Williamson was replaced — by Eddie Urbek.

When the scoring of Saturday's bout was announced, it couldn't have been closer on four cards. Two judges favored Payne by a 59-58 margin; two favored Biggs 59-58. The fifth was Urbek. He gave every round to Biggs, scoring it 60-45.

Such scoring is implausible and unacceptable, except to those who know boxing, a sport that allows anything to be plausible and acceptable. A name in a corner — like Don King — is often enough to assure victory in the ring.

"I HURT more than people know," Payne said Tuesday. He believed, and always will, that he won Saturday's fight convincingly.

"I beat him fair and square. I hit him harder," Payne claimed. "Some of the best people in the sport of boxing judged it in my favor, and this guy (Urbek) calls it perfect for Tyrrell Biggs."

Which recalls, hauntingly so, Soucy's remarks before the Box-offs began. "We're going to have to knock Mr. Biggs out," he said. "We'll never win a decision."

That prediction proved true. But, despite the devastation so evident on his face Saturday afternoon, he indeed continues for Payne — at an accelerated Las Vegas-style pace. Eddie Futch, who trains among other world heavyweight champion Larry Holmes, is interested in Payne's professional career.

CONFERENCES CONDUCTED through Tuesday indicate that Futch will indeed handle Payne, in part. "I'll be turning pro with Paul (Soucy) and Dick (Quinn, his coach-trainer)," Payne said. "I'll just be taking some other people with me."

Payne also plans on staging some pro fights in Livonia, although most will be in the big-money world of Vegas. But nothing, Payne pledges, will happen in his pro career until after the Olympics. He has promised to help Biggs prepare, and he will stick to his word.

That's much more than you can expect from most others in boxing. It's a brutal, hard-knocking world, where the most savage blow are often delivered after the bell has sounded.

Payne — winner of seven bouts — has more than 10 amateur fights — and he's been KO'd by more judges than opponents.

Payne classy in final defeat

By Brad Emons
staff writer

boxing

Craig Payne's quest for a spot on the U.S. Olympic Boxing Team rested squarely in the hands of five judges Saturday in the finals of the Olympic Box-offs at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas.

The super-heavyweight from Livonia lost a close 3-2 decision to Tyrrell Biggs of Philadelphia, Pa. in a nationally televised match that was determined by no fewer than one point on four of the five judges' scorecards.

Well-known U.S. judges Robert Serkin and Rolly Schwartz each scored the fight 59-58 in favor of Payne, while Troy Filippelli and Elmo Adolph each gave the edge to Biggs, 59-58.

The swing vote appeared to belong to Massachusetts judge Eddie Urbek, who scored it 60-45 — Biggs.

"I fought my heart out and I tried everything the last round," said Payne in the post-fight press conference afterwards. "There wasn't any use of saving anything. It was the last fight and for all the marbles. I wish him (Biggs) all the luck in the world. I'm boxing him 100 percent."

The heart-breaking loss came on the heels of Payne's greatest triumph in his amateur career.

ON FRIDAY NIGHT, Payne showed the American boxing world by scoring his first professional win over opponent Mike Adams, a 4-1 decision in a

Biggs in the Olympic Trials last month in Fort Worth, Texas, looked like a different fighter in the Friday night rematch.

The 23-year-old Payne dominated action from the opening bell, beating the taller Biggs to every punch. Although tiring at the end, the aggressive Payne built a healthy lead with quick jabs and punishing body shots against the reigning World Champion.

During Friday's telecast, ABC commentator Howard Cosell said he had been told by Payne: "I'm the lightest I've ever been."

Payne, who weighed in at a season-low 217 pounds, attributed the win to "better conditioning."

"I gave it everything I had and he (Biggs) didn't get off like he usually does," Payne said. "The conditioning paid off. I ran longer and did more sets."

"IT WAS the sweetest victory we've ever had," said Livonia Boxing Club coach Paul Soucy. "We went in knowing we had to take it to Biggs."

Right went left in the match according to the judges' scorecards. The final score was 3-2 in favor of Biggs.

Biggs, who has won 10 of his 11 professional bouts, is the current WBC Heavyweight Champion.

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