

Work inspires Tanana now

By Tom Henderson
special writer

LAKELAND, Fla. — The Tigers were on the road for an exhibition game in Orlando against the Minnesota Twins. Sparky Anderson was gone and so were his coaches. Club president Jim Campbell was nowhere to be seen. Neither was general manager Bill LaJole.

The only ones left behind at Marchant Stadium were a handful of pitchers. They went through a half-hearted workout, throwing to a couple of minor-league catchers brought over for the morning from Tigertown and running a few sprints.

But mostly they joked with each other as the rock music blared from the open clubhouse nearby.

Soon, the minor-league catchers were on their way back to Tigertown, the complex across the road that is home to the minor-leaguers, and the Tiger pitchers were showering and changing into their golfing duds.

THERE WERE two exceptions. Frank Tanana wasn't through yet. He had gotten in his pitching and then ran for nearly three miles in the sauna-like air of Lakeland, thick with 85-degree heat and 80-percent humidity. But he wanted to get in some fielding and he recruited fellow starter Dave LaPoint to hit him a bunch of sizzling grounders.

"What an inspiration!" hollered out Jack Morris, dressed in civies and toweling off his wet hair as he good-naturedly teased Tanana. "Let's move those feet a little."

"I'm gassed," said Tanana.

"Yeah, you look a little flushed," said Morris.

Gassed or not, flushed or not, Tanana kept on fielding grounders. "Give me some real hard, now, OK?" he asked of LaPoint, who started drilling the ball at Tanana's feet. One ball, as hot as the

people in sports

day, tipped by Tanana as he kicked out his leg like a goalie making a skate save.

"THAT'S PERFECT," said Tanana. "Just like that." And so it went.

Half an hour later, showered and dressed, but still red-faced and sucking in oxygen, Tanana came out of the clubhouse for friendly half-hour chat with a home-town reporter.

Someone stepping out of a time-warp from, say, 1977, might have been shocked at Tanana's performance. Frank Tanana busting his tail in practice? Frank Tanana being friendly with a reporter he'd never met? Frank Tanana? Wasn't he the rude party boy of the California Angels?

"I wasn't a very nice person," Tanana acknowledged. "I followed man and it almost killed me. I'm going to follow God, now."

Tanana came out of Detroit Catholic Central in 1971 with a Nolan Ryan fastball. He soon developed a strong taste for the fast life, too. His reputation grew on the field and off the field. He struck out 269 batters in 1975 to lead the American League and 261 in 1976. He won a pile of games and was named to three All-Star teams. He became an All-Star in the bar, as well.

"I WENT the ways of the world," explained Tanana, who has rented a place in Troy for the upcoming season. "I fell into the Playboy routine. I had a lot of things, I had money. I had a lot of pleasures of the world. I had a lot of girlfriends, a nice home. I also had a terrific drinking problem. I was in a lane that was taking me down the path

of destruction."

He also had a growing sense that something was missing. As the wins and strikeouts and conquests grew, so did the lack of contentment. "I was successful and I got caught up into a rut."

"But after five years, I would go home. And when you're not around the people anymore and you're lying in bed at night, you ask yourself the question: What does it all mean? What is it all for?"

"There I was, really using people, seeing my own pleasure. And that was my life. I sought my own gain. I just wanted to please myself. I couldn't care less about anyone else. I was looking out for Number 1."

"And I tell you what. After five years, I realized I was on a merry-go-round going nowhere. I tasted all that the world had to offer, and I was still empty. I had everything, and yet I had nothing. Just a feeling inside: So what? I'm not really happy."

TWO THINGS happened to coincide with Tanana's discontent. A good friend in California, John Werbas, began talking to him about the Bible and Jesus Christ. And a good friend, fellow ball player Lyman Bostock, was shot to death.

"One day we were playing together," said Tanana, "and the next day, Lyman wasn't there. That really got me thinking. We all think we're going to live a long life. But Lyman's death showed me that might not be the case — how temporary this life is. . . How short it might be. . . How even a long life is nothing compared to eternity."

So, in 1978 Tanana and his wife, Cathy, became born-again Christians. His career has been more down than ups since then. Arm troubles that ended his fastball days, a 4-10 record with Boston in 1981, a 7-18 record with Texas in '82, when he led the league in losses. But Tanana feels his life is on

track. He treats everyone with respect, is always cordial and friendly with the seemingly endless stream of radio, TV and print people who ask for interviews in spring training, and excudes contentment.

"CONTENTMENT? THAT'S a good word," said Tanana. "Now, my life is contentment, it's exciting. It's meaningful. It's got a purpose. I've gone through some tough times since I've been a Christian. My career has been mediocre at best. But I get a great enjoyment out of it. I work harder than I ever worked before because I'm working for God's glory. And I'm working so I can share the good news of Jesus Christ."

Tanana doesn't get up on any soap boxes in the clubhouse, but he's active in the Baseball Chapel, and is more than willing to share his thoughts with players who come to him for advice. He has a familiarity with the Bible, quoting scripture, not by rote, mechanically, but with a natural style that gives meaning to the words.

Tanana is seriously considering joining a seminary in the off-season. How, you may ask, can a good Catholic boy with four kids join a seminary? Tanana no longer considers himself a Catholic. The seminary, the Dallas Theological Seminary, is non-denominational.

"My thoughts on going into the seminary are just to gain a greater knowledge of his word," he explained.

Though Tanana says his career lately has been mediocre, if he continues to pitch the way he did after he came to Detroit last June in a trade with Texas, his fulltime attendance in the seminary may be years away.

In the meantime, he wants to be an example to his teammates and to his new neighbors in Troy. "I don't want to be a goody two-shoes. But I want people to see how I can cope with life's problems. To see my contentment."

Best cagers

Continued from Page 1

"Mike is not a flashy player, but a very hard worker who got the job done," said Salem coach Bob Brodie. "He was our steadiest, strongest and most durable player, not missing a quarter of action all season."

"Defensively, Mike was always on our opponents' best mind player."

He was also the Salem captain and MVP. He also made the All-Western Lakes squad.

Ken George, senior, Farm. Harrison: The heavy 5-10 floor leader led Harrison to a 32-10 record over two seasons, including a Western Lakes crown last season.

A two-time All-Western Lakes pick, George scored 295 points this season and 294 a year ago.

He also had 233 career assists and 121 career steals.

A clutch free throw shooter, George hit 113 of 144 this season for a 78.6 percent clip. He shot 78 percent last year en route to second team All-Area honors.

George led Oakland County in free throw shooting two straight years.

Skip Barnett, junior, Garden City: One of four juniors on this year's All-Area

team, the 6-6 center averaged nearly 18 points and 13 rebounds per game.

"Skip moved from a forward position to center this year and he worked very hard to make this change," said GC coach Bob Dropp.

A two-year starter, Barnett has been instrumental in Garden City's 20-4 and 16-4 records. The Cougars have won two straight Northwest Suburban League (NSL) crowns.

Blessed with a good vertical jump, Barnett was the NSL's MVP.

He is also a member of the National Honor Society with a 3.65 grade-point average.

Chuck Henry, Wayne, Coach-of-the-Year: After coming from Dearborn Divine Child three years ago, Henry has made his mark with the Wayne program, capturing two straight league titles and a district.

His teams are always fundamentally sound, exhibiting good ball-handling, shooting and passing skills.

Defensively, Wayne uses an aggressive man-to-man style.

Henry also believes in a tough non-league schedule. Wayne will face the likes of Highland Park, Catholic Central (twice) and Ann Arbor Huron next season.

Gloves at S'craft

The Detroit-area Golden Gloves Championships are returning to Schoolcraft College in Livonia.

The finals are scheduled for Saturday, April 19. Ticket prices and times have not yet been announced, according to Paul Soucy of the Livonia Boxing Club.

The semifinals are scheduled for Saturday, April 12, at the Michigan State Fairgrounds (Community Arts Building) in Detroit. Preliminary bouts will

be held Friday, April 4, at the Inkster Recreation Complex.

There will be 12 different weight divisions in three separate classes: Novice, under 20 years of age with no more than three sanctioned bouts; Senior Novice, 20 years and up with no more than seven sanctioned bouts or four victories; and Open Class, eight or more victories.

Open Class winners will advance to the National Golden Gloves Tournament.

Experience lifts Falcons

Continued from Page 1

Most of the girls who've tried out have little if any experience playing soccer, McKinley said. There wasn't a goalkeeper to be found in the group of 20, either.

Still, McKinley is hopeful the Hawks can notch a few wins this season. She can't look from an easy time from newcomers to the WLA, Walled Lake Western and Walled Lake Central.

Walled Lake Western had over 70 girls try-out for its team. And, if things weren't already difficult enough, who do you think the Hawks open the season against?

Class A state champion Livonia Stevenson.

FARMINGTON

An iron curtain is going to be erected in front of the Farmington net this season.

Coach Ed Bartram has one goal: make sure opponents don't win goals on his team. The Falcons goals against, which plagued them at the start of

last season, is something Bartram wants trimmed.

With most of his back line returning, including goalkeeper Cyndi Rieden, Bartram is confident that can be achieved. Rieden, a junior, was Farmington's most improved player last season.

Rieden is joined by defenders Amy Smith and Jennifer Cunningham.

Offensively, the Falcons lost only one forward to graduation (Katie McIntosh) and have Laurie Dingle back. Last season, Dingle was selected the team's most valuable player with nine goals and three assists.

At midfield, Karen Pennywilt is back along with Leslie Martin. Freshman Jennifer Misares, if her recovery from a broken ankle continues to go well, could find herself starting in the open midfield spot for the Falcons.

"I feel we can score more goals than in the past," said Bartram. "All the defenders are back, except for one (Katie Schoenick), so our defense should be stronger."

Strength is what Farmington or any other team in the WLA is going to need to unseat Stevenson. 30



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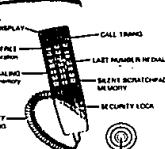
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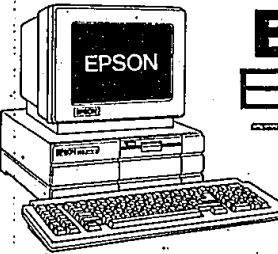
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