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SPORTS COMMENT



By JOE GROSS

Billick is building confidence

Tonight, Ravens fans can finally get a close-up view of what Brian Billick has done so far. The Ravens play in Baltimore tonight for the first time this preseason, having built a surprising 2-0 record.

Those two "meaningless" exhibition victories may actually be meaningful in this case. The record is a sign that the team has at least started to turn the tide. That's something everyone in the organization has crossed their fingers and hoped for. But probably only the most avid, blindly loyal fans really expect it to happen.

Billick came to town with a splash. He seemed

More NFL news, Page B3



Navy's Michelle Nance works her way past George Mason's Carolina Kent last in night's game.

KICKING OFF

Navy women blank Mason in opener

Despite some opening-night jitters, the Navy women's soccer team was able to overcome its anxiety and the rain to post a season-opening 2-0 victory over George Mason last night at Dewey Field.

"This was a big win for us," said seventh-year head coach Carin Gabarra. "It's a good win against a team with a good national reputation and a great regional win for us."

This season was cause for much anticipation after last year's Navy team registered its best-ever record at 17-3-1. Though starters Anne Kipp and Nicole Aannapu have since graduated, Navy looked as though it hadn't missed a beat.

With four new faces in the starting lineup and a few position changes, Navy played to form. Though badly outshot (19-7), the Midshipmen capitalized on two of their shots for goals.

Sophomore midfielder Melissa Rains not only got a surprise starting nod, but tallied Navy's first goal of the season on a cross from newcomer Madia Sheikh a little more than 18 minutes into the game. Despite all shots by the Patriots in the first half, the Mids were able to stifle George Mason's attack thanks to an outstanding night in goal by 1998 first-team all-Patriot League goalkeeper Sarah Wilson.

"We had a few problems and minor breakdowns. But we did quite a few good things to build on the rest of the season."

— Carin Gabarra, Navy coach

She stopped back-to-back point-blank shots by George Mason's Katy Robertson in the first half en route to a career-high 12 saves. Wilson topped her previous best of 10, which came in last season's season opener against nationally ranked UCLA.

It was also a memorable night for senior defender Tara Refo, who scored her first-ever college goal.

Though the anchor of the young defensive Navy unit has taken just 17 shots in her career, she got an excellent opportunity on a deflected corner kick and capitalized. Gabarra seemed generally pleased.

"We had a few problems and minor breakdowns," she said. "But we did quite a few good things to build on the rest of the season."

The Mids next play host to St. Joseph's at Dewey Field on Monday at 7 p.m.

Tigers go long, short to beat O's

By DAVE BUSCEMA
For The Capital

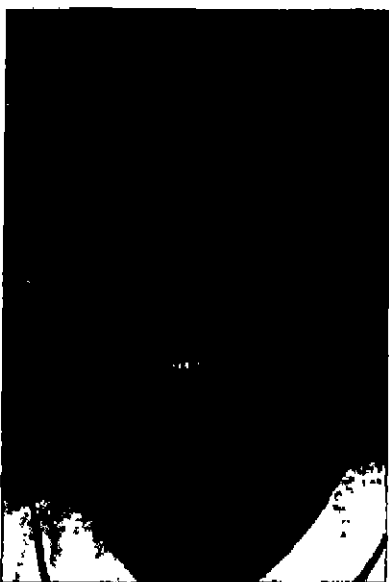
DETROIT — Two shots rocketed their way out of the park to right field. Two dribblers simply squirted down the third-base line.

Separated by hundreds of feet in their critical blows, the Orioles and Detroit Tigers were, nonetheless, tied in the bottom of the eighth inning last night.

Until the Tigers split the differ-

O'S PERCH

When Today: 8:08 p.m.
Where: Tiger Stadium
O's Starter: Scott Erickson (10-10)
Tigers starter: Dave Mlicki (9-10)
TV: 50, 54. Radio: 1090-AM
Outside Orioles try to even the weekend series this evening at Tiger Stadium, which will be replaced by a new ballpark next year in downtown Detroit.



Harold Baines hit .322 with 24 homers and 81 RBIs for the Orioles.

O's send Baines to Tribe

By DAVE BUSCEMA
For The Capital

DETROIT — Harold Baines is the kind of player you'd like to have 25 of, Orioles general manager Frank Wren said. But yesterday the Orioles said goodbye to him anyway.

They may say hello again in a few months. But for now, the 40-year-old All-Star designated hitter is a Cleveland Indian. As a result of the deal, the Orioles continue to stockpile young arms for the future.

The Orioles also had the chance to trade Scott Erickson — one of their veteran arms — to the Indians, but that deal fell through.

In the deal for Baines, the Orioles picked up 22-year-old reliever Juan Aracena, who has spent the season in Class A, plus a player to be named later — a player Wren said would help the major league club quickly.

Wednesday, the Indians claimed Baines — and reportedly Erickson as well — off the waiver wire. That gave the two teams until 1 p.m. yesterday to make a trade, allowable since no American League club with a worse record made a claim on either player.

(See BAINES, Page B3)

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Damion Easley and Gabe Kapler blasted back-to-back homers to left, making up the ground between the Tigers' bunts and the Orioles blasts. As they did, they gave Detroit a 5-4 victory at Tiger Stadium.

And they did it against reliever Al Reyes, who had given up just two runs in 16 innings with the Orioles.

"I brought in Al Reyes to get ground balls from two guys who hit home runs and they hit home runs," manager Ray Miller said. "But, I certainly can't knock Mr. Reyes. He's done a good job for us. He just didn't get it done tonight."

The Tigers led 3-0 going into the seventh as Detroit starter Jeff Weaver extended the Orioles' scoreless streak to 16 innings. But BJ Surhoff drilled a two-run, upper-deck homer to right in the seventh and Derrick May — taking the DH spot left unoccupied by the Harold Baines trade — homered to tie the game in the eighth.

The deadlock was short-lived as Reyes gave up his pair of homers with one out after relieving Jesse Orosco.

As tough as yielding back-to-

(See BIRDS, Page B3)

Francis goes to Rockets

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP) — Maryland's Steve Francis got his trade wish and, in return, Vancouver got its depth.

In what turned out to be a three-way deal, involving the Houston Rockets and the Orlando Magic, the Grizzlies sent Francis, their disgruntled draft pick who was selected second overall last June, and ex-Terp Tony Massenburg to the Rockets.

"I've been called everything from a head case to a type of person who is ungrateful, and that's something that's not even related to me as a person. As the people of Houston and all over the United States get to know me, they'll know I'm a real sensitive person, and the things I do come from the heart."

In return, the Grizzlies got forwards Othella Harrington and Antoine Carr and guards Michael Dickerson and Brent Price from Houston, and a first-round draft pick in 2000, 2001, or 2002. As part of the deal, the Magic sent

(See FRANCIS, Page B4)

SPORTS ON TV

TODAY	
TRACK & FIELD	LITTLE LEAGUE SERIES
World Championships 12:30 p.m. 4, 11	Championship game 4:30 p.m. 2, 7
COLLEGE FOOTBALL	HORSE RACING
Arizona at Penn State 1 p.m. 2, 7	Travers Stakes 4:30 p.m. ESPN
Kansas at Notre Dame 3:30 p.m. 4, 11	GOLF
Louisiana Tech at Florida State 5 p.m. ESPN2	NEC Invitational 3 p.m. 9, 13
N.C. State at Texas 8:30 p.m. ESPN2	LPGA Oldemobile Classic 5:30 p.m. ESPN
MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL	EXHIBITION FOOTBALL
Mariners at Yankees 1 p.m. 5, 45	Redskins at Steelers 7:30 p.m. 4
Orioles at Tigers 5 p.m. 50, 54	Panthers at Ravens 8 p.m. 13
Athletics at White Sox 7 p.m. WGN	AUTO RACING
Mets at Diamondbacks 10 p.m. FX	NASCAR O'Reilly 275 2:30 p.m. ESPN
TENNIS	NASCAR Goody's 500 7:30 p.m. ESPN
ATP Hamlet Cup 1 p.m. HTS	BOXING
Pilot Pen International 1 p.m. 9, 13	David Reid vs. Keith Mullings 11 p.m. HBO
ATP Hamlet Cup 7 p.m. HTS	

It's race time again

Annapolis 10-Mile Run slated for tomorrow

By JOE GROSS
Sports Editor

It's that time again: Annapolis Ten-Mile Run weekend. Needless to say, it will be a festive time throughout Annapolis as a brigade of runners converges on the city for the event.

The race originated more than two decades ago with five intrepid runners. Since then, it has grown into one of the premier 10-mile races in the nation.

The event will be held for the 24th time tomorrow morning with the 4,000 runners starting their journey from the parking lot at Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium and eventually finishing on the grassy apron of Taylor Avenue right in front of the same stadium.

The event is run by the Annapolis Striders in conjunction with the Road Runners Clubs of America, a national organization that governs many of the major running events across the country.

Tomorrow's event will feature some of the top distance runners in the nation, along with many local residents who have trained throughout the year in the hope of simply finishing.

Of course, all of the allotted spots in the race were filled months ago.

For more on the race, including a map of the race route, road closures, etc., please see related story on C1.

There will be no race-day entries and there is a rule prohibiting any transfer of assigned race numbers. Photo identification will be needed to pick up those numbers.

The volunteers who help make the race a success will work all day today to set up the course, pitch scoring tents, medical tents and the like and prepare the start-finish area for tomorrow morning.

One of the race's runners will be well-known locally — state sen. John C. Astle (D-Annapolis) — one of the five runners who organized and ran in the first event.

Back then, people thought the local runners who announced they would run from Severna Park High School to the Annapolis City Dock were out of their collective minds. That was before running became the popular pastime it is today.

Although every possible safety precaution is taken for this event, sometimes the late summer heat takes its toll. One runner collapsed and died during the race two years ago. There are police present in front of the lead runners as well as

behind the last one. There are water stations all along the course, and there are doctors and nurses on duty at a medical tent at the finish line — as well as several at points along the course. There are ambulances and police ready to spring into action.

All of that is a part of the community's effort to join in the event. Some residents who live along the race route spray the runners with their hoses. Some offer additional water for participants to drink. Others stand along the streets to cheer the runners as they pass.

Naturally, there are nay-sayers, who complain every year about closing the streets — another part of the safety precautions.

The starting gun will be fired at 7:50 a.m. tomorrow. Within minutes, the field will be stretched out for nearly a mile. The runners line up according to their probable times, the faster ones in the front and the slowest at the rear. That tactic is designed to protect the average racers from being run over by the faster ones.

The awards ceremony will be held inside the stadium, which will be the site of Navy's first home football game next weekend.