

Umpire's death casts shadow on opening day

ASSOCIATED PRESS

On a day when it dearly wanted to celebrate, baseball mourned instead for a beloved figure.

The death of umpire John McSherry, who collapsed Monday while calling balls and strikes in the first inning of the Expos-Reds game in Cincinnati, cast a pall over what many had counted on to be a warm breath of life after a long, cold winter and two strike-shortened seasons.

The game, which under a more traditional baseball calendar would have been the first of the season, was postponed until Tuesday.

McSherry's death from an apparent heart attack was the most tragic event of a day when snow and rain forced postponement of three other games, and fans from the Deep South to the East River shivered in their seats.

A storm that dumped up to 7 inches

of snow on the Cleveland area caused a day's delay in the opener for the Yankees and Indians at Jacobs Field, where a 3-foot-high snowman in an Indians' cap patrolled the third-base line. Cold rain and wet grounds did in Kansas City at Baltimore and Colorado at Philadelphia.

It was a stormy start to a spring of promise and hope.

Although professional baseball officially opened its 123rd season Sunday night with its earliest ever game, a 3-2 victory by Seattle over the Chicago White Sox in 12 innings, Monday was opening day, with nine games scheduled and sellouts abounding.

It seemed the perfect setting for baseball and its fans to start to patch up their differences and resume a sporting love affair. For the first time in three seasons, no threats of labor strife loomed, and there were rich promises of record-chasing years by the game's new legion

of superstars.

But those visions vanished quickly in Riverfront Stadium, where McSherry was behind the plate seven pitches into the first inning of the first game.

With temperatures in the 30s and Rondell White, the Expos' No. 3 hitter, at bat against Pete Schourek, McSherry walked away from the plate and motioned to the other umpires before collapsing on the warning track in front of a tunnel near the backstop. Emergency workers rushed to his side and tried to revive him.

But the 328-pound McSherry never regained consciousness. He was pronounced dead about an hour later at the University of Cincinnati Hospital.

"He probably had a massive coronary," said Richard Jolson, one of the Reds' doctors.

McSherry, popular with players, managers and his fellow umps, had a

history of medical problems. He was named a crew chief in July 1988, replacing Lee Weyer, who died of a heart attack two weeks earlier.

Baseball was played elsewhere Monday, often in conditions more akin to football or ice skating.

Owner Ted Turner sported a snapbrimmed hat as he watched his Atlanta Braves get their World Series championship rings, then opening 1996 with a 10-8 victory over San Francisco in chilly Atlanta.

At Shea Stadium, where a cold wind whipped the rain, the Mets rallied for a 7-6 victory over St. Louis.

And in Chicago, Ryne Sandberg returned to a frigid Wrigley Field and helped the Cubs beat San Diego 5-4 in 10 innings. Sandberg went 0-for-3 with two walks and handled seven fielding chances flawlessly in his first game since June 1994.

South Carolina native gets big break from baseball

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SIX MILE, S.C. — Jim Hefner's perfect pitch ended a perfectly awful time for his family.

Hefner's finances have fallen off since he and his wife were laid off almost simultaneously in 1991, causing them to fall behind on their bills. Just when he found work as a setup operator at a Mauldin Hitachi plant, his wife had a heart attack.

For months, Hefner says he's been besieged with creditor calls wanting the

back payments on his car, his land, his mobile home. Bankruptcy was a certainty when Hefner got a certified letter that didn't contain a bill.

It said he'd been chosen to participate in The Gillette Strike Zone Challenge and that he could win \$25,000 if he could throw a strike from the pitcher's mound before a spring training baseball game in Florida.

Hefner hadn't thrown anything in 20 years, but was willing to try. He went to Wal-Mart and bought a baseball target.

The first few tosses wound up in the

creek. But after three months of practice, he was able to put the baseball in the 18-by-30-inch target on every other throw. His confidence was high just days before the contest when he nailed all three throws.

Hefner stepped to the mound last Saturday in Clearwater, Fla., in front of 7,000 fans at Philadelphia Phillies spring training game. He eyed the target, 60 feet, 6 inches away, and delivered a strike so pure it would have made Cy Young proud.

"I think maybe the good Lord had

something to do with it. Several people have been praying for me," Hefner said Friday.

The weight of the world lifted from his shoulders, Hefner said.

"It was really terrific because we absolutely had to have some money come in because we've been having a whole lot of trouble," Hefner said.

When gets his bills paid off, Hefner said he's going to buy his wife a decent car.

USC Briefs Staff Reports

BASEBALL

USC's baseball team fell to 17-11 this weekend after dropping two of three games at Arkansas.

The highlight of the weekend came Sunday as the Gamecocks scored 13 runs on 14 hits in defeating the Razorbacks. Mark Mapes had six RBI on three hits. Ryan Bordenick and Ryan Szejebka also had three-hit days.

Starting pitcher Brent Moore allowed only three hits and two runs in six innings. Reliever Chad Hashour came on to shut down Arkansas, holding the Razorback hitless for three innings.

The Gamecocks will face in-state rival Clemson Wednesday at 7 p.m. at Sarge Frye Field.

TRACK AND FIELD

Junior Dawn Ellerbe was named the Southeastern Conference Female Indoor Track and Field Athlete of the Year Monday.

Ellerbe won the SEC, USATF and NCAA Championships in the 20 lb. weight in three consecutive weeks this seasons. Her toss of 68' 11 3/4 is an American record and is being considered by Track and Field News for the world record.

Ellerbe has qualified for the NCAA Outdoor Championships in the discus, hammer and shot put. She won the 1995 SEC title in the discus and the 1995 USTAF title in the hammer with an American record toss of 191'.

GOLF

David Seawell of the men's team and Siew Ai Lim of the women's team each rank in the SEC top 10 in stroke average according to a report released by the league yesterday.

Seawell, a senior member of the No. 19 Gamecocks, ranks second in the SEC with a 71.78 stroke average and is just two one-hundredths of a stroke behind the leader.

SPORT ADMINISTRATION

The Sport Administration Club will present the first Dr. Guy Lewis Student Appreciation Award today to Stephen M. Woods.

Woods will receive the award at the club's 4 p.m. meeting, to be held in room 2008 of the Carolina Coliseum. An adjunct professor at USC, Woods teaches an accredited sports business course each year.

The award is named after the chairman of the Sport Administration department and will be presented annually to worthy faculty member, staff member or other individual associated with the sports administration program.

Lim, a 1995 first team All-American, is eighth in the SEC with a 75.90 stroke. The senior has two top 10 finishes this season, including a fourth-place finish at the Dick McGuire Invitational last fall, and recently led the 20th-ranked Lady Gamecocks to a third place finish at the Lady Gamecock Classic.

■ The Rotary Club of Chapin Sunrise will sponsor its second annual golf tournament April 22 at Timberlake Plantation Golf Course, located on Amick's Ferry Road in Chapin. Starting time is 12:30.

The entry fee is \$200 for each four-person team and includes cart and green fees as well as a free lunch from 11 a.m. to noon. All proceeds will sponsor Rotary projects.

Prizes will be awarded to first and second place teams, closest to the pin (four awards) and longest drive (four awards).

For more information call John Oswald at 345-1094 or John Winfield at 345-6181. All entries and fees must be received by April 12.

NCAA men's basketball championship: Kentucky 76, Syracuse 67

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Q&A Q: What do the following people have in common?

Jennifer Morrison - USC student • John Lithgow - Actor and Director
Robyn Kelly - USC student • Jennifer Wu - USC student • Ben Cohen - USC student
Michael Boone - USC student • Joseph Heller - Novelist • Nate Terracio - USC student

A: They are all recipients of a prestigious national scholarship or fellowship!

Q: How can you add your name to this prestigious list?

A: Find out by attending an **Information Session** and learn more about the criteria and application process! Applicants must be U.S. citizens for the following awards.

Fulbright Grant
Tuesday, April 2 at 4 p.m.
Harper College 107
50th Anniversary Celebration at 4:30 p.m.
Gressette Room

Grants are available to graduating seniors and graduate students who propose a clear program of study to be carried out in a particular academic setting abroad. The location must be essential to the research project proposed. Fluency in the host language is preferred and a strong background in American culture and current events in the host country is a necessity. Grants are calculated on the cost of travel to and from the U.S. and cost of living. Also included, settling-in allowances and tuition waivers. The grant is valued at \$22,000. Following the information session, students and faculty are invited to attend the **50th Anniversary Celebration of Fulbright Reception in the Gressette Room.**


Goldwater Scholarship
Attention Sophomores and Juniors!
Thursday, April 4 at 4 p.m.
Harper College 107

Rising sophomores and juniors pursuing bachelors degrees in natural sciences, mathematics, or engineering and intending to earn a graduate degree in these fields and pursue a career in research and/or college-level teaching are eligible to apply for this \$7,000 scholarship. Applicants should have a strong GPA and research experience.

For More Information
The Office of Fellowships and Summer Programs is located in Harper College 301/303. 777-0958

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