

Sounders earn draw with Colorado / B4



SPORTS

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Mariners win despite 1-hitter

Seattle at season-high 5-game winning streak

By KRISTIE RIEKEN
AP Sports Writer

HOUSTON — The Seattle Mariners only managed one hit against Houston on Saturday night. That big swing by Michael Saunders was all they needed to put away the last-place Astros.

Saunders got Seattle's only hit with a two-run double with two outs in the seventh inning to lift the Mariners to a 4-2 victory.

Erik Bedard (3-7) pitched 6 1/3 innings of no-hit ball before he was replaced by Jose Cisnero, who walked Mike Zunino with two outs before the double by Saunders put

Seattle ahead 4-2.

The long fly ball sailed just out of reach of sprinting center fielder Brandon Barnes and landed at the top of Tal's Hill in straightaway center.

"That was the longest double I've ever had," Saunders said. "I definitely put a good swing on it. I guess if the hill isn't out there, maybe he runs it down. Or if the hill isn't out there, maybe it's a home run. I don't know. But it fell, we won and that's all that matters."

Bedard had thrown 109 pitches when he left the game. Houston manager Bo Porter gave him the option of staying in, but the

34-year-old was ready to go.

"I've had three shoulder surgeries," Bedard said. "I'm not going over 110 (pitches). I'd rather pitch a couple more years than face another batter."

The Mariners, who extended their season-high winning streak to five games, tied it in a wacky sixth inning by scoring two runs thanks to a combination of passed balls, walks and a sacrifice fly.

It was the Mariners' fewest hits of the season and they struck out 15 times, but they were helped by drawing six walks.

"I would say it was the strangest game I've been involved from Little League to the big leagues when you

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Seattle's Hisashi Iwakuma delivers a pitch Saturday against Houston in the first inning in Houston. The Mariners overcame a one-hitter to beat the Astros.

Pat Sullivan / AP

Bassin' Skagit County

Story by AARON WEINBERG ▼ Photos by BROOKE WARREN
Skagit Valley Herald



Brooke Warren / Skagit Valley Herald

Robert Mann releases a largemouth bass into Clear Lake to fight another day. Mann is the co-founder of Pond Jumperz, a bass fishing club that meets in Mount Vernon. Matt Johnson (left) and Brian Calvert look on from Johnson's boat.

Salmon and trout fishing may take center stage in Skagit County, but plenty of locals targeting bass

MOUNT VERNON — Cruising through a swath of lily pads and thick weeds, Mount Vernon's Matt Johnson and Brian Calvert stand atop the deck of Johnson's boat on Clear Lake, rod and reel in hand.

Each angler unleashes a cast, their reels emitting low buzzing noises as line rapidly unspools before their lures plop into the water about 25 yards away.

They gradually retrieve their baits back to the boat and repeat the routine.

The idea is to leave no bit of water untouched in the hunt for the elusive largemouth bass.

"Nothing yet," says Calvert, co-founder of Pond Jumperz, a local bass fishing club.

Each cast, each change in lure and presentation gives the anglers a little more information.

The fish aren't hitting topwater lures. Nothing is in the shallow lily pads. The isolated weed clumps aren't holding anything either.

"They're not here," Johnson says, bending the boat toward some wooden pilings using his foot-controlled trolling motor. "They probably moved out deeper."

The two arrived at the lake about 6:30 a.m. on the brisk summer morning.

Two hours later, the day was already heating up. The fishing, however, was not. Bass fishing is popular in the South, with tournaments awarding hundreds of thousands of dollars to winners.

And plenty of bass anglers venture onto the warm-water lakes in the Pacific Northwest. But in Skagit County, the sport often plays second fiddle to trout and salmon fishing.

Calvert and Johnson, however, would rather spend the day searching for bass than cruising in the Skagit River or the Puget Sound.

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Sox keep rolling with solid pitching

Burlington to play in district title

By DAN RUTHEMEYER
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MOUNT VERNON — The Burlington Sox had more good pitching Saturday.

The American Legion AA baseball team, which won its first three district tournament games with solid pitching, rode the arm of Sean Ferdig to a 6-2 win over Ferndale at Skagit Valley Dream Field.

"He's young, but he's been really, really good for us this summer," Burlington coach Andy Hanson said of Ferdig, who will be a high school sophomore in the fall. "He throws strikes, he's got a good breaking ball and he competes. That's the thing."

Burlington will face Bellingham for the Area 1 North District title today at noon. Should Bellingham win, a second game will be played.

Going into Saturday's game, Burlington had already earned a state tournament berth and was guaranteed to play today.

But the Sox (30-12) were still plenty motivated.

"We didn't have to win today, but we wanted to keep rolling," said Hanson, whose team has won eight straight. "We want to get through this district tournament with winning every game."

The Sox jumped on Ferndale at the start.

They scored two runs in the first inning, three in the second and one in the third.

That took some pressure off Ferdig.

The young pitcher gave up lead-off hits in each of the first two innings and loaded the bases with no outs in the fourth, but still didn't allow a run — and an unearned one, at that — until the sixth.

Ferdig was helped in the fourth by a good play by second baseman Derek Cherryholm.

With the bases loaded and no outs, Cherryholm caught a soft line drive and ran to the second-base bag to complete a double play. Ferdig got the next batter to ground out.

Mason Schwetz went 2-for-3 with an RBI for Burlington, while Logan Martinson was 1-for-3 with a two-run, first-inning single.

Burlington has outscored its four tournament opponents 14-3.

Hanson said today the Sox will dig deeper into their pitching staff to see if

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Local bass fishing lakes

Beaver Lake, Big Lake, Clear Lake, Grandy Lake, Heart Lake, Lake Campbell, Lake Cavanaugh, Lake Erie, Lake McMurray, Whistle Lake

Largemouth bass



Smallmouth bass



Limits and restrictions

Largemouth bass: Five fish of less than 12 inches, one of 17 inches or longer may be retained.

Smallmouth bass: 10 fish of no minimum size, one of 14 inches or longer may be retained.

Some lakes have different regulations. Refer to the Washington Sport Fishing Rules pamphlet, available at wdfw.wa.gov to ensure legal retention of fish.

Information and photos from Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife

Bass

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“Once I started reading about (bass fishing), I was hooked,” Calvert said, who took up the sport five years ago.

And, like any type of fishing, the desire to learn new techniques and catch trophy fish keeps bass anglers coming back.

“It’s like piecing a puzzle together on any given day,” Johnson said, who’s been at it for 1½ years.



Photos by Brooke Warren / Skagit Valley Herald

ABOVE: Bass fishermen use a wide variety of lures to catch fish.

RIGHT: Matt Johnson casts on Clear lake.



About the species

Borderline Bassin’ Contenders tournament director David Parnicky flips a crawfish-shaped lure out in front of the boat. The lure lands inches from a wooden piling jutting out of some thick lily pads and punches its way through the heavy cover.

Seconds later, Parnicky feels that tap, tap, tap on the other end of his line that all bass fishermen look for.

He rears back his rod, setting the hook in one swift motion.

“Got one,” said Parnicky, muscling the 1½-pound largemouth bass out of the lily pads and into the boat.

This fish, like all largemouth bass, had three defining characteristics: Its wide mouth, which depending on the size of the fish is sometimes big enough to hold a baseball; its predominantly dark green color; and the dark stripes that run down each side of the fish from gills to tail.

Smallmouth bass also populate many lakes in Washington. These fish have smaller mouths, brown coloring and dark vertical stripes. They are generally the smaller of the two species, although both range from 12 to more than 20 inches.

The spot where Parnicky, a Mount Vernon resident, caught his bass was a typical one for fishermen to find the species. Bass tend

to ambush prey from any type of cover they can find, whether it’s a dock, log or weed line.

But finding bass is not always easy. Depending on the hour, water temperature and season, they can be almost anywhere in the lake.

It’s part of the challenge — and fun — of the sport.

Fishing for sport

Anacortes resident Robert Mann opens the hatch to his boat’s live well and reaches inside to pull out his catch of the day, a 3½-pound largemouth bass.

If only the fish would comply.

After some thrashing and splashing, Mann, co-founder of Pond Jumperz, comes up empty and lets the fish have a moment to calm down.

Smiling, Mann reaches back into the live well, grabs the fish by the lower lip and hoists it out.

After briefly showing off the fish to fellow club members Johnson and Calvert, Mann lowers the bass back into the water, giving it the chance to fight another day.

The concept of catch and release is one aspect that separates bass fishing from other types of fishing in the region.

Whereas trout and salmon anglers often keep their catch to eat, bass fishermen typically release everything

they net.

This practice keeps bass fisheries healthy, since Washington Department Fish & Wildlife does not stock lakes with bass.

Throughout the morning of fishing on Clear Lake, Johnson navigated his boat along more than half the shoreline looking for an area that might hold a fish willing to bite. During that time, he and Calvert switched between several lures and made countless casts.

This constant and active search for fish is what drew Calvert, and many others like him, to the sport.

“I came from a trout background,” Calvert said. “I was sitting beside a lake with a bobber and I hated it. When I found out that there was a way to fish where you could cast and retrieve and do all these different things ... I had to try it.”

Another draw of the sport is tournament fishing.

Calvert’s Pond Jumperz club hosts six to seven tournaments a year, while Parnicky’s Borderline Bassin’ Contenders hosts five this year.

Gear

Johnson gently bobs his fishing rod’s tip up and down as he slowly reels in his bait. On the end of the line his floating frog imitation lure swims through the lily pads, creating a small

Local bass fishing clubs

Pond Jumperz

About: An electric-motor-only club founded in 2010. It’s an ideal club for the low-budget fisherman.

Dues: \$45 a year

Website: pondjumperz.com

Contact: pondjumperz@gmail.com

Borderline Bassin’ Contenders

About: A fishing and hunting club focusing on promoting and protecting outdoor opportunities.

Dues: \$35 a year

Website: Private Facebook group

Contact: David Parnicky, 360-920-1204

wake in its path.

He’s hoping to entice a largemouth bass to attack the frog on the surface.

After a few casts with no success, he sets the rod down on the bow of the boat to sit unused along with a dozen others.

He reaches for another setup, this time with a sinking worm-like lure dangling on the end, and flips it against an old wooden piling in 10 feet of water.

“We’ll go a little deeper here,” Johnson says.

In all, Johnson owns 17 bass fishing rods. Calvert has 18 and Parnicky has 20.

This may seem like overkill to the uninitiated, but each rod serves its purpose.

It’s similar to a golfer’s bag of clubs. Just like you wouldn’t putt with a driver, a bass fisherman wouldn’t toss light line into a mess of weeds.

Multiple rods allow for easy transition between

fishing techniques.

And there are plenty of techniques and lures to choose from, said Washington State Fish & Wildlife Enforcement Sergeant Rich Phillips.

“The average trout fishermen will use maybe two or three different kinds of gear,” Phillips said. “Bass fishermen might have 20, 30, 40 different types of tackle in their box.”

Just take a look inside the storage hatches of Johnson’s Nitro boat and you’ll find several plastic tackle boxes overflowing with gear.

The boats differ from other types of fishing rigs, too.

Bass boats are basically portable casting platforms, with raised, carpeted decks from which to stand and cast. Along with a gas motor, bass boats have bow-mounted trolling motors with a foot pedal to allow anglers to fish hands-free.

The Challenge

Johnson aims his bow toward the Clear Lake boat launch as Calvert starts putting protective sleeves over his rods to pack them up for the day.

Six hours. Few bites. Zero fish between the two of them.

That’s another aspect of bass angling.

“Other types of fishing you catch fish,” Johnson joked.

Bass fishing can be humbling, even for the experienced angler. But the challenges and rewards, like other types of fishing, keeps anglers such as relative newcomer Johnson coming back.

“Matt (Johnson) didn’t give up,” said Calvert, who introduced him to the sport. “He had his bad days but he kept going. Bottom line, it’s all about time on the water.”

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