

# Baseball urges Nats, Mets to let issues go

By Janie McCauley  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — After a series in New York that included seven hit batters, Major League Baseball is telling the Mets and Washington Nationals to be on their best behavior when they meet for three more games starting Tuesday.

"Just play ball," is the message being sent to the teams, Bob Watson, baseball's vice president for on-field operations, said Sunday night.

"Blowin' over? Not with eight guys getting hit. That never blows over," Mets outfielder Cliff Floyd said Sunday. "I just feel like it needs to stop."

There were five batters hit last Thursday night and two in the previous game. Six of the batters hit were Washington players - and the Nationals weren't happy about it.

Rookie right-hander Brian Bannister hit Alfonso Soriano in the back of the helmet. Jose Guillen was plunked three times, includ-

ing twice by Pedro Martinez. Guillen pointed his bat at Martinez and charged halfway to the mound Thursday after he was nailed for the second time in the game. The angry slugger was held back by plate umpire Ted Barrett and Mets catcher Paul Lo Duca as the benches and bullpens emptied. Players ran onto the field quickly, but no punches were thrown.

"I know how to take care of it, don't worry," Guillen said with a smile after the game, then referred to the rest of the season series. "I'm going to make sure I play in all the games he's in. ... I want him to throw inside. Now I want him more than ever."

Lo Duca had his own take. "I think a lot of people say a lot of stuff when people are not in their face, so we'll see what happens when we're out on the field," he said Sunday after New York's 3-2 victory over Florida.

Nationals first baseman Nick Johnson also was hit twice, once by Martinez. The

three-time Cy Young Award winner is scheduled to pitch Wednesday, the second game of the series in Washington.

"Hopefully, that's behind us. You don't want to get into a beanball contest with anybody," Mets third baseman David Wright said. "That doesn't do you any good. They have to understand - Pedro has to pitch inside to be effective. There shouldn't be any bad blood. You can't worry about those kinds of things. I'm not concerned about it."

Watson said Steve Palermo, an umpiring supervisor, would tell umpires for the upcoming series at RFK Stadium to be on the lookout for trouble.

"We will probably do what's normal after a confrontation like what happened last series, and that's called a 'heads up,'" Watson said. "Steve Palermo will send out an e-mail to the crew and let them know what had taken place so they have an idea of what's going on."

# Bonds OK despite slow start

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Bonds "tweaked" his troublesome right knee - which had three operations last year - during his walk leading off the second, when he jammed his plant foot in the dirt.

"It was a down ball in the dirt," he said. "I popped my knee. It shot through my whole body. It calmed down through the game."

Bonds isn't sure what days he will play in the coming week, when the Giants have home night games against the Houston Astros on Tuesday and Wednesday and a day game Thursday before a weekend series against the Dodgers in Los Angeles featuring all night games.

Bonds, who missed all but 14 games in 2005 because of the knee, already has two intentional walks. All the free passes are no more frustrating now than before. He walked 232 times - 120 of those were intentional - on the way to winning his record seventh NL MVP in 2004.

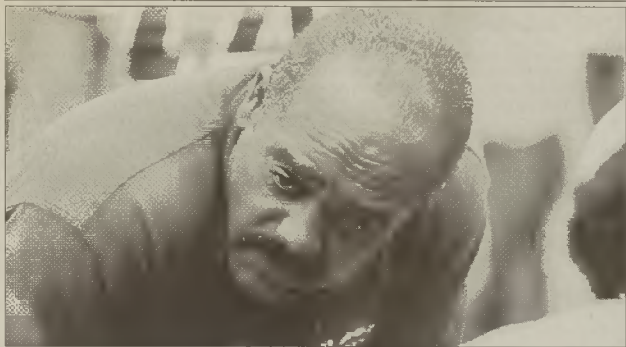
"I'm used to it," Bonds said. "It's harder with my leg, though, a lot harder. Why should it be different past to present?"

Bonds, who has long said a World Series ring would mean more to him than all his personal milestones put together, realizes his numbers are usually better by now but is happy the Giants went 4-2 in the season's opening week.

"I feel fine," he said. "I've been there before. It's no big deal."

Bonds figures if his teammates batting around him - Moises Alou, Ray Durham, Pedro Feliz, Lance Niekro and Omar Vizquel - continue to get big hits, opposing managers will be forced to start pitching to him more often.

"As long as guys around you keep swinging the bat good, they've got to come to you eventually," Bonds said. "You've just got to be patient. ... That's how you win games. Everybody has to do it."



NC A&T football coach Lee Fobbs led the Aggies in his first spring scrimmage last Saturday in Greensboro. The Aggies scrimmaged for about 45 minutes due to inclement weather.

# Still out front: Lexus LS the standard of luxury sedans

WINFRED B. CROSS  
Test Drive



Lexus introduced the LS series in 1989 as a 1990 and it has been the standard by which to judge all luxury sedans since.

There are sexier cars, faster cars and certainly more expensive cars, but none have been more reliable and trouble free.

But the LS is long in the tooth and will be replaced by a technologically superior machine this fall. The new LS460 will come in standard and long wheelbase and will even have an option to park itself.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. The LS430 is still out there, and it's still one heck of an automobile.

The 430 is one of the qui-

etest automobiles I've ever driven. It rushes you down the road with hushed security. Road, wind and engine noise are muted to levels that are nearly non-existent. This allows you to enjoy the Mark Levinson audio system, which rivals much that you can put in your home.

The engine of the LS is a 4.3-liter V8 that makes 278 horsepower and tons of torque. Ask it to go fast with your right foot and it responds nicely. Sixty mph can be achieved in about six seconds. My test car was equipped with an adjustable air suspension that has a sport setting. Selecting such does not turn the car into a Ferrari, but it will glide around curves at a good clip without tire squeal.

Let's face it. The LS has always been about luxury and this car spares no expense at luxury. Equipped with an ultra luxury package which includes laser-

guided cruise control, air suspension, Mark Levinson audio system, power adjustable rear seats with climate controls, climate-controlled front seats, manual door shades, headlamp washers, voice operated navigation system, Bluetooth and a backup camera.

The LS430 is one of the few cars in which I have enjoyed the back seat as much as the driver's. Feeling tense? Adjust the seat to your liking, click on the message function, adjust the stereo to your favorite setting and forget your troubles.

There is nothing wrong with the current LS, but the 2007 will be something special. It makes its press debut in Europe in late summer. Until then, those wishing to get in on ultimate luxury can plunk down \$73,259 and enjoy a really good car right now.

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## NC A&T Charlotte Metro Aggie Club 3rd Annual Spring Golf Tournament at The Olde Sycamore Golf Club

**Date:** Saturday, April 29, 2006  
**Time:** Check-in at 7:00 AM; Shotgun Start at 8:00 AM  
**Place:** The Olde Sycamore Golf Club (Soft Spikes Required)  
**Format:** 4-Players Captains Choice

**Support Levels:**

<b>Platinum</b>	\$400 - four players - tee sponsorship - banner recognition - full page placement in promotional material - 4 mulligans - Choice of start point
<b>Gold</b>	\$300 - four players - tee sponsorship - two mulligans - half page in promotional material
<b>Silver</b>	\$125- four players - one player - tee sponsorship - 1 mulligan - included in promotional material
<b>Bronze</b>	\$75 - one player

**All entry fees include the following: golf, cart fee, driving range, gifts, box lunch, and Awards Ceremony**

**Prizes: 1st, 2nd & 3rd Place Teams; Longest Drive, Closest-to-Pin, & Hole-In-One**  
**Entry Deadline: Registration due by Friday, April 21, 2006**  
**Make checks payable to NC A&T Charlotte Metro Aggie Club**