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Section

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PHOTO/CURTIS WILSON

Monique Currie (right) and the Charlotte Sting haven't figured how to pick themselves up.

Sting looks to improve one play at a time

Inconsistency still an issue as second half of season tips off

By Erica Singleton
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST



Bogues

"I'm not (accepting this)," said Bogues, "and I believe they're not accepting this either. And I know they want to turn this thing around, and the only way to do it is on the court. We've gotta stop beating ourselves."

Charlotte has talent, yet tends to shoot itself in the foot. Against Connecticut in a 76-71 loss last week, the Sting outscored the Sun in the paint 38-26 and had fewer turnovers, yet faded down the stretch. In back to back losses to Los Angeles and Sacramento last weekend, the Sting played hard but to no avail. The Sting had a chance to send the Los Angeles game into overtime, but Tangelia Smith was unable to convert a lay-up with 6.9 seconds left in a 66-64 loss. Charlotte is 0-2 in games decided by three points or less.

"We just have to learn to close out games in the end," said center Tammy Sutton Brown.

On Sunday, Sacramento took advantage of the energy Please see **CONSISTENCY/2C**

Pittsburgh All-Star festivities recalls black baseball's past

By Alan Robinson
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PITTSBURGH - Baseball in Pittsburgh wasn't always about Roberto Clemente, Barry Bonds or Honus Wagner. It also was about Satchel Paige, Josh Gibson and Cool Papa Bell, too, during an 11-year stretch of championships in the 1930s and 1940s unmatched by any city in the sport.

As baseball broke for the All-Star game Tuesday night at PNC Park, some of the game's greatest who never played in the majors or did so only briefly because of racial discrimination are being remembered - at the very time blacks are disappearing from the sport at an alarming rate.

The Pirates recently unveiled at PNC Park seven statues of former black baseball stars who played in the city, as part of an exhibit about the black game that includes interactive kiosks and educational films.

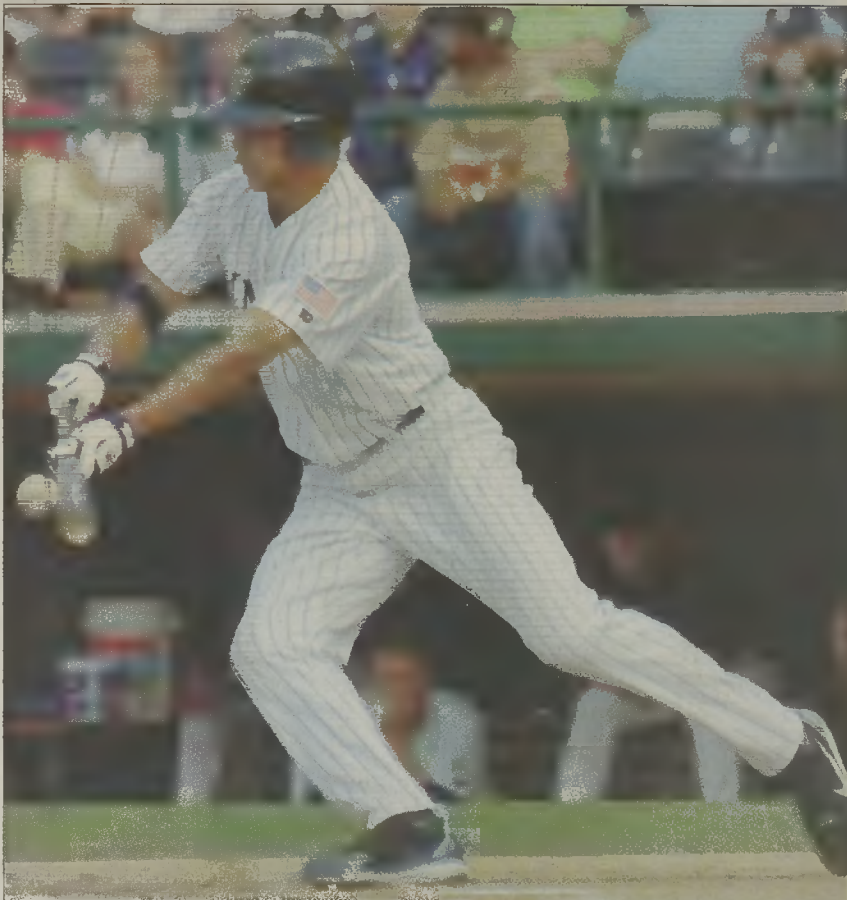
All seven players are enshrined in Cooperstown, although only Paige played in the majors. Considered by the likes of Bob Feller as the greatest pitcher in history, Paige was at least 41 (and possibly older) when he was a Cleveland Indians "rookie" in 1948 - a year after Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier.

The seven played for either or both of Pittsburgh's two black teams, the Crawfords and the Homestead Grays, during the span from 1925-50 when the city had at least one black team. The Crawfords won the Negro National League title in 1935 and 1936, and the Grays won each of the next nine seasons through 1945.

Think a team composed of Paige or Smokey Joe Williams pitching, Gibson catching, Buck Leonard at first base, Judy Johnson in the infield and Bell and Oscar Charleston in the outfield wouldn't have been a contender in the majors?

"While segregation was a very sad chapter in the nation's history ...they (the Grays and Crawfords) built

See **PITTSBURGH/2C**



PHOTO/CURTIS WILSON

Charlotte Knights outfielder Jerry Owens is one of four Knights to drive in at least 40 runs going into the second half of the International League season. Charlotte has the league's best record at 58-31.

Edge of Knights

Charlotte has offense and pitching to stay atop International League

By Herbert L. White
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What's not to like about the Charlotte Knights?

They have the best record in the International League at the All-Star break at 58-31 and play as if Charlotte is a stepping stone to the majors, not a stumbling block. The Knights did

everything right before recess, turning fundamental baseball into a reason to make the trip to across the state line to Fort Mill. After a dismal 2005 in which Charlotte didn't break 50 wins until season's end, these Knights are motivated to win.

How many will get a call from the Major League Chicago White Sox? It's hard to tell because the Sox are loaded and a hot AL Central race with Detroit could dictate how the roster

shakes out for the postseason. But quite a few are deserving of at least some seat time up north.

BEST SURPRISE: That the Knights are this good. Under Nick Leyva, the 2005 team didn't break 60 wins and played as if it didn't care. With an infusion of new talent from the lower levels and a change in managers, the 2006 team, barring a second-half swoon, is the team to beat in the IL.

RAZOR'S BUMPS: What See **KNIGHTS/2C**

On a tear

At the All-Star break, the Charlotte Knights had the International League's best record and among the best in several key statistical categories.

Category	Knights	IL rank
Batting	267	3rd
Homers	67	1st
Hits	796	3rd
ERA	3.73	1st
Hits allowed	672	1st
Runs allowed	312	1st

White Sox winning again, but so is Detroit

By Rick Gano
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO - They're 26 games over .500 at the All-Star break. The Chicago White Sox have played most of the season's first half like defending World Series champions, even if they're not in first place in their

division. It took a while for the White Sox to get to the break. They beat the Boston Red Sox in 19 innings Sunday, needing more than six hours to salvage one win against a team they swept in the playoffs a year ago. "It means a lot, especially

going into the break. We needed this just to keep everybody sane," said All-Star Jermaine Dye, who had a ninth-inning homer off Boston closer Jonathan Papelbon to force extra innings. "We'll take a couple of days off and get ready for the second

half," Dye said. The White Sox's 57-31 record isn't good enough for first place in the AL Central because the Detroit Tigers have the best record in the majors and lead by two games. Chicago has a 5-1 record Please see **WHITE SOX/2C**

Soccer match part of campaign to help kids in war-torn Uganda

By Herbert L. White
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The Charlotte Eagles are playing for the children of Gulu, Uganda Saturday.

The minor-league soccer club is collecting food, clothes, toiletries and soccer gear as part of "Gifts For Gulu" night at Waddell High. At 5:30 p.m., the Lady Eagles play Hampton Roads, followed by the men's match against Richmond at 8 p.m. Advance tickets are available online at \$8 for adults and \$5 for students. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$7 for students at the gate.

Children are especially vulnerable in Gulu, an area hard-hit by Uganda's civil war. On any given night, up to 44,000 walk 8 miles to the cities to sleep without fear of abduction by rebel forces.

"You have millions of children walking into the city to not get kidnapped," said Nathan Krum, the Eagles' director of ticket sales. "We're in this (affluent) bubble in Charlotte and it's just unbelievable what's going on elsewhere."

Last December, 18 Eagles players, staff and head coach Mark Steffens went to Uganda, Rwanda and Kenya as part of the team's missionary work, which has taken them to 26 countries in the last 14 years.

"We've always been preaching to the world," Krum said. "We're using our gifts to spread the message around the world to countries that don't have it."

The Africa tour revealed the devastating effects of war and poverty, but it also Please see **EAGLES/3C**



FILE PHOTO

Patrick Daka (left) and the Charlotte Eagles are playing to support children in Uganda with clothing, shelter and food.