

NEAR-UNANIMOUS CHOICE

Rookie pitcher honored

NEW YORK (AP) — Rick Sutcliffe, a rock-solid starter on a troubled Los Angeles Dodgers pitching staff, was named today as the National League's rookie of the year for 1979.

Sutcliffe, who led the Dodgers staff in victories with 17 after starting spring training with little hope of

making the baseball team, was an easy winner over outfielder Jeff Leonard of Houston Astros and Scot Thompson of Chicago Cubs.

The Baseball Writers' Association of America gave Sutcliffe 20 out of a possible 24 votes, while Leonard received three and Thompson one.

"I still don't believe I won it," said an incredulous but happy Sutcliffe, who had a 17-10 record and a 3.49 earned-run average in the 242 innings he pitched. "I didn't think that pitcher had as good a chance as the everyday player because they can't get the exposure. I don't know who I impressed."

The writers, though, were obviously impressed with Sutcliffe's energetic performance after inauspicious beginnings. "It didn't even look like I would make the club," Sutcliffe said. "The Dodgers had a lot of name pitchers down in spring training. But, fortunately for me, there were a lot of sore arms. I had to beat out Pete Broberg for the eighth spot on the staff."

STAINS IN BILLINGS

Sutcliffe spent some time in the bullpen at the end of the year, then got his chance to shine when Bud Hooton was felled one day by the flu. That was May 3.

"I didn't know I was starting until about an hour or two before the game," said the 23-year-old rookie who had run three miles that day.

"Then I won the next few games and stayed in the starting rotation the rest of the season."

Sutcliffe closed with a rush, winning nine of his last 11 decisions to help the Dodgers finish strong in the National League West race. Six of his 10 losses were by one run.

Sutcliffe is the eighth Dodger to win the award — a major league record — since it was started by the BBWA in 1947. The others included Jackie Robinson the first year, Don Newcombe in 1949; Joe Blanton in 1960; Jim Gilliam in 1961; Frank Howard in 1962; Jim Lefebvre in 1965 and Ted Stamos in 1969.

Leonard batted 290 with 47 runs batted in in 154 games for the Astros. Thompson played in 128 games for the Cubs, batting .289.

Calgary and Victoria increase division leads

By THE CANADIAN PRESS

Calgary Cougars and Calgary Wranglers scored victories Tuesday night in Western Hockey League to increase their leads in the Western and Eastern leagues respectively.

The Cougars, playing at home, outscored the Regina Pats 6-2 in a game that became increasingly chippy as it continued, while the Wranglers, also at home, trounced the Brandon Wheat Kings 8-0.

The Wranglers got some help in building their Eastern Division lead to three points over the Bighorns when Lethbridge Broncos, who edged the Montana Ice 3-2 Tuesday night, ousted the Cougars.

The Cougars stretched their Western Division edge to 10 points over Portland Winter Hawks to six points over the

win over the Pats.

Six Victoria players shared in the scoring. Bob Janach, Bud McCarthy, Brad Palmer, Mark Robinson, Mark Robinson and Rob Smith notched goals for the Cougars while Mike Blaudel and Bill Seiler scored for the Pats, who lost an opportunity to climb over the Bighorns into the Eastern Division second place with their loss. They trail Billings by one point.

The teams battled to a 1-1 draw in the first period, but Victoria took a 4-1 lead in the second frame. In the third, Victoria outscored Regina 2-1 and the name game drew to a close there were several major penalties handed out.

In Calgary, Kevin Merkosky led the Wranglers with three goals. Keith and two and Blair Briggs, Greg Chudak and Clint Fehr added singles.

Cash trade completed

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Dave Cash, three-time all-star second baseman, joined San Diego Padres in a trade Tuesday that sent outfielder Danny Briggs and utility infielder Bill Almon to Montreal Expos.

The acquisition of Cash, a 33-year-old veteran of four National League playoffs and one World Series, came after the Padres signed left-handed pitcher John Curtis and right-hander Rick Wise, both free agents.

Cash asked to be traded after losing his starting job last spring, regaining it later. His lifetime batting average is .287, but he figured in Montreal's pennant drive.

Briggs, switching from outfield to first base, batted .207 while seeing action in 104 games last season. Almon, the first player taken in the 1974 draft, contributed 277 as a reserve in transition from shortstop to second.

The spray-hitting Cash was a regular for Pittsburgh and Philadelphia before signing a five-year contract with Montreal in 1974. He batted .308 for the Phillies with a major league-leading 213 hits. He set club records at Montreal in 1977 with 550 at-bats, 188 hits and 104 doubles and led the Expos with eight with 91 runs scored and 21 stolen bases.

Trail thumps Nelson

By THE CANADIAN PRESS

Trail Smoke Eaters skated to a 5-1 win over hometown Nelson Maple Leafs Tuesday night to maintain a two-point lead over Kimberley Dynamiters atop the Western International Hockey League.

In the other WIHL contest, the Dynamiters scored four consecutive power play goals in the third period to overcome a 4-0 deficit and beat the visiting Spokane Flyers 10-7. The win kept the Dynamiters in the points ahead of third-place Spokane.

In Nelson, Ernie Gare tallied twice to lead the Smoke Eaters while single came from Dave Brockhead, Brad Harding and Iel Lannone.

Paul Britton tied up the only goal for the Maple Leafs, who trail the WIHL with only five points.

Park undergoes surgery

BOSTON (AP) — Brad Park had minor surgery on his right eye Tuesday and Boston Bruins said he would be out of National Hockey League action for at least a month, if not indefinitely.

The arthroscopic surgery, performed with a thick needle which is inserted in the knee, is a procedure the all-star defenseman has undergone twice before.

"Due to previous problems with Brad's knee, it's difficult to make any predictions as to his return," said the club's physical therapist, Jim Kausek. "We do know that he will rest for one month."

Kausek said Tuesday's surgery at Massachusetts General Hospital "was to smooth the area under the knee cap and also to remove small bone spurs."

Park's right knee was operated on a year ago for torn cartilage, and he had arthroscopic surgery on the knee last January, and again in September.

Sockeyes bomb Flyers

RICHMOND, B.C. (CP) — Richmond Sockeyes downed the visiting Abbotsford Flyers 4-1 Tuesday in a penalty-riddled B.C. Junior Hockey League game.

Each team was assessed eight major penalties and eleven minors. The Flyers also took two of three game misconducts.

Shawn Lynes, Dave Williams and Dan Pavich each had two goals for Richmond.

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