

Sports

Puckett says milestone deal won't change his attitude

By Joe Roe Staff Writer When Kirby Puckett walked into his home Tuesday night, he didn't have to tell his wife, Tonya, the news. "She could tell by the smile on my face," Puckett said Wednesday.

Puckett's approach to the game isn't lost on general manager Andy MacPhail, who negotiated the deal for the Twins. "Kirby is, arguably, the game's best player," he said. "I know what he means to the Twins, and look at what he has done in his last six years as the Mookie Mania, Joe D'Magnio, Super Hero, Ty Cobb. He's an elite player."

During his first six seasons, Puckett has gotten more hits than Coak, DeMaggio, Horowitz, Tim Williams or Pete Rose did in their first six years. Puckett, 28, took a unique route to the big bucks, said his agent, Ron Shapiro. Puckett has reached his lofty salary without going through free agency. He could have played out his option in 1990 and then gone for even bigger bucks, such as those that opportunity awaits free agents. Hank Longton and Ricky Henderson.

"If they didn't have it (the money), they wouldn't be paying it to me," Puckett said. "Kirby is unique; he's the first one to reach such a level, but the greatest part about Kirby is that even with all of his talent there is still a humility about him. He doesn't focus on what somebody has given him, he has his own goals. We had set a goal. When the goal was at hand, Kirby wasn't looking back over his shoulder at what the rest of us will make. He had reached his goal."

A legend of his own here are the statistics for the past six years of Kirby Puckett vs. his other fielders. Table with columns: Player, Runs, Hits, Avg. Rows include Puckett, Cobb, DiMaggio, Horowitz, Mantle, Rose, Williams.

Dino who? Gartner leads Stars

Two goals lead rout of Leafs By Theo Meme Staff Writer Right wing Mike Gartner continues to make his name's trade for Dino Ciccarelli look like a smart move.



Patrick Reusse

Gartner, the former Washington standout who came to the North Stars with Larry Murphy for Ciccarelli and Bob Rowe on March 7, scored twice Wednesday night as the Stars beat the Toronto Maple Leafs 6-3 at Met Center. Gartner, who last summer threatened to leave if his contract wasn't renegotiated, increased his leadership point total to 30. Ciccarelli has been struggling with the Capitals. The trade was tough because Dino was a popular player in Minnesota. Gartner said, "I'm sure it was tough for both of us. The initial moment has passed, and I feel good about being here. I feel this is my home."

Gartner's effort highlighted a game in which the Stars outshot the Leafs 54-21 and crested the season series at two games apiece. Coach Pierre Page said Gartner has been outstanding in helping lead the Stars' resurgence. "Right Gartner and Murphy together. I thought it would ease the pain of trading Ciccarelli," he said. "I didn't want one guy to replace one guy because that puts too much pressure on him. Gartner is a good player, a good person and an ambassador in the city. That's why we got him. It's good to see him on the ice and off of it."

Associated Press Toronto's Scott Pearson (22) tripped over the leg of the North Stars' Curt Giles in the first period Wednesday night.

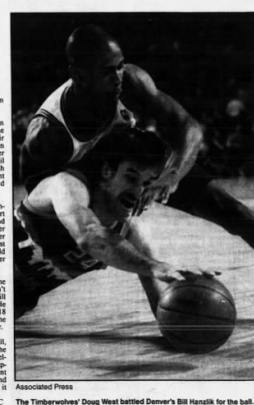
It's time to roast sports' turkeys

Harlock, N.C. This has been the year when Pete Rose turned out to be a list and Steve Garvey turned out to be a two-legged version of Seattle Slew. This has been the year when Wade Boggs cried on Barbara Waugh's shoulder. This has been the year when an executive director, when an executive of Thomas Stralinger's, D.W. Lingo. This has been the year when the Soviet passed his greatest test in Minnesota, then failed in Dallas. This has been such an astounding year in sports that the Turkey Committee needed isolation to make decisions to reduce the number of invitations to the banquet to a mere five. Never has it been so difficult to select the year's No. 1 public head. There could be no distractions during the committee's deliberations. So, we came here to roast North Carolina, where isolation is a way of life, where there are no distractions, where the Reusse continued on page 11C

Wolves lose nail-biter again

By Jerry Zagal Staff Writer The Timberwolves would be well advised to erect a warning sign outside the Metrodome, suggesting that anyone with a weak heart or queasy stomach stay away on game nights. Tuesday night, the Timberwolves look like an overtime before losing Wednesday, they stretched the Denver Nuggets to the final 10 seconds before losing 96-93. Granted, the Wolves have lost five straight and nine of their first 11, but such is life with an NBA expansion team. And if the Wolves can't promise victories, at least they are offering plenty of intrigue. That much was delivered last night in the fourth quarter, when coach Bill Musselman went to a backcourt team of point guard Sidney Lowe and Tony Richardson for the first time. The Wolves responded by treating a seven-point deficit and bringing the outcome of 21:03 to its final when they took a 90-89 lead with two minutes remaining. "Everything Denver has got is small, and we were concerned about the matchups before the game," Musselman said. "Lowe and Tony (Campbell) concerned us. We finally went with two small guys back there, and we probably should have gone to it."

For now, that will have to do on most evenings. The Wolves held the Nuggets to 21 points fewer than their scoring average of 117.1, second in the league, but they didn't discover their best defensive pressure until Musselman, who has been going with a small lineup a lot all season, went really small with both Lowe and Richardson in the final quarter. The only part of the equation that the Low-Richardson experiment didn't solve was Davis, who in age 35 still can't shoot the ball in the basket. He showed that last night by scoring 18 of his game-high 25 points in the second half, 10 in the fourth quarter. "We haven't generated as many points as Albany, five shots, in games where they score more than 40 points," Nigon said. "They have dominated every situation. We're going to have to play flawless defense; it will be a tremendous job."



The Timberwolves' Doug West batted Denver's Bill Hanzik for the ball.

Pack almost back, thanks to Majik Man

By Robert Sussner Staff Writer Mind the nickname? Heck, no. The Majik Man lives it. "I think it's kind of neat," Green Bay Packers quarterback Don Majkowski said. Back in prep school, friends started calling him Majik. Not Majik Man. Just Majik. It was easier to say than Majkowski (Majik CV-68). Too many people backtracked the pronunciation, not knowing that the "j" is silent. The Majik Man, as a nickname, has a certain appeal, and Majkowski's sometimes-magical play for the Packers has lost credibility to it. Thanks to Majkowski's two touch-down rushing and one passing last Sunday, the Packers upset the San Francisco 49ers 21-17 and halted their record to 0-5. The Packers have a chance to move into a tie for first in the NFC Central if they beat the Vikings 17-0 on Sunday at County Stadium in Milwaukee. Chances are, Majkowski wouldn't be the Majik Man if the Packers were 2-9, as they were after 11 games last Packers continued on page 2C

When Totino-Grace football coach David Nigon looks at the record of the Eagle's next opponent, he gets nervous. "We haven't generated as many points as Albany, five shots, in games where they score more than 40 points," Nigon said. "They have dominated every situation. We're going to have to play flawless defense; it will be a tremendous job."