

Lester, Sox shut down Yankees

Tosses five-hitter to give Boston the opener of the four-game series

NEW YORK
By **BEN WALKER**
Associated Press

Jon Lester pitched a sharp five-hitter while the Boston Red Sox roughed up Andy Pettitte, beating the New York Yankees 7-0 on Thursday night to end a five-game losing streak.

A throwing error by shortstop Derek Jeter gave the Red Sox a quick lead. Coco Crisp came back from a five-game suspension to score twice, and it was 6-0 by the fifth inning.

Red Sox	7
Yankees	0

Both AL East powers went into the opener of this four-game series in the rare position of chasing Tampa Bay. There was no scoreboard watching — the division-leading Rays were off.

The last time Boston and the Yankees played after Memorial Day with neither team in first place? September 1997, the Elias Sports Bureau said.

Lester (7-3) made his most impressive start since pitching a no-hitter against Kansas City on May 19. He struck out eight, walked two and won his fourth straight decision.

Lester's lone problem came when he walked Johnny Damon and Jeter to start the game, but the lefty escaped by getting Bobby Abreu on a grounder and striking out Alex Rodriguez and Jason Giambi.

see **LESTER B4**

Mets place Castillo on DL

Veteran second-baseman strained his hip flexor during Wednesday night's game in St. Louis

ST. LOUIS
By **R.B. FALLSTROM**
Associated Press

Luis Castillo played the ninth inning as part of a double switch Wednesday night after the New York Mets had determined the second baseman would be placed on the 15-day disabled list with a strained hip flexor.

That half-inning of defense in an 8-7 loss to the Cardinals will sideline the three-time Gold Glove winner and All-Star until at least the first game after the All-Star break. Castillo did not play the previous two games.

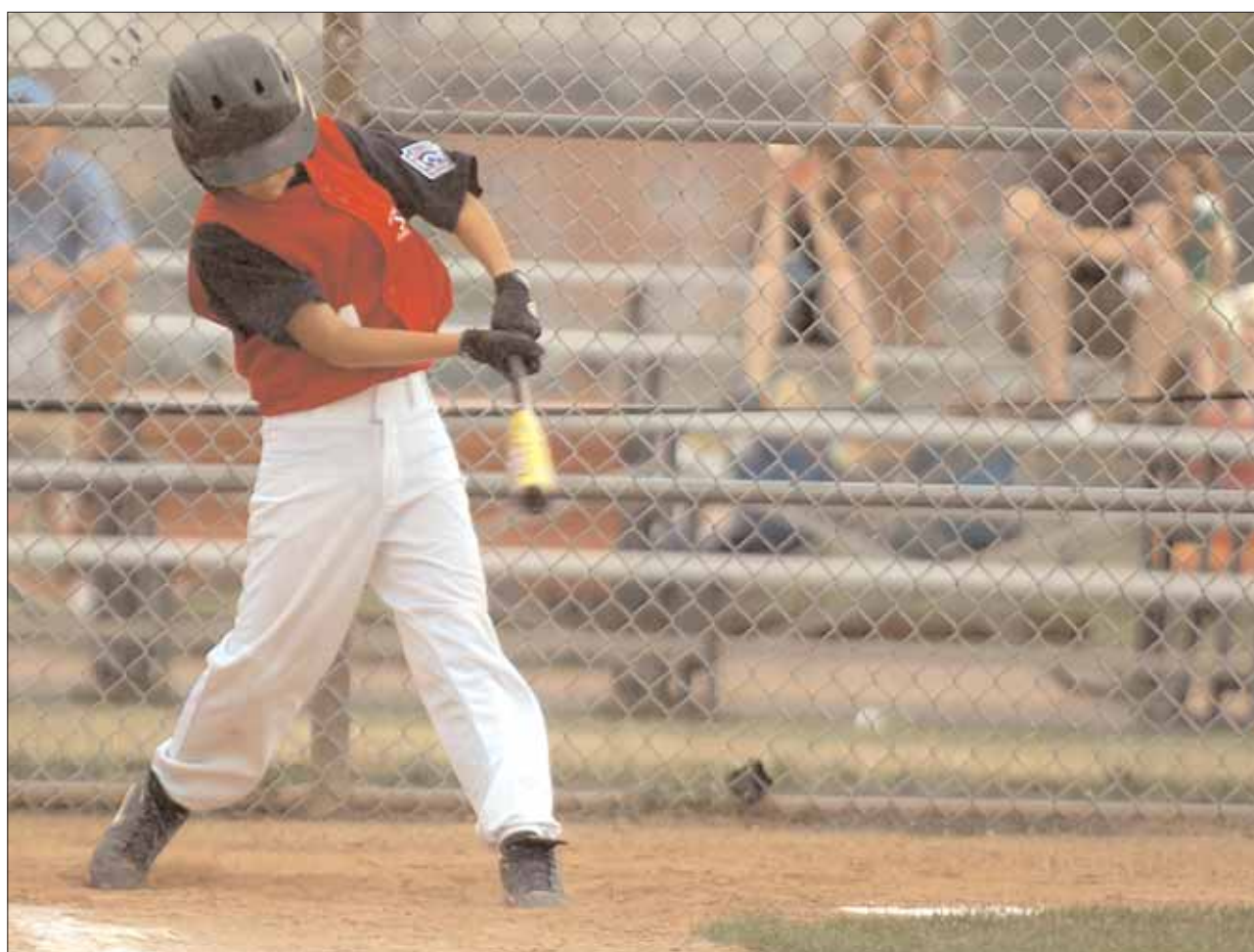
"We could have used those days to buy him some time," interim manager Jerry Manuel said Thursday. "The situation called for us to insert him so we had to do what we had to do to try to win a game."

Utility man Damion Easley, 38, is likely to get the bulk of the playing time until Castillo, batting .261 in 68 games with three home runs and 26 RBIs, is ready. Castillo is in the first year of a \$25 million, four-year contract and has had trouble recovering from arthroscopic surgery on both knees in the off-season.

Manuel said Castillo was to undergo an MRI exam on Thursday, adding "What part of the body, I don't know."

The manager added that Castillo was receptive to the move. "I think he was probably strug-

see **METS B4**



Hour photo/BEN GANCOSOS
Dan Romanello of the Ben Whone 9-10 year-old Little League all-star team takes a cut during Thursday night's District I tournament game against Ridgefield National at Veterans Park in Norwalk. Romanello pitched a complete-game in Ben Whone's 14-2 victory. In other District I action Thursday, Stamford Federal posted a 12-0 win over Babe Spinola.

Romanello leads Ben Whone over Ridgefield

Stamford Federal blanks Babe Spinola

NORWALK

By **SAM WERNER**
Hour Correspondent

Norwalk's Ben Whone 9-10 year-old all-stars took advantage of good pitching and a team effort on offense to defeat Ridgefield National 14-2 Thursday in District I tournament action at Veteran's Park.

Norwalk jumped out to an early lead on Ridgefield pitcher Brian McGuire, taking advantage of walks and key singles to claim a 3-0 lead. Parris Fortt extended the lead to 4-0 with an RBI-triple in the top of the third inning.

Meanwhile, Dan Romanello was cruising on the mound for Norwalk, allowing only one run-

**DISTRICT I
LITTLE LEAGUE**

ner past second base in the first two innings. All was going well for Romanello in the third after he struck out the first two hitters he faced. But a hit batter and a bloop single set up runners on first and second with two outs for Ridgefield's Matt Saporito, who drove a two-run triple to right-center field and cut Norwalk's lead to 4-2.

Saporito came in to pitch for Ridgefield in the fourth, and Norwalk promptly loaded the bases. Angel Nieves knocked in a run with a seeing-eye grounder through the infield, and Matt McDonald broke the game open with a double to center field that scored two runs and gave Norwalk a 7-2 lead.

Romanello settled down after the third, allowing just one hit for the rest of the game. The team captain finished with a victory and a complete game.

"[Dan was] fantastic," Norwalk coach Frank Diurno said. "He led the team. Dan is really a big leader and it showed tonight."

If Romanello needed any additional insurance runs, he got them in the top of the sixth inning, when Norwalk really put the game away. A six-run rally, capped off by a two-out, three-run inside-the-park home run by Corey Hayes sealed the victory for Norwalk.

After the game, Diurno praised his team's offense, up and down the lineup.

"Everybody did something for

see **BEN WHONE B4**

Wilton's Marut stops Norwalk

Righty helped snap Norwalk's seven-game winning streak

NORWALK

By **MICHAEL LIVINGSTON**

Hour Correspondent

The Wilton American Legion baseball team posted a 5-0 victory over Norwalk Thursday at Malmquist Field, snapping Post 12's seven-game winning streak.

Norwalk fell to 13-3 overall.

**LEGION
BASEBALL**

Wilton	5
Norwalk	0

Wilton, which operates in a cop with Weston, scored five runs in the first two innings and rode the brilliant pitching of Kurt Marut for the victory. Marut fired a complete-game two-hit shutout while striking out four and walking none.

"Kurt was awesome tonight, that's about all I can say," Wilton head coach Ian Thoesen said. "He was around the plate the whole game and really kept us in the game from the start."

Marut got all the support he needed as Wilton jumped on Norwalk starter Angelo Bruno for five runs in just over an inning of work. After two Norwalk errors to start the top of the first inning, A.J. Jacoby hit a sacrifice fly to plate Mike Waterhouse to give Wilton the early 1-0 lead.

After Norwalk was retired 1-2-3 in the bottom of the first Wilton, tacked on four more runs in the top of the second inning. Bruno walked the first two batters of the inning before surrendering an RBI double to shortstop Mike McDonald.

The next batter Sam Armstrong singled home Mike Odeirna and

see **MARUT B4**



AP photo
Serena Williams celebrates her victory over unranked Zheng Jie in the Wimbledon semifinals. Serena will face sister Venus in an all-Williams final Saturday.

It's all about the Williams sisters

Serena and Venus won semifinal matches to set up a meeting in the finals

WIMBLEDON, ENGLAND

By **HOWARD FENDRICH**
Associated Press

A spot in her seventh Wimbledon final already secured, Venus Williams headed back to Centre Court to catch the end of the next match.

WIMBLEDON

Scouting? Not really. More like rooting. And when Thursday's second semifinal ended, Williams stood, smiling and applauding for the woman who won, the woman she will have to beat to earn a fifth championship at the All England Club: her younger sister, Serena.

The most unusual and, at times, uncomfortable rivalry in tennis is once more in the spotlight at the pinnacle of the sport: Venus will play Serena in their third all-in-the-family Wimbledon final Saturday.

It's their seventh Grand Slam title match — Serena holds a 5-1 edge over her sister —

but first final at any tournament since 2003.

"Our main focus is obviously both of us getting to the final," Venus said. "Then, from there, it's every Williams for themselves."

While there are, of course, differences in personality (Venus calls herself a nerd; Serena is more extroverted) and game (Venus' serve is faster, for example, and Serena's return is considered better), the siblings' paths to what will be their 16th head-to-head matchup were remarkably similar.

Neither has lost a set in the tournament, and Venus won her semifinal 6-1, 7-6 (3) over fifth-seeded Elena Dementieva of Russia 6-1, 7-6 (3), before Serena hit 14 aces in a 6-2, 7-6 (5) victory over 133rd-ranked Zheng Jie of China 6-2, 7-6 (5). Coincidentally, each Williams won 80 of the 141 points in her match.

How unsurprising were Thursday's results? Consider this: The sisters are now a combined 100-13 at Wimbledon for their careers; Dementieva and Zheng are a combined 29-13.

"We've both been working extremely hard," said Serena, who holds an 8-7 career edge over Venus. "It's just coming together."

see **WILLIAMS B6**

Rangers welcome Naslund, part with Jagr

Blueshirts also signed defenseman Dmitri Kalinin during a busy few days of dealing

NEW YORK

By **IRA PODELL**
Associated Press

Just as the New York Rangers ushered in the Markus Naslund era on Broadway, they turned out the lights on the Jaromir Jagr show.

Naslund, the longtime Vancouver Canucks captain, agreed to terms

NHL FREE AGENCY

Thursday with New York on a two-year deal worth \$8 million.

In making the announcement, Rangers general manager Glen Sather said he couldn't wait any longer for Jagr to make up his mind on what it would take to keep him in a Blueshirt, so he went in a different direction.

Sather broke the news to Jagr on Thursday and thanked him for his service over the past four seasons in New York, including the last two as team captain.

"Jagr was very respectful when I talked

see **RANGERS B4**



AP photo
The Rangers signed former Vancouver star Markus Naslund Thursday, ending its relationship with free agent Jaromir Jagr. The Rangers also signed defenseman Dmitri Kalinin during what is turning into a busy off-season.