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# Sports

7-Heartland

## BACK IN A FLASH KC's Gordon expands repertoire

By SCOTT PURKIS  
Tribune Sports Writer

44 We couldn't be more pleased with Tom Gordon and his progress. He's improved in so many ways. — Johnathan

Three innings, "I feel pretty good about things. I think I'm getting there pretty fast." That's indicative of Gordon's third game — confidence. "I feel like I am a major-league pitcher and that I belong out there on the mound," Gordon said. "Sometimes last year I worried about going back down to the minors. I think (this year) was just because I'm so young."

Last year Gordon was only 21 years old, but his major-league numbers were those of a seasoned veteran: 174, 244 ERA and 153 strikeouts in 183 innings.

Gordon gained 10 pounds, moving from 150 pounds to 160, and he said the weight makes him feel stronger.

Meanwhile, the change-up was something Gordon "just decided to try."

"I felt I needed another out pitch," Gordon said. "It's working out pretty well."

Friday afternoon at Sunbelt City Stadium, Gordon struck out six, walked one, allowed two hits and no earned runs in 4 1/3 innings of relief.

The Tigers defeated Kansas City 4-0, but Gordon said he felt pretty good about his performance.

"I don't see anything too wrong with the way I threw," said Gordon, who was perfect through



Tribune photograph  
Avon Park resident Tom Gordon added 10 pounds and a change-up in the off-season.

## Royals' Boone baseball's answer to Dick Clark

By SELMA ROBERTS

HAINES CITY — For most men, the crossing of sports has been transferred by the time they reach middle age.

For Royals' Boone, the transition comes before three children into the family mini-ran without writing the short story you just read. Boone is using your foot to kick dirty laundry into the clothes hamper without being to send over.

Florida baseball is wading up the norms from your boss and hitting the garage can from three-point mark, and promotion is heading over to the year shoe without putting a hammer.

And baseball? Well, baseball is still baseball. I've got the agents Bob Boone. One of the Dick Clark of the game.

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## Gedman unhappy with backup role

By ROY CUMMINGS  
Tribune Sports Writer

WINTER HAVEN — For the worst of all possible reasons, Rich Gedman may be back like a rookie again.

"I feel like I'm just coming up and I've got to prove myself all over again," said Gedman, a catcher for the Boston Red Sox. "I feel like I've got to open some eyes and prove to somebody that I can do a good job again."

He said he feels that way partly because he has been a while — three years — since he has done anything especially good for the Red Sox.

Gedman hit .258 with 18 homers and 63 RBI in 1986, completing a three-year stretch in which he had posted 200 and averaged 19 homers and 73 RBI a season. In the past three seasons, he has hit only .118 and has 11 homers and 63 RBI.

In addition to Gedman's decline, Boston is only one reason why he has been relegated to rear-rod status.

The presence of five-time National League MVP catcher Tony Pena is the other, more obvious reason.

"I don't know why it is, but it seems as they went out and signed Tony, all of a sudden I'm a backup catcher," Gedman said. "I don't remember anybody saying anything official about who the everyday catcher was going to be."

No one had to, and Gedman realizes that.

"Teams don't go out and sign guys to three-year contracts (Pena signed for \$5 million during three years) and then sit them down on

the bench," he said. "So I understood it to some extent."

"Boston, I more or less played myself into this situation where they had to go out and get somebody else."

That he did. In addition to the drop in Gedman's offensive contributions, there also has been a steady decline in his play defensively.

In 1986, Gedman was an American League all-star and considered by many to be one of the top defensive catchers in baseball. He was second in the league in fielding percentage that season, and he threw out 50 percent (44 of 88) of the base stealers.

By the end of last season, he had posted 13th out of 14 regular All-Star catchers in fielding percentage, and he was throwing out only 27 percent of base stealers.

In spite of those numbers, Gedman said he's not ready to accept a role as Pena's backup, and if necessary, he would accept a trade to another club.

"I've always begged this team to release me," Gedman said. "I'd go somewhere else, because I think I can do the job."

"But the tough thing is proving you're worthy of being a starter again. Once somebody tags you as a backup, that's what everybody looks at."

"So what I've got to do is work hard and produce so that I can show them I'm not just a backup catcher anymore. And to do that, I've got to make the most of my chances, whenever they may come. And that's what I intend to do."



Associated Press photograph  
Boston catcher Rich Gedman says he will fight to win the starting job from free-agent Tony Pena, who played last season in St. Louis.

## County, district titles shape up as 3-team race

LAKELAND — Three teams with totally different weapons have near equal chances to win the upcoming county and district golf titles.

The teams — Lake Gibson, Lakeland and Kathleen — are a study in contrast.

Lake Gibson (120) has six golfers — Taylor, Scott Fields, Kevin Knuth, Chris Polking, Jim Zingarelli and Bryan Shaw — who average about 40 strokes for nine holes.

Taylor has been the top driver with a 2.8 stroke average for nine holes, but he hasn't been the dominant player.

"This is the most depth we've ever had here," said Larry Sobotka, who has been the driver coach for 18 years. "To help the side mixer to know they have people that will usually shoot a decent score."

The Beaver confidence factor helped them about a season-low 151 against Auroreville last week. But then again, Lake Gibson's two seasons are at Lakeland (134) and Kathleen (112).

Lakeland probably has the best team, but Kathleen has the best player, Sunday said.

Lakeland defeated Lake Gibson 156-160 in their only meeting. They meet again April 15.

The difference between the teams is Lakeland isn't as deep as Lake Gibson.

Lakeland, led by David Jory's 38 stroke average, had the advantage of playing the county tournament on its home course at Cleveland Heights.

"Playing on your home course really gives a high school team an advantage," Sunday said. "But I'm really not concerned about the county. I'm fixing the hole to concentrate on the district."

The district tournament is being played at the Links of Lake Brantley in Zephyrhills, and the favorite is Kathleen's Guy Hill, who will be defending his district title.

"You can't count on Kathleen because of Guy Hill," Sunday said. "He's such a good player that he has been almost carry-along."

Hill is averaging a little more than 30 for nine holes.

Winter Haven was considered in the hunt at the beginning of the season, but academic eligibility and injuries have made the Blue Devils a dark horse.

Winter Haven had three players to low grades and in best golf. Matt Wines (38 average), an able sidekick.

"To all my years, I've never seen anything like it," Winter Haven coach Bill Woodhouse said. "Now, without a doubt, I'd say the county and district tournaments are between Lake Gibson, Lakeland and Kathleen."

Base breaks through Bartov's Greg Bass was a Spalding Space Coast Tournament in sudden death this week of the 6:17-yard, par-71 Sunlink Country Club.

Bass shot 69-69 — 137 and defeated Marty Stanovich.

Club hopping

Baseballer Lake Gibson High School plays host to a four-team scramble April 22 to raise money for its athletic program. Full established handicaps will be used to determine flight. The fee is \$35 and includes cart and green fee. The tournament also features long-drive and closest-to-the-pin contests. For more information, call Renee Garrett at 686-1428 in the evening.

Lake Wales, Eileen Sharp, Betty Palford and Marie Durrance won in Atlantic scramble Tuesday with a 67. Shirley Harman, Alice Debarren, Bea Kirt and Manly Vong finished second at 67.

Winterwood. The club is playing host to a "Masters Open" May 5 to benefit Pathway Christian Academy. The format is top member best ball and the deadline to enter is April 14. For more information, call 883-9944 or 883-5623.