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NEWS

DAWSON HIT IN FACE WITH PITCH

By Fred Mitchell
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Cubs right-fielder Andre Dawson lay motionless beside the plate, spewing blood after San Diego Padres pitcher Eric Show had plunked him in the face with a 90-mile-an-hour fastball in the third inning of the Cubs' 7-5 victory Tuesday at Wrigley Field.

The eerie, sickening thud of ball pounding flesh at first had a somber, disquieting effect on Dawson's teammates. Moments later, enraged pitcher Rick Sutcliffe burst from the dugout like an unleashed bull. A frightening bench-clearing brawl ensued. Five Cub players (Sutcliffe, Greg Maddux, Manny Trillo, Dawson and Scott Sanderson), a coach (Johnny Oates) and manager Gene Michael were ejected during the course of the volatile contest witnessed by 26,615 fans.

Dawson was taken to Northwestern Memorial Hospital after suffering a cut on the left upper lip and a contusion and bruise of the left lower cheek. First-base umpire Charlie Williams said it appeared that one of Dawson's teeth cut through his upper lip.

After having the injury iced and anesthetized, 22 stitches were required. Team physician Dr. Jacob Suker, plastic surgeon Dr. Victor Lewis, orthopedic surgeon Dr. Michael Schafer and neurosurgeon Dr. Albert Butler worked on Dawson. According to a hospital official, there were about 8 stitches placed in the lining of the lip, 5 in the muscle and 9 in the face.

The cut may leave a permanent scar on Dawson's face, depending on his healing capability. The stitches are scheduled to be removed Sunday.

X-rays revealed no fracture of the cheekbone. A CAT scan and brain scan also were performed. All the tests were negative. Dawson was released without commenting on the incident. His status is day to day.

Traveling secretary Peter Durso, formerly with the Montreal Expos when Dawson played there, said this was the third time Dawson has been struck in the face. He recalled Dawson's batting helmet being cracked open in a game in St. Louis and a pitch glancing off Dawson's wrist and hitting him in the face in Los Angeles.

Show issued a written apology, saying he did not intentionally throw inside, even though the circumstances dictated a brushback. Show had allowed three home runs in 2 1/3 innings, including one to Dawson in the first inning that proved to be the game-winner. Dawson has hit 7 of his 24 homers against the Padres. Going into Tuesday's game, Dawson had two doubles, three homers and eight RBIs in his last two games.

San Diego pitcher Storm Davis said, "I feel really bad for Andre, but I also feel sorry for Eric because now he's going to have to take on the whole city of Chicago."

Sanderson (4-4), who was credited with the victory in relief, was the only Cub to empathize with Show. After the blood, venom spewed from Cub mouths.

Injured shortstop Shawon Dunston was particularly incensed.

"Show says he's sorry, huh? Sorry, nothing. Sorry didn't hit Andre in the mouth," said Dunston, who had to be restrained from fighting one of his teammates last week. He accused a pitcher of not retaliating by hitting a Montreal hitter after Dawson had been hit.

"Show threw at me in San Diego, and everybody got on me for overreacting. That was my career he was messing with. Look what happened to Dickie Thon (the Houston Astros shortstop whose career has been in jeopardy after being hit in the eye with a pitch in 1984). He (Show) is going to get his. Andre's going to get him. You watch and see. I would have gone out there after him myself today if my hand (broken ring finger on right hand) wasn't messed up.

"You don't throw at somebody's head. That's scary. You can kill somebody. The good pitchers don't throw at people. Mike Scott doesn't throw at anybody. Dwight Gooden doesn't throw at anybody. And we (hitters) don't throw our bats at the pitchers if they strike us out."

Maddux was ejected in the fourth inning after hitting Benito Santiago with a pitch. Plate umpire Gary Darling had warned both benches that an automatic ejection would follow any pitch thrown at a hitter.

Cub first baseman Leon Durham has no fond feelings for Show, either.

"He was down there bleeding, man," Durham said. "That's bad business right there. We're supposed to be out here having fun, turning the fans on and trying to win some ballgames. You're dealing with somebody's life here."

Durham went to the hospital to check on Dawson's condition after the game. Dawson's wife, Vanessa, and mother, Mrs. Mattie Brown, were also at his side throughout the three-hour stay.

Sanderson, making his first appearance since coming off the disabled list with a tender groin, said: "The sad fact is that Andre is in the hospital now, and I know that's a sickening thought to all of us. But it's probably equally as sickening to Eric Show right now. I know Eric a little bit. And I also, in my heart, believe that he did not try to hit Andre in the face. I don't think anyone would try to hit anyone else in the face. I know it's a tough situation for him to be in. I guarantee you he feels terrible about it."

Sanderson was ejected after throwing a pitch behind third baseman Chris Brown in the eighth.

The Dawson incident occurred after Paul Noce led off the inning with a homer to make the score 4-2. One out later, Dawson was hit on a 1-1 count. Dawson lay sprawled on the ground. He was immediately attended to by trainer John Fierro and Suker. Sutcliffe then charged out of the dugout to attack Show. The benches emptied, and an ugly fight ensued. During a break in the battle, members of both teams wandered over toward the immobile Dawson to check on his condition.

"There's not much I can say. It was reaction," Sutcliffe said of his charge. "I think everyone here feels like we've got to protect each other. That's just the way I reacted to it."

As Dawson regained his faculties, he wobbled to his feet like a fighter trying to beat an 8-count. He charged a mob of players in pursuit of Show. As teammates tried to restrain Dawson, Williams grabbed Show and hustled him to the safety of the Padres' dugout. Sutcliffe and Dawson were ejected. Show, who suffered a spike injury to his left foot, was relieved by Keith Comstock.

Comstock gave up a two-out, run-scoring single to Jim Sundberg. The Cubs scored two more runs in the fifth before holding off the Padres, who added two runs in the sixth on a homer by John Kruk and a sacrifice fly by Santiago. Reliever Lee Smith earned his 22d save after giving up a ninth-inning homer to Garry Templeton.

"I don't like headhunting," said Michael, who was ejected when Maddux hit Santiago. "If I see more pitches up at the hitters, I'm going to say,

'Let's go get 'em.' If that's what it takes to stop pitchers from doing it, that will stop them, I think. Years ago they didn't throw so much at people's heads, but they did drill people."

Michael condoned Sutcliffe's charging out of the dugout.

"Usually the pitcher gets away and nothing happens."

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