

Ichiro Records 4,000th Career Hit Between MLB, Japan

NEW YORK (AP) — Ichiro Suzuki slashed a single the opposite way with his unique swing for the 4,000th hit of a career split between Japan and the major leagues.

The 39-year-old Suzuki hit a liner off Toronto's R.A. Dickey that bounced just beyond diving third baseman Brett Lawrie in the first inning Wednesday night for the milestone hit.

Suzuki broke a tie with Lou Gehrig when he got his 2,722nd major league hit in his 13th season. The speedy outfielder amassed 1,278 hits in nine seasons with Orix of Japan's Pacific League.

Suzuki's Yankees teammates streamed out of the dugout and surrounded him at first base, Curtis Granderson giving him the first hug. A grinning Suzuki then faced the cheering fans and bowed.

When he went to his position in right field for the second inning, Suzuki tipped his cap to the fans who greeted him with a standing ovation.

Ken Griffey Jr., a former teammate with the Seattle Mariners, congratulated Suzuki with a message shown on the video board at Yankee Stadium.

The Mariners tweeted a statement: "Ichiro's historic milestone is testament to his position as one of the greatest hitters in the game of baseball."

Pete Rose with 4,256 hits and Ty Cobb with 4,191 are the only two players that have reached the number solely in the major leagues.

According to STATS, Suzuki has the most hits through the first 13 seasons of a big league career. Paul Waner is second. He had 2,648 for

Pittsburgh from 1926-38.

Even though the approach to the unprecedented milestone didn't generate a lot of buzz in the United States because it doesn't count in the record books, players have great respect for Suzuki's accomplishment.

"That's a lot of hits, man," Yankees shortstop Derek Jeter said last week. "It's pretty impressive. I don't care if it's 4,000 in Little League. It shows how consistent he's been throughout his career. It makes you look at how many hits he's got in a short amount of time. That's difficult to do, so Ichi has been as consistent as anyone."

To Suzuki, though, the rarefied number means one thing.

"Not necessarily the 4,000, just the fact that you're getting a hit in the game," he said through an inter-

preter after getting three hits in the opener of a doubleheader Tuesday for 3,999. "If you don't produce you're not going to play in games. Me producing in games is what's good for me."

He has been producing since he was an 18-year-old rookie with the Blue Wave.

A career .353 hitter in Japan, Suzuki became the first Japanese-born non-pitcher to sign with a major league team. He smoothly made the move from Orix to the Mariners in 2001 when he was 27. He was selected as AL Rookie of the Year and MVP in his first season when he batted .350, had 242 hits and stole 56 bases.

The slender 10-time All-Star seemingly could place the ball wherever he wanted with a slashing swing that makes him look more

like an epee-wielding fencer than a professional baseball player.

Suzuki had at least 206 hits in each of his first 10 years in the majors, peaking in 2004 when he set the record for hits in a season with 262, topping George Sisler's mark of 257 established in 1920.

His hit Wednesday night was the 2,209th single of his career.

Uniquely fashionable, Suzuki often wears skinny jeans cuffed at the bottom to show off a rainbow of shoes and socks. He looks more like a 20-something than a graying star in his favorite designer Thom Browne.

Despite his age, Suzuki should have a good shot at the revered major league mark of 3,000 hits, one that doesn't come with debates

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MEN'S 'A' DIVISION CHAMPS: Upper Deck won the Yankton Men's Softball 'A' division post-season tournament. Team members include (front) Carey Mitzel, Tom Gause, Paul Eichfeld, Chris Saylor, Frank Stefani, (back) Ryan Liebl, Ray Gause, Cody Garvey, Andrew Baker, Mitch Johnson, Lance Loecker and Dan Steffen. Not pictured are Dave McKee, Brett Sime, Jason Kral and Jason Anderson.



MEN'S 'B' DIVISION CHAMPS: Old Lumber Company won the Yankton Men's Softball 'B' division post-season tournament. Team members include (front) Gus Loneman, Chad Grunewaldt, Jeff Turman, Kail Hoskins, Joe Mueller, Payton Mueller, (back) Chris Gadeken, Nik Davis, Bryan Davis, Daniel Prendable, Andy Witte and Jesse Jastram. Not pictured are Josh Koch, Riley Cook, Trevor Lapour and Jeff Dreesen.



JUST FOR FUN CHAMPS: Houska Dental won the Yankton Parks & Rec coed softball Just For Fun regular season and tournament title. Individual names were not submitted to Parks & Rec.

Yankton City Softball Winners



MEN'S 'C' DIVISION CHAMPS: Heine Farms won the Yankton Men's Softball 'C' division post-season tournament. Team members include (front) Nick Robinson, Trace Millagen, Zach Benjamin, Zach Waiter, Andrew Hummel, (back) Kolby LaCroix, Evan Schroeder, Colton Wurtz, Tyler Johnson, Alex Slagle, Jace Likness and Jackson Seitzinger. Not pictured are Logan Van Winkle, Nathan LaCroix and John Starzl.



JUST FOR FUN SPORTSMANSHIP HONOREES: The Choppers won the Yankton Parks & Rec coed softball Just For Fun division sportsmanship trophy. Team members include (front) Chris Steffen, Cody Dumars, (middle) Jenn Aguirre, Jason Rauscher, Jessica Cameron, Bailey Forman, Steph Rauscher, Sara Olson, Crystal McHenry, Tony Brasel, (back) Tom Steffen, Garrett Cameron, Brennan Novak, Dustin Olson, Ronnie Cap, Keno Welch and Erica Smith.

King Makes PBA50 Quarters

WELCH, Minn. — Patrick King of Yankton advanced to the quarterfinal of the PBA 50 Treasure Island Tournament, which concluded Wednesday in Welch, Minn.

King earned \$1,600 for advancing to the round of eight, where he lost 2-0 (best of 3) to Robert Harvey of Boise, Idaho. King advanced through the round of 16 with a 3-1 (best of 5) victory over fellow South Dakotan Ted Staikoff of Black Hawk.

Pete Weber beat Harvey 243-227 in a single-game final.

Google And NFL Meet; Sunday Ticket Up For Grabs?

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Google has been holding talks with the National Football League, raising speculation that the Internet monolith is seeking new inroads into television.

Other tech companies like Apple are reportedly in talks with cable providers to boost access to blockbuster television shows through their devices.

With Google sitting on a cash pile of \$48 billion, the league's Sunday Ticket package is easily within its reach.

The contract is currently held by DirecTV, which pays about \$1 billion annually for the rights. That contract, however, expires at the end of the 2014 season.

Earlier this year, Google Chief Financial Officer Patrick Pichette said "it serves the shareholder best to actually have that

strategic ability to pounce," when there is the opportunity to make a major acquisition.

The NFL confirmed its meetings with Google Wednesday, but declined to discuss the nature of those talks, as did Google.

"Members of our office meet often with innovative leaders in Silicon Valley and around the world," the NFL said in a statement. "We are constantly looking for ways to make our game better on the field, in the stadium and for fans."

The Sunday Ticket Package provides fans with access to most out-of-market NFL games not televised nationally on ESPN or on NBC.

Citi analyst Jason Bazinet believes that DirecTV is losing money on the deal, generating only about \$725 million a year in rev-

enue. He thinks a new contract would run about \$1.5 billion if DirecTV were to make another go for it.

DirecTV has a market capitalization of about \$32 billion and would be unlikely to remain for long in a bidding war with Google, which has a market capitalization nine times that.

Bazinet believes DirecTV investors would welcome the prospect of letting the NFL go.

Google recently unveiled a device called Chromecast, which is part of its attempt to make it easier for people to access Internet content on their TVs. Chromecast is a small stick roughly the same size as a thumb drive that can be plugged into an HDMI port on flat-panel TVs.

Vikings' Offense Has Been Rough With Peterson Out

Reigning MVP Has Remained On Sidelines In Minnesota's First Two Preseason Games

EDEN PRAIRIE, Minn. (AP) — Through their first two preseason games, the best performance from Minnesota's first-team offense has been by rookie punter Jeff Locke.

The Vikings haven't done much well in these exhibition games yet. Each incompleteness by Christian Ponder or three-and-out series by the unit has only heightened concerns whether this team can be balanced enough to build off last year's playoff appearance.

Even when the wins and losses don't matter, decent showings will somewhat appease the fans, soften the skepticism of the analysts, and most importantly give

the coaches and players confidence in a chemistry carry-over to the regular season.

"Yeah, there would be some reason for concern if we don't do certain things that we've set out to get accomplished in this ballgame, or any ballgame," coach Leslie Frazier said on Wednesday.

The Vikings are at San Francisco on Sunday, and most of the starters are expected to play into the third quarter. But before this becomes an anxiety-raising, must-thrive event, there's a critical fact to point out about the way the offense bumbled through the first two games.

"I was coming off the side-

line saying, 'Oh, my gosh, what are we doing?'" wide receiver Greg Jennings said. "Like, we were struggling. And then I saw this guy on the sideline that had this '28' jersey on, and he wasn't dressed, and I'm like 'Oh, yeah. I forgot. We don't have a big part of our offense out here that draws a lot of attention.' So this week will be a lot better."

Assessing a team without the league's rushing leader and Most Valuable Player is hardly worth it, especially considering the way the Vikings revolve around their star running back Adrian Peterson. This week against the 49ers, the plan is for Peterson to be on the field.

"If you're an offensive player, we definitely want to take some steps forward," Peterson said.

The Vikings have averaged only 14 first downs and 276 yards over the first two games, though that includes all of the time logged by backups and long shots trying to make the team. Ponder is 6 for 14 for 68 yards and one interception. His passer rating is 28.3.

So this next exhibition will be a valuable opportunity for Ponder to continue trying to establish a rhythm with Jennings, rookie Cordarrelle Patterson and the rest of his receivers. Don't expect a polished product either, Jennings said.

"Kinks will never completely be ironed out," he said. "There will always be a new wrinkle that we put in that we're going to be trying

to perfect. Just our relationship, our chemistry, we're going to try to perfect that forever."

NOTES: The finalists for the punt returner role are incumbent Marcus Sherels and fellow CB Bobby Felder, according to special teams coordinator Mike Priefer. The Vikings have been grooming Patterson for that job, too, but they're trying to narrow his focus for now. ... DT Sharif Floyd's minor left knee operation went fine, Frazier said, and he's expected to be ready for the first week of the regular season. ... In addition to Floyd and FB Jerome Felton, who's out for the rest of August recovering from an appendectomy, the only other significant player held out of practice Wednesday was WR Jarius Wright (concussion symptoms).

Here's five things to know about the film, Hamm's take on the latest women's pro soccer league and Chastain's six-pack abs.

LEVITY, PLEASE: Foudy wanted to make the film to show that sports still can be fun, even at the elite level. She watches parents on the sidelines and kids playing with "a seriousness to it that is exhausting and scares me. I hope it's a good reminder for parents that sports are this great gift and we should enjoy them — laughter is permitted."

In 2006, Foudy started a sports leadership academy that hosts soccer and lacrosse camps and focuses on leadership skills. For the film, she gathered her teammates in January to reminisce in an empty Rose Bowl,