

the sports

AL blamed for ordeal

Rangers lose Gamble

United Press International
NEW YORK — The New York Yankees Wednesday announced the completion of the trade that sent Mickey Rivers to Texas for Oscar Gamble and the Rangers blamed the American League office for the confusion over the original deal.

In addition to Gamble, the Yankees will receive minor-league third baseman Amos Lewis and two players to be named later. The Rangers will receive three players to be named later along with Rivers.

The announcement capped 20 hours of speculation over the trade. The original deal made Monday sent Rivers to the Rangers for three minor leaguers and a player to be named later.

But the commissioner's office objected to "certain provisions of the deal."

The initial transaction called for two of the minor-leaguers — outfielders Gary Gray, Mike Hart — to be delivered to the Yankees at the end of the season. According to league policy, however, once players are named, they must go directly to the new club.

In addition, Gray, Hart and infielder Domingo Ramos, the third player involved, had not cleared waivers. Also, the acquisition of the players would have put the Yankees over the 40-man limit.

The reworked trade was approved by the commissioner's office, freeing Gamble to rejoin the club he helped win a pennant in 1976.

"I can confirm that our office concurs," said Bob Wirz, a spokesman for the commissioner. "It's been approved. All players to be named later are minor-league players."

But Eddie Robinson, the executive vice president of the Rangers, was upset over the way the matter was handled.

"The long wait is over," Robinson said. "I wish the deal had gone the way it was originally proposed. We felt we were on firm ground making the deal and announcing it. Had we not been given the O.K. by the American League office, we would not have announced it."

Robinson said Cedric Tallis, the Yankees' general manager, reached the American League office and received permission to announce the deal.

"I know who was talked to but I feel nothing more needs to be said," said Robinson. "I'm not going to name names."

When asked if he blamed the AL office for messing up the deal, Robinson said, "Yes."

Tallis would not confirm if he spoke with anyone from the AL office but said he had no criticism of the anyone's role in the matter.

"We're very happy with it," said Tallis. "We've improved our ballclub power wise and we have the long range in mind. It will improve our pipeline."

"Unfortunately we didn't know at the time but Texas didn't have waivers on the players. I have no complaint whatsoever. Everything is completed. We're happy with final deal. There is no inclination on my part to criticize anyone."

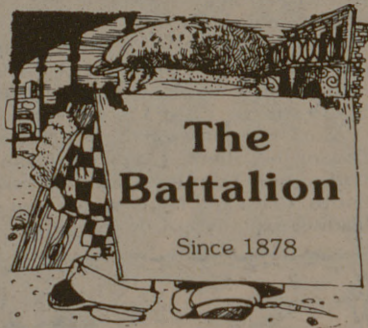
Gamble, currently on the second year of a six-year, \$2.85 million contract, was hitting .335 in 64 games with Texas with eight homers and 32 RBI. Gamble, 29, has played on seven major-league teams, his

longest stint being 1973-75 with the Cleveland Indians. He joined the Yankees in 1976 in a deal that sent pitcher Pat Dobson to the Indians. Gamble's best year was 1977 when he batted .294 with 31 homers and 83 RBI. He then signed with San Diego, spent a disappointing year there, and was traded to the Rangers.

Ironically, the deal deprived Rivers a chance to resume his friendship with Gamble. While in New York, Gamble often helped the brilliant but moody Rivers get over his down moods.

In a separate transaction, the Rangers are transferring the option of shortstop Domingo Ramos from Syracuse to the Yankees' Triple A farm club at Columbus. Lewis will be assigned from the Rangers' Asheville club in the Western Carolinas League to the Yankees' Fort Lauderdale club in the Florida State League.

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Oilers battle Cards tonight

United Press International
HOUSTON — A football game tonight between the St. Louis Cardinals and Houston Oilers is sold out, due largely to performances of the teams last season and probably not to the quality of competition expected in the preseason opener for both teams.

ookies and free agents, composing a large portion of the 78-player Oilers roster and a similarly large Cardinals contingent, will be vying for a handful of jobs on the two teams. A program will be a necessity.

Cardinals' coach Bud Wilkinson said he would play quarterback Jim Hart one quarter. Oilers quarterback Dan Pastorini will not make an appearance, said Bum Phillips.

Before the game, a minute of silence will be observed for former Cardinals tight end J.V. Cain, who collapsed and died July 22. Cain, a former star at a Houston high school, would have been playing his first pro game in his hometown.

There was some suspense attached to the game as Wilkinson re-

fused to say which one of his kickers, Steve Little or Mike Wood, would play. Wilkinson planned to use the two kickers in alternating exhibition games.

"Bud prefers to keep one kicker," Cardinals vice president of administration Bing Devine said. "The competition is still in the balance."

Of utmost importance to Oilers head coach Bum Phillips was finding out which of his rookie defensive linemen, Jesse Baker or Mike Stensrud, could step up into Jimmy Young's defensive end position and start. Young has not recovered from knee surgery.

"We want to win because you don't want your players to get in the habit of losing," Phillips said. "But we want to look at a lot of players, too."

The large number of injuries suffered by the Oilers may cause more new names to be played. Phillips has said wide receivers Billy Johnson, Eddie Foster and Rich Caster will not play. Neither will offensive tackle Greg Sampson, who

has been bothered by recurring headaches.

At quarterback, Phillips will look at Gifford Nielsen, Guido Merkins and Tommy Duniven.

Both teams would like to maintain some momentum achieved in the later part of last season. The Oilers advanced to within one game of the Super Bowl while St. Louis won six of its final eight games.

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