

# Sixers' owner Katz regards Rockets' offer as senseless

United Press International  
HOUSTON — With New York, Los Angeles and New Jersey reportedly interested in Moses Malone, the Houston Rockets' estimated \$1.9 million-a-year contract offer to the NBA's leading rebounder suffers from bad timing, Philadelphia 76ers owner Harold Katz says.

"They feel that they have to sign Moses for next year in order to save that franchise," Katz said. "But they messed up by waiting so late in the season to make him an offer. The offer was just too late."

"It's a joke," he said, "because there is no agent in his right mind who is going to sign a contract now when his client has to wait no longer than this Friday to become a free agent and get more money on the open market."

Katz reacted Sunday to news of the Rockets' offer as his 76ers played the fifth game of the NBA final series. As soon as the series ends, Malone can hit the market seeking contract offers from other teams.

The Rockets have the right to match any offer and retain Malone.

This past season, Malone was the NBA's leading rebounder and second leading scorer as he played out the final year of a three-year contract.

Rockets General Manager Ray Patterson broke a long silence on the Malone contract situation Sunday when he said Malone would be retained by the Rockets at any cost.

"Malone is going to be in Houston one way or the other. The Maloofs (team owners) understand how much he means to the franchise and they are going to do what it takes to keep him here. They are always going to protect their assets," he said.

Patterson also had been quoted recently as saying he had talked with four or five groups interested in buying the franchise, although no firm offer has been made. The team is believed

to be worth \$12 million.

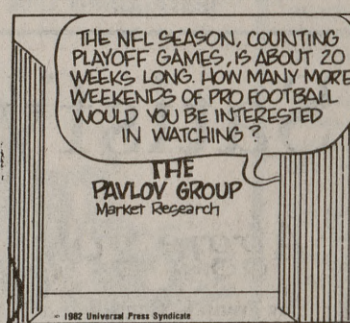
But team owner Colleen Maloof, head of the Maloof Companies of Albuquerque, N.M., said while her family frequently receives offers, a bid "really has to be attractive" before they would consider selling.

"It (the team) is definitely not on the selling block," added Gavin Maloof, Rockets president.

Katz criticized the money and the timing of the offer to Malone, which was sent to Malone's lawyer in Washington D.C. late last week.

"All the Rockets did with their tactic was set the starting price for Malone way too high and, probably in the long run, have forced themselves to pay out a lot more money than they should have to re-sign him," Katz said.

## TANK McNAMARA



# Flores, Szekely selected in top rounds of draft

by Frank L. Christlieb

Sports Editor  
A phone call. That was all David Flores wanted for his 21st birthday. A phone call.

Flores, who just completed his third year of pitching for the Aggie baseball team, wasn't waiting for an ordinary phone call. The ring he hoped for would present him with an offer to join a professional baseball organization.

Flores didn't receive the good news until Monday night, but when he did, he couldn't have wished for a better birthday present.

That's because the 6-3, 210-pound pitcher and teammate Joe Szekely, a junior catcher, were selected in Monday's initial rounds of professional baseball's summer draft. While the Montreal Expos picked Flores in the secondary phase of the third round, the Kansas City Royals drafted Szekely as the 10th pick in the second round, the 36th pick overall.

The secondary phase of the draft involves the selection of players who have been drafted previously. Flores, after completing his high school career at Corpus Christi Carroll High, was picked by the Expos as well.

Flores, who finished the 1982 season with a 7-5 record, said Monday night that he didn't know if he'd be picked early or during today's later rounds.

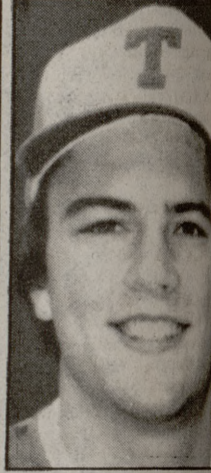
"I've always been looking forward to this," he said. "Not that I wanted to leave A&M, but just that when the chance came, I wanted to take it."

"I didn't have the great year this year that I always hoped for, but I'm satisfied that I got to play at A&M — that was a great honor."

Although he said he's not sure what the Expos will offer him in



Joe Szekely



Spike Owen

the way of a contract, Flores said he hopes to opt for the professional career over finishing his last year of college eligibility.

"I want to (play professional baseball now) but we'll just have to wait and see what their offer's going to be," he said.

Szekely, chosen third-team all-America for 1982, said from his home in Paris, Texas, that the outcome of the draft surprised him.

"I really didn't think I'd go with the Royals in the draft," he said. "I thought there were two or three other teams that I had talked to who seemed a little more interested in me. The Royals had sent me a questionnaire, but they really hadn't talked to me that much."

"But then I got the call this afternoon about 2 or so. It was a surprise, but it was a good surprise. The Royals have a good team and a top-notch organization, and they like to use their minor league players in developing the team."

Szekely, who had been con-

tacted by the Phillies, Orioles and Cubs, said some teams' scouts talk to him, but he doesn't want to make a decision until he's drafted. The Royals didn't draft him, but he's sure he'll be drafted by one of the other teams.

Szekely said the announcement of some personal during the 1982 season surprised him.

"During my first two years, but I had a real good year. I wish the team had had a better year, but I didn't. I set a lot of goals and I missed some and made some."

"I wanted to finish the hitting. 350, and I hit 350. I wanted to break the (Aggie season) RBI and runs records, but I just missed those."

Szekely finished 1982 with home runs, one away from Hawthorne's 14 in 1976. He added 57 RBI, one shy of the 62 he had in 1981. He had been playing for the Burlington Rangers, the Ranger Class A farm team, from that team last season. He had been hitting .236 for the season with 236 at-bats.

Texas A&M coach Chandler, who guided Aggies to a 33-19-1 record Southwest Conference tournament berth this season, said he was proud of Szekely.

See DRAFT page 1

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