

New Kyle Field suites may be approved soon

by Tracey Taylor
Battalion Staff

In a land where football is king, it's not surprising to find the spectators treated as dukes and duchesses.

And the kingdom of Aggieland is no different. Kyle Field, A&M's multi-million dollar football complex is one of only six college stadiums in the nation that offers its alumni enclosed suites for their viewing pleasure.

And plans are underway to add 48 more suites in the near future.

"They're for the wealthy," Wally Groff, associate athletic director for finance, said. "People who give a lot of money to the University should get something nice in return."

These donors "get" exactly what they pay for: Plush carpeting, closed-circuit TV and waiters. The suggested price on the new suites is somewhere between \$125,000 and \$175,000 apiece for a 15-year option.

The proposed plan for the new suites places two levels of boxes on the north end of the field. Each box will seat up to 16 people and would be connected to the present suites by a covered walkway. A parlor area and a multi-purpose meeting room are also included in the blueprints.

The plan is currently before the Board of Regents.

"It's kind of in a non-status," Harry

Green, executive director of the Aggie Club, a fund-raising organization for the athletic department, said. "The regents haven't approved it so it's kind of in limbo."

Green said the project was a pretty big one for the Athletic Department to take on and everyone wants to handle it carefully.

"It's a question of weighting between academics and athletics," Green said. "You have to keep things proportionate."

Board Chairman Bum Bright seems to feel that the perception people might have could be a problem and was quoted as saying A&M didn't want to appear to be taking away from academic funds for athletics.

The estimated cost for the north-end structure is \$7 million.

But the money to fund this project, like the money that funded the suites built in 1979, would come from the owners of the suites themselves — not the state.

"During the building of the third deck," Groff said, "I told Emory (Bellard), who was athletic director at the time, that we had to take care of our contributors."

Thus, the idea, derived from the Astro-dome skyboxes, was born.

The Athletic Department presented it to the university administration and got the go-ahead — if the money could be raised through the Aggie Club.

The state coordinating board also gave

their permission, provided the money was raised before construction.

The department commissioned an architect to draw up plans and presented them to the Aggie Club, along with a request for a list of the top 100 contributors to Texas A&M.

"We held what I like to call the 'Aggie Draft,'" Groff said. "The top 100 contributors were gathered together in a room in the MSC."

In order to be eligible to buy a box, a contributor either had to be there in person, send a representative, or be only a phone call away.

"We put 46 of the 48 boxes on sale and the number one contributor got the first choice as to which box he wanted," Groff said. "Within 3½ hours they were all gone."

The boxes ranged in cost from \$10,000 to \$50,000 depending on the number seated. That price bought only an 8-year option (up in 1988) on the box — not the tickets to the games.

The owners of the boxes must make a decision at the beginning of each season as to whether or not they wish to buy season tickets and thus the box for each of the home games.

The Athletic Department put only one condition on the sale — that the owners of the boxes keep contributing at or above the same level they had previously maintained.



Cincinnati's Brown named to Rice helmet

Battalion Staff

CINCINNATI — Watson Brown, who led the University of Cincinnati to a 4-6-1 record in his only season as head coach, announced his resignation Tuesday to accept the head coaching position at Rice University.

UC Athletic Director Mike McGee announced Brown's resignation at an afternoon press conference.

"We're sorry to see Coach Brown leave," McGee said in making the announcement. "He's done a fine job here. I've been led to believe that the financial advantages offered by Rice are very impressive."

It was rumored that Rice offered Brown a five-year contract worth \$1.2 million. His yearly income package at Cincinnati was estimated at \$100,000.

Rice officials had no comment on the coaching change, but scheduled a press conference for 10 a.m. Wednesday.

Brown was in only the first year of a four-year contract with UC and his first victory at the school was a memorable one, an upset 14-3 victory over Penn State in the opener.

The Bearcats were 3-2 on the year when starting quarterback Troy Bodine fractured his left arm in the Florida State game and was out the rest of the season. From that point on, UC was 1-4-1.

At the time of his injury, Bodine ranked eighth in country in passing efficiency and Cincinnati was sixth nationally in passing offense.

McGee said Brown and his wife, Brenda, visited Rice Sunday afternoon and Monday and he was informed of Brown's decision Tuesday morning.

McGee also said Brown had a buyout provision in his contract, meaning either Brown or the Houston, Tex., school will have to reimburse UC for the remaining three unfulfilled years of the contract. That reportedly could run as high as \$150,000.

Brown will replace Ray Alborn at Rice, which was 1-10 overall and

0-8 in the Southwest Conference the past season. Alborn announced his resignation the season after six years at school.

At 33, Brown was the youngest NCAA Division I head football coach in the nation.

A former quarterback and derbilt, he began his coaching career as a graduate assistant at alma mater under Steve Sauer, 1973 and moved to East Carolina to serve as quarterback coach under Paul W. Hinkle in 1974 and 1975.

Brown then served as assistant coordinator at Jacksonville State (Ala.) before going to Tennessee for one year as quarterback-receivers coach.

In 1979, Brown became head coach at Austin Peay State, where he directed the Commodore football program to consecutive 7-4 seasons.

He returned to Vanderbilt in 1981 as offensive coordinator, receiving a large share of the credit for the resurgence shown in Commodore football program

Met's rely on 'saviour' Strawberry ripening

United Press International

NEW YORK — Darryl Strawberry, once very green around the edges, has ripened to the point where he thinks he can become the saviour for the seemingly hopeless New York Mets.

The 21-year-old outfielder, named the National League's Rookie of the Year Tuesday, said Wednesday his first big league season has built his confidence to the point where he feels there is nothing he can't accomplish on the baseball diamond.

"I think I will come out with more confidence next year," Strawberry said. "I had to make some adjustments last year, and I look forward to being the team leader. I feel it's important for me to lead the ballclub because the Mets look at me as their saviour. It's hard for me to say what I'm capable of doing."

Strawberry hit 26 homers, drove in 74 runs and batted .257 last season, even though he did not play his first big league game until May 4. Moreover, he accomplished those numbers despite a terrible

start in which he batted just .191 over his first seven weeks in the majors.

"He really went from Double A ball to the big leagues," said Mets' general manager Frank Cashen. "It was a quantum leap with a short stopover in Tidewater (Triple A). The big question everyone asks is what would have happened if he'd played longer at Tidewater? would he have struggled so much in the beginning?"

"I said then, and I say it now, he had so much talent that we felt by the time we got to September he would be putting the numbers on the board that shows the real Darryl Strawberry and we would begin to see more of the real Darryl Strawberry that we're going to see in the years ahead in September than we were going to see in May or June."

Strawberry said he never lost confidence despite his poor start, thanks in large part to batting coach Jim Frey, now the manager of the Chicago Cubs.

"I really had confidence all the time because Jimmy Frey kept my confidence up. Even when I struck out three or four times, he just told me I had to keep my head up, that tomorrow was another day. Like Jimmy says, you have to go out there and think you're the best player on the field. When I've got that in my mind, no one can stop me. I have a chance to go out there and do something great every day."

Dave Johnson, the Mets' new manager, had Strawberry at Tide-

water and is enamored with the young outfielder's skills. However, he has seen too many players fail after good first-year performances and so is reluctant to praise Strawberry too soon. "Very few players I've ever seen have his all-around skills," Johnson said. "But he's a rookie. There's too much hype about him. I'm going to try and downplay it. I'm going to poke fun at him to protect him a little bit."

Defense is one area in which the Mets feel Strawberry will show vast improvement next year. Despite being the possession of a rifle arm and outstanding fielding, Strawberry nevertheless has been cautious in the outfield since 1984 season.

"He was the best outfielder in Double A two years ago," said Gorman, the Mets' vice president, player personnel. "He dropped a ball early in the season and was tentative out there. With more experience, I think he can play. He can be a star."

One thing Strawberry guaranteed for next season is a nice fat raise in salary. He made \$40,000 last season and the jump into triple figures is expected.

"We certainly do not want to cheapen Mr. Strawberry's value," Cashen said. "We'll pay him what he's worth."

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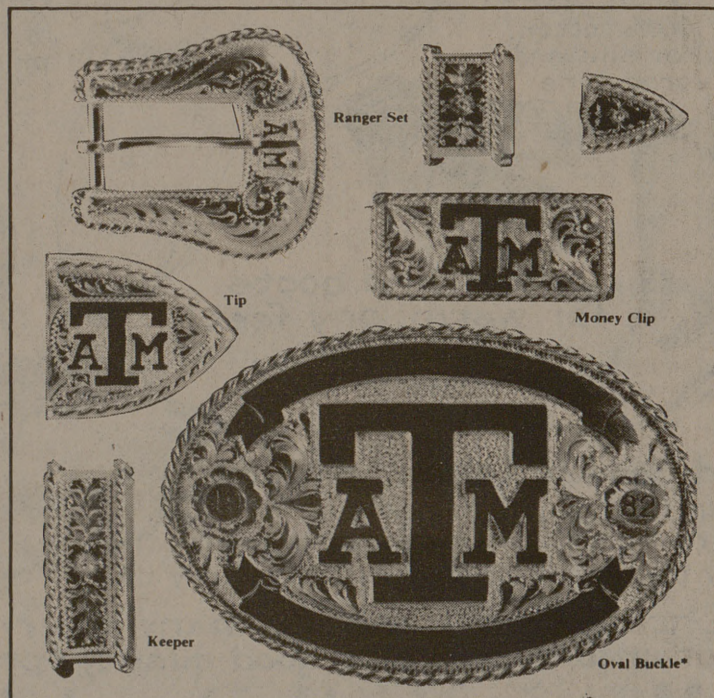
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