

Aaron dislikes MVP choice of Clemens

(AP) — Henry Aaron, a former National League Most Valuable Player, Wednesday called the selection of a pitcher, Boston's Roger Clemens, as the American League's MVP "a joke."

The retired home run king was among several players who disagreed with the choice of a pitcher over an everyday player as MVP.

Aaron, who won the MVP in 1957 while playing for the Milwaukee Braves, said, "Everyday players cannot win the Cy Young award, and pitchers should not be able to win the MVP award. The pitchers have their own MVP award, and it's the Cy Young. I feel very strongly about that."

Aaron is now head of player development for the Atlanta Braves.

The first to speak out was first baseman Don Mattingly of the New York Yankees, the 1985 winner who finished second to Clemens in the 1986 balloting announced Tuesday.

"I know he is valuable, but it's hard for me to conceive that a guy who is in 33 or 34 games can be as valuable... as an everyday guy who is out there 162 games."

Mike Schmidt, named Wednesday as the National League MVP for the third time, said, "I'm prejudiced because I'm not a pitcher, but I tend to agree with Mattingly that the MVP should be reserved for an everyday player, a guy who puts his neck out every day."

Roger Clemens may be an exception, he was so dominant, meant so much to the team. But I'm not in favor of a pitcher being considered for the MVP."

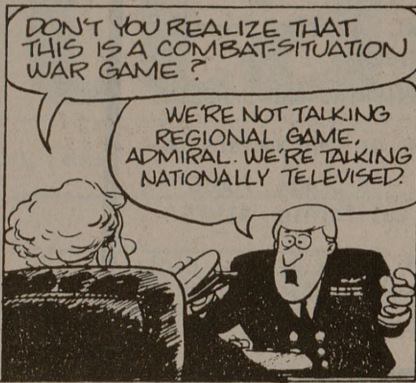
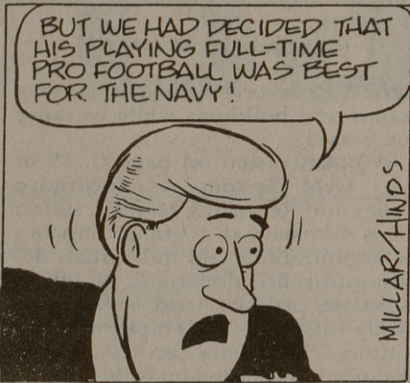
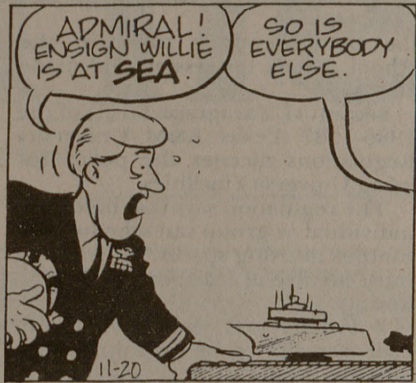
Pitchers have been elected by the Baseball Writers' Association of America as MVP 16 times in the past. But Jack Lang, secretary-treasurer of the baseball writers and a member for the past 22 years, said it has only been controversial since Cy Young winners were first named in both leagues in 1966. Eight pitchers have won both awards.

"The rules that are sent out to the voters on the (MVP) committee (two from each city in each league), state: Keep in mind that all players are eligible. That includes pitchers, starters and relievers," said Lang.

"Anybody on the committee that feels they cannot vote for a pitcher, we replace them. In my 22 years running the elections, only two writers have said that to me."

TANK McNAMARA

by Jeff Millar & Bill Hinds



Coaches pick TCU to win conference basketball title

DALLAS (AP) — Although the consensus of Southwest Conference basketball coaches makes Texas Christian the team to beat, Horned Frog Coach Jim Killingsworth says almost anything could happen in this year's league race.

"I wouldn't be surprised if we had a conference champion and then someone else came along and won the conference tournament," Killingsworth said Wednesday as SWC coaches gathered in Dallas to talk over the upcoming season.

That's exactly the scenario last season when Texas, TCU and Texas A&M shared the regular season title, only to see Texas Tech come on strong at the end and capture the SWC post-season tournament and the conference's only berth in the NCAA tournament.

The Longhorns, Horned Frogs and Aggies all earned berths in the National Invitation Tournament.

Killingsworth returns four starters, including Carl Lott, who averaged 15.8 points per game and was named SWC Newcomer of the Year.

"The reason they pick us is that everyone is coming back," Killingsworth said.

Pat Foster, who has succeeded the legendary Guy V. Lewis as coach at Houston, said TCU "has the guards that will give them an edge over anyone in this league."

But Killingsworth said he expects trouble from the Cougars and the Arkansas Razorbacks, both of which will be trying to rebound from disappointing seasons.



"Houston's always Houston," Killingsworth said. "They might be down for a while, but not for long."

Killingsworth said second-year coach Nolan Richardson of Arkansas had a great recruiting year at Arkansas and is past his first traumatic year of living in the shadow of Eddie Sutton.

"Last year was his first," Killingsworth said. "He knows the league and he knows his players now."

Richardson indicated he was cautiously optimistic about the Razorbacks' chances and said a key part of the team's rebuilding effort would be a preseason schedule that includes Alabama, Mississippi, Virginia and a berth in the Rainbow Classic at Honolulu in late December.

"When we finish our preseason, I'll know what kind of team we've got," he said. "(If) we get a few breaks and get rolling, who knows?"

A tough pre-conference schedule also faces Texas Tech, which plays Kentucky, Arizona, Clemson, Kansas State, Wyoming and Southeastern Louisiana. The Red Raiders closed last season by giving highly rated Georgetown a scare in the first round of the NCAA playoffs before losing by six points.

"We're going to find out our strengths and weaknesses, who can play and who can't play with our non-conference schedule," said Tech Coach Gerald Myers.

Myers said the Horned Frogs have the early advantage.

"TCU is the team to beat," he said. "But there are a lot of teams that could develop throughout the year."

Several coaches said they feel more difficult non-league opponents are an element to making the SWC more competitive.

"Our overall conference schedule is tougher," Myers said. "We want to win them, of course, but that's not necessarily the bottom line."

Texas Coach Bob Weltlich said the conference's one-game show in the NCAA could have a beneficial aspect in the areas of scheduling and recruiting.

"Maybe what happened last year was good," he said. "It called attention to the coaches that we will have to do a better job."

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