

Astros' Kerfeld upset at general manager

HOUSTON (AP) — Houston Astros relief pitcher Charlie Kerfeld said Thursday that Astros General Manager Dick Wagner is more interested in pinching pennies than winning a World Series and that he may walk out of camp.

"There's a stick about 6 feet long, and so far I'm getting one foot of it," Kerfeld said in an interview with KIKK-Radio. "He (Wagner) doesn't seem to want to budge for me or Glenn (Davis) or any player with less than three years in the big leagues."

Wagner was attending a meeting in Dallas and unavailable for comment.

Davis, runnerup as the National League's Most Valuable Player last season, currently is a holdout in his contract squabble with Wagner.

Davis and Kerfeld, key figures in Houston's NL Western Division title last season, have less than three years of major league services and are ineligible for salary arbitration.

"Obviously, he's (Wagner) worried more about pinching pennies than he is about winning the World Series," Kerfeld said.

Kerfeld, in his second season in the major leagues, finished with an

11-2 record and 2.58 earned run average last season as a middle reliever.

"I'm not saying I'm bitter, but I'm very disgruntled," Kerfeld said. "Glenn Davis is a NL super star of the future. There are no more Glenn Davises in the Astros minor leagues, and there are no more Charlie Kerfelds either."

Davis declined to report to the Astros' training camp at Kissimmee, Fla., with other veterans and says he'll hold out for the rest of the season if he doesn't get a satisfactory contract offer from the Astros.

Kerfeld reported early to spring training but said he would decide by March 3 or March 4 on walking out if his contract isn't settled.

"So far, it's no fun going to the ball park and worrying about my contract instead of playing baseball," Kerfeld said.

Kerfeld said he is being offered barely \$100,000 annually and he reportedly is seeking \$125,000.

Davis, who hit 30 home runs and drove in 101 runs, is seeking \$240,000 from the Astros and the club has offered \$170,000.

Commissioner says owners not trying to end free agency

DALLAS (AP) — Baseball commissioner Peter Ueberroth said Thursday he has seen no evidence that major league club owners are conspiring to break up the player free agency system.

Ueberroth said he "made inquiries" during a day-long meeting of the 26 teams' owners or their representatives as to whether teams are still pursuing free agents.

"I wanted to know if there were negotiations ongoing," Ueberroth said. "There seems to be, and I hope they are fruitful."

Players, their agents and the players' union have complained that the owners' failure to sign some of the big-name stars indicates collusion to drive salaries down.

"That's a bunch of garbage," Texas Rangers owner Eddie Chiles told reporters. "But the union has to fuss about something."

He said it is not the owners' fault that some players have not signed contracts.

"If they're good players, we'll take them," Chiles said. "They're probably pricing themselves out of the market."

Most of the owners left quickly af-

ter the regularly scheduled meeting to catch flights. They walked briskly past reporters and declined to comment.

Ueberroth conducted a news conference, however, and said he believes the market place should determine how much a player is paid.

"Everyone seems to forget I came out against a salary cap in 1985," Ueberroth said. "I want the market place to make the decision. The owners may not like that and the union may not like that."

Ueberroth said he is concerned about the financial shape of major league baseball, but is determined to hold the average price of tickets to between \$6 and \$7.

"The financial picture is a little better, but only because revenues are up," he said. "People expect the television payments to come down, and if it continues, the institution of major league baseball could be in trouble."

Ueberroth said it is possible the contract between major league baseball and ABC and NBC will be renegotiated before it expires in 1989.

He said nine teams in 1985 either broke even or made money.

TCU's Lott and Richard lose first home game as Frogs

FORT WORTH (AP) — Carl Lott and Larry Richard didn't know how to act — a game had ended at Daniel-Meyer Coliseum on the Texas Christian University campus and they were on the losing end of the score.

Lott and Richard, both junior college transfers, came to TCU at the start of the 1986 season.

The Horned Frogs proceeded to win 24 consecutive home games until the upstart Houston Cougars knocked off the 15th-ranked Southwest Conference champions 84-65 on Wednesday night.

"It was kind of a weird feeling losing in Daniel-Meyer," Richard said. "It was hard to believe."

Lott agreed. "It's just not something you ever thought was going to happen."

With the SWC Post-Season Basketball Classic only a week away, the Cougars served notice that the regular season champions can be conquered.

"I think this proves it will be anybody's tournament to win in Dallas," TCU Coach Jim Killingsworth said. "Maybe we better wake up."

TCU dropped to 22-5 overall and 13-2 in the SWC, while Houston improved to 17-9 and 9-6.

"We'll have to regroup for the tournament now," Killingsworth said. "We just got too far behind Houston and then we had to do too much gambling on defense. That (a full-court press) pays off about once every 85 times you try it."

"I hate to see our streak go," Killingsworth said "but we ran into a hot team that did everything well. The Cougars were just unconscious."

Greg Anderson scored 27 points and grabbed 12 rebounds as the Cougars shot 57 per cent from the field.

TCU hadn't lost in Daniel-Meyer Coliseum since the last game of 1985.



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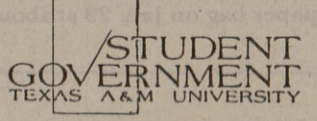
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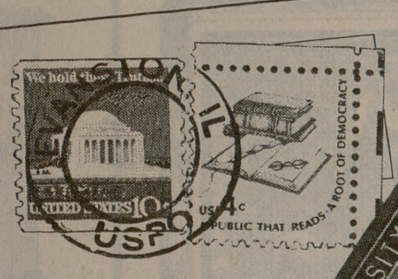
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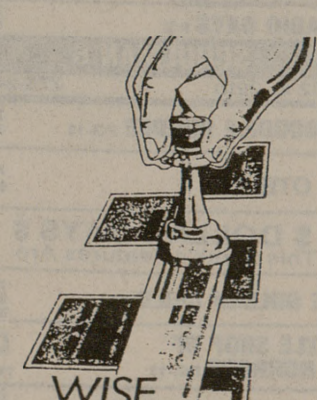
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