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Pavlas

(continued from page 9)

ting two hours a day, four days a week during spring practice. Since he and Stump are competing for the starting role, Pavlas is getting plenty of work.

"It's my first spring practice," Pavlas said. "It's a learning experience. I'm getting a lot of repetitions. With our offense, you learn through experience. And with the repetitions, I'm getting more of a chance to learn our offense through experience and not just observations."

Pavlas is concentrating a lot on making quicker decisions on the field and releasing the ball quicker during practice.

"Those just kind of work hand in hand," he said.

Pavlas said he is excited about getting an opportunity to play, but he doesn't think at all about starting.

"It is exciting to have an opportunity to play," he said. "But I know I've got a lot of improving that needs

to be done. I'm just really working hard this spring to capitalize on this chance I have to improve."

"All those decisions on who starts are up to the coaches. The main thing for me to do is just go out there and do my best every day and try to help the team improve any way I can. That's the main thing spring practice is all about."

Pavlas knows that because of his accomplishments and his well publicized talent, expectations will be high, and some people may never be satisfied with his performance. But that doesn't worry him.

"The only person I have to please is myself," he said. "All I can do is do my best. And if that isn't good enough for some people, that's just the breaks."

"The main thing to remember is that the only people who are going to be there are yourself and your family. I don't worry about pleasing other people. All I want to do is be a

positive contributor to my team. I do the best I can do for myself. And I hope we'll have some good results."

Although pro football Hall of Famer Namath is not included in Vinny Testaverde, Roger Staubach, John Elway and former A&M quarterback Gary Kubiak on Pavlas' terback wall of fame in his room, is the quarterback Pavlas' talent minds a lot of people. But Pavlas tries to keep these comparisons in perspective.

"It's quite an honor," he said. "I haven't thrown one pass or one snap at the college level."

A comparison such as that is of pressure to put on a college man athlete. But the young quarterback seems to be handling it well.

"You can allow the pressure to put on yourself," he said. "But again, the only person I've got to prove anything to is myself. I do my best, that's all I can do."

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STONHARD

The Battalion
845-2611

College baseball tries to prove diamond-in-the-rough reputation

By Doug Hall
Sports Writer

I was flipping through the TV channels Monday night, desperately looking for an update on the fight of the century — otherwise known as Hagler vs. Leonard — when I hit the sports junkie station, otherwise known as ESPN.

And lo and behold, guess what I found? Baseball.

I guess it shouldn't have been that much of a surprise, especially since Monday was opening day around the Major Leagues.

But this wasn't the Astros vs. the Dodgers or New York vs. Pittsburgh. This was Ole Miss vs. Mississippi State.

Big deal you say. Well I'd agree, except for the fact that it made me think back to the last time I had seen a college baseball game on television.

I remembered watching Texas in the College World Series last year and some of the other championship games. But I sure couldn't remember watching a regular season conference matchup, even if it was the Mississippi showdown.

But now think about how many collegiate basketball games we see each season on television. Saturday and Sunday afternoon television are filled with the grating voices of Al McGuire, Billy Packer, Brent Musburger and Dick "the mouth that never shuts" Vitale.

But before we even get to basketball season, the major television networks have fought out the ratings wars starting in early September by televising college football. This season alone, A&M played four of its 12 football games on national television. Other teams such as Notre

Dame and Oklahoma played on live television five or six times.

So if by now you're wondering what all of this is about, then try and answer this question: If baseball is our national past time and each year millions of fans pay billions of dollars to watch professional baseball games, then how come college baseball doesn't command the same amount of drawing power as collegiate basketball and football?

For starters, one has to look at the difference between the league structures in the three sports. Most baseball experts will tell you, the secret to an organization's consistency is a strong minor league development program. Every Major League club has its own farm system where players who have been drafted out of high school or college can develop their skills against players in a higher caliber league.

These players usually start out at the single A division and work their way through AA ball and AAA ball until they get a shot at the Major Leagues. Very few big leaguers ever join their professional teams without doing time in the minors.

Just the opposite, however, is true in football and basketball. With the exception of the Canadian Football league, the Continental Basketball Association, the Italian basketball league and semi-pro teams, basketball and football don't have developmental leagues. It's a make or break scene for rookies in those leagues.

And as evidenced through the play of the Indiana Pacers' Chuck Person or the Los Angeles Rams' Jim Everett, rookies in the those sports are able to come in immediately and contribute to their team's play. Heck, Moses Malone never even

played college ball and look he's done.

The number of pro baseball players that have jumped straight to college to the pros is limited.

Earlier this season Texas Head Baseball Coach Mark Johnson said there was obviously a talent gap between collegiate and professional baseball, but he felt people were normally beginning to come around the excitement and enthusiasm found in the college ranks.

"I think people are finally beginning to see that there are a lot of things happening in college baseball as far as the entertainment side goes," Johnson said. "We finished ninth in the nation last year in attendance because we tried to create a family atmosphere at the game. We want the students to come here and enjoy being part of the excitement."

Johnson attributes the rise in attendance to a competitive league team and the increasing skills of college players.

"People are beginning to see some players they see at our level on the professional teams," he said. "College kids are moving up a lot quicker than they did in the past. In fact, the first two players drafted last year were out of college conference (Jeff King from Texas and Greg Swindell from Texas

Viewpoint

But if you're looking for college baseball to be a television powerhouse in the upcoming years, you probably are disappointed.

But heck, I'd rather go out to the park and watch the game in person. At least that way you don't have to listen to an announcer like Vitale unless of course you go to an off home game and listen to the voice of Derrick Grubbs.

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