

Sports

A&M volleyball team to take on LadyKats

The Texas A&M volleyball team will try to bounce back from a tough weekend at the Illini Classic in Champaign, Ill. when it takes on the Sam Houston State LadyKats tonight in Huntsville.

A&M, 1-3, lost to three Top 20 teams in the tournament, including 4th-ranked Brigham Young (6-15, 6-15, 11-15), 6th-ranked Illinois (11-15, 5-15, 5-15) and 13th-ranked Arizona State (15-10, 2-15, 10-15, 0-15, 8-15). The Lady Aggies opened the season with a three-game sweep of Lamar here last Wednesday.

"I'm glad we were there (at the tournament)," A&M Coach Al Givens said. "We were concerned going into the tournament about

facing strong competition so early, but that's what we needed to help us continue to improve and mature.

"We were disappointed that we didn't win a match, but we served notice that we can be a Top 20 team by competing with Arizona State on an even level."

Sam Houston State brings a 3-1 record into tonight's match with two wins over Prairie View A&M and one win over Lamar. The LadyKats' lone setback was at the hands of the University of Houston in the UH Kickoff Classic.

"We don't want to take Sam Houston lightly," Givens said. "We want to see improvement from match to match."

Bat incident damages Astros' image

By Anthony Wilson
Sports Writer



I've been a Houston Astros fan all my life.

Some of my fondest childhood memories revolve around evenings spent at the Astrodome. I vividly remember crowds howling "Jose Cruuuuuuuuzzzzz!!!!", Joe Sambito and J.R. Richard mowing down batters left and right, and Cesar Cedeno's hotdogging in centerfield and on the basepaths. I was even lucky enough to be in attendance the afternoon Nolan Ryan pitched his fifth no-hitter against those dreaded Los Angeles Dodgers.

Viewpoint

But something happened in a game Sept. 2 against the Chicago Cubs that made me ashamed to be an Astronaut.

Left fielder Billy Hatcher was ejected from the game for using an illegal bat. Hatcher's bat shattered when he hit an inside pitch to the shortstop. When Cub third baseman Keith Moreland retrieved the splintered bat, he noticed a hollowed out portion in the barrel end. He showed it to the umpires and Hatcher was through for the evening.

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Players have been known to remove an 8-inch plug of wood from the barrel and replace it with cork or grounded "superballs." Corking a bat supposedly improves the distance a hit ball travels. Several play-

ers have been accused of using illegal bats this year, most notably New York Mets third baseman Howard Johnson. Ironically, the Astros were among the first to point the finger at Johnson.

The laughter and jeers the Astros faced around the league when they started wearing fluorescent rainbow-striped uniforms will be nothing when word of this incident gets out.

First, let's look at Hatcher's motives for using an illegal bat.

Maybe he's not a very good hitter, you might say.

On the contrary, Hatcher is one of the best hitters in the league. His .311 average is tops on the team and among the league leaders. He has 151 hits this season, fourth best in the league.

"Well," you might think, "maybe Billy's trying to hit more home runs."

If that is the case, then Hatcher

effort seems to be in vain. He has hit 11 home runs this season. That's not bad, but it's not really that good either. His offensive role on the Astros is to get on base and use his speed to steal bases and score runs.

Perhaps Hatcher is just trying to help the team, you conclude. After all the Astros had lost their previous six games, due to a lack of offensive punch, at the time of the incident.

would also increase the distance a bunted ball travels. Obviously a bunt that rolls all the way to the third baseman is useless.

But why would Hatcher be using someone else's bat? Most professional baseball players are very particular about the dimensions of their bat. They usually don't pick up just any old bat and walk up to the plate.

Whether Hatcher knowingly broke the rules or not, the fact remains that he did use a bat which gave him an unfair advantage.

Earlier this season, Minnesota Twins pitcher Joe Niekro and Philadelphia Phillies pitcher Kevin Gross were suspended for 10 days for scuffing baseballs. On Sept. 3, National League president A. Bartlett Giamatti suspended Hatcher for 10 days without pay. Hatcher will miss eight games, including a crucial three game homestand against San Francisco, and \$7000 of his paycheck. Maybe Giamatti should've been a little harsher on Hatcher to let the players know he won't tolerate cheating. Maybe this time a suspension of 14-21 days was in order. It might have served as a deterrent to others who are cheating or contemplating it. Cub manager Gene Michael's suggestion of a three month suspension would've been cruel and unusual punishment.

Baseball is a beautiful and important part of America's culture. It would be a shame for future generations to describe something as American as Mom, apple pie, baseball and cheating.

Pokes cut Sweeney, stick with McDonald

IRVING (AP) — The Dallas Cowboys Monday cut rookie quarterback Kevin Sweeney of Fresno State, a seventh-round draft pick who had been impressive in training camp but lost a close battle to veteran Paul McDonald for a backup job.

Sweeney, the NCAA's all-time leading pass yardage producer, didn't play in Dallas' last two preseason games. McDonald threw a touchdown pass, the only one of the exhibition season, during Saturday night's 18-13 loss to the Houston Oilers.

McDonald never played in a game. McDonald is comfortable in offensive coordinator Paul Hackett's pass offense, having worked with Hackett in both the collegiate and professional ranks.

Other surprising cuts included place-kicker Rolf Benirschke, obtained from San Diego five days ago, and cornerback Johnny Holloway, a two-year vet from Kansas.

It was a particular tough cut for Dallas Coach Tom Landry, who had seen Sweeney grow up as a ballboy at the Cowboys' Thousand Oaks, Calif., training camp.

Others cuts included rookies: Wide receiver Cornell Burbage of Kentucky, running back Alvin Blount of Maryland, running back Carl Miller of Arkansas, cornerback Robert Williams of Baylor, tackle Reggie Smith of Kansas, defensive tackle Mike Makins of Tennessee-Chattanooga, defensive end Ray Perkins of Virginia; one-year vets tight end Steve Folsom of Utah, tackle Steve Cisowski of Santa Clara, guard Bob White of Rhode Island.

"It came down to the experience we needed for the season," Landry said. "Kevin has a tremendous arm and did well in camp. But you saw how McDonald can perform, how he can read defenses," he said.

"I gave it my best shot. Maybe something will work out for me but the Cowboys have always been my team," Sweeney said.

McDonald, who will back up Steve Pelluer and Danny White, was obtained by Dallas as a free agent in

placed on the injured reserve list were defensive tackle Don Smerek, defensive end Robert Smith, and guard Glenn Titensor.

Valentine makes Oiler cut, 7-year vet Baker doesn't

HOUSTON (AP) — The Houston Oilers cut four players, including veteran defensive end Jesse Baker and guard Mike Kelley Monday, reducing their roster to the National Football League's 45-player roster limit.

The Oilers' 12th-round draft pick, Ira Valentine from Texas A&M, made the team after having an excellent camp and preseason.

Safety Kenny Johnson and running back Hubert Oliver also were dropped from the team.

Baker, 6-5, 260, played seven seasons for the Oilers before he was cut last Sept. 1 and resigned Oct. 2.

Kelley, 6-5, 280, left the Oilers training camp for several days, saying he no longer wanted to play football.

The Oilers list does not include first-round draft choice Alonzo Highsmith and starting offensive tackle Bruce Matthews, who have not signed their 1987 contracts.

Rozier says he took and passed drug test

HOUSTON (AP) — Houston Oilers running back Mike Rozier, who missed practice on Friday and did not play against the Dallas Cowboys Saturday, confirmed Sunday he took and passed a drug test.

The Houston Post quoted a team source Sunday saying Rozier had taken and passed the drug test.

Rozier also said he would be available for Sunday's NFL season opener against the Los Angeles Rams in the Astrodome.

Asked if he took a drug test, Rozier said "Yeah." Asked if he passed, Rozier also said "Yeah" as he left the Oiler practice facility Sunday.

But Rozier declined comment on why he missed Friday's practice. And Oiler Coach Jerry Glanville declined comment on Rozier's status.

Rozier also was late for pregame warmups before Houston's exhibition opener against Kansas City in the Astrodome. Rozier said he overslept and was fined \$1,000.

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The same is true of hospitals. Clinic-based HMOs pay for hospitalization only at participating hospitals. So your ability to seek cancer therapy at Houston's M.D. Anderson Hospital, or cardiac surgery at St. Luke's, is similarly restricted.

Add to those limitations the loss of all dental coverage and most psychiatric benefits, and the true cost of HMO participation becomes apparent.

Before you abandon your proven medical insurance for the latest trend in health care delivery, be sure you know all the facts.

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