

# Sports

## Traveling staffer takes a look at British sports



**Cray Pixley**  
Sports viewpoint

Last week sports fans were treated to the farewell column of Wordy Wilson. Wilson tearfully left the sports staff to join the intellectual Opinion Page as editor.

Fine. Now I get to move up the totem pole to the assistant sports editor position. But I won't be writing for the paper in the summer because I'll be away broadening my sports horizons.

I'm being forced to go to the United Kingdom and will experience an Englishman's idea of sport. This is foreign territory for an American in more ways than one.

England is a land with some of the most confusing and uppercrust sports. The sports that Englishmen hold dear are considered social events as much as contests.

The eternal sports puzzle is the game of cricket. Cricket is similar, or so it's been said, to baseball. Cricket uses a bat-like object and glove-like mits, so it must be similar, right?

I know some hardened Astros fans who would disagree. They would say that baseball is a *man's game*, while cricket is too civilized and hoity-toity. Not to mention the in-depth rules and object of cricket that prevent its simple understanding.

After all, there are no inside-the-park grand-slam home runs in cricket.

Cricket is too English for Americans to ever appreciate, baseball enthusiasts say.

It's true, you wouldn't see players in a cricket match chewing and spitting tobacco like major league sluggers. What if they soiled their white playing clothes? Cricket players look like they are posing for a Ralph Lauren ad.

I doubt that there will be a little league cricket team in College Station any time soon. It is not the ideal sport of little boys.

Some sports associated with the English, such as tennis, have already evolved into an art form.

Wimbledon is not just a tournament like the WCT Final in Dallas. Wimbledon is an ivy-covered tradition. Wimbledon is THE tennis event of the season. Winning Wimbledon means you've conquered the world, or something close to that.

Only the English have a Wimbledon.

At Wimbledon, people care more about eating strawberries and cream while drinking champagne than they care about who won the day's matches.

To put it tritely, sports in England are a whole different ballgame. In the United States, football is considered the main college sport. American-style football is unheard of at Oxford or Cambridge. Rowing is the sport of university students.

American-style football has made inroads in London but has yet to catch on at the English universities. There will be no Kickoff Classic between Cambridge and Oxford, except maybe in rugby.

Sports in the United States are grit and power. Sports in England are style and grace — Olympic underdog Eddie Edwards is not included in this statement.

There is no "Refrigerator" in the cricket world, and I bet the English are glad.

# Life in the slow lane

## Carcione takes it easy on the way to the majors

Profile of the Week  
Tom Carcione

By Hal L. Hammons  
Sports Editor

Imagine living in Chicago. The Windy City. The City of the Big Shoulders. There's excitement on every street corner, more entertainment options than you can count, skyscrapers blotting out the sky.

Then you move to College Station. Add in the factor that you're of Italian descent — hardly uncommon in Chicago, but relatively rare in east-central Texas. Plus the stereotypical Italian-American mumble that Marlon Brando made so famous. And put yourself on a team of individuals who are looking for any excuse to turn "people" into "characters."

Now you are Tom Carcione, catcher for the Texas A&M baseball team.

I don't know exactly what I expected to find when I knocked on his Cain Hall door. I had heard he was a clam, hardly talking at all except for an occasional muttered grunt. I had heard he was extremely laid back, with an apparent pulse rate of about 20.

The first was false. The second definitely was not. In fact, when I got to his room at about 11:15 a.m., I woke him up.

But that didn't seem to faze him. He just threw on a shirt and shorts, washed his face, ran his wet fingers through his curly brown hair, and plopped back on the bed, ready to talk.

Or mumble, anyway. And if his roommate, pitcher Fred Riscen, is to be believed, it's considerably worse on the field.

Picture the scene: Carcione is on the mound after Coach Mark Johnson has made a pitching change, bringing Anthony DeLaCruz out of the bullpen. The umpire asks Tom who the new pitcher is.

"Duhluhcluth" is the answer.

What? "Duluhluuuth!" he repeats.

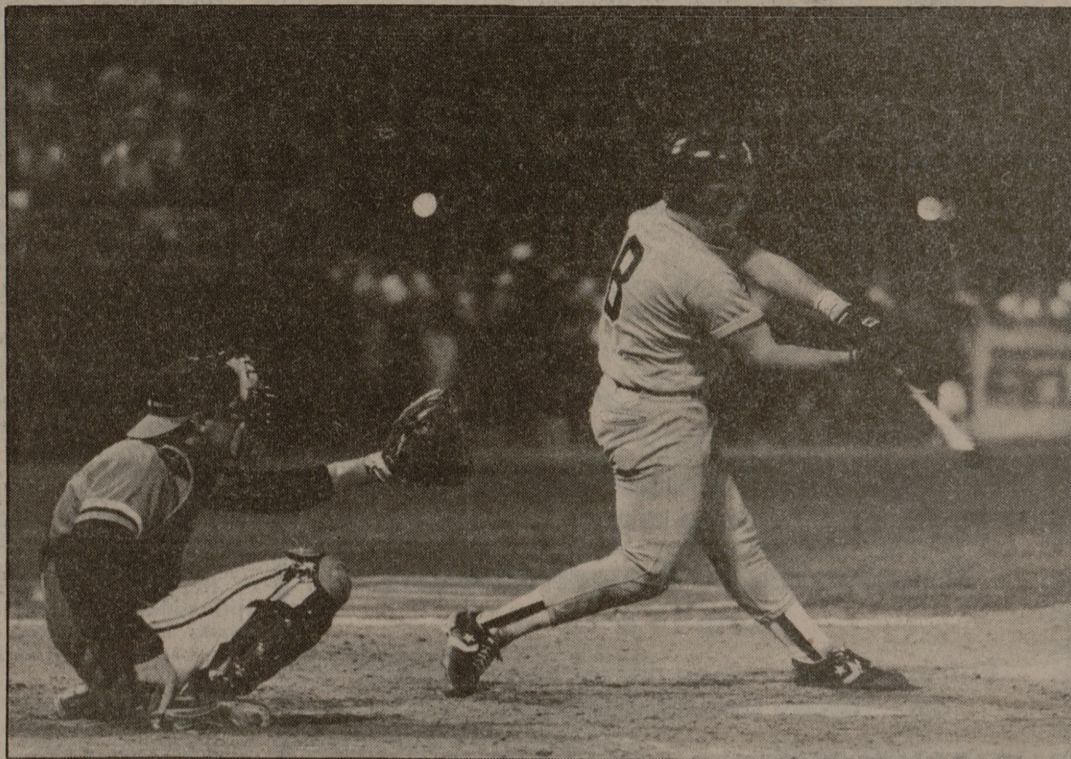
The scene — a true one, Fred and Tom both insist — ends with the umpire asking for an answer from Johnson. In English.

No wonder the theme from "The Godfather" blares out over Olsen Field whenever P.A. announcer "D.D." Grubbs announces the next batter as "Tom . . . Car-GIONE!"

But Tom doesn't get bothered by that. Indeed, it doesn't seem much at all gets on his nerves.

He's someone who knows what he wants — a big-league baseball career. And just as an engineering major is in college to prepare himself for his career, Tom is getting ready for his.

Some might raise their noses at Tom's rather



Tom Carcione has belted 10 home runs this season. Here he connects against the Okla-

Photo by Phelan M. Ebenhack  
homa State Cowboys, ranked No. 1 at the time, on March 28. He hit two homers in the game.

passive attitude toward class, but he's looking at school as a means to an end — a life as a major-league baseball player.

"I guess if I never made it in pro ball, I'd have to go back to school and try to make something out of myself. But right now, since I'm going to have a chance to play pro ball, my sight's on that."

He says it's looking like he will be drafted after this season, and if so he will probably skip his last year at A&M.

"Right now I hear a lot of things about being drafted," he says. "I'm going to have the chance, so I'm looking down the road of playing pro ball."

"Right now it's looking like I'm going to sign (after this year) and just get my foot in the door. I

want a chance to play pro ball, and once I get it I'm going to jump at it.

"My head isn't into school. I'm more onto baseball, the swing of things. I want to play baseball. School don't come over to me. I'm not a student."

"I know I'm not going to be able to concentrate on school. I gotta think about myself, and if I get that chance I'm going to take it."

It's the only thing he's wanted to do since he was a kid, and he's just one step away.

It's not a very big step, if this season's an indicator. He's batted around .300 all season. He has 10 home runs and 36 RBI, placing him fifth on the team in both categories. And he's developed

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