

# Sports

## Psychology could help teams A&M profs try to predict athletic performance

By Doug Walker  
Assistant Sports Editor

A new psychological approach may help professional and amateur sports administrators predict athletic performance, according to two Texas A&M professors.

Dr. Jed Friend, a research associate with the Public Policy Resource Lab at A&M, and Dr. Arnold LeUnes, a professor of psychology at A&M, have devised a system for predicting the performance of baseball players that may have applications to all team sports, as well as different types of industries and corporations.

Research for the approach was conducted last year and included almost 200 amateur baseball players from nine teams around the state, including the Texas A&M baseball team.

Friend says the approach is different from the conventional approaches to sports psychology and should not be confused with them. He says traditional sports psychologists would look at enhancing an athlete's performance through "psyching up," by mental relaxation or by visualizing performance.

"We're addressing more of the management issues. It's still psychology, but it's not mainstream, or conventional, sports psychology. The management aspect stems from a field called industrial organizational psychology," Friend says.

Industrial organizational psychology deals with issues involving personnel management. These are used to decide who should be promoted, fired, transferred, given a pay raise or be trained further, Friend says.

Personnel management issues have not been addressed previously in sports, Friend says.

"Some of the organizational variables have been addressed in sports. Motivation and leadership have been specifically addressed," he says. "This concept of industrial organizational psychology applied to sport really fits more within a field that is coming into its own called sports management."

Friend says he likes to call this approach sports management psychology.

"Obviously there is some overlap between the psychological things the sports psychologists would be addressing and what we're doing," he says.

Friend and LeUnes want to predict performance for use as a prediction device in the drafting or selection process, Friend says.

"This is something that is done all the time in every other industry," Friend says. "It's been my experience with Diamond Shamrock and other organizations that you can predict who will be, for example, a good engineer or

production foreman on the job by giving people a variety of tests."

This idea of evaluation has been transferred to sport by Friend and LeUnes. Personality is the only aspect of psychology that has been addressed for the purpose of predicting performance and was combined with assessment of abilities of each player by coaches, Friend says.

"There is some literature in the area of sports psychology that suggests personality will predict how well somebody performs as an athlete," he says. The aspects of personality that were used are related to tension, anxiety, vigor, mental energy, fatigue and confusion.

Friend says there have been other studies of personality that looked at aggression and its effect on performance, but they were not designed to apply the findings to sports or anything in particular.

"There have been other personality measures that might look at aggression, . . . most of which have not fared well. Unfortunately, the people who were working with the personality measures were not trying to establish a selection or draft system. They were sort of on a grand fishing expedition and were just trying to obtain data and did not have a clear cut idea of what they were looking for," he says.

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## Late Rocket rally fails, Mavs get rare road win to take 2-1 series lead

HOUSTON (AP) — Roy Tarpley scored six of his 17 points in the final minutes, including the go-ahead basket with 3:45 to play, leading the Dallas Mavericks to a 93-92 NBA playoff victory over Houston Tuesday night.

The Mavericks took a 2-1 lead in the best-of-five first-round series and could wrap up the series in Houston tomorrow night.

The Mavericks, who ended a five-game playoff losing streak on the road, had to overcome 35 points and 12 rebounds by Akeem Olajuwon and some last-minute heroics by the Rockets.

Trailing 93-92, Rodney McCray grabbed the ball from Rolando Blackman and the Rockets called timeout with 12 seconds to play to set up their final play.

Olajuwon missed the basket and Detlef Schrempf slapped the ball back toward midcourt as the game ended.

The Mavericks, trailing 77-73 to start the fourth period, tied the score four times in the period and

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took the lead, 86-84, with 3:45 to go on a tip-in by Tarpley, who led the Mavericks with 13 rebounds.

The Rockets, trailing 53-45 at the half, took the lead for the first time since early in the first quarter on a tip-in by Joe Barry Carroll and a steal and slam dunk by Olajuwon with 6:01 to go in the third period.

That gave the Rockets a 66-63 lead, but the Mavericks regained the advantage with 4:59 left in the period on a tip-in by Tarpley.

The Mavericks pulled to an 11-11 tie with 6:41 to go in the first quarter on a layup by Derek Harper, starting a 10-2 surge that led to their half-time advantage.

Olajuwon scored 20 points in the first half. Sleepy Floyd hit the first basket of the game, but the Rockets missed their next six shots before battling back.

Floyd, who scored 42 points in the second game, was held to 10.

# Houston needs Bass, no matter what they think

A familiar rumor has been in the news lately involving the Houston Astros organization. A top player is said to be on the trading block for an aging superstar.



Doug Walker  
Sports viewpoint

Although Toronto Blue Jays General Manager Pat Gillick said yesterday any possibility of a three-way deal involving the Astros, New York Yankees and Blue Jays is "dead" I can't help wondering where they might try to deal

right fielder Kevin Bass next.

The story goes that the Astros would have traded Bass to the Yankees who would trade superstar right fielder Dave Winfield to the Blue Jays who then would send right fielder Jesse Barfield to Houston.

Earlier this season Yankees boss George Steinbrenner attempted to make a trade straight-up with Houston. Winfield for Bass. I must admit that my initial reaction was pretty positive. "Great," I thought. "The Astros finally get a superstar who can hit with power."

Then I thought about the possibilities for the Astros in the long run. Bass, 28, is part of an outfield that has its best years ahead of it. With Billy "Corky" Hatcher, 27, in left field and Gerald Young, 23, in center the Astros have a chance to develop possibly

the best outfield in the major leagues.

By getting Winfield, the Astros would have been dealing away a young player who has already proven himself to be a consistently tough out against West Division opposition. Winfield has been called "Mr. May" by Steinbrenner for outstanding early-season numbers that are followed by decreased production in the late stages.

Steinbrenner, known for his clashes with high-paid players in the past, is only trying to get rid of Winfield because of revelations in Winfield's new book about life as a Yankee.

Winfield, because of his tenure in the majors, can veto any trade. Thankfully, he refused to go to Houston.

However, the Yankees did not give up so easily. They wanted to send Winfield to To-

ronto. Toronto is not one of Dave's favorite cities. He was in trouble for accidentally killing a bird during a game there a few years back, and the Toronto fans give him a hard time every time he visits.

Still, my main concern was for the Astros. I'm not the biggest Houston fan, but why let history repeat itself? They dealt away a young Joe Morgan to the Reds and look what Morgan did for Cincinnati!

Morgan was an integral part of the Big Red Machine of the mid-1970s. Houston received Lee May and Tommy Helms, infielders who contributed to some forgettable seasons during that period.

Barfield would have given the Astros a power hitter to complement Glenn Davis. However, the Astros would be wise to hold on to Bass because Barfield is no youngster

and will probably only be around for a couple of years.

Bass has a .287 career average against West Division clubs and hit .312 in divisional play in 1987. The Astro brass can't argue that he does not have power at the plate. In the last three seasons he has clubbed 16, 20 and 19 homers and hit .311 in the Astros division winning season of 1986.

It appears the Astros were trying to get someone who would fill seats rather than win ballgames. Barfield hit 40 home runs in 1986, but he can't be expected to post those numbers often.

I hope Gillick was not pulling a snow job on the media by saying the trade possibilities were finished. Trading Bass would only hurt the Astros in the long run.

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