Espy, Kunkel find new home in outfield

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## PORT CHARLOTTE, Fla. (AP) — Between them, they've played every position on the field, but this season Texas manager Bobby Valentine

is asking Cecil Espy and Jeff Kunkel to concentrate on center field.

Espy is the likely starting replacement for departed Oddibe McDowell and Kunkel will be his backup. Kunkel and Espy are happy to be

unpacking at one position after roaming the roster in 1988. "This has been more settled than

any other spring," Kunkel said. "They've put me in center field and just let me play a lot of outfield."

Kunkel played second, third, shortstop, left and center field and

pitched an inning last season. Kunkel retired the side in the ninth inning Aug. 31 in a 10-1 loss to Minnesota, becoming the first nonpitcher in Ranger history to take the

## Broncos may be willing to cut Dorsett

DENVER (AP) —Denver Broncos owner Pat Bowlen says a growing emphasis on financial responsibility in the NFL could mean the end of Tony Dorsett's illustrious career and \$500,000 salary if the running back doesn't improve his performance.

Bowlen said Monday that Dorsett has to show a marked improvement over last year in order for him to make the Broncos' roster this season. And Dorsett's lucrative contract could work to his disadvantage.

In previous years, the Broncos might have been willing to overlook the expense of a high-priced running back who carried the ball only 11.3 times a game. Not any longer, Bowlen said.

'I felt he had flashes of greatness last year," Bowlen said of Dorsett. 'Unfortunately, I feel his best game

was the last game of the season."

Dorsett carried 10 times for 86 yards against New England. He finished the season with 703 yards on 181 carries.

Coach Dan Reeves said recently he wants Dorsett to improve his pass-catching abilities.

The Broncos would not have to pay Dorsett any portion of his \$500,000 salary if they release him, since it is not guaranteed, Bowlen

Espy, getting his most extensive playing time in the majors, started 81 games in the outfield last season.

He was the designated hitter three times and also played first, second, shortstop and catcher.

Espy was Texas' best hitter with runners in scoring position, hitting

Filling the center field position was a major concern for the Rangers at the start of training camp. Espy

sees no problem. "I don't think we're hurting as bad as everyone seems to think," Espy said. "Our outfielders can play all

positions. "We've got Kunkel to play center field and (right fielder Ruben) Sierra has got all the talent in the

world. He could move over. "I certainly don't feel any pressure that I've got to do the job or it's not going to get done."

Espy, 26, is starting his 10th year ers last June 9 to begin his jad in pro baseball and has struggled to all-trades services.

establish himself as a major leaguer. He finally broke through as a rookie last season, hitting .248 in 123

Espy led American League rookies with six triples, 33 stolen bases and he was second in games played and 347 at-bats.

Espy is the ideal leadoff hitter because of his speed. His 33 stolen bases last season was the eighth best in Ranger history.

"Once I get to first base, it's chaos," Espy said. "When I get to first base, I cause a lot of problems for the pitcher.

"I'm going to run until Bobby stops me. I like to run and I'm not scared to run.

Kunkel has started each of the last four seasons at Class AAA Okla-

'I'm just trying to worry a what I'm doing today and getti chance to play," Kunkel said. "I really comfortable in the out I'm judging the ball much better

Their performances going the final two weeks of spring t ing have convinced General! ager Tom Grieve he doesn't need

shop for a centerfielder. 'Î can't imagine there would be released player better than the or we have here now," Grieve si "Performance-wise, I haven't se anything to think they can't do least the job Oddibe did."

McDowell, involved in a trade the Cleveland Indians for second baseman Julio Franco, hit 247 120 games last season, drove in homa City. He came up to the Rang- runs, including five game-winner

## Astros acquire Lombardozzi

ton acquired second baseman Steve Lombardozzi from the Minnesota Twins Tuesday and sent 10 players, including pitcher Charley Kerfeld, to the minor leagues.

Astros General Manager Bill

Wood said the Twins would receive an unspecified player for Lombar-dozzi, relegated to a backup role with the Twins.

Lombardozzi will back up starting second baseman Bill Doran, currently recovering from knee sur-

"We felt it was important to have someone to cover us there," Wood said. "Our plan was to take a look at what we had in camp. We just felt more comfortable with what Lom-

Lombardozzi hit .209 in 103 games for the Twins last season and drove in 27 runs. Lombardozzi, 27, was the leading

hitter with a .412 average in the 1987 World Series. He has a .233 career average in three seasons with the Twins

Doran is recovering from arthroscopic knee surgery that was performed March 7.

Doran suffered through a series of injuries last season, including back spasms and underwent off-season shoulder surgery.

Kerfeld, an ace reliever for the 1986 division champion Astros, will be sent to Class AAA Tucson to work on his mechanics, Wood said.

"We were happy with his a speed and velocity," Wood said." has a habit of when he throws go to a couple of guys he relaxes and mechanics go crazy

Kerfeld pitched six and two-th innings in four spring appearand He struck out three, walked five a gave up seven earned runs fora9. earned run average.

"My last outing was the worst ever pitched in baseball," Kerle said. "My mechanics are all mes

The Astros optioned the control of pitchers Fred Costello and Sa August, catcher Tony Eusebio a outfielders Karl Rhodes and Anthony to the clubs' Class AA lumbus team.

### TANK MCNAMARA

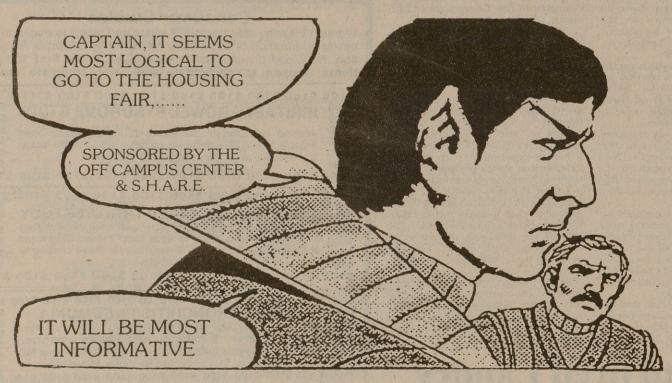
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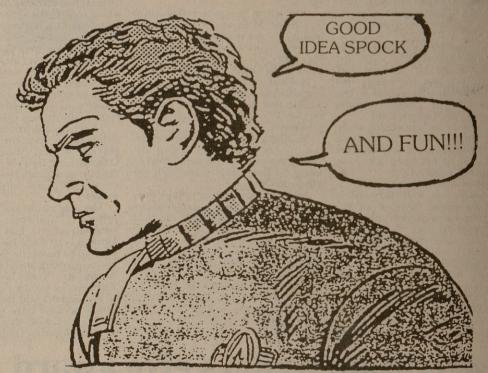






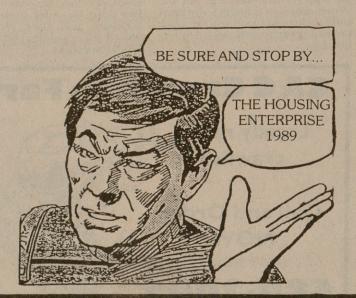
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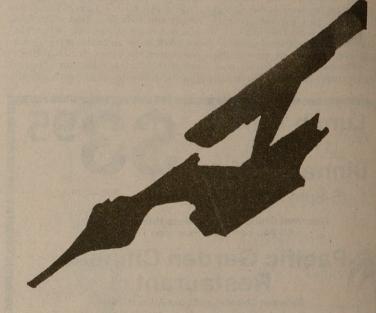




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