

Astros depending on power

Pitching, youth, Davis will lead club in 1990

HOUSTON (AP) — The Houston Astros will hang their hopes on solid pitching, Glenn Davis and an infusion of youth in 1990.

The pitching starts with 20-game winner Mike Scott, opening day pitcher for the season opener against Cincinnati in the Astrodome on Monday night.

The youth movement this year begins with left fielder Eric Anthony, the minor league's home run king the past two seasons and the numerical replacement for departed Kevin Bass.

Anthony, who hit four homers in 61 at-bats during a brief stint with the Astros late last season, could offer power support to Davis, who hit 34 homers last year.

Scott didn't repeat his Cy Young season of 1986 in 1989, but he did post a 20-10 record to lead the National League in victories and he finished second in the NL Cy Young voting.

Anthony is getting the same endorsement that Astros management gave catcher Craig Biggio and third baseman Ken Caminiti last season.

"I'm ready to see what I can do in the major leagues," Anthony said. "I

think I've proven all I can in the minor leagues."

Scott will be followed by Jim DeShaies, Mark Portugal, Bill Gullickson and Jim Clancy in the rotation.

Dave Smith is back to provide dependable closing duties. Middle relief, more important because of the shortened spring, will be provided by Larry Andersen and Danny Darwin.

Xavier Hernandez and Charley Kerfeld also could help in middle relief.

Clancy and Gullickson will be the keys to the pitching staff. Clancy is coming off one of his worst seasons, and Gullickson is returning to the U.S. after playing in Japan two seasons.

Hoping Gullickson can return to major league form was a gamble, General Manager Bill Wood said.

"It's a helluva gamble. We're providing him a platform to show what he can do," Wood said. "It has tremendous upside potential, and it could have a downside as well if he's not the pitcher he used to be."

Clancy is trying to forget his 7-14, 5.08 earned run average season and develop an off-speed pitch.

"He's in good condition and he's in a good mental frame of mind," Wood said. "What happens next we have to wait and see. There's no question he has to pitch better than last year."

Anthony and rightfielder Glenn Wilson, obtained from Pittsburgh last August, will be the only newcomers to the starting lineup.

Gerald Young returns to centerfield with Biggio catching, Glenn Davis at first, Bill Doran at second, Caminiti at third and Rafael Ramirez at shortstop.

Doran and Young are coming off slumps from last season. Doran hit .131 over the second half of the season and Young finished with a .233 average.

Reserves will include Terry Puhl, Alex Trevino and Franklin Stubbs, obtained last week from the Los Angeles Dodgers.

Wood hopes the blend of youth and experience will help the Astros rise above their third place finish in 1989.

"The manager has to have some veterans to provide experience, history and leadership," Wood said.

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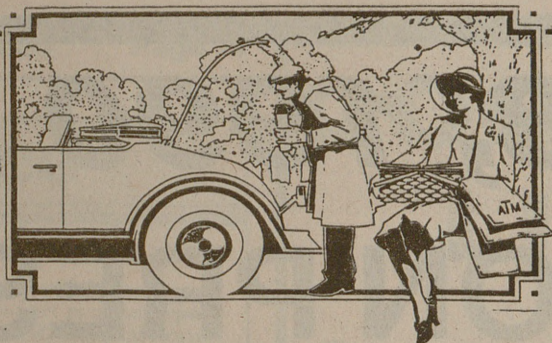
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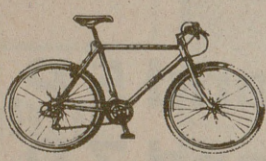
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Letters to the Sports Editor

Research or plagiarism?

SPORTS EDITOR:

Upon reading Clay Rasmussen's "March Monotony" article (April 2) in the Battalion, we were immediately struck with a feeling of deja vu, and later, a sense of shock and amazement.

The familiarity was experienced because the bulk of Rasmussen's contentions came from last Saturday's Houston Chronicle.

The shock and amazement came from finding out just how similar Rasmussen's arti-

cle was to Fran Blinebury's "Constant Halts Harm TV Hoops" (March 31) from the Chronicle.

While the borrowing of empirical data and quotes from reliable sources is a necessary part of journalism, the uncredited use of another writer's exact words and ideas (especially when written under the pretense of being original phrases and sentences) is nothing less than plagiarism.

Paolo Champion '90
Michael Schneider Jr. '90

Save the Speedway

SPORTS EDITOR:

A Battalion article suggested that Texas World Speedway may be converted to a horse racing and training facility. In the article, track management and the local media blamed each other for the demise. Both were responsible. The main irony here is that this article ran on the Monday following the Sunday Daytona 500, America's second largest race with over 250,000 in attendance. And there was no Battalion

coverage of the race! The Battalion should provide at least the minimal Associated Press race coverage for the many students, faculty and staff who are auto or race enthusiasts.

Another note: At least one other track, Dover Downs International Raceway, operates as a dual (horse and auto) facility. Their twice per year auto races are TREMENDOUS boosts to the local economy.

Jeff J. Link '91

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the classification, address and telephone number of the writer.

Gamez & Bear in Norman's way

AUGUSTA, Ga. (AP) — Greg Norman faces an old friend and a new nemesis — Jack Nicklaus and Robert Gamez — in his quest for the elusive green jacket this week in the 54th Masters.

"Jack is Jack," Norman said Wednesday of Nicklaus, who last week won his first start on the Senior PGA Tour. "His confidence is high and on the rise."

"He's hitting the ball extremely well; hitting it high and long. He has a new driver, a new putter. He's lost some weight. He's strong and fit. He looks and acts like he's 35 instead of 50. He has that pride. He thinks he can win."

So does Gamez, the 21-year-old rookie who has won two times on the PGA Tour this year. The second came at the expense of Norman, when he holed a 176-yard

shot for an eagle-two on the final hole at Bay Hill in Orlando.

Gamez, not awed after his first trip over the Augusta National Golf Club course, said he viewed the Masters "as another tournament," and was "confident enough I can win the championship on Sunday."

"Gamez obviously is a very competent individual, but he hasn't felt it before," Norman said. "He hasn't felt the Amen Corner or somebody's bad breath down the back of his neck. The more you play here, the more it drains you."

Only a last-hole bogey kept him out of playoffs in two of the last four years. Only Larry Mize's playoff pitch-in deprived him of a Masters title in 1987.

Lehmann

(Continued from page 11)

left-handed strikeout pitcher in baseball. And the A's bring back all of their prodigious longball hitters.

So how are the Rangers going to win the West — a feat that they've never managed in their 19-year history?

With youth and experience.

Texas has the best of both. Nolan Ryan was the best pitcher in baseball last season and a team leader. He led the majors with 301 strikeouts, and opposing hitters managed only a .187 average when facing him.

Ruben Sierra is the best young hitter in baseball. Last season he did everything except sweep the stadium after games. Sierra hit .306 with 29 homers and 119 RBI. He led the AL in triples, extra base hits and finished second in the American League MVP balloting.

Over the last two years, Harold Baines has been the best designated hitter in the majors. He represented the Chicago White Sox in last season's All-Star game, before Texas acquired him in a mid-season trade for Scott Fletcher, Wilson Alvarez and Sammy Sosa.

Jeff Russell moved to the bullpen last season, and notched 38 saves —

the most in the AL. Russell also made an All-Star game appearance last year, his second in a row.

The defense has improved this year with the addition of center fielder Gary Pettis — one of the best outfielders in baseball, but will that be enough to beat the big three (A's, Angels and Royals) this year?

Yes. Although the Rangers still need a steady shortstop, Oakland won't repeat this year.

The A's lost team leaders Tony Phillips and Dave Parker. The two weren't big offensive factors, but were emotional spark plugs.

Furthermore, the A's pitching staff will become human again this year. Although they have dominated the league, they're not the most talented squad. This year that will become blatantly obvious.

Even with Ryan and Russell, the Rangers can't go toe-to-toe with the Royals' pitching staff. But the Royals were lucky to avoid injuries last season, and with the loss of so much spring training time, they won't fare as well this year.

The Angels were a fluke last season. They got career years out of a lot of players and have more holes in their lineup this year than the Rangers.

So, stop laughing and head for Arlington. This is the year of the Rangers.

NHL Playoffs begin as Bruins, Rangers quest

Associated Press

The Boston Bruins and New York Rangers will try and defy NHL tradition by winning the Stanley Cup with two goalies instead of one.

Both teams begin their quest in that direction Thursday night when the Wales Conference playoffs start.

The Bruins, champions of the Adams Division and the team with the most points (101) during the regular season, will open a best-of-seven series at home against the Hartford Whalers.

The Rangers, winners of the Patrick Division — their first division title in 48 years — begin the chase for their first Stanley Cup in 50 years at home against the New York Islanders.

In the other Adams Division opener, Montreal will be at Buffalo, while in the Patrick Division, it will be Washington at New Jersey.