



David Leahy
Sportswriter

How the Royals became paupers

What has happened to the Kansas City Royals? My favorite baseball team that I have followed for years and one of the most successful organizations from the mid-1970's to the mid-1980's find themselves entrenched in last place just before the All-Star break.

Why? The Royals are a classic example of what too much money does to a team (something the Houston Astros - my second-favorite team - will never understand). In 1989, the Royals finished 6 games behind the first place Oakland Athletics - the closest a team has finished to the Athletics in their 3-year reign as American League Champions.

What did the Royals do in the offseason? Instead of staying with what they had, they became idiotic. They went out and spent millions of dollars on unnecessary players. First of all, they sign three free-agent pitchers. Anyone who follows baseball knows the Royals are notorious for producing outstanding pitchers in their minor leagues.

Just to name a few: 2-time Cy Young Award winner and 1985 World Series MVP, Bret Saberhagen; 1988 All-Star and 20-game winner, Mark Gubicza; one of the National League leaders in strikeouts the past 3 seasons, David Cone; and runner-up to 1989 Rookie of the Year while winning 17 games, Tom Gordon.

The Royals still have very talented pitching in the minors, but for 1990 they found themselves with a little bit of spending money. They sign journeyman pitcher Richard Dotson for one year at \$500,000. Dotson pitched in only a handful of games and is now pitching in Japan. They sign Storm Davis to a three-year \$6 million contract. In his 1 1/2 years as a Royal, Storm has won 9 games.

What has turned out to be one of the worst moves in Royals' history is the signing of the 1989 National League Cy Young Award winner, Mark Davis, to \$13 million over four seasons. In 1989, Mark had a league-leading 44 saves. In his 1 1/2 years as a Royal, he has just seven saves, and is currently on the disabled list.

For much of the 1970's and 1980's, the Kansas City Royals were THE model organization of how to develop and utilize the club's farm system. The Royals produced such players as George Brett, Frank White, U.L. Washington, Willie Wilson, Dennis Leonard, Paul Splittorff, and Darrell Porter. In the 10 years between 1976-1985, these players helped the Royals win 6 division titles, two American League pennants, and a world championship.

The ridiculous trades the Royals have made the past few years led to those stupefied free-agent signings. Before the 1987 season began, the Royals traded away 20-year old pitcher David Cone for a backup catcher and a no-name pitcher. Cone is currently second in the National League in strikeouts and one of the premier pitchers.

In 1988, the Royals traded two talented young pitchers, Greg Hibbard and Melido Perez, for an aging veteran pitcher in Floyd Bannister. Hibbard and Perez are mainstays on the Chicago White Sox pitching staff. Bannister pitched an ineffective year as a Royal and then pitch in Japan.

These type of moves by the Royals may start a new trend for them in the 1990's: finishing last.

A&M up for triathlon challenge

By Tim Schnettler
The Battalion

A grueling swim, followed by an intensive bike ride, followed by an exhausting run make up a triathlon. This is not the kind of challenge that many people enjoy.

For members of the Texas A&M Triathlon Club, it is the challenge that drives them to compete.

"The combination of the three sports provides a challenge, and that is the reason most people get involved in the sport," said club president Ken Petersen.

Long regarded as a curiosity in the sports world, triathlon has recently experienced a surge in popularity.

"Interest in the sport grew in the early 1980's," explained Petersen. "About five years ago, the interest at A&M was great enough to form the triathlon club."

Since that time the club has continued to thrive at A&M.

The club consists of 30 members during the fall and spring semesters, and about half that number participate in the summer. The club competes in triathlons around Texas and Louisiana.

Though the club is not a member of any particular collegiate division, all the races it competes in are sanctioned by the Triathlon Federation, the governing body of the sport.

"We usually compete in three club sponsored events per semester, but that number varies, depending on the interest," Petersen said.

Each year the famous "Iron Man" triathlon is held in Hawaii. "Iron Man" is the world championship of triathlon, and three former club members have qualified for, and competed in the event.

The most recent participant from A&M was former team member Kim Sneed, who qualified for the event last year.

The triathlon club receives the majority of their funding from the Sports Club Department. Unfortunately, operating a club is expensive, so they must play an active role in helping to offset their costs.



The Texas A&M Triathlon Club has flourished since its creation five years ago. Athletes compete in running, cycling and swimming events throughout Texas and Louisiana.

"We volunteer at the International Triathlon to raise money for the club," Petersen said. "Our major fund raiser is a duathlon which we sponsor each year. A duathlon consists of a 5K run followed by a 30K bike ride, and then another 5K bike ride."

The club encourages unity by co-ordinating group training. This builds identity among the members, and improves overall performance.

"We encourage our members to train with one another by offering group

rides and group runs," explained Petersen. "We also offer them the chance to compete as a team, and offer clinics on conditioning and other aspects of the sport."

Petersen said anyone interested in triathlon can get more information by contacting the recreation sports department.

"We encourage all those interested to join the club, whether they are new to the sport or they have participated in the sport before," Petersen said.

A&M basketball faces tough slate next year

From staff and wire reports

COLLEGE STATION — One of the toughest non-conference schedules in school history awaits the Texas A&M basketball team and first-year head coach Tony Barone in 1991-92.

The tentative non-conference slate includes road games at Missouri, Nebraska and Florida, and home games against Auburn, New Mexico and Alabama in addition to the always competitive Southwest Conference schedule. Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, Alabama and Texas each advanced to the NCAA Tournament last season, while Houston and Rice participated in the NIT.

Home games against Texas rivals Prairie View A&M, Sam Houston State, Texas Southern and Southwest Texas State are also on the Aggies' agenda, in addition to one home game and one road game against Missouri-Kansas City. The game against Nebraska is in the opening round of the Ameritas Classic in Lincoln, Nebraska, which also includes Delaware State and Eastern Washington.

"We have a nice national schedule ahead of us that also has a local flair to it," Barone said. "Missouri, Nebraska, Auburn, Alabama and Florida are all top-notch programs, and are recognized for producing outstanding teams."

"The local flavor of Sam Houston, Southwest Texas, Texas Southern and Prairie View add to the excitement of the schedule," he said.

The Aggies open their exhibition season on November 11 against Marathon Oil, followed by a November 15 matchup against Melbourne, Australia. The regular season opens on November 25 against Prairie View A&M in College Station.

"We feel like a tougher non-conference schedule, within reason, will better prepare us for the Southwest Conference season," Barone said.

Foreman, Tyson plan 'People's Championship'

HOUSTON (AP) — A heavyweight fight between former champions Mike Tyson and George Foreman could be held later this year in Las Vegas, says promoter Don King, who already has labeled the match "The People's Championship."

"We're very close to consummating this deal," King, who manages Tyson, said after negotiating Monday with Roy Foreman, George's brother and manager.

King said both fighters would split the revenue equally, with each receiving \$15 million, and would divide a two-thirds split of cable pay TV revenues.

He said the fight could generate \$100 million and top the \$86 million collected for last April's bout when champion Evander Holyfield outpointed Foreman.

King also indicated the fight could be held in Houston if a local company offered to underwrite some of the costs.

"This would be big, very big," George Foreman said. "There's no telling how much we could make, though. Certainly more than we did before (in the Holyfield fight)."

"I've been trying to get a fight with Mike for the longest time. For the longest time, it just didn't seem to be in the cards. But now it seems as though they are willing to do more than talk."

Neither King nor Foreman returned phone calls Tuesday from The Associated Press.

King arrived in Houston on Monday afternoon from Las Vegas, where Tyson last Friday pounded out a unanimous 12-round decision over Donovan "Razor" Ruddock.

Tyson is 41-1 with 36 knockouts. Foreman, following his loss to Holyfield in April, is 69-3 with 65 KOs.

Tyson is the top-ranked contender but has refused to fight Holyfield because of disagreements over money and a subsequent bout, King said.

King said Foreman-Tyson fight would be Nov. 1 at the Mirage hotel-casino in Las Vegas.

Darren Lewis ready for NFL challenges

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Unlike other NFL rookies, Texas A&M running back Darren Lewis has more to prove off the field than on it.

At a pre-draft NFL combine in Indianapolis, Lewis tested positive for cocaine use. When news of the failed drug test circulated around the league, it caused the one-time Heisman candidate's stock to plummet.

The Chicago Bears, oblivious to the running back's drug problems according to some reports, drafted Lewis in the sixth round with the 161st pick overall.

"That was my biggest downfall, the drug thing," Lewis said last week from his parents' house in Dallas.

"There's no doubt in my mind that was the only reason I wasn't drafted higher. If it wasn't for the drugs, I would've gone in the first two rounds," he said.

Instead, there were 17 running backs chosen ahead of Lewis. Some were big names, like LSU's Harvey Williams, Colorado's Eric Bienemy and Notre Dame's Ricky Watters. But others were practically no-names, like Fresno State's Aaron Craver and East Texas State's Terry Babsby.

Even his A&M backfield mate, fullback Robert Wilson, went in the third round to Tampa Bay. Wilson passed on his senior year to enter the draft.

As he prepares to report to the Bears' training camp in Platteville, Wis., today, Lewis doesn't sound bitter about being such an unwanted draft commodity.

"All of those guys are great backs," said Lewis, a Parade magazine All-American at Dallas Carter High School. "It just so happened that I was in a nice class of good running backs."

"My expectations with the Bears are simple. I just want to work hard, take it one day at a time and do whatever it takes to make the team. (Chicago) coach (Mike) Ditka just said for me to do whatever I can to contribute. They know about the capabilities that I have. They know what I can do as far as running the football," he said.

Last month, Lewis admitted himself to Riverside Hospital in Houston to undergo drug rehabilitation. He spent 28 days at the facility, where he was conditioned to re-evaluate his frivolous and carefree lifestyle.

"When you come out, you have to change the people, places and things you come in contact with," said Lewis. "You have to change your habits. You have to stay out of clubs, period. People aren't having clean parties any more, so you have to stay away from all that."

"Getting help for myself was a big turnaround for me. I was just grateful that (the Bears) gave me a chance."

Indeed, a chance is really all Lewis has. The Bears are loaded at running back, with All-Pro Neal Anderson, versatile Brad Muster and former Texas A&I standout Johnny Bailey. Getting carries behind those three will not be easy.

"That's one of the things I have to deal with. I'll have to wait in line as far as the playing time goes," Lewis said. "As far as the competition at running back, I'll just have to worry about me. That's my main focus right now."

Judging from on-the-field credentials alone, Lewis should be as close to a sure thing as there is in the NFL.

He left A&M as the Southwest Conference's career rushing leader (5,012 yards, 18 touchdowns). He became only the fifth player in NCAA history to rush for more than 5,000 yards in a career — joining Heisman winners Archie Griffin of Ohio State, Herschel Walker of Georgia, Tony Dorsett of Pittsburgh and Charles White of Southern California.

"I'm not worried about making the team or not," said Lewis. "The Lord is with me. He knows it's something that I really love, so it's not going to be taking away from me."

"I don't want drugs to be my downfall. I have children to look after, and they're the most important thing to me."

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