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Opening Day '92

Ryan to open Rangers' season

SEATTLE (AP) — Nolan Ryan may be making his last opening-day start when the Texas Rangers play the Seattle Mariners on Monday night.

"In all likelihood, this will be my last season," the 45-year-old right-hander said.

Ryan, who made 20 of his 27 starts at home last season, will begin his 26th major league season, tying the record held by James McGuire and Tommy John. A sell-out crowd of just under 60,000 is expected.

Ryan was 0-1 in spring training, pitching 18 1-3 innings with a 5.89 ERA. He gave up five runs and nine hits in five innings against Cincinnati on Wednesday.

"I'm ready," Ryan said. "I've had all the spring training I want."

Ryan, 314-278 lifetime, will make his ninth opening-day start. He will be opposed by 6-foot-10 Randy Johnson, the tallest pitcher in major league history.

Ryan is making his ninth start in an opener and Johnson, 28, his first. Ryan is coming off a 12-6 record in 1991 while Johnson was 13-10 last season.

In some ways, Johnson resembles the young Ryan. Johnson led the major leagues with 152 walks last season. With the aid of new pitching coach Dan Warthen and a change in his mechanics, he hopes



Texas' Nolan Ryan hints at retirement after this season.

to improve his control. "The biggest thing is, I'm just keeping my eye on home plate the whole time," he said. "Last year, I wasn't picking up home plate or the catcher until the last second."

The Rangers return three hitters with 200-plus hits last season: Julio Franco, Rafael Palmeiro and Ruben Sierra. However, Franco's start will be delayed because of a knee problem; he was placed on

the 15-day disabled list Friday. Texas finished third last season, going 85-77. Bigger things expected.

"I expect us to win our division," Ryan said. "I'll be disappointed if we don't. I think we have as good a shot as anybody. It's our time to win."

In Franco's absence, Mike Fariss will get plenty of playing time at second base. He has had a strong spring with the bat but defense is questionable.

Meanwhile, Bill Plummer will make his managerial debut for the Mariners. The former Seattle third-base coach replaced Lefebvre at the end of last season.

"I'm not the same type of manager that Jimmy Lefebvre was," Plummer said. "He is offense oriented. He's a guy who sits back and waits for a big inning. I do things from the top to the bottom of the lineup."

Plummer, 45, is four years older than Texas manager Bob Valentine, but Valentine is starting his eighth season in the job.

Ryan will face a revamped Mariners' lineup that has added Kevin Mitchell, 1989 National League MVP. Acquired in a December trade from San Francisco, the 30-year-old Mitchell will be cleanup behind two-time A.L. Star center fielder Ken Griffey Jr.

Duke tries NCAA repeat against Michigan

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Success sometimes has a way of erasing the memories of how difficult it was to achieve.

For now, however, Duke is poised on the brink of college basketball history very much aware of what a battle it has been to get to the NCAA championship game.

Duke is 40 minutes from becoming the first team to repeat as national champion in 19 years. The trip to Monday night's title game against Michigan and its five starting freshmen was rough to say the least, especially for a team that ran the regular season as No. 1.

"We feel fortunate to be here," coach Mike Krzyzewski said. "Seton Hall, Kentucky and Indiana have been very tough games for us. Teams play at a high level against us and we expect the same from Michigan on Monday night."

Senior forward Brian Davis sprained his right ankle in Saturday's victory over Indiana and Krzyzewski called him very doubtful for the championship game.

"If we lose it won't be because Brian Davis is hurt," he said. "You play who you have and if they win, they win."

Duke (33-2) has won the last three games, albeit not in the style Blue Devil fans and detractors have come to expect.

Seton Hall had stopped national player of the

year Christian Laettner in the second half and within six points late in the game. Kentucky was next and if you need details of that one you'll find through 600 consecutive sports highlights shows. The Blue Devils' fifth straight Final Four appearance and a chance at defending came down to a miracle shot by Laettner as the overtime buzzer sounded.

Duke seemed so human again this weekend when Indiana took a 12-point lead late in the first half. An awesome defensive performance turned things into a comfortable 13-point lead that almost evaporated in a final-minute, 3-point barrage by the Hoosiers. Laettner again struggled from the field (he did sandwich a perfect 10-for-10 against Kentucky in there) and Bobby Hurley was the savior with 26 points, including a school record-tying six 3-pointers that gave him 11 in two games.

"The toughest game of those was Seton Hall because of the relationship between P.J. (Charles) and myself and Bobby and Danny," Krzyzewski said, referring to the Hurley brothers who faced each other for the first time. "There's been a team that could have beaten us every year but we never played them because they lost."

Duke hasn't lost an NCAA game since the 1990 final, when UNLV beat the Blue Devils 103-73. That loss was avenged last year in the semifinals, when UNLV was denied a chance to repeat.

Notre Dame stops Lady Aggie tennis team

Continued from Page 5

only doubles match that was completed.

Aggie coach Bobby Kleinecke was pleased with his team's effort in the loss.

"We fought as hard as we can

tonight," Kleinecke said. "We were just a hair short of winning the match."

"You have to give credit to Notre Dame. They played hard and won big points. We are not really that far off. We are getting better."

The loss dropped the Lady Ag-

gies to 7-11. Notre Dame improved to 7-7 on the season.

For the Lady Aggies, Nicole Monsul defeated Notre Dame's Katie Clark 6-4, 6-2, and A&M's Margaret Valera beat Ann Bradshaw 7-5, 6-4.

A&M, 2-2 in SWC play, will face Texas Wednesday at 5 p.m.

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