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Rangers react to Canseco trade

Opener has competition from Cowboys

Former A's star dons Texas uniform Friday

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ARLINGTON, Texas — Jose Canseco will be a big ticket draw for his new team, but his debut at Arlington Stadium in a Texas Rangers uniform next week won't be the only game in town.

Canseco will join his new teammates in New York on Friday. The Rangers' first home game with Canseco, acquired in a blockbuster trade Monday night for right fielder Ruben Sierra, pitcher Bobby Witt and closer Jeff Russell will be Sept. 7 against the Boston Red Sox.

Up the highway that same night, the defending Super Bowl champion Washington Redskins visit the Dallas Cowboys at Texas Stadium for the 1992 Monday Night Football kickoff. That game has been sold out for weeks.

And at Arlington Stadium, tickets were already hot items before the trade because if the rotations hold, Nolan Ryan will face Roger Clemens.

That has only happened once at Arlington Stadium, when the fireballers squared off on April 30, 1989. The matchup drew 40,429 fans, a franchise record for a Sunday game.

John Schriever, ticket operations director at Arlington Stadium, said there was a slight boost in sales Tuesday after fans heard of the trade. But there were still about 20,000 seats available.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Jose Canseco had been with the Texas Rangers less than 24 hours when the first hints of controversy wafted through the clubhouse.

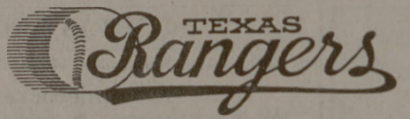
Instead of hurrying to Kansas City to be with his new team, the former Oakland slugger sent word he would join the Rangers on Thursday in New York, leaving his new bosses and teammates to explain his absence as no big deal.

"What do you want me to say?" manager Toby Harrah told a questioner Tuesday as the Rangers dressed for a game against the Royals. "You have a couple of days to report. You don't have to report the next flight out. I am very glad Jose Canseco is going to join us on our off day in New York. I honestly believe if Jose stays healthy he's going to have some great years in Texas."

Canseco, 28, was the centerpiece of the blockbuster deal of the season Monday when the A's, who are leading the American League West, sent him to Texas for pitchers Jeff Russell and Bobby Witt and outfielder Ruben Sierra.

Canseco, a power-hitting outfielder whose career has often been marked by controversy as well as feats of batting skill, is hitting .246 with 22 homers and 72 RBIs during an injury-dogged season.

His new teammates figured the unexpected nature of the deal would cause anybody to spend some time getting everything in shape.



"It's got to be a shock for him," outfielder Kevin Reimer said. "I'm sure he's got things to straighten out in his own life. Things like this catch you off guard. I'm sure he'll meet us in New York and be ready to play. We're looking forward to it. We're real excited to have him."

"This could be a powerful lineup now," infielder Rafael Palmeiro said. "Unfortunately, everything Jose does is magnified. But there's no doubt the Texas fans are going to love him."

Harrah, who said he hadn't spoken with Canseco since the deal was made, hopes the slugger can have a positive effect on such players as Juan Gonzalez, who leads the league with 38 home runs.

"I know his teammates in Oakland loved the guy," Harrah said. "The guys here are going to like him, too, as well as the fans. I believe he'll help other guys in the lineup, too. A young power hitter like Juan Gonzalez who is 22 years old, it's not going to hurt to have him in the lineup along with Juan. When we get Julio Franco back, the American League batting champion, you're talking about a lineup that ought to be able to score some runs."

Harrah also figures Canseco's power game is well suited to the Rangers' home park.

"It's a hitter's ballpark. He gets it up in that wind, it has a good chance of going out," Harrah said. "It's not a small park, but it's not Oakland either. In Texas, it's 90 plus degrees and if you hit it, it goes."

Harrah said he's not worried about recent statements Canseco made about losing bat speed.

"How old is he? 28. Players don't peak at 28," Harrah said.

"It's too bad he's under a microscope so much that if he does do something out of the norm or a little bit different, he's put on the spot," Reimer said. "We all make mistakes once in awhile. For most people, it goes unnoticed. But with him, there is always something watching everything he does."

Gonzalez takes HR lead, but Rangers fall to Royals, 8-3

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — George Brett's single moved him past Mickey Mantle on the career RBI list and capped a four-run seventh inning Tuesday night that lifted Kansas City over Texas 8-3 and caused the mistake-prone Rangers to waste a fine effort by Nolan Ryan.

Ryan, trying to break a personal five-game losing skid, struck out five and did not issue a walk and left after six innings with a 2-0 lead on Juan Gonzalez' American League-leading 39th home run.

But he was relieved starting the seventh by Todd Burns (3-5) and the Rangers proceeded to self-destruct. First Burns hit Brian McRae

leading off, then Gary Thurman singled him to third. When David Howard lifted a routine fly ball to medium center, right-fielder Jack Daugherty collided with center fielder Gonzalez, who dropped the ball as McRae scored.

Gregg Jefferies singled home Thurman with the tying run and then Howard scored the go-ahead run.

But somewhere along the trail from Norman to Arlington, Witt forgot to throw strikes which is detrimental to a career in which strikes are the staff of life.

Almost everyone will agree that the Rangers overpaid for the pleasure of seeing the gigantic Canseco stride to the plate four times an evening. But that is not the point.

The Rangers managed to unload two former All-Stars that they stood to lose at the end of the season anyway through free agency, and another pitcher who was not fitting into their future plans.

I will miss Ruben Sierra. I will miss Jeff Russell and Bobby Witt as well.

But all three will be dim memories after the first time I witness one of Canseco's titanic blasts in a blue and white uniform.

Aggies

Continued from Page 7

"I was very disappointed in his performance, but not from the standpoint of being overly critical. I see him as being a young guy whose inexperienced and who appeared to be a little nervous."

Granger, himself, was equally disappointed with his play last week, but said that inexperience or nervousness was not a problem.

"I felt pretty good," Granger said. "I had the receivers there. I just didn't do it. I felt confident in my ability to read defenses. It's just that I wasn't executing."

Slocum also noted that Michael Hendricks will take over as starting strong safety in place of Steve Kinney. Kinney severely injured his knee last week against Stanford and will not be back for the remainder of the season. Slocum also said that receiver Brian Mitchell, who suffered a broken foot, should be out for four to six weeks.

Davis

Continued from Page 7

Jose will fill stadiums in '93 as well, and in 1994, Arlington will be the home of the newest and perhaps grandest new ballpark in the world where the Arlington Longhorns Little League squad could sell out a game.

The trio of departed Rangers were never that sort of draw, although Sierra probably should have been.

Sierra was the first franchise superstar that the Rangers had ever developed from the minor leagues to the big club, but his welcome was wearing very thin on the greatest fans in all of sport.

Russell, a former All-Star as well, was Texas' only likely closer before last night, but after blowing a major league leading 10 saves this season he won't be irreplaceable.

Which brings us to Witt, probably the biggest disappointment in franchise history.

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