

All-Star voting annual pest for league, players

The Mid-Summer Classic is to some an extraneous game in an already long season. However, to many of baseball's purists, the game should be seen as a showcase of the league's talent as well as a tradition that stems back to the birth of the game.



MATTHEW J. RUSH
Sportswriter

Tonight's 64th All-Star game, held this year at Baltimore's Camden Yards, will see familiar faces that perennially make an appearance this time of year. Cal Ripken Jr., Kirby Puckett, Tony Gwynn, Barry Larkin and Ryne Sandberg will be returning for their fifth or sixth time and all deservedly so.

For other ballplayers, it is a chance to show their ability and gain or regain recognition around the league. Andres Galarraga, a former All-Star in 1988, will be returning after several dismal seasons. John Olerud, like Galarraga, has been over the .400 mark for most of the season and will be making his All-Star game debut.

Last year, Mike Sharperson and Rip Roberts, obscurities to most fans, proved their worth in San Diego, collecting base hits off Dennis Eckersley in the last inning.

Major League reforms may soon, however, call for the abolishment of fan voting. This could be a blessing in disguise. Although this ruling will more than likely be turned down, baseball administrators fear that fans vote for 'name' players and not for those who are worthy of All-Star status.

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Injury slows Thomas' entry into pro baseball

By ROY L. CLAY

The Battalion

Brian Thomas, former Texas A&M center fielder and 10th round draft choice of the Texas Rangers, is out of action until August with a broken hand.

Thomas said it was difficult to deal with the setback posed by the broken hand. "I had run a few balls down in center (field) and right now I'm hitting .316," he said. "It hurt because I was playing so well."

Thomas, an integral part of the Aggie baseball team that went to the College World Series this spring, broke

the fifth metacarpal of his left hand. The bone was fractured when Thomas was hit by a pitch while turning to bunt in his third game with the Rangers Class A Affiliate in Port Charlotte, Fla.

Most draftees are sent to a rookie league team once they begin their professional careers. Thomas is in an unusually promising situation in that the Rangers sent him directly to Class A, a step above the rookie leagues. "They said the way I played my senior year and the way I hustled that I could go in there and start and play for Florida," Thomas said.

But Thomas said even though he is worried about missing playing time so early in his career, he has

proved his case for regaining the starting spot when he returns with good defensive play and a solid performance using a wooden bat.

"I think I proved myself enough in the three games I did play," he said. "I got a couple of doubles off the wall with a wood bat and I never hit with a wood bat before, so I think they're going, 'Well, this guy's got some stuff.'"

Thomas, a Portland, Oregon native, returned to College Station to have the injury checked by Dr. J.P. Bramhall, team physician for Texas A&M, and work towards completing his degree in recreation, parks and tourism sciences.

They got the Blues

Seven Toronto players head for All-Star game

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BALTIMORE — Cito Gaston pulled out his lineup card and read out loud:

Leading off, Roberto Alomar of the Blue Jays.

Batting second, Paul Molitor of the Blue Jays.

Batting fourth, Joe Carter of the Blue Jays.

Batting fifth, John Olerud of the Blue Jays.

Then he paused.

"So I guess I have some questions to answer," the Toronto manager said.

Welcome to this year's All-Star game. Best of the Blue Jays vs. the rest of the National League.

In all, Gaston is taking seven of his Toronto players to Tues-

day night's game. That's one-quarter of the American League roster which, by the way, does not include more than two members from any other team.

"One thing about this job you will learn," Gaston said of managing in the All-Star game, "people will criticize you."

He heard it from the sellout crowd at Camden Yards, too, when he was booed by the fans who had come to watch batting practice.

"It doesn't bother me. I'm used to it," he said. "Like I've said, six of those guys are world champions and the other guy (Molitor) is a Hall of Famer."

Missing was Detroit's Mickey Tettleton, who leads with the AL with 24 homers and is second with 73 RBIs. He was off

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Aikman throws first practice ball

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IRVING, Texas — Dallas Cowboys quarterback Troy Aikman threw a football Monday for the first time since undergoing back surgery, but he downplayed the short tosses as an insignificant step in his rehabilitation.

"Just standing there throwing, I didn't expect to feel any pain or any discomfort ... It really doesn't test the back all that much, at least in my opinion," Aikman said after making several dozen throws.

"I could've thrown a week after surgery if I'd wanted to. It won't be until I actually start getting into some drops and trying to twist and make some throws that I'll have a better idea of where it's come," said Aikman, who had a herniated disk repaired June 19.

Cowboys coach Jimmy Johnson was slightly more upbeat about Aikman's progress.

"I'm very pleased with Troy," he said. "He's much further along than what anybody ever anticipated. I really feel optimistic and somewhat realistic that he'll be there for the opening ballgame."

Both Aikman and Johnson said they're still penciling in the Super Bowl MVP's return to practice for the second week of August, after the team returns from an exhibition game in London against the Detroit Lions.

"Obviously, I would like to get out there as soon as I can," Aikman said. "Realistically, it won't be until after London, but optimistically I'd like to get a few days in before they take off."

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Allison injured in helicopter crash at Talladega racetrack

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TALLADEGA, Ala. — Winston Cup star Davey Allison was aboard a helicopter that crashed Monday in the infield at Talladega Superspeedway.

Donnie Johnson, Allison's uncle, confirmed that a helicopter piloted by Allison and also carrying veteran racer Red Farmer went down Monday afternoon.

A person answering the telephone at Davey Allison Racing in Hueytown said "we think they're still alive."

A helicopter was dispatched from Carraway Methodist Medical Center in Birmingham to pick up the victims.

Behind the lines: A&M football offers fan camp

FROM STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

Serious fans of Texas A&M football will get an in-depth look at head coach R.C. Slocum's conference-dominating program during the first Aggie Kick-Off Camp, Aug. 6-8.

"This is an opportunity for fans of college football to learn a little more about the preparation which goes into each game," Slocum said in a press release.

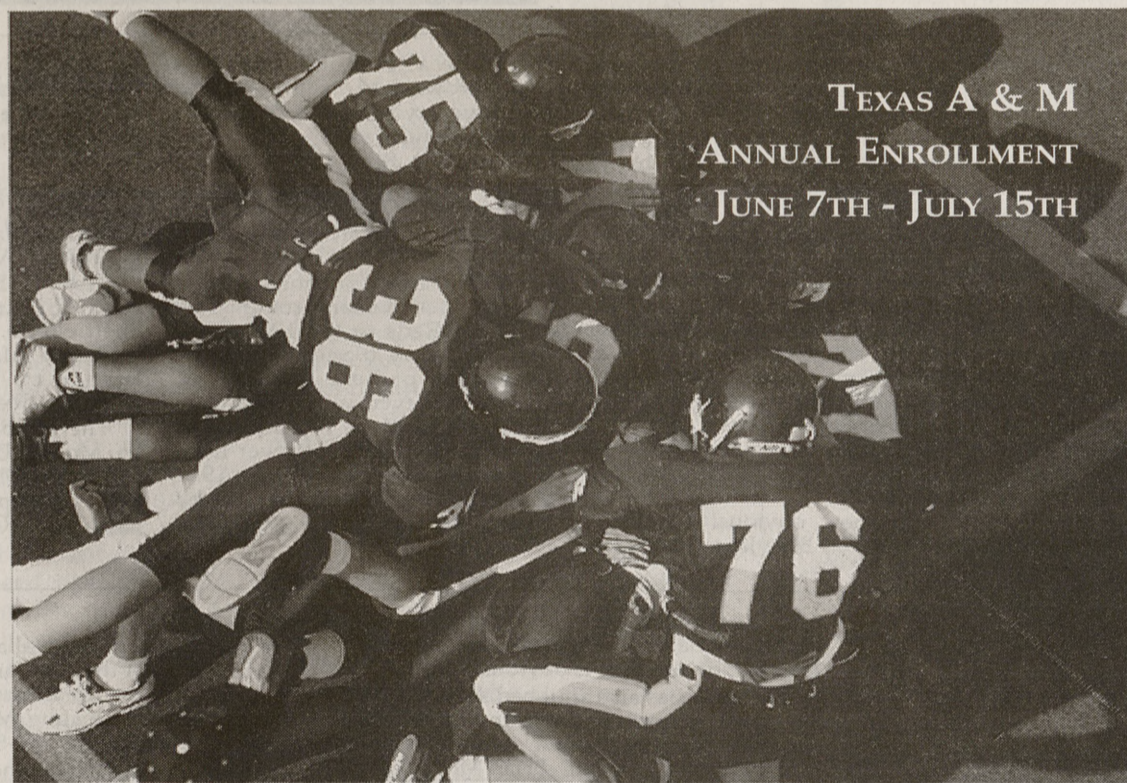
"They will learn the terminology, plays, formations and drills which have helped Texas A&M win back-to-back Southwest Conference Championships," he said.

The money raised from the camp's \$595 participation fee will be donated to Sterling C. Evans Library and the Aggie Band, Slocum said.

No football playing experience is required of the fans, who will stay in Cain Hall, eat training-table meals and participate in two Kyle Field practices.

"We'll tell the guys to go at their own speed, and that can be standing around and watching," Slocum said.

One expected participant is former All-American Dennis Goehring, who played at A&M nearly 40 years ago under coach Paul "Bear" Bryant.



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