

Dog shows not the most exciting sport

You know, sometimes I get bored down here at the Batt, waiting on prospective interviewees to call, or my editor to give me another story to do. Today I just started looking through an old sports almanac to see some of the names from the past. I saw some big ones: Pistol Pete



MARK SMITH Sportswriter

Marovich, Reggie Jackson, and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar were there, reminding me of the greats that once had been. As I looked through this collection of facts and trivia galore I was impressed by the number of events that included. Darts, professional billiards, and even croquet. Granted, I thought a few of these categories were slightly out of place. I mean, how strenuous of a sport is croquet, anyway?

But one category far outweighed the rest in the "what the heck is that doing in here" department. Dog shows. Excuse me? Baking powder? Dog shows? What moron put this almanac together? Oh...he, he...the Associated Press. "Well," I thought, "if they're the Associated Press, they must know what they're doing."

That solution didn't quite hold water for me. It gave me a queasy feeling deep down in my gut. It was either that or the Pancho's I had for lunch.

Dog shows! Dog shows! It just kept haunting me. What do dog shows have to do with sports? Absolutely nothing. It takes no athletic skill whatsoever to show a dog. There could be that nasty shoulder strain when you have to bathe the dog. Or there could be that chance for possible maiming when you have to cut the dog's coat in all those designer, hedge-shaped pieces. But the most taxing activity has to be when you run your pompous pooch by the judges. Yeah, the training to get the form just right must take years.

How do you play with a dog like that? I would hate to get the thing dirty. It would be like playing football with the pigskin you got Joe Montana to sign.

The same thing is true for dogs. You need a scruffy dog to play with. To quote a line from a classic piece of American cinematography, "Nothing is more trustworthy or more lovable than the mutt." Besides, they said that the prize dogs at those shows cost around \$20,000, and that was in 1974. You can get a mutt down at the pound for a lot less than that.

The American Kennel Club should open up a new category for their shows: the Mutt category. That way dogs that are the "cutest" or the most "adorable" have a chance to win a blue ribbon without having the blue blood.

A&M triathlon club organizes conference

By KYLE BURNETT

The Battalion

The Texas A&M Triathlon Club is looking to become a serious competitor in its field, said Richard Scecsy, team captain and club president.

"The sport has been around for only about 10 years," he said. "So when you consider how new the sport is and how new we are, we are making leaps and bounds." On July 12, the team had its best finish to date taking second place at The Tri-Fed South Midwest Regional Club Championship in Framers Branch. The competition consisted of a 1000-meter swim, 18-mile bicycle ride and 4.8-mile run.

"This was great for us as a club," Scecsy said. "We were up against some more professional teams with larger budgets so it was real tough for us."

Beth Dresser, a graduate student in kinesiology, recently joined the team and was pleased with her finish at the championship.

"I felt good about it," she said. "Especially since it was only the second one I had competed in."

Dresser finished ninth and in her age group and 28th overall.

Jamie Plunk, the team's coach and trainer, said the team did very well, especially for a summer competition.

"It went great for this time of the year," he said. "As a club we did pretty well even though we only had four competitors, compared to 18 to 20 from other clubs."

Plunk, a health promotion Ph.D. candidate, placed fifth in his age group and 19th overall.

The club, in a move to establish competition boundaries for the sport, decided to organize a collegiate conference.

Scecsy said the conference, consisting of the University of Texas, University of Houston, Arkansas, Sam Houston State University and Southwest Texas State, will be the first of its kind in the nation.

"Some of the top athletes will be competing there," he said. "The competition will in no way be light."

"We are really turning things around. This will put us at the forefront of collegiate triathlon competition."

The conference will be under the United States

Triathlon Federation's jurisdiction.

Scecsy proposed the idea to the federation at a board meeting held in Farmers Branch during the championships.

"They were real impressed with the idea and accepted it immediately," Scecsy said.

Competition inside the newly formed conference is scheduled to begin in the fall.

The federation has chosen to give several of their annual events collegiate status.

Scecsy said the conference will allow the sport not to focus solely on the individual athlete.

"It is an individual sport but is finally becoming a team event," he said. "You still compete as an individual but you get points for the team. It adds to the collegiate spirit."

Plunk said the new conference could widen the sport's appeal.

"This collegiate deal will bring a lot of other people out to compete," he said. "In the past, they didn't have a lot of support since it takes a lot of time, but now more support will follow."

Landry accepts place in Ring of Honor

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IRVING, Texas — Hall of Famer Tom Landry finally accepted a spot in the Dallas Cowboys' Ring of Honor on Tuesday, an honor the former coach had vehemently shunned since he was fired in 1989.

Landry, who guided the Cowboys to two Super Bowl championships in his 29 years, left the franchise on bitter terms when Jerry Jones bought the team then dismissed him within hours.

He previously refused enshrinement in the ring, which encompasses the facade between the decks of Texas Stadium. He also has distanced himself from the team, spending more time with personal business and charities.

"I'm really thankful to be here," Landry said adding that Jones had asked him to join the ring during a charity golf tournament.

On Tuesday, Jones announced that Landry had agreed to be enshrined in the ring of honor. The ceremony will take place Nov. 7 at the game between the Cowboys and the New York Giants.

Jimmy Johnson, who replaced Landry and became only the second coach in Cowboys' history, said "I think it's good that coach Landry will be in the Ring of Honor. He's a big part of the

great tradition of the Dallas Cowboys."

Johnson's sentiments were echoed by the club's former general manager, Tex Schramm.

"I think it's tremendous that Tom has decided to go into the Ring of Honor," Schramm said. "I'll be there that day for sure."

Landry becomes the eighth person honored, joining seven players he coached: Bob Lilly, Don Meredith, Don Perkins, Chuck Howley, Mel Renfro, Roger Staubach and Lee Roy Jordan.

The hat-wearing Landry became a stoic figure on Cowboys' sidelines as he turned a floundering expansion franchise of the early 1960s into America's Team by the 1970s.

The team was weakened in the early 1980s as his players aged and weren't sufficiently replaced. He still guided them to the playoffs in 1983 and his streak of 20 consecutive winning seasons lasted until 1985.

But by 1988, his final year, the team had dropped to 3-13.

Under Landry, the Cowboys went 270-178-6, reaching Super Bowls V, VI, X, XII and XIII. They beat Miami 24-3 in Super Bowl VI and defeated Denver 27-10 in Super Bowl XII. He remains the NFL's third-winningest coach.

He became the third Cowboy in the NFL's Hall of Fame in 1990, joining Lilly and Staubach. Team president and general manager Tex Schramm followed in 1991.

Lawsuit settlement to cause cuts in UT men's sports

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUSTIN — Most coaches and administrators for men's sports at the University of Texas don't believe their teams will be hurt by reductions in walk-ons, but they say reducing the talent pool is unsettling.

The reduction is part of last week's settlement in a federal gender equity lawsuit against the university.

"I don't think this will make competitive changes in our programs," DeLoss Dodds, UT men's athletic director, told the Austin American-Statesman.

"It just limits opportunities, and you're never comfortable limiting opportunities. That was the genesis of the lawsuit on the other side," he said.

The out-of-court settlement in the lawsuit that accused Texas of sex discrimination calls for the proportion of all UT athletes — whether on scholarship or walk-

ons — to be approximately 56 percent men and 44 percent women. Student enrollment at Texas is 53 percent men and 47 percent women.

Under the settlement, men's coaches find themselves faced with trimming the number of athletes while maintaining their scholarship numbers.

Those to be trimmed will be walk-ons. Dodds estimates the number of male athletes in the program will drop from 325 to 265.

"In a program like Texas, where we fully fund every sport, the impact of walk-ons is not that great," Dodds said.

"Obviously, there have been some who have made big contributions over the years, but in terms of the competitive success of programs, walk-ons have not made that big an impact," he said.

The sport that might feel the most impact is track and field. Last season, coach

Stan Huntsman had a 62-man roster but only 12 scholarships, which he divided among 40 athletes who received aid. The most prominent recent track walk-on is Harry Green, who in 1989 set the school record in the 10,000-meter run.

Huntsman's administrative aide, Mike Hughes, said he didn't believe reducing the number of walk-ons would hurt the quality of the two-time defending Southwest Conference indoor and outdoor champions. But Hughes said he feels badly about limiting the chances of walk-ons.

"Most coaches don't like to deal with walk-ons. They're a lot of work. But those are the kids who give back to the program because they feel the program gave them something," he said.

Dodds said walk-ons will continue to have a chance to try out, but the competition will be tougher because of fewer available spots. "You just draw the line in a different place now," he said.

Stadium fire in Atlanta causes evacuation, delay

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATLANTA — Fire broke out in a luxury suite behind home plate Tuesday at Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium, 90 minutes before the Atlanta Braves were to play the St. Louis Cardinals.

The fire was extinguished 45 minutes after it started. As many as 10 firefighters were treated on the scene for heat related problems and one was taken to a hospital for heat exhaustion. No other injuries were reported.

Fans who had arrived early for the 7:40 p.m. EDT start were evacuated, and Braves management intended to play the game.

"We think it was some sort of electrical fire," said Larry Tanner, Atlanta's assistant fire chief. He said five box suites were destroyed and a sixth was heavily damaged.

The fire burned 25 minutes before firefighters could get close enough to pour water on it. Twenty minutes later, the fire appeared out.

Braves president Stan Kasten said he does not believe the stadium sustained structural damage.

The fire apparently started in a luxury suite rented by radio station WGST on the third-base side of the press level. Matt Stewart of WGST said no one was in the suite when the fire started at 5:55 p.m.

A loud explosion was heard several minutes after the fire began. Burning debris fell onto the field-level seats, flames shot through the middle level and black smoke billowed above the 52,013-seat stadium.

Players from both teams stood on the field and watched.

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