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GARRIDO Continued from Page 9

Garrido attributes his success to the sacrifices of all his former players and coaches.

SPORTS

"There's no question about that," Garrido said. "I've had great assistant coaches and great players who worked for me. Baseball is the ultimate team sport. It's all about team work. I've been surrounded by great teammates.

"The success I've had has come from what others have given to the same common goal. Because of his accomplishments, Garrido was selected National Coach of the Year in 1975, 1979, 1984, and 1995. He also has been ranked as one of the top three baseball teachers in the nation by the major league directors of player development. Although he has received several accolades, Garrido said he has no desire to manage at the professional level.

"I think it's a different game and [I] prefer the college level," Garrido said. "In professional baseball, you use the players for the betterment of the game. In college baseball, you use the game for the bet-

terment of the players. 'I have a teacher's mentality and prefer being in an academ-

Garrido's teacher's mentality is evident in his views on baseball.
"Baseball parallels life,"
Garrido said. "It's a lot like golf in that, as a game, it really tests your inner strengths. It's a game filled with adversities and it's a game that is very difficult to play well.
"It tests your ability to over-

come problems and to find ways to be successful. It takes an awful lot of work, determina-tion, commitment and dedication — all the ingredients to be successful in life. That's what I like about it. It provides a great vehicle for people to learn how to be successful in life in the university environment."

Garrido's new players and coaches are working toward a new common goal — winning the Big 12 Conference. They are working to continue the longstanding traditions and successes of a baseball program rich in history.

But even with all the expectations of the university and its fans, Garrido said he did not feel he had to prove himself and win from day one.

"Maybe I should have [had high expectations], now that we're not doing so well," Garrido said. "I was not and am not. I feel like I served a long apprenticeship. This is a difficult and demanding environment. I think I am the right person at the right time for this job.

My only hesitation was to the university and see if we

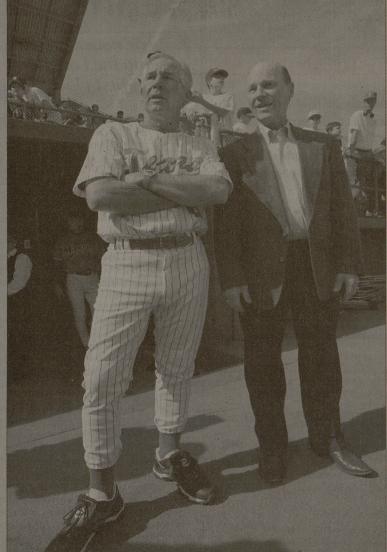


Photo Courtesy of Jim Sigman, UT PHOTO DEPARTMENT UT Head Coach Augie Garrido (left) stands with former coach Cliff

cally about how things would be done and where the priorities would be. That was put to rest quickly by meeting (athletic director) Deloss Dodds and Butch Worley.

In his first season at the helm, Garrido has experienced a lot of disappointment. The Longhorns are 22-17 overall and 5-10 in conference play. Texas currently stands eighth in the conference race behind Kansas University (10-8) and the University of Missouri (7-11).

Making the race more challenging is the fact that Texas will play three fewer games than the front-runners in the conference. The Longhorns had a threegame series against Iowa State University which was snowed out, April 12-13, and because of Big 12 bylaws, the series will not be rescheduled.

Garrido said this season has not been difficult for him because it is not the first time he has experienced down time season in his first year with a new program.

"It's been difficult for the players," Garrido said. "I've been through this four times (our offense) to hit the ball," get to know my bosses here at before when I started programs Garrido said. "We don't have up at (Cal Poly) San Luis agree philosophically and ethi- Obispo, (Cal State) Fullerton opponent at this point.

Gustafson (right) during the retirement of Gustafson's number the first time, Illinois, and when I went back to Fullerton.

"The people I'm concerned about are the players who are in an environment that is difficult. I'm trying to help them find solutions and to be successful."

Adding to the pressure of dealing with a frustrating season, the Longhorns have to all but run the table to close out the season.

'We have to win nine out of the next 12 mathematically, for us to be included in the final six," Garrido said, "It is our chance to salvage a season that has otherwise been very discouraging for the players."

The 12-game journey begins with a three-game series against Texas A&M University. Game 1 is tonight at Olsen Field at 7. The series then returns to Disch-Falk Field for the final two games Saturday at 7 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m.

Garrido said the Longhorns will focus solely on themselves and not the Aggies.

"We're trying to get our infielders to catch ground balls time to get concerned with our

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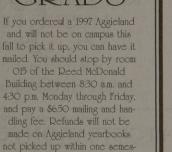
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