

# Astros 'not married' to payroll

HOUSTON (AP) — Moises Alou will fit nicely into the Houston Astros outfield next season and owner Drayton McLane says he'll also find a way to squeeze him into the Astros' budget.

The Astros acquired Alou from the World Champion Florida Marlins on Tuesday in exchange for relievers Oscar Henriquez and Manny Barrios and a player to be named.

The Astros, with free agent Darryl Kile still unsigned, are trying to keep a \$33 million budget, but that's becoming more difficult.

"I'm not married to \$33 million," McLane said. "I'm seldom married to any one idea. We're trying to be

competitive. We haven't made a final decision on (the budget). We're still going to have a small market budget, but we're trying to improve our club.

"We're going to try our best to get the people we need to have. We're just going to have to adjust as we go along."

Alou, who led the Marlins last season with 23 homers and 115 RBIs, is under contract through

2001. He'll get \$5 million in 1998 and 1999 and \$5.25 million in 2000 and 2001.

Kile likely will command a contract worth \$6-\$7 million per year, leaving the Astros a longshot to retain his services.

"Drayton is committed to winning," general manager Gerry Hunsicker said. "But we also have to show fiscal restraint, and we're going to try to do the best we can and see what happens. We're not going into a spending frenzy."

Kile is being pursued by several teams, including the Colorado Rockies.

"It looks like a stretch right now

but we're going to try to keep Darryl," McLane said.

Acquiring Alou doesn't automatically mean the Astros will unload right fielder Derek Bell, who had an off-season in 1997.

"I'm always looking to improve the club," Hunsicker said. "But to add someone like Alou and take away Bell almost negates the move. I think adding Alou makes Bell a better player. He can be more relaxed and pitchers have one more guy in the lineup to worry about."

Henriquez was 4-5 with a 2.80 ERA and 12 saves in 60 games with Triple-A New Orleans last season. Barrios was 4-8 with a 3.27 ERA in 57 games.

# Griffey unanimous choice for AL MVP

NEW YORK (AP) — Ken Griffey Jr. became the ninth unanimous pick for the American League Most Valuable Player award, winning the honor for the first time Wednesday.

Griffey, who hit .304 for Seattle, led the AL with 56 homers and finished first in the majors with 147 RBIs, received all 28 first-place votes and 392 points in balloting by the Baseball Writers Association of America. He's the first unanimous AL pick since Chicago's Frank Thomas in 1993.

New York Yankees first baseman Tino Martinez was second with 24 second-place votes and four thirds for 248 points, followed by Thomas (172 points) and Baltimore reliever Randy Myers (128).

Griffey, winning an honor his

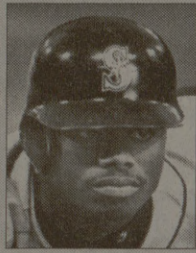
father never did during 19 seasons in the majors, led the AL in runs (125), total bases (393) and slugging percentage (.646). He had 24 homers through May but just five in June and three in July before getting hot again.

He had finished close in previous MVP voting, winding up second in 1994, fourth last year and fifth in 1993.

Griffey's home-run total matched the seventh-most in a single season, and his 294 homers already is 76th on the career list. On April 25, he became the fourth-youngest player to reach 250 homers, trailing only Jimmie Foxx, Eddie Mathews and Mel Ott.

Griffey's father, who finished with 159 homers, was ninth in NL MVP voting in 1976 with 49 points and got one 10th-place vote in 1980.

For winning the award, Griffey gets a \$150,000 bonus. The only other player to earn a bonus was Texas outfielder Juan Gonzalez, who gets \$50,000 for finishing ninth.



Griffey

leadership," Elliott said. "Not so much like I tell people what to do, but you could call me an organizer ... and motivator. Well, hopefully that's what I'm doing."

Her leadership potential has not gone unnoticed. Co-Big 12 Coach of the Year G. Guerrieri names that as being one of her dominant characteristics.

"She is the single greatest impact from an incredible freshman class. She brings to our back line, not just the usual things that you find from a great defender like in that she is good ball winner and good distrib-

utor, but she has incredible leadership abilities," Guerrieri said. "That is one of the reasons we recruited her. She has certainly been a leader on this team as a freshman and very much deserving of the Big 12 Rookie of the Year award this year."

With the postseason kicking off



Elliott

## ELLIOTT

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"We went to Bullwinks and did karaoke. It was just awesome. It was all the freshmen and they got us to go up there and we sang 'Footloose.' It was embarrassing, but it was the soccer team and we all bonded. Really, those first two weeks of preseason was special and helped us come together."

The freshman sweeper sees her role on the team as a motivator on and off the field.

"As a sweeper I assume some

## AGGIES

Continued from Page 7

A service ace by Smedsrud and a Sykora kill would lead the Aggies to a 6-2 lead. Then a combination of a block and kill by Sykora seemed to stun Texas into a deep sleep as the Aggies would go on to a relatively easy victory in Game three to win the match and break the Horns 15 game

"I don't know if I've ever been prouder of my team coming through in the clutch."

Laurie Corbelli  
VOLLEYBALL COACH

winning streak. The 15-6 score in game three would mark the second time in two years that the Aggies swept UT in G. Rollie White.

Seniors Kristie Smedsrud and Farah Mensik both seemed as though they were very pleased with the outcome.

"It is just an awesome feeling, I can't really explain what it feels like," Smedsrud said.

"This is the sweetest victory of my career at A&M," Mensik said.

As far as Texas is concerned the coach Jim Moore saw the positives in the loss.

"This can be the best thing to happen to us," Moore said. "Tonight taught us that if you play careful and try not to lose, you lose."

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