

AGGIE SPORTS BRIEFS

from staff and wire reports

Baseball gears up for UT showdown

The Texas A&M Baseball Team (2-13, 14-7) will take on the Texas Longhorns (16-23-1, 4-10) for a three-game series starting Friday in Austin at 6:30 p.m. The series will then shift to College Station for the final two games on Saturday and Sunday. The Aggies are coming off a comeback 10-9 victory against the Longhorns on Tuesday. The Horns recently lost to the University of Texas at Austin 4-1 on Tuesday. Senior pitcher Ryan Rupe will probably start game one in Austin. Rupe has a 7-3 record and a 2.64 ERA. Sophomore Casey Fossum will probably start game two. Fossum is 2-1 with a 3.35 ERA. Assuming he recovers from a tight low, junior Matt Ward will start the final game of the series. Ward is 6-2 with a 4.84 ERA. If Ward cannot go, sophomore Chance Caple will pitch.

Rupe nominated for national award

Texas A&M senior pitcher Ryan Rupe is on a list of 12 semifinalists for the Rotary Smith Award, the only national award for college baseball's pitcher of the year as voted upon by the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA). Rupe has a 7-3 record with a 2.64 ERA and two shutouts. Including Rupe, the state of Texas has four nominees for the award. The others include Stanford pitcher Jeff Austin (Houston), Rice pitcher Bubba Crosby (Houston) and LSU first baseman Eddy Furniss (Nacogdoches).

Track trio look to continue quality

The Texas A&M Track and Field team will travel to Austin this Saturday to compete in a five-way meet between Oklahoma, Rice, Houston and

the University of Texas. The meet will take place at Darrell K. Royal Memorial Stadium, the site of the Texas Relays just two weeks ago.

The Aggies are coming off of their most impressive all-around meet of the season at the A&M Invitational and will look to carry that momentum into Austin against perennial powerhouses Oklahoma and Texas.

Freshman Esther Eisenlauer will look to duplicate her last performance in Austin, when she won the women's javelin during the Texas Relays. The women's trio of Adrienne Sawyer, Rosa Jolivet and Chimika Carter should continue to dominate the hurdles, while Sawyer and Carter have also excelled in the jumps.

Meshell Trotter, Megan Koonce and Kelli Schrader also had exceptional meets a week ago in the throws.

Over on the men's side, senior Larry Wade is the odds-on favorite to win the 110-meter hurdles, and freshman Bashir Ramzy will look to continue his successful dual role as hurdler and jumper.

Following this weekend, the Aggies will have little time to rest. Beginning on Thursday, April 23, Texas A&M will be competing in Pennsylvania in the always competitive Penn Relays.

Softball goes on trip of Oklahoma

The Texas A&M Softball Team (30-20-1, 4-6) will continue its conference play this weekend after sweeping a doubleheader against Sam Houston State on Tuesday.

On Saturday, the Aggies will travel to Stillwater to take on No. 8 Oklahoma State in a doubleheader.

On Sunday, A&M will travel to Norman to play a doubleheader against No. 5 Oklahoma. Both series will begin at noon.

After dropping two games to Texas last weekend, the Aggies dropped to sixth in the conference standings and need to make a strong showing this weekend to improve their current position.

Wizards players under fire

Grand jury presented with testimony in Webber and Howard investigation

ROCKVILLE, Md. (AP) — "Parental discretion advised" was the best way to describe the evidence given by witnesses Thursday as the investigation of a sexual assault complaint naming Juwan Howard and Chris Webber went before a grand jury.

One witness, an exotic dancer from Atlanta, told prosecutors the alleged victim spoke of receiving \$1,000 after having sex with Webber during a party at Howard's house.

"She came in the kitchen, I saw her in the kitchen," Natasha Shallow told WUSA-TV. "She told me she had just slept with Chris Webber. She said she got paid for it, a thousand dollars. I don't know if that was true or not. She was intoxicated and kept on talking."

Webber and Howard have been under investigation since a Trumbull, Conn., woman filed a complaint after a party April 6 at Howard's house in suburban Maryland. Neither player has been charged, and both have denied the allegations.

A Montgomery County grand jury spent about four hours Thursday interviewing several people who were among the 40 guests at the party.

About 10 people appeared for an early debrief-

ing with prosecutors, but all did not testify before the grand jury, officials said.

State's Attorney Robert Dean said it may be another two weeks before the grand jury completes its investigation.

"We will take the time to get as clear a picture as possible," Dean said.

Thursday's grand jury witnesses mostly disputed the accuser's statements.

"It's a lie," said Donnie Kirksey, Howard's high school coach, who flew in from Chicago to testify. "It's not true to interact with (Webber)."

Ferguson Evans, a lawyer who represents four women who attended the party, said his clients told authorities the woman was "trying to interact with (Webber)."

"He didn't respond," Evans said. "She was, according to them, kneeling down beside him ...

basically trying to get his attention."

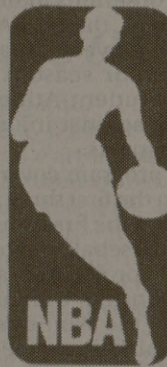
Shallow, the dancer, said Webber left the party before the woman. She said she later heard Howard yelling at his friends to get the woman out of his house.

"Juwan Howard was upstairs and he was telling friends 'Get her out of my house, get her out of my house.' And all I saw was all of these guys picking her up, taking her outside," Shallow said. "(Howard) pulled me to the side and said 'What's wrong with your girl? She came up in my room trying to get in my bed and disrespected me.' ... He said 'I didn't touch her, I didn't touch her. I did nothing to her.'"

Mitchell Rubenstein, a lawyer who represents Howard and Howard's roommate, Lamont "Juice" Carter, said Carter and other witnesses have said the woman was "banging" on Howard's bedroom door.

"When he finally responds, he tells her he has no interest. She became irate," Rubenstein said. He said the witnesses also said the woman began throwing insults at Howard.

Neither Webber nor Howard have been interviewed by police. Both were with the Wizards preparing for Friday's game at Miami.



SFA Lumberjacks prepare for NFL draft

NACOGDOCHES, Texas (AP) — The effort to recruit Mikhael Ricks, a multi-talented football player and a fair tuba player, to Stephen F. Austin has included a musical interlude.

Coach John Pearce also made an extra effort for junior linebacker Jeremiah Trotter, although neither athlete was heavily recruited in high school.

Ricks completed his college eligibility by setting an NCAA record with 28.9 yards per catch for the Lumberjacks.

"I had to sit through a band concert to recruit him because he played the tuba in the school band," Pearce said. "We recruited him as an athlete and tuba player but he was so talented we were going to find a place for him to play."

Pearce expects both players to

receive more attention in Sunday's NFL draft than they did coming out of high school.

"I expect both of them to go on the first day," Pearce said.

Ricks and Trotter could be the first players selected from Texas, ahead of players at Big 12 Division I-A schools.

That's a sore subject for Pearce. "You hear knocks on our kids because they played at a Division I-AA school," Pearce said. "But with 85 scholarships limit, there are plenty of good players in Division I-AA."

The Lumberjacks have several active players in the NFL including quarterbacks James Ritchey with the Tennessee Oilers and Mike Quinn with the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Ricks, a 6-5, 237-pound wide receiver with a 4.4 40-yard dash time, has been projected to play

tight end or wide receiver. But he could offer serious mismatches for smaller defensive backs if he lines up as a wide receiver.

"He played tight end and wide receiver in college and played extremely well," Pearce said. "He'll be hard to overlook at either spot and I think he has the ability to play either one."

Ricks' NCAA record of 28.9 yards per catch last season was 4 1-2 yards better than the previous record set by Fresno State's Henry Ellard in 1982.

He caught 47 passes last season for 1,358 yards and 13 touchdowns. Ricks had touchdown catches of 97, 79, 78, 77, 74, 70, 55, 53 and 50 yards.

Ricks also had TD catches of 68 and 56 yards as an underclassman — so half of his 22 career touchdowns

covered 50 yards or more.

"I'll play tight end, H-back, wide receiver, wherever they want me," Ricks said. "Whatever will help my draft stock, I'll do."

Trotter grew up in Hooks, helping his father in the wood cutting business.

His regular chore after school was chopping wood.

His strength training paid off at the NFL's scouting the combine when he bench-pressed 225 pounds 32 times, the fourth strongest of the 325 players invited to the combine. Only three linemen lifted more.

Trotter is 6-0, 261 and has a 4.58 40-yard dash time. He had 300 tackles in three college seasons, intercepted three passes and recovered three fumbles. He also had five sacks last season.

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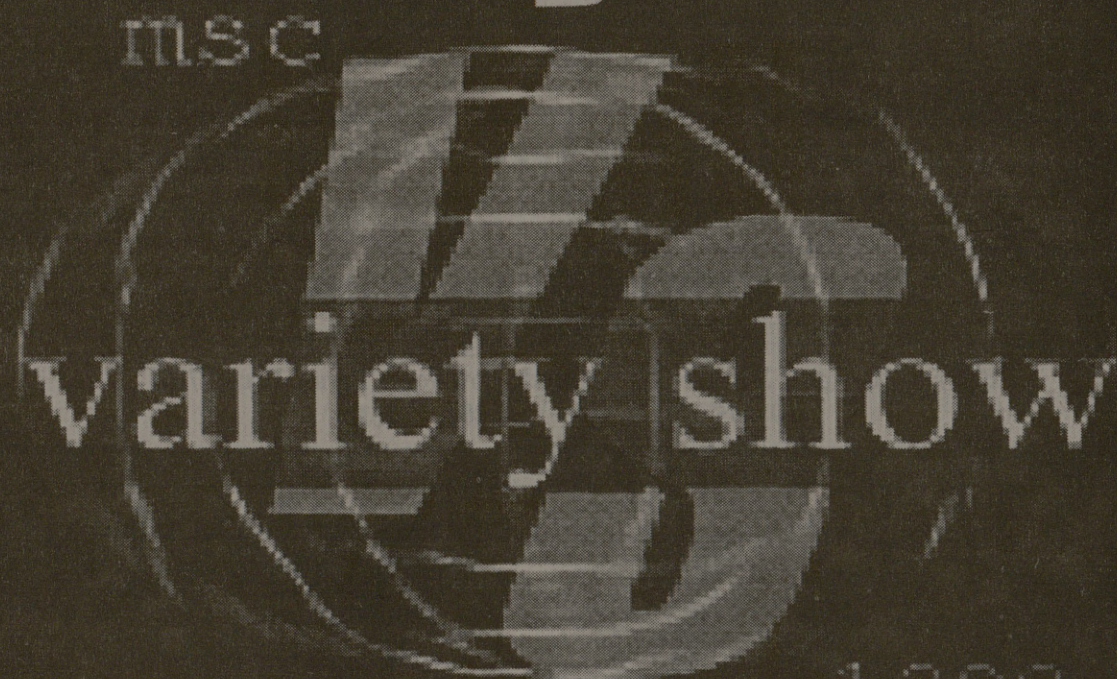
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