

Ambres agrees to terms with the Marlins

BY JEFF WEBB
Sports Editor

Texas A&M quarterback prospect Chip Ambres agreed to terms with the Florida Marlins on Friday night. The Beaumont native said he will play for the Marlins' rookie-league Melbourne Manatees, a team for baseball players drafted directly out of high school.

"This is something I can look forward to," Ambres said. "I have no regrets at all. I feel like I made the right choice and I wanted to take advantage of this opportunity."

Ambres' father, Raymond, negotiated the deal with Florida before the August 4 deadline for rookies to report.

"I was mostly the negotiator," Raymond Ambres said. "We had advisers also. We got what we were looking for. We are very satisfied."

The Marlins do not allow baseball signees to play other sports while they are under contract for baseball. Ambres will not be able to play quarterback for A&M, having recruit Vance Smith as the one signal-caller left in the 1998 Aggie signing class.

Florida will pay for Ambres' college education when he decides to attend school.

"That's a big part of it," Ambres said. "I'm not sure when."

Ambres visited the Astrodome during the series between the Houston Astros and the Marlins and was able to take batting practice with the team. Ambres talked with Florida players and manager Jim Leyland.

"I talked to everybody," he said. "It was great. I just wanted to see what players' attitudes were like."

"I thought they would be on a higher level or their egos would be bigger, but they weren't. It made me feel more comfortable about the whole process."

Ambres will fly to Miami today for a physical before joining the team later in the week.

A Fighting Chance

Ricky Juarez wants his shot at a professional boxing career

BY JEFF WEBB
Sports Editor

Ricky Juarez, all 119 pounds, climbed in the ring of Bryan's Lulac Recreation Center, ready for the fight

ahead of him.

The belt he wore had the name "Rocky" written across it in black print, but Juarez, a Houston native, bore little resemblance to the Italian boxing hero who made the name famous.



PHOTO BY MIKE FUENTES/THE BATTALION

Houston's Ricky Juarez defeated Mexico's Samuel Lopez in Bryan on Wednesday.

The gloves laced on his fists looked more like lollipops affixed to their respective sticks than fierce weapons ready for battle.

Samuel Alvarez Lopez, a Mexican Olympic hopeful, was Juarez's opponent for the Wednesday night bout, the third in the series featuring local American fighters and Mexican Olympic "B-team" boxers.

Juarez defeated Lopez by a unanimous decision from the judges after three rounds, but Juarez said he was unhappy with his performance.

season's remaining games.

His father suggested boxing as a new activity. Since that time, he said his mind has been set on a professional career.

"I'm planning on making this a job," he said. "Hopefully, I will make it to the Olympics in 2000 for a faster start in the pros. But not all Olympic medalists make it to the world championships."

Juarez abandoned his normal life to pursue his dream.

Training at Ray's Boxing in Houston takes up most of his time and, during a period when most 18-year-olds are attending college thinking about getting a diploma, Juarez is working to out-distance the competition in the ring.

"I can stick with it," he said. "What's hard about it is to stay in it all year round. You can take a break, but you have to work double-time to catch up with everyone else."

"There are no timeouts in boxing. It's the toughest sport out there."

After his victory, Juarez retreated to one darkly-lit corner of the room where his parents waited.

His father helped him unlace his gloves and take the tape off of his trembling fists. Then he gave him a powerful hug and some words of advice.

"You used your right with power only one time," his father Pedro said. "One time."

"Did he hurt you?" his mother asked as she kissed him on the cheek.

"No," he replied. "Do I have anything on my face?"

"Only lipstick, dear," she said. "Only lipstick."

“There are no timeouts in boxing. It’s the toughest sport out there.”

— Ricky Juarez
Houston Amateur Boxer

"Tonight, I felt real bad," he said. "People who have seen me fight know I don't win that close."

Those same people have seen Juarez fight many times in the last six years.

The 18-year-old began his career when his father Pedro got him interested in the sport.

Juarez got into a fight with the son of his baseball coach in little league and soon found himself on the bench for the

Randy Johnson strikes out 12 in first National League start in 9 seasons

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Randy Johnson was everything the Houston Astros wanted when they sacrificed their future to get him: Overpowering, dominating, intimidating. Everything including a winner.

Johnson, pitching fewer than 48 hours after Houston swung the big trade to get him, struck out 12 in seven innings and the Astros scored four times in the eighth to beat the Pittsburgh Pirates 6-2 Sunday.

Despite battling jet lag, an unfamiliarity with Pittsburgh hitters — he knew only a few even after studying box scores on an all-day trip Saturday — Johnson was just as menacing for the NL Central-leading Astros as he was for the Seattle Mariners.

His 12 strikeouts gave him 225 for the season — he led the AL before he was traded Friday for three prospects — and are an Astros' season high. It also was the eighth time in his nine starts he had double-digit strikeouts, and gave him the overall major league lead in strikeouts.

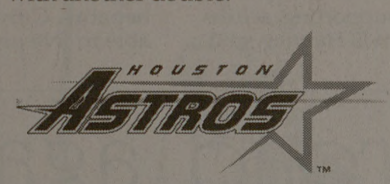
The Big Unit, who drew as many cheers during pregame introductions as the hometown Pirates, breezed through the first four innings in his first NL start since April 1989 for Montreal, allowing only two singles and walking one.

The Pirates finally got to him for a 20-year-old rookie third baseman Aramis Ramirez's solo homer, his sixth, leading off the fifth. They took a 2-1 lead on singles by Mark Smith and Ramirez, a hit batsman and

Kevin Polcovich's sacrifice fly.

But just when it seemed the much-traveled Todd Van Poppel would outduel Johnson, the Astros took the lead with a four-run eighth against reliever Jason Christiansen (1-2), himself rumored in trade talks.

Carl Everett's tying RBI single followed a single, a walk and a force play. Ricky Gutierrez's two-run double into the gap in right field made it 4-2, and Tony Eusebio, batting for Johnson, added an insurance run with another double.



Johnson (1-0), who walked one, hit another and threw 116 pitches, was replaced by the Astros' best pitching prospect, Scott Elarton, who sailed through the final two innings for his second save.

Johnson may not know these Pirates very well, but they have a history against him, beating him twice in three of his 11 previous NL starts in September 1988 and April 1989, before the Expos traded him to Seattle.

By coincidence, his major league debut came against the Pirates in Montreal on Sept. 15, 1988, when he won 9-5 despite lasting only five innings and allowing two homers to Glenn Wilson.

But while Johnson dominated the Pirates' entirely right-handed hitting lineup — they even benched NL stolen base leader Tony Womack to add another right-handed bat — the league's second best offense didn't give him much support until the eighth.

The Astros took a 1-0 lead in the fourth on Billy Spiers' double and Jeff Bagwell's one-out single off Van Poppel, who was tearing up Texas high schoolers when Johnson debuted in 1988 but has since gone through seven major league organizations.

That was Houston's only scoring against Van Poppel, who gave up five hits and struck out five over seven innings while barely resembling a pitcher with a 22-35 career record.

It was a smooth return all the way around for the 34-year-old Johnson, who didn't arrive in Pittsburgh until 9 p.m. EDT Saturday but chose to stay on his normal five-day rotation by pitching Sunday. He last worked Tuesday, losing to Cleveland.

"I'm tired, hungry and ornery, just the way I want to be before I pitch," he said.

His only worry about returning to the NL was batting again, but he didn't look overmatched at the plate, popping up once, hitting a sharp ground ball another time and striking out once.

About the only time he looked uncomfortable was when he shoed away several of the nine photographers who lined up behind home plate shooting his warmup pitches.

Watkins takes Texas A&M men's team on European vacation basketball tour

From staff and wire reports

The Texas A&M Men's Basketball Team will play a five-game exhibition schedule August 14-25 in Germany and Holland. The Aggies begin practice for the tour today at Reed Arena.



WATKINS

The Aggies' tour roster will include only the nine returning players from last season since newcomers will not be eligible until school starts in early September.

"The tour will allow me to see the players and get to know them better," first-year A&M coach Melvin Watkins said. "Maybe more important, it will give them a chance to get to know me and allow us to get our philosophy somewhat in place. If we can accomplish that, I won't worry too much about the wins and losses."

"Just the fact that we can spend some time together and get to know each other will make the trip worthwhile."

The Aggies are led by senior forward Shanne Jones, who earned second team All-Big 12 honors last season after averaging 18.1 points and 6.7 rebounds per game.

Junior guard Steve Houston led the Big 12 in

steals last season with 2.5 per game and also averaged 9.5 points and 4.4 assists. Houston was named to the Big 12 All-Defense Team.

The Aggies leave for the tour on August 14 and play their first game against the Weert Basketball Club on August 16 in Eindhoven, Holland. After one game in Amsterdam, Holland, the Aggies will play three games in Cologne, Germany, before returning to the United States on August 25.

AGGIE BASKETBALL TEAM

GERMANY-HOLLAND TOUR ITINERARY

Location	Date	Time	City
Weert Basketball Club	Sunday, Aug. 16	4 PM	Eindhoven, Holland
Amsterdam "Ricoch Astronauts" Basketball Club	Tuesday, Aug. 18	6 PM	Amsterdam, Holland
Bayer Leverkusen	Thursday, Aug. 20	TBA	Cologne, Germany
Telekom Basket Bonn	Friday, Aug. 21	TBA	Cologne, Germany
Brandt-Hagen	Sunday, Aug. 23	3 PM	Cologne, Germany

AGGIE SPORTS BRIEF

from staff and wire reports

Football tickets on sale today

A limited number of Texas A&M single game football tickets remain and orders will be taken beginning today at the athletic ticket office inside G. Rolie White Coliseum.

"Season ticket orders have been filled and we can begin accepting orders for single game tickets with the exception of the Nebraska and Texas contests," Athletics Director Wally Groff announced today. "With the north end zone expansion project underway, our capacity is around 58,000 for this season."

Tickets for Big 12 games will most likely be folding chairs on the track and bleachers in the south end zone.

Americans claim MLS victory

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — It will not change the results of a disappointing World Cup showing, however the United States did reclaim some bragging rights in Major League Soccer's third All-Star game.

Brian McBride of the Columbus Crew scored one goal and assisted on two others Sunday as the U.S. All-Stars beat the World All-Stars 6-1 before a crowd of 34,416 at the Florida Citrus Bowl.

Nine of 11 U.S. starters were members of the national team that went 0-3 in France this summer, and they viewed this game as an opportunity to regain a measure of respect.

McBride and MetroStars teammates Alexi Lalas and Tab Ramos scored in the first 16 minutes, and the U.S. built a 4-0 lead before D.C. United's Roy Lassiter and Cobi Jones of Los Angeles finished the rout with goals in the final 12 minutes.

The World team avoided a shutout when Tampa Bay's Mauricio Ramos scored on an assist from

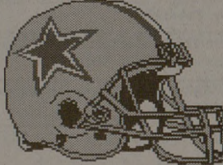
Chicago's Jorge Campos, who started the game in goal before returning as a forward in the 89th minute.

The first two MLS All-Star games were played under an Eastern vs. Western conference format that was abandoned for the U.S.-World concept this year.

While winning didn't bury memories of a poor World Cup showing, the U.S. team's domination was complete. McBride was the MVP, breaking World star Carlos Valderrama's two-year stranglehold on the award, but he had plenty of help.

The U.S. team beat Campos on four of its first five shots on goal, while goalkeeper Tony Meola stopped shots by five different World players before being replaced by Zach Thornton at the start of the second half.

Valderrama, rumored to be headed for the New England Revolution in a trade spurred by his dispute with Miami Fusion coach Ivo Wortmann, started and played all but about 15 minutes of the game.



even for a preseason game."

The Cowboys were flagged Friday night 11 times for 97 yards. Four penalties, three for having 12 men on the field, and a 33-yard pass interference call, led to the game-winning touchdown in the third period.

Gailey said the calls for 12 men on the field came from typical preseason confusion.

"We're going to get that straightened out," Gailey said. "I hope that's not going to happen anymore. It wasn't just one player. It was different people at different times."

He said what confused some of his younger players was the different defenses the Cowboys were running including "the nickel, the dime,

the heavy and the goal-line."

"We also got some guys hurt and that added to the confusion," he said. "It's my fault we didn't adjust to all that."

Gailey, who was an offensive coordinator at Pittsburgh and called games from the press box, said it was a change for him to be on the field.

"There was an adjustment I had to make," he said.

For the first time, the Cowboys coaches used wireless microphones, and Gailey said, "I kept trying to tug on a long wire that wasn't there."

He rated his first game as Cowboys head coach as "not every good. We lost and that's how you are judged. I was doing the best I could to win."

The Cowboys played their starters only in the first period and Gailey said both units did a good job.

"Our first team defense played the run well and the secondary looked good," Gailey said. "Our first team offense did fairly well, not great."

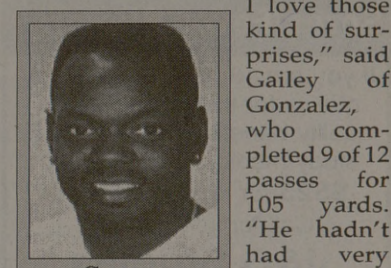
Gailey said it was a comfort to see Chris Warren have a big game after Emmitt Smith suffered a minor elbow injury.

"We have a great deal of confi-

dence now that we can still keep running the ball if something happens to Emmitt," Gailey said.

Gailey also praised third-string quarterback Daniel Gonzalez, a free agent from East Carolina.

"He surprised me a little bit but I love those kind of surprises," said Gailey of Gonzalez, who completed 9 of 12 passes for 105 yards. "He hadn't had very many repetitions in practices and we hadn't seen him do something like that."



SMITH

Gailey added "of course Jason Garrett will be our No. 2 quarterback but it's good to have someone with the promise of Gonzalez at the No. 3 spot."

Gonzalez beat out Max Knake for the third quarterback spot.

The Cowboys play their second game of the preseason next Saturday night in Texas Stadium against Oakland after a Thursday scrimmage in El Paso against the Raiders.