

Ice hockey team soon to be approved for competition at Texas A&M

BY RUTH STEPHENS
The Battalion

Texas A&M University may soon be welcoming a new sport as part of its student organizations: ice hockey.

Pending official recognition by A&M on Aug. 15, the A&M ice hockey team will begin their first season in October.

Founder and team captain Daniel Sneed said he started organizing the collegiate hockey league last year.

By January of this year he had teams from Baylor University, University of Texas, University of North Texas and College Station slated to play.

Sneed started the College Station team with players from A&M, Blinn Junior College and Tomball Junior College.

Texas and North Texas eventually dropped out, ending the season prematurely, but a few games were played, including the College Station / Texas season opener at

the Compaq Center in Houston.

"At least 300 fans came to that game," Sneed said. "I mainly wanted to see what things would look like. It convinced me that the interest was there."

Sneed, who played ice hockey in junior high and high school, approached several people he knew at different universities about starting an ice hockey league and with their help, Sneed successfully recruited several teams.

On the roster for the 1999-2000 season is North Texas, Texas, Baylor, Southwest Texas State and Texas A&M, once it is recognized by the Department of Student Activities.

Sneed then asked the Interscholastic Hockey League in Houston if they would be interested in forming a league for the universities.

The league agreed and the Intercollegiate Hockey League (ICHL) was formed.

Sneed said the popularity of ice hockey is growing in Texas, especially with the recent success of

the Dallas Stars.

"It's huge in Texas," Sneed said, "especially with kids. Each rink in Texas has their own league with over 5,000 people participating in cities like Houston and Dallas."

Sneed had wanted to play Division III ice hockey in Boston, but was told he didn't have enough experience. That prompted him to start competitive ice hockey at the collegiate level.

"I'm trying to make it where you can play hockey if you come down here (Texas)," Sneed said. "You shouldn't have to be the best in the world and move up north to play."

Sneed said many players he recruited for the upcoming season played roller hockey and were excited about the opportunity to play on ice.

"I want people to understand though, that this is full-contact ice hockey and is a lot faster than high school," Sneed said. "We want people coming out for the team who are confident on the ice."

Because the ice hockey team

will be a student organization rather than a club sport, only 25 percent of the team must be A&M students. Because of this, students enrolled at Blinn and Tomball can remain on the team.

Sneed hopes ice hockey will eventually reach the club level at A&M, and in the future become a varsity level sport in the state of Texas.

The Willowbrook Aerodome in Houston will be the home rink for A&M, with a banner going up as soon as the team is recognized by the University.

The schedule consists of 20 games starting in October with the season ending in March or April.

Sneed said games will be played on the weekend, with all teams meeting at one site, two times each month.

With this rotation, multiple games can be played in one weekend, which saves in travel and rink costs. Besides completing his roster,

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TEXAS A&M ICE HOCKEY

- Team will compete in the Interscholastic Hockey League (ICHL).
- League will consist of Texas A&M, Baylor University, University of North Texas, University of Texas and Southwest Texas State University.
- Schedule consists of 20 games, with the season beginning in October and ending in March or April.
- A&M will play its home games in the Willowbrook Aerodome in Houston.

GABRIEL RUENES/THE BATTALION

French Faux Pas



MARK MCPHERSON/THE BATTALION

Frenchmen show true colors by slandering, not praising Lance Armstrong's triumph

It is too bad that phrases are not defined in the dictionary. If they were, then it is almost certain under the phrase "fundamental lack of class," the French Tricolor would be there in big, bold letters.

What have our supposed French friends been up to now? Thankfully, they have not drawn the United States into another war nor demanded another spate of Jerry Lewis movies. No, they are just being a group of what the English-speaking world calls "cry-babies."

They are not even crying over the fate of one of their fellow countrymen in the British Open. Frenchman Jean Van de Velde pulled off the greatest choke job of all time at Carnoustie, blow-

ing a three shot lead on the last hole of the tournament.

That's right, the biggest choke ever. Bigger than Dennis Eckersley, bigger than Bill Buckner. Bigger than Nick Anderson at the free throw line or Greg Norman at Augusta any time. Monsieur Van de Velde screwed up so magnificently that the engraver had to scratch his name off of the Claret Jug.

But the French are not so upset about that. They hardly play golf, and all Frenchmen know that they haven't won anything on English soil since 1066.

They are grieving about what should be the feel-good story of the decade. They are trying to rain on the parade of Lance Armstrong, the winner of the 1999 Tour De France and a man who came within two weeks of dying from testicular cancer three years ago.

Since Armstrong is an American, the French media is more interested in burying him than

praising him. They have gone out of their way in the past 10 days to accuse Armstrong of doping or using illegal substances to improve his chances of winning.

Even after this was forcefully denied by Armstrong, tour officials, and the International Bicycling Federation, the newspaper *Le Monde* still accused him of using drugs on its front page.

This is utterly pathetic. Armstrong has gone through France faster than anything since German Panzers in 1940, and the French cannot stand it. Many French dislike Americans because they feel the United States has attempted to exert their domination over them, and that American culture has attempted to destroy theirs. They treat Americans — especially ones from Texas like Armstrong — are arrogant buffoons who are very quick to remind them that

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Armstrong a winner before Tour

(AP) — Lance Armstrong's victory in the Tour de France was made possible by another incredible triumph — medicine's ability to beat advanced cancer.

In 1996, Armstrong's doctors in Austin, Texas, gave him the most feared of medical diagnoses: At age 25, he had cancer. Not just that, but it had already spread throughout his body.

In a way he was lucky because his form of malignancy, cancer of the testicles, is one of the unusual types of cancer in adults that can often be cured once it has spread.

For Armstrong, like most victims, the first sign of trouble was a painless lump in one of his testicles. He ignored it for 5 1/2 months, thinking it was probably irritation from his competitive bicycle training. But when it grew sore and he began to cough up blood, he went to see a doctor.

He had never heard of testicular cancer, which strikes 7,400 men in the United States annually and represents just 1 percent of all male cancers. But for men in their 20s and 30s, it is the leading form of cancer.

Armstrong underwent surgery to have his right testicle removed and received one round of chemotherapy. Then he was sent to Indiana University Hospital in Indianapolis to see Dr. Lawrence Einhorn, an expert in testicular cancer.

What Einhorn found was especially ominous. Doctors grade this kind of cancer by how far it has spread. Stage one disease is confined to the testicles and is completely curable.

Stage two has spread to the abdominal lymph glands and is 98 percent curable. Stage three has traveled through the bloodstream to the lungs or beyond. Typically doctors can cure 80 percent of these patients.

"Stage three is the worst," Einhorn said. "He was a bad stage three."

His cancer had spread extensively throughout his lungs, and there were also traces of it in his brain that had begun to cause headaches.

Einhorn estimated that he had a 50 percent chance of being cured. Still, for an adult with widely spread malignancy, those are good odds.

Twenty-five years ago, such a diagnosis would have quickly led to death. That was before the development of cisplatin, a platinum derivative that has become standard treatment for many kinds of tumors but is especially effective against testicular cancer.

That fall and winter, Armstrong underwent three more five-day sessions of chemotherapy. Besides cisplatin, doctors gave him the drugs etoposide and ifosfamide.

Ordinarily, they prefer the drug bleomycin to ifosfamide, because it is equally effective and less likely to cause nausea. But bleomycin can slightly injure the lungs.

"That damage is trivial for most people, but if someone is a world-class athlete, a slight reduction in lung function would lower their standing by several notches," Einhorn said. So the doctors settled on the nastier but ultimately safer ifosfamide.

Armstrong continued to ride between treatments, and by late December his chemotherapy was over. But it was still unclear whether he was saved. Doctors monitor progress with chest X-rays and blood tests.

His X-rays still showed abnormal growths in his lungs, but that could have been scar tissue, not can-

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"Stage three is the worst. He [Armstrong] was a bad stage three."

— Dr. Lawrence Einhorn
Cancer Expert

Major league umpires rescind resignations

NEW YORK (AP) — In what appears to be an overwhelming defeat, the threatened walkout by major league umpires collapsed yesterday, with all umpires withdrawing their resignations, The Associated Press has learned.

However, about one-third of the 68 major league umpires will lose their jobs anyway because the American and National leagues already have hired 25 replacements from the minor leagues, two high-ranking baseball officials said speaking on condition of anonymity.

AL president Gene Budig sent letters to nine AL umpires on Monday accepting their resignations, according to the officials.

Similar letters to as many as 13 NL umpires will be sent by NL president Len Coleman later this week,

the officials said.

On Monday, umpires sued the AL and NL in federal court in Philadelphia, seeking a court order that would allow them to withdraw the resignations prior to their effective date of Sept. 2.

Lawyers for owners and umpires held a conference call Tuesday with U.S. District Judge Edmund V. Ludwig, who refused to issue a temporary restraining order to prevent owners from accepting the resignations, the official said.

Umpires union head Richie Phillips did not immediately comment on the move. Baseball lawyers did not return telephone calls seeking comment.

Umpires announced their mass resignations after a meeting in Philadelphia on July 14, and 56 of

the 68 umpires submitted resignation letters in the following week.

By last Friday, 14 of those 56 umpires had withdrawn their resignations. The rest of the withdrawals were sent to the leagues yesterday, the officials said.

Umpires decided on the resignation strategy because they feared owners would lock them out when their labor contract expires Dec. 31, and the agreement contains a no-strike clause.

The nine AL umpires who apparently were sent letters Monday accepting their resignations are Drew Coble, Jim Evans, Dale Ford, Rich Garcia, Ed Hickox, Mark Johnson, Ken Kaiser, Greg Kosco and Larry McCoy.

The only NL umpires assured of keeping their jobs are Wally Bell, Mark Hirschbeck and Jeff Nelson.

Fox Sports Net plans High School Championship

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP) — Fox Sports Net unveiled its plan for a national high school championship football game yesterday, but the network is battling skepticism from officials who doubt the game is logistically feasible.

Under Fox's plan, the top two teams in its weekly "Fab 50" poll would meet at a predetermined site in December of 2000 for the inaugural championship game.

The poll, which begins this season, is compiled by a group of 4,000 correspondents nationwide who funnel their information to 35 regional pollsters.

But because of scheduling difficulties and the reluctance of high school governing bodies such as Texas' University Interscholastic League, the process has become more complicated than Fox officials originally anticipated.

"We have run into some impassioned opposition," spokesman Michael Lewellen said. "But we think we're on the right track."

Among the main concerns about holding the championship game is finding an appropriate date. The high school playoffs in Texas continue into the

fourth week of December, but states such as Illinois sometimes complete their postseasons by the end of November.

Fox said it would pay the traveling expenses of the teams, bands and pep squads involved, but critics of the plan note that the players' families will have problem finding transportation because teams won't know whether they're playing until the week of the game.

Lewellen said no state has rejected the network's proposal, but the UIL and similar organizations are leaning toward not being involved in the plan.

John Tyler head coach Allen Wilson said he is seeking a waiver from the UIL to participate in the game if his team is selected, and other coaches may take similar actions if they are asked to participate.

"Everyone talks about how great Texas high school football is, but we've never had a way to prove it," Wilson said. "Now we have a format."

Five Texas teams were listed in Fox's first Fab 50 preseason poll — No. 2 Midland Lee, No. 21 Austin Westlake, No. 29 Duncanville, No. 34 Lewisville and No. 48 Stephenville.