

## Scrumming it up



BRIAN SMITH/THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M Rugby Club battles for the ball during their game last Saturday against Sam Houston State University.

## Rodman's change of heart could land him in Dallas

DALLAS (AP) — If Dennis Rodman can convince the Dallas Mavericks that he is sincere about a cleaned-up comeback, the flamboyant forward could be signed as soon as today.

Rodman flew to his hometown Monday and met with owner-in-waiting Mark Cuban and coach-general manager Don Nelson. A decision was expected by tonight's home game against Golden State.

"We wanted to see where Dennis' head is at, and it seems like Dennis really wants to get back on the court and play," Cuban told *The Dallas Morning News*. "We haven't offered him anything yet, but it's something we're very interested in."

Because the Mavericks are over the salary cap, the most they could offer Rodman is about \$500,000 — that is the \$1 million cap exception pro-rated for the 42 games remaining, counting tonight. He likely would not play until Thursday's game at home against the Los Angeles Clippers.

Rodman's agent, Steve Chasman, did not immediately return phone calls to *The Associated Press*. Mavericks officials were not immediately available for comment.

Cuban began pursuing Rodman soon after striking a \$260 million deal to buy the team from Ross Perot Jr.

Cuban, a longtime Dallas season-ticket holder and the billionaire co-founder of Broadcast.com, has been extremely active in running

the team, even before the purchase is finalized.

Despite his often-distracting wackiness, Rodman would help the Mavericks on the court and off. Dallas is last in team rebounding and defense and there are thousands of empty seats at every home game.

But the 38-year-old Rodman, who had trouble behaving on good teams, could lose interest quickly on such a bad team. The Mavericks are 14-26 and have not won a playoff game since 1988.

"This squad can handle him," Dallas forward Cedric Ceballos said. "Bring him on."

Rodman's decision to come to Dallas for a meeting with Cuban is a sign that he is taking the opportunity more seriously. The owner made the visit a mandatory condition.

Rodman's sincerity was questioned after he said in a television interview that he wanted to attend the Super Bowl and Pro Bowl before returning to the NBA. And, in a Jan. 10 entry in his Internet journal, Rodman wrote: "For me the important thing is that I really want to play for a team that can go far in the playoffs. I don't know if it's Dallas."

Rodman said he preferred to play for the Lakers and coach Phil Jackson, who coached him in Chicago.

"However, I really like the city of Dallas and I will always consider Texas home," Rodman wrote.

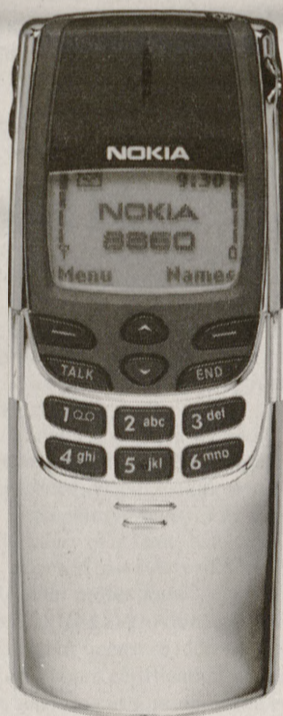
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