

Griffey traded to Cincinnati Reds

CINCINNATI (AP) — Junior has come home.

The final piece of the deal came when Griffey agreed to a nine-year contract worth \$116.5 million, the richest package in baseball history. The pact covers from 2000-09, and the Reds even have an option for a 10th season.

While Griffey boarded a plane in Florida to fly to Cincinnati for a news conference, euphoric fans honked horns on the streets, put up "Welcome Home" signs in their yards and reveled in the team's most celebrated trade since Pete Rose returned as player-manager in 1984.

"His name comes up like Pete Rose's name as far as Cincinnati," said coach Ron Oester, a native who played for the Reds. "That's the magnitude he's at for Cincinnati fans."

And for all of baseball, too.

Widely regarded as the best all-around player in the game, the 30-year-old Griffey is considered a threat to break Hank Aaron's career home run record of 755. Junior already has hit 398 with his sweet, left-handed swing, and was voted onto baseball's All-Century team last fall.

Perhaps never before has such a great player been traded in his prime. Babe Ruth, Rogers Hornsby and Frank Robinson are others that come to mind.

Cincinnati is the only place the 10-time All-Star center fielder wanted to play. And when spring training begins later this month, his trademark backward hat will have a "C" on it.

Pitcher Brett Tomko and outfielder Mike Cameron were sent to Seattle for Griffey, along with a pair of minor leaguers: infielder Antonio Perez and right-hander Jake Meyer.

"It's like being traded for Jordan or

something," Tomko said.

Indeed, Griffey could be his sport's Michael Jordan. No wonder the Mariners were so reluctant to lose him.

"We hope that Ken decides to go into the Hall of Fame as a Mariner," Seattle president Chuck Armstrong said. "We might not have baseball here except for Ken, and we might not have Safeco Field."

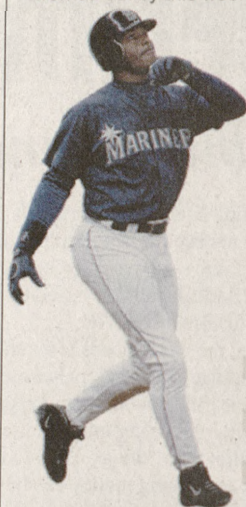
The Mariners, though, had little hope of keeping him after this season. He was eligible for free agency, and said he wanted to be closer to his home in Florida.

He eventually limited his list of eligible teams to one — Cincinnati, where he grew playing in the clubhouse during the days when his father, Ken Sr., was part of the Big Red Machine.

Ken Sr. is now the Reds' bench coach and a candidate to eventually succeed Jack McKeon as manager.

Junior seeing red

Ken Griffey Jr. will become a Cincinnati Red if a new contract can be worked out by this weekend.



Career statistics

Regular season (Seattle, 1989-1999)						
AB	R	H	HR	RBI	Avg.	
5,832	1,063	1,742	398	1,152	.299	

Division Series (1995, 1997)						
AB	R	H	HR	RBI	Avg.	
38	9	11	5	9	.289	

League Championship Series (1995)						
AB	R	H	HR	RBI	Avg.	
21	2	7	1	2	.333	

Most home runs (Active)		Best at-bat to HR ratio (Active)	
Mark McGwire	522	Mark McGwire	10.8
Barry Bonds	445	Juan Gonzalez	14.2
Jose Canseco	431	Ken Griffey Jr.	14.7
Cal Ripken Jr.	402	Albert Belle	14.8
Ken Griffey Jr.	398	Jose Canseco	15.0

Sources: Elias Sports Bureau; Compiled from AP wire reports

AP/Ed De Gasparo

Sports in Brief

Baseball travel to face UT-Pan

The Texas A&M baseball heads to Edinburg this week to take on the University of Texas American in a three-game series.

The Aggies (1-3) are coming off a 4-0 loss to the University of San Antonio Tuesday at Odessa.

It was the first time in 2000 that A&M had been shut out. A&M plays Friday at 3 p.m. doubleheader Saturday at 1 p.m.

Aggies try to keep streak alive at Tech

The Texas A&M women's volleyball team will head to Lubbock for a Saturday game against seventh-ranked University of Tech Red Raiders.

The Aggies (10-10, 2-8) are coming off a big victory over the University of Baylor, which brought an end to an eight game losing streak. A&M will have its work cut out when they take on the Raiders.

Texas Tech is 18-3, 7-3 in the conference and has won 12 of its last 12, and have not lost a home game this season. They are led by Johnson with 14 points per game and Plenette Pierson, who is close behind with 13.3 points per game.

Softball heads to Fiesta Bowl Classic

The Texas A&M Softball team will have its hands full this weekend when it competes in the zona Fiesta Bowl Classic.

This is the Aggies first tournament of the season, and they will take on the 18th-ranked University of South Carolina in their first game at 2:30 today.

A&M will also have to battle the 10th-ranked University of Arizona, the 11th-ranked Oregon State University, the 12th-ranked Mississippi State University, and the University of Georgia.

Track competes in ISU Classic

The Texas A&M track team is headed to Ames, Iowa for the ISU Classic this weekend, while the field team is headed to Houston for a smaller competition.

Head coach Ted Nelson and associate head coach Marcinkiewicz said the team is looking to Iowa with hopes of securing qualification spots in the meet in March.

Men's Tennis takes on Cornhuskers

The Texas A&M men's tennis team will open its dual meet on Friday at 6 p.m. against the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, Neb.

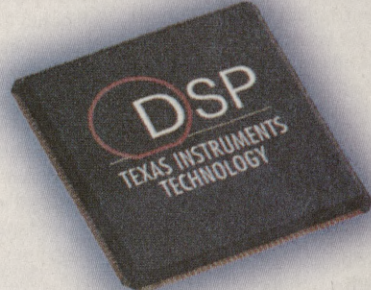
The 17th-ranked Aggies will travel to Champaign, Ill. for a match against 11th-ranked University of Illinois Sunday at 1 p.m.

The Aggies are the 10th highest ranked team in the nation, trailing only No. 12 Baylor University.

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