

Baylor women's basketball coach Hogg announces retirement

WACO (AP) — Sonja Hogg, the outspoken coach who revived Baylor's struggling women's basketball program and led the Lady Bears to their first postseason appearance in 17 years, is retiring after the worst of her six seasons here.

The outspoken Hogg was once reprimanded for comments she made about officiating.

Hogg's surprise decision, effective at this season's end, followed a 6-17 season. The coach told team members and four incoming recruits Sunday



HOGG

night that she was leaving.

"It's been a fun run, but some people don't know when to get off the train," Hogg, who is 82-88 at Baylor, told the *Waco Tribune-Herald* on Monday's editions.

Last in the Big 12 with a 1-12 record, the Lady Bears beat Oklahoma State on Tuesday, 71-60, to end an 11-game losing streak — their longest in a decade.

However, Hogg, 54, said she wasn't leaving the game because of the worst losing streak in her 17-year college career.

"Sometimes the good Lord gives you a little nudge and says, 'This might be the time,'" she said. "It's been a gut-wrenching decision,

but it's not about winning and losing ballgames, I assure you."

Hogg, who won 307 games and an NCAA title in 11 years at Louisiana Tech, came to Baylor in 1994 and assumed leadership of a program that had endured 10 consecutive losing seasons under coach Pam Bowers.

Although the Lady Bears were 13-14 and 11-19 in her first two years — Baylor's last in the Southwest Conference — they improved to 15-13 in 1996-97, and 7-9 in their Big 12 debut.

"This is a sad day for Baylor women's basketball because we have lost one of the true pioneers in the profession," said Baylor Athletics Director Tom Stanton. "I respect and

support Sonja's decision."

He said Hogg has built a solid foundation that the school can build upon.

Hogg has accepted a position in Baylor's development office, Stanton said. She held a similar position at the University of Texas from 1988-90.

At Louisiana Tech, Hogg led the Lady Techsters to six-straight Final Four appearances, including consecutive national championships in 1981 and 1982.

Last year, Big 12 Conference Commissioner Kevin Weiberg reprimanded Hogg for comments she made about officiating in a loss against Oklahoma State. Hogg had said after the loss, "You

don't call an intentional foul in a one-point ballgame when someone's going after the ball and somebody falls down."

The Alexandria, La., native, who signed a five-year contract extension at Baylor before the season began, said she reassessed her priorities after friends' health problems in the athletic department and wants to devote more time to her aging parents in Louisiana.

Hogg decided to approach Stanton after he congratulated her Tuesday night for the victory over Oklahoma State.

"During the losing streak, I wondered if I was going to feel the same way after we won one," she said. "And I did."

XFL to spice up football

On bright fall days, leather helmets on ruddy-cheeked males changing the heck out of each other over a pigskin ball brings joy to many Americans.

The game, unfortunately, evolved over the years into an overregulated arena of millionaires who sometimes commit felonies during the offseason.

Currently, the National Football League (NFL) is the only destination for the best football players in the country after college.

However, if Vince McMahon's idea for his new cable child — the extreme football league, or XFL — goes into effect, it could give the fans what they were missing.

The basic plan involves faster-paced games in eight U.S. cities starting right after the Super Bowl, with plenty of rule-changing and special effects.

McMahon knows what he is doing when it comes to planning a successful, meat-eating, entertaining cable series. His Monday night "Raw Is War" is the highest rated cable series in history and attracts the 12- to 24-year-old demographic like Aggies to Kyle Field.

With a built-in fan base — football fanatics sadly waiting for the NFL Draft day and the non-stop channel surfers itching for something new to stare at — McMahon could possibly achieve ratings somewhat similar to ABC's "Who



JILL RILEY

Wants to Be a Millionaire."

And if the games air on UPN as suggested, that station may start flourishing like the WB did when "Dawson's Creek" hit America.

The XFL plans to give football fans all that the NFL has taken away. Viewers should expect unregulated play with the return of the head-slap and bump-and-run techniques.

The games will be limited to three hours with no television timeouts. Microphones will abound — in the huddle, on the coaches and inside locker rooms.

Though producers will probably be forced to hire someone to sit on the bleeper, football fans will finally be able to hear what the coach says to the wide receiver when he fails to catch a perfectly thrown ball in the end zone.

Viewers have always wanted to know, but the NFL refuses to quench this desire.

Another goal of the XFL is to allow players to demonstrate their personalities. Granted, this could probably become insanely boisterous and even barbarous, but those qualities have continued to sustain ratings for the WWF. Players will be allowed to dance in the end zones and after sacks — whenever they want with no threat of a yellow flag flying through the air.

The idea of bringing back the raw excitement of unregulated football seems a dream come true. However, special effects added to the games will be one drawback to McMahon's plan.

Football is football, just like wrestling was wrestling before McMahon decided to add a lot of silly

outfits and many minutes of macho talk.

Though McMahon does not care what "legitimate" sports executives think about his new pro-football league, he will not score points with hardcore football fans if he adds frivolous effects, like teams mouthing off to each other for half an hour before the game starts or flashy, fluorescent uniforms.

Planning senseless stunts could amount to a smaller audience for the XFL's games, so McMahon's plan could amount to smaller profits for the league.

"McMahon doesn't give a damn what anyone thinks of his plan," according to the XFL Website, so expectant viewers will probably be subject to the crazy effects regardless.

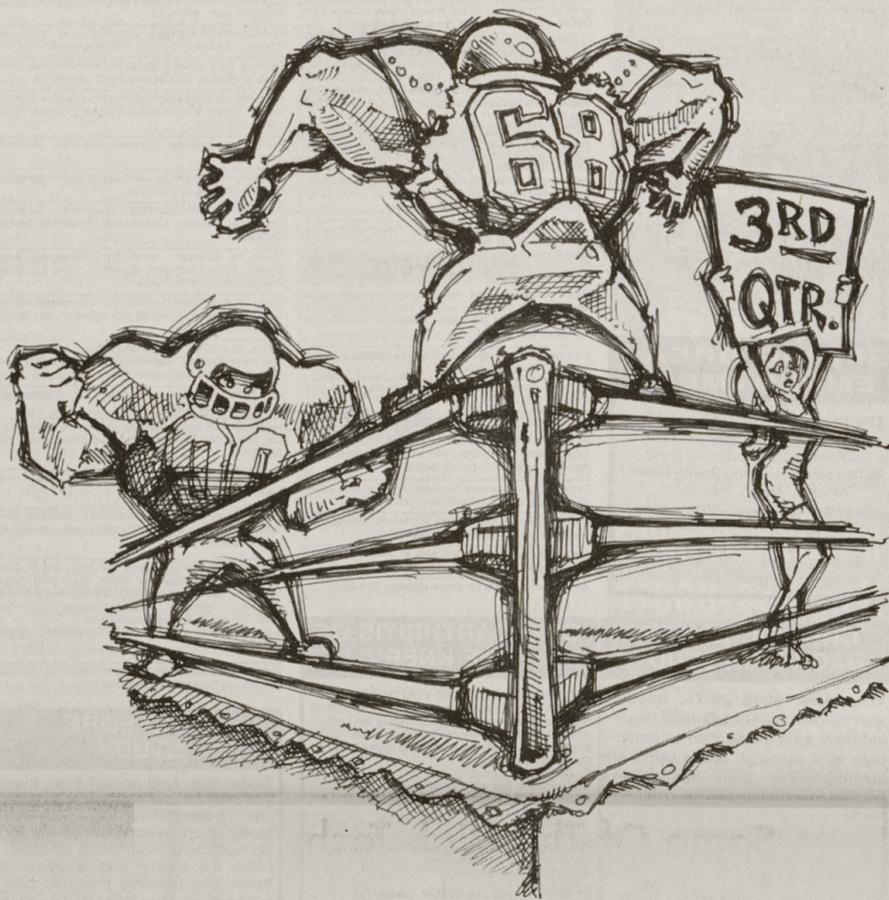
The eight team XFL league will start play in cities such as Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, Miami and Orlando in February 2001.

Though many are doubtful of its "true sport" components, McMahon and the XFL can count on a large audience checking the game out, if nothing else, for its shock value.

And perhaps, if all goes right in the world, someday the old-fashioned, bash-their-head-in, real pigskin will return to America.

In the meantime, Americans can watch the XFL's "exciting, exhilarating, extreme" football to curb the cravings for the "real thing" — Texas Aggie football.

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ROBERT HYNCEK/THE BATTALION

Griffey arrives at Reds' spring training camp

SARASOTA, Fla. (AP) — Ken Griffey Jr. could have done without the superstar treatment — the dugout news conference, the golf cart ride, the photo shoot on a balcony.

His new team couldn't give him enough of it.

The Cincinnati Reds formally welcomed Griffey to spring training on Monday, a day after he slipped unannounced into the clubhouse to unpack his belongings and report to his new team.

That was more to his liking than the front-and-center treatment he got Monday. About 150 reporters and photographers were on hand, following his every move.

Griffey was nervous, felt out of place and wished he could have been treated like just one of the guys.

"I just figured I'd sneak into the locker room without being noticed and go onto the field and that's it," Griffey said wistfully. "I didn't have any idea there would be this many people and cameras here."

Instead of the Ordinary Joe treatment, he got the Michael Jordan treatment. He sat atop the first base dugout — the very spot where Jordan was seated six years earlier for his introduction to minor league baseball — and pumped his right leg nervously during a half-hour news conference.

"Nervous? Not at all. Junior is back home," general manager Jim Bowden said. "It's tremendous for baseball, and baseball is finally back in Cincinnati."

Bowden pulled off one of the biggest trades in the history of baseball's first professional franchise by getting Griffey from Seattle in a 4-for-1 swap on Feb. 10. Griffey had told the Mariners he would accept a trade only to his hometown team, and accepted \$116.5 million over nine years — roughly half his market value



GRIFFEY

— to join the small-market Reds, who get to defer \$57.5 million of what they owe him.

"I don't think it's a triumph (for small-market clubs)," Bowden said. "Ken Griffey Jr.'s contract is the highest contract ever given to a player in the history of the sport, so he's being paid a lot of money."

"It's very unique, though, to be able to bring the Michael Jordan of baseball home to where he was raised. I think he'll not only pay for himself, I think we'll probably make more than that over the term of the contract."

Griffey couldn't avoid the Jordan comparisons, even though all he wanted to do was blend in and learn the names of his new teammates.

"I don't consider myself any different than anybody else on our team," he said. "I just want to go out there and play and hope this ballclub will win a championship. I'm just one of 25 guys."

Technically, he's one of 69 players in camp. On Monday, he was the only one that seemed to matter. Even his new teammates got caught up in the moment.

Griffey walked through a semicircle of photographers as he left his car and headed for the clubhouse Monday morning. Once inside, heads turned as he walked toward his two dressing cubicles — he's got so much stuff that he needs more than one.

Minor league pitchers sat in a row with their legs crossed, watching the newcomer's every move with wide eyes. Outfielder Dmitri Young walked over, gave Griffey a hug, then retreated to his dressing cubicle and watched with a huge grin as dozens of reporters roamed around.

It reminded the former Cardinal of the day that Mark McGwire reported to the St. Louis clubhouse for the first time.

"Wow," Young said. "This is a great day. There's a

media circus, the fans are in a frenzy, it's going to be great for the Cincinnati Reds. There's a lot of adrenaline flowing."

Outside, about 200 fans — a much larger crowd than the day before — watched pitchers and catchers work out on and hoped for a glimpse of the newcomer. A few wore Griffey Seattle or Cincinnati replica jerseys.

He didn't have time to mingle. After the interview and photo sessions, he had to head off to find a place to stay for spring training. He was due back for a physical exam Tuesday and the first full-squad workout a day later.

Griffey was looking forward to that.

"Yeah, I'm nervous," he admitted. "I just want to go out and play. There were some things written and said about me that were not true, and I just want to make people forget about it by going out there and playing."

Griffey took exception to suggestions that he forced Seattle to trade him. He also bristled over the talk about money.

"I think the one thing that bothered me the most was that everybody said, 'When an athlete says it's not for the money, it's for the money.' I've always said from Day One that it's not about money," he said. "And I guess in a way I proved it, but it wasn't intentional."

By agreeing to take millions of dollars less to play for his hometown team, Griffey became a sensation in Cincinnati. The Reds' offices were overwhelmed by calls about tickets, and fans flew banners over the city welcoming him home.

He has heard about the commotion secondhand.

"As far as all the excitement of Cincinnati, I still have family there," he said. "They were calling me and telling me they had people flying planes and helicopters (pulling banners). It was like, 'Here we go again.' But I'm happy. I grew up there."

Sports in Brief

Webster, Lechler receive honors

The All-American Football Foundation announced its 1999 All-America football team and two Texas A&M seniors, punter Shane Lechler and cornerback Jason Webster, were named to the squad.

"The Foundation waits until all of the returns are in, after the championship games have been played, before voting on the All-America teams," Jimmie McDowell, the All-American Football Foundation president, said.

Lechler helped the Aggies finish No. 1 in the country in net punting average and he finished as the all-time NCAA career punt leader with an average of 44.7 for his career.

He also set the NCAA record for games with a 40-yard plus average with 37 games in his four-year career.

Webster turned in an excellent senior season as a coverage corner



LECHLER



WEBSTER

and was the team leader with 10 passes broken up and he intercepted four other passes.

He recorded 74 tackles and was involved in a team-high 640 defensive snaps, seeing action on punt coverage and all kick returns.

Webster was honored by his teammates with the Aggie Heart Award, the most prestigious honor for an Aggie Senior football player.

Baseball hits road to face SHSU

The Texas A&M baseball team travels to Huntsville Tuesday to take on the Sam Houston State University Bearcats at 2 p.m.

The Aggies (5-6) are coming off a series win against the University of Arizona Wildcats this past weekend at Olsen Field.

Arizona took the first game of the series, 4-1. A&M came back and won the last two games, 8-3 and 7-3.

The Aggies swept the season series against the Bearcats last year, winning 7-3 in Huntsville and 14-10 at Olsen Field.

A&M returns home Friday to open Big 12 play against Kansas State University.



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