

SPORTS

THE BATTALION

Houston honors Comets

HOUSTON (AP) — In what has become an annual rite of summer, Houston Comets fans ignored oven-like heat to honor the four-time WNBA champions and implore star Cynthia Cooper to stick around.

"I think I speak for everyone here this afternoon: Please reconsider your retirement," Mayor Lee Brown told Cooper on the steps of City Hall as thousands of fans crowded Hermann Square below.

Brown added that he intended to push through an ordinance to make it "illegal for Cynthia to retire."

Cooper, named most valuable player of the WNBA Finals after the Comets completed a two-game sweep Saturday of the New York Liberty, announced earlier in the season this was her last go-round.

Despite signs and calls by the sun-baked throng to stay for a fifth title run, Cooper repeated that she was hanging up her sneakers.

"I won't be leaving town. I'll just be changing professions," she said while hoisting the championship trophy and waving to fans crowding both sides of the parade route. "I might go into broadcasting, or maybe coaching. Some different things."

Florida financier Les Alexander, who owns the Comets and NBA Rockets, held out hope Cooper would change her mind.

"You never know," he said.

In the tradition of the Comets' previous championship parades and two by the Rockets before, the victors rode atop Houston fire trucks preceded by marching bands, floats and convertibles carrying local dignitaries.

Fans stacked three and four deep along Smith Street to greet the players and coach Van Chancellor, who said this title was the sweetest yet.

"One of the great joys of winning championships is the big parade we get in Houston," Chancellor said. "There's a lot of kid in me getting to do this parade today."

Parade-goer James Russell brought his three young sons to see the spectacle first-hand.

"I'm more excited now than I was for the first three of (the titles)," Russell said.

Fans also cheered the area's other recent sports heroes, the national champion Bellaire Little League All-Stars, who fell one game short of a world title last weekend in a 3-2 loss to Maracaibo, Venezuela.

Against all odds

Dat Nguyen's success in NFL contributed to inner strength

IRVING (AP) — If Dat Nguyen ever begins to feel a twinge of pressure about being the starting middle linebacker for the Dallas Cowboys, he has no problem quickly putting things into perspective.

While he has overcome long odds and constant critics who said he was too small to play in college, much less the NFL, it does not compare to what his parents did to bring their family from war-torn Vietnam.

"It's unbelievable what they did," said Nguyen (pronounced "Win"). "They didn't speak any English and didn't have any money. Now, they're living a comfortable life and have five kids with college degrees."

It was April 1975 in the shrimping village of Ben Da when Ho and Tam Nguyen, she four months pregnant with Dat, their sixth child, left their home and everything else behind. They were fleeing the Viet Cong, the army firing countless rounds of bullets.

Through the gunfire, the Nguyens and dozens of others ran to a waiting boat. They then had to survive a 10-day trip through rough seas with just a three-day supply of rice to eat and salty sea water to drink.

After getting to safety in Thailand, the Nguyens had to live in the boat for three more months. They finally went with other Vietnamese refugees to a U.S. Marine base in California and later to a U.S. Army base in Fort Chaffee, Ark., where Dat was born.

"I'm not even supposed to be here, so this is a great opportunity and this is fun," Nguyen said.

Nguyen, who at 5-foot-11, 231 pounds is not the prototype for a linebacker, became the first

Vietnamese-American to play in the NFL last season. Dallas drafted him in the third round following an All-American career at Texas A&M.

"There have always been obstacles for me to go through," Nguyen said. "They've been there all of my career and I've been proving people wrong."

"Obviously he didn't have the easiest life growing up, and that makes him hungry to succeed."

— Dave Campo
Cowboys coach

Nguyen first excelled in soccer and basketball in the Texas Gulf Coast town of Rockport, where his family settled when he was 2.

It was not until he was in high school that he began to stand out on the football field. He had 188 tackles his senior year, earning a scholarship to Texas A&M.

At A&M, Nguyen bulked up and set school records with 51 straight starts and 517 career tackles.

As a senior, he won the Lombardi Trophy as the nation's best linebacker.

Despite his still smaller-than-wanted NFL size, the Cowboys could not ignore the fact that he kept making play after play.

Sports in Brief Ticket office sets Reed seat deadline



The deadline for Reed Arena priority seats for the Aggies' 2000-2001 basketball season is today.

According to a press release from the Texas A&M ticket office, the priority deadline for the renewal of Aggie basketball season tickets has been set for today. In order to retain the same priority, season ticket holders must have their payments received by 4 p.m.

The deadline for former students and others purchasing tickets through the 12th Man Foundation is Sept. 7th. According to A&M assistant ticket manager Sean Conner, first time ticket buyers can still purchase tickets.

Equestrian team informational today

The Texas A&M varsity women's equestrian team is holding tryouts to complete its 2000-2001 roster. Interested students should attend a mandatory meeting at 7 p.m. on Thursday in Kleberg 115 on West Campus.

Those interested in trying out should bring their class and work schedules with them to the meeting. Previous riding experience is not required.

Aggie to premiere in tennis U.S. Open

Freshman Aggie tennis player Tres Davis will play his first match in the U.S. Open tennis tournament. Davis, currently the nation's No. 1 men's doubles player, will compete in the doubles competition with Robby Ginepri of Marietta, Ga.

Davis and Ginepri qualified for the U.S. Open by winning the United States Tennis Association's Boys 18s competition earlier this month in Kalamazoo, Mich. Davis and Ginepri defeated Davis' A&M teammate Ryan Newport and his partner, Philip King, in the finals.

Davis and Ginepri will play Pablo Albano of Argentina and Lucas Arnold in their opening match.

Davis also will compete in the singles portion of the junior section of the tournament.

Golfers successful on lighted courses

PALM DESERT, Calif. (AP) — The "Battle at Bighorn" might have shed some light on the future of golf.

There was nothing at stake in Monday's prime-time exhibition match, although one would not know that from watching Sergio Garcia act as if he had just won the Masters when his 10-foot birdie putt fell for a 1-up victory over Tiger Woods.

But imagine those two duking it out with a host of others right behind in the final round of The Players Championship, with nearly \$1.1 million in official money up for grabs on the famed Stadium Course at the TPC at Sawgrass.

At night. Under the lights.

"Absolutely, I think it would work," said Rob Correia, senior vice president of programming for CBS Sports. "It's not something you'd dismiss outright like you would 10 years ago."

It certainly cannot be dismissed after Monday night, when Woods and Garcia played the final four holes

of their match with help from 186 light fixtures that generated 603,000 watts.

There is even some precedent on the PGA Tour.

The final round of the 1993 Dis-

"We staunchly believe it's an outdoor game, played under natural conditions."

— Marty Parkes
U.S. Golf Association representative

ney Classic was 36 holes because of weather problems, and Jeff Maggert finished up his first tour victory under floodlights. Even last year at Valderrama, lights were positioned

on the 18th green so Woods and Miguel Angel Jimenez could complete their sudden-death playoff.

It can be done.

Musco Lighting of Iowa was in charge of lighting Bighorn for the prime-time show. That is the same company that did the unthinkable two years ago by installing lights at the Daytona International Speedway for the midsummer NASCAR races, with stock cars traveling at speeds close to 200 mph and not knowing the difference between night and day.

Purists would scream "Fore!" or something close to it.

Imagine the sight of 65-foot high light poles lining the fairways of Sawgrass or Firestone or Colonial. On the other hand, what would Old Tom Morris have thought about cart paths? Or television towers?

"I would doubt it very much," said Marty Parkes of the U.S. Golf Association, when asked if the U.S. Open would ever be played in prime time. "We're pretty traditional in our approach to things. We staunchly be-

lieve it's an outdoor game, played under natural conditions. It smacks of yet another artificial device being used in the game."

Lights are artificial, just like the range-finders players are allowed to use in practice rounds to measure exact yardage. In the strictest sense, so are sprinklers, which make sure the grass is green and perfect. And lawn mowers.

Jeff Rogers, the vice president of development for Musco, said there already is talk about adding lights for a fifth hole should there be another Tiger vs. fill-in-the-blank. How long before the entire back nine is lit, followed by all 18 holes.

Besides, Musco already has installed lights at golf courses in Taiwan, China and Malaysia.

"I think last night spoke for itself," Rogers said Tuesday. "They could do whatever they wanted. If you have good quality and sufficient quantity of lights, seeing the ball at night is easier than seeing it at daytime. And it's easier to track."

Places

Home Of Rodeo & Viper Clubs Thursday

College Night

No Cover With College I.D. Or Ring Until 11:00

Cool Contests In Viper Club

Free Chance
To Win A Brand New Chevy Extended Cab Pickup
Worth \$25,000 From Tom Light Chevrolet
Best Tan Line Contest
\$50.00 Prize For The Guy And Girl With
The Best Tan Line

Awesome Drink Specials

.50 cent Well Drinks .75 cent Longnecks Until 11:00
.75 cent Pints, \$1.50 Chuggers, & \$3.00 Pitchers ALL NIGHT

Friday-LOOK Ladies Night

No Cover For Ladies Until 11:00

Ladies Looks That Kill Contest

6 Lovely Ladies Qualify Each Week
For Our Grand Finals September 29th

\$1.00 Well Drinks \$1.25 Longnecks Until 10:30
\$1.00 Draft Pints, \$2.00 Chuggers & \$4.00 Pitchers All Night

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