

SPORTS

THE BATTALION

Page 3 • Wednesday, July 2, 2003

Johnson tries to balance recruiting with draft

MLB amateur draft takes bite out of 2003 squad

By Jeff Allen
THE BATTALION

In the world of sports, there are probably more cliches than there are athletes and sports writers to beat the tired old words into submission on a daily basis. However, there is usually a reason why things become cliches. Take, for example, the well-worn saying, "Any given team can win on any given day." Aggies of all stripes have learned this lesson over the years.

The most recent tutorial came about a month ago when the Texas A&M baseball team came up short against a team that lost twice as many games as the Aggie squad. Houston beat the Aggies twice in a row at Olsen Field, and ended the Aggies' opportunity to take on the eventual national champion Rice Owls in Rice Super Regional.

"You count your blessings anytime you get into post-season play," said A&M coach Mark Johnson. "Then the game itself sometimes can get cruel, you don't get a second chance."

The Aggies may have lost that night, but Johnson explained that the Aggies' fate was the same as 63 other teams who entered post-season play last year. It is just the nature of the game.

"Anyone can win, and you run that risk so often in baseball. That's why you play 56 games, and you're still not positive this is the best team. Nonetheless, you move on and have to mature," Johnson said.

It's the moving on part where the Aggies find themselves today, and in baseball, like many other major col-

lege sports, the off-season poses its own challenges.

In June each year, Major League Baseball holds its amateur draft. The draft tests a college team twofold and takes shots at the incoming recruiting class as well as players who are already on the team.

ATM	PLAYERS going pro
	Brian Finch
	* Scott Beerer
	Logan Kensing
	Matt Farnum
	Kyle Parcus
	Zach Dixon
	Robert Ramsey
	Dwayne Pollock
	Scott Beerer is going to sign

"It's hard to get continuity in a program with the June draft," Johnson said.

Initially, a player has the option of signing a professional contract out of high school, but if he waives that and goes on to play college ball he has made what amounts to a commitment to the university to play for at least three years. However, if a player turns 21 before the amateur draft, he can elect to go pro before his junior season.

This stipulation has cost the Aggies three players in the past two seasons, including Logan Kensing this year. The club stands to lose as many as nine players off last year's second place Big 12 team to the professional ranks, including juniors Brian Finch,

Matt Farnum, Kyle Parcus and All-American Scott Beerer, among others.

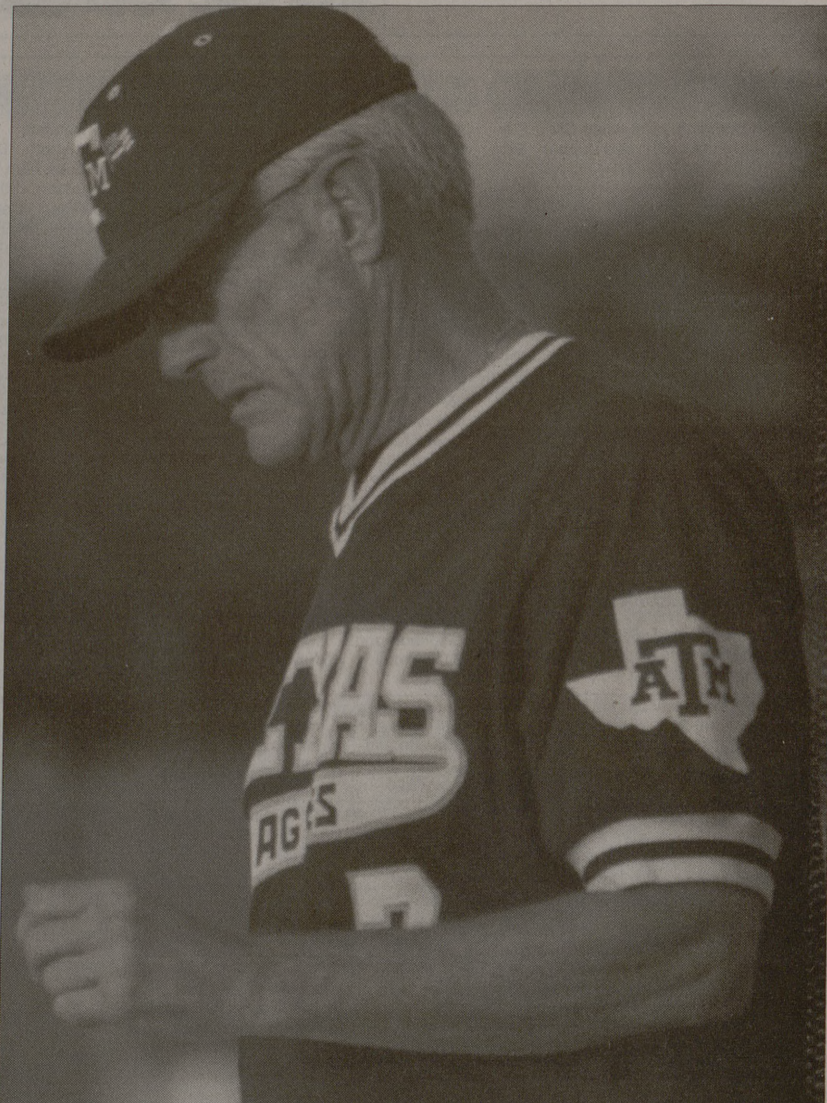
"I had decided if I had a good enough season (I'd enter the draft)," Beerer said. "I'm excited about it. I couldn't pass up the money and the opportunity (to play professional baseball)."

The draft not only affects the current team, but also the year's recruiting class. It is not uncommon for players to skip college and go straight to minor-league ball. It puts college clubs in direct competition for some of the best talent across the country with deep-pocketed professional franchises.

"It's always been a problem, but (more so today with) the amount of money they are giving to guys, some they are really rolling the dice on," Johnson said. "When I started coaching it was like \$100,000 was the ultimate, and now it is (\$7 million just to sign (their) name on a piece of paper. It's hard for people to turn down."

This problem complicates recruiting even further by adding another variable to the equation. Not only do college coaches have to look at the talent of a player, but they also have to consider whether the player is going to sign a contract and leave the college team with roster spots to fill and the recruiting season past.

"It's frustrating, but part of our recruiting," Johnson said. "We have to find players who can play, but whether the professional people want them is in account, too. I don't want to sign 10 guys who are going to sign pro contracts in June; then I'm left



JP BEATO III • THE BATTALION

A&M coach Mark Johnson looks down after a play didn't go the Aggies' way against Houston at the College Station Regional in June.

with nothing. We try to get the top onship. Those are (usually) the same players to win a national champi- guys who the professionals want."

ACC introduces Miami and Virginia Tech

By Tim Reynolds
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CORAL GABLES, Fla. — Money played a large role in Miami's decision to leave the Big East and join the Atlantic Coast Conference.

But not in the way that might have been expected. Miami officials relied less on the amounts of the offers from the two conferences and more on the ways the leagues distribute profits to all sports.

If guaranteed money over the next five years was the most important factor, then university president Donna Shalala and athletic director Paul Dee would have kept the Hurricanes in the Big East.

"Frankly, the Big East made us a better financial offer," Shalala said after the announcement Monday. "It was a sense of the future. They're fundamentally different in the way in which they distribute money."

So, Miami went to the ACC largely because that conference pays all its members the same amount. In the Big East, teams received some base money, then more in a sliding bonus system that rewarded national championships and other achievements.

"More importantly, if there is a revenue-sharing situation, you can budget accordingly because you pretty much know what you're going to get," Miami athletic spokesman Mark Pray said Tuesday. "It's not predicated solely by what you get in football, and that really helps our Olympic sports."

In the 2001-02 academic year, ACC members received \$9.7 million each, the highest disbursement in that conference's history. Miami earned a reported \$9.3 million that year, but even with a substantial bonus for appearing in a Bowl Championship Series game and winning the national title, the Hurricanes made less than every other ACC school.

Miami made \$4 million by appearing in the 2001 season's BCS title game at the Rose Bowl; they would have made \$1.7 million less otherwise.

Much of the ACC money comes from TV deals. The schools will split \$69 million for the three seasons left on the conference's football TV contracts

with ABC, ESPN and Jefferson-Pilot Sports. By adding Miami and Virginia Tech, the ACC figures to negotiate a much better deal next time around.

"In the Big East, which has worked for us up until now, the more successful you were, the more money you got," Shalala said. "If you look at the ACC, it's an even distribution. Everyone gets the same thing. In addition to that, the ACC could better accommodate all of our sports."

Specifically, baseball. Miami remained independent in baseball when it joined the Big East 12 years ago, a move that kept the Hurricanes from committing to at least six road trips to the Northeast every spring.

Miami was, and will remain for one more year, a Big East member in all other sports. But travel costs for track, cross country, golf, soccer, tennis, volleyball, rowing and swimming and diving teams will be much lower when the Hurricanes enter a regionalized conference.

An average of 1,284 miles separates Miami from the other campuses of full Big East members. Only 830 miles, on average, spans between Coral Gables and the schools that will be the Hurricanes' ACC foes.

Virginia Tech, 900 miles from Coral Gables, was the Hurricanes' closest rival in Big East competition. But the Hokies will become Miami's third-longest travel distance in ACC play.

"There's a lot more broader issues than athletics," said Richard Ensor, commissioner of the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference. "Presidents think about what schools they want to be associated with. An association with ACC schools makes a lot more sense with Virginia Tech and Miami in terms of geography."

Shalala also said Miami's academic interests would be better served by a switch to the ACC, which is trying to strengthen its academic alliances. She did not say academic reputations were better at ACC schools than at Big East institutions, but likened the setup in the ACC as comparable to what other academic conferences have in place.



PHOTO COURTESY OF KRT CAMPUS

University of Miami basketball coach Perry Clark is greeted by fans and trustees as he enters a news conference about joining the ACC.

From 1987 to 1993, Shalala was the chancellor at Wisconsin, a Big Ten school that has the sort of academic cooperative in place like the one the ACC aspires to have. Schools in the Big Ten often apply for grants together, share library resources, have student exchanges and visiting professorships from other member institutions.

The "broader" academic goals in the ACC was another attractive tenet, Shalala said.

"The ACC has built a remarkable conference based on equal treatment and high academic and athletic expectations," Shalala said. "We have both. This is a good move for this university."

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Tom Holliday named new Longhorn pitching coach

AUSTIN (AP) — Former Oklahoma State baseball coach Tom Holliday was named the new pitching coach for Texas on Tuesday. He'll take the job vacated by Frank Anderson, named as Holliday's successor at Oklahoma State.

Holliday was fired in May after the Cowboys missed the post-season playoffs for the second straight season. Holliday spent the past 26 years at Oklahoma State including the last seven as the head coach. He was 281-150 at Oklahoma State.

"Tom's hiring gives our players the opportunity and privilege to work with one of the great teachers in the game. He is a strong addition to our baseball family," Texas head coach Augie Garrido said. Among major leaguers coached by Holliday are Robin Ventura, Jeremy Burnitz, Pete Incaviglia, Doug Dascenzo and Mickey Tettleton.

Mets trade a disappointing Roberto Alomar to White Sox

NEW YORK (AP) — Roberto Alomar's disappointing stay with the New York Mets ended Tuesday when the 12-time All-Star second baseman was traded to the Chicago White Sox for three minor league prospects.

In exchange for Alomar, the Mets received pitchers Royce Ring and Edwin Almonte and infielder Andrew Salvo.

The trade marks the beginning of a long-expected makeover of the Mets. The team is in last place for the second straight season despite having a \$116.9 million payroll on opening day, the second highest in baseball.

Alomar, 35, is in the final season of a contract that pays him \$8 million. He came to New York in an eight-player trade with Cleveland after batting .336 with 20 home runs and 100 RBIs for the Indians in 2001.

Summer Graduates
Come check out our original and unique Graduation Announcements at Aggieland Printing

Order today and receive them in approximately 1 week!

We have our own unique design licensed by A&M.

Don't miss it!

- Graduation Announcements
- Graduation Remembrance Displays
- Thank You Notes
- Personalized Graduate Notepads

Order & pay online: www.aggielandprinting.com

1902 Texas Ave. South • College Station
(Texas Avenue and Park Place, in front of the new HEB)
693-8621 M-F 8:30-5:30

AMERICAN RED CROSS/APO BLOOD DRIVE.....
HAPPENING NEXT WEEK ON CAMPUS...

JULY 7 THRU 11

IN NEED OF O TYPE BLOOD:

1 DAY'S SUPPLY OF O POSITIVE
1/4 DAY'S SUPPLY OF O NEGATIVE

PLEASE HELP TO SAVE A LIFE!!

E-SCOOTER
STUDENT DISCOUNT AVAILABLE

Many Colors
Red
Silver
Yellow
Blue
Maroon
Black
Green

SUMMER BLOWOUT
ONLY \$249.99
LIMITED TIME

ELECTRIC • RECHARGEABLE
AVAILABLE EXCLUSIVELY AT

CWS
CW SCOOTERS

For Ages 8 & up. Up to 250 lbs.
No permit or license required

3725 E. 29TH ST. BRYAN TOWN & COUNTRY CTR.
979.846.4297
1.866.323.4297