

SPORTS

THE BATTALION

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Rangers want resolution to possible A-Rod trade

By Stephen Hawkins
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ARLINGTON, Texas — The Boston Red Sox have about a week to close a trade for Alex Rodriguez.

Texas general manager John Hart would like to know by the end of the winter meetings on Dec. 16 whether the American League MVP will remain with the Rangers for next season. The Rangers have been discussing a trade that would send him to the Red Sox for Manny Ramirez.

"As long as this potentially is alive, it precludes us from having a road map of what we can do with anybody else," Hart said Sunday. "The sooner we have

a resolution, the better."

The deal would be a swap of baseball's only \$20 million-a-year players.

In a sign of how extraordinary the situation is, commissioner Bud Selig is allowing the Red Sox to speak directly with Rodriguez. In most situations, a tentative trade must be in place before baseball grants a window for a team to speak with a player under contract to another club.

"To the extent that it happened, the commissioner has approved it," said Sandy Alderson, executive vice presi-

dent of baseball operations in the commissioner's office.

Asked whether he had granted permission, Selig declined comment.

The Boston Herald, citing unidentified sources, first reported Saturday that Red Sox owner John Henry had spoken to Rodriguez. Rangers owner Tom Hicks told the Fort Worth Star-Telegram that Rodriguez was allowed to meet with Henry more than a week ago.

"It was more of a get-acquainted meeting," Hicks was quoted as saying. Rodriguez's agent, Scott Boras, said no meeting had been scheduled.

The Red Sox refused to confirm or deny the possibility of a trade.

Rodriguez agreed in December 2000 to a record \$252 million, 10-year

contract with Texas. Ramirez and the Red Sox agreed the same day to a \$160 million, eight-year deal.

Hart said Sunday, after the Rangers refused salary arbitration for Rafael Palmeiro and Juan Gonzalez, that the team was preparing to move forward with A-Rod at shortstop and is "very excited" about that.

"I recognize that a lot of things can change, a lot of dynamics in the next week that could take us through the winter meetings," Hart said. "But to this point, there has been little or no contact with any clubs regarding Alex."

Rodriguez led the majors in homers his first two seasons with Texas, and hit an AL-high 47 last season with 118

RBIs. Ramirez had at least 33 homers and 104 RBIs in each of his three seasons in Boston.

Hart said he hadn't spoken directly to Rodriguez, but had several conversations with Boras, about the shortstop and other players.

He said there wasn't much to discuss about a possible trade at this point. "This has been a lot built up over very little," he said.

If the trade happens, it would likely leave Red Sox shortstop Nomar Garciaparra on the outside looking in. Garciaparra, who has one year and \$11.5 million remaining on his seven-year contract, rejected a proposed contract extension last spring but says he wants to stay in Boston.



RODRIGUEZ

Not your average athlete

Nelan turning heads in pool, as student leader

By Pete Burks
THE BATTALION

Chris Nelan has never known the meaning of average. The Aggie senior swimmer has always found a way to exceed mediocrity.

The reason Nelan has gone the extra mile in life is two-fold: First, he is hearing impaired, and second, Nelan is determined to exceed others' expectations of him despite his disability. Being deaf to high-frequency noises, he may never get to experience everyday sounds such as high-pitched musical notes or sirens, but an inability to hear certain noises has not slowed down his thirst to experience life to the fullest.

Spending his formative high school years in Keller, Texas, Nelan was no stranger to the arena of athletics. While primarily competing in football, basketball and soccer, swimming was a mere afterthought in high school. However, in his junior year, that changed.

"I actually started swimming competitively at 17," Nelan said. "At first, I only swam to stay in shape for football, basketball and soccer, but ... I had to choose one sport to focus on. In the end, I was between football and swimming, but after talking to my parents and my uncles and doing some praying about it, I felt that swimming was it for me."

Once he made his decision, Nelan wasted no time accumulating honors and medals. After being named the Texas Amateur Athletic Federation Athlete of the Year in 1996, he went on to be named team MVP three times and earned three All-American honors. Nelan's accolades did not stop at the pool. Along with being named Athlete of the Year, the city of Keller named him its Citizen of the Year for 1996.

Keller received the city's award that year when a 4-year-old who had just gotten a new bicycle for his birthday careened off a road and fell into a creek bed.

Luckily for the youngster, Nelan's younger brother Caleb heard his cries of distress and quickly alerted Nelan. Without hesitation, Nelan headed for the



RANDAL FORD • THE BATTALION

In addition to being a standout swimmer at Texas A&M, senior Chris Nelan was named the city of Keller's Citizen of the Year in 1996 and plays an active role in the Student Athlete Advisory Committee.

water and, using a lifeguard technique he had learned through his years of swimming, was able to pull the screaming toddler to safety on the banks of the creek.

Nelan's heroic deeds did not stop when he went to college.

One day while driving from Keller to College Station, he saw a truck pulling a trailer that had flipped over on the shoulder of the highway. He stopped his car and went over to help. As he came upon the truck, the engine was still running, and as he poked his head inside to turn it off, he saw that an older man was still inside.

After pulling the man out, Nelan noticed there was a sizable hole in the passenger side of the windshield and realized there had been someone else in the car. As he walked a little further up the road, he found the man's wife, who had been thrown through the windshield and was bleeding profusely, with multiple lacerations from broken glass.

Using lifesaving techniques in life-

guard training, Nelan was able to help stop her bleeding until emergency vehicles arrived.

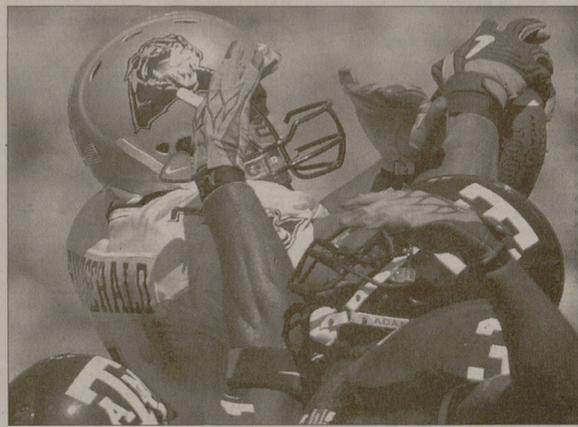
"Everybody loves him in Keller," said Nelan's mom, Debra. "In an emergency situation, most people just tend to watch, but a few tend to act. Chris is one of those that tends to act. That's just the type of person he is."

Nelan's career as an Aggie has only been a continuation of the success he achieved in high school. In the 1999-2000 season, he finished first place in every event he competed in during the U.S. Deaf Games, setting a new international speed record in the 200-meter freestyle, and a new American-record in the 100-meter freestyle.

At the Deaf World Games in Rome, Italy, in 2001, Nelan earned three gold medals, two silvers and a bronze, as well as becoming the U.S. male high-point scorer.

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BATTSPORTS HEISMAN FAVORITES



JOHN C. LIVAS • THE BATTALION

Pittsburgh wide receiver Larry Fitzgerald is one of the favorites for this year's Heisman Award, given every year to the best player in college football.



TRUE BROWN
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DALLAS SHIPP
SPORTS EDITOR

- Larry Fitzgerald, WR, University of Pittsburgh:** With the exception of the Pittsburgh-Miami game, Fitzgerald dominated defenses all season long.
- Jason White, QB, University of Oklahoma:** I can't drop him down too much for a subpar game in the Big 12 Championship.
- Chris Perry, RB, University of Michigan:** He disappeared in the middle of the season, but his 5.0 yards per game keep him high on the Heisman list.
- Ben Roethlisberger, QB, University of Miami (Ohio):** Racked up 4,110 yards and 33 touchdowns this year, and the RedHawks' offense demands much more than the short passing offense of Texas Tech.
- Matt Leinart, QB, University of Southern California:** Quietly put together a tremendous season with 35 TDs and just nine interceptions.
- Larry Fitzgerald, WR, University of Pittsburgh:** After hauling in a touchdown in 18 consecutive games, there is no doubt he is the most dominant player in NCAA football.
- Ben Roethlisberger, QB, University of Miami (Ohio):** If he played for a major BCS conference team, he would be a shoe-in for the Heisman.
- Chris Perry, RB, University of Michigan:** His 154 rushing yards against Ohio State was one of the best performances of the season.
- Jason White, QB, University of Oklahoma:** White scorched Big 12 defenses throughout the season but his horrendous performance in the Big 12 title game will cost him big this late in the season.
- Eli Manning, QB, Ole Miss:** Manning led the Rebels to a solid regular season and a New Year's Day bowl game, but it wasn't enough for the Heisman.

Book details happier times for Aggie football players, fans

Remember Jarrin' John Kimbrough and the 1939 season? It was the last time the Aggies won the national championship, when The Associated Press crowned the national title, long before computers decided the fate of the nation's top team.

It's doubtful that many of today's students have a clue what happened in the 1940 Sugar Bowl, or how Jack Pardee survived the Bear Bryant training camp in Junction, Texas, and led the Aggies over the Longhorns in 1956.

After a long, less-than-memorable 2003 campaign, "The Game of My Life, 25 Stories of Aggie Football" gives Aggie fans the chance to forget about the miserable season this year and escape to the glory days of Twelfth Man kick-off teams and Heisman trophy winners.

The collection of stories, compiled by San Antonio Express-News sportswriter Brent Zwerneman, gives readers their first chance to experience the games of yesterday through the eyes of the players.

"There was a publishing company out of Champagne, Ill., that sent a letter to my Valley Ranch address in Dallas and asked if I had any book ideas," Zwerneman said. "They said, 'how about a biography of 25 players?' At that point, my job was to narrow down the list. They wanted part of each chapter to be a first-person narration from each player."

Former All-American punter Shane Lechler, now a Pro-Bowl punter for the Oakland Raiders, tells the story of the 1999 matchup against the Texas Longhorns, a game filled with emotion on both sides after the 1999 Aggie Bonfire collapse. Lechler explains that when Bonfire fell, the football team was having a party that was being busted by police. All of a sudden the police officers rushed out of the house and left in a blaze of glory. The players and others in attendance had no idea what was going on until they heard the news the next day.

"Texas A&M football players are taken care of pretty good," Lechler said in the chapter devoted

to the game. "It's not that we're given everything. But everything is made a little bit easier for us. The student body on the other hand, those guys fight for everything they get."

"And they built that Bonfire every year as kind of what amounts to a big pep rally for us. To have people get killed doing something in support of us ... at that point we needed to do whatever we could to help out."

Lechler's is just one of 25 stories that Zwerneman captures.

Aggie fan favorite Dat Nguyen, who has little to no facial hair, tells the story about one long hair on his face that he named Oscar during the 1998 Big 12 Championship season.

"As it turns out it was a good luck charm during that 1998 season," Zwerneman said. "It fell off just before the Texas game, and you know how that turned out."

But the loss to Texas wasn't the game of Nguyen's life. That came a week later when the heavily-favored Kansas State Wildcats fell to the Aggies in one of the most thrilling Big 12 games of all time — and Oscar had started to grow back.

"Winning that game is the biggest thrill in my athletics career," Nguyen said. "Against the No. 1 team in the nation, down by double digits in the fourth quarter, we push it into double overtime to

finally win. I'll guarantee you that everybody on that team will tell you the same thing: It's their favorite all-time game."

While there weren't many favorite games for this year's team, Aggie fans of every generation will enjoy Zwerneman's collections of 25 Aggie legends' games of their lives.

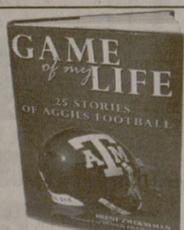
The book is the perfect Christmas gift for any Aggie football fan to carry him through the long offseason.



Dallas Shipp



Zwerneman



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