

THE BATTALION

Tuesday, February 17, 2004

# Rodriguez traded to Yankees

By Ronald Blum  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — It's a done deal: Alex Rodriguez is a Yankee. Commissioner Bud Selig approved the record-setting swap Monday, allowing the reigning American League MVP to be traded to New York by the Texas Rangers.

"I'm pretty excited. This is a big, big one," Yankees owner George Steinbrenner said.

"It ranks with when we signed Reggie," he said, a reference to when slugger Reggie Jackson joined the Yankees before the 1977 season.

Texas will pay \$67 million of the \$179 million left on Rodriguez's \$252 million, 10-year contract, the most cash included in a trade in major league history. The Rangers get All-Star second baseman Alfonso Soriano and a player to be named — but they also will pay Rodriguez through 2025.

"I am very concerned about the large amount of cash consideration involved in the transaction, and the length of time over which the cash is being paid," Selig said.

"I want to make it abundantly clear to all clubs that I will not allow cash transfers of this magnitude to become the norm. However, given the unique circumstances, including the size, length and complexity of Mr. Rodriguez's contract and the quality of the talent moving in both directions, I have decided to approve the transaction."

Rodriguez will move from shortstop, a position at which he's been an All-Star seven times, to third base, where he will replace injured Aaron Boone. The Yankees will keep Derek Jeter at shortstop.

"Jeter is the captain. He is the leader," Steinbrenner said at the team's minor league complex in Tampa, Fla.

Both Jeter and Yankees manager Joe Torre were expected to attend Tuesday's news conference at Yankee Stadium to introduce Rodriguez. Torre will miss the first day of spring training.

Steinbrenner praised Rodriguez's decision to move to third.

"I was very impressed. He's an outstanding young fellow. He'll be very big in New York," Steinbrenner said.

Rodriguez, who waived his no-trade clause, was desperate to play for a winner.

"I don't think he ever thought about playing another position until the concept came up," Rodriguez's agent, Scott Boras, said Sunday. "He decided it didn't make a difference — shortstop, third base, center field. He wanted the opportunity to play on a competitive team."

The Rangers will wind up paying \$140 million for three seasons with Rodriguez, an average of \$46.7 million annually for three last-place finishes in the AL West. The Yankees will owe him \$112 million over seven years.

"Since the end of last season we said we would not trade Alex unless it made sense for our organization," Texas Rangers general manager John Hart said.

"This deal is a win-win-win situation for the Rangers, the Yankees and Alex Rodriguez. This trade is about flexibility. We've traded the best player in the game, and we're getting tremendous financial flexibility."

Baseball's biggest spenders will raise their payroll to about \$190 million.

"The disparity is not healthy for the sport," Arizona Diamondbacks owner Jerry Colangelo said Sunday. "But everyone runs their team the way they see fit, and they did it by the rules."

Boras said the possibility of a trade first came up last Monday while he was talking to the Yankees about another player. Boras then called Rodriguez.



RODRIGUEZ

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SPORTS IN BRIEF

### Softball goes 2-3 in Phoenix

The No. 17 Texas A&M softball team wrapped up the Fiesta Bowl Tournament this past weekend in Phoenix, Ariz., with a 2-3 record, including an 8-3 win over No. 16 Oregon University.

A&M (5-3) dropped contests with No. 2 Arizona and No. 5 Washington, and was no-hit by No. 21 Fresno State in Bulldog pitcher Jamie Southern's third perfect game of her career. A&M head coach Jo Evans said the weekend was a great opportunity to develop as a team.

"I think it is a situation where we continue to learn," Evans said. "We had a great win against Oregon."

Freshman pitcher Jill Weynand pitched the Aggies to their win over Oregon as well as a 6-0 win over New Mexico.

A&M will return home to face the University of Houston in a doubleheader this Wednesday at the Aggie Softball Complex. First pitch is set for 3 p.m.

### Baseball

Continued from page 1B

I think our guys will be better the second time out. The hitters will be better and learn some (situational things)."

While the Bearcats are not highly regarded by their peers — they were picked to finish seventh in the Southland Conference — the Aggies know from experience that traveling to Huntsville is no easy task.

"(Sam Houston State) will be good. They always are," Johnson said. "And going over there, we have a history of struggling and having ballgames over there that are really tough, so I'm sure that they'll be waiting for us."

With the history of a good rivalry, both teams are anxious to get out on the field and play.

"I think our guys are up to the challenge," Gutzman said.

"We know there's a program with a great tradition coming in here, but I think our guys are always ready to go and certainly eager to get that first home game underneath their belt."

### Patton

Continued from page 1B

wants to do," Bobbie Patton said. "If something happens, then he has to support us and he knows that."

Patton said he had nights where he would lie awake in the summer pondering his decision, but in the end, his love for A&M's baseball program and for his new family, proved to overcome the money that came with his signature.

"It was difficult with the money, but he just wanted to come back so bad," Bobbie Patton said.

Now with the decision behind him and sitting in the A&M clubhouse still wearing his No. 15 Aggie jersey, Patton is confident he made the right call. A&M is thankful that he stayed too.

"(San Diego) let me know they wanted me bad," Patton said. "I didn't want to have to call coach Johnson and tell him I had decided to go pro. I had told the coaches that I was going to come back, so I wanted to stick to my word."

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