

# RENO HAPPENINGS

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## Richie Improves stock with pro baseball scouts

By Don Cos/Gazette-Journal

It has been almost a year since Rob Richie looked at his future, weighed the odds and took a calculated risk.

Richie, who achieved All-American status during four seasons as a baseball player at the University of Nevada-Reno, delayed his chance for a major-league career when he spurned the Texas Rangers last spring.

Will Richie's decision to play his senior year at UNR pay off, or backfire? He should find out next month, when his name again will be listed for selection by any of the 28 big-league teams in their draft of amateur free agents, scheduled for June 2-4.

Richie doesn't know the answer to his future, but he seems comfortable with the possibilities.

"It will be interesting for me to find out," said Richie, who finished his college career by hitting two doubles and driving in all of UNR's runs in the Wolf Pack's 9-4 loss to Nevada-Las Vegas last Sunday at Moana Municipal Stadium.

"Time will tell," said Richie, an outfielder who hit .339 his senior season. "I hardly ever second-guess myself. There's been a lot of teams contacting me. I talked to a scout from the Houston Astros."

At least one scout, who lives in Reno and sees Richie

frequently, is convinced UNR's career-record holder for doubles, triples and home runs improved his potential as a professional by playing this season in college.

"I feel this year he's going to go higher than he did last year," said Wally Walker, who thinks Richie could climb a round or two in the 1987 draft. "Most of the time, that doesn't happen."

Richie, a three-sport star during his prep career at Reno's Hugh High School, was selected in the fourth round of last year's draft by the Texas Rangers. What did Richie do in 1987 to improve his standing with Walker?

"He started showing a few things. One is power," said Walker, who scouts part-time for the Chicago Cubs.

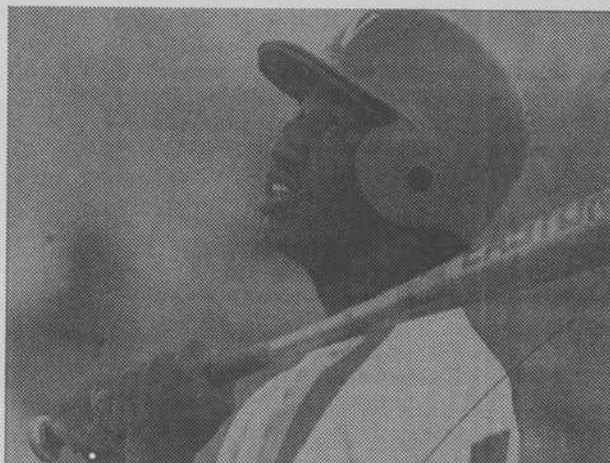
Statistically, Richie's improvement doesn't appear that dramatic. He hit six home runs as a junior and nine as a senior. Richie drove in 48 runs as a junior. He knocked home 54 as a senior. His batting average dropped 18 points, from a career-high .407 in 1986.

Apparently, there is more to Richie than numbers. According to Walker, scouts see muscle in Richie they didn't notice last year.

"That was the thing," Walker said. "Last year, that was the big question. What kind of power did he have? This year, he showed that he had major-league power."

Richie also recovered from a shoulder injury he suffered near the end of his junior season.

"I'm hitting the ball where I want to in certain situations," said Richie.



Jean Dixon Alkin/Gazette-Journal

**RICHIE: UNR's All-American outfielder is pro prospect.**

"My outfield play has gotten steadier this year also."

None of this, however, means Richie has improved his cash value in the major-league market.

According to Walker, the bargaining power a college player enjoys with major-league teams shrinks between his junior and senior years. An under-graduate has options to employ in negotiations after his junior year. He can sign a big-league contract, or remain in school. After his senior year, the chance is no longer available.

That's why Richie gambled

on his future when he refused the Rangers' offer to sign for a reported \$50,000.

The money Richie will, or won't, receive next month isn't the important factor, according to Walker.

"It's how quick is he going to the big leagues?" Walker said. "He's a lot closer in doing things right than he was last year. I personally feel he's going to better himself."

Richie created a negative impression among major-league teams when he refused Texas, according to Walker.

"It did turn a lot of people off, but he turned their heads back around again. It's no different than job interviews. You offer him a job. He doesn't take it. That doesn't make people very happy."

Why did Richie, who was

named to the starting lineup of The Sporting News All-America team last year, turn the Rangers down?

Money, according to Richie, wasn't the problem.

"Things just didn't work out the way I thought they were going to. I was uncomfortable about the situation. It was just basically the way the whole situation was dealt with. It wasn't smooth. There was just tension between me and them."

Richie won't say much more about his dealings with the Rangers, a team he doesn't expect to hear from in June. A desire to graduate from UNR in four years, apparently, was a factor in

Richie's decision to decline the Texas offer.

"It became real important to me after I didn't sign last year," said Richie, who earned a degree in criminal justice. "It was important before that. After I had the opportunity to sign and didn't, it became even more important that I finish."

The degree doesn't drive in runs, but it does impress Walker.

"He wanted a college education," said Walker. "He knew he was going to get drafted again. Say he lost \$30,000 or \$40,000. Education was important to him. It's short-term and long-term goals."

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## COPING

From PAGE 2

ceptions about each other and have virtually given up the chase. 4) The attitude that many project is almost certain to elicit the very behavior that they dislike in their opposite number, creating a self-fulfilling prophesy, 5) Close inspection will reveal a sense of rejection, felt by the person making the statement, and a relatively low self-image, and 6) there is every indication of a continuing tit-for-tat in the behavior of both sexes that promises a hard line in relationships, the need to dominate the relationship, a sense of what-can-you-do-for-me-in-this-relationship, and a hardening of attitudes. This does not bode well for the future of male-female relationships and may be a logical reason for the thousands of unhappy, lonely people who exist in our society. The perception that people have of each other may reveal the existence of many, many people with deeply-ingrained inferiority complexes that, in turn, explains the preponderance of child abuse and mate abuse cases that dominate the news. An insecure person is unhappy. An unhappy person is a threat to the well-being of everyone with whom they come into contact. Could it be that the individual who abuses you is taking out personal feelings of inadequacy

See COPING, Page 15