

## SPORTS

## Stars learn more than baseball from Royster

By Lee Brown  
Sentinel-Voice

Las Vegas Stars Manager Jerry Royster, has had a long and successful career in baseball. He played in the majors for 16 years and he has managed at every level of minor league baseball, as well as a brief stint as a third base coach with the Colorado Rockies at the major league level. So what more could he possibly ask for? Maybe a shot at managing in "The Show."

Though he dreams of one day joining the small, yet elite group of African-American managers in major league baseball, Royster has proven that he's always had his players best interests at heart.

"I'd say I'm definitely a players' manager because I'm going to let them do their thing," Royster said before the Stars disappointing 11-6 home loss to Phoenix last Friday. "I'm not going to sit and try to dictate what game they should be playing. I'm going to let them do their thing as long as it's going to stay in coincidence with what's going to help them get to the major leagues."

Acknowledging that it's his job to get players ready for that next level, Royster, 43, is also quick to admit he knows there's far more to life than baseball.

"Baseball's not the most important thing, and it never will be," he said. "Their goal in life is to become major league baseball players — so my goal has to be to make sure they're trying to fulfill that. That's why I was hired by the Padres — to do that. But



Las Vegas Stars manager Jerry Royster says his job is to not only prepare his players for a shot to play big league baseball, but to prepare them for the "real world" after their careers.

meanwhile, they've got a whole 'nother world out there. Some of these guys are not going to make it (in the majors). So, again I have to put on those gloves at some point in time and make sure that these guys are becoming the kind of people they need to be in order to get on in the real world."

Royster knows all too well about life's unexpected turns. Though he remembers playing baseball since he was five-years-old, the Sacramento, Calif. native said basketball was his early interest.

"Basketball was my first love," he recalls. "I was going to college to play basketball when I ended up signing professionally to play baseball."

Royster was recruited heavily out of high school by a number of Division 1 schools, but

ultimately chose to play for UCLA and its legendary coach, John Wooden.

However, during the summer before his first year with the Bruins, a scout with the Los Angeles Dodgers saw him filling in at shortstop for a few games on a summer league team, and he liked what he saw.

"The Dodgers stayed on me pretty hard, and I kept telling them 'I'm going to UCLA to play basketball.' Then they made me an offer, and money really became an issue, and it was hard for me to say no to the money they were offering," Royster said. Thus, his career in baseball had begun.

Royster's 16-year major league career saw him in action with five different teams from 1973 to 1988 (Los Angeles Dodgers, 1973-75; Atlanta

Braves, 1976-84, 88; San Diego Padres, 1985-86, Chicago White Sox, 1987 and New York Yankees, 1987).

"I played third base, second base, some shortstop, and some outfield," he said of his playing days. "I was really known for my versatility, and I think that's where my longevity came in — I was able to play 16 years."

It was with the Braves in 1979 that he achieved personal highs in games played, 154; at-bats, 601; hits, 164; doubles, 25; runs, 103; RBIs, 51; walks, 62; and stolen bases, 35.

"I made the right decision," he says looking back on his choice between baseball and basketball. "I had a very, very good career. Not too many guys get to play in the major leagues for 16 years. Every day was a new day for me. I played the game as hard as I could and I didn't even realize what I was accomplishing until I was done."

Now, with his playing days over, Royster says he has another set of goals to accomplish. The Stars, the AAA farm club for the San Diego Padres, nearly won the season's first-half title, an impressive feat considering the obstacles the team had to go through during the course of the year.

"I don't think (the first-half of the season) was disappointing at all. It was very rewarding in a lot of ways. We went through a lot of adversity," he said.

"The Oakland A's had trouble with their stadium, we were being shuffled around. There were a

(See Royster, Page 13)

## SPORTS BRIEFS

## RILEY TRADED TO DETROIT

Former Clark High School and Arizona State star Ron Riley, still smiling after being selected in the second round (No. 47 overall) by the Seattle SuperSonics in last Wednesday's NBA Draft, was traded Friday to the Detroit Pistons. The 6-foot-5, 205 pound Riley, the 1992 Nevada High School Player of the Year, said he anticipates eventually taking over veteran player Joe Dumars' role as Detroit's shooting guard. "I knew Detroit and Denver were interested in me," Riley said, "but I had to keep thinking that I was going to the Sonics until it was official."

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL TITLE GAME IN THE WORKS

The commissioner of the new Big 12 Conference says a national championship game in football is in the works, although the first one may not happen until after the year 2000. "I don't know if there's a big heartbeat for a national championship now," Steve Hatchell said Thursday. "But when you coalesce six major conferences and talk about where to go, you're talking about people who can get it done."

Hatchell said it won't happen quickly because two powerful conferences — the Big Ten and the Pacific-10 — are not in the bowl alliance.

## HOUSTON MAY DROP ATHLETICS PROGRAMS

AUSTIN, Texas — The school that produced Hakeem Olajuwon, Andre Ware, Bruce Lietzke and the Phi Slamma Jamma is considering dropping athletics. University of Houston president Glenn Goerke last Wednesday said if the school doesn't reverse a \$5 million athletics department deficit in four years, the school will consider dropping sports. "If despite our best efforts, the deficits continue annually at an unacceptable level, if faculty and students are not coming to the games, and the tough sports dollar — even with the Oilers gone — isn't coming to UH, athletics will be scaled back or eliminated, depending on the severity of the situation," Goerke said.

## MORRIS PLEADS GUILTY TO FELONY

ROCKWELL, Texas — Pittsburgh Steelers running back Bam Morris pleaded guilty last week to a felony marijuana possession charge in exchange for prosecutors' recommendation that he not be imprisoned. Rockwell County District Attorney Ray Sumrow said Morris, who had no prior criminal record, agreed to the plea in exchange for Sumrow's recommendation of probation. Also, a felony cocaine possession charge was dropped. Morris, 24, could still be sentenced to 10 years in prison and be fined \$10,000 for the third-degree felony at a hearing set for July 11 before state District Judge William B. Lofland.

## CLEMSON PLAYERS HIT WITH DRUG CHARGES

CLEMSON, S.C. — Antwan Wyatt, Clemson's leading receiver, was arrested last Wednesday on the same marijuana charge that tailback Anthony Downs was picked up on recently. Wyatt, 21, talked with investigators and was charged with intent to distribute marijuana, Clemson police said. The investigation prompted head coach Tommy West to permanently dismiss the players from the team Monday. If convicted, Wyatt and Downs, the team's No. 2 tailback, could face as much as five years in jail and a \$5,000 fine. Both were released on \$2,500 personal recognizance. A trial is set for July 15.

## GRIFFEY FIRST IN ALL-STAR BALLOTING

PHILADELPHIA — Outfielder Ken Griffey Jr. of the Seattle Mariners and catcher Mike Piazza of the Los Angeles Dodgers are the American and National League top vote-getters in final fan balloting for next Tuesday's 67th All-Star Game in Philadelphia. Griffey, also the majors' top vote-getter in 1994, received 3,064,814 votes. He will not play in the game after having surgery on his right hand June 20. He also missed last year's All-Star Game in Pittsburgh because of a broken left wrist. Griffey's replacement in the starting lineup will be named by AL manager Mike Hargrove of the Cleveland Indians.

## BRITAIN'S CHRISTIE TO RUN IN OLYMPICS

LONDON — After a year of keeping his fans, rivals and the media guessing, Linford Christie announced Monday he would defend his Olympic 100-meter title in Atlanta. The 36-year-old British sprinter also said he would compete against world record-holder Michael Johnson in the 200-meters. Christie said that support from the British public made him rethink his decision to run in the Centennial Games.

## TYSON RECEIVES \$45 MILLION OFFER

LONDON — Mike Tyson was offered \$45 million Tuesday to defend his WBC heavyweight title against Britain's Lennox Lewis. The offer was faxed to Tyson's promoter, Don King, by Lewis' manager Frank Maloney. Lewis, the No. 1 contender to the WBC title, accepted \$4 million to step aside and let Tyson fight WBA title holder Bruce Seldon on July 13 at the MGM Grand Garden. Lewis was told he would be Tyson's next opponent, but Tyson appears to have already made negotiations to fight Evander Holyfield in his next bout. If Tyson does not agree to fight Lewis, then he will be stripped of his WBC belt, and Lewis will fight No. 2 contender Oliver McCall in September for the vacant title.



## Louisiana Nite

EVERY TUESDAY NITE • 5 P.M. UNTIL ?

"Come Enjoy a Taste of the Bayou"

Gumbo • Crawfish  
Ice Cold Beer

★ Free 16 oz. Budweiser with your crawfish order ★

Seven Seas Seafood Restaurant & Lounge

808 W. Lake Mead Blvd. • 646-4688