

Mariners make pitch to trade Johnson

Dodgers Executive Vice President Fred Claire said he turned down Seattle's proposal

By Peggy Andersen
The Associated Press

SEATTLE—Randy Johnson wants out, and the Seattle Mariners are trying to accommodate him.

Team officials met in Florida on Thursday to discuss possible trade scenarios for one of baseball's most feared pitchers.

But the possibility of an imminent deal with the Los Angeles Dodgers was dismissed by both teams, although Dodgers executive vice president Fred Claire said the Mariners made a proposal Thursday that he turned down.

"It's been a wild day. The phone started ringing early and is probably still ringing at the hotel," Woody Woodward, head of baseball operations for the Mariners, said before Thursday night's game against the Tampa Bay Devil Rays.

"The fact is there is no truth to that rumor. The idea that names were given to me for a trade and it was very close to happening are not accurate."

Johnson asked to be traded last fall after the Mariners indicated they would not renew his contract—worth \$6 million this year—beyond this season. He renewed the request last week.

The Mariners say they're

talking with several teams about Johnson but are nowhere near a deal with Los Angeles, which reportedly was on the verge of obtaining the 34-year-old left-hander in exchange for pitcher Hideo Nomo and an outfielder.

While Woodward said he had spoken with Claire on Thursday, he insisted there was nothing to the Johnson-for-Nomo report by MSNBC.

"It was a good conversation. He said he was as surprised



about the rumor as I was," said Woodward, adding that he hadn't spoken with Claire for "some time" before Thursday.

"I don't anticipate any type of deal while the ball club is here in Tampa. There's not a timetable. Would I like to get something done? Certainly. If we take one player, it's not going to be a big salary player. It's not that type of deal."

Claire met privately with Nomo, his interpreter, outfielder Todd Hollandsworth and manager Bill Russell nearly two hours before the Dodgers entertained the Cincinnati Reds on Thursday night.

"We have spoken to the Mariners. No, we have not made a deal," Claire said after the brief meeting of less than 10 minutes.

Golf: Nosler expects UO to return in 1999

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took sole possession of the top spot on the individual leaderboard by shooting his second straight five-under-par 67. Henry has a one-stroke lead on defending national champion Charles Warren of Clemson.

Ben Crane recovered from a disappointing first round to regain his normal position as the Ducks' leading scorer. Crane's two-under-par 70 was Oregon's lowest individual round in the tournament. He finished with a 149 combined total, two strokes higher than the 147 two-round score he registered when he com-

peted as an individual last season.

Derek Croskrey recorded the Ducks' lowest combined total for the two rounds at two-over-par 146. Croskrey's 71 in the second round was second best on the team.

Andrew Tredway improved to an even-par 72 for Oregon after Wednesday's 77 to finish at 149.

"Yesterday, when we were practicing afterwards, just looking at the leaderboards we were pretty embarrassed," Tredway said. "I know we're better than a lot of teams that made the cut."

The Ducks' Chris Cone shot a 74 to finish at 148, and Ryan

Lavoie rounded out Oregon's scores with a 75 for a 152 combined total.

Nosler said he is confident that his team, which returns every player that competed in the tournament but Cone, will return to the championships next season.

"I've got a good nucleus of young people coming back," Nosler said. "I feel very positive about our program. We had some ups and we had some downs, but overall I'd say that it was a very, very positive year."

After today's third round, the championships conclude with Saturday's final round.

Track: Nine Ducks have NCAA experience

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nia's Kedjeloba Mambo ranks second.

Bleakney finished 11th at last season's NCAAAs to earn All-American honors.

Davis, one of only two Oregon winners at the Pac-10 meet in Stanford, will also be making a return trip to the NCAAAs as the junior finished 13th last year.

"I'm excited," Davis said. "I want to go back and run fast and step it up a level. I don't think rankings matter that much. I think it comes down to whomever wants it the most."

Several Ducks were on the bubble after having qualified provisionally for the championships but were left on the outside looking in.

Included in that group is Matt Davis (Micah Davis' older brother), who made a furious late-season comeback from various injuries to provisionally qualify in the 10,000 meters at the Pac-10s.

Other Ducks who didn't make the cut after provisionally qualifying are Konrad Knutsen (steeplechase), Greg James (1,500), Laird Prosser (1,500), Will Driessen (400-meter hurdles) and Ryan Cole (discus). Micah Davis provisionally qualified in the 5,000 but didn't make the field of 21.

Among the 10 Ducks selected to the NCAAAs, nine are NCAA veterans and have combined for nine All-American honors. Milena Glusac leads in that category as she is a three-time All-American.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Ducks dish out softball awards

Junior pitcher Jennie Cook was named the Ducks' most valuable player for the second straight season, while designated hitter Tri-

awn Custer was selected as the rookie-of-the-year at the Oregon softball team's annual awards banquet Thursday night at the Len Casanova Center.

In addition, third baseman Katie Mackey received most-im-

proved honors and outfielder C.C. Burns was selected the team's most inspirational player for the recently completed season.

The Ducks finished the season with a 40-31 overall record.



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