

SPACE CITY TRASH TALK

This week's Trash Talk has to start with Houston Town. Space City.

It was the best of times:

COLLEGE FOOTBALL
A&M's latest QB controversy also involves one that coach passed on.
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PRO BASKETBALL
Rockets coach Mike D'Antoni finds a winning combination on defense.
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SPORTS

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2017 WORLD CHAMPION ASTROS

OH, YES!

BRIAN T. SMITH
Commentary

Owner, GM never lost sight of their vision

We will always remember the names, numbers and moments. Jose Altuve, Justin Verlander, George Springer, Carlos Correa and Alex Bregman in 2017. Game 1 of the ALDS, when Altuve opened it all up with three huge home runs, and Game 4 in the rain at Fenway Park. Game 7 of the ALCS against the Yankees clinching a Fall Classic berth in downtown Houston. Then the real magic: Games 5, 6 and 7 of the World Series, when the Astros truly became world champions for the first time in their existence. And the season-altering dates: Aug. 30, Sept. 2, Nov. 1. Those will never be forgotten and are now forever linked with the best baseball team in Astros history — the one this orange-and-blue city will throw a parade for Friday.

But none of this happens without two other names. And I wouldn't be doing my job if I didn't devote this column to Jim Crane and Jeff Luhnow.

The owner and the Astros' architect pulled it off. A.J. Hinch was masterful through its regular season and its playoff games. The perfect manager for a fun, winning team that refused to settle for

Smith continues on C4

JENNY DIAL CREECH
Commentary

Correa has even more to celebrate now

LOS ANGELES — In the summer of 2013, a 17-year-old Carlos Correa perched around his home in Santa Isabel, Puerto Rico.

He signed posters, baseball cards and slips of paper the residents handed to him everywhere he went.

That June, Correa became the first Puerto Rican player to be taken No. 1 overall in the Major League Baseball draft. He was selected by the Astros — a team in the middle of its second consecutive 100-plus loss season. From the minute his name was called and he traipsed across a stage in an MLB studio in Secaucus, N.J., the excitement over the young, fresh talent had Houston buzzing.

"There were a lot of good choices in this year's draft, and we really felt like Carlos had a chance to be an impact player here in Houston for a long time," Astros general manager Jeff Luhnow said that evening after choosing Correa.

It was a huge moment for a budding baseball star and for the Astros organization.

Both celebrated an even bigger one at Dodger Stadium on Wednesday night as the Astros won the franchise's first World Series.

Creech continues on C4



World Series MVP George Springer is happy to be carrying some extra baggage after the Astros arrived in Houston on Thursday after winning Game 7 in Los Angeles on Wednesday night.

More to the story | Houston Chronicle

It was the worst of times:

DESHAUN WATSON OUT FOR SEASON

OH, NO!

Strong start ends way too early for rookie

The news came down like a sledgehammer to the rookie. The Texans lost quarterback Deshaun Watson, their extraordinary rookie, for the season after he suffered a torn anterior cruciate ligament in his right knee during practice Thursday.

Tom Savage will start Sunday's game against Indianapolis at NRG Stadium, his first appearance since being replaced by Watson at halfback of the loss to Jacksonville in the first game of the season.

Houston fans so euphoric over the Astros winning their first World Series were devastated to learn Watson will follow J.J. Watt and Whitney Mercilus to the operating room to undergo surgery that ruined the best start for a rookie quarterback in NFL history.

The season changed during practice on a warm afternoon — a practice watched by members of the military on Salute to Service weekend — when Watson was injured in a noncontact drill, a routine toss to a running

Savage continues on C2



With his first season now grounded, rookie quarterback Deshaun Watson finishes the year with 1,699 passing yards, 19 touchdowns and eight interceptions.

Karen Warren | Houston Chronicle

Quarterback tears ACL in his right knee

By Aaron Wilson

The ultra-promising season of multidimensional Texans quarterback Deshaun Watson came to a devastating end during a routine practice play Thursday when the rookie tore the anterior cruciate ligament in his right knee.

A magnetic resonance imaging exam confirmed the initial diagnosis for Watson, according to league sources not authorized to speak publicly. Watson, a strong Pro Bowl candidate, was injured while running a toss sweep during a noncontact drill at an outdoor practice session. It wasn't initially regarded as a serious injury because Watson didn't appear to be in much discomfort and wasn't hit on the play, but further tests confirmed the severity of the injury. Watson will undergo surgery to repair the damage.

The first round draft pick tore the ACL in his left knee at Clemson but gutted it out while playing with a brace on. He will not be able to do that this time, though.

Watson is expected to make a full recovery in time for next season and is facing a rehabilitation

Watson continues on C2

Although the last game was kind of one sided and a bit of a letdown, the Astros and Dodgers 2017 World Series was truly one for the ages. Games two and five were some of the most astounding baseball I have ever watched, World Series or otherwise. Baseball is unique among the major sports in America in that you can get up and get a snack, or go to the bathroom or whatever, and you likely won't miss anything. It charmingly crawls along. Man, not in these games, they were white knuckle every second of the way. We here in Phoenix have always been a little smug that the 2001 World Series between the DBacks and Yankees was one of the best ever. And it was. But move over rover, 2017 has passed you by. Just wow. And the weird thing is, the Astros trade deadline acquisition of Justin Verlander really supercharged their late season run and through the AL playoffs, but he did not win a WS game. Anyway, wow, what a series. Baseball needs more of that.

In football, however, Houston has just been devastated this year. First, defensive studs JJ Watt and Whitney Mercilus were lost for the year. A league leading defense went immediately to only okay. But rookie QB Deshaun Watson was arguably, along with Carson Wentz, in the running for the league MVP award. He had a season line of 19 TD's, only 8 interceptions and 1,699 yards for an overall QB rating of 103 in seven games. But it was not just the stats, it was the scintillating way he was doing it. Electric. And then he tore his ACL in a non-contact play in practice. The Texans won't quit, and may even still have a chance in their division, but what a loss, both for them, the league and fans everywhere.

Okay, on to the games. In the student athlete area, UCLA got absolutely blown up by an unusually mediocre Utah team in Salt Lake, and on national TV, last night. Ugly. The Pac-12 is having a very weird year so far, but tonight's tilt between USC and the very surprising Arizona Wildcats may be the biggest game of the regular season. Watch out for Arizona's Khalil Tate. You

probably don't know his name, but you should. Take a look at what he has done so far this year, it is ridiculous. If he keeps it up, he will be in the Heisman race. This game is worth the watch just for him alone.

Penn State at the Sparty's of Michigan State is interesting, I think PSU bounces back behind Saquon Barkley, but never sleep on Sparty. Indiana has an early 10-0 lead on Wisconsin, and that would be a shocking upset if they pull it off. Undoubtedly the best looking game is Oklahoma at Oklahoma State. You just never know what you will get from the Sooners. Their record isn't bad, but hard to see LSU having anything for Alabama this year.

As to the Pros, The Jets made life easier on the Pats by easily taking out the Bills Thursday night. And the game was not nearly as close as the final 34-21 score. The aforementioned Houston Texans have the good fortune of facing the hapless Colts at home in Houston. That ought to get them a win and a 4-4 record to close out the first half of the season. What is up with Andrew Luck? He is not coming back this year (never really seemed like he was, but it is official now) and people are starting to whisper he may just be done. That would be a shame, truly hope he is back for next year. Kansas City at Dallas looks very interesting. The Chiefs had a hiccup, are they back on track? the SNF game of Raiders at Fins looks pretty good too, but no idea how Miami will look after trading away their entire running game, Jay Ajayi, to Philly for a mid-round draft choice. That was a total head scratcher. Lastly, the Kittens at Cheesers for Monday night will be interesting. Would be a hell of a lot more interesting with Aaron Rodgers though. Have to go with Detroit, but it is almost a must win for the Cheesers. Did the extra practice afforded by their bye week give Brett Hundley enough time to synch up with his offense? He sure wasn't in their last game against the Saints.

Okay, that is it for this week. Eat some food,

tilt a cold one and enjoy the games.