

Around the horn with Craig Dewalt

By **CRAIG DEWALT**
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Hello and welcome back for the second season of Around the Horn with Craig Dewalt. In case you don't know the rules; I prepare a series of questions and ask four contestants for their responses. The four contestants will give their answers and be scored with pluses and minuses. If a comment is really good they can receive up to three pluses. If their comment is downright awful they can receive up to three minuses. If their answer is so terrible I will shut them up by putting them on mute. After each question one person will be eliminated. The winner will then get their time to shine in the "Moment of Fame" section. Here is this week's round of questions:

1. With an exciting end to the 2007 regular season, who will win the National League MVP award?
2. Buy or Sell? Tony Romo is the next big thing?
3. The 2007 College Football season has seen a series of upsets and surprises. Who's your biggest surprise team, and why?

QUESTION 1

Sarver: "Two words Matt Holliday (-). This man is a monster at the plate. He led the National League in batting average (.340), hits (216), Doubles (50), RBI's (137) and he was 4th in homers (36). (+++) What else more do you need to hear? Plus the fact that he plays for the hottest team in the league right now, the Colorado Rockies. (+) Look for Holliday to lead this team deep into the playoffs, maybe even a World Series Championship." (3 points)

Me: "Sarver, Matt and Holliday are not words, they're names, but I'm feeling you on this answer"

Carroll: "I'm a Phillies fan (---) ...MUTE...(-3 points)

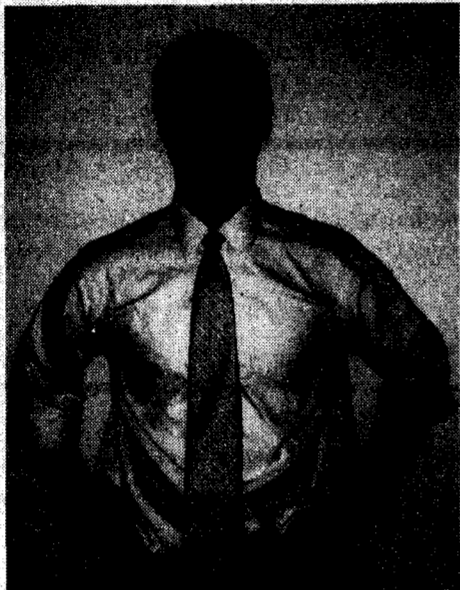
Me: "That's all I needed to hear from you. Carroll, you lose three points and get muted for being a Phillies fan."

Aumiller: "No Brainer. Matt Holliday. Well, (Call me full of it) I knew he was a stud, but he led the Rockies all year for his "coming out year." (+) #1 in batting average (.340), #1 in RBI's (137), and #4 in home runs (36) made him 14 homers shy of a

triple crown season (Not that is that close). (+) Not too mention, he also led the NL in doubles (50). He's the best player on the team that won 13 out of 14 to make the playoffs. (+) It's a crime if it's not Holliday." (3 points)

Me: "Good answer Kris, I like the stats."

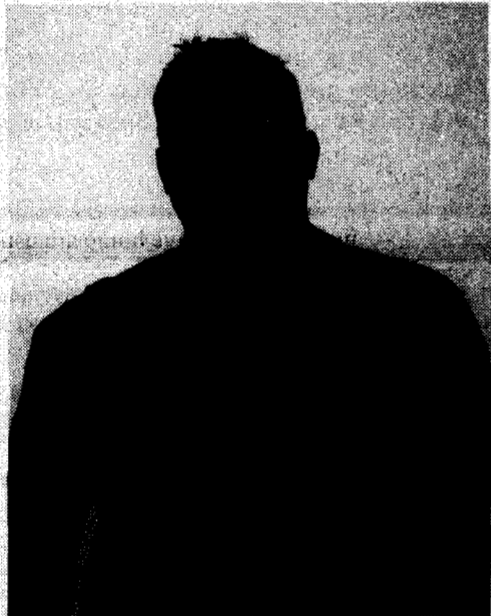
McComas: "Matt Holliday hands down. Before I say why Holliday is the MVP, let me tell you why the other favorite, Jimmy Rollins, is not. If the Mets didn't have their monumental collapse the Phils wouldn't have made the playoffs and therefore would have eliminated Rollins' chances. (++) Not to mention, Holliday just



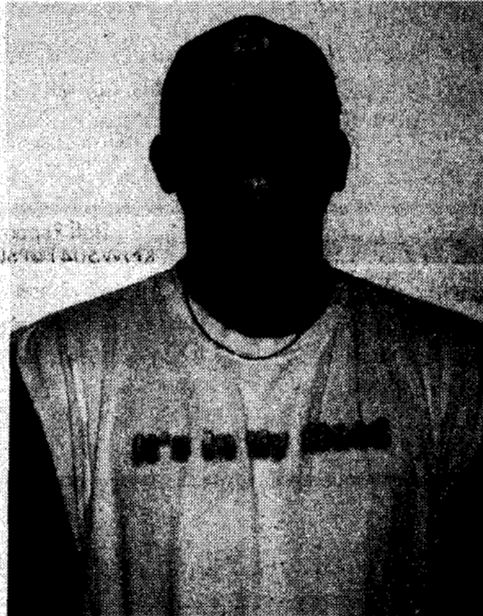
Matthew Carroll



Matthew Sarver



Matthew McComas



Kris Aumiller

has better stats. Now, look at Holliday's numbers on a team that put together a more than impressive streak to get into the post-season. He hit 36 home runs, while batting .340. He hit 137 RBIs and scored 120 runs. The numbers speak for themselves and oh, by the way, unlike the unanimous AL MVP, Alex Rodriguez, he is continuing his strong play into the playoffs. (++)" (4 points)

Me: "My thoughts exactly, good answer."

QUESTION 2

Sarver: "I hate to admit this but I'm buying Tony. He's on the best team in the NFC, he's third in the league in passing yards, and he's second in the league with a 112.9 passer rating. (++) I believe that if he can keep the majority of the offensive weapons he has around him, then he will be leading the Dallas Cowboys to several playoff appearances in his career. (+)" (3 points)

Me: "Another solid answer. What's gotten into you Sarv?"

Aumiller: "Buy. Romo is a winner. He is an accurate passer, he can make something out of

Me: "Aumiller, excellent answer. T.O. is happy, and that is deadly. Call me crazy, but when he's motivated and happy, T.O. is the best in the league. The marketability factor is also a plus. Carrie Underwood?"

McComas: "At first I wasn't going to buy Romo, but after some thought I am. Who else would you consider to be the next big thing? The only way you can dispute this is if you say Romo is already a "big thing" and therefore is not eligible to be an answer to the question. Romo is not only getting the job done on the field, but the media love him. (+) Heck, he's already doing ESPN commercials. What's next?"

QUESTION 3

Aumiller: "The South Florida Bulls. UK will probably get a lot of love here and it is deserved, but how about those boys from USF. (+) Jim Leavitt has his 11-year-old program (Yes, no football at USF until 1996) in the top ten and on pace to win the Big East. (+) They took down powerhouse West Virginia and have a favorable schedule the rest of the season. (+) They could pop into a BCS bowl and really get on the map for those leisurely college football viewers, like Sarver. (++)" (5 points)

Me: "Great answer again, nice shot at Sarver as well, he is a leisurely college viewer (atleast when the wife lets him be one)

McComas: "I could go a lot of different ways here. Disappointing teams such as Penn State, Notre Dame and Louisville could all be options. Teams like Boston College, Kentucky and South Florida some people may pick because of the number of wins they have. BC and KU haven't played good teams until this weekend when the Wildcats lost to South Carolina. (+) South Florida has supposedly come out of nowhere, but who wouldn't have picked them to win the Big East? I know I did. (+) So which team is the biggest surprise to me so far? The Michigan Wolverines.

Last year they only lost two games. Yes, they lost a lot of their defense, which in all honesty wasn't that good anyway, but they returned the entire offense almost. (+) They had two Heisman hopefuls at the beginning of the year and were ranked #5. Now, they have two losses already and are unranked.

The Wolverines lost to a 1-AA at home! (+) And then proceeded to get embarrassed by Oregon. At the beginning of the year if u were to ask where all those other teams would have been, you could have guessed close to where they are now for the most part. If you would have said Michigan would be unranked and looking bad in their wins, you would have been fitted for a straight jacket. (+)" (5 points)

Me: "Good answer, I like the direction you took on this one. This leaves a tie between the two of you fine gentlemen. To break the tie, you will each get five

sentences which will be scored on valid points and humor."

TIE-BREAKER

McComas: "First of all, if you are going to dock Mr. Carroll points for liking the Phillies I'm going to have to request you do the same for Aumiller because he likes the Mets. I'm also going to have to question his pick on South Florida as being the biggest surprise. If you look at their schedule it has been a pretty easy road, besides West Virginia and that was a home game, so there performance is not that surprising. In closing I would like to say good luck to Kris and I hope his statement is better than Sarver's wii tennis "skills." Aumiller: "I don't think there is much need for a tiebreaker here. I have called all 3 postseason series so far (and am 1 Indians win from 4), and I already bribed Craig D with his trademark favorite Whatchamacallit earlier today. Not to mention, Death Valley Dewalt and I showed off our Nintendo Wii Tennis dominance when the chips were down in a 7-game series against Sarver and McComas. The tag team title belts are on their way and title t-shirts and hats are available for purchase very soon. Please contact the formentioned Craig Dewalt for more information."

Me: "Ladies and gentlemen, after further review of the tie-breaker scenario, your winner... Kris Aumiller. McComas, you gave it a valiant effort. It takes a lot to belittle a teammate like you did of Sarver, and for that I commend you. However, Aumiller and I are a team, and he did in fact bribe me with my favorite candy bar, the often bypassed, always underrated Wat-Cha-Ma-Call-It. Therefore, he is the winner.

In order to prevent Marin from snapping from this ridiculous word count, Aumiller will not get his moment to shine, but if you would like to see him shine, please stop by the Capital Times office any day, at any time to see him dominate."

Caption: Kris Aumiller is a very talented young man. He dominates Around the Horn, defends the net like no other on Wii Tennis, drops bombs on opposing colleges baseball teams, and ladies he is a former model. Parents warn your daughters, because this rarity is available. BAMMMMM!

Women's soccer team finishes top three in all World Cup tournaments

By **ALISON SMITH**
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Team USA is the only country to finish in the top three in all five Women's World Cup tournaments. However, Coach Greg Ryan's decision to play veteran goalkeeper Brianna Scurry instead of Hope Solo against Brazil caused a firestorm of controversy. The team knows this tournament won't be forgotten soon, but they would rather disregard the drama and get back to soccer.

The disruption caused by Solo's remarks to the press following the loss to Brazil was cited as a major factor in the decision made by Ryan and the team to bench Solo for the game against Norway.

Part of the controversy surrounding Ryan's goalie choice came from public descent.

Referring to Ryan's decision to play Scurry against Brazil, Penn State Harrisburg communications student and unofficial soccer guru Brigid Wood said, "That would not have been the coaching decision that I would have gone with.

The biggest mistake that he made was not playing different goalkeepers during the tune up matches. There were a lot of goalkeepers in the tournament that were backups. Coach Ryan didn't even plan for the fact that Hope Solo could possibly get hurt and he would need a backup goalkeeper. The position itself really requires some game time to get knowledge of how the back

four works and the trust that they have in you as a goalkeeper. He did not allow for this to happen."

Brandy Chastain, a former member of the Dream Team that internationally dominated women's soccer for over a decade, told Yahoo! Sports, "People say this is a step back, but I think Greg Ryan has put us three steps back, all the way at the starting gate. He lacks the ability to communicate and is not in tune with his players, and he's obviously not a tactician or he wouldn't have made the decisions he did."

ESPN analyst and former Dream Team member Julie Foudy also said to Yahoo! Sports, "There was no flow to this team. I think that's because all three lines practiced

separately; they would all go off with their separate coaches, rather than work together. What Coach Ryan did tactically made no sense and there were a lot of decisions he made that I think many people would question."

Other former champions voiced their opinions about Ryan's failure to his players on tactical and motivational levels, noting the outcome of the semifinal match is enough evidence for him to lose his job.

Standing by his choices, Ryan said, "I want to continue on as the head coach. I don't feel like my job is yet done with this team."

Despite the controversy, Team USA pulled off a major victory against Norway with a 4-1 win. Needing to play a near perfect game

after an embarrassing loss to Brazil, Brianna Scurry told press, "That performance for me personally was one of the biggest games of my life."

Hope Solo's status with the team is not clear. Scurry is a veteran and if Team USA wants to play at the best level possible in the Olympics, they will need a top rate back-up goalie as well as an on-point starter.

"Hope did come in and apologize," second leading goal scorer Abby Wambach said according to the post-match quote page on the Women's National Team's Web site.

"It's just going to be a matter of time. We're all humans and we all feel equally about certain subjects, and the forgiveness on our team's hearts is just going to have to come in time."

Another big question is whether Captain Kristine Lilly, the last remaining member of the Dream Team, will play with the team throughout the Olympics.

"Kristine's function in this team encompasses everything we do," Coach Ryan said according to the post-match quote page. "Her character, leading by example, by how she comes to training, by how she treats the other players, with how she carries herself as a professional, has taught our young players what it means to be a Women's National Team member."

Team USA will take on Mexico in the next 30 days as part of warm-ups for the Olympics. USA plays Mexico on Oct. 13 in St. Louis, Oct. 17 in Portland and Oct. 20 in Albuquerque.