

# Boggs retires after 18 seasons

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Rather than pack his bags and leave home again, Wade Boggs decided 3,010 career hits were enough.

The Tampa Bay Devil Rays didn't offer the 41-year-old third baseman an opportunity to play for them again next season, so he accepted a chance to move into the front office with duties as an advance scout and evaluator of young talent.

Saying he had been spoiled the last two seasons by being able to live year-round in the area where he grew up, Boggs consulted fellow 3,000-hit club members Robin Yount and George Brett, as well as some current players and friends, before turning to his dad, Win, for some fatherly advice.

"I asked him if I could catch Pete Rose," the career hits leader with 4,256. "He said: 'Son, you're not going to be able to play that long.'"

Boggs, the only player to hit a home run for his 3,000th hit, said the conversation on a fishing outing in North Florida essentially sealed his decision.

He considered the possibility of playing a year or two with his fourth major league team but concluded the future was brighter as an assistant to Devil Rays General Manager Chuck LaMar.

"This is all new. I know how to get a hit. I know how to catch a ground ball. I know how to throw a baseball. Those three areas, I've had to master since I was 18 months old," Boggs said at a news conference at Tropicana Field. "At the age of 41, I'm starting something new, different and exciting."

Boggs played 18 seasons in the majors with the Devil Rays, Boston Red Sox and New York Yankees. He became the 23rd player to reach 3,000 hits on Aug. 7, homering off Cleveland's Chris Haney just a half-hour's ride from where he grew up playing Little League ball.

A month after reaching the plateau, the 12-time all-star and two-time gold glove winner had season-ending surgery to repair torn cartilage in his right knee. The Devil Rays faced a deadline Wednesday to exercise a \$1 million option on the contract he signed two years ago when he returned home to help Tampa Bay launch an expansion franchise.

He entered discussions with the team last month, thinking he still had a future as a player. But Tampa Bay, wanting to exercise a \$250,000 buy-out, pushed for him to head in another direction, clearing the way for the team to upgrade at third base through a trade, free agency or younger players within the organization.

"You see so many players who try to hold on and try to stay in the game," Boggs said. "For one reason or another, they were not as fortunate as I was to obtain a World Series ring or something along those lines to allow me to walk away."

Boggs was selected to 12 consecutive All-Star games from 1985 to

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**WADE BOGGS**  
former Devil Ray

1996, the year he finally won a World Series championship with the Yankees. He also was the only player this century with seven straight 200-hit seasons, set an AL rookie record with a .349 average in 1982 and hit .300 better in 15 of his 18 big-league seasons.

He hit .301 with two homers and 29 RBI in 1999, joining Ty Cobb, Lou Brock and Roberto Clemente — all Hall of Famers — as players who retired after hitting .300 in their final season.

"It wasn't an easy decision because an athlete can always look in the mirror and say, OK, I can still play. Deep down inside, probably I thought I still could," Boggs said. "But why not go out on top? I've always said: 'I'll never embarrass myself in this game.'"

Asked to recall the biggest moment in his career, Boggs said there were two that he treasured equally.

"Riding the horse at Yankee Stadium," he said, recalling the World Series celebration following his greatest accomplishment as a member of a team. "And kneeling down and kissing home plate after I hit the home run for the 3,000th hit."

He joked that perhaps the happiest people about his decision to retire were his wife and kids.

"Now we don't have to have chicken every day," said Boggs, whose pregame ritual included a meal that with chicken before each game.

"It's hard because from the time he graduated from high school we were married and he's been in baseball," said his wife, Debbie. "So, it's like the only thing we've known is baseball. That part of it is going to be strange."

Although his new job description is not clearly defined, Devil Rays managing general partner Vince Naimoli said Boggs will not be a figurehead.

"We don't have the luxury to have people on staff who are not going to do anything," Naimoli said. "Everybody's got a job."

Boggs said one of the most appealing aspects of the Devil Rays' offer was the prospect of helping young players and having an impact on the development of what he thinks can be a championship organization.

"That's one of the biggest reasons I felt this was an opportunity I couldn't turn down," he said. "When you have input, you feel like you're a part of it."

# Griffey options discussed

DANA POINT, Calif. (AP) — The great Griffey chase goes on, at least to Anaheim and the winter meetings, and maybe beyond.

The general managers' meetings ended Thursday with Ken Griffey Jr. remaining the property of the Seattle Mariners, who are attempting to comply with the slugger's wish that he be traded closer to his Orlando, Fla., home.

Three big trades were made this week, including Thursday's five-player deal sending 1996 AL Cy Young winner Pat Hentgen from Toronto to the St. Louis Cardinals. Otherwise, GMs laid the groundwork for future deals, many of which could come at

the winter meetings Dec. 10-14 in Anaheim.

Three facts about the Griffey talks that emerged here are that about 3-to-4 teams could be serious players in the sweepstakes, getting Griffey will cost plenty and there's a concern about giving up a lot only to face the prospect of having Griffey leave as a free agent after the 2000 season.

St. Louis Cardinals GM Walt Jocketty said he had dinner one night this week with Mark McGwire, and the subject of the two sluggers playing in the same lineup came up.

"We'd love to have him here, but (McGwire) also realizes that we have to stay competitive," Jocketty said.

# NU ready for KSU attack

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game. You can't kid your players or yourself that this is a big game."

Senior rover Mike Brown knows how important this game is for Nebraska football.

"We want to keep it in people's minds that Nebraska is a great program and that it will always be a great program," said Brown, who was named the Big 12 co-defensive Player of the Week after the Texas A&M game. "It will always be a place where kids in high school want to come and play. Even with everything our program has been through, it continues to shine."

Sophomore quarterback Eric Crouch currently is one of the brightest young Huskers and will hold the key to the Big Red offensive engine Saturday.

Last year in Manhattan, the red-shirt freshman was starting in just his third game as a Husker. But he played beyond most people's expectations, throwing for three touchdown passes and rushing for a career-high 108 yards.

Late in the fourth quarter, NU trailed by just a field goal when fortunes turned sour as a blatant grab of Crouch's face mask was missed and a fourth down pass fell incomplete.

It was a difficult loss for Crouch, but it was the start of something special for the freshman.

He said the confidence he gained in that hostile environment carried over into the offseason and now this season.

"It seems like this whole team has grown, and we are a different team than last year," Crouch said. "Things are fitting into place on offense and, especially, on defense. We are 100 percent healthy. I think

## Football Starters

Nov. 13, 1999  
Lincoln, NE.  
Memorial Stadium  
TV: ABC (regional)  
2:38 p.m.

### Nebraska starters

Offense				Defense			
Pos.	No.	Name	Ht. Wt.	Pos.	No.	Name	Ht. Wt.
SE	3	Matt Davison	6-1 185	LR	81	Aaron Willis	6-2 250
LT	69	Adam Julch	6-5 320	NT	96	Steve Warren	6-2 305
LG	63	James Sherman	6-4 295	DT	91	Loran Kaiser	6-4 295
C	54	Dominic Raiola	6-2 295	RR	83	Kyle Vanden Bosch	6-4 270
RG	55	Russ Hochstein	6-4 290	SLB	46	Brian Shaw	6-1 220
RT	58	Dave Volk	6-5 300	MLB	13	Carlos Polk	6-2 250
TE	85	T.J. DeBates	6-3 250	WLB	27	Eric Johnson	6-1 206
QB	7	Eric Crouch	6-1 195	LCB	3	Keyuo Craver	5-10 190
FB	15	Willie Miller	6-1 245	FS	19	Clint Finley	6-0 205
IB	38	Dan Alexander	6-0 245	ROV	21	Mike Brown	5-10 205
WB	82	Sean Applegate	5-9 185	RCB	22	Ralph Brown	5-10 180
PK	26	Josh Brown	6-2 185	P	17	Dan Hadenfeldt	5-11 195
KO	17	Dan Hadenfeldt	5-11 195				

### Kansas State starters

Offense				Defense			
Pos.	No.	Name	Ht. Wt.	Pos.	No.	Name	Ht. Wt.
WR	22	Aaron Lockett	5-7 160	DE	44	Monty Beisel	6-3 255
LT	77	Damion McIntosh	6-4 316	DT	79	Cliff Holloman	6-4 275
LG	66	Ian Moses	6-3 285	DT	75	Mario Fatafehi	6-2 305
C	58	Randall Cummins	6-3 285	DE	49	Darren Howard	6-4 270
RG	70	John Robertson	6-4 291	LB	43	Travis Litton	6-2 240
RT	65	Thomas Barnett	6-5 290	LB	52	Ben Leber	6-3 250
TE	85	Shad Meier	6-4 250	LB	42	Mark Simoneau	6-0 240
QB	18	Jonathan Beasley	6-1 215	CB	23	Jerametrius Butler	5-10 180
RB	30	Joe Hall	6-2 180	FS	1	Lamar Chapman	6-1 180
FB	37	Johnno Lazetich	6-1 240	SS	40	Jarrod Cooper	6-1 210
WR	5	Quincy Morgan	6-2 215	CB	35	Dyshod Carter	5-8 185
PK	15	Jamie Rheem	6-2 190	P	32	David Allen	5-9 200

this will be an outstanding ball game.

"Our team is definitely better than we were last year at this point. We feel we can get some more things done with our offense. We have been putting a lot of things in to try to attack any offense we see. The one thing we have to do is execute and not turn the ball over."

Forcing turnovers are something the Wildcat defense does well. They lead the nation in turnover ratio. They also are in the top five for total defense and rushing defense.

"They're very aggressive and very athletic," Solich said. "There's no question that they are the best defensive team we will face this year."

At this point, it will take a great effort on our part to get done what we need to get done offensively."

Nebraska's defense certainly isn't shabby. The Blackshirts are coming off their best defensive performance of the year in which they allowed 118 yards of total offense and shut out Texas A&M.

Senior defensive tackle Steve Warren said a similar performance could happen Saturday.

"If we get all 11 minds on the same cord, there is no limit to this defense," he said. "If everyone is on the same level as they were Saturday, anything can happen. It could be the same thing."

# Back pains behind him, Warren excels for NU

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physical pain.

"I have to give him some credit," said sophomore defensive tackle Jason Lohr. "He played though a lot of pain, probably more than we know."

Unless you were close to Warren or have had a back injury, you probably can't relate to the pain that the 6-foot-2 300-pound defensive tackle played through his entire junior season.

Two damaged discs in his lower back limited Warren on the football field and off.

When he walked, his body felt like it was twisting. When he played football, his back would spasm, and he couldn't move. When he slept, he had to put pillows under his stomach to keep his back arched. When he woke up, he had to be careful not to move out of bed too fast.

"My roommate would be like, 'What's wrong with you? You walk like you are an 80-year-old man,'" Warren said. "I was like, 'I need a wheelchair.' I am 21 years old, and I can barely walk around in the morning."

He would stretch daily, go to chiropractors, get massages, do treatments with the trainers, get cortisone shots and subject himself to two epidural shots — the same kind given to pregnant women.

But still nothing worked. "I can't remember a game last year where I came to play and my back didn't spasm up," Warren said. "No matter how much I stretched the night before or how many sittings I did during the week, it didn't matter."

The pain got so bad in the Texas A&M game Oct. 10, 1998, that Warren had to take himself out. He would miss the next game against Kansas. In between those games, he got his first epidural shot and flew home to Kickapoo, Mo., to be with his sick grandmother.

His grandmother died while he was

home. The shot didn't help his back. Warren felt the worst he ever had and didn't want to come back to school.

"I didn't know what I was going to do," Warren said. "I didn't want to quit, but nothing was helping my back. I prayed a lot to 'please let me make it through the season.' I would just go into the training room and not say anything, because I knew it wasn't going to do any good."

It carried over onto the field, where the normally vocal Warren was quiet. The happy-go-lucky Warren was noticeably unhappy. He couldn't do anything active and as a result put on 15 pounds. Finally, the season ended, and Warren took some time off to re-evaluate his condition.

He weighed 318 pounds, didn't have any quickness and lacked flexibility. So he decided to change his eating habits and workout routines. He dropped 20 pounds during the summer.

"The diet wasn't that tough, because I probably ate more than I was eating before, but it was things that were good for me," Warren said. "I stayed away from fried foods — I was grilling everything. I stayed away from the starches and ate more fruits. I just ate healthier."

With the suggestion of former Nebraska All-American and current strength coach Danny Noonan and teammates Kyle Vanden Bosch and Aaron Willis, Warren also took up kickboxing. What started as a one-hour a week workout turned into a three-day a week ritual.

"The kick-boxing really helped me with my flexibility," Warren said. "The trainers used to hate stretching me. They would say I was like a big, old tight rubber band."

The pounds he shed and his increased flexibility have taken most of the pressure off his back, allowing him to perform at full strength this season. With his regained speed and strength, Warren has gotten back to his

old form.

"I've been able to get off the ball and explode this year," Warren said. "Good things are going to happen when you get off the ball fast."

Defensive coordinator Charlie McBride has noticed the difference.

"If you watch Steve, he is a completely different football player when he's not hurt," McBride said. "When he got heavy, he wasn't able to do anything. He gained so much weight and that kept him from having the quickness he wanted to have."

Many fans noticed that lack of speed, and a lot of people questioned Warren's ability.

"People last year were like, 'maybe he isn't as good as everybody thought he was,'" Warren said. "It was frustrating. That comes with life."

Warren is now showing these critics what he knew he could do all along.

"He is just dominating people," Slechta said. "He takes control of games. Last week against A&M, he displayed what he can really do. Three sacks is just amazing, especially being an interior lineman, because being in there, in the middle, it is so congested you can't even get through. He found a way to get through to make the plays."

Saturday against Kansas State, Warren will get his final chance to show the people in Memorial Stadium what he can really do. A good showing against the Wildcats might get Warren recognized by people outside of his team.

"I think he is one of the most underrated defensive linemen in the country," Johnson said. "He is one of the best defensive linemen that I have seen around. I am not just saying that because he is my teammate. I am saying that because I have seen him play and seen him do things that most other linemen can't."

"Steve Warren will get in there and make an offensive lineman go whichever way he wants them to go."