



MLB4 Newsletter

Season 14
Week 7
ed. Rob Crowther

Welcome to the MLB4 Newsletter. I'm hoping to get it published at least semi-regularly in the future, but past experience with newsletters has shown I tend to get discouraged fairly quickly if I don't get any contributions. Yes, that was a hint! See then end of the newsletter for some contact details and links, but now - on with the show...

Perfect Weeks for Yankees and Diamondbacks

New York swept divisional rivals Tampa Bay and followed that up with further sweeps of Cleveland and Oakland, catapulting themselves ahead of the Devil Rays to take the lead in the AL East. Tampa Bay recovered from their disappointing first series to get series wins against division leaders Los Angeles and Minnesota and stay four games ahead of the Orioles in the wildcard race. Baltimore started off with a series win in Toronto, followed that with a series win in Texas and finished off with a home win against the Indians for a solid 6-3 week, giving them the third best record in the American League and also, unfortunately, the third best record in the AL East. The Blue Jays recovered from their first series defeat with victory in Minnesota but slipped up at home against Seattle, losing two close games, and finish the week firmly at the bottom of the highly competitive eastern division.

Every team in the AL Central finished with a losing record, continuing the pattern of the season so far the Twins and the Indians were not quite as bad as

the Brewers and White Sox. Though Cleveland swept Minnesota in the first series of the week, Minnesota managed to lose at home to the White Sox. Chicago didn't manage to win any more games in the week, getting swept by both Oakland and Texas, while the Twins faced eastern opposition for the rest of the week and were perhaps fortunate to get two wins. Cleveland only got one win against their AL East opponents while Milwaukee managed to improve slightly, but still lose to Seattle and Los Angeles.

In the west the Angels and Mariners both swept their respective divisional rivals in the first series. Seattle followed that up with a further two series wins while LA were less consistent, losing at home to Tampa Bay before defeating the Brewers. Texas and Oakland both recovered from their opening sweeps, as they both got to play the White Sox.

Onto the National League where the Diamondbacks continue to set the pace with sweeps of San Diego and then divisional leaders Washington and St Louis, only three of the nine games were decided by anything less than eight runs. In the battle to finish second to Arizona the Dodgers struck the first blow, winning 2-1 at home against the Giants. LA couldn't build on their early results, however, getting swept by Atlanta and then losing to the Cubs. San Francisco swept St Louis then managed a hard fought series win in New York where every game was decided by one run.

Cellar dwelling San Diego followed up their initial defeat with losses against Chicago and Philadelphia.

The NL Central was almost a match for their AL counterparts in ineptitude this week, the Pirates and Cardinals both started off with series wins, but Pittsburgh lost 2-1 to both New York and Washington while St Louis got swept by the Giants and then Arizona. The Cubs followed up their opening sweep with series wins against San Diego and Los Angeles, while the Reds managed a series win at home against Philadelphia before getting swept in Atlanta.

Washington look to be the biggest threat to Arizona's complete dominance this season, but series wins over both Pennsylvania teams were sandwiched around a sweep in Arizona which set back their challenge. The Braves had an excellent week, despite losing the opening series against New York – they went on to sweep the Dodgers and the Reds for a 7-2 week. The Mets weren't so lucky, a series win in Pittsburgh was followed by a 2-1 defeat by San Francisco. The Phillies lost both of their first two series but recovered slightly with a win against the Padres.

View From the Bay by Rob Crowther

I keep thinking I'm doing really badly in this league, but I have the third best record in the NL and a two game lead in the wildcard. The thing that makes it all look bad is the phenomenal record of Bo's Diamondbacks: 9-0 this week to get to 45-9. Only Paul's Yankees are anywhere close to them at five games back, the whole of the NL is now more than 10 games behind them.

There are some signs of hope in San Francisco, for the first time this season all the starting pitchers are in positive form at the same time, though we again suffered some odd form with the relievers (the closer - 3 saves, 1 blown

save, -3 form...). If we can get a little more consistency out of the batters I think we'd be well set for another playoff appearance, just need to figure out how to win some games in my own division :)

Desert Discussion with Bo Mayfield

I had planned to drop this team when credits ran out but after such a good start will probably stick it out to see if we can repeat. Injuries and a VERY tight budget will make life more difficult in coming weeks but this is certainly the most talented team I've managed.

Week Seven Key Matchups

They've very little left to prove, but Arizona's trip to San Francisco should be their toughest matchup this week. The Giants got swept in Arizona but will be looking to do better at home. The top two teams in the NL East also face each other in the opening series, Washington will be looking to avenge the earlier sweep at home. In the AL the on form Mariners will be attempting to peg back the visiting Angels in the opening series, but the big series for Los Angeles will be their trip to New York in the final series.

Contact and Links

Send any contributions to Rob Crowther, gameplan@crowther.info If you need to use the snail mail: 95 Wentworth Avenue, Finchley, London. N3 1YN. For further discussion check out the Yahoo! Group at <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/gameplanbaseball/> For results and statistics go to <http://www.gbspn.com>