



MLB4 Newsletter

Season 14
Week 8
ed. Rob Crowther

Welcome to another issue of the newsletter. Thanks to Troy Dilworth and Andrew Purdie for their contributions this time, please see the end of the newsletter for contact details if you have something to say.

Yankees Continue to Set the Pace

New York kept up the pace from their 9-0 performance last week with a sweep of the Orioles followed by a sweep of the Brewers, giving up a total of only 8 runs in those games, before the Angels proved to be more troublesome in their final series. The Devil Rays attempted to keep up the pressure on the Yankees but slipped up on the road at lowly Oakland and dropped another two games back. Baltimore also fell behind this week, losing in New York and then Seattle before a home win against the Brewers. Toronto took the opportunity to close up the gap, after a series loss to Tampa they swept the White Sox before beating Texas.

Minnesota are starting to stamp their authority on the AL Central, despite losing the opening series to the Brewers they finished with a 7-2 record thanks to sweeps of Texas and Oakland. With the rest of the Central only managing to win a total of two games outside the division, the Twins now have a comfortable lead.

Seattle looked to close up on divisional leaders the Angels and started off with a sweep of their rivals, then followed up with series wins over the

Orioles and the Indians. Los Angeles bounced back from their initial disappointment with a sweep of the Indians before competing well in New York but only getting the one win. Texas managed to sweep the Athletics but managed to win only one other game, while Oakland surprised everyone with a series win over Tampa Bay, but won no other games.

Cardinals Take Control

St Louis leapt to the front of a lacklustre NL Central with an 8-1 week, sweeps of Pittsburgh and Philadelphia were followed up with a series win in Atlanta. The Cubs opened up with defeats against Cincinnati and New York but then swept the Nationals to record a winning week. The Reds couldn't build on their opening victory as they got swept by Arizona and the San Francisco. Pittsburgh didn't recover from their initial defeat, losing to both LA and San Diego.

Arizona continue to dominate in the West, San Francisco managed to take a game off them but the Reds and Phillies struggled to even get close. The Giants followed up their initial defeat by losing at home to Atlanta before bouncing back with a sweep over the Reds in Cincinnati. The Dodgers beat San Diego and Pittsburgh but then got swept by the Mets, while the Padres got swept by Washington before a series win in Pittsburgh.

The Nationals beat their nearest rivals the Mets and then swept the Padres, but wasted an opportunity to pull clear when they got swept themselves in Chicago. New York recovered with a series win in Chicago before sweeping LA at home. Atlanta and Philadelphia both dropped further behind with losing weeks.

A Return to the Helm in Oakland – Troy Dilworth

On returning from my self imposed exile what do I find has happened to my Oakland squad?

The batting is a shadow of it's former self, 4 big bats have left the club, best known of these being their switch hitting outfielder Harris. He was a superstar. That will leave a hole in any batting lineup, so it's no surprise that Oakland are struggling to score runs. In fact, after only 60 odd games they have already scored some 350 less runs than Arizona!

On paper, the pitching is potentially not too bad, however a few lefties will need to be brought into the ballclub to try and take the pressure off starting pitcher Alan Benes. This will probably have to wait though as the batters will be the main focus of free agency for quite awhile.

A good starting point would be to work out how to win an away game as Oakland are currently a very dismal 1-29 on the road this season! If the Oakland management can fathom that conundrum then that will go a long way to putting Oakland back on their feet. Just don't expect any miracles in the short term but hopefully we will be competitive sooner rather than later!

Pittsburgh Ponderings – Andrew Purdie

For the Pirates this season pitching has been the great frustration. We look good on paper but just aren't producing. Last week one of my pitchers

started twice and managed a total of 2 innings!

Finances are tight and rebuilding is difficult but in the National League Central anything can happen. With the results swinging wildly for all teams concerned it remains the tightest division in both leagues. Still all to play for.

Week Eight Key Matchups

Despite being bottom of the division, the Blue Jays have given the Yankees as much trouble as anyone – currently they are responsible for 20% of their losses, and New York have to travel to Toronto. In the National League the top of the table matchup sees St Louis, coming off an excellent week, travel to Chicago and have an opportunity to build a significant lead at the top of the division.

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>