



# MLB4 Newsletter

Season 20  
Week 16  
ed. Rob Crowther

Welcome to the third issue of the MLB4 newsletter, just over six short seasons after the second one! I'm not sure how often I'll be able to get an issue out, though I may be able to beat my current average of one every two seasons. If you send me some contributions I'll endeavour to put another newsletter together, please see the end for contact details if you have something to say.

## Yankees Target Win Record

New York started the week on a ten game winning streak and needing just seven more wins, or seven Blue Jay losses, to clinch the division with three weeks to spare. After the series in Toronto it was down to just one win as the Blue Jays only managed six runs. The Yankees then swept two other second place teams to secure their second consecutive 9-0 week and stretch their unbeaten run to 19 games. At their current win percentage they're set to win 136 games - a standout total for MLB4 even with the gaudy win totals the top teams have been putting up in recent seasons. Meanwhile the Blue Jays rebounded from their initial setback with series wins against Detroit and Los Angeles to remain on course for the wildcard.

Detroit also managed to clinch their division with three weeks to spare, barring a spectacular collapse where they lose all 27 remaining games by ten runs. However they suffered surprising series

losses against Cleveland and Toronto before a return to form against AL East whipping boys Baltimore. The White Sox' hopes of a wildcard faded somewhat with a series loss to the Twins and getting swept by the Yankees either side of a 2-1 series win against the Rays.

The Mariners actually clinched their division last week, but since they're the only team in the AL West with a winning record they're easy to ignore. Seattle are still on course for a hundred win season but manager Eatough will be concerned by the five game losing streak they find themselves on.

## Race for the East will go down to the wire

Washington and Atlanta have been neck and neck for most of the season and went into this week's series in Atlanta with one game separating them. The Braves got back on level terms by winning game one before the Nationals won the second two games to eke out a two game advantage. Washington then failed to take advantage of a soft schedule, winning only four of their remaining six against Chicago and San Diego, while Atlanta managed to win five of six against Arizona and Cincinnati.

The two contenders in the West also faced off in the opening series, the Dodgers extending their lead with a series win. Just like the East the leaders were unable to drive their advantage home as the Giants won five of their last six while LA managed to win only four.

The Dodgers are still in pole position for their third consecutive division title with a five game lead, but as the Giants went to the World Series from the wildcard both times it probably doesn't bother them that much. The biggest news in the NL West this week was the arrival of a new manager, David Barnett, at the Padres. San Diego last had a winning record back in season nine when they won the division, since then they've been also-rans so David has some work ahead of him to get them back in contention.

In the Central the Reds had an average week but are in no danger of being caught up by any of their division rivals. They can start plotting for the postseason and a divisional round showdown with the Dodgers. The Cubs had a big week to get back into second place but it's far too late for them to make any sort of run at the division.

### **This Week in History Season 16**

Changing of the guard was evident in the AL Central as the season 15 winners Cleveland couldn't close the gap on the upstart Tigers despite an 8-1 week. Manager Lee, in his first full season, had Detroit on a 12 game winning streak and held an 11 game lead with 18 to play. New York and Seattle were leading the other two American League divisions while Toronto had a two game lead over Cleveland in the wildcard race.

Over in the NL the Giants were the standout team with an 8-1 week and looked well on their way to a second consecutive division title. Behind them the Dodgers had been having a great season and looked all set for their first playoff appearance with a 16 game lead over the Braves for the wildcard. Pittsburgh had the second best record in the National League and had the Central clinched while Washington needed just six wins out the last 18 to win the East for the fourth consecutive season.

### **Draft Preview**

For new manager in San Diego it looks like any late upturn in form isn't going to cost them much in the draft, as long as he wanted a pitcher. The sweet spot for hitters looks to be in picks 13-16, so there may be some quality pitchers available later in the round if teams looking for hitting drop down the list.

### **Week Eight Key Matchups**

There are only two divisional races of any interest as we head into week 16, the NL East and NL West. The Divisional rivals don't play each other this week but the first place Nationals host the first place Dodgers in the final series while the second place Giants host the second place Braves. Looking at how the matchups have gone over the course of the season this week could be an opportunity for the Braves to sneak back into the lead in the East. New manager Barnett gets welcomed to the league by the Dodgers, a team San Diego haven't managed to beat since week 14 of season 18. That's not series wins, that's just a single game - LA are on a 25 game winning streak against the Padres!

### **Contact and Links**

Send any contributions to Rob Crowther at [gameplan@crowther.info](mailto:gameplan@crowther.info)

Snail mail at: 95 Wentworth Avenue, Finchley, London. N3 1YN.

For further discussion check out the Yahoo! Group at <http://goo.gl/PXrsd>

For results and statistics go to <http://www.gbspn.com>