

2 OUT BOTTOM OF THE 12th

Issue 186 Editor: Kevin Gibson, 31, Jedmoor, , Hebburn, Tyne & Wear, NE31 IET. Email:kevin@mets91.freemove.co.uk

MLB6

MARINERS SAIL AWAY

Hall of Fame

Kevin Reed, Dodgers



Ian Clark, Blue Jays



Kevin Gibson, Mets



Mike Sim, Rangers



Alan Molloy, Giants



Seattle wouldn't let it lie after not getting top billing last week as they equalled their 8-1 return last week to take the bragging rights this time around. They started with a hard fought series win at home to Anaheim and then went into overdrive with successive sweeps on the road in Tampa and home to the Tigers to establish command of the division by 7 games. Texas opened with a good sweep at home to the A's but defeat in Detroit put the brakes on their week a little in their next series. A good series win at home to the Blue Jays in their final series gave them a good 6-3 return and it moves them into second place in the division with 7 weeks to go. Oakland bounced back from their opening sweep to win on the road in Minnesota and they finished well too with a home victory over the Red Sox for a below par 4-5 week but I'm sure Oakland would have settled for that following their opening sweep. Anaheim were beaten in New York in their 2nd series and at home by the Twins in their final series for a poor 3-6 week and not much hope of catching the other 3 now they all have hit some semblance of form.

Toronto started with a very hard fought sweep on the road in Boston and with another sweep at home to the Brewers. Defeat in Texas in their final series took the lustre off a little but they can be well pleased with a very good 7-2 week as they clawed a game back on the division leading Yankees. New York themselves had a very consistent week as they recorded series wins at home to the Devil Rays and Angels before victory on the road in Chicago gave them a solid 6-3 return and an advantage of 5 games at the head of the division. Boston Bounced back in tremendous style from their opening sweep as they recorded a sweep of their own over the White Sox. Defeat in Oakland in their final series was a bit of a disappointment as their below par 4-5 week does little to enhance their post season aspirations. Tampa were swept at home by the Mariners in their 2nd series and defeated in Milwaukee in their 3rd for a very poor 2-7 week and as Coach Byrne points out later, it will take some time to turn things round in Tampa.

In the Central Minnesota started well with a hard fought series win over the Tigers and despite losing their 2nd series at home to the A's, they fought back well to defeat the Angels in Anaheim in their final series for a solid 5-4 week and a 3 game lead atop the division. Detroit recovered from their opening loss to defeat the Rangers but a sweep in Seattle in their final series left them with a poor 3-6 record for the week. Milwaukee lost at home to the White Sox in their opening series and then went further downhill as they succumbed to a sweep in Toronto next up. Victory over Tampa in their final series gave them their only win of the week and despite their poor 3-6 record they are still well in touch in the division. Chicago didn't build on their good start as they were swept in Boston in their 2nd series and beaten by the Yankees in their 3rd for a poor 3-6 week but like the other 3 teams in pursuit

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Cubs Bear Their Teeth

The Cubs continued their surge and following an excellent 8-1 record last time around they scorched another week with a very good 7-2 return. They opened with a great sweep on the road in St Louis, followed up with victory in Philadelphia and ended well with victory over the Expos to establish themselves as one of the teams to watch in the remaining weeks of the season. Cincinnati were defeated on the road in Pittsburgh in their opening series, they lost at home to the Rockies in their 2nd series and completed their week with victory in San Diego for a below par 4-5 return. St Louis recovered well from their opening sweep to record victories on the road in Atlanta and at home to the Mets in a real hard fought series for a below par 4-5 week and despite looking unlikely to catch the divisional leaders, a wild card berth is still a possibility. Pittsburgh had a nightmare following their good start as they lost at home to the Giants in their 2nd series and were pounded by the Dodgers in their 3rd for a poor 3-6 return for the week but the consolation is they still hold an 8 game lead at the head of the division.

Los Angeles started with a series win in San Diego, they warmed up a bit more with their 2nd road win of the week in Montreal and by the time they returned home to sweep the Pirates they were on fire with their 70 games won leading the league easily. Colorado started well with victory over the Giants, they followed up with a win on the road in Cincinnati and ended a most consistent week with victory over the Braves for an good 6-3 week and sign that the consistency Coach Dorman is striving for isn't that far away. San Francisco recovered from their opening loss to win in Pittsburgh but defeat in their final series at home to the Phillies left them with a below par 4-5 week and with the Dodgers gone the only chance they have for post season play is the wild card. San Diego were swept by the Mets in their 2nd series and beaten by the Reds in their 3rd for a very poor 2-7 record for the week.

New York opened with a hard fought sweep over their nearest rivals Montreal, they swept the padres next up but were beaten on the road in St Louis in their final series for a very good 7-2 week and a 21 game lead atop the division. Philadelphia started with a good series win over the Braves and despite going down to the in form Cubs in their next series they fought back well to win in San Francisco for a solid 5-4 week and signs that the Phillies are starting to get their act together. Atlanta were beaten at home by the Cardinals in their 2nd series and on the road in Colorado in their 3rd for a poor 3-6 week. Montreal were beaten at home by the Dodgers in their 2nd series and on the road in Chicago in their 3rd for a very poor 2-7 week and the extinguishing of any flicker of hope in catching the Mets this year.

Tampa So Far – Rob Byrne

They stink! But that's exactly what I want, a franchise to try and turn round. From the worst towell better if not the best. The roster was, and still is, in turmoil. No pitching of note and what there is overpaid. On the batting side there are some decent infielders but so many are much of a muchness competing for the same place in the team. Worst of all there were just 2 outfielders and one of them is a minor league player in truth, the other at the end of his career. There will be plenty of changes before the end of the season and this started with the signing of Trot Nixon. He's no star but he immediately improves my lineup. Off the field they are in better shape, money to play with, low wages and good backroom staff and facilities. Thanks for the kind words in the newsletter but its going to take a long time to turn these into winners. A high draft pick will be nice but it's not a short term fix for this team.

Boston Bugle – Alan Clements








The Red Sox are having a very up and down season. It started with an awful lot of down, followed by a large amount of up and continues to fluctuate on a weekly basis. It seems like the team is going to get back into the Wild Card race and then falls right back out of it again. Being swept by the Blue Jays in Week 11 in Fenway could be very costly come the end of the season. The worst thing about the series was that the three games were lost by a combined four runs. The pitching staff did a great job for no reward. The payroll was hugely inflated at the start of the season. I thought that the risk of keeping a high priced team may bring results, but all it brought was a team languishing in the doldrums for much of the first half. I have begun to juggle the roster in the hope of putting in place solid building blocks for next season. However, some pleasant surprises and more consistent pitching have seen the team climb back over .500 and have an outside chance of competing for the Wild Card down the stretch. A few more 8-1 weeks will be required and I can't afford to keep dropping series within the division. I'm hoping the continuation of my addition by subtraction policy will pay dividends. Switch-hitters 3B Hillenbrand and 1B Elster are finally starting to fulfil their promise with .300 seasons. The extra responsibility of batting fourth and fifth on a fairly regular basis seems to suit both of them. Garciaparra was starting to show real signs of age, but seems to have shaken that off since a productive move to the leadoff spot. Manny Ramirez is living up to his star status. More production from elsewhere is necessary if the team is going to challenge. A lack of talent on the bench and little production from centre and right field is holding the team back. It also means that players are getting tired because of a lack of rest. All the time I have been managing the Red Sox I have tried to build a solid starting rotation and reliable bullpen. The emergence of Arroyo and Martinez as genuine number one type pitchers has given me hope for the future. Castillo has performed very well as the third starter. Veteran Chad Fox has stepped out of the bullpen into a starting role, but he and others have not really generated great results from the fourth and fifth spots in the rotation. The bullpen is doing a good job as starters are giving them rest by going deeper into games on the whole. Injuries are testing the depth of the pitching staff at the moment, but they continue to cope admirably in shifting roles. I'd love to make it into the postseason again, but my formidable divisional opponents make it a very tall order. I'll keep plugging away this season and hope for the best. Even if we don't make the postseason due to continuing roster restructuring there is always next year...you can tell I'm a Red Sox fan can't you...

Dodger Talk – Kevin Reed

I've been watching the excellent NASN coverage of the baseball playoffs and it's struck me that it's not only in MLB6 that a good offence can make the difference between success and failure. Whether it's the all-round hitting excellence of the Red Sox, the Cardinals' "Murder Row" (Pujols, Edmonds, Walker et al), or Houston's "Killer Bs" (Biggio, Berkman & Beltran), this year great hitting is destroying good pitching in the first round of games. St Louis even tied the postseason record of 5 HR's in a game against the Dodgers to blow them away in game 1 of their series. Alright, excellent pitching and defence also has its place and the Twins set a new record for double plays in a postseason game (also 5) to blank the Yankees, but New York left a lot of men on the bases (they actually out-hit Minnesota 9 to 7) and just a couple of big hits at the right time would have seen a very different story.

Anyway, on to our own hard-fought league. What the hell has happened to the Giants this year? Not that I'm complaining obviously!! At the moment I'm undertaking my annual attempt to reduce the wage bill and bring in some decent players with potential to replace those likely to suffer from the ageing process at the end of the season. With the pressure off a bit it's also easier to rest some of the worst fatigued players even though their replacements like Green and Kendall don't really produce the goods. Good luck to all of the new coaches in MLB6 - in my opinion this is a top league and we're very lucky to have both a superb newsletter and a lot of interaction amongst the coaches. Keep up the good work, mate!

Wild Card Race – AL

	<u>W</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>GB</u>
 Blue Jays	60	39	–
 Rangers	56	43	4
 Athletics	55	44	5
 Red Sox	52	47	8
 Tigers	47	52	13
 Brewers	46	53	14
 White Sox	45	54	15

Wild Card Race – NL

	<u>W</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>GB</u>
 Reds	56	43	–
 Giants	52	47	4
 Cardinals	50	49	6
 Rockies	47	52	9

Thanks for the contributions, keep them coming in and the newsletter will keep going from strength to strength. It's your efforts that make it worthwhile. Good luck to you all.

Deadline for Contributions: Saturday 23rd October 2004