

2 OUT BOTTOM OF THE 12th

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MLB6 NATIONALS/BRAVES HANG TOUGH

Hall of Fame

Kevin Reed, Dodgers



Ian Clark, Blue Jays



Kevin Gibson, Mets



Mike Sim, Rangers



Alan Molloy, Giants



Simon Greener, Yankees



Nigel Beck, Pirates



Washington started off superbly with a hard fought sweep over the high flying Mets, they followed up with successive victories over Chicago and in San Francisco for a very good 7-2 week. Atlanta opened their week with a sweep of Philadelphia and despite going down to a home defeat to the Rockies they ended their week with a fantastic sweep in Chicago to mirror the Nationals very good 7-2 week. New York were stunned by their opening sweep and with series upcoming against the Dodgers and the Pirates, things looked a little bleak. That was until they swept them both leaving the Mets with a good 6-3 return for the week. Philadelphia recovered from their opening sweep to defeat Pittsburgh and finished an excellent week of the NL East with a sweep on the road in San Diego for a solid 5-4 week.

Colorado started the week with a surprise loss in San Diego but they rallied with victories on the road in Atlanta and at home over the Reds for a solid 5-4 week. San Francisco opened with a superb series win on the road in Los Angeles but subsequent defeats on the road in Cincinnati and at home to Washington left the Giants with a below par 4-5 week. The Dodgers were swept in New York in their 2nd series but victory at home to Houston in their final series salvages something from an otherwise very poor 3-6 week. San Diego didn't build on their good start as they lost in Houston in their 2nd series and were swept at home by the Phillies in their 3rd for a very poor 3-6 record for the week.

Cincinnati opened their week with solid series wins over the Cubs and Giants but defeat in their final series on the road in Colorado left the Reds with just a solid 5-4 return following a good weeks work. Houston started with defeat in their opening series in Pittsburgh and despite beating the Padres next up they lost in LA to the Dodgers in their final series for a below par 4-5 week. Pittsburgh didn't build on their good start and it cost them the lead in the division as they were beaten in Philadelphia in their

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Mariners Again

Seattle took the headlines in the AL for the third week in a row following another very good 7-2 week. They opened with a win over the Angels, followed up with a sweep on the road in Detroit and finished with a win over the Blue Jays for the best record in the AL. Texas were beaten by the A's in their opening series and by the Twins in their 2nd but a superb sweep at home to the Red Sox in which they completely shut out Boston gave them light in what was just a solid 5-4 week. Oakland built on their opening win with a super series win in Tampa Bay but a sweep at the hands of the Tigers in their final series left them with a below par 4-5 record for the week. Los Angeles Angels were beaten in New York in their 2nd series and at home by the Twins in their final series for a poor 3-6 re-

Minnesota started the week well with a good series win over Chicago, they followed up with another series win over Texas and ended a most consistent week with another series win in Los Angeles for a good 6-3 record for the week. Milwaukee started with a win over Detroit and despite losing their 2nd series in Toronto they fought back well with a superb series win over the D-Rays for a solid 5-4 record for the week. Detroit were swept in their 2nd series at home to the Mariners but they showed character to fight back and inflict their own sweep on the road in Oakland for a below par 4-5 record for the week. Chicago were beaten by Boston in their 2nd series but they recovered to win a good series over the Yankees for a below par 4-5 return.

New York started with a good win over the Blue Jays, they followed up with victory over the Angels before falling on the road in Chicago for a solid 5-4 week and the lead in the division. Boston opened with victories over the Devil Rays and White Sox but they were shut out in a sweep Texas leaving Boston with a below par 4-5 week. Toronto recovered from their opening loss to beat the Brewers but defeat in Seattle left them with a below par 4-5 week. Tampa were beaten by Oakland in their 2nd series and by

Boston Red Sox Week 3 Update

The Red Sox have stumbled out of the gate. An appalling start on the road and too many runs given up sees the Red Sox a game under .500 and chasing the Yankees. The AL East looks like a tough division again this season, if I'm still in the Wildcard or division races with a couple of weeks left I'll be happy.

The release of the ultra-reliable and smooth fielding Nomar Garciaparra at shortstop was a tough decision, but monetary considerations and the emergence of Pokey Reese as a long-term replacement swayed the decision. It will be a shame to see Garciaparra retire if no-one has picked him up this turn.

The batting lineup continues to underachieve, as it has in most of my time as manager. If anybody has any suggestions for setting up my lineup to maximum effect or whether a power-based or high average lineup is most effective are more than welcome. Ramirez, Hillenbrand and Ortiz in the meat of the order have failed to produce on a consistent basis, which is putting extra pressure on the pitching staff to produce shutdown stuff. When this goes wrong you see results like Week 3, a promising week ended with a three-game sweep by the Texas Rangers, in which the Red Sox failed to score a single run and gave up many. It must be said that Mike's Rangers are something of a bogey team and seem to beat up the Red Sox regardless...

Ace of the staff Pedro Martinez is suffering a terrible start to the season, with an alarming 10.46 ERA and an 0-3 record. Schilling and Castillo deserve better records for the mostly impressive performances so far. The bullpen is solid, unspectacular and is well set for a long while with good young talent. I hope the bullpen will blossom over the next couple of seasons. The addition of an experienced starter and an experienced reliever could help out the staff a great deal this season. The addition of a more adequate backup for Varitek would provide the opportunity for an occasional rest, but reasonable backup catchers seem in very short supply.

Thanks for keeping the newsletter going, it's always interesting to hear what is going on with the other managers. I like the all-time statistics that you keep and I'm hoping to become the Red Sox leader in victo-

Alternative Review/Preview - Mike Sim

AL East

Tampa Bay - Need to slug to survive against more talented teams in the East. Rob is still busy adding by subtraction of some big contracts, replacing them with some young players with potential. Over-paid a bit for Fossum but can afford to.

The season will be a success if... they finish 3rd in the AL East or get 70 wins.

Boston Red Sox - Need their offence to pick it up and give their pitchers the run support they deserve. They need recent SS signing McEwing to give them Nomar like production on half the wages. They may need to re-negotiate with team leader Ramirez.

The season will be a success if... they make the playoffs either as East winner or wild card. Could win 90+ and miss out.

Toronto - Need to shrug off their slow start and find a way to win close games. Would like to sign 2b Hudson back or see him go for the full amount to give them the LPs. Would like to find a cheaper option at C. In good shape overall.

The season will be a success if... they win the AL East and make a serious playoff run.

New York - Need their bats to carry them whilst they retool on the mound. Well placed to shop for free agents and have already spent well on C Williams and 3b Crede. If they slip back under .500 expect wholesale roster changes.

The season will be a success if... they can hold on to their playoff spot from last year, or if they retool effectively.

AL Central

Chicago WS - Need their bats to liven up, particularly on the road in their division. They were 21-27 in the Central last season. Would love to see Eric Davis emerge as a true superstar (he was brilliant in 2 starts this week). Hal Morris is a key man.

The season will be a success if... they won the AL Central or won 90 games.

Minnesota - Need to find a way to keep the high earners they have like Bernie Williams. Need to add another quality LHB and would love to upgrade their catching tandem. Pitching is nicely experienced and could surprise a few teams.

The season will be a success if... they won the AL Central.

Detroit - Need to score more runs to sustain a decent start. Last in hitting and first in pitching - expect to see both move toward the middle of the rankings, pitching could surprise much like the Twins. Dean Palmer seems to have all the tools.

The season will be a success if... they retain the Central or win 90 games.

Milwaukee - Need more series like the 29 run effort vs. Tampa. Could not survive an injury to Belliard. Need SS Lansing to emerge as a real star. Also need to keep improving their infrastructure. Tough juggling act for Paul. Need pitching to carry them.

The season will be a success if... they win the Central or 85 games.

AL West

Anaheim - Need to shop wisely if they want to make up the ground they lost last season. Drafted well but Martin can't rebuild with that alone - they need to bring in the right people via free agency. Needs to find a replacement for C Williams.

The season will be a success if... they add 2 or 3 quality players via FA and 2 more in the draft.

Oakland - Need to keep beating the Rangers as they did this week. Oakland was 5-13 vs. Texas last season. Building a nice infield around 2b Petty and SS Newman. Need Reed Johnson or Catalanotto to emerge in the 3rd OF spot.

The season will be a success if... they finish 2nd in the West or win 85+ games.

Seattle - Need to keep on believing in Troy's pitching ethos - it's working. Hitting is more talented than any other team in the AL and it shows. Would like to re-negotiate with C Jackson but he may be worth every \$.

The season will be a success if... they win the West and have a serious playoff run. World Series repeat

a definite possibility.

Texas - Need to hang in there and not panic if the Mariners open up a 10+ game gap. They need to find some way to beat AL East teams (22-26 last year, 73-41 in game away from the East). Need F.Cordero to emerge as team leader. Wages a problem.

The season will be a success if... they make the playoffs and have a serious playoff run.

NL East

Atlanta - Need to not panic about their pitching. Could do with an experienced SP to take pressure off the other starters. Need to get a quality player if they do trade Chipper Jones away. Need to hit as many HR's as they give up at home if possible.

The season will be a success if... they finish 2nd in the East with 70+ wins.

Philadelphia - Need to keep shedding the unpalatable contracts but must add quality along the way. Adding RHP Quevedo was a solid move and they have the foundations of a decent pitching staff. Maybe too much pressure on C Jenkins to produce runs now.

The season will be a success if... they win more games than last year with 75 a benchmark. 2nd in the East also a target.

Nationals - Need to start hitting - they have some real talent but it's got to produce for them to have a chance. Could use a LHP or two to give them some variety particularly within the division. Dave Lewis should be feasting on the pitching in the East but isn't yet.

The season will be a success if... they emerge as the 2nd team in this division and win 75+ games.

Mets - Need to add some depth - lengthy injuries to key players could hurt, particularly if they occur late in the season. Their pitching is better than advertised so far but it's early days. Hitting is great but will need continued contributions from all corners.

The season will be a success if... they have a serious playoff run - the East should be theirs. They want a World Series.

NL Central

Cubs - Need to string some wins together early on will fall too far behind in a very tough division. The rotation of 8* veterans can work but 80 walks through 18 games is hurting them and is 34 more than their hitters have. Need to win a home series badly!

The season will be a success if... they win 75 games or finish 3rd in the division.

Reds - Need to keep up the momentum - making great FA signings like Vizquel and Sirotko has really helped. Need to balance out their infield a bit - at one point they had 4 C and 5 3B! Despite that making few errors. Could use another quality LHP.

The season will be a success if... they can return to the playoffs, as Central winner or wildcard.

Astros - Need to address their high wages before the LPs run low. Need to find some power after losing Sean Berry. Play some great D and have good team speed so may be going another way. Must find the right balance in the rotation but have options.

The season will be a success if... they play .500 ball in Rob's first season.

Pirates - Need to find a long term replacement for C Steinbach who they smartly re-signed. They need to prove their microscopic ERA of weeks 1&2 can be sustained over a season. Need to work out how they are going to pay Cordero, Lansing etc.

The season will be a success if.. they make the playoffs and stay solvent!

NL West

Colorado - Need to keep scoring runs at home in their cavernous ballpark. Have the resources to add to an already decent hitting team but must decide if they can make a run this year or if they are one season away. Would like young pitchers to step up.

The season will be a success if... they finish second in the West with 80+wins and maybe a wild card.

Dodgers - Need to find a long-term replacement for Lo Duca. Would regret not re-signing Darwin this week as rotation without him is struggling somewhat. Need to prove they can play with the Mets who got the first punch in last week.

Deadline for Contributions: Saturday 14th May 2005