

2 OUT BOTTOM OF THE 12th

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MLB6

Perfect White Sox

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



Chicago stormed clear atop the AL Central this week following a perfect 9-0 week which extended their winning streak to 10 games. They opened with a home sweep of the Brewers , doubled up with a sweep on the road in Oakland and ended with an impressive sweep of the Mariners to catapult them through the division. Detroit started with a hard fought series win at home to the Twins but with successive defeats at home to Boston and on the road in New York they ended with a below par 4-5 week. Minnesota recovered from their opening loss to earn a hard fought series win over the Blue Jays but defeat on the road in Tampa in their final series left them with a below par 4-5 week. Milwaukee were beaten in Anaheim in their 2nd series but they did well to edge a close series with Texas in their final series but that still left them with a poor 3-6 week.

Toronto started with a good victory over the Red Sox and despite going down on the road in Anaheim in their next series they stormed back with a home sweep of Oakland to claim a good 6-3 week. New York were ultra-consistent this week as they started with victory in Tampa Bay, followed up with a better series win in Texas and finished with a home win over Detroit to match the Blue Jays good 6-3 week. Boston recovered from that opening loss to win in Detroit and at home to the Angels for a solid 5-4 return for the week. Tampa were beaten in their 2nd series on the road in Seattle but they ended their week well with a home win over Minnesota for a below par 4-5 return.

Texas opened with a home victory over Seattle but it was all downhill from there as they were beaten at home by the Yankees in their 2nd series and on the road in Milwaukee in their 3rd for a below par 4-5 week. Los Angeles were beaten at home by Oakland in their opening series. They fought back in their 2nd series to defeat Milwaukee but a loss in Boston in their final series left them with a below par 4-5 week. Seattle bounced back from their opening loss to record a home win over Tampa but a sweep in Chicago in their final series left the Mariners with a poor 3-6 week. Oakland didn't build on their good opening win as they crashed to sweeps at home to Oakland and on the road in Toronto for a very poor 2-7 record for the week.

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Wagner Tosses No-hitter for Houston

Billy Wagner tossed a no hitter for Houston in their 2nd series sweep over Washington. The Astros had started the week really well with an opening sweep of Cincinnati, Wagner's masterpiece was the final game of the second series but following that the Astros capitulated to a series loss in Atlanta for a disappointing end to an otherwise very good 7-2 week. Pittsburgh opened their week with a sweep in Chicago, next up was a good series win in Colorado before returning home for a win over San Francisco to seal a very good 7-2 week giving them a 4-game cushion atop the division. Cincinnati bounced back from their opening sweep to beat Philadelphia but defeat in New York in their final series left them with a poor 3-6 effort for the week. Chicago were beaten in Los Angeles by the Dodgers in their 2nd series and not even a home win over San Diego in their final series could brighten a poor 3-6 week for the Cubs.

New York started well with a hard fought sweep over the Braves, victory in San Diego in their 2nd series was followed by a home win over Cincinnati to give the Mets a very good 7-2 return for the week. Philadelphia started with a good home series win over the Nationals and despite going down in Cincinnati in their next series they rallied well to beat the Dodgers in their final series for a solid 5-4 record for the week. Atlanta were beaten in San Francisco in their 2nd series but they came back to beat Houston in their final series but that will not cheer the fans after another poor 3-6 week for the Braves. Washington didn't recover from their opening loss at things went from bad to worse as they were swept by Houston in their 2nd series and at home by Colorado in their 3rd for a terrible 1-8 record for the week.

Los Angeles started with a series win in Colorado, they followed up with a home win over Chicago before losing their final series on the road in Philly for a solid 5-4 return. San Francisco started with a win over the Padres followed by a home win over the Braves before mirroring the Dodgers week with defeat in their final series on the road in Pittsburgh for a solid 5-4 return. Colorado were beaten at

Boston Bugle - Alan Clements

The Red Sox currently languish in last place in the AL East, six games under .500 and nine games out of the Division lead and the AL Wildcard race. The Red Sox home record is fine, but it gets ugly on the road and the Rangers beat our brains out wherever we play. An inability to pick up series wins is proving costly. Starting pitching has been a huge disappointment thus far. Ace Pedro Martinez has an ERA that looks like a good score in ice skating (5.96) and a 2-5 record. The only bright spot in recent weeks is the addition of Allen McDill to the starting rotation. The rest of the starting pitching is forgettable. LHP Castillo has been relegated to the bullpen this week with Wakefield promoted into the starting rotation. Chad Fox's move to the bullpen has been a success, but no other pitcher is fulfilling their potential, of which there appears to be plenty. Sadly Fox will probably be released at the end of the season as he is old and may become expensive. The batting lineup lacks power. Superstar Manny Ramirez is putting up good numbers, but our lack of depth in the lineup is proving costly in close games. Management have tried to move Ramirez and his huge contract in recent weeks, but have been unsuccessful thus far. A lesser outfielder will be picked up if the entire lineup can be improved in the long run. Hopefully this will be possible through the draft, free agents and more flexibility with the payroll. I have to stop using my first round pick on a pitcher the whole time...

A substandard week this week will see the Red Sox dead and buried at midseason. It may then be time to experiment with the rotation and some younger players in the field. I'd like to keep alive my streak of finishing over .500, but maybe it's not meant to be this year.

Chicago Post - Rob Byrne

Up until last week I was quite satisfied with the White Sox start to the season, I never expected us to be big challengers for the playoffs and am expecting a record on or around .500 for the season. However, 10 straight wins may have changed expectations somewhat in Chicago.

Suddenly we are leading the division and have a record which matches up to the other playoff contenders very well - unfortunately looking at last week's performance with an unbiased eye leads me to believe this is a temporary aberration rather than the beginning of a charge to the world series. Of the three teams we played last week, two have a combined record of 50-94, the other sweep was against the Mariners and, while they are genuine playoff contenders, we got two freakishly good pitching performances and won another in extra innings. So I don't think we'll be seeing too many more 9-0 weeks out of the White Sox...

On the positive side one 9-0 week is one more than I was expecting this season, I'm now thinking 85-90 wins is an achievable goal for this team instead of the 80-85 I was hoping for and, given the performance of the other teams in the AL Central, that may turn out to be enough for a division title. I think to really challenge this year we still need another blue chip left handed batter and it seems unlikely we'll get one with the current state of our finances and the free agent market, but there is plenty of hope for the future on this squad. Young pitchers Guerrero, Davis and Green are among the league leaders, Beltré is doing much better this season at 3B than he was last year at 1B and we have a bevy of young players picking up good form in the minor leagues. Most of the offensive output has hinged around veterans Butler, Perez, Durham and Codero so far this season, and at least half of them will be departing before next season, but I believe we have the players waiting in the wings who can not only replace them but eventually exceed them.

The pitching is loaded with potential and is only going to get better over the next few seasons, yet already it is good enough to be among the best in the league. Even if we miss out on the playoffs this season I am confident this is a team that will soon be challenging on a regular basis.

Milwaukee Messenger - Paul Denyer

Manager Paul Denyer has taken his Milwaukee side from division champions in his first season in charge to the bottom of the division trailing the White Sox by 14 games after 72 games and fans are starting to wonder if this manager is going to be around for much longer. The answer is yes as the Brewers management confirmed they are in support of their managers plan to rebuild the Brewers, to win back the AL Central title again and produce a team that can compete in the playoffs with the big boys of the AL.

With one of the best pitching staff in the league at the moment attention turns to the offensive side of the ball which has been a bug bear of the managers since taking over the side. 2b Ron Belliard is relied upon too much and Burnitz and Hammonds need to step up; Kade Johnson the young catcher was leading the team in home runs till last turn and has been helped with an off season of developing with swing but we still need a bone a fide star to play along side Belliard.

With nothing forth coming in the free agent listing (or least anything we can afford at the moment) you could see the team offensively dismantled to bring in young and upcoming stars so expect the Brewers to be competitive but don't expect miracles and a climb from the bottom spot in the division is the managements message to the Brewers faithful!

Tampa Tribune -Rob Byrne

Down in Tampa things are going very well. The rebuilding process is coming along nicely and for once we are off the bottom of the division (though that may change this week). The rebuilding has had to focus on two distinct areas - a revamped batting line up built around veteran SS Ledesma and a reduction in costs of an overpaid, underperforming pitching staff. Neither are complete but both have moved along well.

On the batting side the youngsters are performing well and future hopes are high. Rookie outfielder Crawford has played lead off for much of the season and his form has surpassed expectations. 3b Walsh is a star of the future and loves playing at Tropicana Field. Veterans Burks, Nixon and Minor are all also contributing well with the bat. I'm still a quality CF short of a decent line up and some of the other youngsters are struggling with the pressure but I believe they will come good.

Pitching is still a problem area. It doesn't have a star of the calibre of Ledesma to carry it when times get tough and it lacks experience. Those with experience, James and Fraser in particular, lack the skills to get through. This will move to become the focus of improvement over the next half season and possibly the draft.

Overall though I did not expect to be doing as well as we are. Tampa fans are seeing winning baseball (we aren't so good on the road) and so go home happy more often now. The owners are seeing a healthy profit with the lowest wages in the league. At the start of the season I expressed a hope to get to 63 wins. I'd be disappointed with that now. I'm aiming for .500 but I accept that's a tough target but I think this team will get better over time and I want to aim high.

On a side note, I'm just glad I'm in the AL East. Your Mets look unbeatable - at team batting average of .316 is unbelievable! We visit you on week 10 and I'm not looking forward to it!

Just enough space at the end for me to say a few words. That is the end of the 200th issue of the newsletter. It was started to try and give the active coaches a little bit of feedback and fun during the MLB6 season. It has, at times, been a bit of a slog but I'm glad we are still going and hopefully with your help we'll get better and better. It has been a long time and I would just like to thank you all for help and for your contributions. I'm going on holiday for 2 weeks at the start of August and just wondered whether anybody fancied a shot at being a guest editor for the time I am away. If you do just let me know otherwise we'll just miss one out.