

'Better Eight Than Never' *- The Newsletter of MLB8*

Week 1 and the week that never was!

Well, we're underway but not without considerable controversy. Due to an administrative error at the Commissioner's office, the first 9 games of the season had to be re-run. Without going into too many details, this meant there were some big winners and some big losers. The main winners were Toronto, KC, Texas and Atlanta. The main losers were Tampa, Cleveland, Oakland and Arizona. We can only hope that things go smoother from now on and the luck (good and bad) that some teams have had will even out during the season.

A few teams made big statements in Week 1 as they staked claims for being favourites in their respective leagues. Toronto and Anaheim looked good in the AL while Atlanta and LA started the best in the NL. Teams continued to make slight adjustments to their rosters through the free-agent market (12 free-agent moves). Also, we are now able to see the pay structures of each team. The BoSox have the highest payroll in the league, while the Mariners have the lowest. They have a wonderful stadium at SafeCo Field but it will be interesting to see if they can win enough games to attract the fans to come and watch them.

The average number of runs scored in Week 1 was 3.66 so the preseason indications that this would be a pitching league look as if they will become true. Also, the 2 teams with the lowest ERA's had the best records in the league. Close games were a theme with 10 games going to extra innings, including a 14-inning marathon between my Rangers and the A's. (we had 62 AB's in that game with Hank Blalock going 0 for 8!)

We also had a perfect game as Adam Bernero of the Rockies blanked the Cubs. Congratulations to Bernero and his manager Mark Hall – an outstanding performance in an otherwise disappointing 3-6 start.

The view from Oakland by Tom Shewry

"I'm absolutely gutted it was re-run. Having managed to go 7-2 (in the week that never was! – ed) with some fantastic pitching - team ERA 1.98 - I saw my team crushed in a reversal of fortunes to 2-7. Oh well it was probably too good to be true. My roster is extremely

young, with no depth but lots of potential so I'd be surprised if I was a contender for a couple of seasons."

Week 2 Preview

I'm sure we all hope that Week 2 will be much calmer than the chaos of Week 1. Some teams may feel that they have a score to settle but 3 teams in particular will have revenge on their minds for another reason. The Yankees, Twins and Mariners will host the Jays, White Sox and Angels respectively and will be looking to avenge the series sweeps they suffered in Week 1.

In the AL, White Sox ace Jon Adkins will look to continue his streak, having pitched 2 complete games in Week 1. Angels manager Paul Beaumont will be looking to see if he can any more pitchers who can throw complete games for him, having had 4 different pitchers achieve this in Week 1.

In the NL, the 'Adam Bernero watch' will move to San Francisco as he is likely to pitch in the series against the Giants. Geoff Geary of the Phillies will be looking to repeat the 1-hitter he threw against the Marlins. Arizona ace Chris Capuano will face the Dodgers again (1-hitter) and look to silence their bats again though this week he will be trying to do it in Dodger stadium. Braves manager Mike Sim is the Paul Beaumont of the American League so will be looking to his 2 other starters to add their names to his list of pitchers who have hurled complete games.

I would welcome any contributions for the newsletter in the future and appreciate that there was a pretty quick turnaround between turns this time and also – if you were unlucky in the re-run – your contributions may well have been unprintable anyway!

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Until next week, Ian.