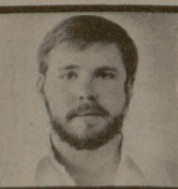


the sports



Mark Patterson

The race is on

The 1978 major league pennant races have turned into one hell of a good topic for conversation among sportsmen. And where ever you have a group of fans your destined to hear all kinds of choices. So with some 12 games remaining on this year's regular season schedule I think it's time cry out my choices and risk my sporting reputation. Here are my predictions on who the four teams will be vying for the title of world champion.

National League West

I'll start with the easiest choice of the three divisions and go from here. What started out as the best race in either league has turned into a runaway. The Los Angeles Dodgers, riding the power hitting of Reggie Smith and Steve Garvey and the flawless pitching of the entire staff, have run away and hid from the rest of the division. Or at least the other two teams worth mentioning.

The Dodgers are fortunate to be playing in the easiest division in baseball. Until this season it was a yearly race between the Cincinnati Reds and L.A. to see who would represent the West for the National League pennant. And with the collapse of the Red's pitching staff, the ace of their staff this season is Bill Bonham with a 11-5 record, coupled with injuries to Joe Morgan and Johnny Bench early in the year reduced the Reds to also-rans in 1978.

But thank Commissioner Kuhn for the San Francisco Giants. With the acquisition of Vida Blue (16-9) the Giants became contenders. At least for most of the season. But as with most young teams, the Giants folded late and are a distant 9 1/2 games back going into last night's play. But you can bet your bubble gum cards they'll be back contending in 1979.

National League East

Who would have thought the Pittsburgh Pirates would be battling for the East crown? From the first weeks of the season the Pirates were so far back in the pack the people of that city couldn't wait for the return of Terry Bradshaw and his crew.

But that was before Dave Parker got rolling. And carrying the hottest bat in the National League, he leads the league with a .327 average with 29 home runs (third best) and a league-leading 111 RBIs. Going into yesterday's action against the Chicago Cubs the Pirates stood but one game behind the division-leading Philadelphia Phillies. And Pittsburgh plays seven of its last 11 game in the friendly confines of Three Rivers Stadium. And for the steelmen, there may be no place like home in 1978.

But the Phillies can control their own destiny in their last 12 games but have one big factor working against them; they play nine of their final 12 games on the road. And an even harder task awaits them in the season's final series. They have to visit the Pirates in a four game set which could easily decide the divisional winner.

And from this point of view it looks like it will be the Pittsburgh Pirates facing the Los Angeles Dodgers for the National League pennant.

American League West

The experts originally predicted this division would be a three-way fight between the defending champion Kansas City Royals, the California Angels and the Texas Rangers. But someone forgot to tell the Rangers and Angels as the two sat back and watched Kansas City win the crown for the third straight year.

Texas folded early as their free agents, with the exception of Al Oliver's .317 batting average, never performed to expectations. And it appears owner Brad Corbett will buy a few more this off-season in hopes of finally buying a pennant to Texas.

The California Angels are mathematically still in contention, 5 1/2 games back, but are dangerously close to elimination. New manager Jim Fregosi couldn't pull his troops together when given the reigns in mid-season, yet he generated some excitement if not a pennant for owner Gene Autry.

As for Charlie O. and his A's, it had to have been the luck of the Irish early in the season. But luck won't win a pennant.

American League East

It's hard to describe what's happened in the East this season. Shakespeare couldn't put it into words. But the actions have generated the most press, controversy and excitement within recent memory as the New York Yankees, Boston Red Sox, Milwaukee Brewers and Baltimore Orioles, at one time or another, all contended for the East pennant.

But as the season progressed the elite came forward as the Red Sox and Yankees ran away from the rest of the division and went head-to-head for the lead.

If you follow baseball you know that the Red Sox came away with their heads spinning as the Yankees took seven of eight game from the former division-leading Red Sox.

The Yankees are trying to make history by winning the East this season. Never, in the history of the American League, has a club won the championship when they changed managers in mid-season. And upon Billy Martin's dismissal and Bob Lemmons' assumption of duties the Yankees have made their charge for the championship.

But history will have to wait another year as the Red Sox will take the East and face Kansas City for the pennant. Even though they dropped seven games to New York, Boston was only two games back going into Wednesday night's action.

The remainder of this season's schedule favors neither as Boston faces Detroit and Toronto in their last 11 games, six at home and five on the road. The Yankees also have six games against Toronto, three at home, and they face Cleveland for six games in a 3 home, 3 away split.

But I have to put my vote in for the Sox. If they didn't fade after the New York Massacre they won't fade now. I see it as Boston-Kansas City for the American League Crown.

Carter country

Receiver is home

By SEAN PETTY
Battalion Staff

After spending two years at Tyler County Junior College, Gerald Carter is home to stay.

Carter, who plays split end for Texas A&M along with Doug Teague, played high school football for Bryan with halfback Curtis Dickey.

Carter had offers from Houston, Baylor and SMU after his two years at Tyler, but came to Texas A&M for one main reason.

"I came to A&M because I wanted to come home," Carter said. "I wanted to play in front of my own people again and always wanted to play for the Aggies. Plus, the addition of the I-formation really made the offer attractive."

Carter has received praise from the Aggie coaches on his ability to catch passes in a crowd. Coaches are also pleased with Carter's presence because they were able to move former split end Darrell Smith to defensive back to add speed to that department.

Carter likes the I-formation because of the added passing dimension. "I love to catch the ball and it's what I know best," he said. Carter



Gerald Carter

played split end at Bryan and Tyler so he definitely knows where he is going when he takes off from the line of scrimmage.

Although there are major differences in playing a team like Henderson County Junior College as opposed to the University of Texas or the University of Arkansas, Carter said the job is still the same.

Cowboys favored over Cardinals

United Press International

DALLAS — The Dallas Cowboys will go into their game against St. Louis next Sunday as a very heavy favorite. But favorites do not always win and Coach Tom Landry had a good example to present Tuesday.

"I was driving home yesterday," he said, "and I heard someone talking about the Baltimore-New England game. I believe he said the score would be about 110-0."

"We may be the favorite against St. Louis, but the Cardinals will start winning like everybody else does eventually."

Nevertheless, Landry said the Cardinals might be a better foe to face this week than, say, New England or Minnesota.

"I think it's to your advantage to play a 0-3 team after coming off a game with a contender," he said.

Dallas is looking for improvement across the board after its 27-14 loss to Los Angeles.

Dallas' defense gave up the big play, quarterback Roger Staubach threw four interceptions and the Cowboys did not play with the intensity showed by the Rams.

"I don't think we have too many players playing at the pitch we had

going into the playoffs last year," Landry said. "But we are not a bad team. We played hard against Los Angeles. It was a good, tough game. We are moving pretty good and we are not dead yet."

"I have no reason to feel any differently about our defense now than I did before the season started. We play a different type of defense than anybody else. We can look awfully bad one week, but we can look awfully good another week."

Landry said bruises suffered by wide receivers Drew Pearson and Tony Hill probably would not keep them out of Sunday's game with the Cardinals but did say he was making a change in his secondary.

Cornerback Benny Barnes, bothered by a foot injury that makes it difficult for him to cut sharply, will be replaced by Mark Washington.

"Benny played well, but his foot is not responding," Landry said. "It doesn't bother him when he runs straight ahead so he will still be on the specialty teams. No one is better on the specialty teams in the league than he is."

Conference busy

With all nine SWC teams in action Saturday, it will still be only the second busiest week in SWC football history. Last year the nine SWC teams played ten games in one week. Houston had a Monday night game last year and came back the next Saturday and played a non-conference game, as did the eight other schools.

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