

Baltimore looks to unseed New York



BALTIMORE ORIOLES

Baltimore was everyone's pick to go all the way last pre-season. But all of the new faces acquired from the free agent market didn't set right off the bat. It wasn't until late July that the Orioles climbed back in to the Wild Card race they would eventually win. The only thing Baltimore couldn't overcome was their lack of balance, and that brings us to 1997.

The most talked about topic in Oriole camp this spring has been the move of Cal Ripken Jr. to third base to make room for Mike Bordick at short stop. Ripken fans are hysterical about the move, but the Orioles and Ripken aren't. Bordick is perfect for this team and is the missing link to the powerhouse. Six-time Gold Glove Roberto Alomar returns to second and baseball's most underrated player, Rafael Palmeiro, stays at first. Offensively and defensively this is the best infield in the league, and then add Chris Hoiles at catcher and it still looks nice.

Eric Davis was the other big signing of the winter. He will replace error-prone Bobby Bonilla in the outfield. One-year wonder Brady Anderson and budding star Tony Tarasco finish out the outfield. Pete Incaviglia and B.J. Surhoff should split time at designated hitter.

Mike Mussina will once again be the ace of a starting rotation that added Jimmy Key and Shawn Boskie in the winter. Those two veterans probably will help take some pressure off Scott Erickson and Rocky Coppinger, who both are potential No. 2 starters. Randy Myers remains as the closer and Alan Mills will be healthy this year to set him up. The biggest addition to the staff might not be a pitcher at all, but will be pitching coach Ray Miller, who worked under former manager Earl Weaver during Baltimore's glory years of the early '80s.

This team won't challenge for the home run crown like it did last year, but it will pitch better, field better and play fundamental baseball better than last year's squad. The Orioles could be scary. **Projected Record: 98-64**

Key Series: Sept. 4-7 @ New York Yankees; Sept. 11-14 vs. New York Yankees; Last month of the season, tight division race going right down to the wire, eight games against second-place New York in 11 days — this is the stuff of which baseball is made. Baltimore will be in the driver's seat going into this stretch. If they want to win the division, they need to take at least five of these games from the Yanks.

NEWYORKYANKEES

The World Series Champs better not bask in their triumph too long, or they may end up in a hole from which they can't climb out. New York was so caught up in their championship, they forgot to re-sign some of the key players who got them there.

Problem No. 1 — Too many outfielders, not

enough spots. This isn't softball — what is Joe Torre going to do with Bernie Williams, Tim Lincecum, Paul O'Neill, Darryl Strawberry, Mark Whiten and future superstar Ruben Rivera? They all can play, but the only thing worse the Yankees could do to add to the clubhouse tension would be to trade for the self-centered Ricky Henderson.

Problem No. 2 — Wade Boggs and Charlie Hayes will be a terrible platoon at third. Just because Hayes caught the last out of the World Series doesn't mean he should get to start over a future Hall of Famer and career .300 hitter. Rookie of the Year Derek Jeter will return to short with Mariano Duncan at second, Tino Martinez at first and Joe Girardi catching. Oh yeah, Cecil Fielder is still around to make sure there will be four former All-Stars on the bench at all times.

Problem No. 3 — David Wells is supposed to fill in for Jimmy Key but can't seem to stay out of bar room brawls in the off-season. He will miss the start of the season with a broken hand. Andy Pettite and David Cone are back to bring some respectability to a rotation that is counting on Kenny Rogers and Dwight Gooden to boost the staff.

Problem No. 4 — Mariano Rivera made New York's bullpen the league's best last season, but as a set-up man, not a closer. If he can't cut it as the fireman then either Graeme Lloyd, Mike Stanton or Jeff Nelson will have to step in from middle relief to try their hand at it.

The Yankees had unique team chemistry last season that will be difficult to re-create, especially with their already-bloated egos letting a shot of championship get into their veins.

Projected Record: 92-70

Key Series: Sept. 4-7 vs. Baltimore Orioles; Sept. 11-14 @ Baltimore Orioles; See Above. This is where New York gets to prove if they are really champions or just last October's hottest team.

TORONTO BLUE JAYS

It didn't take Toronto long to completely rebuild their 1992-93 World Series team into a 1997 contender. There will be only two faces in the starting lineup from the '93 team, Joe Carter and Ed Sprague, but Toronto should contend for the Wild Card.

Carlos Garcia (second), Orlando Merced (right) and Benito Santiago (catcher) are the new acquisitions in the field. Merced is the key. He allows Carlos Delgado to move into first base and split time with Shawn Green at DH. Otis Nixon and Carter will join Merced in the outfield. Garcia adds defense to the infield at second, and a helpful voice to second-year shortstop Alex Gonzalez. Sprague will again be at third.

But the biggest noise from the winter in Canada came from the signing of Roger Clemens to a deal that will pay him \$8.25 million a year — a lot considering he will be the No. 3 starter. Cy Young award winner Pat Hentgen and '96 ERA leader Juan Guzman will be the one-two punch with Erik Hanson and Huck Flener rounding out the starters. Middle-relief may end up the Jays' Achilles' Heel with Tim Crabtree and Paul Spoljaric the only notable guns. Mike Timlin evolved into a good closer last season and should improve again in 1997.

The Blue Jays are definitely the sleeper team in the A.L. If it can get games to Timlin consistently, they will be in the Wild Card hunt come September.

Projected Record: 90-72

Key Series: Sept. 19-22 @ New York Yankees; Toronto could be battling Cleveland, Seattle and New York for the Wild Card. They need to sweep

Sports Writer



Jeremy Furtick
Senior journalism major

this series to put them over the top.

BOSTON RED SOX

The Red Sox just aren't going to be good this season. They have Troy O'Leary, Reggie Jefferson, Darren Bragg and Rudy Pemberton to fill the outfield and DH roles. Not very impressive, huh? They will be able to score runs fairly frequently though. Mo Vaughn and Tim Lincecum are on the corners and will probably have All-Star caliber seasons. John Valentine has moved to second to make room for rookie phenom Nomar Garciaparra at short. Valentine was not very happy about this and has damaged the already fragile clubhouse situation with his complaints. Mike Stanley will catch and quietly have another stellar season.

The Clemens era is over in Boston, now it's time for the ace-by-committee era. Steve Avery will try to rebuild his career with Tim Wakefield, Tom Gordon, Vaughn Eshelman and Aaron Sele backing him up. Heathcliff Slocumb is still a great closer, but will probably end up on a contending team come September. The rest of the staff will be sorted out by April 1.

This is the official start of rebuilding the Boston Red Sox. After the Celtics' and Bruins' horrid seasons, spirits won't be high in Boston. **Projected Record: 78-84**

Key Series: June 23-25 vs. Toronto Blue Jays; Roger Clemens comes home for the first time. This will be one series when the Red Sox fans will be doing a lot of cheering — too bad it will be for the Rocket.

DETROIT TIGERS

Anyone attending a Tigers' game this season better have a team roster with them at all times. You'll need it to figure out whose playing. It seems like every team in the league has a new player compliments of Detroit's busy off-season, yet the Tigers didn't really get any proven talent in return. But baseball's all-time worst team from 1996 (53-109) may push the 65-to-70 win plateau with their load of young talent.

Brian Hunter came from a deal with Houston and will join Bobby Higginson and Melvin Nieves in the outfield. Phil Nevin, Bubba Trammel and Phil Hiatt are three youngsters ready to step into the outfield and will spend some time at DH. In these six players, Detroit should develop a very good outfield in the next few years.

Third baseman Travis Fryman survived the payroll cut to stay and help the young infield mature. Deivi Cruz (short) and Dave Hajek (second) will start the season up the middle with Tony Clark poised at first base to have a break-out year. Matt Walbeck will have the responsibility of handling the pitching staff at catcher.

The pitching staff will be the real indication of how long the rebuilding will take. Their situation is a lot worse than the hitters' development. Felipe Lira will be the ace, everything else has yet to be decided. But some combination of Omar Oliveras, Dan Miceli, Doug Brocail, Glenn Dishman and Justin Thompson will round out the rotation. The bullpen will have Mike Myers, Todd Jones and Richie Lewis, along with a group of prospects, handing games to closer Gregg Olson — who was the only Tiger with a winning record last year (3-0).

If you're a Tiger fan, just hold your breath until 2000 when Detroit will be a contender. **Projected Record: 64-98**

Key Series: Aug. 25-27 @ Minnesota Twins; The Tigers will be able to start calling up minor leaguers to expand their roster. Now manager Buddy Bell will have even more players on his team that don't deserve to be in the majors.

MARTIN

Continued from page 7

Johnson has been pleased with Martin's performance as well.

"He's done a good job," Johnson said. "He's been tested in some pretty tight spots and has done well with it. We need left-handed pitching and he's offered that."

However, Martin also has seen the opposite end of the spectrum. Against Oklahoma State earlier in the season, Martin was roughed up, allowing three earned runs in 1-1/3 innings as the Aggies fell, 11-7.

Martin has taken both the good and the bad, not letting either affect him.

"You have to have tough skin to

be a reliever and you definitely can't look to the past," Martin said. "If you get too excited about a good job or too down about a bad job, you'll never be able to compete. I think some of the best relievers talk about that all the time. Once that performance is over, it's over, both the good and the bad."

"The same with the future. If you're worried about the future you're going to get a chance to get that one batter, and your not going to be able to do it, because you're not concentrating on that one purpose," Martin said.

This is advice Martin has taken to heart.

"I know how hard I had to work to get here and that really helps me on the mound to stay focused," he said. "I don't want my opportunity to slip by."

"I wanted to pitch here and I knew what I had to do."

Colby Martin
Junior pitcher

FULBRIGHT

Continued from page 7

Johnson said Fulbright is one of the freshmen expected to contribute to the team.

"He's one of the guys who will have to step forward," Johnson said. "We've got some young guys — Chance Caple, Fossum, and Ful-

bright — who we thought would be a help to us by their sophomore year."

Apparently Johnson's expectations have rubbed off on the Illinois native. Fulbright said he has envisioned himself in next year's starting rotation.

"I'd like to see myself in that role," Fulbright said. "I'd like to be in the top three positions fighting for the starting role."

THE TEXAS HALL OF FAME					
CALENDAR OF EVENTS • MARCH 1997					
TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
LIVE MUSIC 18 "COLT 45" DOORS OPEN @ 7 \$2 OFF COVER WITH A&M, BLINN, COSA, OR CSC ID	COUPON GOOD FOR \$1 ADDITIONAL OFF COVER CHARGE	"FLASHBACK" \$2 OFF COVER WITH A&M, BLINN, COSA AND CSC ID	"T.G.I.F." DOORS OPEN @ 8 NO COVER FOR 21&UP TILL 10PM \$5 MINORS PLUS! \$1 LONGNECKS 75¢ WELL TILL 10	LIVE MUSIC 22 "CHRIS WELLS" 75¢ WELL DRINKS \$1 LONGNECKS	MECHANICAL BULL 5000 SQ. FT. DANCE FLOOR
LIVE MUSIC 25 "COUNTRY MAGIC" DOORS OPEN @ 7 \$2 OFF COVER WITH A&M, BLINN, COSA, OR CSC ID	CONCERT 26: MR. WILLIE NELSON ALL TICKETS \$20 NO RESERVATIONS DOORS OPEN @ 7PM	"FLASHBACK"	"T.G.I.F." DOORS OPEN AT 8PM NO COVER FOR 21&UP TILL 10PM \$5 MINORS PLUS! \$1 LONGNECKS 75¢ WELL TILL 10	LIVE MUSIC 29 "STERLING COUNTRY" 75¢ WELL DRINKS \$1 LONGNECKS	

GOLDEN KEY N.H.S

General Meeting

Wednesday, March 26

7:00 p.m. • Rudder 502

Guest Speaker: A Representative
from the Career Center
Topic: Preparation For Job Search

University PLUS

and

H & R Block

Does April 15th give you the willies? Let MSC University PLUS and our tax teacher from H & R Block help you figure out the differences between a 1040, 1040EZ, and 1040A. Learn how to fill out the forms, what you can claim, and how to properly file your tax return. Learn to do your own taxes and *save money!* Class is only two hours and can benefit you for years to come. Call or come by MSC University PLUS in the MSC Lower Level for more information.

April 3 7:00pm - 9:00pm
Rudder 501

FREE Seminar

<http://uplus.tamu.edu> 409/845-1631 uplus@msc.tamu.edu

US AIR FORCE CAREER DAY

Thursday, 27 March

Sam Houston Corps of Cadets Center
Dashiell Room 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Sponsored by the Texas A&M
Department of Aerospace Studies
Call 845-7611 for more information

THE AIR FORCE PROVIDES ITS OFFICERS:

- Employment upon graduation (regardless of academic major!)
- \$41,000+ Salary (after only 4 years!)
- \$25,000 Starting Salary (minimum!)
- Post-graduate programs (numerous options, 75% of cost paid for!)
- 30 days annual vacation (immediately!)
- \$200,000 life insurance policy!
- Retirement (after only 20 years!)
- Qualification for veteran's benefits!
- Travel (free military airlift & opportunity to live overseas!)

Visit us at the
Housing Fair

NOW LEASING

Brand New Phase II

Opening Fall '97

- New 2 bedroom/2 bath
- Fully Furnished
- Alarm System
- 2 Swimming Pools
- Hot Tub
- Club House
- Tennis, basketball,
& Sand Volleyball courts
- Close to campus
- Weight room
- Computer room

UNIVERSITY COMMONS

950 Colgate

764-8999

Hours: M-F 9-6pm • Sat 10-4pm • Sun 1-5pm

Where Dreams Come True
IN
Xanadu Bridal Shoppe
3817 E. 29th Street
Bryan, Tx.
268-1328
Hours: Mon & Thurs 11-8
T-W-F 11-7
Sat 10-6

ATTN. RING & BOOT
DANCE APPLICANTS
BIG BLOWOUT SALE
All discontinued stock dramatically
discounted for sale.
Dresses as low as \$25 this week only.
**Hey guys, don't forget
your tuxedo!**
**Guys \$10 OFF Tux
Rental**

