

Major-leaguers bobble off-season errors into Florida

With snow still blanketing much of the country and the basketball season winding down, few people are thinking of baseball. But, spring training has begun for all 26 major league teams.

A month in the Arizona or Florida sun allows the clubs to work on last season's problem areas, evaluate new players and set the lineup for the year.

And some teams have larger problems than others.

I. kent wolgamott

The Cincinnati Reds must regroup under new manager John McNamara, who replaces the fired Sparky Anderson. The Reds also must find a replacement for veteran third baseman Pete Rose, who left the team in this year's version of "buy a player for a larger check" at Philadelphia.

The Reds also are in search of a missing pitching staff, the cause of their demise the last two seasons.

Ride the bench

The Phillies must find something to do with their expensive superstar. For if he starts anywhere, a veteran starter from the National League East's champion must go to the bench. Hardly a settling influence on a team.

Tentative plans call for Rose to start at first base. Richie Hebner, who was disturbed about the addition of Rose, would move to third base, and Mike Schmidt would go to second, according to the *Sporting News*.

When the Phillies figure out what to do with Rose in

the infield they can deal with the problem of where to put him in the batting order.

Traditionally a lead off hitter, Rose would have to replace the fleet Larry Bowa to take that spot, an unlikely event.

Equally as unlikely a situation would find the egotistical Rose batting second, where he would have to sacrifice himself for the good of the team. And manager Danny Ozark probably will not change the meat of the division's strongest hitting lineup.

The what-to-do-with-the-free-agent woes also are afflicting the world champion New York Yankees.

Lemon's staff

The Bronx Bombers have an enviable problem, because owner George Steinbrenner has purchased the best pitching staff in baseball for manager Bob Lemon. The problem is that Steinbrenner bought too many pitchers.

Cy Young award winner Ron Guidry and the Yankees pitching staff, which already included free agents Catfish Hunter and Rich Gossage, will be joined by Tommy John, who played for the Los Angeles Dodgers last year, and Luis Tiant. A total of 10 pitchers are fighting for a maximum of eight spots.

Replacing the free agents will be a problem at Los Angeles and Boston, which lost left handed pitcher Bill "Spaceman" Lee along with Tiant.

The Dodgers are set in the field and at the plate, but need to establish a pitching rotation with at least one pitcher who can throw the ball over 80 mph consistently. Perhaps it will be young Bob Welch, the rookie who overpowered Reggie Jackson in the second game of the World Series last year.

Boston also is set in the field with the signing of Jim Rice to baseball's largest contract and Wednesday's arrival of holdout Carl Yastrzemski. But manager Don "Zip" Zimmer must revitalize a ravaged mound staff, depending on Dennis Eckersley and Mike Torrez to carry even more of the load than last year.

Another team struggling to fill a large hole will be the Minnesota Twins, who must find a first basemen to replace the traded Rod Carew, who was most of the Minnesota team.

Meanwhile the West Coast version of the "best team money can buy," the California Angels, is savoring the prospects of the coming season with baseball's best hitter, Carew, and only needing to find a shortstop to complete their lineup.

The other division champion of last year, Kansas City, is plagued by minor questions with regulars, especially in the outfield and on the pitching staff.

Heading north

All teams will be selecting their squads to go north for the regular season with 650 of 1200 players in camp making the big leagues and the rest going to Double and Triple A minor league teams.

The first of 350 exhibition games will take place March 7 and continue until April 5, although the major league regular season begins April 4 in Cincinnati.

Seventeen of the 26 teams have their training camps in Florida, and most of the games take place in that state. The other nine teams and most of the remainder of the games can be found in Arizona.

Next week: A preview of the National League East.

New crew coaches fight current of team's low morale

By Kirk Wolgamott

Despite the fact that they have been the defending Big Eight champions for the past four years, the 1979 season could be a long hard row for the Nebraska crew team.

The team has suffered morale problems that followed the resignation of Coach Frank Sands last year. But, Sands has been replaced by a new coaching staff made up of freshman coach Paul Koerner, varsity men's coach Wes Hubka and women's coach Dave Volkman.

All three of the new coaches have UNL crew team experience. Hubka, a 1976 graduate, has spent the last three years as an engineer.

He will return to class in the fall. Volkman and Koerner, who also fill oarsmen spots on the varsity team, are still full time students at the university.

Low point

Hubka said he was not totally pleased with the club when he came.

"I guess crew was at a low point for awhile. The organization was low before the old coach resigned," he said. "A lot of people have been turned away by those problems. Now we are going to try and minimize those aspects and make crew a good time again."

Volkman agreed with Hubka.

"The situation has left us weak for numbers. Right now what we need is more people," Volkman said. "If

we can get them, it will be fun. It will also be good competition."

"We are always recruiting new people. Right now we are the second largest sport on campus, but we need to keep those high numbers to maintain a high degree of competition," he said.

"We never turn down anyone. If you have an interest in crew come on out. We promise we never cut anyone."

One of the problems with the crew team has been the lack of funds from the university. Crew is not a recognized sport in the Big Eight Conference.

Growing popularity

"We have to pay it all ourselves. We can't blame the university, but that has made it tougher for us. The fact also makes crew a more special sport. You get a great feeling of accomplishment and striving when you have to go it on your own," Koerner said.

Recently, the sport has been spreading throughout the midwest. There are 15 to 20 teams within a 550 mile radius of Lincoln, Koerner said. Four schools in the Big Eight—NU, Oklahoma State, Kansas and Kansas State—have crew teams. Creighton University also started a team this year.

"Everyone thinks there is something crazy about the rowing that goes on in the midwest, since there isn't much water around. Rowing doesn't really take that much water, and it's real fun," Hubka said.

"It's a lot more fun than it looks, it's not a spectator sport. It's a participant sport. The big thrill is in the rowing," he said.

Season opener

The Huskers open their season in Oklahoma City on March 31 against Alabama, Wichita State, Oklahoma State, Washburn, and the Oklahoma Boat Club.

Hubka and Volkman said Jim Dalton, Mac Welch and Jim Richardson, who row for the varsity heavyweight eight team are the top people on this year's team. So far, they have been training indoors in the tank in the boat-house but plan to practice outside as soon as weather permits.

"We are still recruiting members during off water training," Volkman added. "As soon as the water thaws we will be out training at Capital Beach. That only gives us about one week of training before the first meet. That doesn't seem like much but actually it's good when coupled with our other training methods. We should be able to give a respectable showing."

Hubka said Nebraska has the best equipment in the Big Eight and possibly the best in the midwest.

"We have a new eight man shell coming from Maine as soon as someone gets up there to get it. Our indoor tank is excellent," he said. "What we need is more people to come out and use it."

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