

# sports

Analysis by L. Kent Wolgamott

The last two months of the baseball season are upon us and it once again seems to be a good time to do a little crystal ball gazing and try to predict the outcome of the pennant races and the World Series.

Last year at about this time, I picked three of the four division winners and the league champions. However, I also picked the Chicago Cubs to win the National League East and my beloved Dodgers to win the World Series.

With that in mind, let me begin with the NL West. While shedding tears for my obys in blue, I can only hope the Dodgers can play a spoiler role and knock Cincinnati or San Francisco out of contention, for they are 15 games out of first place and sliding fast.

The surprising Houston Astros have led the division the entire year on the strength of their young pitching staff. Manager Bill Virdon has done well leading his team this far, but it is questionable whether they can hang on to the top spot.

The Cincinnati Reds, the bane of every Dodger fan, seem to be closing on the Astro's and probably will overtake them and win the division. The Reds' combination of steady hitting and a revitalized pitching staff led by Tom Seaver make them hard to stop in September.

The only other team within striking distance is the young San Francisco Giants, but they would need help from others to make up the eight games between them and the leaders.

The National League East may have a clear leader by next week as the rampaging Pittsburgh Pirates overtake the skidding Montreal Expos.

The Pirates, led by National League and All Star game MVP Dave Parker have come from eight games back to tie the Expos and should pass them and keep going.

Chuck Tanner is managing his pitchers exceptionally well and gangly reliever Kent Tekulve has had a good seasons with 18 saves thus far.

The Expos, like the Astros, have led the division all season but their shallow bench and shaky mound staff have started to come into play. This is unfortunate, for it would have been interesting to hear the announcers talk about the great baseball tradition of Montreal.

Maybe Howard Cosell would have told us about growing up in the shadows of Gerry Ballpark (the old Expos stadium).

The Chicago Cubs are within striking distance, as are the St. Louis Cardinals and Philadelphia Phillies, and all three may pass Montreal before the season ends. However, catching Pittsburgh may be impossible.

In the American League East, the three teams with the best baseball records are fighting for the lead, sort of.

The Baltimore Orioles, lightly regarded at the start of the year, lead the division by 6 games.

Crafty manager Earl Weaver is performing his magic again and Baltimore might just run away and hide from the rest of the division.

However, the Boston Red Sox and Milwaukee Brewers are both playing .600 baseball and are in a position to battle for the championship should Baltimore start to slip.

And what of the world champion New York Yankees? They are 14 games out of first place and definitely out of contention.

Another tight race is possible in the AL West as California leads Minnesota by three games. However, Angels ace Nolan Ryan might have arm trouble opening up the race.

Both the Texas Rangers and Kansas City Royals remain within striking distance should the Angels and Twin start to fade.

But if Rayn remains healthy and Don Baylor continue to drive in runs, the Angels should win a penanant for owner Gene Autry.

Now for the division playoffs.

In the National League, I see the Pittsburgh Pirates defeating the Cincinnati Reds in a short series, based on the superior hitting strength of the Bucs and the managerial ability of Chuck Tanner.

In the American League, I see the Baltimore Orioles and California Angels battling for the pennant in a five-game series. If the Angels can find pitching help for Ryan, they could make a run at the pennant, but Earl Weaver might be the best manager in baseball and his birds should emerse victorious.

And in the World Series, I think the Pirates may have the advantage, once again because of superior hitting.

My guess is that the Series will go the full seven games and will end with a Pirate win, probably anchored by a Parker/Tekulve show. But if any one can mess that combination up it is Earl Weaver.

## Football . . .

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players in the form of a newsletter to let each player know how they compare with the rest of the team, Epley said.

The team this year is a large team, and a large weight gain will not be necessary, he said.

### Gain weight

A lot of players will be trying to gain 40 to 50 pounds this summer and fall while others will have to lose weight, he said.

The idea is not to become as muscular as possible, but to achieve a weight at which the player will be most effective, Epley said.

Some of the players work constantly at keeping their body at the right weight while others go in spurts, he said. Last week Kerry Weinmaster dropped nine pounds from 231 to 222 pounds he said.

Epley said the Huskers will have strength, speed and size this year but may have problems coordinating their physical prowess with their skill.

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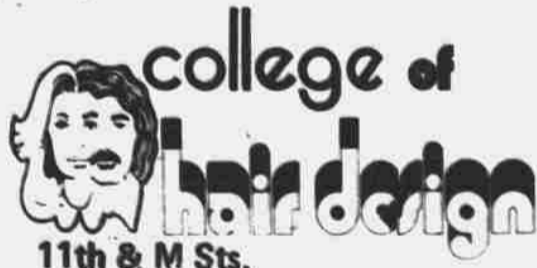
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