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NL East will be close again

Analysis by Scott Ahlstrand

This is the third in a series previewing the major league baseball season.

The National League's eastern division, like a conservative politician, rarely changes its ways.

No one runs away from the pack in this division. If there's a certainty in

this world beyond death and taxes, it's that a divisional race will still be brewing in the NL East come September.

A typical season in the closely contested East sees the divisional lead change hands as often as pot in a San Diego high school. The Chicago Cubs and the New York Mets usually bow out of the race by mid-July, leaving it up to the big boys (Montreal Expos, Philadelphia Phillies, Pittsburgh Pirates and the St. Louis Cardinals) to fight it out for the title.

MONTREAL EXPOS

The Expos are a team of perennial chokers. In first place last year on Sept. 12, the mighty Montrealers proceeded to drop 12 of their next 20 and finish the season in the No. 3 spot.

But the time has come for the Expos. A solid mix of youth and experience should put them in the driver's seat.

The outfield is led by All-Western Hemisphere performer Andre Dawson. Joining him is Pete "Char-

lie Hustle" Rose and speedster Tim Lincecum.

La Spos have a decent infield with Tim Wallach, Bryan Little, "Angel" Salazar and Terry Francona.

Catcher Gary Carter and pitchers Steve Rogers, Charlie Lea, Bill Gullickson and Gary Lucas form an imposing battery.

PITTSBURGH PIRATES

The Pirates, better known in the 70s as the Lumber Company, are a pitcher's paradise now. Pittsburgh used to beat teams into submission with power hitting, but the Pirates now feature a pitching staff that's the envy of the division.

John "Candy Man" Candelaria, John Tudor, Larry McWilliams, Jose DeLeon, Lee Tunnell, Cecilion Guante, Don Robinson, and Rick Rhoden are one of the deepest staffs in baseball.

Although they're no longer the Lumber Company, the Pirates still know how to use the wood. Top hitters for the Bucs are Johnny Ray, Bill "Mad Dog" Madlock and Tony Pena. The addition of former Royal Amos Otis should add punch to the lineup.

PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES

Philadelphia made it to the World Series last year sporting one of the oldest lineups in recent years. But the new Phillies have much less of a geriatric look to their roster. Gone are Pete Rose, Joe Morgan and Tony Perez. In their places are Juan Samuel, Len Matuszek and Jeff Stone.

Mike Schmidt and Bo Diaz provide consistent power for the Phillies. Steve Carlton, John "Cy Young" Denny and Al Holland compare favorably with any pitchers in base-

ball.

ST. LOUIS CARDINALS

The Cardinals are a team blessed with great speed, timely hitting and solid fielding. On the negative side of the bird cage though, is a lackluster pitching staff and a team that was last in the NL in home runs (83).

If Joaquin Andujar and Bruce Sutter can make comebacks, the Redbirds may fly high again, but a fourth place finish seems more likely.

CHICAGO CUBS

The Cubs are on the rise. They may not win the division this year, but the Cubbies are only a year or two away from serious contention.

The Chitown boys have more than enough hitting to impress their opposition, but their pitching staff is in dire need of a transfusion.

Ryne Sandberg and Mel Hall should disprove the sophomore jinx and, along with Leon Durham and Jody Davis, give the Cubs a pool of talent for years to come.

When the summer starts warming up and pitchers start taking control, the Cubbies will go out the window as divisional contenders.

NEW YORK METS

The only one in worse shape than the New York Mets this season are the Mets' fans. Darryl Strawberry "fields forever," Keith Hernandez and Jesse Orosco are all All-Star caliber performers, but after that trio, you have to look pretty hard to find anything to brag about from the hapless Mets. Don't look for a miracle from New York.

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Applications available at the Daily Nebraskan office, Rm. 34 Nebraska Union, Monday through Friday until 4 p.m. The editor will conduct interviews from April 9 through April 13.

The Daily Nebraskan will publish two days a week from May 21, 1984, through August 17, 1984.

Daily Nebraskan

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Daily Nebraskan

NOW there is something different — work for the Daily Nebraskan — without the drudgery, pestilence and intellectual malnutrition commonly associated with labor.

We're now accepting applications for fall semester senior editors and columnists including News editor, associate news editors, copy desk supervisor, sports editor, arts and entertainment editor, art director, photo chief and assistant photo chief, wire editor, night news editors, supplements and First Down editor, and depth supplements editor.

Applications available at the Daily Nebraskan office, Rm. 34 Nebraska Union, Friday through Thursday until 4 p.m. The editor will conduct interviews from April 13 to April 20. Please sign up for interview when picking up application.

The Daily Nebraskan will publish five days a week from August 22 to December 17, 1984.

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