

# Royals strengthen for 1991 despite Bo's loss

By Matt Larsen  
Staff Reporter

It's springtime . . . time for tans, shorts, skipping class and baseball. With Kansas City a mere 3 1/2 hours from Lincoln, the prospect of watching a live major league game complete with hot dogs, beer and organ music is entertaining.

This year, the Royals are looking to pick up the pieces of their disastrous 1990 season when they finished sixth in the American League West. Although the West looks even tougher, Kansas City is predicted to finish second or third and is the pundits' pick to challenge the Oakland A's and the Chicago White Sox for the division title.

Steve Fink of the Royals' media department said pitching, speed and defense will be the Royals' strengths this year, and their younger players will make big contributions.

"Our young guys will bring a lot of excitement to the team," Fink said. "Brian MacRae, who is the son of former Royals' star Hal MacRae, came on strong at the end of last season and is now our leadoff hitter.

"At second base, rookie Terry Schumpert will be taking over Frank White's position," he added. "He's a lot of fun to watch, plays good defense and can do a lot with his bat."

Backing up the youngsters will be the Royals' solid core of experi-

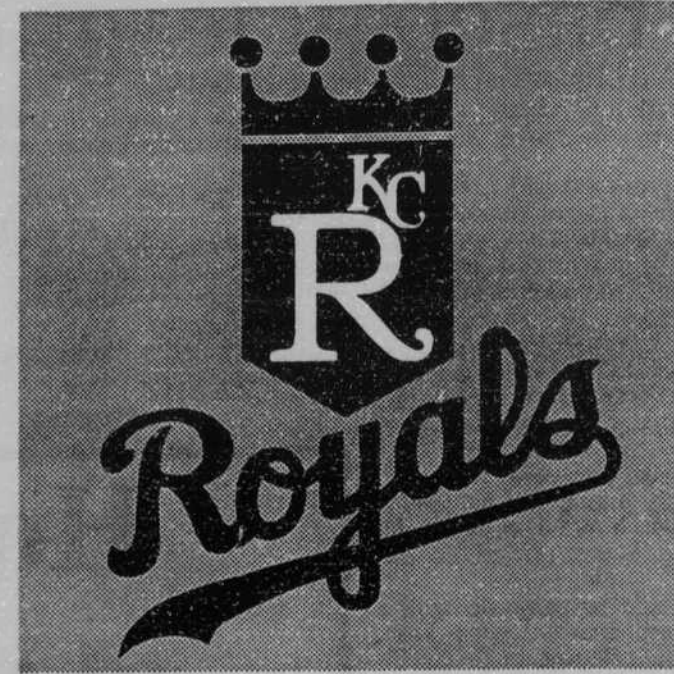
enced veterans, he said. George Brett is coming off his third batting title, and a big year is expected out of Danny Tartabull, he said.

But most of the excitement is centered on the off-season addition of veterans Kirk Gibson and Mike Boddicker. In his first at-bat as a Royal, Gibson tripled, then went on to score a run and drive in another to lead Kansas City to a win over Cleveland.

Fink said the biggest key to the Royals' success in the pitching-rich AL West will be the effectiveness of their pitchers. Bret Saberhagen got his first win of the season Monday and hopes to continue his winning ways for a full season.

Boddicker won 17 games for Boston and contributes another experienced arm, Fink said. With consistent performances from Storm Davis, Mark Gubicza, Kevin Appier and closer Mark Davis, the Royals could reach the dominant form that eluded them last year.

Already the Royals have been part of baseball's biggest story of the year so far: the Bo Jackson saga. The Royals released Bo and his media monster in spring training because of questions about the soundness of his hip. Manager John Wathan replaced Bo with a platoon of Jim Eisenreich and Gary Thurman, two consistent players who lack Bo's awesome physical ability.



But Fink believes the loss of Bo could help the team in other ways.

"We have a lot of outstanding players, so hopefully the focus will shift to some of the other guys," Fink explained.

Wathan said there is a lot more emotion in the clubhouse and the team is closer this year than in the

past.

Season ticket sales are down slightly to 15,200, but opening day was sold out. General admission seats at Royals Stadium are \$4 and club box seats are \$11. Every Monday and Thursday is Royals' day, and view-level seats are half-price at \$3.50.

# Cubs' charisma draws national appeal

By Chris Hopfensperger  
Senior Reporter

Something during the mid-1980s made the Chicago Cubs into America's baseball team.

Part of it was the Cubs finally winning a pennant in 1984. Some of it was WGN broadcasting Cubs' games nationwide almost every day. And a lot of it was the nationwide controversy over finally lighting up Wrigley Field.

All of that, and more, led to the Cubs' immense national popularity. Their reputation, however, has not been without penalties to the fans.

Frank Maloney, director of ticket operations at Wrigley Field, said tickets to see the Cubs live have gotten harder to come by.

"After we won the pennant in 1984, it changed here," Maloney said. "Since then things have really changed."

One of the biggest changes are the lights. The front office's decision to finally put lights on Wrigley Field spurred a controversy that culminated with the first night game on Aug. 9, 1988.

Tickets for the night games are some of the hardest to get a hold of, Maloney said.

"Weekends and nights are pretty much gone," Maloney said. "If you want a ticket, I would suggest any weekday 1:20 p.m. game."

Ticket prices for Cubs' games run from \$6-\$15, he said. The cheapest seats are located above the famous ivy-covered outfield walls among the bleacher bums. Terrace reserved seats are \$8, upper deck box and terrace box seats are \$11. The most expensive seats are in the field and club boxes.

Maloney said the Cubs' fans have their own brand of fans,

making it easier to share the Windy City with the White Sox of the American League.

"The team is really, really popular so we don't have to compete with them," he said. "Chicago's a big city and Cubs' fans are Cubs' fans."

The Cubs don't have to be winning to bring the fans in either. Last year, when the Cubs went 77-85 and fell to a fifth place finish, tickets were still hard to come by.

"There's so many Cubs' fans out there that there is always a good crowd," Maloney said.

This season, however, the fans may not have not worry about following a slumping team.

Ryne Sandberg, Andre Dawson and Mark Grace could lead the team back to reclaim the National League East crown it grabbed in 1989, if they get support from a bullpen that was decimated by injuries last summer.

The team's pitchers finished last in the division with a combined 4.34 ERA, and six Cubs' pitchers spent a total of 285 days on the disabled list.

During the off-season, the Cubs tried to shore up their pitching staff. Free-agent Danny Jackson signed a deal to add to an unpredictable bullpen.

Greg Maddux, 15-15 with a 3.46 ERA last season, has the ability to win the Cy Young Award if he can pitch an entire season. Last year, he led the club in wins, complete games and innings pitched, but between May 11 and July 14 he was 0-8 with a 6.15 ERA.

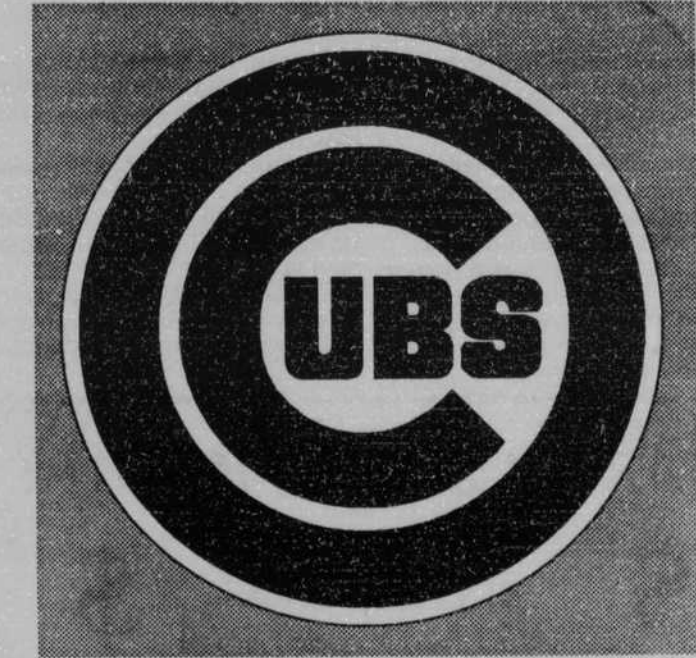
Rick Sutcliffe, who underwent shoulder surgery last year, is still undergoing rehabilitation and was placed on the 15-day disabled list April 2.

Mitch "the pitch" Williams is the real-life version of Charlie Sheen's "Major League" Wild Thing. He led the Cubs last season with 16 saves, but it was nowhere near the National League leading 36-save performance in 1989.

When Williams went out with a knee injury last season, he was replaced by Paul Assenmacher, who finished with a 7-2 record, a 2.80 ERA and 10 saves.

Once again the Cubs begin the season with enough talent to make a drive at the elusive World Series.

Maybe this year the road's name is Waveland Avenue.

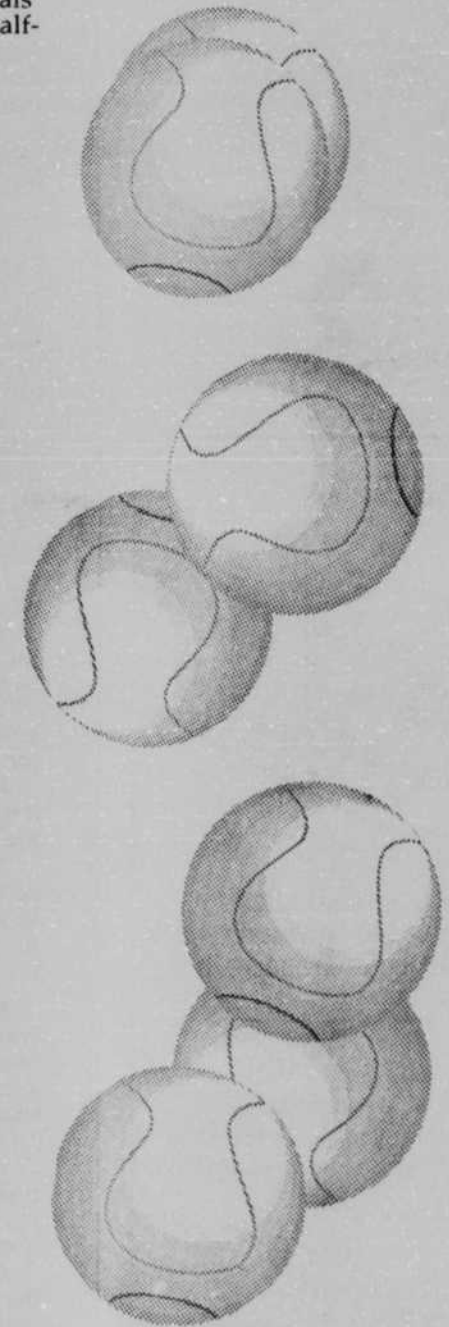


## Chris' & Matt's

### Major League 1991 Baseball Picks

Chris' Picks		Matt's Picks	
<b>NL EAST</b> Chicago Cubs Montreal New York Mets Pittsburgh Philadelphia St. Louis	<b>NL WEST</b> Los Angeles San Diego Cincinnati San Francisco Houston Atlanta	<b>NL EAST</b> Chicago Cubs Pittsburgh New York Montreal Philadelphia St. Louis	<b>NL WEST</b> Los Angeles Cincinnati San Diego San Francisco Atlanta Houston
<b>AL EAST</b> Boston Toronto Detroit Cleveland New York Yankees Baltimore Milwaukee	<b>AL WEST</b> Chicago White Sox Oakland Kansas City Seattle Texas California Minnesota	<b>AL EAST</b> Toronto Boston (Take your pick of the rest.)	<b>AL WEST</b> Oakland Seattle Chicago Kansas City Texas California Minnesota

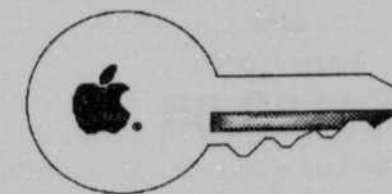
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