

OUR PLAYER RANKINGS: STARTING PITCHERS

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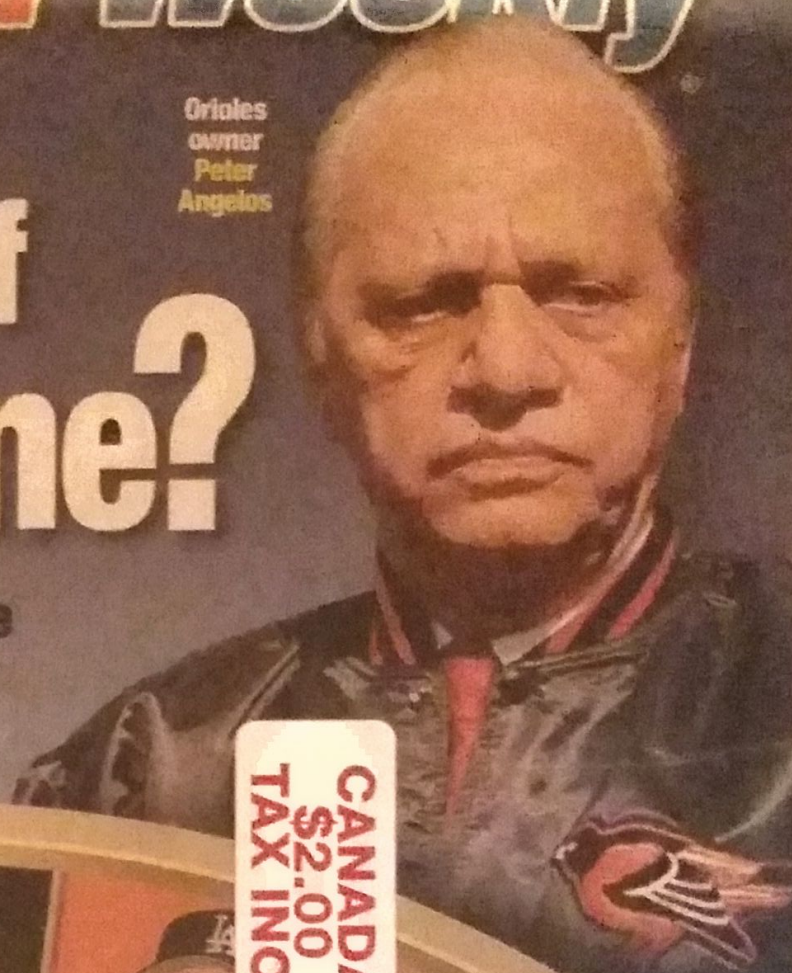
Baseball Weekly

ON SALE JANUARY 19-25, 2000

Orioles owner
Peter Angelos

Wheel of Misfortune?

Baltimore has lost some of the game's best talent. But does that mean it is mismanaged?



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LEADING OFF

Lineup



By Richard Dineen, AP

Finally Fame-ous: Once he is inducted, Tony Perez, right, with co-electee Carlton Fisk, will no longer have the most RBI of any non-Hall of Famer.

LEADING OFF

4 The Hall of Fame is about excellence, sure. But it's also about debates — and excellence, both real and perceived. This year's election provides an interesting study.
By Paul White

MAJOR LEAGUE REPORT

5 Grading the offseason movers and traders — A to F — with Seattle, Colorado and St. Louis leading the way.

Bob Nightengale writes about all of Famer Bob Lemon at 79, Page 9

LOBBY

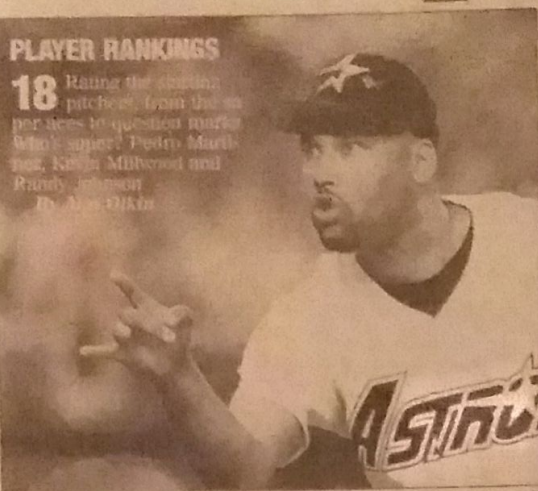
11 Doc "Moonlight" Graham, of *Field of Dreams* fame, also has a scholarship fund as a legacy.
By Dana Heiss Grodin

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15 A Roto-cruise of the ballpark effects of the new parks in Detroit, Houston and San Francisco.
By John Hunt

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18 Rating the starting pitchers from the top 10 per team to question Mark Buehrle's ascent: Pedro Martinez, Kevin Millwood and Randy Johnson.
By Alan Diaz

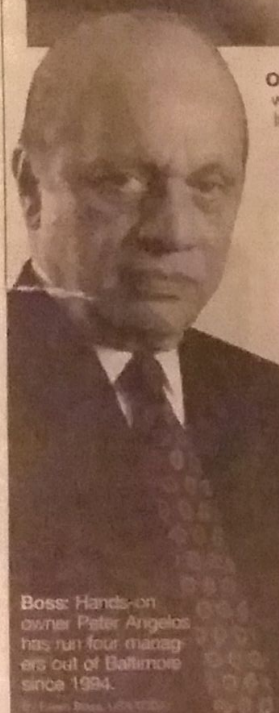


By Pat Swanson, AP

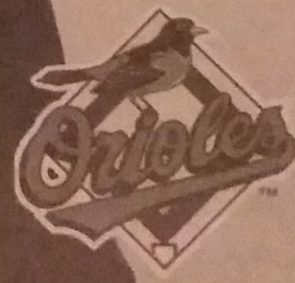
On the rise: After a 21-10 season with a 3.58 ERA, Jose Lima is climbing in the starting pitcher rankings.

COVER REPORT

6 Who, or what, is to blame for the Orioles' underachievement during the Angelos reign? Some lay the blame on Peter Angelos — but he and some other O's say that's a bum rap.
By Seth Livingsstone

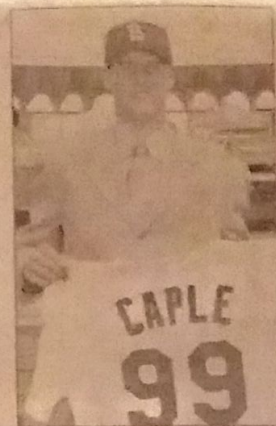


Boss: Hands-on owner Peter Angelos has run four major league clubs since 1994.



TOP PROSPECTS

22 Who's going to be who in NL Central? A look at each team's top prospects. Next issue: NL West.



By Tom Gamper, AP

Chances are: Chance Caple could be pitching in Busch Stadium in a few years.

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Cover illustration and photo illustration of Aaron Sele by Peter Lavigna. Cover photo of Peter Angelos by Carlos Ochoa, AP; Frank Wren by Vince Lupo, AP; Pat Gillick by Barry Sweet, AP.

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ON NEWSSTANDS JAN. 26
Fan's Guide to Spring Training, with schedules and not-to-miss places in Florida and Arizona.

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Travel along, swinging a song

Country music star **Garth Brooks** wants another go. Brooks, who attended spring training with the Padres last year, is looking to participate with another club this year. He has mentioned the Phillies, Braves and Yankees as possibilities.

Brooks' Touch 'em All Foundation raised \$1.8 million in its first year, thanks to donations from 67 baseball players, including **Kevin Brown**, **Tony Gwynn**, **Robin Ventura**, **Larry Walker** and **Andy Ashby**. The money is contributed by players based on their home runs, stolen bases or strikeouts.

Brooks, 37, spent six weeks with the Padres last year after first working out with them in 1998. He left in April on a high note, getting his first RBI in 22 spring training at-bats.

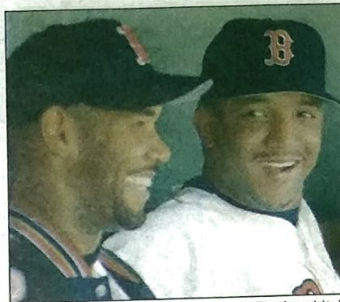


Bowden: He's here all the week

Cincinnati Reds general manager **Jim Bowden** couldn't resist. In accepting his award from the Boston baseball writers as executive of the year, Bowden noted how classy a move he thought **Pedro Martinez** had made in 1997, when he gave his NL Cy Young award to his hero and fellow countryman **Juan Marichal**.

Said Bowden: "After giving it a lot of thought, I've decided **Pat Gillick** of the Seattle Mariners deserves this award — as long as he trades me **Ken Griffey Jr.** by Opening Day."

Meanwhile, Martinez was surprised at the dinner by the presenter of his 1999 AL Cy Young Award — his older brother **Ramon Martinez**. Pedro Martinez was deferential. "Even though I was the one who won the trophy, that trophy has more of you than me in it," he said. "You taught me how to pitch and you were always trying to motivate me — you are more that trophy than I am."



By Elise Amendola, AP

Dedicated: Pedro Martinez, right, looks up to his big brother Ramon.

Sacrificing for a dream

The Olympic dream is still more than a cliché for some athletes.

Spurning opportunities to make much more money in the major leagues, free agent **Dave Nilsson** signed a one-year contract to join Japan's Chunichi Dragons, clearing the way for the All-Star catcher to play for his native Australia in the upcoming Sydney Olympics.

"This is a dream come true for me. This is what I wanted," Nilsson said after agreeing to terms in Sydney.

Nilsson, who made nearly \$5.7 million last season in Milwaukee, will get a salary of about \$2 million in 2000 and become a free agent after the season. Nilsson said all along he wanted to play in the Summer Games, which start in September.

Thirty days until garbage men report for spring training

If the Indians' spring training camp smells a bit this year, there's a good reason for it.

Thousands of gallons of raw sewage flooded practice fields last month at the site in Winter Haven, Fla. An electrical failure in a lift station that was moving sewage to a treatment plant caused the accident in Chain of Lakes Park. The main field, where the Indians play their Grapefruit League exhibition games, wasn't damaged, but several fields outside the main stadium had to be pumped out.

The fields were covered by a lime-powdered disinfectant.



Bobby J. Jones

By Leon Algebe, AP

This story is getting Boras



By Beth A. Kelsor, AP

Great Scott: Barry Bonds switches.

The adage about the rich getting richer isn't restricted to baseball teams. It happens among agents as well.

Super agent **Scott Boras**, who represents stars such as **Greg Maddux**, **Alex Rodriguez**, **Kevin Brown** and **Bernie Williams**, has landed another whopper on his client list — San Francisco's **Barry Bonds**.

"Boraso contacted us in late October and told us he was considering a change," Boras said. The Beverly Hills Sports Council represented Bonds previously. "We had a couple of discussions and he decided to retain us."

Boras isn't sure whether Bonds wants to negotiate an extension with the Giants before he becomes eligible for free agency after the 2001 season. Bonds is entering the second year of a \$30.7 million, three-year contract.

Modern-day Miller's Tale: The Mets' Jones gang

In 1962 the Mets set a major league record when they had pitchers named **Bob G. Miller** and **Bob L. Miller**. Thirty-eight years later, they've become the only team to duplicate the feat of having two unrelated players with the same first and last names.

Pitcher **Bobby M. Jones** was acquired from the Rockies Jan. 14 in a trade involving **Masato Yoshii**. Jones joins a roster already containing pitcher **Bobby J. Jones**.

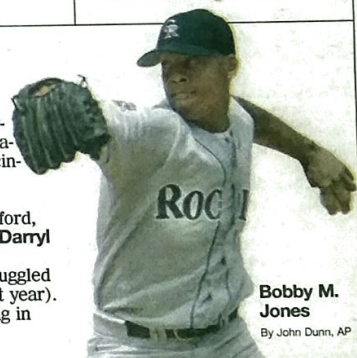
The new feat doesn't include several past instances where players had the same given name, but were known by different names, nor the convergence of a certain father-son combination by

the name of **Ken Griffey**.

The Joneses started against each other last May 11, becoming the first starting pitchers sharing the same name to oppose each other in a major league game since April 16, 1899, when Cincinnati's **John B. Taylor** met Chicago's **John W. Taylor**, according to the Elias Sports Bureau.

Bobby M. Jones, 27, who lives in East Rutherford, N.J., grew up a Mets fan. **Dwight Gooden** and **Darryl Strawberry** were his idols.

"It's a dream come true," said Jones, who struggled last year (6-10, 6.33). "I wasn't real focused (last year). I really missed home and my family a lot. Being in New York solves that real quick."



Bobby M. Jones

By John Dunn, AP

Contributing: Staff and wire reports

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LEADING OFF

What matters? Might just be the memories

Carlton Fisk and Tony Perez are going in to the Hall of Fame together this summer. How fitting.

For you toddlers who were too young at the time, prepare to learn all about the 1975 World Series — Fisk's lovable Red Sox against Perez's Big Red Machine. The rest of us will relive one of the more entertaining

Series of our lifetime. By the July 23 induction at Cooperstown we'll probably be sick of seeing Fisk waving that 12th-inning fly ball toward the Fenway foul pole. A moment that lives forever.

How many times will we see the crucial home run that turned the Series? I submit most of you have never seen it.

The most important home run of the 1975 World Series was more than comfortably wide of the foul pole as it cleared the Green Monster.

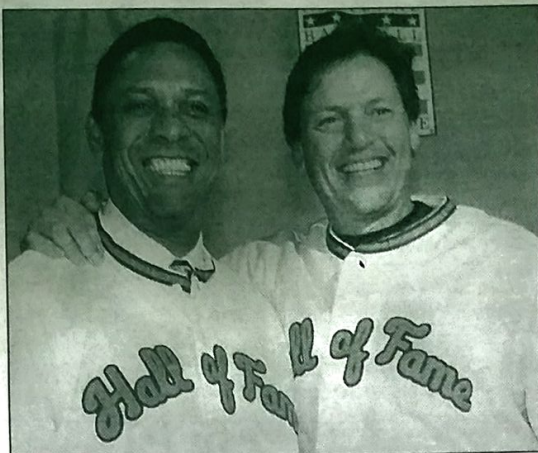
No theatrics. No body language. No one was even certain at the time of its importance. It figures that Perez hit it.

The night after Fisk forced a seventh game, the Red Sox were cruising 3-0 in the sixth inning behind pitcher Bill Lee. With a runner on first, Johnny Bench nearly hit into an inning-ending double play but was safe at first when second baseman Denny Doyle's relay was off line. Perez followed with a two-run homer, his Series-high third. Cincinnati would tie the game on Pete Rose's single in the seventh and win it on Joe Morgan's RBI bloop in the ninth.

So, Perez led both teams with three home runs and seven RBI in that Series and his team won. His other two homers came in crucial Game Five, a solo shot that tied the game and a three-run blast that blew open the 5-1 victory. And the lasting memory of the Series still is Fisk's home run.

And so it goes for Perez. In reality, it wasn't his Big Red Machine. It was Bench's. Or Rose's. Or Morgan's. Even manager Sparky Anderson's. Being the fourth-best player on a powerhouse team was the easy answer for why Perez spent nine years inching from 215 votes in 1992, his first year on the Hall ballot, to the 385 that got him in.

Even accounting for the aversion some voters have for electing anyone but the truly elite in a player's first year on the ballot, the obvious question is what Perez did to nearly double his support. Except for a rather non-descript 44 games as manager of the Reds



By Richard Drew, AP

Impact players: Tony Perez, left, and Carlton Fisk, right, each played important roles in the 1975 World Series.

in 1993, he's spent virtually all of his time on the ballot as special assistant to the general manager of the Florida Marlins.

The Hall of Fame is about excellence and it certainly is about debates over whose excellence was enough. But this year's election is an interesting study in what else the Hall is about.

It's about longevity. Not only longevity of careers but longevity of memories. And not just memories of great plays, heroic deeds or athletic excellence. Sometimes, it's as much about having the man in the conscious part of your brain. It's staying power, after a career almost as much as during a career. It's being seen or at least having supporters who will campaign loud and long enough for you.

It certainly didn't hurt that Perez has remained visible around baseball. Most of the voters are active writers. They've seen Perez out there. Just like they saw Don Sutton broadcasting for the Braves. Just like they're seeing Jim Rice coaching for the Red Sox. Don't miss the fact that Rice received 137 Hall votes when he first appeared on the ballot in 1995. He got up to a 257 this year, the next-best total behind Fisk and Perez and not far off Perez's pace in his sixth year on the ballot.

With nine more chances, Rice probably will make it. So will another Fisk contemporary, Gary Carter, who in three years on the ballot has crept from 200 votes to 248.

This isn't so much about the relative merits of Hall of Fame candidates. It's more about the sometimes curious ways those merits get considered.

It's not even about lambasting the voters,

as more than a few of you have done in recent letters and e-mails. I have no reason to believe any vote is cast without care, without thought or not in good conscience. (Just for the record and to answer an obvious question, I don't have a vote.)

Fisk and Perez made it this year. Rice and Carter didn't. Nor did a handful of other players for whom relatively strong cases can be made: closers Bruce Sutter and Goose Gosage; hitters Steve Garvey, Dave Parker and Dale Murphy; starters Tommy John, Jim Kaat, Bert Blyleven, Luis Tiant and Jack Morris.

Fisk and Carter make a good comparison, especially because catchers are a slightly different breed. Their offensive numbers don't necessarily have to match those of other position players, although Fisk's and Carter's do.

It's the longevity factor that's most interesting here. Hall of Famer Fisk hit .269 for his career with 376 home runs and 1,330 runs batted in. Still-waiting Carter hit .262 with 324 homers and 1,225 RBI. Advantage Fisk — or so it would seem.

Fisk also has the longevity edge, playing in 24 major league seasons to Carter's 19. Playing "just" 19 seasons certainly shouldn't be a negative, but Fisk's apparent durability has to be considered. Those extra five years, his final five, added 53 home runs and 232

Hall of Fame voting

Players needed 375 of the 499 votes cast:

Carlton Fisk	397
Tony Perez	385
Jim Rice	257
Gary Carter	248
Bruce Sutter	192
Goose Gosage	166
Steve Garvey	160
Tommy John	135
Jim Kaat	125
Dale Murphy	116
Jack Morris	111
Dave Parker	104
Bert Blyleven	87
Luis Tiant	86
Dave Concepcion	67
Keith Hernandez	52
Ron Guidry	44

Dropped from ballot for failing to receive 5% of the vote:

Jeff Reardon	24
Bob Boone	21
Willie Wilson	10
Rick Sutcliffe	9
Kent Hrbek	5
Charlie Hough	4
Dave Henderson	2
Steve Sax	2
Bill Gullickson	1
Bruce Hurst	1
Lonnie Smith	1
Bob Welch	1
Hubie Brooks	0

RBI to Fisk's totals. Take away those years and he has 323 home runs and 1,098 RBI, very Carter-like numbers.

Fisk hit those homers and drove in those runs and he should receive credit for them. But how much? During those five seasons, Fisk hit .258 and averaged 10.6 homers instead of the .271 and nearly 18 homers a year he had hit before then. How much do we consider non-Hall caliber seasons that help produce Hall-caliber totals? Tough call.

Perez vs. Rice is a similar study. Career totals: Perez, .279, 379 home runs, 1,652 RBI; Rice, .298, 382 home runs, 1,451 RBI.

Not a lot of difference until you get to the biggest discrepancy: Perez 2,777 games, Rice 2,089. Perez played 23 seasons to Rice's 16 and Perez's extra years are an even more striking example than Fisk's.

After playing almost every day for 14 years, Perez never played more than 91 games during any of his final six seasons. In the 464 games over those seasons, Perez added 31 homers and 190 RBI while hitting .261, 18 points below his career mark.

You can do the same thing with pitchers. Compare these three:

Pitcher	Wins	Pct.	ERA	20 wins	10 wins
Catfish Hunter (1965-79)	224	.574	3.26	5	11
Don Sutton (1966-88)	324	.559	3.26	1	21
Luis Tiant (1964-82)	229	.571	3.30	4	13

Sutton got into the Hall in his fifth year of eligibility. Hunter made it in his third. Tiant has been on the ballot since 1988 and still isn't close.

Sutton cracked the supposedly magic 300-victory level but wasn't an automatic choice for the Hall. The dilemma: Do you punish him for just one 20-win season or reward him for winning 324 games?

Catfish Hunter got into the Hall more quickly despite winning 100 fewer games. But Hunter had five consecutive 20-win years, a sign of the dominance voters apparently look for. Or do they? Tiant had four 20-win seasons. But he never had more than two in a row. And it apparently carries some weight that he pitched in only one World Series, while Hunter was in six.

Longevity of career or longevity of memories?

The answer gets further muddled every year. In fact, Fisk will be tugging on the bill of a cap with a "B" on the front this July in Cooperstown, even though he spent more time playing for the Chicago White Sox.

At least there's no doubt that's the right choice.

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RK NAME	CITY/STATE	EARNED
3 Donald Daisley	Pittsburgh, PA	\$850
4 Karl Mische	Rogers, MN	\$600
5 Steven DiCarlo	Hamden, CT	\$350

Leaders in the race for the \$5,000 Cash Grand Prize in the USA TODAY Playoff Football Challenge thru Week 1.

RK NAME	CITY/STATE	RK NAME	CITY/STATE
1 Danny Miller	Waterford, MI	6 Angelo Cavaleri	S. Ozone Pk, NY
2 Anthony Scuzzese	Plainfield, NJ	7 Mike Rhyne	Highland, IN
3 Travis Brooks	Stuarts Draft, VA	8 Dan Coldiron	San Ramon, CA
4 Terry Rujawitz	Maryville, IL	9 Alan Ginoza	Pearl City, HI
5 John Slavik	North St Paul, MN	10 Thomas Jones	Whippany, NJ

Leaders in the race for the \$15,000 Cash Grand Prize in the USA TODAY Hockey Challenge thru Jan. 6th.

RK TEAM OWNER	CITY/STATE
1 Victor Riebold	Fenton, MO
2 Darren Russ	Greer, SC
3 Clair Ellison	Blairmore, ALB
4 Barry Freed	Souderton, PA
5 Tom Rippon	N Vancouver, BC
6 Paul DaSilva	Forest Hills, NY
7 Rich Roetemeyer	St. Louis, MO
8 Roger Headley	Orlando, FL
9 Kevin Tyler	St. Louis, MO
10 Dan Brady	Livingston, NJ

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Leaders in the race for the \$15,000 Cash Grand Prize in the USA TODAY Basketball Challenge thru Jan. 9th.

RK NAME	CITY/STATE
1 John Moore	Rolling Meadows, IL
2 Jim Gay	Urbana, IL
3 Victor Vola	Colorado Springs, CO
4 Martin Cole	NW Washington, DC
5 Jeff Scheer	Warrenton, MO
6 Jim Alber	Jackson, MI
7 Wheeler/Zahn	Sussex, WI
8 Thompson/Lingat	Charleston, SC
9 Michael Francis	Allen, TX
10 Daniel Kobold	Indianapolis, IN

MAJOR LEAGUE REPORT

Grading the offseason movers and traders

You know it's a crazy winter when the Seattle Mariners shell out \$53 million, but not a penny toward keeping Ken Griffey Jr. or Alex Rodriguez.

You know it's an outrageous winter when two players in last year's All-Star Game — Tony Fernandez and Ed Sprague — still are looking for work, while aging free-agent pitcher Chuck Finley will get a bigger check from the Indians than Manny Ramirez and Omar Vizquel combined.

So after a winter that rocked the baseball world with the trades of stars such as Juan Gonzalez, Mike Hampton, Shawn Green, Vinny Castilla and Ryan Klesko, the non-trades of Griffey and Rodriguez, the makeovers of the Colorado Rockies, Seattle Mariners, St. Louis Cardinals and Tampa Bay Devil Rays and the mouth of John Rocker, it's time to assess the damage.

Here is our report card evaluating the winners and losers:

GRADE A

SEATTLE: GM Pat Gillick, the architect of the Toronto Blue Jays' World Series championship teams, wasted no time in turning around this franchise with the free-agent signings of first baseman John Olerud, starter Aaron Sele, relievers Kazuhiro Sasaki and Arthur Rhodes, outfielder Stan Javier and second baseman Mark McLemore. They could win this division going away, whether or not they keep Ken Griffey Jr.

COLORADO: No newcomer has had a greater impact on his team than new GM Dan O'Dowd, who has brought in 16 new players on his 40-man roster. The Rockies likely won't win the National League West, but they finally have a vision.

ST. LOUIS: No team in the National League improved their woeful pitching staff more than the Cardinals with the acquisitions of Darryl Kile, Andy Benes, Pat Hentgen and Dave Veres. The Cardinals no longer will be the Mark McGwire freak show.

GRADE B

N.Y. METS: OK, so they overpaid to get Todd Zeile, who will be switching from third base to first to replace John Olerud. But the one move to acquire left-handed ace Mike Hampton from the Houston Astros for center fielder Roger Cedeno and Octavio Dotel could have this team winning 100 games.

ATLANTA: The Braves continue to win, and John Schuerholz, the finest GM in the game, refuses to allow them to get stagnant. His latest move of acquiring speed, defense and insurance in second baseman Quilvio Veras, outfielder Reggie Sanders and first baseman Wally Joyner should pay huge dividends. Now, if they can find a way to shut closer John Rocker's mouth.

CHICAGO CUBS: GM Ed Lynch wins the salesman-of-the-year award. The man not only was able to persuade Don Baylor to become the Cubs' manager, but also talked Dodgers GM Kevin Malone into giving them prized starter Ismael Valdes and second baseman Eric Young for reliever Terry Ad-



By Barry Sweet, AP



By David Zalubowski, AP

Heads of the class: Seattle's Pat Gillick and Colorado's Dan O'Dowd are two GMs who get an 'A' for this offseason.

Cubs might be respectable again.

TAMPA BAY: We're not going to get suckered into believing that the Devil Rays have become anything more than a glorified softball team, but we like the fact that they'll be much more entertaining to watch. Why, with Fred McGriff, Jose Canseco, Greg Vaughn and Vinny Castilla, they could put on the greatest array of batting practice since *Home Run Derby*.

GRADE C

PHILADELPHIA: The Phillies made some nice moves in trading for Andy Ashby and signing closer Mike Jackson, but you wonder if they're kicking themselves for not trading away Curt Schilling six months ago before his shoulder started aching.

CLEVELAND: Chuck Finley hardly will be enough to overcome the Indians' pitching woes, but GM John Hart's most brilliant move was not panicking and trading away Manny Ramirez simply because he's a year away from free agency.

N.Y. YANKEES: They re-signed starter David Cone to a one-year contract. They didn't need to do anything else.

LOS ANGELES: The Dodgers pulled off a heist for slugger Shawn Green, but then let the Cubs rob them of starter Ismael Valdes and second baseman Eric Young.

OAKLAND: GM Billy Beane and company continue to impress. Instead of crying poverty, they're trying to win. They retained

starter Omar Olivares and still hope to get Angels center fielder Jim Edmonds.

DETROIT: The Tigers gambled heavily in acquiring two-time MVP Juan Gonzalez. They have offered a five-year, \$75 million contract to keep him, but Gonzalez hasn't blinked. Gulp.

SAN DIEGO: They might not win more games with Ryan Klesko and local favorite Bret Boone, but they could be a lot more exciting to watch. Now, if they can just keep their pitchers from falling out of trees.

CINCINNATI: No one in the game is more aggressive and innovative than Reds GM Jim Bowden. Yet Bowden's most impressive trait this winter is his patience in waiting for the Mariners to make their move, believing that the Reds will either get Griffey in a trade later this month or as a free agent in November.

TEXAS: They might have improved themselves for the future with the Juan Gonzalez trade, but the present looks downright shaky. Still, the free-agent signings of left-handed starters Kenny Rogers and Darren Oliver should keep this team in contention in the AL West. Besides, a team that has scored only two runs in its last six playoff games could afford a little shake-up.

GRADE D

TORONTO: Sure, the Blue Jays got snookered when they didn't get more from the Dodgers than Raul Mondesi when they traded away Shawn Green. But they wisely hung onto first baseman Carlos Delgado, and should contend once again.

PITTSBURGH: They talk awfully big, telling everyone how they're willing to trade one of their top pitchers for outfield help, but when it's time to pull the trigger, they shoot blanks.

ARIZONA: OK, maybe they didn't have to do a whole lot after winning 100 games.

But there are a whole lot of folks asking whether the D-backs are making a huge mistake with Tony Womack at shortstop.

MONTREAL: We applaud new owner Jeffrey Loria's enthusiasm and willingness to spend money, but why shell out \$9 million on Graeme Lloyd?

MILWAUKEE: The good news is that they finally dumped off Cal Eldred. The bad news is that they're now stuck with Jaime Navarro. New GM Dean Taylor took a huge risk trading away third baseman Jeff Cirillo.

HOUSTON: Let's see if we can get this straight: They move into a new downtown ballpark that'll bring in a whole lot of money. But instead of spending it, they act like they're going broke. They not only trade away center fielder Carl Everett, outfielder Derek Bell and shortstop Ricky Gutierrez, but foolishly part with ace Mike Hampton.

SAN FRANCISCO: We realize the Giants have to pay for their own stadium, but couldn't the ownership still allow brilliant GM Brian Sabean the opportunity to at least energize this team with a free-agent signing or trade?

BOSTON: We're still waiting for them to make a move, any move, to show that they're trying to catch the Yankees.

KANSAS CITY: They finally have a direction, but are light-years from competing.

GRADE F

CHICAGO WHITE SOX: They're loaded with young talent, but does anyone care?

BALTIMORE: Earth to Peter Angelos: We've got a feeling X-rays will show that every pitcher in baseball has wear and tear on his arm. We also have a feeling Mike Mussina might bolt the moment he's a free agent.

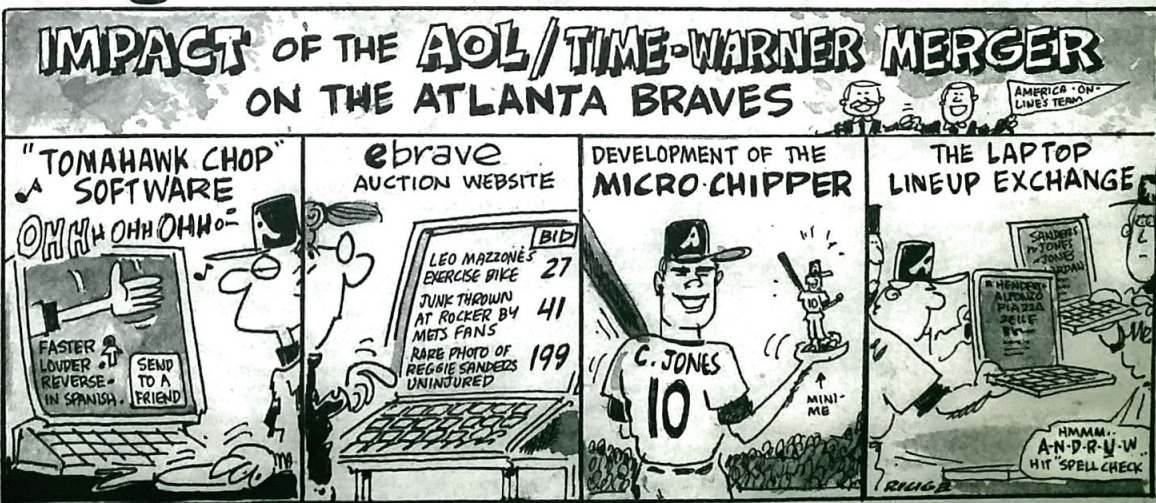
MINNESOTA: Give us your tired, your poor, your hungry and your weak.

FLORIDA: Really, could it be just three years ago that the Marlins won the World Series? If they had any pride, they'd give back the trophy until they get re-admitted to the major leagues.

ANAHEIM: Hello, is anyone home? Does anyone have a clue out there?

ricig

by Mike Ricigliano



Camden Yards chaos?

Mass talent exodus leads some to conclude Orioles owner Peter Angelos is one contentious boss

By Seth Livingstone

BALTIMORE
IT IS A COLD, CLEAR MORNING outside the Orioles' Camden Club restaurant and team executives Syd Thrift and John Angelos are running late for their lunch appointment with a reporter.

"I should have shaved today," says Angelos, realizing that he's about to be photographed for a national publication.

That the nattily dressed Angelos hasn't had much time to worry about stuff like shaving is perhaps a testament to the pace of business around Camden Yards these days. Just a week before, the whispers were that the Orioles had snagged free-agent starter Aaron Sele, cementing their pitching rotation and perhaps a return to competitiveness in the AL East. Now, a week later, Sele is in Seattle — and Thrift and Angelos are ending a week of damage control.

Clearly, Thrift and Angelos — as well as his father, Peter, who owns the team — don't like that they're blamed for an Orioles team that in the '90s was a star-studded squad of underachievers. And 2000, with the Sele caper fresh on everyone's mind, isn't starting off much better.

"I came across the Potomac River bridge to Baltimore and was blasted before I ever got unpacked," said Thrift. "I don't know what happened. Maybe I forgot to pay the toll but (reading the papers), you'd think that maybe I'd lost everything that I thought I knew about baseball."

That notion might be a bit extreme, but here is what the court of public opinion says after two losing seasons: The club has permitted a raft of talent — both on the field and in management — to slip through its fingers while overspending on unproductive free agents.

The Orioles have produced hardly any everyday players from their farm system since bringing up Cal Ripken in 1982. And Peter

Angelos is being charged with excessive meddling and costly indecision.

Angelos' meddling hurts Orioles reads the day's headline in *The Washington Times*, a clear reference to the Sele mess, which came to pass after the Orioles had agreed to terms of a four-year deal with the right-hander only to back off after having second thoughts about his durability. Time will tell if failing to sign Sele was a prudent decision or another in a series of perceived blunders by the Orioles, who have let stars such as Rafael Palmeiro and Roberto Alomar skip town.

But the bottom line remains. The Orioles still are searching for a quality starting pitcher as they seek to regain a measure of respectability in the AL East and, for that matter, the league.

PETER ANGELOS IS A headline maker. He's the legal eagle who controls the team with a hefty wallet, some say an iron fist, and a long-demonstrated love for the Baltimore area. There is no one better to take the stand in his own defense.

Love him or hate him, the elder Angelos is respected as the leading class-action attorney in the country. He brought asbestos companies to their knees, is arguing with the state of Maryland about whether he'll be paid \$1 billion or \$500 million for his work against big tobacco and is currently going after manufacturers of lead-based paint. He's also managed to put himself in charge of a baseball franchise that has led the majors in attendance each of the past

five seasons, while tending to considerable real estate concerns.

Thrift, recently promoted to vice president of baseball operations, marvels at his boss. "I've never

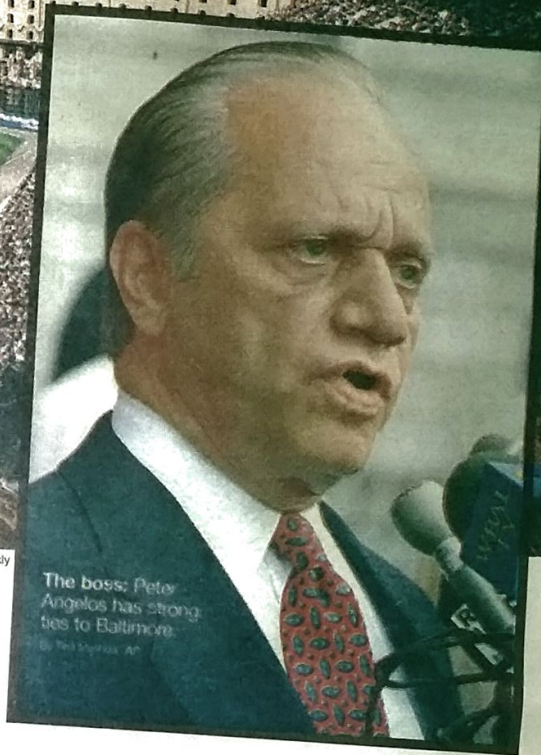
seen a man work as many hours and more days than him," he says. "I've never seen anyone who has the capacity to work on so many different projects. I don't know how he does it. I have no idea

how many telephone calls he must receive per day or how he sorts out who he's going to talk to — and how he can change (gears) while doing it. His retention is fabulous, as is his vocabulary. He's a brilliant man, academically, and he's street smart."

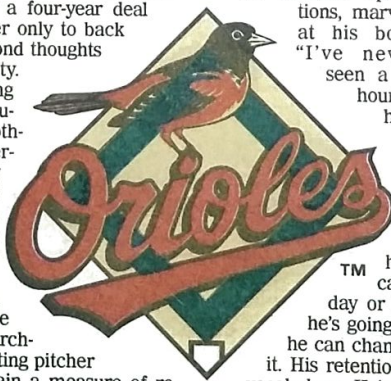
That might or might not translate into Peter Angelos being the right man to make decisions that have a dramatic impact on the performance of the Orioles. It's a popular theory that Angelos has too much say — that he has failed to give enough authority to baseball professionals, past and present.

"I think he has the right intentions," said *Baltimore Sun* columnist Peter Schmuck, who has chronicled the Orioles since Angelos' takeover in 1993. "I think he has trouble handing authority over to other people. It would be so easy for him to be a hero here. But he's just an uncompromising individual.

"Given his personality and the fact that he's focused on so many other things that are more important than baseball — big class-action suits on huge issues that are not fun and games — you have to wonder why he doesn't leave decisions to his baseball



The boss: Peter Angelos has strong ties to Baltimore.



people."

A number of talented baseball executives have come and gone in Baltimore under the Angelos regime. Pat Gillick (Mariners), Kevin Malone (Dodgers) and Doug Melvin (Rangers) are all general managers elsewhere. Frank Wren, let go after serving one year of a three-year contract last year, wasted no time in latching on with the Braves as an assistant GM.

Malone, who like Melvin had been an assistant GM with the Orioles, recounts what it was like to work for Peter Angelos.

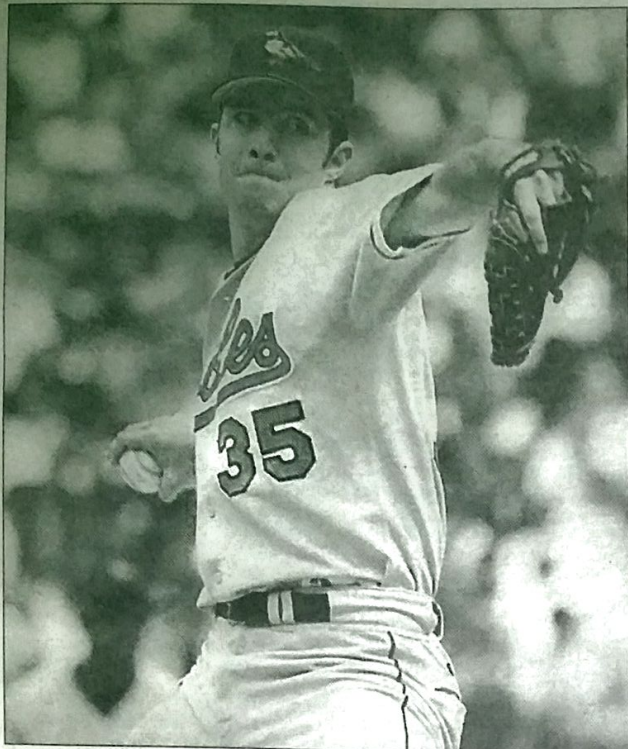
"Mr. Angelos is up-front about it," Malone says. "He's passionate and vocal about it. In some ways that's advantageous. In some ways it's not. He commits the dollars and wants to win as badly as anyone. I think that's admirable.

"You just have to know the system," he says. "Sometimes he offers a difference of opinion. If you understand that and don't try to battle it, I think that's healthy. Everyone has an opinion, and sometimes a difference of opinion is good. Even Pat Gillick recognized that's just the way it is. Mr. Angelos is involved and should be. Who am I or anyone else to say what should or shouldn't be? He owns the team. I did not sit in judgment. When I was there, I just tried to be part of the decision-making process."

Then, there are the managers: Johnny Oates, now with Texas; Phil Regan; Davey Johnson, currently managing the Dodgers; and Ray Miller, a much-respected pitching coach, who seemed miscast as skipper of a lineup since the past two seasons. In 2000, the

Baseball Weekly

COVER REPORT



By Joe Brockert, AP

Short leash: The contract of ace pitcher Mike Mussina, who has won 136 games in nine seasons for Orioles, expires after this season.

reins are handed to Mike Har- grove, who landed on his feet in Baltimore after being unceremoniously dumped by Cleveland.

"Letting me go is one thing," says Johnson, whose Orioles teams advanced to the ALCS in 1996 and '97. "Not using Pat Gillick and his expertise — not keeping him on — was, to me, a grandiose error. It was the work of Gillick and Malone that (began to) restore the Orioles' farm system. When we first got here, (the farm system) was terrible. But Pat Gillick and Kevin Malone worked extra-over- time with the scouting department and I feel like they did a great job of rebuilding. It was a traumatic thing when I had to resign. . . . We were knocking on the door (of the World Series) two years in a row, and that's someplace they hadn't been in 13 years."

Also among the departed is current Giants/ESPN broadcaster Jon Miller, who did Orioles games for 14 years. His term ended when Angelos viewed him as too critical.

"They've not really been able to retain their talent," says Miller. "They had Davey Johnson, one of the best managers they possibly could have had; Pat Gillick, one of the best GMs they possibly could have had; plus Kevin Malone, who had a great track record in Montreal. They had a great ballpark, generating great revenues and an owner committed to spending money to keep his team up there (in the standings). Why people weren't allowed to do their jobs is only speculation. I know Davey was very unhappy there. Pat is one of the most first-class people there's ever been in baseball. I know he was not allowed to do the job."

Peter Angelos has his own view on that issue. "The inference (by the media) is that somehow or other I'm an owner who's meddling or interfering," he says. "My critics

them employees. I refer to them as 'associates' or 'personnel of this firm.'"

DO PETER ANGELOS and the Orioles get a bad rap?

"It's one huge misconception," says Thrift. "If Peter Angelos is a bad guy and the cause of all the problems, and John Angelos is also a bad guy, then I must be a bad guy too, because I'm here — and the only way you get to be good is to leave and go somewhere else. I don't understand that mentality at all."

Don Buford, a longtime Oriole who recently was promoted to director of minor league operations, says he doesn't have a problem working for Angelos.

"The Angeloses have provided us with an opportunity," he says. "When you spend \$85 million to put a club together, I can't complain. It's up to me to go out and get the talent. There aren't many CEOs who are going to say, 'Take \$85 million and run with it.'"

John Angelos, 32, the Orioles' executive vice president, says his father — whom he often refers to as "Mr. Angelos" in the context of team affairs — is a good listener.

"He's also very good at quickly taking the information, analyzing it and giving you follow-up questions. But he's a pretty good listener and analyst and tends to cut through a lot of the information pretty quickly. (Growing up) I had a lot of experience with cross-examination."

"My father doesn't like to lose," he continues. "He feels like he's got an obligation, not only to himself, but to all the other owners and the fans in Baltimore. He wants this team to be a winner for them."

But would John like to see his Dad run things a little differently? Does he wish he could change him, just a little bit?

"I'm just an employee here," he

says, laughing. "You want to get me fired?"

Actually, Peter Angelos did change the way things were run — at least in titles — this offseason. Gone is the job description for general manager. Instead, Thrift is now vice president of baseball operations, handling day-to-day affairs along with John Angelos.

What hasn't changed is Peter Angelos' willingness to spend in order to put a winner on the field — he merely expects results for his money. Payroll commitments for the sub-500 Orioles of 1999 were in the neighborhood of \$80 million.

"Peter has spent (money) the last eight years," says columnist Schmuck. "He's willing to spend and do whatever it takes to make the Orioles a winning team — and he should be commended for that."

"But he is also much too concerned about getting credit for it," he adds. "In 1996, he decided not to let the front office trade David Wells and Bobby Bonilla. It was Peter's key decision that year. But I think it really bothered him that many people thought the Orioles reached the playoffs because of Davey Johnson, one of the winningest managers in the history of baseball. I think he always felt the media never gave him proper credit for, what at the time, was the proper decision." On the other

hand, while Peter Angelos has the final say on all critical transactions and is anxious for success, some say he can be reluctant to assume blame. And he's not shy about criticizing some of people who he hired as GM.

"I didn't put the bullpen together that destroyed our 1999 season. The GM did," says Angelos, pointing blame directly at Wren.

"In 1998, Pat Gillick was the GM and we said, 'What do we have to do to get the necessary components we don't have?' I said: 'Here's the checkbook. Tell me what you need to do it.' So he signed Doug Drabek, Ozzie Guillen, Joe Carter and Norm Charlton. Those weren't my decisions. It was his professional assessment of what he as GM thought we needed. We did all of that and it wasn't able to provide any improvement."

Angelos has been criticized for not following through on possible trades for Shawn Green and John Olerud, among others. Nothing stopped him from making a five-year, \$65 million commitment to Albert Belle, but Baltimore's hesitation in committing to Rafael Palmeiro led to the productive first baseman's departure after the '98 season. The Orioles settled for signing Will Clark, a player whose medical history prompted them to

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

WHO RUNS THE ORIOLES

► **Peter Angelos**, 70, CEO and managing partner. Raised in Baltimore, where he served as a city councilor and made an unsuccessful run for mayor, he made his fortune as a plaintiff's attorney. Angelos and his group of investors restored local ownership to the Orioles in Aug., 1993, paying a then-record \$173 million. He's become a target of criticism, primarily because of the control he exerts over Orioles' personnel decisions.

► **John Angelos**, 32, executive vice president. Oldest son of Peter and Georgia Angelos, he is a graduate of Duke with a law degree from the University of Baltimore. He handles the daily business of running the team, along with Syd Thrift.

► **Louis Angelos**, 30, attorney. Works in his father's law office and has been involved mainly in peripheral issues, such as the Baltimore/Cuban series and the advancement of the Greek Olympic team.

► **Syd Thrift**, 70, vice president of baseball operations. Former Pirates GM and director of the Kansas City Royals Baseball Academy, he began his career as a scout for the Yankees and Pirates. Beginning his sixth year with the Orioles, his current duties are

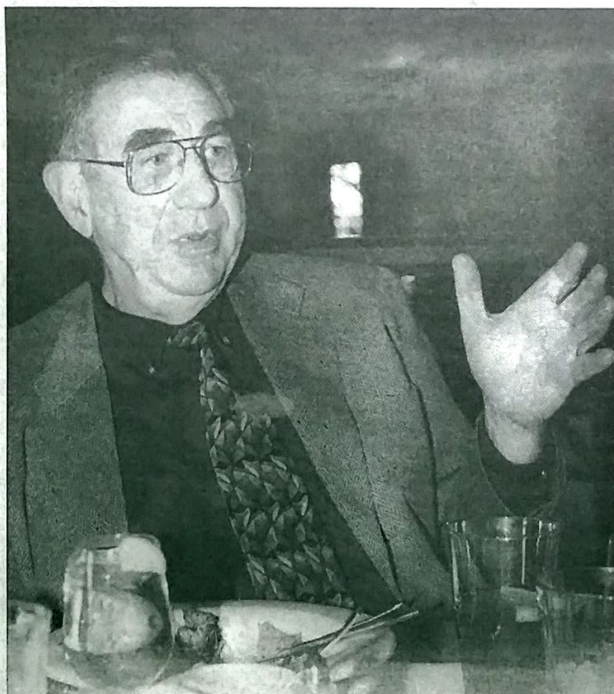
similar to that of a general manager.

► **Joe Foss**, 51, vice chairman and COO. Former chairman of the board of First American Bank of Washington, he is in charge of business, financial and administrative operations. He's been there from the beginning of the Angelos era.

► **Tom Trebelhorn**, 52, director of organizational instruction. Former manager for the Brewers and Cubs, he played five minor league seasons as a catcher and infielder. Once a schoolteacher in the offseason, he is regarded as an exceptional instructor and is charged with bringing consistency to the team's minor league system.

► **Don Buford**, 62, promoted to director of minor league operations this month. Buford has spent much of his career with the O's, beginning as a player in 1968. He has served as a major league coach and, most recently, as director of player development.

► **Tony DeMazio**, 54, scouting director. In his second season with Orioles after spending four years as East Coast scouting supervisor. He scouted for the Braves from 1983-90, signing Tom Glavine and Chipper Jones, among others.



By Barbara Jean Germano, Baseball Weekly

Transaction man: Syd Thrift is now the Orioles' top-ranked executive in terms of conventional baseball experience.



By Barbara Jean Germano, Baseball Weekly

Not a rookie: John Angelos is in his seventh year with the O's.



By Barbara Jean Germano, Baseball Weekly

Vet: Don Buford has spent 17 of 37 pro years with the club.

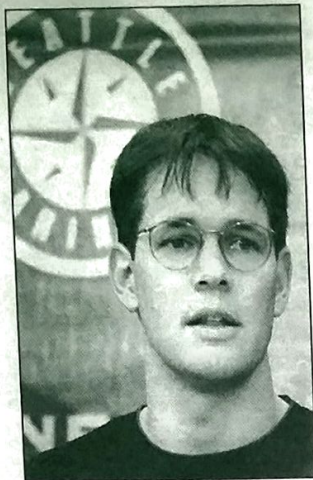
'Fiction,' says Angelos of hesitation reputation

(FROM PREVIOUS PAGE)

reject him as a long-term solution in 1993.

Angelos is adamant that the powers of a team's general manager should only extend so far.

"A lot of them believe they should operate, unchecked by ownership," he says. "That's preposterous. They can't be independent, operating by themselves. There has to be accountability. Some people interpret what they're doing to be independent. They think they're the professionals and should not be queried by ownership or a non-professional, even if that person ranks above them in the chain of command."



By Barry Sweet, AP

Aaron Sele: He takes two-year total of 37 wins to Seattle.

health.

Were Baltimore's medical concerns about Sele no more than the normal wear and tear associated with many veteran pitchers?

Perhaps most telling is that Sele had no qualms about accepting a two-year deal, a sign that he's confident enough in his physical state to believe he'll be negotiating another lucrative contract in a year or two.

Maybe so, but medical evaluations indeed are a pet peeve of Peter Angelos. He demands one of every player he signs. He was stung by the Xavier Hernandez deal last winter, in which Wren signed Hernandez and placed him on the roster prior to his exam (which he later failed).

"That was a \$1.75 million mistake (the result of) a failure to follow company policies," Angelos says.

Angelos has vowed not to be burned the same way twice. He demands that every player undergo a medical examination by team doctors William Goldiner (general) and Michael Jacobs (orthopedics) and personally reviews the player's medical history.

Agent Jeff Moorad, who represents Will Clark and guided injury-haunted Jeffrey Hammonds (now with the Rockies) through his arbitration with the Orioles, says, "Team physicians have a variety of standards. Some are more tolerant of the more natural wear and tear that occurs with an athlete's body. My understanding is that Peter has extensive knowledge and experience with issues in the legal/medical field. For that reason, he's particularly focused on the physical well-being of prospective signees."

His conclusion: "Peter Angelos is entitled to have the toughest, most detail-oriented medical practitioners look over his shoulder. To the extent that he has chosen a group of conservative doctors, he owns the team. He's entitled."

DESPITE THE FACT that the Orioles have done away with the GM position, there doesn't appear to be any confusion in their dealings with other teams.

The Mets worked a trade with Baltimore last month, sending Chuck McElroy to the O's for Jesse Orosco. Mets GM Steve Phillips said he hasn't found dealing with the Orioles to be any different than working with any other team.

"You deal with Syd Thrift, directly, and we interacted as we would have with any other GM," Phillips says. "Things were handled in a prompt, professional manner. There was nothing within the structure they currently have that prohibited us from having productive discussions and trying to move forward on any number of fronts."

The Orioles have attempted to move forward this offseason by hiring Hargrove as manager and by retooling a bullpen that let them down early and often in 1992. Baltimore's first move of the winter was to sign free agent Mike Trombly, an effective reliever for the Twins. They complemented that with the signing of lefty Buddy Groom and dealt the aging Orosco to New York for McElroy. Mike Timlin, who was significantly better in the second half of last season, will be counted on to close.

Now, if the Orioles can only improve the production from the farm. "That," says John Angelos, "is why we made such an effort the last couple of years to sign as many amateur players as possible and get the top talent we can coming in. Hopefully, that will start to produce in the way the Yankees have produced."

It's also the reason the Orioles promoted Tom Trebelhorn and Buford to oversee minor league development. Things might be looking up, with players such as second baseman Jerry Hairston, catcher Jayson Werth, left-handers Matt Riley and B.J. Ryan and first baseman Calvin Pickering on the immediate horizon.

But the Orioles still must determine a way to work these players into a lineup featuring aging vets Cal Ripken Jr., Brady Anderson, Clark and Delino DeShields.

The Orioles also must consider the future of Ripken and — most importantly — pitching ace Mike Mussina, who will be a free agent at season's end.

Mussina looms as a litmus test for the Orioles' style of management. Will the Orioles be able to hang on to their most irreplaceable player? Or will he join Rafael Palmeiro as a star player who wasn't courted enough?

"We certainly want Mussina to be part of our future here," Thrift says. "Mr. Angelos will be the person responsible for that contract."

Once more, the direction of the Orioles will be squarely in the hands of their owner. **EW**

THE ANGELOS ORIOLES

1993

Following an 85-77 season under manager Johnny Oates, the sale of the Orioles from Eli Jacobs to a group led by Peter Angelos becomes official Oct. 4 ... The Orioles pass on signing first baseman Will Clark (a player they will ultimately sign five years later) because of medical concerns.

1994

Oates is fired in September after the Orioles go 63-49 during the strike-shortened season ... After nine seasons with Baltimore, assistant GM Doug Melvin leaves to become GM of the Texas Rangers.

1995

Syd Thrift joins the Orioles as director of player development ... Cal Ripken plays in his record 2,131st consecutive game, but the O's finish 71-73 under manager Phil Regan. In November, Pat Gillick is hired to replace GM Roland Hemond.

1996

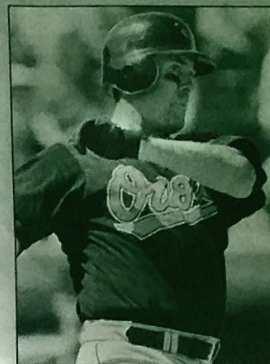
Brady Anderson hits 50 home runs and Rafael Palmeiro drives in 142 (both team records) as the Orioles, now managed by Davey Johnson, earn the AL wild card with an 88-74 record. Baltimore loses to the Yankees in five games in the ALCS ... Amid reports that Angelos thinks he's too critical, noted broadcaster Jon Miller leaves town after 14 seasons.

1997

The Orioles win the division, finishing 98-64, but Johnson is left no option but resignation after the team loses to Cleveland in the ALCS. Ray Miller is named manager in November.

1998

Baltimore finishes 79-83. Gillick steps aside and is replaced by GM Frank Wren in October. Gillick's logical successor, assistant GM Kevin Malone, had already left to take the Dodgers' GM job in September ... The Orioles sign Albert Belle to a \$65 million, five-year contract and before year's end trade for catcher Charles Johnson and sign Delino DeShields, B.J. Sur-



By Robert Borna, AP

A bad sign? Will Clark drove in only 29 runs in 77 games.

hoff and Will Clark to multi-year deals.

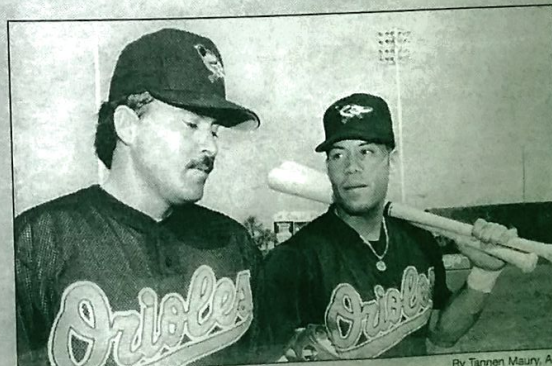
1999

Baltimore's payroll exceeds \$80 million — and that's with three-time team MVP Palmeiro rejecting a \$50 million, five-year proposal ... In January, John Angelos is promoted to executive vice president ... Baltimore's first signings of the new year are Heathcliff Slocumb and Mike Fetters, a signal of trouble to come in the bullpen. ... The Orioles get off to a dreadful start and finish 78-84, resulting in the termination of what was supposed to be a three-year contract for Wren.

2000

Operating without a GM in title, it's Thrift, vice president of operations, who's chiefly responsible for personnel ... Tom Trebelhorn, beginning his fifth year with the team, is promoted to director of organizational instruction; Don Buford to director of minor league operations. ... Having bolstered their bullpen by adding Mike Trombly, Chuck McElroy and Buddy Groom, the Orioles work out a four-year, \$29 million outline of a deal with free agent starting pitcher Aaron Sele, but try to shorten it because of the results of his medical exam. Sele quickly signs with Seattle ... Ace Mike Mussina is eligible for free agency at the end of the year.

— Seth Livingstone



By Timmen Maury, AP

Flown the coop: Ex-Birds Rafael Palmeiro, left, and Roberto Alomar, right, each were strong MVP candidates last year.

NEWS

Hall of Famer Bob Lemon dead at 79

By Tom Withers

CLEVELAND — Bob Lemon, a Hall of Fame pitcher who earned a "lifetime contract" with the New York Yankees by taking over a team in turmoil and managing it to the 1978 World Series title, died Jan. 11.

Lemon, who won 20 games seven times during his brilliant pitching career with the Cleveland Indians, died in Long Beach, Calif. He was 79.

Lemon led the American League in victories three times and won two games in the 1948 World Series — the last time the Indians were champions. He finished with a 207-128 record and was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1976.

Two years later, Lemon, who also managed the Kansas City Royals and Chicago White Sox, took over the Yankees in midseason when Billy Martin resigned. He brought focus to a turbulent clubhouse, where Martin, owner George Steinbrenner, and players Thurman Munson and Reggie Jackson had been feuding.

Under Lemon's easygoing leadership, the Yankees overcame a 14-game deficit, beat Boston in a one-game playoff at Fenway Park

to win the AL East, then defeated the Royals in the ALCS. New York then triumphed over the Los Angeles Dodgers to win its second consecutive World Series title.

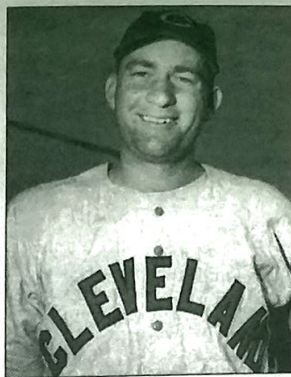
Lemon, who often said all he did was "fill out the lineup card," was given a "lifetime contract" by Steinbrenner and remained on the Yankees' payroll as a scout and adviser until his death.

"When our team was going through the turmoil during the 1978 season, Bob Lemon was just what we needed," Steinbrenner said. "He was such a calming influence and, of course, he guided the club to the world championship in one of the greatest comebacks in sports history. He was a gentle but consummate competitor."

Lemon, a seven-time All-Star, began his playing career as a third baseman with the Indians in 1941 and briefly played center field. After Lemon served in the Navy during World War II, the Indians tried him as a pitcher, and he became one of the most successful in club history.

His No. 21 was retired by the Indians in 1998.

Lemon, who pitched a no-hitter at Detroit on June 30, 1948, also was an outstanding hitter for a pitcher, compiling a .232 career



Lifer: Bob Lemon spent his entire playing career with the Indians.

average with 37 home runs, the second-highest home run total among pitchers. He often was used a pinch-hitter, batting .284 in 109 at-bats.

After retiring in 1958, Lemon worked as a scout, coach and minor league manager.

Lemon managed Kansas City from 1970-72 and the White Sox in 1977 and 1978 before taking over the Yankees.

Lemon was replaced by Martin midway through the '79 season, but returned for the second half of the 1981 season. New York won the AL pennant before losing to the Dodgers in the Series.

Tom Withers is an Associated Press sports writer.

Johnson winner of first Spahn award

From staff, wire reports

Randy Johnson has won the Warren Spahn Award.

Johnson, the Arizona Diamondbacks ace, received the inaugural award from Spahn last week at the Oklahoma Sports Museum in Guthrie, Okla. The museum created the award, which will go annually to the top left-handed pitcher in the majors.

Spahn, who has lived in Oklahoma for 50 years, is the winningest left-hander in baseball history with 363 victories.

The award is based on wins, ERA and strikeouts. Johnson led lefties last year in strikeouts (364) and ERA (2.48) and was second to Mike Hampton in victories (17).

SAAM DIES: By Saam, remembered by generations of Philadelphians as the voice of baseball, died Sunday at age 85 after a stroke.

The popular radio announcer, who was inducted into the broadcasters' wing of the baseball Hall of Fame, called more than 8,000 games for the Philadelphia Phillies and Athletics

over 38 seasons.

Saam also broadcast University of Pennsylvania and Philadelphia Eagles football, college and professional basketball, and minor league hockey.

"Socially and professionally, By was a joy to be around," Phillies broadcaster Harry Kalas said. "Between innings, he would crack Whitey (Richie Ashburn) and me up with his sense of humor and one-liners. (But) he was trained in the old school where everything on the air was serious business."

Gene Kelly, Chuck Thompson, Bill Campbell and Claude Haring were among Saam's many broadcast partners.

He began announcing Phillies and Athletics home games in 1938. Broadcasters did not travel then, so he was able to announce for both teams until the late 1940s, when Phillies owner Bob Carpenter wanted road games announced as well.

Out of loyalty to Athletics owner Connie Mack, Saam became the A's home and road announcer in 1950, until the team left town in 1954. He was the Phillies' announcer from 1955 to 1975.

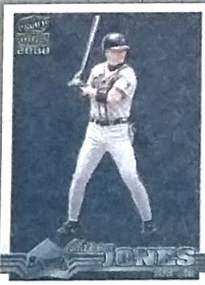
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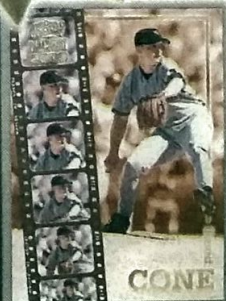
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AMERICAN LEAGUE NOTES



Former team president Richard Brown criticized new general manager **Bill Stoneman**, calling his claim that he expects the Angels to be a contender regardless of whether he makes another acquisition an "insult" to the fans.

"Even with nobody getting hurt or catching a disease, they're not going to contend (without acquisitions)," Brown said. "To say otherwise is just an insult."

Brown, who wrote a letter to the *Los Angeles Times* after reading Stoneman's comments in *Baseball Weekly* last week, said an honest explanation outlining a rebuilding plan would be more acceptable.

Without another acquisition, the rotation is expected to include **Ken Hill** and **Jason Dickson**, both stalled by injuries last year, along with youthful **Jarrod Washburn**, **Ramon Ortiz** and **Brian Cooper**. Veteran **Tim Lincecum**, coming off surgery to repair a minor tear in the flexor tendon, is expected to join the rotation sometime in April.

Center fielder **Jim Edmonds** said last week he's not sure how to respond to the third consecutive year of trade rumors surrounding him. He thought a deal to send him to Oakland was imminent a month ago before the Angels killed it.

"I haven't made any decision," said Edmonds, in the final year of a contract that pays him \$4.65 million in 2000. He's considering playing out his contract and becoming a free agent, refusing to negotiate with the Angels or any team he might be traded to, which would hamstring Stoneman's efforts to market him.



One pitcher who could fit into the rotation, even though he was not offered a contract by the Orioles, is left-hander **Doug Johns**. But Johns, 32, had a more pressing matter last week.

A Baltimore judge sentenced him to a year of supervised probation and 80 hours of community service, and fined him \$1,525 on charges of driving while intoxicated and drug possession last April. A charge of driving under the influence last fall has yet to come to court.

Johns went 6-4 with a 4.47 ERA in 32 games for the Orioles last season. In five late-season starts, covering 33 innings, he went 2-1 with a respectable 3.55 ERA.

The Orioles did not offer him a new contract, but the club could sign him to a minor league deal with an invite to spring training, according to **Syd Thrift**, vice president of baseball operations.

Thrift also talked last week to the agent for left-hander **Steve Avery**, who was 6-7 with Cincinnati last season.

Baltimore signed reliever **Al Reyes** to a one-year, \$620,000 contract last week. Reyes went 2-3 with a 4.85 ERA in 27 games after coming over from Milwaukee in a July 21 trade.

Catcher **Charles Johnson** filed for arbitration for the second consecutive year with the Orioles. He made \$3.6 million in 1999 and hit .251 with 16 homers and 54 RBI while gunning down 40% of runners attempting to steal.

► **The Aaron Sele non-deal and Orioles' front office, Cover Report, Page 6**



Just moments before Carlton Fisk announced he would wear their cap into the Hall of Fame, the Red Sox surprised Fisk by announcing they would retire his No. 27. Fisk's number will join just four others — Bobby Doerr, No. 1; Joe Cro-



By Tom Olschke, AP

Comedown: Mike Caruso lost 56 points off his batting average and 93 points off his slugging percentage in his sophomore year.

in, 4; Carl Yastrzemski, 8; and Ted Williams, 9 — on the facade of the right-field grandstand at Fenway Park.

"It gives me goose bumps to think about that," said Fisk.

General manager **Dan Duquette** met with Larry Reynolds, agent for new center fielder **Carl Everett**, about signing a long-term contract. Everett is eligible for free agency after 2000, but the club wants him for the long haul. Everett sounded open to the idea. "If everyone joins together in the effort, I'm sure things will work out," he said.

Everett's price tag could be as high as \$10 million a season for four to five years.

► The club plans to keep **Darren Lewis** as a backup outfielder, although Lewis wants to play every day and would like a trade.

► The club continues to show interest in a minor league deal for right-hander **Bobby Witt**, as well as a contract for left-hander **Donovan Osborne**. There is also the possibility that right-hander **Jim Corsi**, released last season, could return.

► The Sox signed catchers **Joe Suddall** and **Tim Spehr** to minor league deals. The club is expected to keep catcher **Scott Hatteberg** as backup for **Jason Varitek**, although a trade remains a possibility.

Hatteberg and the rest of the arbitration-eligible Red Sox — **Everett** and right-handers **Rich Garces**, **Bryce Florie** and **John Wasdin** — all filed for arbitration Jan. 14.



The White Sox lit a fire under short-stop **Mike Caruso** by acquiring veteran **Jose Valentin** from the Brewers, along with pitcher **Cal Eldred**, for pitchers **Jaime Navarro** and **John Snyder**.

Valentin had a down year in 1999, but the Sox hope he will recapture the magic of 1996, when he hit 24 home runs and had 95 RBI, and that Caruso will be inspired to reprise 1998, when he hit .306 as a rookie.

Last season Valentin lost his starting job in Milwaukee, hitting .227 with 22 errors in just 89 games, while Caruso batted .250 for the Sox with 24 errors in 136 contests.

"I warned Mike during the season and after it that he has to come back and show us he is prepared to be a major league player," said general manager **Ron Schueler**. "It's going to be a dog-fight."

► **Eldred**, who hasn't had a winning season since going 11-2 as a rookie in 1992, will try to jump into an inexperienced rotation of **James Baldwin**, **Mike Sirota**, **Jim Parque** and **Kip Wells** while fending off contenders **Aaron Myette**, **Tanyon Sturtze**, **Jon Garland** and **Lorenzo Barcelo**.

"We have a guy who could probably be a real good pitcher," manager **Jerry Manuel** said of **Eldred**, "but we have to be careful how we use him because he's coming off major injuries."



The Indians, not wanting to leave center field in the inexperienced hands of **Dave Roberts** and **Jacob Cruz**, signed veteran **Lance Johnson** last week to a minor league contract.

Johnson, who has spent the winter working out with Olympic trainer **Bob Kersee**, must make the team out of spring training to collect on his incentive-laden contract.

The Indians have a hole in center field because **Kenny Lofton** has a hole in his left rotator cuff. He underwent surgery in December and could be out until the All-Star break.

► Major league owners are expected to vote on the sale of the Indians this week at their meeting in Phoenix.

Attorney **Larry Dolan** reached an agreement to purchase the Indians on Nov. 3 from **Dick Jacobs** for a record \$320 million.

► Right-hander **Steve Karsay**, expected to compete for the vacant closer's job, filed for arbitration last week. The Indians haven't gone to arbitration since 1991.

"I believe we'll get a deal done without going to a hearing," said general manager **John Hart**.

► **Jaret Wright** worked on a new delivery with pitching coach **Dick Pole** for three days last week in Jacobs Field. Wright, coming off an 8-10, 6.06 ERA season, was disappointed with last year, but unbowed: "We play this game in front of the whole world. If you're not a secure person, it will break you. I'm not broken."



While he continues looking for pitching help, general manager **Randy Smith** believes the club is improved even if it makes no further moves.

The additions of two-time AL MVP **Juan Gonzalez** and manager **Phil Garner** are behind Smith's optimism.

"I think those two will be worth a lot of wins for us," Smith said. "I think we're significantly better."

After winning 79 games and seeming to be on the upswing in 1997, the team has struggled the last two seasons.

Pitching has been an obvious problem. The rotation likely will include **Dave Mlicki**, **Brian Moehler**, **Jeff Weaver**, **C.J. Nitkowski** and **Dave Borkowski**.

"Mlicki and Moehler are solid, and Weaver could be excellent," said Smith.

"Nitkowski and Borkowski made strides last season, and the potential is there."

► Outfielder **Bobby Higginson** broke the tip of his right thumb while vacationing in Mexico. The injury is not serious and Higginson expects to miss little time during spring training.

► The Tigers signed outfielder **Billy McMillon** to a minor league contract and invited him to spring training.

McMillon, 28, hit .304 with 16 home runs and 85 RBI last season for Triple-A Scranton/Wilkes-Barre. He's had brief stints with Florida and Philadelphia.



The Royals, searching for a closer to replace the retired **Jeff Montgomery**, signed right-hander **Ricky Bottalico** to a one-year contract Jan. 14. Bottalico will receive a base salary of \$1.5 million and can pocket another \$400,000 in incentives.

Bottalico, who had to undergo a thorough physical before the contract was final, led the Cardinals with 20 saves last season. He had elbow sur-

gery on April 27, 1998, while with Philadelphia.

The bullpen needed help after registering only 29 saves in 59 chances last year.

Bottalico said he chose the Royals because he wanted an opportunity to remain a closer.

► The Royals avoided arbitration with outfielder **Johnny Damon** and first baseman **Mike Sweeney** by signing both to one-year contracts.

Damon, who made \$2.1 million in 1999, signed for \$4 million. He hit a career-high .307 with 101 runs, 77 RBI and 36 stolen bases.

Sweeney, who hit .322 with 22 home runs, 102 RBI and 101 runs, signed for \$2.25 million. He switched from catcher to first base after **Jeff King** retired last May.

► The Royals signed veteran catcher **Jorge Fabregas** to a minor league contract and invited him to camp. Fabregas hit .199 last season in 88 games with Florida and Atlanta. He will compete with **Sal Fasano** and **Brian Johnson** for a spot on the roster. Fabregas' advantage is he is a left-handed hitter, while the other two are right-handed hitters.

USA TODAY
Baseball Weekly

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CLUBHOUSE

BIRTHDAYS

► Jan. 18: Jim Morris, Devil Rays; 36: Wilton Veras, Red Sox; 22: Orlando Palmeiro, Angels; 31: Jeff Juden, Yankees; 29: Phil Nevin, Padres; 29: Chris Stynes, Reds; 27: Armaury Telemaco, Phillies, 26.
 ► Jan. 20: Ozzie Guillen, Braves; 36: Marvin Benard, Giants; 30: Julio Santana, Red Sox; 26: Brian Giles, Pirates, 29.
 ► Jan. 21: Byung-Hyun Kim, Diamondbacks; 21: Rusty Greer, Rangers; 31: Jeff McCurry, Astros, 30.
 ► Jan. 22: Jimmy Anderson, Pirates, 24.
 ► Jan. 23: Jason Ryan, Twins; 24: Erubiel Durazo, Diamondbacks; 26: Mark Wohlers, Reds; 30: Alan Embree, Giants; 30: Charlie Greene, Brewers; 29.
 ► Jan. 24: Cory Bailey, Giants, 29.
 ► Jan. 25: Bryan Ward, White Sox; 28; Dan Serafini, Padres, 26.

Doc's legacy now moonlights as fund-raiser

By Dana Heiss Grodin

A successful minor leaguer named Archibald "Moonlight" Graham made his major league debut for the New York Giants on June 29, 1905.

He entered the game in the ninth as a defensive replacement in right field. He wasn't there long, since the Giants needed only five minutes to record the final three outs.

That game was Graham's last as a big-leaguer. After his debut, Graham walked away from baseball to pursue a medical career. The Giants went on to win the 1905 World Series. Moonlight Graham entered the record books with one half-inning of play to his credit and zero at-bats.

If Graham's story sounds familiar, then perhaps you're a fan of the book *Shoeless Joe*, written by W.P. Kinsella, or the 1989 movie version of the book, *Field of Dreams*.

In the book and movie, Doc "Moonlight" Graham is beckoned to a magical diamond built on an Iowa cornfield. Graham finally gets the at-bat he never had as a big leaguer decades earlier and hits a sacrifice fly.

In real life, Graham never did get that at-bat. But he fulfilled his dream of becoming a successful physician. He spent 50 years as a doctor, 44 of them working for schools in



At long last: Retroactive baseball cards honor 'Moonlight' Graham three decades after his death.

Archibald Wright 'Moonlight' Graham

► Position: Right fielder
 ► Bats: L ► Throws: R
 ► HT: 5-10 ► WT: 170
 ► Born: Nov. 9, 1876, in Fayetteville, N.C.
 ► Died: Aug. 25, 1965, in Chisholm, Minn.
 ► Nickname: Best guess of where "Moonlight" came from was made by W.P. Kinsella, who wrote about Graham in the book *Shoeless Joe*. He said Graham suffered from insomnia and often took moonlight strolls.

Chisholm, Minn.

He died in 1965 at age 89, but his legacy lives on in his small northern Minnesota hometown. The Doc "Moonlight" Graham Memorial Scholarship Fund was established in 1993 and has thus far awarded 13 \$500 scholarships to Chisholm High School gradu-

ating seniors.

The Fund has raised money by selling baseball trading cards bearing his image. The series began with a rookie card and has grown with unique additions.

One card poses the question, "What if Moonlight Graham had played in the 1905

Series?" The front is a drawing of Graham in his NL jersey; the back discusses in detail the players and managers that starred in that World Series.

The latest card, introduced in 1999, pairs Graham with Shoeless Joe Jackson, another player featured in *Field of Dreams*.

The 1999 card postulates that Jackson and Graham might have befriended each other in real life on a baseball diamond.

Jackson was known to have played baseball games around Chisholm after his banishment from the major leagues for his part in the 1919 Black Sox scandal. According to longtime residents of Chisholm, Graham stayed active by playing baseball around his hometown, so he might have played with Shoeless Joe.

The idea alone made for an interesting baseball card, said Mike Kalibabky, producer of the card set and co-creator of the Doc Graham Memorial Scholarship Fund.

"The whole idea of Jackson and Graham actually meeting in real life makes the hairs on my neck stand on end," he said. "Talk about fantasy drifting into reality."

For more information on Doc "Moonlight" Graham cards and the Graham Scholarship Fund, call Kalibabky at (218) 254-2174 or go to www.cardmall.com/moonlight-graham.

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AMERICAN LEAGUE NOTES

Minnesota Twins

www.twinsbaseball.com

The Twins continue to engage in contracts talks with **Brad Radke** while protecting themselves by listening to trade proposals for him.

They believe Radke will command at least a four-year deal for about \$30 million, and they already have received plenty of offers for their ace.

Still, the Twins hope to sign Radke before the start of the season. He is eligible for free agency after 2000.

"I would like to address it sooner rather than later," general manager **Terry Ryan** said.

► The Twins, who provided a chance for reliever **Bob Wells** to turn around his career last season, rewarded him with a two-year, \$1.8 million contract. Wells, 8-3 with a 3.81 ERA last year, could become the closer. He pitched in 76 games in 1999, tying for the AL lead.

► The club continues to show mild interest in third baseman **Ed Sprague** and outfielder **Butch Huskey**.

New York Yankees

www.yankees.com

The (Newark) *Star-Ledger* reported that the Yankees and closer **Mariano Rivera** have discussed a four-year deal that would make the 30-year-old right-hander baseball's highest-paid reliever. There were indications the deal might be done soon, although Rivera's agent, **Jim Bronner**, downplayed the notion. "We've talked about it, but nothing's close," Bronner said Jan. 14. "Unless something happens between now and (Jan. 17, the date teams and players must submit their requests), we plan to file figures."

► New catching instructor **Bob Didier** will be stationed behind the plate during games. Previous catching instructors have generally watched from the bullpen.

"This will give us a scout-coach thing," general manager **Brian Cashman** said. "Bob will look at how we should be pitching to guys, how we're handling pitchers. It's a new view."

Didier, 50, has been an advance scout for the Yanks since 1997. He was a big-league catcher from 1969-74. He joins former Met and Yankee **Lee Mazzilli** as new additions to manager **Joe Torre's** staff.

► Would Cashman be interested if Atlanta reliever **John Rocker** were available? "I don't think that's something I'd want to pursue," Cashman said. "And I haven't made any calls about him."

Third base coach **Willie Randolph** doesn't have any sympathy for Rocker, but he doesn't think baseball has to do much, if anything, to punish him for his remarks.

"I don't think they need to suspend him or take his pay away from him," Randolph said. "I don't think that serves any real purpose."

Randolph said the punishment will come naturally as he interacts with his teammates and other ballplayers. "This is something he has to deal with for the rest of his life," Randolph said.

► Cashman has laid out a challenge to **Shane Spencer** and **Ricky Ledee**, who enter spring training as a left field platoon.

"One of the reasons we did the (Chad) Curtis deal (with the Rangers) was to give Spencer and Ledee a real chance to go with it and win the job," Cashman said. "In theory, the organization would like one of them to step up and flat-out win the thing."

Oakland Athletics

www.oaklandathletics.com

After years of spending February and March in Florida, **Jason Istringhausen** is looking forward to his first spring train-

ing in Arizona.

It's about a month away, and the closer will report to Phoenix with a new one-year deal. It's possible talks on a long-term deal could rekindle in midseason. Istringhausen becomes a free agent after 2001.

Istringhausen, who became the closer in the final five weeks of 1999, earning eight consecutive saves, brought up the possibility of a multiyear contract. The A's were interested, but after signing starter **Omar Olivares** to a new two-year, \$8 million deal, they weren't ready for a multiyear pact.

► General manager **Billy Beane** doesn't care for the suggestion that the A's could begin the season as AL West favorites. He points to improved Seattle and still-formidable Texas.

"As opposed to the last couple of years, we've got a realistic chance this year," Beane said. "But to call us the favorite is a little presumptuous."

► The only player on the roster still eligible for arbitration is pitcher **Ariel Prieto**, injured the last two seasons. Prieto has pitched well in winter ball.

"The challenge for Ariel is to keep healthy this year," Beane said. "It remains to be seen what we can expect from him this year."

Seattle Mariners

www.mariners.org

The revamped Mariners might not be enticing enough to dissuade **Ken Griffey Jr.** from leaving, but they're enough to persuade observers that Seattle is a contender.

When **Aaron Sele** signed a last-minute deal with the Mariners, after Baltimore pulled a four-year agreement off the table, he became the sixth free agent general manager **Pat Gillick** signed since the season ended. He joins **John Olerud**, relievers **Kazuhiko Sasaki** and **Arthur Rhodes**, and utility players **Mark McLemore** and **Stan Javier**. "We're going to be competitive," Gillick said. "A lot can happen. Injuries can play a part in what you do. But I think we have probably made progress on the Texas Rangers. . . . I guess you can say we put our money where our mouth is."

But Gillick said the Mariners' upgrade is unlikely to impact the Griffey situation. "We're going by the joint statement originally released," Gillick said, referring to Griffey's stated desire to move on. "We're going to try to comply with Ken's request, and that's trying to get him closer to home."

► Pitcher **Frankie Rodriguez**, 27, claimed off waivers from Minnesota on May 26, agreed to a one-year contract with the Mariners Saturday. Rodriguez was 2-4 with three saves and a 5.65 ERA in 28 games for Seattle, but a 1.40 ERA in 19½ innings at Safeco Field.

► Outfielder **Brian Hunter** became the only Mariner to file for salary arbitration. He made \$1.75 million last season.

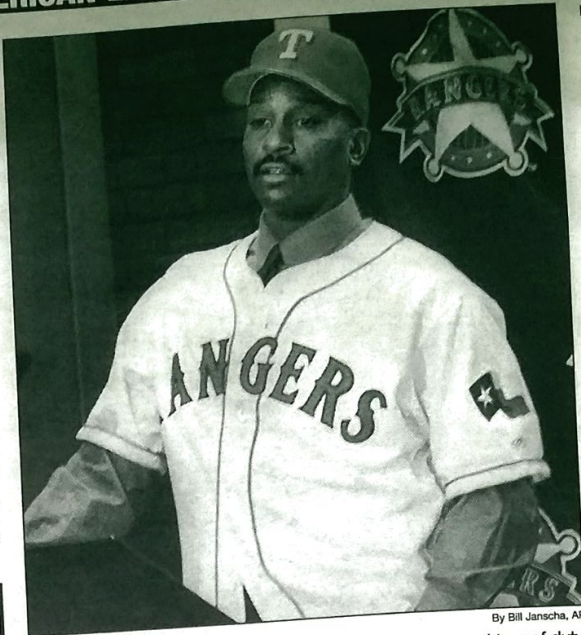
► The Mariners bulked up their international scouting department Saturday. They hired **Wayne Norton** as Canada scouting supervisor, **Patrick Guerrero** as Dominican Republic scout, **Rafael Santo Domingo** as Puerto Rico scout and **Pedro Avila** and **Luis Fuenmayor** as Venezuela scouts.

"Over 21% of all players in the majors last season were international players," said **Roger Jongewaard**, Mariners vice president of scouting and player development. "All five of the scouts we were able to add to our staff today are very successful, experienced international scouts who can come in and make an immediate contribution to the Mariners."

Tampa Bay Devil Rays

www.devilray.com

From the start of the free-agent process, **Steve Trachsel** insisted he wanted to play for the Devil Rays. He finally proved his point by accepting a risky



By Bill Janscha, AP

Prodigal son: Rangers pitcher Darren Oliver is on his second tour of duty with Texas, as are Kenny Rogers and Rick Helling.

one-year contract.

Trachsel, who made \$5.1 million with the Cubs last season, agreed to a \$1 million contract with \$4.5 million in incentives, much of which would be deferred.

The former All-Star was coming off an 18-loss season and did not generate a lot of interest on the market.

"I think if anybody has something to prove this year, he would certainly be one of the top candidates," manager **Larry Rothschild** said.

► After breaking his hand, getting released in Toronto and spending part of the season at Triple-A, **Dave Hollins** has no illusions about his role with the Rays. He signed a minor league deal and is expected to compete for a backup position.

"The positions I've played are all taken by pretty good players, so what I hope to do is be a swing man between first and third, and maybe DH, when someone needs a break," Hollins said.

The Rays also signed catcher **John Marzano**, first baseman **Ryan Jackson** and right-hander **Marc Valdes** to minor league deals.

Texas Rangers

www.texasrangers.com

General manager **Doug Melvin** thought his offseason shopping was complete when he signed free-agent pitcher **Kenny Rogers**. Owner **Tom Hicks** thought differently.

He "challenged me" to get something done with **Darren Oliver**, Melvin said.

The GM accepted the challenge and signed the free-agent left-hander to a three-year, \$19 million deal.

"Kenny Rogers was our No. 1 priority," said Hicks. "We had to have a proven, experienced left-hander. Getting Daren Oliver is a bonus."

Oliver, 9-9 with a 4.26 ERA in 30 starts for St. Louis last year, returns to his original organization. He was drafted by the Rangers and pitched in Texas for 5½ years before being traded to St. Louis in 1998.

The Rangers believe their pitching, for once, is a strength. Oliver joins a staff that includes Rogers, **Justin Thompson**, **Rick Helling** and **Esteban Loaiza** in the rotation, and All-Stars **John Wetteland** and **Jeff Zimmerman**, hard-throwers **Tim Lincecum** and **Francisco**

past because of our pitching."

Toronto Blue Jays

www.bluejays.ca

A year ago, right-hander **Paul Quantrill** was in the hospital after breaking his right femur in a snowmobile accident.

Quantrill, who didn't return to the club until June 15, celebrated the anniversary of his accident by working out with some teammates at the Jays' minor league complex in Dunedin, Fla.

"You wouldn't even know it was the same guy," manager **Jim Fregosi** said. "I was really happy to see the way he looked, and I can't tell you what it means to have him 100% healthy for the entire season."

In his half-season of 1999, Quantrill was 3-2 with a 3.33 ERA in 41 appearances. After some initial success, however, Quantrill, 31, went through a rough stretch, and Fregosi responded by not bringing him into games in crucial situations. Now, with the added recovery time, Fregosi says Quantrill will resume his role as one of the rocks in the bullpen as he was in '97 and '98.

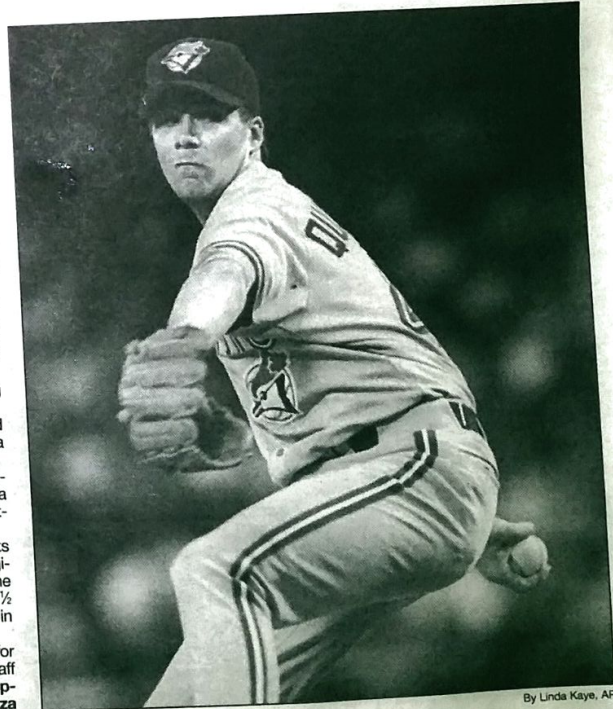
► Fregosi also had conversations with left-hander **David Wells**, who dropped by the complex to say hello to some of his teammates.

Fregosi said Wells is over the "get-me-out-of-here" snit he had in December when he asked his agent to request a trade.

"At the time he was hearing his name come up again and again in trade rumors, and I think he found that upsetting," said Fregosi. "He just wants to know where he's going to be, and I told him he'd be my starting pitcher the first game in April."

► The Jays have three players who are arbitration-eligible — second baseman **Homer Bush**, first baseman/DH **David Segui** and catcher **Alberto Castillo**. Pitcher **John Frascatore** signed a two-year, \$1.85 million deal Monday.

General manager **Gord Ash** said the club wants to sign Bush to a multiyear contract. In his first season as an everyday player, Bush posted a .320 average, 69 runs scored, 26 doubles 55 RBI and 32 stolen bases.



By Linda Kaye, AP

Ready for comeback: Paul Quantrill is eyeing a return to his form of 1997-98, when he posted ERAs of 1.94 and 2.59 in relief with Blue Jays.

NATIONAL LEAGUE NOTES


Arizona Diamondbacks
 www.azdiamondbacks.com

Center fielder **Steve Finley** chipped a bone in his right hand while removing Christmas decorations from his family's home in Aspen, Colo. Initial medical reports indicate Finley will be ready for spring training.

► Reliever **Bobby Chouinard's** case will go through the proper legal channels, but indications are that he'll never again pitch for the Diamondbacks. On Christmas Eve, Chouinard was arrested on domestic violence charges.

"We'll let the legal process run its course, and we'll react accordingly," manager **Buck Showalter** said.

► Closer **Matt Mantei** signed a one-year contract Jan. 14 for \$2.8 million plus incentives. Mantei, who played an integral role in stabilizing what had been an erratic bullpen in the final three months after his arrival from Florida, had been seeking a three-year deal in the neighborhood of \$16 million.


Atlanta Braves
 www.atlantabrades.com

John Rocker tried to repair his tattered public image last week by granting an interview with Peter Gammons on ESPN and meeting with **Hank Aaron** and civil rights leader and former U.N. ambassador Andrew Young. Aaron had been one of Rocker's harshest critics since the release of the *Sports Illustrated* article with Rocker's racial remarks.

Aaron said Rocker was more much convincing in person than in the interview with Gammons. "The way he said it on ESPN with Peter Gammons (admitting he was wrong) was not the way to say it," Aaron said. "He just put more fuel on the fire. . . . I've got to learn more about him, but I do forgive him."

Meanwhile, first baseman **Randall Simon** said from the Dominican Republic on Saturday that he knew Rocker was talking about him when he called an unnamed teammate a "fat monkey." He also said Rocker lied when he told Gammons he had called the player that name to his face and characterized it as locker room humor.

"If he said that to my face, I'd tear him up, and one of us would be suspended right now," Simon said.

Also Saturday, Rocker played in Dennis Martinez's charity softball game Miami. Shunned by some of his teammates, the reliever received a mix of boos and cheers from the crowd.

► With the acquisition of **Reggie Sanders**, **Quilvio Veras** and **Wally Joyner** from the Padres, the Braves are feeling good about the completeness of their team. The only real hole is on the bench where the Braves might sign an additional outfielder. With **Sanders**, **Andrew Jones** and **Brian Jordan** starting, the only outfielders with a realistic chance to make the team are **George Lombard** and **Brian Hunter**, whose primary position is first base.

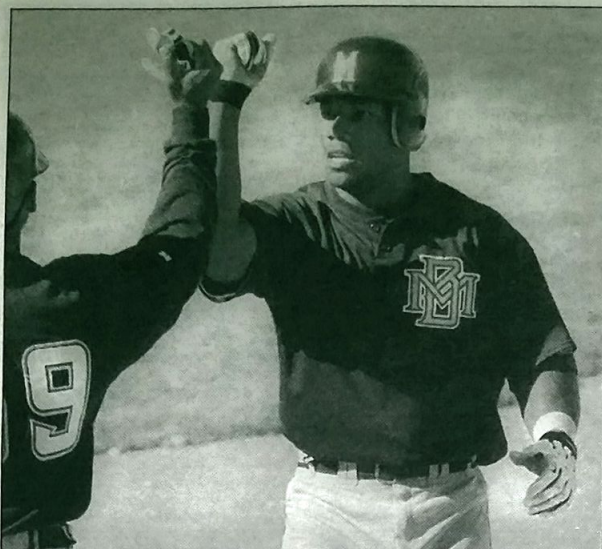

Chicago Cubs
 www.cubs.com

The Cubs have invited No. 1 draft choice **Corey Patterson** to spring training but insist he will not make the Opening Day roster.

Considered the Cubs' center fielder of the future, Patterson has played only one full season in the minors (at Class A Lansing) and is slated for Double-A this summer.

"He'll take this as an opportunity to see what the major league atmosphere is like," general manager **Ed Lynch** said. "When he goes down to the minors, it will be more of an incentive for him."

Patterson, 20, was the Midwest League's Prospect of the Year after batting .320 with 20 homers, 17 triples and 79 RBI. He also hit .368 in the Arizona



By Eric Felsberg, AP

Moving on: Not even hitting .300 could prevent a fourth trade involving Alex Ochoa, who spent 1999 with the Brewers.

Fall League with four homers, 24 RBI and eight steals in 35 games.

The Cubs plan to use newly acquired **Damon Buford** in center, but Patterson is expected to advance quickly and could be in Chicago by late summer.

► Seeking backup help in the infield, the Cubs signed **Jeff Huson**, 35, and invited him to spring camp.

Huson has spent parts of 11 seasons in the majors with six teams. He batted .262 in 97 games at Anaheim last season.


Cincinnati Reds
 www.cincinnati Reds.com

Short of right-handed firepower off the bench, general manager **Jim Bowden** acquired **Alex Ochoa** from the Brewers for outfielder **Mark Sweeney**, a left-hander used mostly as a pinch-hitter, and a player to be named.

"We feel Alex came into his own last year with the bat, hitting .300 in 277 at-bats," said Bowden.

Ochoa, 27, will play with his fourth team in four seasons.

Sweeney led the Reds with 11 pinch-hits and two pinch-hit home runs. Even though he was hitting .375, Sweeney was caught in a roster squeeze and was optioned to Triple-A Indianapolis on May 16 and didn't return until Sept. 1.

► When the Reds report to spring training, 11 non-roster players report, including former big leaguers **Larry Leubers**, **Bobby Munoz**, **Terrell Wade**, **Brooks Kieschnick**, **Chris Sexton** and **Pat Watkins**.


Colorado Rockies
 www.coloradorockies.com

Masato Yoshii, whose clutch pitching down the stretch helped propel the Mets to the playoffs, was traded Jan. 14 to the Rockies for left-handed pitcher **Bobby M. Jones** and minor league pitching prospect **Lariel Gonzalez**.

Yoshii, who turns 35 in April, has never pitched at Coors Field, where the average score in 1999 was 8-7. Yoshii was 12-8 with a 4.40 ERA. What the Rockies liked most about him was his control. He walked 2.9 batters per nine innings in 13 seasons in the Japanese Central League and 2.9 in his two years with the Mets.

Last season, when Rockies pitchers issued three or fewer walks in a game at Coors, their record was 18-8, but when they walked five or more, it was 15-30. "What we liked about him was his

ability to change speeds and throw strikes," said manager **Buddy Bell**.

► Pending a physical, the Rockies signed outfielder **Darren Bragg** to a one-year contract with a second-year option. With Bragg in the fold as a backup to **Jeffrey Hammonds**, **Tom Goodwin** and **Larry Walker**, the Rockies offered to package outfielder **Edgard Clemente** in the Yoshii trade, but the Mets insisted on Gonzalez.


Florida Marlins
 www.floridamarlins.com

Right-hander **Brad Penny** looked at all the young power arms during the club's pitching mini-camp last week, then envisioned something special in the not-too-distant future.

"You can mold this into a Braves-type rotation," said Penny, 22.

Coming off a stellar performance in the Arizona Fall League (1.64 ERA, league-leading 36 strikeouts), Penny is the favorite for the fifth rotation spot.

The Marlins say Penny is ready to pitch in the majors. He was acquired from Arizona last July with right-hander **Vladimir Nunez** and top outfield prospect **Abraham Nunez** for **Matt Mantei**. Nunez returns to the rotation with **Alex Fernandez**, **Ryan Dempster** and **A.J. Burnett**, the colorful rookie who went 4-2 with a 3.48 ERA in seven late-season starts after struggling (6-12, 5.52 ERA) at Double-A Portland.

► **Josh Beckett**, 19, drew curious glances from Marlins pitchers and catchers on the first day of the four-day minicamp at Pro Player Stadium. It was their first look at the hard-throwing Texas phenom, who landed a four-year, \$7 million major league contract after being the No. 2 overall pick in the June draft. He is the third high school player to receive a major league contract in the 34-year history of the draft, along with **Todd Van Poppel**, 1999, and **Alex Rodriguez**, 1993.

Though Beckett must be carried on the 40-man roster, he will be assigned to Class A Kane County or Brevard County, with his expected date of arrival in the majors in 2002 or 2003.


Houston Astros
 www.astros.com

The Astros are encouraged by the progress of **Moises Alou**, who missed last season with a torn anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee.

"He almost has maximum strength

back in both legs, and the doctors are extremely optimistic that he'll be back at full strength when he comes to spring training," general manager **Gerry Hunsicker** said. "The biggest hurdle for Mo is getting himself back into baseball shape and shedding some of the rust."

With the offseason trades of outfielders **Carl Everett** and **Derek Bell**, Alou will be counted on heavily to produce offensively. He finished third in the NL MVP race after hitting .312 with 38 home runs and 124 RBI in 1998.

► Right-hander **Scott Elarton**, who underwent offseason rotator-cuff surgery, has been cleared to begin light throwing. The big question is whether he will be ready to start the season. If healthy, he will assume a spot in the rotation. If he is unable to pitch early on, the Astros will most likely feature a rotation of **Jose Lima**, **Shane Reynolds**, **Octavio Dotel**, **Dwight Gooden** and **Chris Holt**.


Los Angeles Dodgers
 www.dodgers.com

When the Dodgers traded Eric Young last month, they not only created a hole at second base but also left a void atop the order. With no replacement in the organization to fill either spot, the Dodgers turned to shortstop **Mark Grudzielanek**.

When he was a player, manager **Davey Johnson** switched from shortstop to second base, and he's asked Grudzielanek, the first Dodgers shortstop since 1963 to hit .300 in a season, to do the same.

After initially balking at the idea, Grudzielanek talked with Johnson and has started working out at second with former big-league shortstop **Bucky Dent** last week in Florida.

"All I know about the position is they say it's easier," Grudzielanek said. "Being able to pivot (on double plays) is the difference."

► Grudzielanek's move leaves the Dodgers in need of a shortstop, but at least they have options.

Slick-fielding **Alex Cora** is the leading candidate because he batted .308 with Triple-A Albuquerque. **Juan Castro**, perhaps the best fielding infielder in the organization, and veteran **Jose Vizcaino** also will battle for the job.

The shift of Grudzielanek sparked talk that the Dodgers could make a run for Seattle's **Alex Rodriguez** after the 2000 season.

► One-time NL Rookie of the Year **Todd Hollandsworth** avoided arbitration by signing a one-year contract for \$1.45 million. Hollandsworth will be a free agent after the season.


Milwaukee Brewers
 www.milwaukeebrewers.com

For the first time in his career, **Mark Loretta** will enter spring training with a starting job and a multiyear contract. Loretta, who bailed the team out at first base and other infield spots in recent seasons, signed a three-year contract worth \$11 million. He will start at shortstop.

► **Jaime Navarro** and injury-plagued right-hander **John Snyder** will join an already huge field competing for spots in the rotation. Right-handers **Steve Woodard**, **Jamey Wright** and **Jimmy Haynes** appear to have the first three spots clinched. Competitors for the final two spots include right-handers **Juan Acevedo**, **Jason Bere**, **Rocky Coppinger**, **Jeff D'Amico**, **Navarro**, **Kyle Peterson** and **Snyder** and lefties **Bill Pulsipher** and **Rafael Roque**.

► Seeking an experienced left-handed pinch-hitter for his bench, general manager **Dean Taylor** dealt outfielder **Alex Ochoa** to the Reds for **Mark Sweeney** and a player to be named. The departure of Ochoa, who was eligible for salary arbitration, makes **James Mouton** a leading candidate to win the fifth outfield spot.

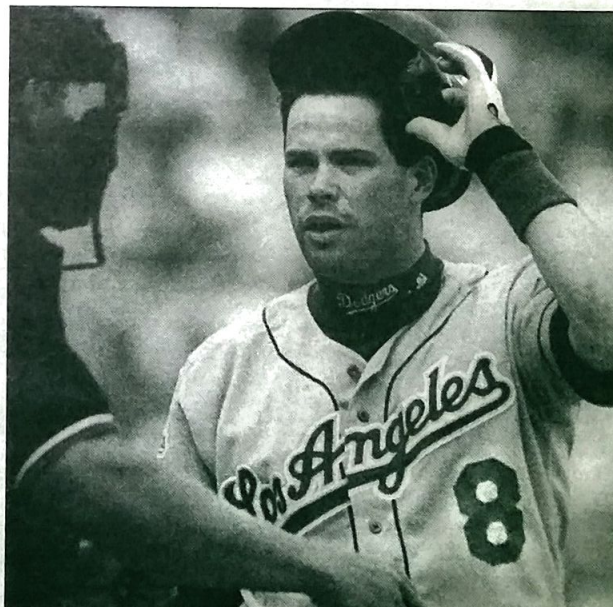

Montreal Expos
 www.montreal Expos.com

The Expos decided not to take any chances with **Tony Armas Jr.'s** future, shutting down the promising right-hander's winter season after he suffered a sprained right elbow while pitching in Venezuela.

The son of the Oakland and Boston slugger of the same name was examined by team physician **Dr. Larry Coughlin** in Montreal on Jan. 11 after undergoing an MRI in Florida. Although no ligament damage was found, Armas, 21, will not resume throwing before Feb. 10 at the earliest.

General manager **Jim Beattie** felt that Venezuela's disastrous weather conditions contributed to his top

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)



By Tony Tribble, AP

Switch: The Dodgers are eyeing **Mark Grudzielanek**, a shortstop who has topped .300 twice in his five big-league seasons, to be their next second baseman, provided they can find a new shortstop.

NATIONAL LEAGUE NOTES

(FROM PREVIOUS PAGE)

prospect's elbow woes.

"Tony went back out to pitch and just sort of felt a little twinge in his elbow," said Beattie. "At least there was no problem with the stability of the elbow."

Armas, acquired from Boston along with **Carl Pavano** in the Pedro Martinez trade, went 9-7 with a 2.89 ERA for Double-A Harrisburg last season.

► Beattie addressed the team's need for an experienced backup catcher on Jan. 13 by signing **Lenny Webster**, 34, who had two previous stints with the team in 1994 and 1996, to a minor league contract.

Webster, who hit .140 in 22 games with Baltimore and Boston last season, was one of six non-roster players invited to spring training. Others were third baseman **Andy Tracy**, catcher **Yohanny Valera**, and right-handed pitchers **Bryan Hebson**, **Yovanny Lara** and **Matt Skrimetta**.

► **Anthony Telford** became the third pitcher—after **Graeme Lloyd** and **Hideki Irabu**—to sign a multiyear deal with the Expos this offseason when he agreed to a two-year, \$2 million deal on Jan. 14.

Telford, 33, who made \$350,000 last season while going 5-4 with a 5.94 ERA and two saves in 79 relief appearances, will earn \$700,000 this season and \$1.15 million in 2001. The team has an option for \$1.35 million in 2002, with a \$150,000 buyout.



By Morris Foster

Precaution: To avoid complications, the Expos shut down blue-chip prospect Tony Armas Jr.



www.mets.com

Continuing to tiptoe a fine line between upgrading his roster and trimming his payroll, general manager **Steve Phillips** dealt **Masato Yoshii** to the Rockies for left-hander **Bobby M. Jones** and minor league pitcher **Lariel Gonzalez**. Jones might join right-hander **Bobby J. Jones** in the rotation.

Phillips cited flexibility as the main reason for dealing Yoshii and his \$3 million salary for two pitchers who struggled last season. Although Yoshii was the Mets' best pitcher for the last two months of 1999, his contract became a burden when the Mets dealt for **Mike Hampton**, whom they are trying to sign to a long-term deal.

Hampton appears interested in discussing a long-term deal with the Mets, an option he didn't give the Astros before he was traded last month. He will earn \$5.75 million this season in the last year of his contract.

The Mets took a similar risk with **Mike Piazza** two years ago but signed him before he tested free agency.

► Phillips' next order of business is addressing the team's six arbitration-eligible players, including closer **Arman-**



By H. Rumph Jr. AP

Leverage: Bobby Abreu finished third in the NL batting race last season and placed among the Top Five in runs, triples and on-base percentage.



www.phillies.com

The Phillies are trying to avoid arbitration with right fielder **Bobby Abreu** by offering a multiyear contract to the budding star who finished third in the NL in hitting last season with a .335 average.

General manager **Ed Wade** approached Abreu's agent, Pete Greenberg, with a four-year offer worth a reported \$8.5 million last spring. Abreu, 25, turned it down and played for \$400,000.

If no agreement can be reached on a long-term deal, the two sides will focus on a one-year contract.

"We're not close," said Greenberg. The Phillies have gone to an arbitration hearing only five times in history but have prevailed in each case.

► The new year brought the Phillies renewed hope that they can secure a stadium deal in time to have a new ballpark for 2003.

New mayor John Street has made it clear that obtaining new stadiums for the Phillies and Eagles is a priority.

Street has appointed a committee of community leaders to review plans and recommend the best way to proceed.

► **Curt Schilling** thinks he can beat the May 15 target date for his return following arthroscopic shoulder surgery.

"I feel good," he said. "The therapy has been going great. I'm shooting for the middle of April ... The middle of May is a worst-case scenario."



www.pirateball.com

The Pirates continue to come up empty in their bid to acquire a closer.

"We haven't made a lot of progress," conceded general manager **Cam Bonifay**. "Teams are asking for certain things that we don't feel like we have the depth to give up."

The Pirates and Texas talked earlier last week, but no deal was reached. The Pirates wanted relievers **Jeff Zimmerman** or **Francisco Cordero**.

The Pirates also talked to the agent of **Ricky Bottalico**, who last week signed with Kansas City.

Right-hander **Mike Williams** led the Pirates with 23 saves last season but had an unsightly 14.48 ERA after Aug. 11. He will likely go into spring training as the closer.

A darkhorse candidate is right-hander **Mike Garcia**, who made seven relief appearances last September as a 31-year-

old rookie. Garcia has had a solid winter in Mexico, going 1-0 with eight saves and a 3.44 ERA in 16 games.

Right-hander **Rich Loiselle** saved 29 games as a rookie in 1997 and 19 in 1998. He had reconstructive elbow surgery last July, however, and probably won't be ready to pitch until June.

► Contrary to news reports, the Pirates are not actively pursuing free agent **Bobby Bonilla** to be their third baseman. Bonilla's agent, Danny Horwits, contacted the Pirates, but the interest is slight.



www.stlcardinals.com

Once they signed **Andy Benes** to a three-year, \$18 million deal, the Cardinals approached left-hander **Darren Oliver**, but he signed instead with Texas for \$18 million.

The Cardinals offered Oliver \$24 million for four years last fall but pulled it back when he didn't accept.

► **Adam Kennedy**, who finished 1999 as the regular second baseman, might be a utility player at best and could even go back to Triple-A Memphis to sharpen his skills at second. "If he can prove he belongs on the club, he'll be on the club," said manager **Tony La Russa**.

Kennedy's second base days with the Cardinals have ended, at least for now, with the acquisition of **Fernando Vina** from Milwaukee. He likely will play a lot of outfield this spring.

► The Cardinals have offered short-stop **Edgar Renteria** a multiyear contract. Renteria, who hit .275 with 37 steals, filed for arbitration, as did right-hander **Kent Bottenfield**, who won 18 games.

Bottenfield has been offered both one-year and multiyear contracts.

Morris, **Alan Benes** and **Mike Mohler** are other arbitration candidates.



www.padres.com

The Padres' efforts to bolster their international scouting presence paid off in their first signing of an amateur player from Japan.

Left-hander **Nobuaki Yoshida**, 18, will report to extended spring training after he graduates from Sendai Technical High School in Tokyo in March. Yoshida, 6-1 and 180 pounds, came to the attention of scout **Gary Nickels** when he was in Japan to view pro leagues.

"He's a good-sized kid with a lanky body and good mechanics," Nickels said. "He has good offspeed stuff, but

he doesn't throw all that hard. We're hoping with his mechanics and maturity, he'll get quicker. We hope we've uncovered a gem."

► Nickels has been shifted from international scouting supervisor to director of pro scouting. That opens the way for **Bill Clark**, who takes over the international duties after 10 years in that capacity with the Braves. Clark, 67, claims a network of scouts spanning 55 nations, but won't overlook San Diego's backyard.

"Mexico is a target," Clark said. "Mexico doesn't have the player base of the Dominican or Venezuela, but it's the closest country to San Diego, and the club is making a big effort to market the team there. The Padres have never signed and developed a top quality Mexican player. Personally, that's my No. 1 goal."

► Building on discussions from the winter meetings, the Padres reopened trade talks over Toronto outfielder **Jose Cruz Jr.** Talks did not progress, however, because of the Blue Jays' desire to link Cruz with costly left-hander **David Wells**.

"I've spoken to the Blue Jays about Cruz," general manager **Kevin Towers** acknowledged. "Are we close to a deal? No."



www.sfgiants.com

Setup man **John Johnstone** signed a two-year, \$3.35 million contract, avoiding arbitration.

Johnstone, 31, posted a 2.60 ERA last season but missed September with a back injury. He had a 1.47 ERA through Aug. 8 before slumping.

He hurt his back in an automobile accident in late August but now says he's "throwing with no pain."

Johnstone received a \$250,000 signing bonus and will get base salaries of \$1.05 million in 2000 and \$2.05 million in 2001. He can earn an additional \$150,000 in incentives.

► Johnstone's signing leaves **Alan Embree** and **Felix Rodriguez** as the team's only unsigned, arbitration-eligible players.

► **Barry Bonds**, hoping to improve his marketability, switched agents even though he's signed through 2001.

Bonds left the Beverly Hills Sports Council and signed on with Scott Boras. He'll make \$10.7 million in 2000 and \$10.3 million in 2001. He hasn't asked for an extension.

Focus Group 2000

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March 14 & 15, 2000

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Some of the new ballparks might feel a little drafty

One of the lessons learned in 1999 was that ballpark factors are still something to be reckoned with, and they don't begin and end with Coors Field.

Seattle's Safeco Field will make Aaron Sele, Jamie Moyer, Freddy Garcia, John Halama and perhaps Gil Meche well-paid fantasy pitchers in 2000 drafts. But how about the new parks — what will be the Enron Effect? Will there be a Pac-Bell Pinch? How about a Comerica Corollary?

Darin and Jason Brown explore the issue on the Rotonews Web site (www.rotoneews.net/baseball/features/newsparks.cfm), and while we can't be certain of how a ball will carry (the main pitcher-friendly effect of Safeco), we can certainly assume that massive power alleys might take the juice out of power numbers.

Here are some of the Browns' findings:

► Houston: All hitters benefit, especially right-handed power hitters, but ground-ball pitchers could benefit from the natural grass infield.

► San Francisco: Overall offense should be about the same, with hits going up and home runs going down.

► Detroit: Pitchers will love it, especially fly-ball pitchers whose mistakes will be caught. Right-handed power hitters (even those named Gonzo?) will suffer.

I agree with all of the above, and I think we'll find that in the heat of drafting, many of the new ballparks' effects will be forgotten. A little voice will try to tell you to go the extra buck on an Astros pitcher or on that Tigers left-handed slugger.

So be sure to rank players accordingly, but that doesn't mean putting Willie Blair on your must-get list.

Just as Safeco hurt David Bell but didn't really affect Ken Griffey Jr., Comerica Park's 37-foot deeper power alley in left field won't turn Juan Gonzalez into a doubles hitter, but should make Damion Easley and maybe even Dean Palmer less attractive.

PacBell's lopsided dimensions (420-foot alley in right, 365 feet in left and a 307-foot pooch shot down the right-



field line) should have a predictable effect on lefty and righty hitters. Bump up Jeff Kent, Ellis Burks and new catcher Bobby Estalella; bump down J.T. Snow, Armando Rios and Bill Mueller.

The biggest fantasy impact — again, just as Safeco was in the second half of last season — will be that we should expect good numbers from Detroit pitching. And that's certainly something we haven't seen since, oh, 1984.

Brian Moehler, Jeff Weaver, Dave Mlicki and Blair suddenly go from \$1-\$5 roster fill to guys you actually want to have on your roster. And I still like C.J. Nitkowski, who had a 3.86 ERA in seven starts at the end of last season.

GETTING A DATE: Some leagues are already in a quandary about setting a date for their auctions, a task complicated by the late-March trip to Tokyo by the Mets and Cubs. Though these games will count as regular-season games, your league should keep April 3 as the official Opening Day date for drafting purposes, since rosters won't be finalized until then.

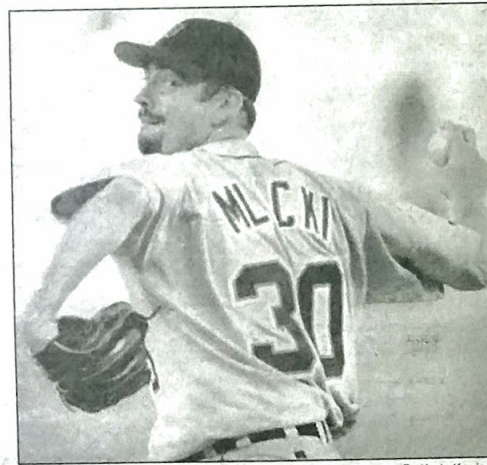
BIG DEAL: Has there ever been a more ho-hum trade than the Brewers-White Sox deal last week? In case you missed it, pitchers Jaime Navarro and John Snyder went to Milwaukee for shortstop Jose Valentin and pitcher Cal Eldred.

These four had a combined Rotisserie value in 1999 somewhere around Milwaukee's record low temperature. Snyder and Valentin are the only ones with upside, though you might want to pay a buck for Valentin, then hope for an early hot streak to trade him. Snyder had a nice start last season, going 6-1 with a 2.00 ERA before I picked him up.

The biggest positive impact of the deal is that it makes a full-time shortstop of Mark Loretta. The deal also adds to the huge jumble in the Brewers' rotation behind Steve Woodard, Jamey Wright and Jimmy Haynes with Snyder,



By Ed Zurga, AP
Bye-bye bandbox: The Tigers' new ballpark might hurt Detroit hitters such as Dean Palmer, above, but help Tiger pitchers like Dave Mlicki, below.



By Kevin Kargin, AP
Navarro, Bill Pulsipher, Juan Acevedo, Jason Bere, Kyle Peterson and Rafael Roque. Oh my.

Mailbag

Previous question: What sites will you be bookmarking this season?

Rotonews roter

Without a doubt, Rotonews is the one place to hit. Great — and often entertaining — insight on even the most borderline players makes it a premier site.

Jay Cohen
Middlethian, Va.

Keeping up, buffet style

I go to individuals I respect the most for

Next question:
Who's your best bet for a sleeper reliever in 2000? McGilichny? Sasaki?

e-mail
jhunt@usatoday.com

an edge: Ron Shandler (baseballhq.com), Rob Neyer (espn.com and robneyer.com) and then I get news (fastball.com, rotonews.com, rotoworld.com) and then I get benchmark stats on individuals (espn.com

for splits, budman.com for comparisons). Not sucking up, I carefully read what you have to say — especially with respect to pitching.

Doug Dennis
Cincinnati

Player and rules tips

A quality Web site I like that I'm not sure a lot of people know about is www.kamikazesports.com. The site has many features including tips on players to pick and suggestions on making your league better. Our fantasy league has adopted a couple of the rules innovations

the site suggested, and I believe they made our league more enjoyable.

David M. Czarniecki
Wilmington, Del.

Pay service worth price

The sites that led me to my first championship season last season are sure to find a way to my bookmarks this year. They are fantastics.com (pay service) for their pre-season draft kit and downloadable projections, and rotonews.com (free) for their daily news stories throughout the season.

Anthony Nardi
Tucson

RATING THE STARTERS

By Mat Olkin

Contrary to popular belief, you can count on pitchers.

You can count on them to get hurt, lose their stuff overnight, and find a million other ways to break your heart.

Things were more topsy-turvy than ever in 1999 as old standbys such as Greg Maddux, Tom Glavine and Roger Clemens suddenly proved human.

Now only three pitchers can lay claim to the highest pedigree.

THE SUPER ACES

There's no contesting that **Pedro Martinez** is the game's reigning ace. Last year, when the rest of the AL's pitchers got

knocked around, Martinez single-handedly brought back the Dead Ball Era every fifth day.

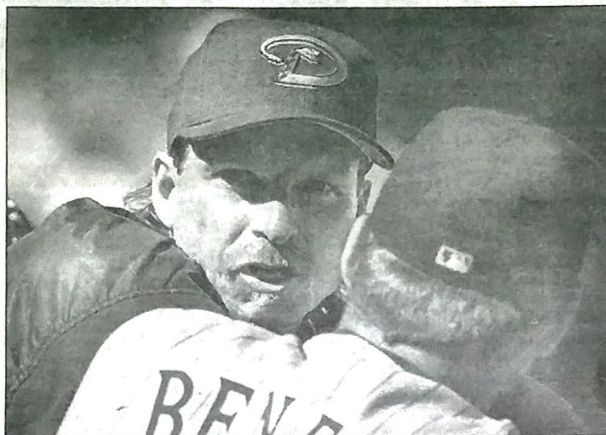
The only two other Martinez-class pitchers are in the NL — veterans **Randy Johnson** and **Kevin Brown**. The 35-year-old Johnson proved he still was at the top of his game. He threatened Nolan Ryan's single-season strikeout record, ultimately falling 19 short despite throwing 54½ fewer innings than Ryan did during his record-breaking season.

Brown, 34, proved he was still in his prime. Despite pitching for an uninspired Dodger club with porous infield defense, Brown placed among the Top Four in the NL in both victories and ERA.

THE ACES

Being a bona fide ace involves more than just being the best pitcher on a given staff. It also means more than simply posting a decent ERA with help from a spacious home park, or winning 16 games thanks to tremendous run support. We define an ace as a proven winner who'll almost certainly be among the top pitchers in the game in 2000.

Atlanta's rotation has been packed with aces for years. But last year, for the first time since the 1980s, the Braves' most effective starter was neither **Greg Maddux**, **Tom Glavine** nor **John**



By Elaine Thompson, AP

Left alone: The only lefty among the elite, Randy Johnson held lefties to a .103 batting average and .126 slugging percentage.



By Kevork Djansezian, AP

Traveling man: With his fifth team in six seasons, Kevin Brown's ERA rose to 3.00 in 1999. If only he had a decent infield behind him.

Smoltz. At age 24, **Kevin Millwood** held opponents to a major league-low .202 average while finishing second in the NL in ERA. And while he doesn't have the experience of his rotation mates, he's given every indication that he'll remain on par with them.

Of course, Maddux, Glavine and Smoltz all remain bona fide aces in their own right. Maddux suddenly became hittable, however, yielding a .294 average. He contained the damage well enough to win 19 games, though.

Coming off a Cy Young season, Glavine had a similarly pronounced decline, as batters hit him at a .287 clip. He posted his worst won-lost mark (14-11) and

ERA (4.12) since 1990.

Meanwhile, Smoltz did everything he could to keep pitching despite a sore elbow. He dropped down to a three-quarters delivery, added a straight change, and tinkered with a knuckleball.

Free agents and managers come and go, but **Mike Mussina** remains the one constant in the Orioles' equation. The right-hander has kept himself out of the Super category by repeatedly topping 15 wins but never posting the magical 20-win season. But the only sure-fire way to slow him down is to drill one off his noggin.

David Cone, at age 37, isn't everything he used to be, but that's still plenty good enough. He won



By Steven Senne, AP

Efficiency: Despite making his fewest number of starts in a 162-game season, Pedro Martinez had career bests in wins, losses and strikeouts.

Baseball Weekly's Player Rankings

Baseball Weekly's panel of expert writers and editors are spending the next few weeks breaking down the major league players, position by position.

Beginning with Nov. 24-30's assessment of major league catchers, each week we analyze how the best in the business stack up.

Each issue will focus on a

different position and include a statistical ranking based on on-base percentage plus slugging percentage — the most reliable indicator of offensive prowess — and a sampling of defensive statistics.

In addition, Baseball Weekly's staff will factor in age, health and all the intangibles to provide the most comprehensive analysis.

only 12 games, but his 3.44 ERA was second-best in the run-happy American League. As long as his arm holds up, he ought to be good for his normal quota of wins.

NEAR-ACES

These include the aces who have slipped a half-notch, as well as recent hotshots who haven't quite proven they belong at the head of the class.

Roger Clemens followed up back-to-back Cy Young seasons with only 14 victories and the highest ERA of his career. A lingering groin problem was blamed for his wavering command. Even at age 37, a return to the top seems likely. His velocity hasn't suffered, his strikeout rate remains high, and

it's hard to believe his decline is permanent.

Late last year, **Curt Schilling** finally succumbed after years of the Phillies' near-pathological overwork. He's expected to return from shoulder surgery in May or June, when the Phils undoubtedly will ease him back into the rotation with several 140-pitch outings.

Newcomers to this level include new Met **Mike Hampton**, older-than-advertised Yankee **Orlando Hernandez** and Cleveland flame-thrower **Bartolo Colon**.

Hampton had a brilliant season; the only question is whether he will revert to his customary 10-to-15-win level. Hernandez has few blemishes on his record, but suspicions linger that even his re-

SPECIAL REPORT

vised age of 34 might be a bit overly optimistic. And while Colon has stepped forward as his club's best starter, his streakiness, minor league injury history and heavy work lead to legitimate concerns over his long-term development.

SOLID NO. 2 STARTERS

These include veterans who have maxed out at this level, former aces on the way down, and potential aces on the way up.

The first group starts with a pair of Houston hurlers. With Hampton gone, the Astros will try to pass off **Shane Reynolds** or **Jose Lima** as a legitimate No. 1 starter. Both are reliable, but each falls a bit short of ace quality. Both owe a large debt to Houston's strong offense and the pitcher-friendly Astro-dome. The closing of the Dome might take a toll on their ERAs.

Who could've foreseen that frail, soft-tossing **Jamie Moyer** would suddenly develop into a workhorse in his mid-30s? Upon retirement, he can look forward to doing infomercials with Doug Jones testifying that changeups reverse the aging process.

If the Twins had a great pitcher, would anyone realize it? Philosophers will ponder that one as long as **Brad Radke** remains in Minnesota. **Pedro Astacio's** case presents a similar conundrum for Rockies fans.

Aaron Sele parlayed two seasons of four-plus ERAs offset by outstanding records into a lucrative deal with Seattle.

Sore-shouldered **Pete Harnisch** labored in the shadow of an imminent physical breakdown all season yet still won 16 games.

Al Leiter pitches like an ace at times, but doesn't seem able to do it for more than a few months at a time any more.

If you're waiting for Arizona's **Omar Daal** to come back to earth, make yourself comfortable — it might be a while.

Can the move to the up-and-coming Phillies make **Andy Ashby** a 20-game winner? Possibly. But, like Lima, it won't necessarily make him a true ace.

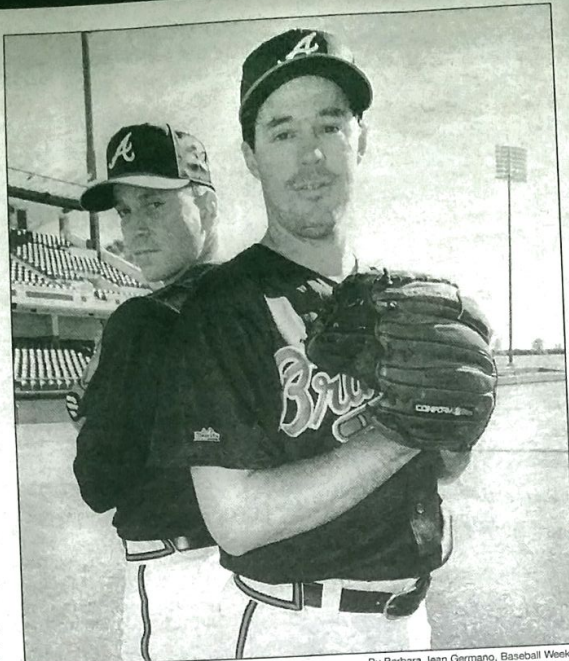
Members of the next group include vets like Cleveland signee **Chuck Finley**, Toronto's **David Wells**, returning Cardinal **Andy Benes**, and the recovering **Alex Fernandez** and **Denny Neagle**.

Some might contend that Finley is still a legitimate ace after posting an ERA below the league norm in 10 of the last 11 seasons. Having the Indians' lineup behind him will help, but at age 37, his best years might be behind him.

It's debatable whether Wells ever was a legitimate ace; pitching for a strong Yankee team helped him look like one, at least briefly. He was unable to maintain the illusion with the Blue Jays last year.

Benes finds himself back in St. Louis, where he found his greatest success in 1996 and '97. His command wavered last year, but Tony La Russa and Dave Duncan ought to get him back on track.

When **Fernandez** was throwing tantrums last year, he should have been thanking the Marlins. Their pitch limits might have been what helped him make such a strong comeback from rotator cuff surgery. **Neagle** closed the season strongly for the first time in years



By Barbara Jean Germano, Baseball Weekly

Just aces: Have Greg Maddux and Tom Glavine slipped? Maddux posted his highest ERA since 1987 and Glavine his highest since 1990.



By Ryan Remiorz, AP

Rallied late: Dustin Hermanson's season was a tale of two halves.

after a vague shoulder ailment cost him most of the first half.

A number of young aces-in-training stepped up last year, including **Jose Rosado**, **Eric Milton**, **Russ Ortiz**, **Freddy Garcia**, **Dustin Hermanson**, **Tim Lincecum**, **Jason Schmidt** and **Kris Benson**.

Few were as spectacular as the 23-year-old **Hudson**, who went 11-2 and became the de facto ace of the near-wild card Oakland A's. This year will be his first full big-league season and should give a better picture of the kind of pitcher he'll be.

Schmidt is going on age 27 and has been stuck at his current level, so it might be a stretch to describe him as a potential ace. Sophomore **Benson**, on the other hand, seemed to mature into a savvy vet before the end of his rookie season. And **Hermanson**, in his third season in Montreal, posted a 2.95 ERA after the All-Star break.

INNING-EATERS

When it comes to pitching, quantity can be as important as

quality. Some pitchers are well-known for providing little of the latter but plenty of the former.

Charles Nagy is a good example. He rarely shows up among the league leaders in any category. He consistently wins 15 games a year, however, simply by taking the ball every fifth day and keeping his team in the game more often than not.

Question: What do you get when you take a Nagy-type pitcher and stick him on a lousy team? Answer: **Steve Trachsel**.

On a good team — like the '98 Cubs — he's quite capable of posting a respectable record. On a bad team — like last year's Cubbies — he's helpless. Now that he's in Tampa Bay his value might improve slightly.

Many doubted **Livan Hernandez** would make it through the '99 season after the brutal overwork he'd suffered the season before. Hernandez has survived so far, but certainly hasn't thrived. His days are numbered.

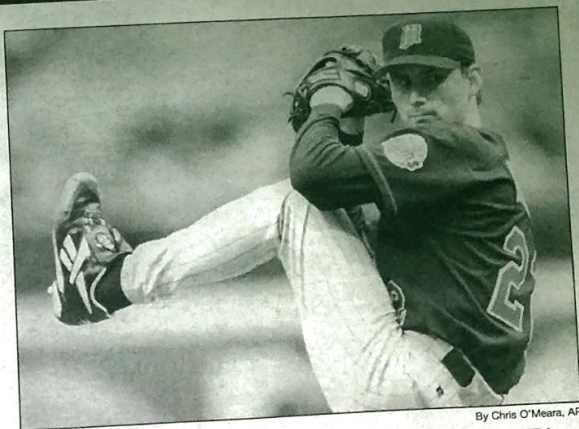
Scott Erickson has long played the role of the durable, moderately effective sinkerballer. Although he runs hot and cold over the course of a season, his final numbers rarely change much.

Andy Pettitte no longer has anything going for him except that he pitches for the Yankees and is good for around 200 innings. Meanwhile **Rick Helling's** game is simple: throw high fastballs and hope that his teammates hit more homers than he allows.

If the young White Sox improve, **Mike Sirotko** might benefit the most. He's undeniably mediocre, but takes the ball enough to win 15 games with a good club.

STARS IN THEIR EYES

The Phillies have high hopes for **Randy Wolf**, who struck out nearly a man an inning as a rookie last year. This hasn't prevented them



By Chris O'Meara, AP

Hard-luck: Minnesota's Brad Radke went 12-14 despite his 3.75 ERA.

Rankings schedule

CATCHER	NOV. 24
FIRST BASE/DH	DEC. 1
SECOND BASE	DEC. 8
THIRD BASE	DEC. 15
SHORTSTOP	DEC. 22
LEFT FIELD	DEC. 29
CENTER FIELD	JAN. 5
RIGHT FIELD	JAN. 12
STARTING PITCHER	JAN. 19
RELIEF PITCHER	JAN. 26

from giving him the usual ligament-rendering Phillie treatment, which few young arms survive.

The Padres seem to have something in young right-hander **Matt Clement**, who displayed the ability to get strikeouts and ground balls last year. He closed strongly and might step up this season.

Sidney Ponson, **Jeff Weaver** and **Chris Carpenter** shone in 1999 before wearing down in the second half. But a prime candidate for a Jose-Lima-type coming out is **Octavio Dotel**, who was acquired by Houston from the Mets.

Any discussion of 2000's top young pitchers must begin with St. Louis' **Rick Ankiel**. He rocketed through the Cardinals' system and fanned 39 men in his first 33 major league innings late last year.

BACK OF THE ROTATION

The ever-unpredictable **Kenny Rogers**' return to Texas might be the best thing for him. First, it gets him out of New York, and second, it puts him in a ballpark where he owns a lifetime 19-6 record.

Will leaving New York for Montreal help **Hideki Irabu**? Possibly. He never pitched well at Yankee Stadium, and his lifetime mark on artificial turf is a surprising 7-1. The only problem is he'll now need two interpreters.

It's taking an exasperatingly long time for **Darren Dreifort** to fulfill his potential. As a starting pitcher, he's been terrific his first time through the order and downright horrible thereafter. The Dodgers traded **Dave Micki** while keeping Dreifort in the rotation. Until last year's second-half rush, Micki couldn't get noticed in an elevator. Somehow, Detroit doesn't seem like the place to become a consistent winner.

Anyone who saw **Francisco Cordova** throwing 78 mph last April had to believe there was something seriously wrong with

his arm. He rebounded to enjoy a good second half, though. At the same time, **Brian Anderson** pitched exceptionally well down the stretch last year. If the Diamondbacks can leave him alone and let him start, he ought to be in line for his best season.

Hideo Nomo rebounded nicely with the Brewers, but was overworked in the first half and wore down late in the season. He's due for another downturn. If the major leagues used six-man rotations, **Masato Yoshii** would be a star. He was good at his best when he's been able to get it.

Elsewhere in the Mets' rotation, **Rick Reed** always needed to have the best control in baseball to succeed. Now, at age 34 and coming off an injury-marred season, he must prove that he still can locate the ball with precision.

Jon Lieber is an enigma — as effective as Smoltz against right-handed hitters, and as helpless as Scott Ruffcorn against left-handed swingers. If he hasn't fixed the problem by now, we can't expect he ever will.

Another pitcher who's frustratingly inconsistent is **Esteban Loaiza**, who might have been the Rangers' top second-half pitcher last year. It isn't hard to imagine him winding up back in the bullpen by May.

San Francisco's **Kirk Rueter** and Arizona's **Armando Reynoso** are making hanging on into an art form. Rueter seems to be conducting an experiment to see how high he can push his ERA and keep winning. And how much longer can Reynoso make a living with nothing but six mediocre pitches and an exceptional pickoff move?

High-flying **Paul Byrd** returned to earth with a thud in the second half. Few expect him to take flight again anytime soon.

Few seem to have noticed, but **Juan Guzman** quietly regained his effectiveness last year. His 3.74 ERA would have placed in the Top 15 in either league; he didn't make the leader boards either place, as he split his season between the AL and NL. Signing with Tampa Bay should return him to mediocrity.

Brett Tomko has regressed under Jack McKeon, who questions his toughness. Tomko might not be

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 21)

SPECIAL REPORT

Starting pitchers by the numbers

MORE THAN 162 INNINGS PITCHED

Name	Team	OPS	Sgt	OBP	BA	W	L	ERA	G	Sv	IP	H	R	ER	HR	BB	SO	WP	SB	CS	PK	vs-L	vs-R	H/9	BB/9	SO/9	G/F	GDP	DP/100	S-W	S-L	S-ERA	S-IP	R-ERA	R-IP
Pedro J. Martinez	BOA	.536	.288	.248	.205	23	4	2.07	31	0	213.1	160	56	49	37	313	6	21	10	0	221	187	6.8	1.6	13.2	1.07	11	8.9	22	4	2.07	208.1	1.80	5.0	
Kevin Millwood	ATL	.594	.337	.258	.202	18	7	2.68	33	0	228.0	168	80	68	24	59	205	5	12	4	2	230	175	6.6	2.3	8.1	0.80	6	5.0	18	7	2.68	228.0	—	0.0
Randy Johnson	LARI	.601	.335	.265	.208	17	6	2.48	35	0	271.2	167	86	75	30	70	364	4	12	7	3	103	219	6.9	2.3	12.1	1.04	4	8.9	17	9	2.48	271.2	—	0.0
Kevin Brown	ANA	.609	.336	.273	.222	18	9	3.00	35	0	232.1	210	94	19	59	221	1	19	7	3	355	189	7.5	2.1	7.9	2.07	19	11.0	18	9	3.00	252.1	—	0.0	
Mike Hampton	HOU	.646	.324	.322	.241	22	4	2.90	34	0	239.0	206	86	74	12	101	177	1	9	6	2	149	259	7.8	3.8	6.7	2.22	38	11.0	18	9	3.00	252.1	—	0.0
John Smoltz	ATL	.662	.374	.288	.245	11	8	3.19	29	0	186.1	168	70	66	14	40	156	2	9	7	1	264	229	8.1	1.9	7.5	1.26	19	14.6	11	8	3.19	186.1	—	0.0
Curt Schilling	PHI	.683	.396	.287	.237	15	6	3.54	24	0	180.1	159	74	71	25	44	152	4	2	2	1	246	227	7.9	2.2	7.6	1.04	12	9.8	11	8	3.19	186.1	—	0.0
Omar Daal	ARI	.686	.378	.308	.236	16	9	3.65	32	0	214.2	188	92	87	21	79	148	3	7	10	4	204	242	7.9	3.3	6.2	1.09	18	10.7	16	9	3.65	214.2	—	0.0
Kris Benson	PIT	.695	.367	.327	.249	11	14	4.07	31	0	196.2	184	105	89	16	83	139	2	17	7	0	278	225	8.4	3.8	6.4	1.46	22	15.3	11	14	4.07	196.2	—	0.0
Dave Cone	NYG	.697	.375	.322	.229	12	9	3.44	31	0	193.1	164	84	74	21	90	177	7	22	10	0	245	213	7.6	4.2	8.2	0.75	11	8.2	12	9	3.44	193.1	—	0.0
Orlando Hernandez	NYG	.703	.392	.311	.233	17	9	4.12	33	0	214.1	187	108	98	24	87	157	4	19	8	1	273	187	7.9	3.7	6.6	0.75	11	7.9	17	9	4.12	214.1	—	0.0
Jose Rosado	KC	.703	.390	.314	.248	10	4	3.85	33	0	208.0	197	103	89	24	72	141	9	4	5	3	242	250	8.5	3.1	6.1	0.97	14	7.7	10	14	3.85	208.0	—	0.0
Jamie Moyer	SEA	.705	.394	.311	.267	14	8	3.87	32	0	228.0	235	108	98	23	48	137	3	9	8	4	234	278	9.3	1.9	5.4	0.97	25	15.1	14	8	3.87	228.0	—	0.0
Eric Milton	MIN	.706	.406	.299	.243	7	11	4.49	34	0	206.1	190	111	103	28	63	163	2	6	6	1	253	240	8.3	2.7	7.1	0.53	10	6.7	7	11	4.49	206.1	—	0.0
Bartolo Colon	CLE	.712	.398	.314	.242	18	11	4.38	31	0	205.0	185	97	90	24	76	161	4	9	7	0	255	229	8.1	3.3	7.1	1.45	16	10.5	18	5	3.95	205.0	—	0.0
Chuck Finley	ANA	.716	.386	.330	.246	18	11	4.4	33	0	213.1	197	117	105	23	94	200	15	17	13	3	234	249	8.3	4.0	8.4	1.24	19	10.3	12	11	4.43	213.1	—	0.0
Andy Ashby	SD	.717	.406	.311	.258	14	10	3.80	31	0	206.0	200	95	87	26	54	132	6	23	6	1	281	240	8.9	2.4	5.8	1.88	21	14.0	14	10	3.80	206.0	—	0.0
Shane Reynolds	HOU	.721	.418	.303	.275	16	14	3.85	35	0	231.2	260	108	99	23	37	187	4	13	4	1	282	269	9.7	1.4	7.7	1.61	26	14.7	16	14	3.85	231.2	—	0.0
Todd Ritchie	PIT	.723	.404	.318	.259	15	9	3.49	28	0	172.2	169	79	67	17	54	107	7	6	3	7	280	243	8.8	2.8	5.6	1.58	25	20.7	15	8	3.53	170.2	0.00	2.0
Jose Lima	HOU	.723	.427	.296	.265	21	10	3.58	30	0	246.1	256	108	98	30	44	187	8	12	7	1	287	248	9.4	1.6	6.8	1.17	9	6.1	21	10	3.58	246.1	—	0.0
Mike Mussina	BAL	.724	.411	.312	.268	18	7	3.50	31	0	203.1	207	88	79	16	52	172	2	4	5	0	268	268	9.2	2.3	7.6	1.47	23	14.5	18	7	3.50	203.1	—	0.0
Greg Maddux	ATL	.726	.403	.323	.294	19	9	3.57	33	0	219.1	258	103	87	16	37	136	1	21	10	1	300	288	10.6	1.5	5.6	1.82	14	7.7	19	9	3.57	219.1	—	0.0
Pete Harnisch	CIN	.727	.420	.307	.252	16	10	3.68	33	0	198.1	190	86	81	25	57	120	3	13	3	1	256	249	8.6	2.6	5.4	0.81	13	10.6	16	10	3.68	198.1	—	0.0
Kenny Rogers	NYM	.734	.390	.344	.275	10	4	4.19	31	0	195.1	206	101	91	16	69	126	4	6	8	9	272	276	9.5	3.2	5.8	1.79	24	13.8	10	4	4.19	195.1	—	0.0
Darren Oliver	STL	.736	.396	.339	.265	9	4	4.26	30	0	196.1	197	96	93	16	74	129	6	13	11	6	320	254	9.0	3.4	5.5	1.26	21	14.4	9	4	4.26	196.1	—	0.0
Tom Glavine	ATL	.736	.390	.346	.287	14	11	4.12	35	0	234.0	259	115	107	18	83	138	2	13	4	1	267	292	10.0	3.2	5.3	1.52	22	10.0	14	11	4.12	234.0	—	0.0
Russ Ortiz	SF	.739	.388	.351	.244	18	9	3.81	33	0	207.2	189	109	88	24	125	164	13	25	7	1	251	238	8.2	5.4	7.1	1.18	22	9.4	18	9	3.81	207.2	—	0.0
Orel Hersheiser	NYM	.742	.401	.342	.260	13	12	4.58	32	0	179.0	175	92	91	14	77	89	6	9	4	1	279	245	8.8	3.9	4.5	1.83	18	12.1	13	12	4.58	179.0	—	0.0
Freddy A. Garcia	SEA	.743	.398	.345	.263	17	8	4.07	33	0	201.1	205	96	91	18	90	170	12	26	7	2	255	273	9.2	4.0	7.6	1.22	16	10.0	17	8	4.07	201.1	—	0.0
Al Leiter	NYM	.743	.401	.342	.262	13	12	4.23	32	0	213.0	209	107	100	19	93	162	4	26	8	2	260	262	8.8	3.9	6.8	1.18	24	13.9	13	12	4.23	213.0	—	0.0
Damen Dreifort	LA	.743	.403	.340	.262	13	13	4.79	30	0	178.2	177	105	95	20	76	140	9	20	7	4	274	249	8.9	3.7	7.1	1.56	16	13.0	13	10	4.83	177.2	0.00	1.2
Roger Clemens	NYG	.744	.394	.350	.261	14	10	4.60	30	0	187.2	185	101	96	20	90	163	8	17	11	3	263	259	8.9	4.3	7.8	1.18	15	9.2	14	11	4.60	187.2	—	0.0
Sterling Hitchcock	SD	.745	.425	.320	.254	12	4	4.11	33	0	209.0	236	108	93	24	57	125	4	13	7	2	266	287	10.2	2.5	5.4	1.14	16	9.0	12	14	4.11	205.2	—	0.0
Mike Sirota	CHI-A	.745	.418	.327	.283	11	13	4.00	32	0	209.0	236	108	93	24	57	125	4	13	7	2	266	287	10.2	2.5	5.4	1.14	16	9.0	12	14	4.11	205.2	—	0.0
Jon Lieber	CHI-N	.747	.432	.315	.279	10	11	4.07	31	0	203.1	226	107	92	28	46	186	2	5	4	0	333	236	10.0	2.0	8.2	1.18	15	9.4	10	11	4.07	203.1	—	0.0
Dustin Hermanson	MTL	.749	.419	.330	.271	9	14	4.20	34	0	216.1	225	110	101	20	69	145	4	20	4	3	272	271	9.4	2.9	6.0	0.82	12	8.0	9	14	4.20	216.1	—	0.0
Hideki Irabu	NYG	.750	.433	.317	.267	11	7	4.84	32	0	169.1	180	98	91	26	46	133	7	19	4	1	288	242	9.6	2.4	7.1	0.68	6	4.5	11	7	4.84	158.0	4.76	11.1
Juan Guzman	CIN	.750	.419	.332	.255	11	12	3.74	33	0	200.0	194	96	83	28	86	155	12	28	10	0	259	251	8.7											

SPECIAL REPORT

Name	Team	W	L	ERA	G	SV	IP	H	R	ER	HR	BB	SO	WP	SB	CS	PK	VS-L	VS-R	H/9	BB/9	SO/9	G/F	GDP	DP/100	S-W	S-L	S-ERA	S-IP	R-ERA	R-IP				
Wilson Alvarez	TB	.778	.429	.349	260	9	4.22	28	0	16.00	159	92	75	22	128	3	2	0	3	276	257	8.9	4.4	7.2	1.41	25	16.6	9	9	4.22	1600	0.0			
Blake Stein	KC	.781	1.415	.366	241	1	2.56	13	0	73.0	65	38	37	11	47	3	5	1	0	256	226	8.0	5.8	5.8	0.64	8	11.6	1	2	4.37	70.0	9.00			
Joe Nathan	BAL	.781	.448	.333	243	7	4	4.18	13	0	90.1	85	45	42	17	46	54	2	6	2	201	250	8.4	4.6	5.4	1.06	10	13.0	7	3	4.09	81.1	5.00		
Jason Johnson	TB	.783	.436	.348	267	8	7	5.46	22	0	115.1	120	74	70	16	55	7	1	0	242	289	9.4	4.3	5.5	1.56	4	8.0	7	5.42	114.2	13.50	0.0			
Dave Eiland	TB	.784	.436	.349	294	4	8	5.60	21	0	80.1	98	59	50	8	27	53	2	7	3	279	307	11.0	3.0	5.9	1.56	4	5.6	4	7	4.90	68.0	9.49		
Ken Hill	ANA	.788	.418	.369	270	4	11	4.77	26	0	128.1	129	72	68	14	76	76	5	21	5	2	240	302	9.0	5.3	5.3	1.25	18	14.9	4	11	4.80	123.2	3.86	
Roy Halladay	TOR	.788	.420	.346	294	8	7	4.32	36	1	149.1	156	76	65	19	79	82	6	9	3	0	274	266	9.4	4.8	4.9	1.14	16	10.9	8	6	3.97	104.1	3.80	
Chris Carpenter	TOR	.796	.450	.346	294	8	7	4.32	36	1	149.1	156	76	65	19	79	82	6	9	3	0	274	266	9.4	4.8	4.9	1.14	16	10.9	8	6	3.97	104.1	3.80	
Ryan Thompson	DET	.796	.452	.344	274	9	11	5.11	24	0	150.0	177	81	73	16	48	106	9	3	6	0	299	290	10.6	2.9	6.4	1.10	13	9.6	9	8	4.38	150.0	4.50	
Justin Dempster	FLA	.800	.430	.370	262	9	7	4.71	25	0	142.2	152	85	81	24	59	83	2	6	6	5	3	264	276	9.6	3.7	5.2	0.91	16	11.4	9	11	5.11	142.2	—
Odalis Perez	ATL	.804	.438	.366	275	4	6	6.00	18	0	93.0	100	65	62	12	53	82	5	16	4	5	0	282	243	8.9	5.7	7.7	0.96	14	9.9	7	8	4.71	147.0	—
Rick Reed	NYM	.809	.474	.334	281	11	5	4.58	26	0	149.1	163	77	76	23	47	104	1	8	5	1	0	333	266	9.7	5.1	7.9	1.91	7	8.0	4	6	6.07	92.0	0.00
Robert Person	PHI	.809	.456	.353	250	10	7	4.68	42	2	148.0	139	84	77	24	85	139	5	9	1	1	0	273	232	8.5	5.2	8.5	0.73	13	10.1	11	5	4.58	149.1	—
Mike Fyhrie	ANA	.809	.460	.349	286	0	4	5.05	16	0	51.2	61	32	29	8	21	26	0	2	1	0	256	307	10.6	3.7	4.5	0.65	2	4.7	0	4	6.42	33.2	2.50	
Mark Gardner	DET	.813	.472	.341	267	5	11	6.47	29	0	139.0	142	103	100	27	57	86	3	11	6	1	0	279	258	9.2	4.7	5.6	0.76	7	6.6	4	10	6.69	122.1	4.86
Dave Borkowski	CLE	.816	.444	.371	283	2	6	6.10	17	0	76.2	86	58	52	10	40	50	3	6	2	3	0	233	265	10.1	4.7	5.9	1.67	9	13.6	1	6	6.92	66.1	0.87
Jeff Wright	DET	.816	.439	.376	277	8	10	6.06	26	0	133.2	144	99	90	18	77	91	4	16	7	0	2	294	261	9.7	5.2	6.1	1.02	11	8.3	8	10	6.06	133.2	—
Brian Rose	BOS	.819	.488	.332	280	7	6	4.87	22	0	98.0	112	59	53	19	29	51	0	10	4	2	2	220	335	10.3	2.7	4.7	0.89	7	9.1	6	5	4.89	92.0	4.50
Steve Sparks	ANA	.825	.451	.373	281	5	11	5.42	28	0	147.2	165	101	89	21	82	73	8	12	5	4	2	295	269	10.1	5.0	4.4	1.02	6	5.0	5	11	5.25	145.0	10.13
Kyle Farnsworth	CHI-N	.825	.484	.340	271	5	11	5.42	28	0	147.2	165	101	89	21	82	73	8	12	5	4	2	295	269	10.1	5.0	4.4	1.02	6	5.0	5	11	5.25	145.0	10.13
Sean Bergman	ATL	.826	.455	.370	325	5	8	5.05	27	0	130.0	140	80	73	28	52	70	7	15	4	1	0	276	268	9.7	3.6	4.8	0.80	3	2.8	5	8	6.37	106.2	3.98
Dan Smith	MTL	.827	.459	.368	293	4	9	5.21	25	0	105.1	135	62	61	9	29	44	3	9	1	0	307	343	11.5	2.5	3.8	1.46	19	18.4	4	6	5.23	93.0	13.1	
Randy Wolf	PIT	.828	.466	.362	266	6	9	5.55	22	0	89.2	104	64	60	12	39	72	3	6	5	1	0	322	273	10.4	3.9	7.2	0.95	5	5.4	3	9	6.13	83.2	4.50
Chris Brock	SEA	.828	.472	.357	291	6	8	5.48	19	0	106.2	126	78	75	20	67	116	4	0	1	0	209	278	9.3	5.0	8.6	0.72	6	5.1	6	9	5.44	120.2	18.00	
Mark Portugal	BOS	.828	.491	.337	292	7	12	5.51	31	0	150.1	179	100	92	28	41	79	2	11	6	0	290	303	10.7	2.5	4.7	1.01	10	8.5	7	11	5.39	143.2	8.10	
Andrew Lorraine	CHI-N	.829	.479	.350	293	2	5	5.55	11	0	61.2	71	42	38	9	22	40	3	4	4	0	274	292	10.4	3.2	5.8	0.89	3	6.3	2	5	5.55	61.2	—	
Mike Oquist	OAK	.830	.472	.358	283	9	10	5.37	28	0	140.2	158	86	84	18	64	89	2	5	6	0	274	292	10.1	4.1	5.7	0.82	12	12.8	9	10	5.62	125.0	3.45	
Tom Burkett	OAK	.832	.474	.358	307	9	8	5.62	30	0	147.1	184	95	92	18	46	96	4	5	5	0	279	337	11.2	2.8	5.9	1.47	16	12.8	9	8	5.98	129.1	3.00	
Jimmy Haynes	OAK	.837	.467	.370	282	7	12	6.34	30	0	142.0	158	112	100	21	80	93	7	8	4	0	283	280	10.0	5.1	5.9	0.97	9	9.1	7	12	5.80	135.0	16.71	
Kent Mercker	BOS	.839	.460	.370	290	8	5	4.80	30	0	129.1	148	85	69	16	64	81	3	3	9	5	2	296	288	10.3	4.5	5.6	0.96	10	8.7	7	12	5.80	135.0	16.71
Joey Hamilton	TOR	.843	.480	.382	298	7	8	6.52	22	0	98.0	118	73	71	13	39	56	4	3	4	0	348	243	10.8	3.6	5.1	1.15	12	12.2	7	8	6.37	106.2	3.98	
Dwight Gooden	CLE	.846	.463	.382	282	3	4	6.26	26	0	115.0	127	90	80	18	67	88	4	27	5	1	0	286	277	9.9	5.2	6.9	0.76	11	10.1	3	4	6.37	106.2	4.32
Jay Witasick	KC	.847	.459	.387	304	9	12	5.57	32	0	158.1	191	108	98	23	83	102	5	11	3	0	322	286	10.9	4.7	5.8	0.94	18	9.9	11	5	6.30	145.1	4.31	
Jeremy Powell	MTL	.847	.463	.385	302	4	8	4.73	17	0	97.0	113	60	51	14	44	44	4	3	8	2	250	343	10.5	4.1	4.1	1.04	10	11.0	4	8	4.73	49.1	0.0	
Bill Pulsipher	MIL	.849	.496	.353	287	5	6	5.98	19	0	87.1	100	65	58	19	36	42	4	7	1	0	325	276	10.3	3.7	4.3	1.80	10	12.2	5	6	6.12	82.1	3.60	
Pete Schourek	PIT	.874	.516	.358	287	4	5	3.94	27	0	113.0	128	75	67	20	49	94	0	11	4	4	2	275	290	10.2	3.9	7.5	0.81	7	7.9	3	7	5.36	84.0	5.28
Bryan Reink	TB	.874	.490	.385	313	6	6	5.80	27	0	94.2	121	68	61	14	41	55	4	5	4	0	323	305	11.5	3.9	5.2	1.29	9	10.5	5	5	6.00	63.0	5.40	
Jaime Navarro	CHI-A	.878	.492	.387	313	8	13	6.09	32	0	159.2	206	126	108	20	54	49	3	4	6	4	0	331	291	10.5	5.2	4.7	1.51	11	12.6	4	3	4.87	94.1	—
Rolando Arroyo	CLE	.881	.504	.378	296	7	12	5.18	24	0	140.2	162	84	81	23	60	107	2	22	6	2	0	361	264	11.6	4.0	4.2	1.05	20	12.6	7	12	6.24	151.1	3.24
Tom Candiotti	CLE	.886	.519	.367	300	4	6	7.32	20																										

NL CENTRAL PROSPECT REPORTS

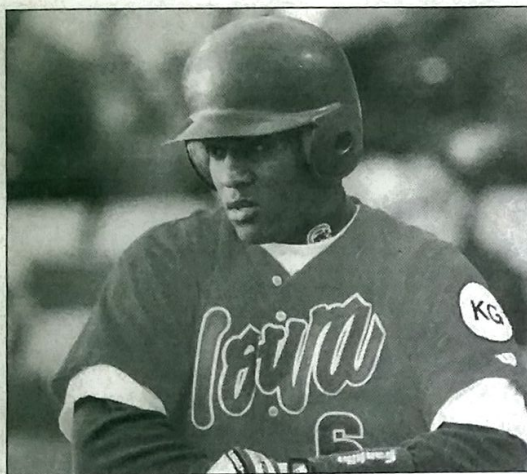
Young Cubs will take time to mature

By Joe Barbieri

The Cubs, in desperate need of pitching, set a club record by using 25 different pitchers, including 10 left-handers, in 1999. Help might be on the way, but not nearly of the magnitude of Kerry Wood. There also is substantial talent in the system in the outfield as well as at the infield positions.



SETBACKS: RHP Chris Gissell, a fourth-rounder in 1996, was pounded in his first season at Double-A before going down with a shoulder injury. RHP Kurt Miller, who led the organization in wins in 1998, was ineffective early and was released to go play in Japan. C-OF Pat Cline's defensive struggles were joined by offensive difficulties and hamstring problems at Triple-A. 3B Ron Walker, who emerged with a power bat in '98, could not handle Double-A pitching in '99. LHP Nate Teut, a 13-game winner in '98, was a 12-game loser last season.



By Cosimo Mellace

Making it add up: Roosevelt Brown tallied 26 homers and 301 RBI in 457 at-bats between the majors and minors in '99.

NEARLY READY												
HITTERS	CLUB	Age	AVG	AB	H	2B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB	
Chad Meyers, 2B	WTE-IWA	24	.317	413	131	32	3	45	55	60	39	
Cole Linkk, 3B	PAW	23	.264	348	92	25	12	42	40	57	0	
Jose Nieves, SS	NWA	24	.268	392	105	25	11	59	24	65	11	
Roosevelt Brown, OF	WTE-IWA	24	.338	393	133	37	25	91	33	83	9	
PITCHERS	CLUB	Age	W	L	SV	ERA	IP	H	BB	SO		
Steve Rain	WTE-IWA	24	3	2	26	1.66	54	39	20	64		
Richie Barker	NWA	26	4	4	7	4.26	74	72	30	52		
Brian McNichol *	NWA	25	10	11	0	5.58	161	194	55	120		
Phillip Norton *	WTE-IWA	23	12	10	0	4.44	166	170	75	142		
Scott Downs *	NBR-FTM-DAY-WTE	23	13	2	0	2.35	157	137	55	173		

UP AND COMING												
HITTERS	CLUB	Age	AVG	AB	H	2B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB	
Jeff Goldtuch, C	LAN	19	.271	399	108	27	18	72	64	66	1	
Dennis Abreu, 2B	DAY	21	.257	374	96	10	2	30	13	69	29	
David Kelton, 3B	LAN	19	.269	509	137	17	13	68	39	121	22	
Jasen Randolph, OF	DAY	20	.272	511	139	16	2	37	43	86	25	
Corey Patterson, OF	LAN	20	.320	475	152	35	20	79	25	85	33	
PITCHERS	CLUB	Age	W	L	SV	ERA	IP	H	BB	SO		
Ruben Quevedo	RMD-IWA	20	9	6	0	4.80	150	146	55	148		
Chris Gissell	WTE	21	3	8	0	5.99	98	121	62	57		
Jeff Yoder	DAY-WTE	23	10	5	1	2.92	145	123	75	120		
Ben Christensen	CLB-EUG-DAY	21	1	6	0	5.60	53	54	30	49		
Joey Nation *	MAC-MYR-DAY	21	6	5	0	3.82	137	123	48	129		

SLEEPERS												
HITTERS	CLUB	Age	AVG	AB	H	2B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB	
Brad Ramsey, C	DAY	22	.212	330	70	15	9	44	40	67	1	
Julio Zuleta, 1B	WTE	24	.295	482	142	37	21	97	35	122	4	
Hee Choi, 1B	LAN	20	.321	290	93	18	18	70	50	68	2	
Tony Schragar, 2B	LAN	22	.277	392	106	31	16	73	103	101	8	
Eric Hinske, 3B-1B	DAY-IWA	22	.296	460	136	28	20	81	83	94	16	
Ron Walker, 3B	WTE	23	.219	302	66	20	9	42	39	86	2	
Augie Ojeda, SS	RDC-BOW	24	.267	461	123	18	10	60	57	47	6	
Franklin Font, SS	DAY-WTE	21	.307	411	126	9	3	50	29	52	18	
Jason Smith, SS	DAY	22	.261	442	137	5	5	26	12	29	9	
Tyus Meadows, OF	LAN	22	.301	449	135	32	17	74	66	85	18	
PITCHERS	CLUB	Age	W	L	SV	ERA	IP	H	BB	SO		
Mike Meyers	DAY-WTE	22	14	3	0	1.73	140	89	50	173		
Carlos Zambrano	LAN	18	13	7	0	4.17	153	150	62	98		
Michael Wuertz	LAN	20	11	12	0	4.8	161	191	44	127		
Roy King *	NWA	25	4	4	2	1.88	43	31	22	41		
Jon Cannon *	DAY	24	3	5	0	4.42	96	83	66	77		
Ricardo Palma *	LAN	20	7	7	0	2.94	135	134	44	79		

* left-handed pitcher; IWA: Iowa (AAA); WTE: West Tenn (AA); DAY: Daytona (A); LAN: Lansing (A); EUG: Eugene (SS-A); CLB: Mesa Cubs (Rookie).

NEARLY READY

ROOSEVELT BROWN (OF): A minor league Rule 5 draftee prior to the 1998 season, Brown had 64 at-bats for the big club but mostly split '99 between Double-A West Tenn and Triple-A Iowa, hitting .338 and tying for fourth in the minors with a .634 slugging percentage. His 22 homers in 268 Triple-A at-bats translated into a Ruthian rate of one every 12.2 at-bats. His 26-game hitting streak was the longest in the PCL in 1999. Despite being a modest 5-11 and 195 pounds, Brown has been a legitimate power source. He has decent speed and a strong arm but doesn't always go hard after the ball. A 20th-round pick of the Braves in 1993, Brown was dealt to the Marlins for Terry Pendleton in '96.

SCOTT DOWNS (LHP): Originally a third-round pick by the Cubs in 1997, Downs was dealt to Minnesota for pitcher Mike Morgan late in the 1998 season and then re-acquired in the Rick Aguilera trade last June. Between Daytona and West Tenn, the 23-year-old allowed two or fewer earned runs in all but two of his 19 starts. Downs tossed his first pro shutout shortly after being reacquired, and was then promoted to West Tenn, where he won his first five decisions. Downs ended the season with 24 consecutive scoreless innings at Pringles Park. The 6-2, 180-pounder has a terrific curve and excellent control to compensate for not being a hard thrower, mixing his upper-80s fastball and decent changeup appropriately. Downs has had success working out of jams, indicated by his .191 opponent average with runners on base after the trade, and has been tough on lefties.

CHAD MEYERS (2B): The scrappy, 185-pound Meyers is an ideal top-of-the-order guy who bunts well, always hustles and has compiled more walks than strikeouts, a .302 average and 115 stolen bases over the last three seasons. The 24-year-old began the season at West Tenn and last three seasons. The 24-year-old began the season at West Tenn and last three seasons. The 24-year-old began the season at West Tenn and last three seasons. The 24-year-old began the season at West Tenn and last three seasons.

UP AND COMING

BEN CHRISTENSEN (RHP): Though he posted a 21-1 record in three years at Wichita State, including a 9-1 mark and 2.40 ERA in his final season, Christensen made himself infamous by beating an opposing pitcher who was thought to be timing pitches in the on-deck circle. The controversy dropped his stock and he fell to the 26th pick. Christensen lost his first five pro decisions and was 1-6 with a 5.60 ERA over three levels, not winning a game until Aug. 27. Christensen has a 6-4, 185-pound frame and a fastball that can hit the mid-90s. He also has exceptional command and a good breaking pitch to complement the fastball. The heater was in the 89-92 mph range in his first few starts but warmed up as the season progressed. While there is no doubting his upside as a power pitcher, Christensen has to prove his makeup is of higher quality than evidenced in the beaming incident.

JEFF GOLDBACH (C): A second-round pick in 1998, the 6-0, 190-pounder earned Midwest League All-Star honors at just 20 years old. Though Goldbach put up impressive numbers, his batting average was inconsistent from month to month. He also went from May 5 to June 27 without a home run. The slugger also did much better at hitter-friendly Lansing. The right-handed hitter projects to hit for power and average as he progresses, but is a dead pull hitter with a prolific uppercut, which merits concern. Defensively, he has a lot of room for improvement. Despite above-average arm strength, he threw out just 27% of basestealers while leading the league with 23 passed balls in 87 games and committing nine errors. The Cubs love his makeup and work ethic and believe that will help him overcome his relative inexperience behind the plate.

DAVID KELTON (3B): The 19-year-old Kelton had a great first half at Lansing, batting .300. He was very streaky in the power department, however. He didn't go deep before May 22, homered six times from June 26-July 23, and didn't hit another homer for the rest of the year. The Cubs like Kelton's level swing, ability to lash line drives to all fields, and speed. But he needs to be more patient and make better contact to enjoy success as he advances further up the ladder. A shortstop in high school, Kelton was moved to the hot corner after being drafted because of concerns about his arm. The Cubs like his reactions and range, but he committed 32 errors and posted a fielding percentage of under .900 for the second consecutive season. Kelton was a second-round draft pick in 1998.

COREY PATTERSON (OF): The third overall pick in the 1998 draft, Patterson is one of baseball's most promising players. The Class A Midwest League's Prospect of the Year matched impressive on-field skills with a level of maturity that could not have been expected from an 18-year-old making his pro debut right out of high school. Patterson began slowly, collecting just three hits without an RBI in his first 22 at-bats, after missing the first week of the season with a hand laceration. He hit .314 the rest of April, including his first pro home run on the month's final day, and batted at least .310 in each full month thereafter. He led the league with 72 extra-base hits and a .592 slugging percentage, and also put together a 15-game hitting streak from May 20-June 20, during which he missed time with a fractured finger on his left hand. He hit for the cycle as part of a five-hit game in early July. He continued to impress as the youngest player in the Arizona Fall League, ranking fourth with a .368 average and third with a .581 slugging percentage. The son of a former NFL defensive back, Patterson has tremendous all-around skills. The 5-10, 175-pounder generates good bat speed and has shown ability to hit to all fields.

RUBEN QUEVEDO (RHP): Acquired along with lefties Micah Bowie and Joey Nation in a deadline deal that sent Jose Hernandez and Terry Mulholland to the Braves, Quevedo impressed the Cubs enough to be considered a candidate for their 2000 starting rotation at the age of 21. Though he struggled at Richmond as the youngest player in the International League, he made a huge turnaround following the deal. He had had trouble with the longball with the Braves, allowing 26 homers in 105 1/3 innings, but just one while with Iowa in the PCL. The 6-1, 180-pounder didn't pitch more than six innings in any of his starts with Richmond, yet

This is the fifth of a six-part series looking at some of the top prospects in each division, from those nearly ready for the majors to those who made noise in '99. The writers report for Howe SportsData.

This issue: NL Central. Next issue: NL West.

pitched into the seventh three times with Iowa. Quevedo has a low-90s fastball that sneaks up on batters thanks to a fluid delivery and a loose arm. He also has a decent curve and changeup. Quevedo had good success against left-handed hitters in '99, affording them just a .206 average. Signed by the Braves at age 16, Quevedo entered 1999 with a 3.12 ERA in three pro seasons.

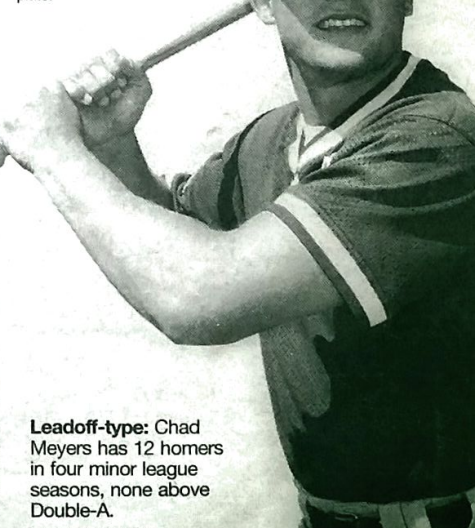
SLEEPERS

HEE SEOP CHOI (1B): One of the best teen-age baseball players in Korea, Choi signed with the Cubs in March and had an outstanding pro debut at Lansing. The left-handed hitter drove in 23 runs in his first 17 games and posted an on-base percentage of .422 and a slugging percentage of .610 for the season. The latter would have been the best in the league if he'd had enough at-bats to qualify. A teammate of Byung-Hyun Kim (Diamondbacks) on the Korean Junior national team, Choi not only handled opposing pitchers with aplomb, he led the same with the new culture. The 6-5, 240-pounder is an outstanding hitter with a quick bat, power to all fields and an idea of what he wants to do at the plate. The Cubs like him as a first baseman despite his 18 errors in 79 games but also feel he has the speed and arm to hold down a corner outfield spot if necessary. He is on an extensive weight program this winter to strengthen his upper body.

MIKE MEYERS (RHP): A 26th-round pick in the 1997 draft, the 22-year-old not only won 14 games, but his 1.73 ERA led all minor league starters in 1999. Splitting his time between Daytona and West Tenn, he also ranked second among all minor league pitchers with a .179 opponent batting average and sixth among starters with 11.0 strikeouts per nine innings. Meyers put together 29% consecutive innings without allowing an earned run at one stretch in Daytona. In his five Southern League starts, he was even more dominant. He reached double digits in strikeouts three times, including a career-high 13, and fanned six consecutive batters in the game before that. The 6-2, 210-pound Meyers' success has stemmed from an outstanding curve and the ability to set up hitters. Despite having a fastball that barely reaches the low 90s, he can make it appear much faster with his pitch sequence. With a workload mentality, Meyers never gets rattled and has been able to work out of jams consistently. Prior to 1999, Meyers had gone 24-9, 2.18 ERA in his three minor league seasons, posting a strikeout-to-walk ratio of over three-to-one and affording the opposition just a .204 average. A native of Ontario, Meyers also represented Canada in the Pan Am Games last summer.

CARLOS ZAMBRANO (RHP): Considered to have the best arm and the highest ceiling among pitchers in the Cubs' system, Zambrano won 13 games for Lansing at age 18. Though he began the '99 season in the bullpen, he was incorporated into Lansing's starting rotation by mid-April and posted a five-hit shutout in his fourth start. The native of Venezuela has a sturdy 6-4, 220-pound frame, and gets his fastball up into the mid-90s. He also has a good curve and does a good job of keeping the ball down for a power pitcher, allowing just nine home runs in 153 1/3 innings.

JULIO ZULETA (1B): Coming out of nowhere to lead all Cubs minor leaguers with a .331 average and 106 RBI in 1998, the 24-year-old Panamanian led the organization in homers and RBI in 1999 while posting a career-high 21 round-trippers and 97 RBI at West Tenn. He also belted 37 doubles and compiled a .519 slugging percentage. Coming out of his crouch and displaying more of a stand-up stance at the plate by midseason, he began hitting line drives with more consistency and his power numbers increased. Though he tailed off a bit toward the end of the season, Zuleta finished second in the Southern League in RBI and extra-base hits (62). In addition to coming into his own as a consistent producer with the bat, Zuleta has also become a competent first baseman. At 6-6 and 230 pounds, the converted catcher presents a big target. He also trimmed his error total down from 15 in 1998 to nine in '99. Zuleta is mainly a pull hitter who crowds the plate.



Leadoff-type: Chad Meyers has 12 homers in four minor league seasons, none above Double-A.

By Rodger M. Wood

Most of Reds' help a few years away

By Jim Keller

The 1999 season was a dream for the Cincinnati Reds. They came within one game of reaching the playoffs, and many young players, some developed by the organization, emerged as quality major leaguers. Heading into the 2000 season, the

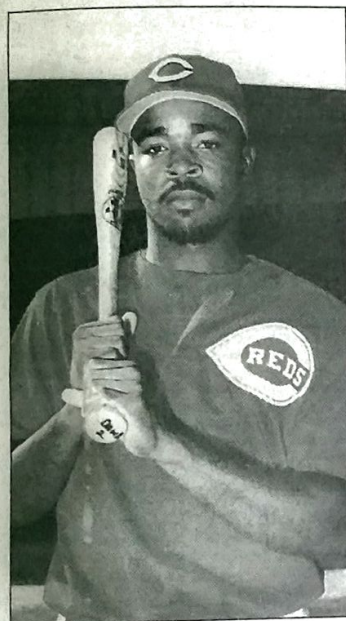
Reds' farm system has several young outfield prospects, a few quality infield prospects and a solid catcher — but few mound hopefuls. There are no open spots for infielders at the moment, however. While the Reds have several talented outfielders, none are ready to step in at the big-league level,

nor should the Reds count on getting much pitching help from the minor leagues this season.

SETBACKS: RHP Ted Rose, who posted an 11-win season at Double-A in 1998, saw his '99 season ruined by an injury to the bone in his upper arm. After a promising 7-3, 2.80 ERA in the short-season Pioneer League, LHP Robert Madritsch

missed the entire 1999 season recovering from shoulder surgery. Madritsch was a sixth-round pick in the 1998 draft.

RHP Darrell Hussman, a 1998 fourth-round pick, also missed the entire season with arm problems. OF Johnny Oliver, a first-round pick in 1996, was traded in midseason.



Hit and run: Shortstop Travis Dawkins batted .300 with 53 stolen bases between Class A and Double-A last year. He hit .364 in 32 games at the latter level.

By Steve Moore

NEARLY READY

JASON LaRUE (C): LaRue has established himself as one of the top hitting catchers in the minor leagues. During a seven-week stint with Cincinnati at midseason, the 25-year-old showed the Reds he could handle the defensive responsibilities of the post. The 1995 fifth-round pick is not imposing at 5-11 and 200 pounds, but he's hit for average and extra bases throughout his career while making consistent contact. The right-handed hitter won the Southern League batting title in '98 (.365) and legged out 20 infield hits, showing very good speed for a catcher. In 1997, he set a South Atlantic League record with 50 doubles. LaRue has thrown out about 35% of basestealers the last two years and has improved defensively, though his passed-ball totals are still a little high.

UP AND COMING

TRAVIS DAWKINS (SS): The 20-year-old played in Class A, Double-A, and the major leagues and for Team USA in the Pan Am games last season and impressed all with his outstanding defensive skills, basestealing ability and bat. After hitting just .264 with just seven doubles and one homer in 367 at-bats in the Midwest League in 1998, he hit .300 at two levels with 17 doubles, 10 homers and 53 stolen bases last season, leading the organization in steals for the second year in a row. After being bothered by bunions all of '98 and having his season end in late July because of a fractured toe, Dawkins improved his power numbers significantly in 1999. "Gookie" has similar skills to Pokes Reese, but projects to be a better hitter because he's more selective and makes consistent contact. Dawkins has great speed and uses the entire field, but would be more effective if he hit the ball on the ground more often. He's ready for the major leagues now defensively. The 6-1, 180-pounder is quick, agile and smooth with good range, a strong arm and soft hands.

ROB BELL (RHP): Reluctantly included by Atlanta in the Bret Boone deal after the 1998 season, Bell became one of the Reds' top pitching prospects the day he was acquired, but he lost valuable developmental time last season because of a shoulder problem that limited him to 80 innings. Bell was sidelined for three months with a problem similar to the weakened shoulder that Denny Neagle experienced. The 22-year-old ended up making 12 starts and then continued to strengthen his arm in the Arizona Fall League, going 4-1 with a 4.76 ERA in eight starts, walking eight and fanning 34 in 34 innings. Likened to a young John Smoltz, Bell has good size (6-5, 225 pounds) and throws a devastating curveball to go with an average fastball and an improved changeup, a pitch he made progress with this season. He also is confident and never gets rattled. The 1995 third-round pick led the Carolina League with 197 strikeouts in 1998.

TY HOWINGTON (LHP): The signing of this 1999 first-round pick just days before he enrolled in junior college came as a big relief to the Reds. Howington was only the fourth southpaw the Reds had selected in the first round since the draft was started in 1965. The 19-year-old already stands 6-5 and weighs 220 pounds, and he can throw his fastball in the mid-90s. He also has a great breaking ball and make-up, and the Reds plan on challenging the first-year player in the Midwest League this season.

BEN BROUSSARD (OF): In a memorable game during his first pro month with Billings, Broussard went 5-for-5 with three homers and 11 RBI, setting league records in RBI and total bases (16). His 11 RBI were the most in a minor league game this decade. The 6-2, 220-pounder out of McNeese State led the minors with a .496 average in July, and when promoted to Clinton after 38 games he was leading the league in homers (14), on-base percentage (.527) and slugging (.800), and was second in batting (.407) and RBI (48). He spent less than a week at Clinton before moving up to Double-A Chattanooga. Broussard struggled there, batting .213 with eight homers and 21 RBI in 35 games, but had four homers and 10 RBI in his first six starts. Broussard continued to pound the ball in the California Fall League, batting .387 with nine homers and 34 RBI, giving him a .347 average with 30 doubles, 33 homers and 109 RBI in his first 114 pro games. Although he earned Southland Conference Hitter of the Year honors as he set a slew of records, Broussard's second-round selection was somewhat surprising since he doesn't have "projectable tools." The collegiate first baseman converted to left field because of the presence of Sean Casey in Cincinnati and struggled there, making seven errors in 53 games while showing a subpar throwing arm. Broussard is not a speedster but is a hard worker.

AUSTIN KEARNS (OF): Kearns was selected Kentucky's Mr. Baseball in 1998 and was the Reds' top pick that spring. A two-way player in high school with a fastball registering 93 mph, Kearns was regarded as a pitcher until his velocity dipped 5 mph his senior season. Kearns hit .315 in 30 games at Billings in 1998 and in two years of pro ball has made a smooth transition to right field, showing solid tracking skills, instincts and a strong arm. In addition to his talent, Kearns endeared himself to his coaches by displaying a great attitude and willingness to learn. The 19-year-old shows promising power potential. The 6-4, 210-pounder also swiped 21 bases but struck out 120 times in 426 at-bats.

ADAM DUNN (OF): A power/speed package with leadership qualities, Dunn had been the backup quarterback at the University of Texas but gave up the sport last summer to concentrate on baseball. Dunn hit .307 with 16 doubles, 11 homers, 44 RBI and 21 stolen bases in 93 games at Rockford when he finally turned his attention to the sport full time, finishing the campaign by batting .441 in his last 102 at-bats. The

1998 second-round pick would have been a certain first-rounder if not for his commitment to football. The 6-5, 235-pounder has 30-homer/30-steal potential and already exhibits a discerning eye at the plate. His athleticism should serve him well at either corner outfield spot, and his arm is more than playable.

BRANDON LARSON (3B): The 14th overall player selected in the 1997 draft, Larson stayed healthy for the first time in 1999 after having his first two seasons end early because of injury. The 1997 season ended after 11 games because of an ankle injury, and he blew out his knee 18 games into the 1998 season. The 23-year-old had three game-winning homers and went deep nine times over a 14-game stretch in 1999, but a wrist injury prevented him from playing in the Arizona Fall League. The right-handed hitter is a serious power threat but gives away too many at-bats, walking 35 times against 118 strikeouts in 422 at-bats. He's also a little too pull-conscious. Defensively, the 6-0, 205-pounder, a shortstop in college, made 33 errors and fielded .900 at the hot corner. Larson has the arm for the position, though his agility and quickness are suspect. A two-time national champion at LSU, he was MVP of the College World Series in '97 (.368, 3 HR) and set a NCAA record for shortstops with 40 home runs that season.

SLEEPERS

ANTONIO PEREZ (2B): The youngest everyday player in the Midwest League, Antonio Perez showed outstanding speed, defensive promise and an advanced bat with a little pop. The 17-year-old second baseman, playing for Rockford, batted .200 the month of April before hitting .338 in May and .321 in August. He scored runs in nine and 12 consecutive games during the course of the season. Although still raw in all phases of the game, the right-handed hitter has shown a solid understanding of the strike zone, though he needs to learn to use the entire field and take a few more pitches. He went six weeks without a walk in midseason but walked 21 times in August. Speed is his best tool right now, but his 29 infield hits and 35 stolen bases will improve once he learns to hit the ball on the ground more often and refine his base-stealing technique. Perez played the first half of '99 at second base and then switched to shortstop. He committed a combined 36 errors between the two, not a bad record for a player his age, but his subpar arm will probably place the 5-11, 175-pounder at second base.

BRADY CLARK (OF): Clark, a non-drafted free agent from San Diego State whose career almost ended before it started, followed an injury-plagued 1998 with the Southern League MVP award and a spot on the 40-man roster. He does not excel at any one aspect, but he does everything well and has a great work ethic. The 26-year-old missed more than half of '98 because of a stress fracture in his shin but returned to Chattanooga last year to lead the league in batting. He was second in runs (103), hits (165), on-base percentage (.425) and walks and was the third-toughest hitter in the league to strike out. He hit .336 with runners on base and hit well against left-handers, batting .331 with six homers and more walks than strikeouts. The 6-2, 195-pounder has five solid tools and plays the game the right way. He drives the ball the opposite way, shows excellent command of the strike zone and hustles all the time. An above-average right fielder with a plus arm, Clark originally signed in January 1996 but was released three months later because of a broken hamate bone. He re-signed the following spring and earned Midwest League All-Star honors in '97, batting .325 with 108 runs.

ALEJANDRO DIAZ (OF): The first Japanese League player signed under a new baseball trade agreement instituted in 1999, the Reds acquired the rights to Diaz. Listed as 21 at the time of his signing, Diaz impressed the front office with a strong throwing arm and outfield instincts, but his bat and speed were suspect. It was later discovered that he was 24 years old. He began the 1999 season in extended spring training nursing a calcium deposit on his right elbow, and he then went just 2-for-31 after joining Class A Clinton in May. He heated up soon afterward and was promoted to Chattanooga. One Reds official compared his defense to Roberto Clemente's because of his strong arm and outfield instincts, although he played center field instead of right field. The 5-9 right-handed hitter showed some extra-base potential but was not too selective, drawing just 20 walks. Diaz used the entire field and legged out 25 infield hits, but did not hit the ball on the ground enough to take advantage of his speed.

ADRIAN BURNSIDE (LHP): A Rule 5 pick taken from the Dodgers organization in December, Burnside hopes to become the third Australian-born player to appear in the major leagues for Cincinnati. When he was throwing in the upper-80s, the Dodgers dropped Burnside down from over the top to three-quarters and his fastball increased to the low- to mid-90s. He also throws a pretty good slider. The 6-4, 190-pounder was 1-10 with a 7.81 ERA at Class A San Bernardino in 1998 but improved to 10-9 with a 4.17 ERA last season with his new motion. He struck out 129 batters in 132 innings and was 10-7 with a 3.79 ERA as a starter. He allowed two earned runs or fewer in 13 of 22 starts.

Speed bump: After coming over from Atlanta in the Denny Neagle trade, Rob Bell missed half of '99 with injuries.

By Rodger M. Wood

NEARLY READY

HITTERS	CLUB	Age	AVG	AB	H	2B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Jason LaRue, C	IND	25	.251	263	66	12	12	37	15	52	0
Mike Frank, OF	IND	24	.296	433	128	36	9	62	38	55	10

UP AND COMING

HITTERS	CLUB	Age	AVG	AB	H	2B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Brandon Larson, 3B	RKF-CNG	23	.294	422	124	28	25	94	35	118	16
Travis Dawkins, SS	RKF-CNG	20	.300	434	130	17	10	45	49	55	53
Ben Broussard, OF	BIL-CLN-CNG	23	.332	292	97	20	24	75	48	75	2
Austin Kearns, OF	RKF	19	.258	426	110	36	13	48	50	120	21
Adam Dunn, OF	RKF	19	.307	313	96	16	11	44	46	64	21

PITCHERS	CLUB	Age	W	L	SV	ERA	IP	H	BB	SO
Phil Merrell	CLN-CNG-IND	21	10	8	0	4.18	149	143	49	108
Rob Bell	CNG-RDS	22	3	6	0	2.93	80	78	17	79
Justin Atchley *	RKF	26	6	10	1	3.80	121	153	24	76
Ty Howington *	DNP									

SLEEPERS

HITTERS	CLUB	Age	AVG	AB	H	2B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Bobby Cripps, C	DUN-STC-KNOX	22	.187	134	25	6	4	17	9	53	0
Corky Miller, C	RKF-CNG	23	.264	299	79	20	14	56	44	72	3
Ron Wright, 1B	ALT	23	.213	80	17	6	0	4	9	27	0
Jason Williams, 2B	CNG-IND	25	.339	492	167	45	9	64	60	65	7
Juan Melo, SS	LUG-SYR-IND	22	.219	319	70	12	6	29	17	67	10
Nick Presto, SS	CNG-RDS	25	.272	232	63	10	2	28	39	35	6
Wilmy Caracas, SS	CLN-RDS	21	.262	485	127	18	1	30	30	66	52
Antonio Perez, SS-2B	RKF	18	.288	385	111	20	7	41	43	80	35
Brady Clark, OF	CNG	26	.326	506	165	37	17	75	89	58	25
Andy Burress, OF	RKF-CNG	22	.288	527	152	36	11	60	35	86	28
Alejandro Diaz, OF	CLN-CNG	21	.274	441	121	23	13	76	20	66	34

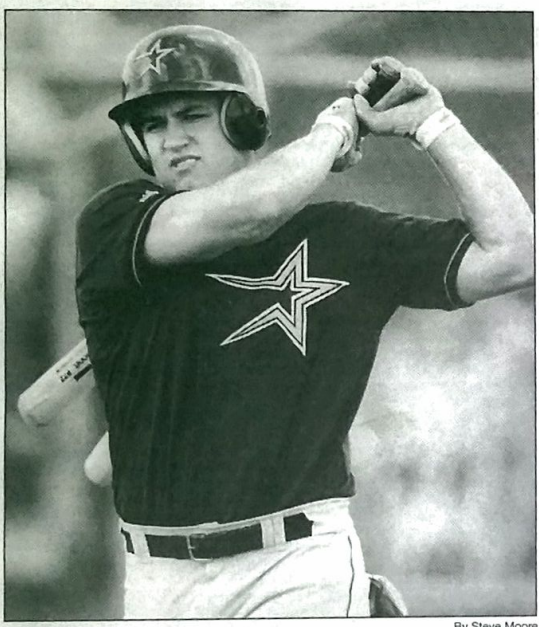
* Left-handed pitcher; IND: Indianapolis (AAA); CNG: Chattanooga (AA); RKF: Rockford (A); CLN: Clinton (SS-A); RDS: Gulf Coast Reds (Rocky).

Pitching key to system's strength

By Brian Joura

Despite a smaller budget than most organizations and a reputation for poor drafts in the '90s, the Astros have a solid minor league system that has produced many players. The Astros traded away several prospects in 1997 and 1998 to bring in Jay Powell, Moises Alou and Randy Johnson. Although they made no such moves last season, those trades depleted much of the overall depth the organization had accumulated. Pitching is the Astros' strength in 2000. There are few if any position players with a chance to contribute in the near future.

SETBACKS: C Mitch Meluskey was limited to 33 at-bats with a shoulder injury. SS-2B Jhonny Perez batted .250 at Double-A and couldn't find full-time duty. RHP Brad Lidge, a first-rounder in '98 limited to 32 innings his first two years, suffered elbow problems for the second consecutive year. LHP Derek Root, who posted a 2.89 ERA and emerged as a prospect in '98, lost 16 games and became a six-year free agent.



By Steve Moore

Lance Berkman: The switch-hitting outfielder's homers fell from 30 to 12 as he split time between Triple-A and the majors.

NEARLY READY

HITTERS	CLUB	Age	AVG	AB	H	2B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Carlos Hernandez, SS	NO	23	.293	355	104	14	0	43	27	65	22
Lance Berkman, OF	NO	23	.323	226	73	20	8	49	39	47	7

PITCHERS	CLUB	Age	W	L	SV	ERA	IP	H	BB	SO
Wade Miller	NO	23	11	9	0	4.38	162	156	64	135

UP AND COMING

HITTERS	CLUB	Age	AVG	AB	H	2B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
John Buck, C	AUB-MCH	19	.239	243	58	18	3	29	27	51	7
Adam Everett, SS	TRE	22	.263	338	89	11	10	44	41	64	21

PITCHERS	CLUB	Age	W	L	SV	ERA	IP	H	BB	SO
Tony McKnight	JCK	22	9	9	0	2.75	160	134	44	118
Eric Ireland	KIS-JCK	22	10	8	0	2.24	185	164	32	148

SLEEPERS

HITTERS	CLUB	Age	AVG	AB	H	2B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Mike Rose, C	KIS-JCK	23	.273	348	95	16	14	40	72	74	12
Kevin Burris, 1B	JCK	24	.281	352	99	21	12	58	42	74	6

PITCHERS	CLUB	Age	W	L	SV	ERA	IP	H	BB	SO	
Chris Truby, 3B	JCK	25	282	465	131	21	28	87	36	88	20
Julio Lugo, SS	JCK	23	319	445	142	24	10	42	44	53	25

* - left-handed pitcher; NO: New Orleans (AAA); JCK: Jacksonville (AA); KIS: Kissimmee (A); MCH: Michigan (A); AUB: Auburn (SS-A); MAR: Martinsville (Rookie).

NEARLY READY

LANCE BERKMAN (OF): Though limited to 319 at-bats in 1999, Berkman continued to display the talents that prompted Houston to select him in the first round of 1997 out of Rice University. After missing more than a month because of a knee injury, Berkman picked up where he left off in his standout 1998 season, when he was MVP of the Triple-A World Series. He hit for both average (.323) and power (518 slugging) while showing fine plate discipline for a young slugger. A switch-hitter, Berkman has power to all fields but is a better hitter from the left side. The 6-1, 205-pounder was a collegiate first baseman but has played most of his pro career in the outfield. Berkman shows good hands and a decent arm for a left fielder. In addition to being an outstanding hitter, the 24-year-old has been praised for his makeup and work ethic.

CARLOS HERNANDEZ (2B/SS): A quality defensive player with good speed, Hernandez is an acrobatic second baseman with quick feet and sure hands. He has played both second base and shortstop with all organization. The 5-9, 175-pounder managed just 14 extra-base hits, all doubles, in 398 plate appearances in the hitter-friendly PCL last year. Despite showing little patience at the plate, Hernandez does a good job of slipping the ball to all fields and led New Orleans with 22 infield hits in 1999. For the second consecutive season, the 24-year-old showed a knack for delivering in the clutch. After batting .336 with runners in scoring position in 1998, he batted .368 in those situations last year.

WADE MILLER (RHP): Coming off a hand injury that cut his 1998 campaign short, Miller came to New Orleans fully recovered in 1999 and re-established himself as one of the top pitching prospects on the farm. After going 15-5 between two Class A clubs in 1997, Miller was on the fast track to the big leagues. He opened 1998 by winning all five of his decisions and posting a 2.32 ERA when his season ended May 31 with tendinitis in his middle finger. In 1999, the 23-year-old fanned 34 batters in 31 innings in May and had his best month of the year in June, going 4-1 with a 2.63 ERA. The 6-2, 185-pounder has a mid-90s fastball with good life. He also throws two breaking pitches and a changeup, but his offspeed pitches lack consistency.

UP AND COMING

ADAM EVERETT (SS): Everett, acquired from the Red Sox this off-season in the Carl Everett trade, is an excellent defensive shortstop with some projected offensive upside. Freed from the shadow of Nomar Garciaparra in Boston, the 22-year-old will fit nicely into the Astros' infield plans. A first-round pick in '98, he went 200 at-bats before hitting his first pro home run but went deep three times in his next 40 at-bats. In 1999, Everett missed the month of May with a broken pinky. The 6-1, 170-pound Everett has above-average range, a good glove, a strong arm and fluid motion. He is a spray hitter with above-average speed. His 80.8% stolen-base percentage ranked fourth in the Eastern League.

ERIC IRELAND (RHP): A second-round draft pick in 1995, Ireland is a durable pitcher who throws three pitches for strikes and has excellent command. His nine-inning perfect game against St. Petersburg in June was just the fourth in the history of the Florida State League and the first since 1975. The 6-1, 170-pounder led the FSL with a 2.06 ERA and 170 1/3 innings pitched, had the second-lowest walk rate in the league (1.53) and allowed the third-fewest baserunners per nine innings (9.67). Overall, adding in his brief call-up to Double-A Jackson, his 2.24 ERA was the fourth-best in the minors last year. In addition to his perfect game, Ireland carried a no-hitter into the ninth inning in another start. The 22-year-old allowed two earned runs or fewer in 18 of his 24 starts for Kissimmee and has yet to miss a start in his four-year pro career. He's also led his league in innings pitched the last three seasons, including a minor league-leading 206 in 1998. Ireland was 14-9 for lower-level Class A Quad City that year, finishing second in the Midwest League in wins and strikeouts (191). While not overpowering, Ireland reaches 90 mph with his fastball and also throws a slider and a changeup. All of his pitches have good movement, and he does a good job of keeping the ball down.

TONY MCKNIGHT (RHP): Houston's first-round pick in the 1995 draft, McKnight enjoyed his best year as a pro in 1999. He shaved nearly two runs off his ERA while making the jump to Double-A. Despite his .500 record, he still earned Texas League All-Star honors. The 6-5, 205-pounder has a late-breaking curve ball and a fastball in the low 90s. Last year, McKnight established a third quality pitch with his changeup, which drastically improved his success against right-handers. After allowing more hits than innings pitched in each of his first four campaigns, McKnight permitted just 134 in 160 1/3 innings in 1999. Furthermore, he cut his hit batters and wild pitches in half. After allowing a .301 average in the Florida State League in 1998, he limited batters to a .222 mark in the Texas League, the third-best mark in the league during '99. That comparison is especially impressive since the Texas League is known as a hitters' league while the FSL has been considered kind to pitchers. The 22-year-old has been hampered by injuries throughout his career. He battled tendinitis in 1999 and has had both elbow and shoulder problems in the past.

WILFREDO RODRIGUEZ (LHP): A big, young, hard-throwing left-hander, Rodriguez has every desirable trait for a pitching prospect. He led the Florida State League in wins (15) and strikeouts (148) while finishing sixth in ERA (2.88). A product of Houston's vaunted Venezuelan scouting pipeline, Rodriguez made his pro debut in 1997 in the rookie-level Gulf Coast League, striking out 71 in 68 innings. Still growing into his 6-5, 200-pound frame, Rodriguez features a fastball in the mid-90s with wicked movement. He complements his heater with a hard-breaking curve and has good command of both pitches. The 20-year-old pitched five or more innings in 24 of his first 25 outings and was consistent all year.

SLEEPERS

CARLOS HERNANDEZ (LHP): Aided by an 8- to 9-mpg increase in his fastball, Hernandez became one of the most dominant pitchers in the Appalachian League. Hernandez, who was more of a finesse pitcher when he signed with the Astros back in the spring of 1997, struck out a minor league-high 18, including eight in a row at one point, over seven innings to lead his team to the victory that clinched their division title. The 19-year-old split time between the bullpen and the rotation until August, when he was given a good look as a starter. He promptly posted a 1.44 ERA in six starts down the stretch. Over 31 1/3 innings, the southpaw fanned 56 while yielding just 18 hits. Hernandez, whose best pitch is a sharp-moving curveball, also struck out 11 or more in each of his final three outings. Hernandez led the Appalachian League in ERA and has good command of his pitches. He is very consistent at throwing strikes and maintaining proper mechanics. Still, because of his young age, the Venezuelan native needs some work on his 5-10, 145-pound physique.

JULIO LUGO (SS): An exciting player with plenty of speed and good pop for a middle infielder, the 6-0, 165-pounder turned in another fine season at the plate in 1999 despite missing time because of an automobile accident and assorted ailments. Lugo tied his career high with 10 home runs and fanned just 53 times in 497 plate appearances, batting .363 over the last two months of the season. A top-of-the-order hitter, he batted over .300 against both righties and lefties. The 24-year-old makes good contact but needs to hit more balls on the ground to take advantage of his speed as he is considered one of the fastest players in the organization. Defensively, the Venezuelan native has great range, good hands and a decent arm for a shortstop but needs improvement with his footwork and reactions to the ball. The organization likes his makeup and wants him to remain at short for now. Currently residing in Brooklyn, N.Y., Lugo attended junior college in Texas and was a 43rd-round draft pick in 1994. In his five-year career, Lugo has a .358 on-base percentage and has been successful on 73% of his stolen base attempts.

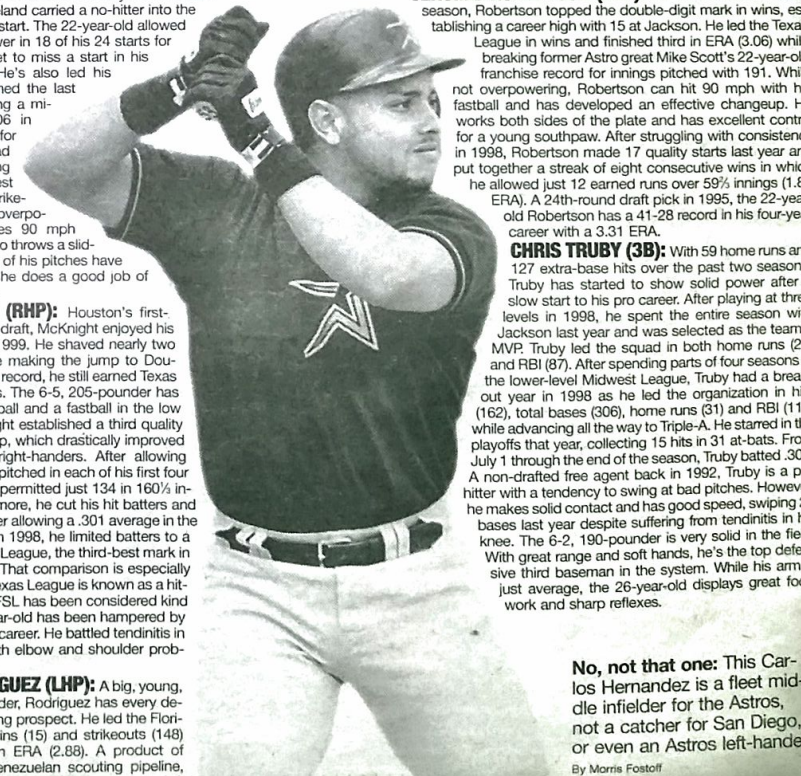
AARON MCNEAL (1B): McNeal had a breakout season in his second year in the Midwest League, finishing second in the minors in both RBI (131) and total bases (315), and winning the league MVP award. After batting just .225 in April, McNeal batted .325 the rest of the way to finish at .310. The 21-year-old led the league in both hits (166) and home runs (38), finishing with 17 more homers than the runner-up. His 131 RBI established a record for Astros' farmhands. McNeal hit well both at home (.297) and on the road (.321) and batted over .300 against both righties and lefties. Featuring raw strength and a compact swing, he averaged a home run every 14.11 at-bats, and while he fanned 121 times, it was an increase of just nine strikeouts in an additional 174 plate appearances from the previous year. The 6-3, 230-pounder is solid defensively at first base with a good glove and a knack for digging throws out of the dirt. A 27th-round draft pick in 1995, McNeal has moved slowly through the system, but his 1999 campaign might speed that climb now.

JEROMIE ROBERTSON (LHP): For the third consecutive season, Robertson topped the double-digit mark in wins, establishing a career high with 15 at Jackson. He led the Texas League in wins and finished third in ERA (3.06) while breaking former Astro great Mike Scott's 22-year-old franchise record for innings pitched with 191. While not overpowering, Robertson can hit 90 mph with his fastball and has developed an effective changeup. He works both sides of the plate and has excellent control for a young southpaw. After struggling with consistency in 1998, Robertson made 17 quality starts last year and put together a streak of eight consecutive wins in which he allowed just 12 earned runs over 59 1/3 innings (1.81 ERA). A 24th-round draft pick in 1995, the 22-year-old Robertson has a 41-28 record in his four-year career with a 3.31 ERA.

CHRIS TRUBY (3B): With 59 home runs and 127 extra-base hits over the past two seasons, Truby has started to show solid power after a slow start to his pro career. After playing at three levels in 1998, he spent the entire season with Jackson last year and was selected as the team's MVP. Truby led the squad in both home runs (28) and RBI (87). After spending parts of four seasons in the lower-level Midwest League, Truby had a breakout year in 1998 as he led the organization in hits (162), total bases (306), home runs (31) and RBI (112) while advancing all the way to Triple-A. He started in the playoffs that year, collecting 15 hits in 31 at-bats. From July 1 through the end of the season, Truby batted .309. A non-drafted free agent back in 1992, Truby is a pull hitter with a tendency to swing at bad pitches. However, he makes solid contact and has good speed, swiping 20 bases last year despite suffering from tendinitis in the field. The 6-2, 190-pounder is very solid in the field. With great range and soft hands, he's the top defensive third baseman in the system. While his arm is just average, the 26-year-old displays great footwork and sharp reflexes.

No, not that one: This Carlos Hernandez is a fleet middle infielder for the Astros, not a catcher for San Diego, or even an Astros left-hander.

By Morris Fostoff



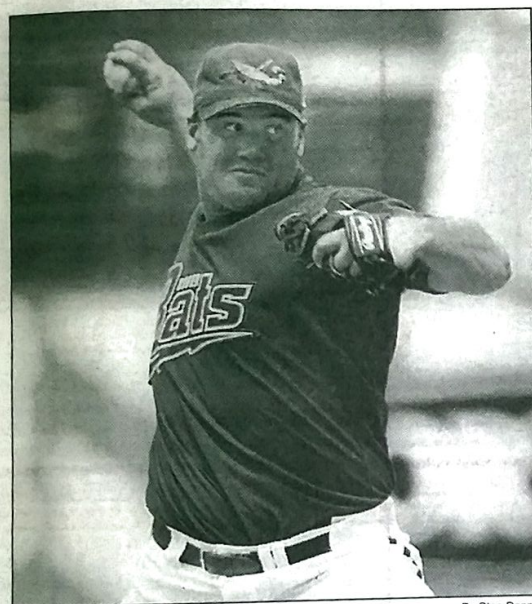
New regime aims to restock minors

By Joe Barbieri

The Brewers spent another season out of contention, prompting an overhaul in the front office. The organization begins the new year with a new GM and farm director, among others. Overall, the farm system is not blessed with an abundance of talent. There are some exciting pitchers scattered throughout but practically nothing in the way of position players with a legitimate chance.



SETBACKS: RHP Jose Garcia, one of the better pitchers in the California League in 1998, missed all of '99 with an elbow injury suffered in spring training. OF Bucky Jacobsen, who emerged in '98 with 27 homers at the lower Class A level, was overmatched at Double-A, and did not take well to a switch to first base. OF Anthony Lapocce, who batted .314 with 181 hits and 35 steals in 1998, fell to .227, 49 and eight last season. RHP Doug Johnston, a 13-game winner in '98, struggled at Double-A.



By Stan Denny

Time on his side: Allen Levrault, with 27 pro victories, is only 22 years old. He has gone 20-13 over the last two seasons, reaching Triple-A late last year.

NEARLY READY												
HITTERS	CLUB	Age	AVG	AB	H	2B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB	
Kevin Barker, 1B	LOU	24	.278	442	123	27	23	87	59	94	2	
Santiago Perez, SS	LOU	23	.263	407	107	23	7	38	31	94	21	
PITCHERS												
CLUB	Age	W	L	SV	ERA	IP	H	BB	SO			
Allen Levrault	HVL-LOU	22	10	5	0	4.77	134	125	49	115		

UP AND COMING												
HITTERS	CLUB	Age	AVG	AB	H	2B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB	
Jeff Deardorff, 3B	STK	21	.266	436	116	22	10	47	40	150	2	
Chad Green, OF	HVL	24	.246	422	104	22	10	46	46	109	28	
Bucky Jacobsen, OF	HVL-STK	24	.222	306	68	14	8	41	41	72	7	
Alvin Morrow, OF	BLT	21	.233	296	69	11	3	41	47	121	0	
PITCHERS												
CLUB	Age	W	L	SV	ERA	IP	H	BB	SO			
Paul Stewart	STK	21	10	11	0	3.96	170	171	61	117		
Ben Sheets	OGD-STK	21	1	1	0	4.04	36	31	16	40		
J.M. Gold	BLT	19	6	10	0	5.40	112	120	54	93		
Nick Neugebauer	BLT	19	7	5	0	3.90	81	50	80	125		
Jose Garcia		21	Missed season due to injury									

SLEEPERS												
HITTERS	CLUB	Age	AVG	AB	H	2B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB	
Brian Moon, C	STK	22	.265	385	102	14	2	30	37	40	6	
Mickey Lopez, 2B	HVL-LOU	25	.306	496	152	33	10	71	83	71	42	
Jeff Pickler, 2B	STK-HVL	23	.316	494	156	22	2	65	38	54	16	
Scott Kirby, 3B-1B	BLT-STK	22	.296	449	133	29	27	83	72	118	6	
Chris Rowan, SS	STK	20	.237	431	102	25	11	55	30	142	9	
Scott Krause, OF	LOU	26	.277	499	138	26	15	89	33	104	10	
Scott Sollmann, OF	STK-HVL	24	.334	440	147	14	1	42	86	69	49	
Ramy Beatriz, OF	BLT-STK	20	.276	392	108	21	4	36	36	63	8	
Cristian Guerrero, OF	OGD	18	.310	226	70	7	5	28	23	50	26	
PITCHERS												
CLUB	Age	W	L	SV	ERA	IP	H	BB	SO			
Doug Johnston	HVL	21	7	11	0	5.01	119	128	43	80		
Al Hawkins	STK-HVL	21	11	9	0	4.98	125	152	35	67		
José Miess	HEL	20	10	2	0	2.67	108	79	28	87		
Horacio Estrada	LOU	24	6	6	0	5.67	132	128	65	112		
Brian Pessini	LOU-HVL	24	2	7	0	5.26	65	67	36	36		

* - left-handed pitcher; LOU: Louisville (AAA); HVL: Huntsville (AA); STK: Stockton (A); BLT: Beloit (A); HEL: Helena (Rookie); OGD: Ogden (Rookie).

NEARLY READY

ALLEN LEVRAULT (RHP): Levrault dominated Double-A hitters in 1999 after going 1-5 with a 5.89 ERA in 11 starts at that level in 1998. Starting the season as one of the Southern League's youngest hurlers, the 21-year-old led the league's starting pitchers in opposition average (.213) and baserunners per nine innings (10.38), the second consecutive season he led his league in those categories. The 6-3, 235-pounder suffered a broken nose during batting practice in mid-July, missing three weeks and tailing off when he returned. Promoted to Triple-A, he posted an 8.65 ERA in nine outings and was moved to the bullpen. Levrault throws a low-90s fastball with movement, a decent curve, a changeup and an occasional slider. His heater, which tops out at 93 mph, was up in the strike zone a little too much, resulting in 20 homers, including nine in 34 innings at Louisville. His heater, which tops out at 93 mph, was up in the strike zone a little too much, resulting in 20 homers, including nine in 34 innings at Louisville. Some feel a permanent move to the bullpen, possibly as a closer, could be in Levrault's future. He has an aggressive demeanor and closer mentality, and lacks the consistent breaking ball needed to start. A 13th-round pick in 1996, he was 9-3 with a 2.87 ERA for Stockton in 1998.

KEVIN BARKER (1B): Barker led the organization in homers and RBI in both 1997 and 1998 and finished among the top four in both last year. Promoted to Milwaukee on Aug. 19, he had the game-winning hit in his first game. At Louisville he posted a .518 slugging percentage, his fifth consecutive season over .500. The 6-3, 205-pounder was an outfielder at Virginia Tech and a third-round pick in 1996. Playing strictly first base as a pro and having a reputation for stiff hands, Barker has been a diligent worker and has improved steadily over the years. The left-handed hitter has a natural lift in his swing, uses the whole field and has improved his plate discipline. He struggles against lefties, hitting .147 against southpaws last year in the minors and going 2-for-17 in the majors.

SANTIAGO PEREZ (SS): Acquired two winters ago from Detroit in the Bryce Florie deal, Perez opened eyes in 1998 when he hit .306 with 20 doubles, 13 triples, 11 homers and 21 stolen bases in 107 games at Double-A El Paso. However, his offense was aided by the El Paso park, one of the best hitter's parks in the minor leagues, and his numbers came back down two last season after being promoted to Triple-A. Batting mostly in the top two spots in the batting order, Perez walked only 31 times and fanned 94 times. In addition, the slender 6-2 switch-hitter is a liability from the right side of the plate. He slaps the ball all over the field, and is fleet but doesn't have the pop to homer in double digits. He has major league range and arm strength and committed a career-low 30 errors last season.

UP AND COMING

CHAD GREEN (OF): Drafted for his speed and leadoff potential, Green has yet to live up to expectations. The former All-American at the University of Kentucky has a lot of developing to do to show he was deserving of being the eighth overall player selected in 1996. Five of the seven players selected before Green that season are mainstays in the big leagues, and the two others, right-handers Matt White and John Patterson, were drafted out of high school. A fractured tibia and a hamstring problem limited Green to 40 games in 1998. He got off to a poor start in '99, suffering through a 5-for-53 slump, and he never had his average higher than .259 after April 25. He also walked just 46 times, struck out 109 times and was caught stealing in 13 of 41 stolen base attempts. A slap hitter from both sides of the plate, Green did hit the ball on the ground more often last season but it earned him just 21 infield hits. Defensively, Green is an exceptional center fielder, showing great range, a plus arm and consistency.

BEN SHEETS (RHP): The 10th player selected in 1999, Sheets is a late bloomer who wasn't drafted out of high school or pursued by any big college programs. He headed to Northeast Louisiana where, as a junior, the 6-2, 195-pounder went 14-1 with a 3.11 ERA and 31 walks and 158 strikeouts in 116 innings, leading his club to the Southland Conference championship and earning Player of the Year honors and a first team All-America selection. The cousin of big league infielder Andy Sheets allowed just one run on one hit with eight strikeouts over five innings in his first pro game at Ogden. Quickly promoted to Stockton, he posted a 14-strikeout game at the end of the season. Sheets has a fastball in the 92-93 mph range, a hard curve, a decent changeup and pretty good command.

J.M. GOLD (RHP): A first-round pick in 1998, Gold has size and a power arm, but at 19 he's still a long way away from the majors. His inexperience showed in 1999. Gold allowed five or more runs in seven of his

21 starts, including one start in which he allowed 11 earned runs in 1 1/2 innings and another, where he gave up nine runs over 3 1/2 innings. Without those two outings, Gold's ERA for the season would have been 4.12 rather than 5.40. Gold was winless after July 9 and spent a month on the DL with a sprained elbow. The 6-5, 225-pounder has a fastball in the low 90s, a projectable sharp-breaking curveball and the beginnings of a changeup, but lacks command of all his pitches, throws across his body and will have to watch his weight. Gold also allowed 41 stolen bases last season — seven more than any other pitcher in the Midwest League.

NICK NEUGEBAUER (RHP): A 1998 second-round pick, Neugebauer has a fastball in the upper 90s and led all minor league starters in both opponent batting average (1.78) and strikeouts per nine innings (13.95) in his pro debut. However, he also has some serious control and mechanical problems that must be dealt with. The fourth-youngest pitcher in the Midwest League served notice with 22 strikeouts over 11 1/2 innings in his first two pro starts, allowing no runs and one hit over seven innings in his second outing. However, Neugebauer rarely matched those quality outings later in the season, though he fanned a career-high 13 in his final start of the season. He walked 80 and fanned 125 in 81 innings but lasted more than five innings in just eight of his 18 starts. At 6-3 and 205 pounds when drafted, the 19-year-old now weighs 230 pounds and must watch his weight and mechanics, which caused shoulder problems in high school and contributed to his sporadic performance in the second half of 1999.

PAUL STEWART (RHP): Stewart, a 6-5 right-hander who hasn't posted a winning record in any of his four seasons in pro baseball, was added to the 40-man roster this winter. Just 20 years of age while pitching against older competition in the California League, Stewart tied for the league lead with five complete games. Starting out as the No. 5 starter at the beginning of the season, the 225-pounder was recognized as the staff ace by season's end. Stewart allowed three earned runs or fewer in 20 of his 27 appearances. A sixth-round pick in 1996, Stewart does not throw nearly as hard as his size would suggest. He has a fastball in the 90s, a curve and a slider, and can spot his pitches well. However, he leaves too many pitches up in the strike zone and has led two leagues in gophers. In 1999, though, he allowed just 18 in 170 innings.

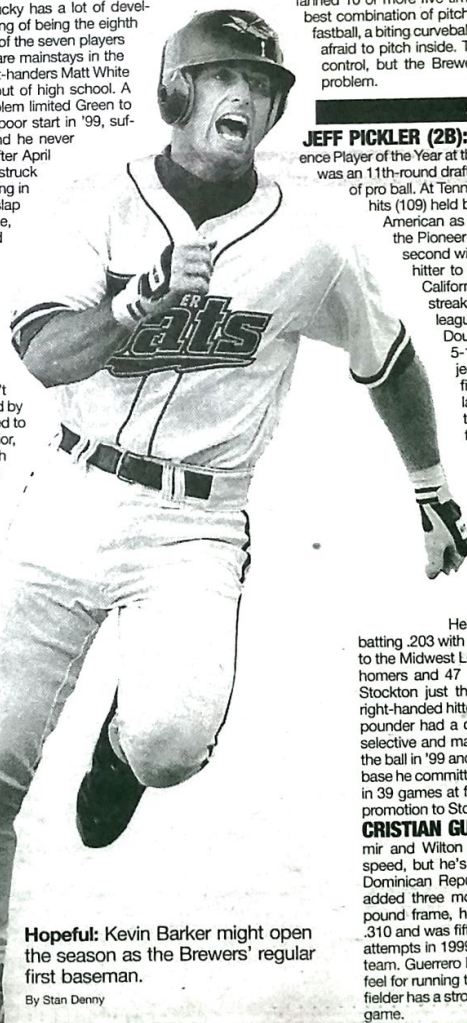
JOSE GARCIA (RHP): One of the top pitchers in the organization, Garcia missed all of 1999 because of elbow surgery but is expected back at full strength this season. The injury was originally diagnosed in spring training and after rest and an aborted rehab assignment, Garcia finally went under the knife in August. The second-round pick in 1996 had a 17-23 record with a 3.89 ERA in his first three years, but he was one of the youngest pitchers in each league he appeared. The then-20-year-old Garcia was 11-12 with a 3.67 ERA in the California League in 1998 and led the organization with 167 strikeouts. He led the league in innings pitched (169) and fanned 10 or more five times. The Brewers feel that Garcia has the best combination of pitches in the organization: a low-90s sinking fastball, a biting curveball and serviceable changeup. He's also not afraid to pitch inside. The 6-4, 200-pounder needs work on his control, but the Brewers feel more experience will solve that problem.

SLEEPERS

JEFF PICKLER (2B): An All-American and Southeast Conference Player of the Year at the University of Tennessee in 1998, Pickler was an 11th-round draft pick but has hit .333 in his first two years of pro ball. At Tennessee, Pickler broke the school record for hits (109) held by Todd Helton and was an Academic All-American as well. In his pro debut he finished third in the Pioneer League in batting (.364). He also finished second with 22 doubles and was the third-toughest hitter to strike out. In 1999, Pickler started in the California League, put together a 15-game hitting streak, hit in 28 of 30 games and was fifth in the league with a .338 average when promoted to Double-A in mid-July. The 23-year-old stands 5-10 and weighs 185 pounds, doesn't project to hit for power and is ordinary in the field. He hit just 22 doubles and two homers last season, never pulled the ball, rarely hit the ball in the air and managed just one extra-base hit against southpaws. Defensively, Pickler, who had surgery on his left ACL in 1996, has steady hands, but limited range and an average arm.

SCOTT KIRBY (3B-1B): After spending two years at Helena, Kirby returned to Beloit for a second year in 1999 and led the organization with 27 home runs, four more than he had hit in his first three years combined. Kirby hit .239 with 15 home runs in two years at Helena before spending all of 1998 at Beloit, batting .203 with eight home runs in 107 games. He returned to the Midwest League club last season and hit .304 with 17 homers and 47 RBI in 68 games. Kirby was promoted to Stockton just three weeks before his 22nd birthday. The right-handed hitter continued to impress there. The 6-2, 190-pounder had a different approach last season, being more selective and making more consistent contact. Kirby pulled the ball in '99 and hit more fly balls than ground balls. At third base he committed 23 errors in 80 games and made 11 more in 39 games at first base. He played mostly at first after his promotion to Stockton. He's adequate at best at either spot.

CRISTIAN GUERRERO (OF): The 6-7 cousin of Vladimir and Wilton Guerrero has some skills, including great speed, but he's still very inexperienced. Signed out of the Dominican Republic two years ago, Guerrero has already added three more inches and, once he fills out his 200-pound frame, he should supply more power. Guerrero hit .310 and was fifth in the Pioneer League with 26 steals in 28 attempts in 1999, earning a spot on the postseason All-Star team. Guerrero has a live bat, and his speed and advanced feel for running the bases is his best skill right now. The right fielder has a strong arm, but he's still learning how to play the game.



Hopeful: Kevin Barker might open the season as the Brewers' regular first baseman.

By Stan Denny

NL CENTRAL PROSPECT REPORTS

Pittsburgh rebuilds from bottom up

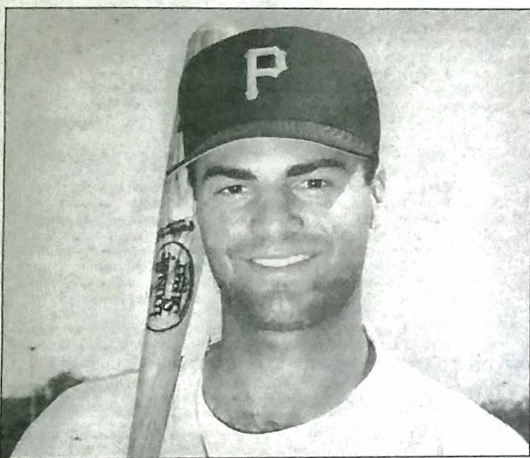
By Jim Keller

Despite suffering their seventh consecutive losing season, the Pirates, entering their fourth year of Cam Bonifay's five-year rebuilding plan, have built a deep farm system, aided by good drafts, trades of veteran players and the scouting of Latin America. There are several top-notch position prospects on the horizon but not much immediate pitching help.



SETBACKS: Once considered the first baseman of the future, 1B Ron Wright was waived this fall and picked up by Cincinnati after three years of back

problems. 3B Freddy Garcia never fulfilled his power promise and was waived from the 40-man roster and dealt to Atlanta. 1994 first-round pick 3B Mark Farris quit baseball and returned to college to begin a football career. RHPs Jason Phillips, Javier Martinez and Jose Pett and LHP Kevin Pickford missed virtually the entire season with injuries. Phillips and Pett left the organization as six-year free agents after the season.



By Steve Moore

Staying ahead of the game: Though he has spent five years in pro ball, including two full seasons at Triple-A, Pirates prospect Chad Hermansen still is only 22 years old.

NEARLY READY												
HITTERS	CLUB	Age	AVG	AB	H	2B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB	OB
Chad Hermansen, OF	NL	22	.270	496	134	27	32	97	35	119	19	39
PITCHERS	CLUB	Age	W	L	SV	ERA	IP	H	BB	SO	OB	
Jimmy Anderson *	NVL	23	11	2	0	3.84	134	153	41	93		

UP AND COMING												
HITTERS	CLUB	Age	AVG	AB	H	2B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB	OB
Jason Evans, C	LYN	22	.225	413	93	18	11	58	37	129	3	
R. Washington, C-3B	HCK-LYN	21	.325	492	160	22	20	82	78	90	9	
Humberto Cota, C	CSC-HCK	20	.277	469	130	32	11	81	41	71	4	
Eddy Furniss, 1B	LYN	24	.261	444	116	33	23	87	94	113	5	
J.R. House, 1B	PIR-WPT-HCK	19	.313	224	70	15	6	36	20	47	3	
Garrett Long, OF-1B	ALT	23	.245	355	87	12	18	56	63	100	6	
J.R. House, 1B	PIR-WPT-HCK	19	.313	224	70	15	6	36	20	47	3	
T.J. Davis, OF	ALT	23	.265	532	143	20	3	60	52	29	2	
John Grabow *	HCK	21	.265	317	84	26	19	65	74	99	2	
PITCHERS	CLUB	Age	W	L	SV	ERA	IP	H	BB	SO	OB	
Bronson Arroyo	ALT-NVL	22	15	6	0	4.17	166	189	68	111		
Bobby Bradley	PIR	18	1	1	0	2.90	31	31	4	31		
Sam McConnell *	ALT-LYN	23	8	10	0	4.50	164	166	60	110		
Clint Johnston *	HCK	22	5	6	0	4.73	93	92	49	94		
John Grabow *	HCK	20	9	10	0	3.80	156	152	32	164		

SLEEPERS												
HITTERS	CLUB	Age	AVG	AB	H	2B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB	OB
Yemid Haad, C	LYN-ALT	22	.225	346	78	14	11	43	52	74	12	
Craig Wilson, C	ALT	22	.268	362	97	21	20	69	40	104	1	
Carlos Rivera, 1B	HCK	21	.322	457	147	30	13	86	15	45	2	
Jon Prieto, 2B	HCK	19	.303	244	74	9	1	21	22	55	10	
K. Haverbusch, 3B	ALT	23	.288	332	95	22	14	61	12	60	6	
Rolando Segura, 3B	WPT-HCK	20	.316	250	79	18	10	45	24	56	1	
Tony Alvarez, 3B	WPT	20	.321	196	63	14	7	45	21	36	38	
Derrick Landford, OF	LYN	25	.292	456	133	28	20	88	52	124	4	
Freddy May, OF	LYN	23	.295	441	130	20	8	56	85	105	17	
Jovanny Sosa, OF	HCK	19	.209	402	84	16	22	53	37	145	2	
PITCHERS	CLUB	Age	W	L	SV	ERA	IP	H	BB	SO	OB	
Franklin Bravo	HCK	20	7	1	0	3.22	95	82	42	81		
Luis Torres	PIR-HCK	19	4	4	0	2.43	81	64	27	59		
Paul Ah Yat *	ALT-NVL	25	12	7	0	4.11	180	161	54	131		
Mike Gonzalez *	LYN-ALT	21	12	7	0	4.80	139	132	82	150		
Brian O'Connor *	ALT	22	7	11	0	4.70	153	152	92	106		
David Williams *	WPT-HCK	20	7	3	0	2.92	105	75	22	93		

* Left-handed pitcher. NVL: Nashville (AAA); ALT: Altoona (AA); LYN: Lynchburg (A); HCK: Hickory (A); WPT: Williamsport (S-A); PIR: Gulf Coast Pirates (Rookie).

NEARLY READY

CHAD HERMANSEN (OF): Hermansen, 22, already has two years experience and 60 homers at the Triple-A level. He homered in four consecutive games and nine times over a 14-game stretch in 1999. The 1995 first-round pick has a strong arm, outstanding power and decent speed. In 38 more at-bats in '99 than '98, Hermansen cut his strikeouts from 152 to 119, but major league pitchers could take advantage of his prolific uppercut. He hit .233 with 19 strikeouts and one homer in 60 big league at-bats. The right-handed slugger improved his average with runners in scoring position from .213 in 1998 to 2.99 last season. After suffering through slumps of 10-for-65, 2-for-26 and 1-for-25 in '98, the 6-3, 200-pounder went three games without a hit just once last year. He began his career at shortstop, but after making 23 errors in 33 games in '97, he was shipped to the outfield, then to second base and finally back to the outfield.

JIMMY ANDERSON (LHP): After blazing through the lower levels before stumbling at Triple-A in 1997-'98, Anderson was leading the PCL with 11 wins when promoted to Pittsburgh in July. After being demoted to the bullpen for the final two months of 1998, he returned to the rotation last year, stopping nipped and pitched more aggressively. He was very consistent, pitching at least five innings in 27 of 31 starts while allowing more than three earned runs just twice. Anderson, who turns 24 on Jan. 22, has a 90-mph sinking fastball and an impressive slider. He yielded just five home runs last season. A ninth-round pick in 1994, Anderson was 25-16 with a 2.44 ERA below Triple-A and 16-16 with a 5.32 ERA at Triple-A in '97 and '98. The stocky 6-1 southpaw is an excellent athlete and fields his position well.

EMIL BROWN (OF): Brown, a 1996 Rule 5 pick from Oakland, spent '97 with the Pirates but was returned to Double-A in '98 for more seasoning. In 1999, the 24-year-old hit .307 for Nashville with 20 doubles, 18 homers, 60 RBI and 16 stolen bases and finished fifth in the PCL with 97 runs. He never hit lower than .279 in any month and batted .350 in May. For the second consecutive year he hit well both at home and on the road, against both right- and left-handers. A Southern League All-Star in '98, Brown finished second in that league in batting (.330), clubbing 14 homers and swiping 24 bases. The 6-2, 200-pounder has a live body with speed and makes consistent contact for a young player, but he'll need to pull the ball more often to realize his 20-homer potential. Defensively, Brown shifted from center field to right field last season to accommodate his powerful throwing arm and is above-average in the field. Originally a sixth-round pick by Oakland, Brown lacks focus at times, especially in the field, and the Pirates would like to see him apply himself 100% of the time.

UP AND COMING

BOBBY BRADLEY (RHP): Although Bradley doesn't fit the mold of a first-round pick, the Pirates used the eighth pick of the 1999 draft on the slender six-footer. They feel they drafted an outstanding high school pitcher with command, makeup, a fine arm and great curveball, and feel he should move faster than the typical 18-year-old. Bradley throws his fastball in the 87-91 mph range, but has an outstanding curveball for a teenager. He was 12-1 with a 0.38 ERA with 156 strikeouts in 92 innings as a high school senior, and posted a 2.90 ERA in six Gulf Coast starts. He walked four and struck out 31 batters in 31 innings.

HUMBERTO COTA (C): Acquired from the Devil Rays in the Jose Guillen deal, Cota is a solid backstop with some pop and has quickly become the Pirates' top catching prospect. Released by the Braves in 1997 because of a disagreement on how to treat an injury, Cota was signed by the Devil Rays and earned Appalachian League All-Star honors in 1998, batting .310 with 15 homers and 61 RBI in 85 games. He finished second in the league in homers and RBI. The 20-year-old spent all of 1999 in the South Atlantic League, playing for Charleston-SC and Hickory. The 6-0, 170-pounder put up similar numbers between his two clubs. Cota has a chance to hit for both average and power as he progresses. Defensively, he has a pretty good arm, good fundamentals and an understanding of his defensive responsibilities. He threw out 31% of attempted basestealers, allowed 17 passed balls and made nine errors in 91 games.

J.J. DAVIS (OF): Davis, a 1997 first-round pick, homered in six consecutive games in one stretch, which matched the '99 minor league high. He was one of four minor leaguers to homer twice in one inning, driving in six runs in that inning, a minor league high. After hitting just two homers through May 14, Davis slugged 17 homers in his last 223 at-bats before being shut down by minor elbow surgery in early August. His elbow problems kept him out of the field after mid-June. At 6-6 and 230 pounds, the 20-year-old is an immense physical talent with unbelievable power and a tremendous arm, but he's strictly a pull hitter with an uppercut swing and has problems with breaking balls. He also loses concentration in right field at times. A cousin of footballer Lawrence Phillips, Davis has seen his work ethic questioned and has missed a lot of playing time over the last two years with minor injuries. Struggling at .198 with four homers in 30 games at Augusta in '98, Davis moved down that June to Erie, where he hit .270 with 12 doubles, eight homers and 39 RBI in 52 games.

BRONSON ARROYO (RHP): A top prospect prior to a subpar 1998 campaign, Arroyo rebounded last season and was placed on the 40-man roster. The 22-year-old led the organization with 15 wins and finished strong at Altoona, allowing two earned runs or fewer in his last seven starts before going 0-2 with a 10.38 ERA in three starts at Triple-A. He used his legs more in the second half, which helped his fastball, and stopped thinking too much about his mechanics. However, like most Altoona hurlers, Arroyo feasted on enemy hitters in 17 starts at the pitcher-friendly Altoona park, posting a 2.80 ERA

there as opposed to a 5.77 mark on the road. Rail-thin at 6-5 and 185 pounds, the 1995 third-round pick does not have any outstanding offerings, but he does throw three solid pitches with pretty good command, and his 90 mph fastball could improve as he matures physically.

JOHN GRABOW (LHP): A third-round pick in 1997, Grabow needed to repeat a season in the South Atlantic League, and with improved control and three quality pitches he became the staff ace for Hickory. The 21-year-old was just 9-10, but he had four no-decisions and four losses in starts in which he allowed two earned runs or fewer. Overall, Grabow allowed more than two walks in just one of 26 starts and allowed two earned runs or fewer 16 times. After a dead arm period in which he allowed 25 runs in 18 1/3 innings over four starts, Grabow finished strongly, allowing a total of three runs in his last three starts. Earlier in the season, the 6-2, 189-pounder matched a '99 minor league high with seven consecutive punchouts in a contest. With pinpoint location, a low-90s fastball, a good breaking ball and a promising changeup, Grabow limited runners to a .229 average while holding lefties to a .254 mark. He allowed hitters a .222 average with the bases empty but a 290 mark with runners on, an indication that he may need work on his stretch mechanics.

RIKO WASHINGTON (C-3B): The best pure hitting prospect in the organization, Washington was leading the South Atlantic League in batting (.355) and on-base percentage (.453) when promoted to the Carolina League in early July. The 21-year-old totaled 160 hits, 78 walks and 101 runs between the two teams. Washington hit .330 in 51 games at Erie in 1998, earning New York-Penn. League All-Star honors. The left-handed batter was a 1997 10th-round draft pick, and split the season among catcher, third base and second base. After spending two years at third base, he moved behind the plate, and while he showed quick feet and a strong arm, he threw out just 16.7% of attempted basestealers, allowed 28 passed balls and committed nine errors in 68 games.

J.R. HOUSE (C): A national record-setting high school quarterback in West Virginia during the fall and an outstanding high school hitter in Florida during the spring, House chose a career in baseball over a college football scholarship. As a quarterback, House set national records for total offensive yards and career passing and led his school to its first-ever state championship. The 6-2, 215-pounder hit .596 with 15 homers and 55 RBI last spring, leading his baseball team to the final four of the Class 4A state championships. House split time between three clubs in 1999 after being drafted in the fifth round. He showed an outstanding hitting stroke at all three, batting .313 with 15 doubles, six homers and 36 RBI in 63 games. Bat speed and power potential are House's best skills. Defensively, the 20-year-old spent time at first base, third base and catcher, but he might lack the arm strength to remain at third or behind the plate.

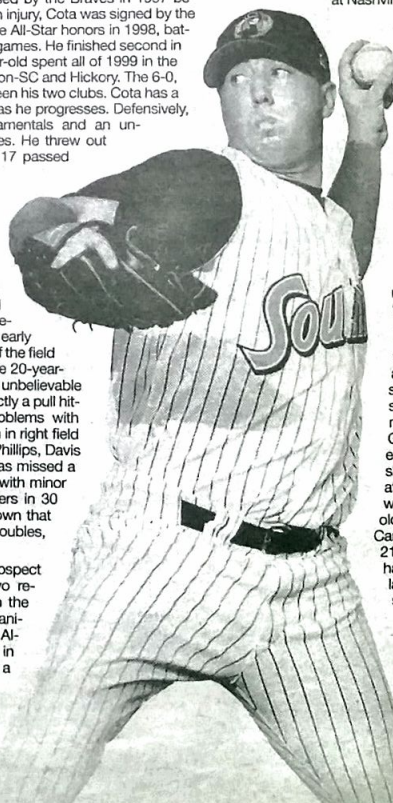
SLEEPERS

PAUL AH YAT (LHP): Despite posting the best numbers in the organization the last three years and reaching the highest level of the minor leagues, Ah Yat is not considered a top prospect because his fastball only reaches the 85-88 mph range. But the University of Hawaii product has won 33 games over that span, pitched at least five innings in all but two of his 68 starts and has walked more than three batters just four times in his career while allowing fewer hits than innings pitched. The 6-1, 186-pounder got off to a great start in 1999 at Altoona, allowing four earned runs in his first five starts, including a one-hitter. Promoted to Triple-A in late June, the southpaw struggled for the first time in his career at Nashville, going 4-3 with a 5.71 ERA in 13 outings, but finishing it at a .291 clip. The 25-year-old is a finesse pitcher who relies on excellent location of four offerings including a slow curveball and an outstanding changeup. Extremely focused, Ah Yat is equally effective against both right-handers and left-handers and extremely tough to run against. A 21st-round draft pick in 1996, Ah Yat was toiling in the bullpen until mid-'97 when he was given a chance to start.

MIKE GONZALEZ (LHP): A 30th-round draft choice in 1997, Gonzalez has been one of the minor league's top pitching performers in the first halves of both the 1998 and 1999 seasons. At Hickory in '98, Gonzalez was 4-2 with a 2.84 ERA and was leading the minor leagues with 72 strikeouts in 51 innings through mid-May. Last season, Gonzalez was leading the Carolina League in wins at the All-Star break and started the All-Star Game against the California League. He was 10-4 with a 4.02 ERA when promoted to Double-A in early August and ranked among the league leaders with 119 strikeouts in 112 innings. He fanned seven consecutive batters in one start, matching the '99 minor league regular-season high. However, Gonzalez did not fare well in the second half of either campaign. In '98, he came down with shoulder problems and went 0-3 with a 6.67 ERA at Lynchburg. Last season, Gonzalez was 2-3 with an 8.10 ERA at Double-A. Still, the 21-year-old was one of the youngest pitchers in both the Carolina and Eastern Leagues last season. The 6-2, 218-pounder throws uncommonly hard for a left-hander, reaching the low-90s consistently, but lacks command and leaves the ball up in the strike zone too often.

Toehold on the majors: Lefty Jimmy Anderson, from Chesapeake, Va., comes into 2000 with two major league victories.

By Stan Denny



NL CENTRAL PROSPECT REPORTS

Pittsburgh rebuilds from bottom up

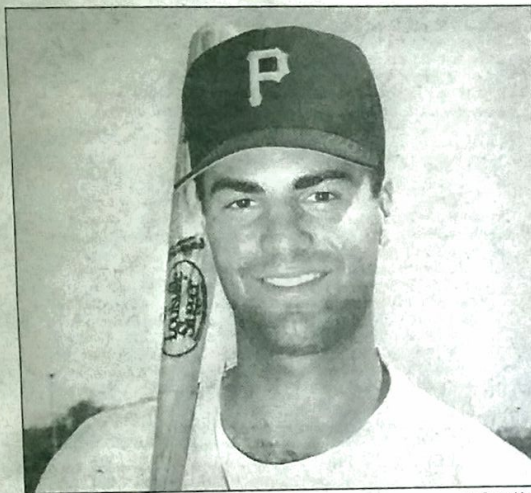
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David Williams *	WPT-HCK	20	7	3	0	2.92	105	75	22	93	

* Left-handed pitcher; NWL: Nashville (AAA); ALT: Altoona (AA); LYN: Lynchburg (A); HCK: Hickory (A); WPT: Williamsport (S-A); PIR: Gulf Coast Pirates (Rookie)

NEARLY READY

CHAD HERMANSEN (OF): Hermansen, 22, already has two years experience and 60 homers at the Triple-A level. He homered in four consecutive games and nine times over a 14-game stretch in 1999. The 1995 first-round pick has a strong arm, outstanding power and decent speed. In 38 more at-bats in '99 than '98, Hermansen cut his strikeouts from 152 to 119, but major league pitchers could take advantage of his prolific uppercut. He hit .233 with 19 strikeouts and one homer in 60 big league at-bats. The right-handed slugger improved his average with runners in scoring position from .213 in 1998 to .299 last season. After suffering through slumps of 10-for-65, 2-for-26 and 1-for-25 in '98, the 6-3, 200-pounder went three games without a hit just once last year. He began his career at shortstop, but after making 23 errors in 33 games in '97, he was shipped to the outfield, then to second base and finally back to the outfield.

JIMMY ANDERSON (LHP): After blazing through the lower levels before stumbling at Triple-A in 1997-98, Anderson was leading the PCL with 11 wins when promoted to Pittsburgh in July. After being demoted to the bullpen for the final two months of 1998, he returned to the rotation last year, stopped nibbling and pitched more aggressively. He was very consistent, pitching at least five innings in 20 of 21 starts while allowing more than three earned runs just twice. Anderson, who turns 24 on Jan. 22, has a 90-mph sinking fastball and an impressive slider. He yielded just five home runs last season. A ninth-round pick in 1994, Anderson was 25-16 with a 2.44 ERA below Triple-A and 16-16 with a 5.32 ERA at Triple-A in '97 and '98. The stocky 6-1 southpaw is an excellent athlete and fields his position well.

EMIL BROWN (OF): Brown, a 1996 Rule 5 pick from Oakland, spent '97 with the Pirates but was returned to Double-A in '98 for more seasoning. In 1999, the 24-year-old hit .307 for Nashville with 20 doubles, 18 homers, 60 RBI and 16 stolen bases and finished fifth in the PCL with 97 runs. He never hit lower than .279 in any month and batted .350 in May. For the second consecutive year he hit well both at home and on the road, against both right- and left-handers. A Southern League All-Star in '98, Brown finished second in that league in batting (.330), clubbing 14 homers and swiping 24 bases. The 6-2, 200-pounder has a live body with speed and makes consistent contact for a young player, but he'll need to pull the ball more often to realize his 20-homer potential. Defensively, Brown shifted from center field to right field last season to accommodate his powerful throwing arm and is above-average in the field. Originally a sixth-round pick by Oakland, Brown lacks focus at times, especially in the field, and the Pirates would like to see him apply himself 100% of the time.

UP AND COMING

BOBBY BRADLEY (RHP): Although Bradley doesn't fit the mold of a first-round pick, the Pirates used the eighth pick of the 1999 draft on the slender six-footer. They feel they drafted an outstanding high school pitcher with command, makeup, a fine arm and great curveball, and feel he should move faster than the typical 18-year-old. Bradley throws his fastball in the 87-91 mph range, but has an outstanding curveball for a teenager. He was 12-1 with a 0.38 ERA with 156 strikeouts in 92 innings as a high school senior, and posted a 2.90 ERA in six Gulf Coast starts. He walked four and struck out 31 batters in 31 innings.

HUMBERTO COTA (C): Acquired from the Devil Rays in the Jose Guillen deal, Cota is a solid backstop with some pop and has quickly become the Pirates' top catching prospect. Released by the Braves in 1997 because of a disagreement on how to treat an injury, Cota was signed by the Devil Rays and earned Appalachian League All-Star honors in 1998, batting .310 with 15 homers and 61 RBI in 85 games. He finished second in the league in homers and RBI. The 20-year-old spent all of 1999 in the South Atlantic League, playing for Charleston-SC and Hickory. The 6-0, 170-pounder put up similar numbers between his two clubs. Cota has a chance to hit for both average and power as he progresses. Defensively, he has a pretty good arm, good fundamentals and an understanding of his defensive responsibilities. He threw out 31% of attempted basestealers, allowed 17 passed balls and made nine errors in 91 games.

J.J. DAVIS (OF): Davis, a 1997 first-round pick, homered in six consecutive games in one stretch, which matched the '99 minor league high. He was one of four minor leaguers to homer twice in one inning, driving in six runs in that inning, a minor league high. After hitting just two homers through May 14, Davis slugged 17 homers in his last 223 at-bats before being shut down by minor elbow surgery in early August. His elbow problems kept him out of the field after mid-June. At 6-6 and 230 pounds, the 20-year-old is an immense physical talent with unbelievable power and a tremendous arm, but he's strictly a pull hitter with an uppercut swing and has problems with breaking balls. He also loses concentration in right field at times. A cousin of footballer Lawrence Phillips, Davis has seen his work ethic questioned and has missed a lot of playing time over the last two years with minor injuries. Struggling at .198 with four homers in 30 games at Augusta in '98, Davis moved down that June to Erie, where he hit .270 with 12 doubles, eight homers and 39 RBI in 52 games.

BRONSON ARROYO (RHP): A top prospect prior to a subpar 1998 campaign, Arroyo rebounded last season and was placed on the 40-man roster. The 22-year-old led the organization with 15 wins and finished strong at Altoona, allowing two earned runs or fewer in his last seven starts before going 0-2 with a 10.38 ERA in three starts at Triple-A. He used his legs more in the second half, which helped his fastball, and stopped thinking too much about his mechanics. However, like most Altoona hurlers, Arroyo feasted on enemy hitters in 17 starts at the pitcher-friendly Altoona park, posting a 2.80 ERA

there as opposed to a 5.77 mark on the road. Rail-thin at 6-5 and 185 pounds, the 1995 third-round pick does not have any outstanding offerings, but he does throw three solid pitches with pretty good command, and his 90 mph fastball could improve as he matures physically.

JOHN GRABOW (LHP): A third-round pick in 1997, Grabow needed to repeat a season in the South Atlantic League, and with improved control and three quality pitches he became the staff ace for Hickory. The 21-year-old was just 9-10, but he had four no-decisions and four losses in starts in which he allowed two earned runs or fewer. Overall, Grabow allowed more than two walks in just one of 26 starts and allowed two earned runs or fewer 16 times. After a dead arm period in which he allowed 25 runs in 18 1/3 innings over four starts, Grabow finished strongly, allowing a total of three runs in his last three starts. Earlier in the season, the 6-2, 189-pounder matched a '99 minor league high with seven consecutive punchouts in a contest. With pinpoint location, a low-90s fastball, a good breaking ball and a promising changeup, Grabow limited hitters to a .229 average while holding lefties to a .254 mark. He allowed righties a .222 average with the bases empty but a .290 mark with runners on, an indication that he may need work on his stretch mechanics.

RICO WASHINGTON (C-3B): The best pure hitting prospect in the organization, Washington was leading the South Atlantic League in batting (.355) and on-base percentage (.453) when promoted to the Carolina League in early July. The 21-year-old totaled 160 hits, 78 walks and 101 runs between the two teams. Washington hit .330 in 51 games at Erie in 1998, earning New York-Penn League All-Star honors. The left-handed batter was a 1997 10th-round draft pick, and split the season among catcher, third base and second base. After spending two years at third base, he moved behind the plate, and while he showed quick feet and a strong arm, he threw out just 16.7% of attempted basestealers, allowed 28 passed balls and committed nine errors in 68 games.

J.R. HOUSE (C): A national record-setting high school quarterback in West Virginia during the fall and an outstanding high school hitter in Florida during the spring, House chose a career in baseball over a college football scholarship. As a quarterback, House set national records for total offensive yards and career passing and led his school to its first-ever state championship. The 6-2, 215-pounder hit .596 with 15 homers and 55 RBI last spring, leading his baseball team to the final four of the Class 4A state championships. House split time between three clubs in 1999 after being drafted in the fifth round. He showed an outstanding hitting stroke at all three, batting .313 with 15 doubles, six homers and 36 RBI in 63 games. Bat speed and power potential are House's best skills. Defensively, the 20-year-old spent time at first base, third base and catcher, but he might lack the arm strength to remain at third or behind the plate.

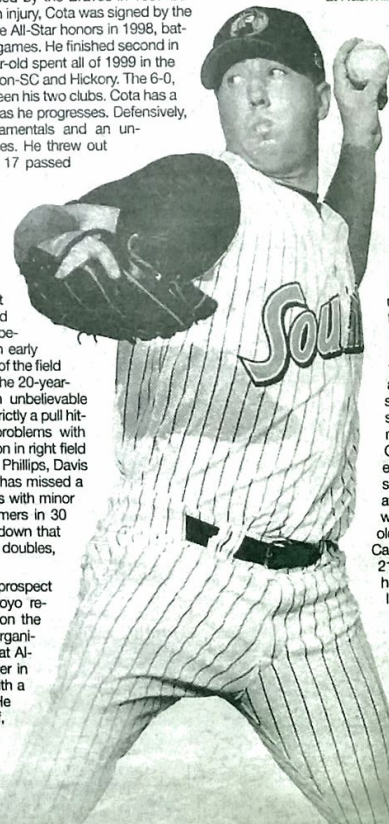
SLEEPERS

PAUL AH YAT (LHP): Despite posting the best numbers in the organization the last three years and reaching the highest level of the minor leagues, Ah Yat is not considered a top prospect because his fastball only reaches the 85-88 mph range. But the University of Hawaii product has won 33 games over that span, pitched at least five innings in all but two of his 68 starts and has walked more than three batters just four times in his career while allowing fewer hits than innings pitched. The 6-1, 186-pounder got off to a great start in 1999 at Altoona, allowing four earned runs in his first five starts, including a one-hitter. Promoted to Triple-A in late June, the southpaw struggled for the first time in his career at Nashville, going 4-3 with a 5.71 ERA in 13 outings, being hit at a .291 clip. The 25-year-old is a finesse pitcher who relies on excellent location of four offerings including a slow curveball and an outstanding changeup. Extremely focused, Ah Yat is equally effective against both right-handers and left-handers and extremely tough to run against. A 21st-round draft pick in 1996, Ah Yat was toiling in the bullpen until mid-'97 when he was given a chance to start.

MIKE GONZALEZ (LHP): A 30th-round draft choice in 1997, Gonzalez has been one of the minor league's top pitching performers in the first halves of both the 1998 and 1999 seasons. At Hickory in '98, Gonzalez was 4-2 with a 2.84 ERA and was leading the minor leagues with 72 strikeouts in 51 innings through mid-May. Last season, Gonzalez was leading the Carolina League in wins at the All-Star break and started the All-Star Game against the California League. He was 10-4 with a 4.02 ERA when promoted to Double-A in early August and ranked among the league leaders with 119 strikeouts in 112 innings. He fanned seven consecutive batters in one start, matching the '99 minor league regular-season high. However, Gonzalez did not fare well in the second half of either campaign. In '98, he came down with shoulder problems and went 0-3 with a 6.67 ERA at Lynchburg. Last season, Gonzalez was 2-3 with an 8.10 ERA at Double-A. Still, the 21-year-old was one of the youngest pitchers in both the Carolina and Eastern Leagues last season. The 6-2, 218-pounder throws uncommonly hard for a left-hander, reaching the low-90s consistently, but lacks command and leaves the ball up in the strike zone too often.

Toehold on the majors: Lefty Jimmy Anderson, from Chesapeake, Va., comes into 2000 with two major league victories.

By Stan Denny



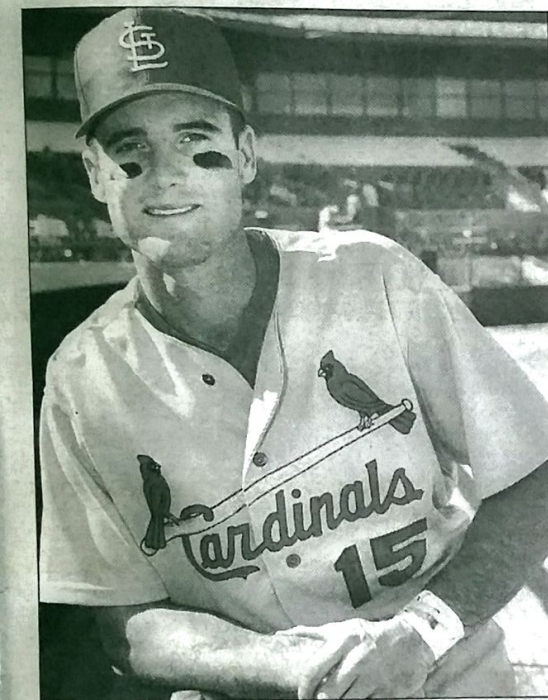
NL CENTRAL PROSPECT REPORTS

Cardinals committed to college arms

By Brian Joura

For the second time in three years the Cardinals finished a disappointing 11 games under .500. The farmhands expected to make big contributions early in the season struggled, while St. Louis actually got better results from several players not expected to contribute much, at least in 1999. It's no secret the Cardinals have concentrated on college pitchers in the June draft. Last year was no different, with 23 of their 42 picks being college pitchers. St. Louis has selected pitchers with its first pick in 12 of the last 18 drafts, and all 12 hurlers were collegians. Middle infield has been the best-stocked position the last couple of years.

SETBACKS: SS Jason Woolf again missed a great deal of time because of injuries. C Gabe Johnson, the system's best behind the plate, hit less than .200 in short-season ball. 3Bs Chris Haas and Jose Leon combined for a .231 average and 269 strikeouts at the two highest levels. In the outfield, J.D. Drew will have to earn a spot this spring because of his disappointing performance last season, and OF Luis Saturria struggled at Double-A in 1999.



By Barbara Jean Germano, Baseball Weekly

Good wood: Adam Kennedy hit .327 at Triple-A last year.

NEARLY READY

HITTERS	CLUB	Age	AVG	AB	H	2B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Adam Kennedy, 2B	MEM	23	.327	367	120	22	10	63	29	36	20
PITCHERS	CLUB	Age	W	L	SV	ERA	IP	H	BB	SO	
Rich Ankiel *	ARK-MEM	20	13	3	0	2.35	138	98	62	194	

UP AND COMING

HITTERS	CLUB	Age	AVG	AB	H	2B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Gabe Johnson, C	NYJ	20	.194	124	24	5	5	14	9	49	1
Chris Haas, 3B	MEM	23	.229	397	91	19	18	73	66	155	4
Jason Woolf, SS	ARK	22	.272	320	87	18	8	15	28	86	11
Ben Johnson, OF	JCY	18	.330	203	67	9	10	51	29	57	14
Tim Lemon, OF	NYJ	19	.198	242	48	5	4	29	22	62	16
PITCHERS	CLUB	Age	W	L	SV	ERA	IP	H	BB	SO	
Chad Hutchinson	ARK-MEM	22	9	11	0	4.52	153	131	93	166	
Steve Sternle	PEO	22	7	10	0	5.47	148	177	67	113	
Chance Caple	NYJ	21	0	4	0	4.38	37	35	18	36	
Robert Smith *	PEO-POT	20	8	10	0	2.92	157	144	48	152	

SLEEPERS

HITTERS	CLUB	Age	AVG	AB	H	2B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Ramon Carvajal, 2B	NYJ	18	.250	240	80	9	6	30	13	59	12
Jose Leon, 3B	ARK	22	.233	335	78	17	18	54	25	114	3
Jack Wilson, SS	PEO-POT	21	.319	508	182	32	5	46	34	54	18
Jason Lariere, OF	MEM	26	.286	497	142	35	9	47	47	64	18
Luis Saturria, OF	ARK	23	.244	484	118	30	16	61	35	134	16
Bill Ortega, OF	POT-ARK	24	.316	490	155	36	11	84	48	78	7
David Kim, OF	POT	23	.259	440	114	23	19	72	42	107	7
Andy Bevens, OF	POT	24	.277	513	142	30	25	97	44	128	6
Johnny Hernandez, OF	JCY	18	.330	203	67	9	10	51	29	57	14

* left-handed pitcher; MEM: Memphis (AAA); ARK: Arkansas (AA); POT: Potomac (A); PEO: Peoria (A); NYJ: New Jersey (SS-A); JCY: Johnson City (Rookie).

NEARLY READY

RICK ANKIEL (LHP): Ankiel has totally dominated the minors in his first two years of pro ball, going 25-9, 2.50 ERA in 52 starts with 416 strikeouts in 299 innings. He led the minors with 222 strikeouts in his pro debut in 1998 and was leading with 194 strikeouts last season when called up to St. Louis. The 20-year-old, the Cardinals' second-round pick in the 1997 draft, fell out of the first round strictly because of signability concerns. In 1998, he posted seven double-digit strikeout games despite never pitching into the eighth inning. As impressive as he was in 1998, Ankiel was even better last year. He simply overmatched Double-A hitters, allowing two runs in only one of his eight starts and limiting league batters to a .145 average. He was also extremely effective in the hitter-friendly Pacific Coast League. The 6-1, 210-pounder throws from a three-quarters arm angle and has an effortless delivery. Ankiel has quality pitches with his mid-90s fastball, curve and changeup. He has very good command for a young southpaw, although he walked 46 batters in 88 1/3 innings at Triple-A. He is expected to begin the 2000 season in the St. Louis starting rotation.

ADAM KENNEDY (2B/OF): An outstanding offensive talent who makes consistent contact, Kennedy was fourth in the PCL in fewest strikeouts per plate appearance and tied for fifth in average. Alternating between the second and third slots in the lineup, Kennedy posted hitting streaks of 17 and 20 games last year. The 6-1, 180-pound left-handed hitter batted over .300 both at home and on the road and a solid .278 versus left-handers after hitting .270 against southpaws in 1998. Limited to 91 games because of a stint on the DL with a bruised foot, and spending several weeks with Team USA for the Pan Am Games and his August promotion, he still established a career high with 20 steals in 26 attempts. The Cardinals' first-round pick in 1997 was touted as a solid two-way prospect. However, serious questions about his range and ability to turn the double play at second have arisen. The 24-year-old saw time at third base, shortstop and left field in Triple-A last year, and the outfield could be his permanent home by the end of 2000.

UP AND COMING

CHANCE CAPLE (RHP): The Cardinals' first pick in 1999, a supplemental pick for losing free agent Brian Jordan, was one of the top starters at Texas A&M, striking out 125 in 114 innings for the Aggies. The 6-6, 206-pounder didn't win a game in his pro debut at New Jersey, going 0-4 in seven starts, but did fan 36 batters in 37 innings. He features a low-90s fastball and also throws two breaking balls, including a strong slider.

BRENT COOK (RHP): A third-round pick in 1999 out of Oregon State, Cook fanned 92 batters in 101 innings for a weak Beavers squad that went 19-35. The 21-year-old was an All-Academic Pac-10 selection. In addition to his smarts on the mound, Cook packs a low-90s fastball and an overhand curve. The 6-4, 200-pounder had an impressive professional debut, including a 5-0 record and a 1.79 ERA in his last seven starts for New Jersey.

CHAD HUTCHINSON (RHP): St. Louis' second-round pick in 1998 passed up his final season as a quarterback at Stanford and a potential NFL career to ink a multimillion-dollar deal with the Cardinals. Hutchinson was able to focus on baseball only for the first time last year. Starting at Arkansas, he struck out 150 batters in 141 innings, and upon his promotion to Memphis, fanned the first six batters he faced in Triple-A. He won both of his starts in Memphis and limited PCL hitters to a .100 average while fanning 16 in 12 1/3 innings. He joined St. Louis in September by contractual stipulation but did not appear in a game. A first-round draft pick of the Braves in 1995, Hutchinson opted for Stanford and the chance to play two sports instead. In his collegiate career, the 6-5, 220-pounder was 25-11 despite his time with the football team. The 23-year-old throws in the mid-90s and his fastball has good movement. Hutchinson also has a hard breaking ball that is also a plus pitch. However, he does not have a lot of pitching experience, and inconsistency with his mechanics has led to control problems. Hutchinson posted a 3.73 ERA at home, but that mark soared to 6.02 in road games. At Double-A, the right-hander actually was more effective against left-handed hitters, holding them to a .216 mark, compared to .263 for right-handed batters.

BEN JOHNSON (OF): The Memphis-area High School Player of the Year batted .446 with 13 home runs and 58 RBI in 36 games as a senior for Germantown High School and was 20-for-20 in his steal attempts. St. Louis selected Johnson with their fourth-round pick in 1999. He had an impressive pro debut for an 18-year-old, batting .330, ninth in the league, with 10 homers, 51 RBI and 14 stolen bases in 57 games at Johnson City. He was the youngest player among the league's top 10 hitters. The 6-1, 200-pounder homered in three consecutive games in July and finished the year strongly, batting .366 with 25 RBI in August. Johnson played most of the year in right field, but the organization sees him settling in center. Johnson has above-average tools across the board and has impressed the club with the way he carries himself on the field.

ROBERT SMITH (LHP): The 20-year-old southpaw was selected Potomac's Pitcher of the Year despite a sub-.500 record. Opening the year at Peoria, Smith had an impressive first game where he fanned 11 in seven innings of three-hit ball, and he was named to the Midwest League All-Star team prior to his promotion to Potomac. There, he was only 4-9 because of poor run support but posted a 2.96 ERA. He would have finished fourth in league ERA with an additional eight innings pitched. A fourth-round pick in 1998, the 6-0, 170-pounder has impressed the

organization with his maturity and mound presence. Smith complements a 90-mph fastball with a good offspeed pitch and does a good job of keeping his pitches down.

SLEEPERS

JUSTIN BRUNETTE (LHP): Out all of 1998 after undergoing elbow surgery, the Cardinals just wanted Brunette to pitch last season, but he impressed the front office so much that he was added to the 40-man roster this winter. Pitching in middle relief, the 24-year-old posted a 1.81 ERA with 44 strikeouts in 44 1/3 innings at Peoria, then skipped a level and notched a 1.96 ERA and 23 strikeouts in 18 1/3 innings at Arkansas. He limited lefties to a .217 average and showed good control, walking 23 batters in 73 innings. The San Diego State product actually threw the ball harder post-surgery, consistently throwing in the low 90s and being clocked as fast as 95 mph. He also displayed a very impressive slider that induced lots of ground-ball outs. After being selected in the 20th round of 1997, the 6-1, 200-pounder pitched just six games that summer before experiencing elbow pain.

BILL ORTEGA (OF): A defector from Cuba signed in 1997, Ortega had two nondescript seasons before breaking out last year. He finished ninth in the Carolina League with a .306 average, then hit .377 in 20 games at Arkansas. The 6-4, 205-pounder started to show some over-the-fence power, smacking 11 home runs last year after hitting just two in his first two seasons. He had a five-hit game in late July and a 24-game hitting streak between the two leagues. Ortega ended his Carolina League season with a 20-game hitting streak and had a base hit in his first four games in the Texas League. Listed as a 24-year-old, Ortega is a solid defensive outfielder capable of playing both right and center fields. He runs well, makes good contact and showed increased patience at the plate. Ortega drew 48 walks in 1999, including 10 in his final 20 games of the season.

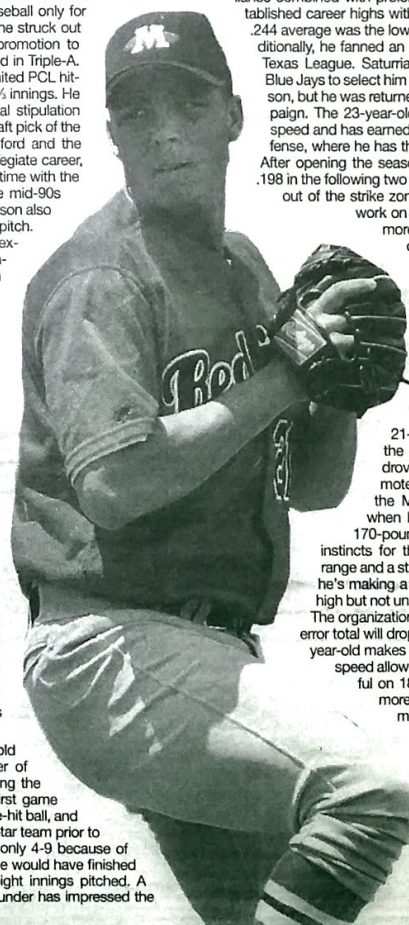
CHRIS RICHARD (1B): Following up a 1998 campaign that featured three stints on the DL, Richard was injury-free last year and turned in an All-Star performance in the Texas League. He finished third in the league in home runs (29), fourth in slugging percentage (.563) and sixth in RBI (94) while batting .294. A 19th-round pick in 1995, Richard was a Florida State League All-Star in 1996, when he hit .283 with 14 home runs and 82 RBI, finishing second in the loop in RBI. But injuries hit in 1997, when he was sidelined by a strained right hamstring. The same injury shelved him in 1998, when he was limited to 36 games. That year Richard had surgery on his left shoulder and also missed time with a strained upper back. The 25-year-old attempted to make up for lost time in 1999. His 30 homers doubled his previous career output, and he established personal bests in 10 offensive categories. Richard hit well both at home and on the road at Arkansas and closed his season with a flourish, batting .350 in his final 137 at-bats, including a four-game stint with Memphis. The 6-2, 185-pound lefty has good mobility around the bag at first. He has a strong arm and has played both corner outfield spots in the minors, including six games in left field last year. The Oklahoma State product makes good contact for a power hitter, has some speed and hangs tough against southpaws.

LUIS SATURRIA (OF): A Carolina League All-Star in 1998, Saturria made the jump last year to Double-A, where he showed flashes of brilliance combined with prolonged slumps. The Dominican native established career highs with 30 doubles and 16 home runs, but his .244 average was the lowest mark in his four years of pro ball. Additionally, he fanned an alarming 134 times, second-most in the Texas League. Saturria's outstanding raw tools prompted the Blue Jays to select him in the Rule 5 draft following the 1997 season, but he was returned to the Cardinals prior to the 1998 campaign. The 23-year-old hits for good power, has tremendous speed and has earned praise within the organization for his defense, where he has the range for center and the arm for right. After opening the season batting .345 in April, Saturria hit just .198 in the following two months when he started chasing pitches out of the strike zone. The 6-2, 170-pounder needs a lot of work on his plate discipline and also needs to hit more balls on the ground to take advantage of his speed, as he managed just eight infield hits last year.

JACK WILSON (SS): An Appalachian League All-Star in 1998 when he led the loop with a .373 average, Wilson earned raves with both his bat and glove and appears to have the defensive skills needed to stay at shortstop as he climbs the organizational ladder. Starting 1999 with Peoria, Wilson batted .343 and posted a 21-game hitting streak. He was selected for the midseason All-Star Game, singled and drove home a run in the game and was promoted after the game. Wilson was second in the Midwest League in hits (86) and batting when he was called up to Potomac. The 6-0, 170-pounder is a solid defensive player with good instincts for the game. Wilson has good hands, plus range and a strong arm but has a tendency to rush when he's making a play. He committed 34 errors last year, a high but not unreasonable number for a young shortstop. The organization feels that experience will win out and his error total will drop, allowing him to remain at short. The 22-year-old makes excellent contact and hits to all fields. His speed allowed him to beat out 26 infield hits. Successful on 18 of 27 steal attempts, Wilson could add more steals as he learns to read pitchers' moves. The one area he needs to improve on is patience at the plate. Wilson drew just 34 walks last year, a low number for a top-of-the-order hitter.

Making it look easy: Rick Ankiel compiled a 25-9 record and 2.50 ERA in the minors, striking out 416 men in 298 1/3 innings.

By Jeff Golden



WINTER BALL STATISTICS

ANAHEIM ANGELS

Player	AVG	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB	SLG	OBP	Team	Lg.
Orlando Cabrera	.265	143	12	38	7	0	4	22	15	3	315	.363	.413	Pollos	D.R.
Guzman, Epifanio	.222	18	2	4	0	0	0	4	3	5	278	.333	.333	Escogido	D.R.
Shivley, Seth	.192	21	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	4	418	.230	.230	Magnalanes	Ven.
Molina, Ben	.260	212	26	53	7	1	4	29	37	3	249	.335	.415	Oriente	Ven.
Alvarez, Tomas	.278	36	9	10	1	0	1	4	5	8	389	.366	.428	Estrellas	D.R.
Williams, Reggie	.118	34	5	4	0	0	2	13	8	0	124	.264	.346	Santurce	D.R.

BALTIMORE ORIOLES

Player	AVG	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB	SLG	OBP	Team	Lg.
Alfonso Soriano	.286	84	24	5	0	0	0	1	9	2	369	.302	.369	Lara	Ven.
Edwin Encarnacion	.200	7	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	.000	.000	Caracas	Ven.
Edwin Encarnacion	.200	7	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	.000	.000	Caracas	Ven.
Edwin Encarnacion	.200	7	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	.000	.000	Caracas	Ven.
Edwin Encarnacion	.200	7	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	.000	.000	Caracas	Ven.

BOSTON RED SOX

Player	AVG	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB	SLG	OBP	Team	Lg.
Alexander Hernandez	.285	186	28	53	6	1	15	11	56	5	344	.333	.413	Navejoa	Mex.
Alfonso Soriano	.286	84	24	5	0	0	0	1	9	2	369	.302	.369	Lara	Ven.
Edwin Encarnacion	.200	7	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	.000	.000	Caracas	Ven.
Edwin Encarnacion	.200	7	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	.000	.000	Caracas	Ven.
Edwin Encarnacion	.200	7	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	.000	.000	Caracas	Ven.

CHICAGO WHITE SOX

Player	AVG	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB	SLG	OBP	Team	Lg.
Danny Bautista	.222	52	5	13	2	0	0	0	0	3	8	.269	.281	Oriente	Ven.
Danny Bautista	.222	52	5	13	2	0	0	0	0	3	8	.269	.281	Oriente	Ven.
Danny Bautista	.222	52	5	13	2	0	0	0	0	3	8	.269	.281	Oriente	Ven.
Danny Bautista	.222	52	5	13	2	0	0	0	0	3	8	.269	.281	Oriente	Ven.
Danny Bautista	.222	52	5	13	2	0	0	0	0	3	8	.269	.281	Oriente	Ven.

CLEVELAND INDIANS

Player	AVG	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB	SLG	OBP	Team	Lg.
Roberto Alvarez	.143	7	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	143	.250	.250	San Juan	PR
Roberto Alvarez	.143	7	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	143	.250	.250	San Juan	PR
Roberto Alvarez	.143	7	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	143	.250	.250	San Juan	PR
Roberto Alvarez	.143	7	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	143	.250	.250	San Juan	PR
Roberto Alvarez	.143	7	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	143	.250	.250	San Juan	PR

DETROIT TIGERS

Player	AVG	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB	SLG	OBP	Team	Lg.
Frederic Freire	.182	33	4	6	0	0	0	4	5	9	2	.262	.317	Oriente	Ven.
Frederic Freire	.182	33	4	6	0	0	0	4	5	9	2	.262	.317	Oriente	Ven.
Frederic Freire	.182	33	4	6	0	0	0	4	5	9	2	.262	.317	Oriente	Ven.
Frederic Freire	.182	33	4	6	0	0	0	4	5	9	2	.262	.317	Oriente	Ven.
Frederic Freire	.182	33	4	6	0	0	0	4	5	9	2	.262	.317	Oriente	Ven.

KANSAS CITY ROYALS

Player	AVG	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB	SLG	OBP	Team	Lg.
Arnaldo Jose	.273	183	18	50	11	0	1	26	22	4	350	.341	.413	Oriente	Ven.
Arnaldo Jose	.273	183	18	50	11	0	1	26	22	4	350	.341	.413	Oriente	Ven.
Arnaldo Jose	.273	183	18	50	11	0	1	26	22	4	350	.341	.413	Oriente	Ven.
Arnaldo Jose	.273	183	18	50	11	0	1	26	22	4	350	.341	.413	Oriente	Ven.
Arnaldo Jose	.273	183	18	50	11	0	1	26	22	4	350	.341	.413	Oriente	Ven.

MINNESOTA TWINS

Player	AVG	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB	SLG	OBP	Team	Lg.
Rafael Alvarez	.189	95	8	18	6	1	0	4	10	2	274	.284	.324	Urua	Ven.
Rafael Alvarez	.189	95	8	18	6	1	0	4	10	2	274	.284	.324	Urua	Ven.
Rafael Alvarez	.189	95	8	18	6	1	0	4	10	2	274	.284	.324	Urua	Ven.
Rafael Alvarez	.189	95	8	18	6	1	0	4	10	2	274	.284	.324	Urua	Ven.
Rafael Alvarez	.189	95	8	18	6	1	0	4	10	2	274	.284	.324	Urua	Ven.

NEW YORK YANKEES

Player	AVG	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB	SLG	OBP	Team	Lg.
Omar Fuentes	.300	10	0	3	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	.300	.417	Aragua	Ven.
Omar Fuentes	.300	10	0	3	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	.300	.417	Aragua	Ven.
Omar Fuentes	.300	10	0	3	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	.300	.417	Aragua	Ven.
Omar Fuentes	.300	10	0	3	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	.300	.417	Aragua	Ven.
Omar Fuentes	.300	10	0	3	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	.300	.417	Aragua	Ven.

OKLAHOMA A'S

Player	AVG	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB	SLG	OBP	Team	Lg.
Byrnes, Eric	.129	31	4	4	1	1	1	5	2	0	233	.258	.315	Yocohis	Mex.
Byrnes, Eric	.129	31	4	4	1	1	1	5	2	0	233	.258	.315	Yocohis	Mex.
Byrnes, Eric	.129	31	4	4	1	1	1	5	2	0	233	.258	.315	Yocohis	Mex.
Byrnes, Eric	.129	31	4	4	1	1	1	5	2	0	233	.258	.315	Yocohis	Mex.
Byrnes, Eric	.129	31	4	4	1	1	1	5	2	0	233	.258	.315	Yocohis	Mex.

TAMPA BAY DEVIL RAYS

Player	AVG	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB	SLG	OBP	Team	Lg.
Alamo, Efran	.000	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	.000	.000	Ponce	PR
Alamo, Efran	.000	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	.000	.000	Ponce	PR
Alamo, Efran	.000	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	.000	.000	Ponce	PR
Alamo, Efran	.000	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	.000	.000	Ponce	PR
Alamo, Efran	.000	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	.000	.000	Ponce	PR

TEXAS RANGERS

Player	AVG	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB	SLG	OBP	Team	Lg.
Andy Zito	.222	52	5	13	2	0	0	0	0	3	8	.269	.281	Oriente	Ven.
Andy Zito	.222	52	5	13	2	0	0	0	0	3	8	.269	.281	Oriente	Ven.
Andy Zito	.222	52	5	13	2	0	0	0	0	3	8	.269	.281	Oriente	Ven.
Andy Zito	.222	52	5	13	2	0	0	0	0	3	8	.269	.281	Oriente	Ven.
Andy Zito	.222	52	5	13	2	0	0	0	0	3	8	.269	.281	Oriente	Ven.

TORONTO BLUE JAYS

Player	AVG	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB	SLG	OBP	Team	Lg.
Castillo, Alberto	.263	114	10	30	1	0	1	20	19	12	1	.298	.365	Aguilas	D.R.
Castillo, Alberto	.263	114	10	30	1	0	1	20	19	12	1	.298	.365	Aguilas	D.R.
Castillo, Alberto	.263	114	10	30	1	0	1	20	19	12	1	.298	.365	Aguilas	D.R.
Castillo, Alberto	.263	114	10	30	1	0	1	20	19	12	1	.298	.365	Aguilas	D.R.
Castillo, Alberto	.263	114	10	30	1	0	1	20	19	12	1	.298	.365	Aguilas	D.R.

WINTER BALL STATISTICS

Player	W-L	ERA	G	SV	IP	H	R	ER	HR	BB	SO	Team	Lg.
Duarte, Henry	1-1	5.70	17	0	23.2	38	17	15	2	12	13	Caracas	Ven.
Duarte, Henry	1-1	5.70	17	0	23.2	38	17	15	2	12	13	Caracas	Ven.
Duarte, Henry	1-1	5.70	17	0	23.2	38	17	15	2	12	13	Caracas	Ven.
Duarte, Henry	1-1	5.70	17	0	23.2	38	17	15	2	12			

TRANSACTIONS

ARIZONA — Jan. 14: Signed P Matt Mantel to a one-year contract; signed free agent P Mike Morgan, who had been with Texas, to a minor league contract.

ATLANTA — Jan. 12: Agreed to terms on a one-year contract with P Rudy Seanez, avoiding arbitration; sold the contract of IF Howard Battle to the Hanshin Tigers of the Japanese Central League.

BALTIMORE — Jan. 14: Signed P Al Reyes to a one-year contract.

CHICAGO CUBS — Jan. 14: Invited IF Jeff Huxton and OF Corey Patterson to spring training. Jan. 17: Agreed to a one-year contract with P Felix Heredia.

CHICAGO WHITE SOX — Jan. 12: Acquired SS Jose Valentin and P Cal Eldred from Milwaukee and OF Corey Patterson to spring training. Jan. 13: Invited the following players to major league spring training: Ps Mark Buehrle, Jon Garland, Matt Ginter, Rob Purvis, Jason Stumm, Danny Wright and Kelly Wunsch; Cs Eric Christopherson and Humberto Quintero; IFs Esteban Beltre and Liu Rodriguez and OFs Yamil Benitez, Steve Gibraltar and Aaron Rowand. Agreed to terms with IF Esteban Beltre, OF Yamil Benitez, OF Steve Gibraltar and P Kelly Wunsch on minor-league contracts.

CINCINNATI — Jan. 14: Acquired OF Alex Ochoa from Milwaukee for OF Mark Sweeney and a player to be named. Jan. 17: Signed Ps Ron Villone and Gabe White to one-year contracts.

CLEVELAND — Jan. 13: Signed OF Lance Johnson and C Jesse Levis to minor league contracts with invitations to spring training.

COLORADO — Jan. 14: Acquired P Masato Yoshii from the New York Mets for Ps Bobby M. Jones and Lariel Gonzalez.

KANSAS CITY — Jan. 12: Signed free agent C Jorge Fabregas, who had been with Atlanta, to a minor league contract and in-

ited him to spring training. Jan. 13: Agreed to terms with OF Johnny Damon on a one-year contract. Jan. 14: Signed free agent P Ricky Bottalico, who had been with St. Louis, to a one-year contract. Jan. 15: Signed 1B-DH Mike Sweeney to a one-year contract.

LOS ANGELES — Jan. 12: Agreed to terms with OF Todd Hollandsworth on a one-year contract, avoiding arbitration. Jan. 14: Agreed to terms with IF Kevin Elster on a minor league contract.

MILWAUKEE — Jan. 12: Agreed to terms with IF Mark Loretta on a three-year contract. Acquired Ps Jaime Navarro and John Snyder from the Chicago White Sox for P Cal Eldred and IF Jose Valentin. Jan. 14: Traded OF Alex Ochoa to Cincinnati for OF Mark Sweeney and a player to be named. Invited Ps Bob Scanlan and Hector Ramirez and IFs Mickey Lopez and Jose Fernandez to spring training. Jan. 17: Agreed to terms with free agent C Tyler Houston, who had been with Cleveland, on a one-year contract.

MINNESOTA — Jan. 11: Agreed to terms on a two-year contract with P Bob Wells. Jan. 14: Agreed to terms with P Bobby Ayala, who had been with the Chicago Cubs, on a minor league contract and invited him to spring training.

MONTREAL — Jan. 14: Agreed to terms with P Anthony Telford on a two-year contract.

NEW YORK METS — Jan. 14: Acquired P Bobby M. Jones and OF Lariel Gonzalez from Colorado for P Masato Yoshii. Jan. 15: Signed P Rick Reed to a one-year contract. Jan. 17: Signed minor league free agents P Paul Wagner and C Alan Probst; invited C J.P. Phillips to spring training.

OAKLAND — Jan. 14: Agreed to terms with P Jason Istringhausen on a one-year contract.

PHILADELPHIA — Jan. 11: Agreed to terms with IF Kevin Jordan and P Scott Aldred on one-year contracts.

SAN DIEGO — Jan. 11: Agreed to terms

with P Nobuaki Yoshida on a minor league contract. Jan. 17: Signed OF Ruben Rivera to a two-year contract. IF Jed Hansen to a minor league contract and Ps Brian Boehringer and Donne Wall to one-year contracts.

SAN FRANCISCO — Jan. 13: Invited the following players to spring training: Ps Kurt Ainsworth, Jake Esteves, Mike McMullen, Erasmo Ramirez, Jeff Urban and Ryan Vogelsong; IFs Raul Marval, Carlos Mendoza and Cody Ransom; OFs Michael Byas, Doug Clark, Mike Glendenning, Terrell Lowery, Chris Magruder and Pedro Mota.

SEATTLE — Jan. 14: Agreed to terms with P Frankie Rodriguez on a one-year contract.

TAMPA BAY — Jan. 13: Agreed to terms with P Steve Trachsel on a one-year contract; signed P Frank Thompson to a minor league contract. Jan. 14: Agreed to terms on a one-year contract with P Jim Mecir; signed IF Dave Hollins, C John Marzano, P Marc Valdes and 1B-OF Ryan Jackson to minor league contracts with invitations to spring training. Jan. 17: Signed free agent P John Burkett, who had been with Texas, to a minor league contract and invited him to spring training.

TEXAS — Jan. 12: Signed free agent P Darren Oliver, who had been with St. Louis, to a three-year contract. Designated OF Scarborough Green for assignment.

TORONTO — Jan. 17: Signed P John Frascatore to a two-year contract extension.

TORONTO — Jan. 17: Signed P John Frascatore to a two-year contract extension.

ARBITRATION LIST

The 80 players who filed Jan. 14 for salary arbitration. Teams and players were to exchange figures Tuesday:

- AMERICAN LEAGUE**
ANAHEIM (5) — Jason Dickson, rhp; Todd Greene, c; Mike Holtz, lhp; Orlando Palmeiro, of; Mark Petkovsek, rhp.
BALTIMORE (1) — Charles Johnson, c.
BOSTON (5) — Carl Everett, of; Bryce

Florie, rhp; Rich Garces, rhp; Scott Hatteberg, c; John Wasdin, rhp.
CHICAGO (2) — James Baldwin, rhp; Bill Simas, rhp.

CLEVELAND (1) — Steve Karsay, rhp.
DETROIT (5) — Deivi Cruz, ss; Karim Garcia, of; C.J. Nitkowski, lhp; Danny Patterson, rhp; Gregg Zaun, c.

KANSAS CITY (1) — Jeff Suppan, rhp.
NEW YORK (6) — Jason Grimsley, rhp; Derek Jeter, ss; Ramiro Mendoza, rhp; Andy Pettitte, lhp; Jorge Posada, c; Mariano Rivera, rhp.

OAKLAND (1) — Ariel Prieto, rhp.
SEATTLE (1) — Brian Hunter, of.
TAMPA BAY (3) — Mike DiFelice, c; Quinton McCracken, of; Rick White, rhp.

TEXAS (2) — Esteban Loaiza, rhp; Lee Stevens, 1b.
TORONTO (3) — Homer Bush, ss; Alberto Castillo, c; David Segui, 1b.

NATIONAL LEAGUE

ARIZONA (3) — Brian Anderson, lhp; Brad Clontz, rhp; Andy Fox, ss.
ATLANTA (2) — Andruw Jones, of; Quivro Veras, 2b.

CHICAGO (2) — Matt Karchner, rhp; Ismael Valdes, rhp.
CINCINNATI (7) — Mike Cameron, of; Alex Ochoa, of; Steve Parris, rhp; Pokey Reese, 2b; Scott Sullivan, rhp; Michael Tucker, of; Dmitri Young, of.

COLORADO (2) — Aaron Ledesma, ss; Neifi Perez, ss.
HOUSTON (2) — Roger Cedeno, of; Chris Holt, rhp.

LOS ANGELES (6) — Terry Adams, rhp; Mark Grudzielanek, ss; Trenidad Hubbard, of; Dan Naulty, rhp; Kevin Orie, 3b; Chan Ho Park, rhp.

MILWAUKEE (3) — Juan Acevedo, rhp; Bill Pulsipher, lhp; Jamey Wright, rhp.
MONTREAL (2) — Wilton Guerrero, 2b; Dustin Hermanson, rhp.

NEW YORK (5) — Armando Benitez, rhp; Matt Franco, of; Pat Mahomes, rhp; Rey Ordonez, ss; Turk Wendell, rhp.

PHILADELPHIA (3) — Bobby Abreu, of; Paul Byrd, rhp; Robert Person, rhp.
ST. LOUIS (5) — Alan Benes, rhp; Kent Bottenfield, rhp; Mike Mohler, lhp; Matt Mor-

ris, rhp; Edgar Renteria, ss.
SAN FRANCISCO (2) — Alan Embree, lhp; Felix Rodriguez, rhp.

FREE AGENTS

The 49 remaining free agents:

AMERICAN LEAGUE

- BALTIMORE** (1) — Jim Corsi, rhp.
BOSTON (3) — Reggie Jefferson, dh; Kent Mercker, lhp; Pat Rapp, rhp.
CHICAGO (1) — Darrin Jackson, of.
CLEVELAND (2) — Paul Assenmacher, lhp; Carlos Baerga, if.
KANSAS CITY (5) — Chad Kreuter, c; Scott Leius, if; Jeff Montgomery, rhp; Hippolito Pichardo, rhp.
MINNESOTA (1) — Terry Steinbach, c.
NEW YORK (1) — Luis Sojo, 3b.
OAKLAND (5) — Mike Macfarlane, c; Greg McMichael, rhp; Tony Phillips, 2b; Tim Raines, of; Tim Worrell, rhp.
SEATTLE (2) — Mike Blowers, 1b; Mark Leiter, rhp.
TAMPA BAY (2) — Paul Sorrento, 1b; Bobby Witt, rhp.
TEXAS (1) — Roberto Kelly, of.
TORONTO (4) — Pat Borders, c; Tony Fernandez, 3b; Brian McRae, of; Bill Riskey, rhp.

NATIONAL LEAGUE

- ARIZONA** (1) — Turner Ward, of.
ATLANTA (1) — Otis Nixon, of.
CHICAGO (3) — Jeff Blauser, ss; Mickey Morandini, 2b; Benito Santiago, c.
CINCINNATI (2) — Steve Avery, lhp; Mark Wohlers, rhp.
COLORADO (3) — Kurt Abbott, 2b; Kirt Manwaring, c; Kevin Fittz, rhp.
HOUSTON (1) — Jack Howell, if.
MILWAUKEE (1) — Eric Plunk, rhp.
NEW YORK (1) — Shawon Dunston, of.
PITTSBURGH (3) — Joe Oliver, c; Ed Sprague, 3b; Doug Strange, 3b.
ST. LOUIS (3) — David Howard, ss; Willie McGee, of; Donovan Osborne, lhp.
SAN FRANCISCO (2) — Charlie Hayes, 3b; Rich Rodriguez, lhp.



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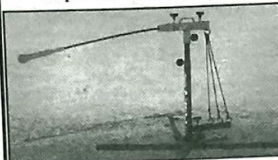
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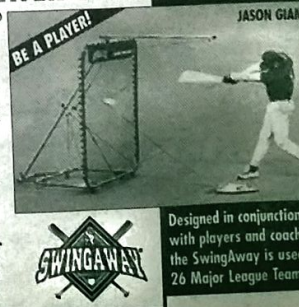
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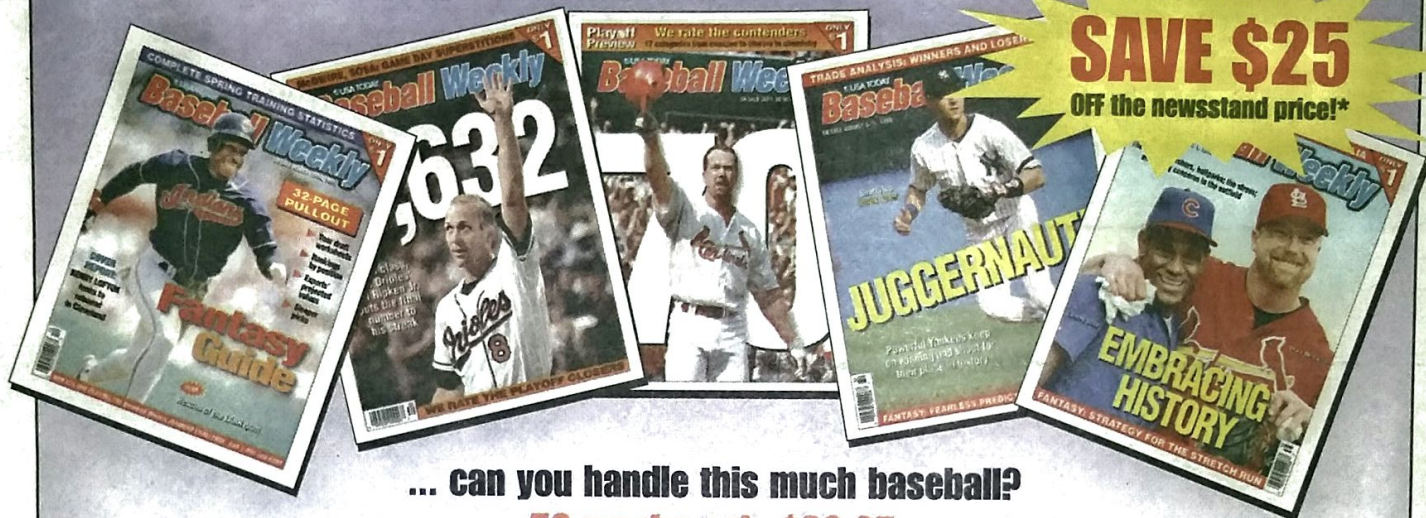
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