

1989 Pre-Season Prognostication or Pundit Prediction by Prose Perpetrator

I'll guess I'm not the only one that hits auto play just to see what the season will bring. Not wanting to comb thru each team and set lineups and tendencies, figured flipping a coin might be just as revealing. A phone-call to long time SPB2 Beat Writer John Ungashick. Providing the secrets of the trade he also offered two key words "good luck". Off the figure out what I should have paid attention to so many years ago in school. Pythagorean Theorem (PT). I recall those words and started to think about pyramids or some long lost civilization from Sid Meier. John pointed me in the general path of Bill James. My heat stuttered a little, it's about to get real up in here!

By no means is the below based on anything but conjecture and good fun. The ramblings should not be used for any purpose but pure enjoyment. Past performance will not predict future performance, nor should these wild guesses be used for any wagering use. Math has never been kind to me nor me kind to math. These numbers might not add up and double checking my work seems logical. Those who know me would agree, doubt if I'd do something too logical.

The write-ups will have the following flow:

League – Division

Team Name – Manager – last year record and finish – prediction wins, based on PT– write-up ramblings

American League – East: Grays should remain the team to beat. Lemurs and Game Sox will tie for second, if they play well, if not they could fall to 4th. Firebugs will be in the middle and Vaqueros and Rough Riders will be rounded up like strays in the back of the pack.

Worcester Grays – Hugh McElaney – 90-72 1st place WS Runner Up – 77 PT wins - 1st Place

A team that doesn't rebuild – they reload. Offense they have – as stocked can knock 149 dingers and swipe 147 bases – that's a nice mixture of speed and strength. Kent Hrbek won't play every day however, when he does hit he will, no matter LHP or RHP. Willie Randolph, Carney Lansford, Robin Yount all have over 600 ABS and .OBP of .366 .398 .384 respectively. They will no doubt be on for the "next man up." Eric Davis and Darryl "Straw That Stirrs the Drink" will roam the outfield and drive in runs. The other players to include Mr. Play Me Anywhere Tony Phillips provide Hugh the flexibility to set his MP for each opponent. Once again; Doug Bake, Jack Daugherty drafted this year will give the starters a breather and the team should not miss a beat. If there is an Achilles heel to the Grays it is throwing the ball off the mound. Reason for their low PT wins is due to pitching. A team WHIP of 1.354 might allow other teams a chance. Duel closers Bryan Harvey and Tim Burke should slam many a door when they get the chance. Worcester might be in a few slow-pitch softball game type scores.

Carolina Game Sox – Steve Eury – (Hired Guns) 87-75 2nd place – 90 PT wins – tied for second

High hopes. Kevin Mitchell will be a one man wrecking crew. Tom Brunansky and Steve Balboni should provide good back up hitting the long ball. Roberto Alomar, Oddibe McDowell, Joe Orsulak and Randy Bush are not your everyday household names, yet they should be on base for Mitchell to drive them in. Five starters with over 33 starts and setting the rotation to get the most out of matchups will be key for Steve's Game Sox. As Stewart and Maddux go, so will the Game Sox. A fragile bullpen will have to be monitored closely as to not be overused. The durability of the rotation will carry the team to 2nd for they could fall to 4th.

East Kenosha Lemurs – Dave Lauer - (Natti Bohs) 78-84 3rd place – 95 PT wins – tied for second.

The Lemurs are not a land of misfit players Trader Dave has so enjoyed. Rafael Palmeiro, Tommy Herr, Tony Fernandez and Wade Boggs anchor the infield with over 600 Abs each. Craig Biggio and his 500 Abs behind the plate could go most of the season or fewer games, depends where he hits. Outfielders Dan Gladden, Lloyd Moseby, Roberto Kelly and Junior Felix will share time in the outfield and are adequate at getting on base. Lemurs, native only to the island of Madagascar and the neighboring Comoro Islands are not known for their speed. Don't confuse those with these East Kenosha Lemurs that will use their speed to race to the top of the standings. Speed doesn't slump. They won't hit HRs but hit they will and score runs. Their success might depend on how Mark Langston, Tom Glavine and Roy Smith pitch. A decent pen anchored by closer Dave Smith should hold leads and do their job.

Frankfort Firebugs - Gary Plunkitt – 71-91 5th place – 88 PT wins – 4th place

Nick Esasky will be ticked off this season and play like a MVP. Robby Thompson, Andres Thomas will defend the middle infield on a daily basis. Thomas does not flash a great glove and his ave will allow him 671 PAs. Ivan Calderon, Rob Deer when he hits the ball it goes a loooong way, Glen Braggs and Jack Clark will see plenty of playing time. The Firebugs will play "blup & blast" in scoring their runs. The pitchers Tanna & Saberhagen will do their part, too bad they can't do more. Things look bleak going 3 thru 5. Their numbers might not look all that great however, they will be craft enough to keep hitters missing the ball with their bat. Juggling the pitching staff well will allow Frankfort to move up in the standings. Leaving someone in too long or not long enough will be the balancing act Gary will have to play most of the season.

San Diego Vaqueros – Steve Lehman – 62-100 6th place – 77 PT wins – 5th place -

Todd Benzinger and Devon White will play every day. Steve will have to juggle the others and mix and match to garner offense. The other players will have to contribute evenly and time their hits in order to produce runs. A collection hat will be passed in order to help pay the power bill, as they will be lacking the long ball to get quickly back into games. Chuck Finley – starter and when he is not on the mound, Vaquero fans can get in the food line or go to the bathroom. Another year of waiting till next year. Next year they won't be in the lottery as no team can be in the lottery in successive years. Who will they

grow with on the 5th pick? One never knows what a little hard work can do for a player and this team is putting in the hard years. When they take off – hold on.

Ottawa Rough Riders – Stan Barkun – (Vipers) 76-86 4th place – 68 PT wins– 6th place –

Rough Riders will be in for a rough ride. When 38 year old Dave Parker is your mainstay and only player that will stay in the lineup on a regular basis, get comfortable cause it will be a long season for loyal fans. Ottawa residents will hope winter is a longer this year, in hopes their baseball season will be shortened. If the numbers were clacked correctly 68 PT wins might be 10 or more than they actually obtain. Witt and Walk anchor the rotation. Witt a pitching corps they have Walk other batters they will. Juggling position players and pitchers will make Stan a real hands on type manager. Plugging and playing very few games as he will closely monitor his usage.

American League West: 45's & Mets will battle all year with the slight edge to the upstart Mets. Cavaliers & Aviators will tie. Rockets fall hard and rebuild and Mud Hens will waller this year.

New York Metropolitanans – Don Rahn – 74-88 4th place – 105 PT wins – 1st place –

Lead with your strength and the strength of the Mets is their pitching. They will go as far as their pitching takes them. Four pitchers each starting 33 or more games and the highest ERA is 3.52 a total of 135 games. Don's ability to juggle those 27 starts vs "lessor" teams will be key. Pat Combs has great numbers for seven starts and now he is down to 21 starts to juggle. I'd venture to guess most of us would like that problem. When the starter goes out; Larry Andersen, Norm Charlton, Juan Berenguer "senior smoke" will set up closer tandem of Bill Landrum and Steve Bedrosian. When the Mets get the lead, they should hold it and close it in the end. Every Day players: Pedro Guerrero and Brian Downing can hit and will need to in order to cover up their lack of defense. Guess you could say their defense is offensive. Catcher by committee Whitt, Petralli and Geren will do an adequate job behind the plate. Ron Kittle get extra attention as a PH 196 PAs and 11 HRS .302/.378/.556 Steve Sax and Kevin Elster form a fair duo up the middle. Kelly Gruber is the Gold Glove of this infield and may move to the outfield in the late innings as upstart Charlie Hayes is learning the game at the plate, yet his glove has already developed. Mets will score runs in a variety of ways and their pitching should keep them in games. This could very well be the break out year Don has been searching for.

Huston Colt 45's – Scott Saxon – 75-87 3rd place – 87 PT wins – 2nd place –

A misstep by the Mets and the 45's will be there to take the reins. A team building for next year and that year could very well be now. Duo boppers Glenn Davis and Howard Johnson anchor the corner infield. Johnson might get lifted for a defensive replacement in the late innings. Phil Bradley will be on base for one of those two. Scott will mix and match his lineup that boasts six switch hitters. 172 – the number of total HRs and SBs – Ho Jo leads with 36-41. Another team with four pitchers getting 33 starts

and the 3.52 era is as high as they go. Scott looks to lefties Teddy Higuera and Larry McWilliams to fill out the remaining games. The bullpen has every day hurlers 60+ games each in lefty Gary Wayne and one of the closers Jeff Montgomery. Todd Worrell will either set up or assist in closing. The ammo the 45's have in store in the bullpen and the timely hitting will keep them on the heels of the Mets. Guess you could say, they are aiming for the bullseye on the back of the Mets.

Lafayette Aviators – Steve Ehresman – (Colts) 100-62 1st place – 86 PT wins - 3rd place

The height the Aviators will fly is based on how many runs can they score. Leading the charge, second sacker Lou Whitaker. Youngsters that will contribute: C Benito Santiago, 1B Wally Joyner offensive SS Spike Owen who will be replaced in late inning for slick fielding Jose Uribe. Gerald Young's 720 Abs will hold down CF and swipe a few bases, when he gets on. The Aviators bats might fly under the radar, you'd better look out for the base smugglers. This is a team that is capable of stealing a game and manufacturing runs. How creative and daring Steve gets on the base paths, will reflect in the win column. Balancing the rotation to get the best results will make for a long season. Steve Gutterman can throw 70 games and is backed up by Mark Williamson's 65 to form a great L/R combo. Getting the most out of his players has the Aviators on a fine line of best or bust.

Canton Cavaliers – Tom Kackley – (Moondogs) 58-104 6th – 86 PT wins – 3rd place

Jumping from 6th to 3rd should have the Cavaliers throwing baby powder in the air. Making the jump will depend on the production from the 1B trio of Larry Sheets, Gene Larkin and Randy Milligan, Jerry Brown will probably take his .370 obp to the top of the lineup or hit behind switch hitting, base stealing CFer Gary Bettis. The offensive mix could be enough to get the job done and weak enough to muster few if any runs. Dennis Martinez, Kevin Gross, John Smoltz are all very good starters that will need help from the make shift bullpen. Gregg Olson is almost a sure things to close out the game. How many games he gets to close out is the question. The Cavaliers, like the Aviators could be above the .500 mark or below by as many as one or twenty games.

Rossville Rockets – Rick Ryan – 99-64 2nd place – 79 PT wins – 5th place

Will the Rockets really fizzle from 99 wins and lose 20 fewer games in a year?? That is what the numbers reveal. Maybe I should relook. Nah, this will be more fun. Very Good. That is the report from the infield. From catcher Lance Parrish, Eddie Murray at 1st, Ryne Sandberg at 2nd, Tim Wallach at 3rd and SS Garry Templeton all but Murray field VG. They all hit pretty decent also, 80 of the total 191 HRs are in the infield's daily starters. Another 88 dingers will roam the outfield in the form of: Bo Jackson, Dale Murphy, Dave Henderson and Andre Dawson. This is an offense that will crank the ball out of Wrigley. Four of 33 – yet another team that will create a rotation at the start of the year and cruise. Getting the most out of the starters and them keeping the ball in Wrigley will be key in the Rockets success. This might be were the numbers fail the Rockets. Bullpen is capable in work horses: Danny Darwin, Frank DiPino, Dave Righetti and Cecilio Guante. A fragile season could have the Rockets take off

and land on a distant planet, go on and play in the World Series or fizzle off at take-off on the launching pad.

Toledo Mud Hens – Rich Applegate – 71-91 5th place – 79 PT wins – 6th place

No place like Mudville unless you are in Toledo. Joe Carter and Alvin Davis will do their best in cracking the ball out of the park. They hit a combined 56 HRs and other team members hit 49 and 41 year old catcher Carlton Fisk has 13 in 419 Pas. Tony Gwynn's production is legendary and the trio of Gwynn, Carter and Davis can and will do damage. The issue is what will the other five daily players add? Rich will shuffle the deck like a Las Vegas dealer as he mixes and matches all season long. Mud Hen pitching staff is deep. John Farrell leads the team and will no doubt be the Toledo Cy Young. Problem, lucky if he makes it in the top 20 of the league. His 3.63 era leads the fulltime starters. Remember where teams had only one starter with an era above 3.50 To say the Mud Hens will have a long season is not true. Their season will be as long as everyone, since we all play 162 games. Rich will get plenty of exercise as he strolls out to the mound. In some cases, getting his starters out early might not be a bad thing. The bad thing is if the team is behind before the game is turned over to the bullpen. Jim Acker and Jesse Orosco combine to make another lefty righty combo. Gregg Harris and John Costello can also eat p innings and 37 year old Rich Gossage still gets the job done as a closer. Just how many chances he gets depends on the game and Rich.

National League East – Magpies remain pesky and the newly moved Spacemen might be sighted at the top of the standings. Guardians and Milers will bounce between 3rd and 4th Monsters will lurk near the bottom however the Crackers will be soaking up the soup at the bottom of the bowl, named NL East.

Edmonton Magpies – Chris Williams – 94-68 1st place – 79 PT wins – 1st place

Chris Williams's team will watching the scoreboard if they don't klick on all cylinders. Magpies will fly as high as their starting rotation takes them. Mike Moore, Bert Blyleven make a good one two punch and Ron Darling, Ken Hill and Bobby Ojeda make 3, 4 and 5. Scott Garrelts will get spot starts and as Garrelts goes, so may the Magpies. Bullpen is shaky and the fewer innings they throw the better their chances. On the offensive side of the ball, not much long ball threat nor base stealing. One base at a time. Patchwork catching corps six catchers on the roster. The Professor will juggle lineups at most positions save: 1B Pete O'Brien, 2B Jose Lind, RF Dwight Evans. The tri hold their own on both sides of the ball. Danny Tartabull and Gary Gaetti are respectable on one side of the ball and could be a hindrance on the other. The other cast of characters need to perform well enough to keep the Magpie tradition of winning rolling this year.

Baltimore SpaceMen – Mace Matayc – 82-80 3rd place – 86 PT wins – 2nd place

Daily players: Andres Galarraga @ firstbase, Bobby Bonilla @ thridbase, George Bell and Dave Gallagher @ outfield form a good foundation for offense and defense. The fill ins will not cause fear to the opposing team. They should be decent enough to not get in the way of the cornerstones of the team. Gubicza, Drabek and Bielecki form a terrific trio at the top of the rotation. The 4th and 5th starter will be

a balancing act reminiscent of a spacewalk with a weak tether. A suitable bullpen with late inning specialists Ken Dayley and Mike Henneman from each side of the mound. Dan Plesac is a closer that might be prone to the long ball in the 9th. SpaceMen relate the season to a 10 minute mission with 10 minutes of air. No room for extra things or something going wrong. A fine line from success or failure.

Asgard Guardians – Mel Schwarz – 83-79 2nd place – 83 PT wins – 3rd place

George Brett, Julio Franco lead the infielders in hitting, both respectable at first and second base. SS and third will be exciting to watch, not in a good way. Jesse Barfield is a threat in the outfield and at the plate. Von Hayes is an adequate back up to Jesse and plays every day. Middle of the road pitching staff has crafty veteran Charlie Hough, prone to giving up the long ball – lefties Bud Black and Greg Swindell as their main three. Mel will have to balance the 70 starts to get the most out of the pitching staff. The bullpen is loaded with lefty specialists: Craig Lefferts, Rob Murphy and Kenny Rogers have 217 games between them. Closer Jay Howell should lock most of the games, giving the Asgaard loyalists hope for a good season.

Minneapolis Millers – Terry Baxter – (Grizzlies) 79-83 4th place – 80 PT wins – 4th place

Terry's MMers have a good offense. The issue will be their pitching is just as offensive. The Millers almost score as many runs as they give up 662/663. According to Bill James and the PT that will get you 80 wins. "This is why we play the game" quote from many a manager/owner. Games ain't won on paper. Will the Thrill Clark will anchor first base and 3rd or 4th in the order. He does both real well. Scott Fletcher will be other lone main stay in the infield. A platoon of outfielders Coles, O'Neill, Washington & Snyder are decent and combine for 56 dingers. Whereas some teams had starters with an ERA above 3.50 this team has one starter with an ERA below 3.50 the Millers lead the league in two pitching categories: ERA 4.63 and WHIP 1.480 era Lead the league as in with the highest, you know more is better right! Terry will also make many a trip to the mound. Chess, checkers or 4-square, in order to make it through the season MMers will have to make many roster moves getting 28 starts from Dave Schmidt to lead the team. Seven possible starters are of the bonus type. A very fine line from 4th place to 6th place.

Ostego Lake Monsters - Mike See – (Lakers) 68-94 6th place – 66 PT wins – 5th place

Little team power, little team speed, little team offense. Barry Bonds will be a one man wrecking crew stealing more bases than homers early in his career. He is also the only player with more than 600 ABs.

Rookie Ken Griffey will join Barry in the outfield for 500 ABs 16 is his long ball number as well as his steals. The OL Monster Maniacs will have to wait a few years. Mike no stranger to a team rebuilding will do plenty of advanced scouting in order to set his rotation accordingly. Nine pitchers or more could see action as a starter. Donn Pall, Paul Assenmacher, Mike Schooler and Mitch "Wild Thing" Williams will be trotting out from the bullpen on a regular basis. A good balance of lefty righty in the pen for the matchup to sneak in a few wins. Something that will not show up in the box score or standings, no matter how many they lose, they won't be in next year's draft lottery.

Buckhead Crackers – Marc Robinson – 69-93 5th place – 50 PT wins – 6th place

Lefties John Smiley and Neal Heaton. Smiley won't be smiling too much and Heaton will see plenty of heat from the opponent's bats at all the friction they create when making contact. Ozzie Guillen will have fans cheering with his flashy glove work and speed on the base paths. And that is where the joy ends in Buckhead. Kevin Seitzer will live at 3rd base with his 715 Abs and .281/.387/.337 – he will get on base and motion Ozzie to bring out his glove as he gets stranded. Platoon players a plenty as Marc works the math and options to create the correct lineup for each game. Not a single player with double digit HRs Mike Schmidt is the power threat 6 HRS in 172 PAs + that up another 100, as Schmidt is a bonus player and he could reach double digits. Starting rotation Smiley, Heaton, Bob Milacki and Fernando Valenzuela are respectable. The issue is who is next up and who comes out of the bullpen. Door Closer Jeff Russell has 71 games available might be lucky to get in 30 save opportunities.

National League West – Defending World Series Champions Astoria Zoo Crew get no respect. Wright-Patt Plainsmen and Fairfax Canaries Punxsutawney Pachyderms, Thunder Bay Damage and Anok Island Gnomes are projected above the Zoo Crew. And this is why we play the games.

Wright-Patt Plainsmen – John Turnbull – 87-75 3rd place – 92 PT wins – 1st place.

John Turnbull will get the most out of his starting rotation – three are rated excellent and two are very good – Frank Viola, Orel Hershiser, Mike Witt, Nolan Ryan and Dwight Gooden. If or when they tire strolling out will be Lee Smith, Greg Minton, Tom Henke and Doug Jones. Plainsmen pitchers are the cream of the crop in the NL West and should be more than enough to garner the top spot. 157 is their total team HRs. Mickey Tettleton a switch hitting catcher (26), Mark McGwire at firstbase (33) Paul Molitor second or third base, Ozzie Smith's gold glove at shortstop Mr. Play Me Coach Jeff Kunkel will hold down the infield. Kevin McReynolds (22) Kirby Puckett will get a lot of playing time in the outfield. Jose Canseco will be used sparingly with his 258 PAs and 17 HRs Nothing plain about the Plainsmen this year.

Fairfax Canaries – Ron Peterson – 84-78 4th place – 87 PT wins – 2nd place

Thievery is the word opposing managers will mutter. Slick Ricky Henderson starts it off and the daily production goes down from there. Brook Jacoby is fair at third and has a little pop in his bat. Ellis Burks preforms well when he is on the field. The other players that will done the bright yellow of the Canaries might sneak away with more runs going stations to station and a steal on occasion. Sneaky little thieves. 37 starts from lefty Tom Browning will set the gold standard for the Canaries' staff. Issue is the standard might be too high for the other pitchers. Lefties Rick Honeycutt and Randy Myers will be joined in the pen by righty Chuck Crim. The other cast members might be carrying gasoline in their gloves only to fuel the fire vice put it out.

Punxsutawney Pachyderms - John Lippincott – 104-58 1st place – 84 PT wins – 3rd place

Balance of speed and power as SB 135 and HR 130 for a total team effort. Crime Dog Fred McGriff tallies 36 dingers at first base playing every day. Harold Reynolds steals 25 bases playing daily at second. Mike Greenwell and Ruben Sierra 29 HRs anchor the corner outfield spots. Dave Magadan gets on base and will see most of his playing time at third base. The supporting cast is nothing to get excited about, just good enough to keep them in the game. Punxsutawney starting pitchers should go deep into the games and keep the Pachyderms in contention. Mark Davis can close the door 70 times during the season. As long as the pitchers that bridge from the starters to Davis the 9th – don't blow the lead, the Punxsutawney Pachyderms will be a joy for the loyal fans.

Anok Island Gnomes – Steve Brunner - 81-81 5th place – 84 PT wins – 4th place

Gnomes success will come from their pitching staff. Rotation of Key, Magrane, Mahler, Candiotti and Flanagan will get them thru the season. When they tire or get rocked the bridge to closer Roger McDowell is decent. Dibble and Agosto form a good righty lefty duo. The balancing act will come from the pitchers before these two and McDowell pitch. Jeff Leonard and his 24HRs one-flap down will provide the spark on offense. A station to station team, unless your name is Butler or Thompson who will join Leonard in the outfield. Mark Grace stays on base and plays first base. Jeff Hamilton plays daily at third. Jody Reed is a decent table setter and plays daily at second. Off the bench players; Kruk and Stubbs will have to get the job done when called upon.

Thunder Bay Damage – Rob Capizzano – 77-85 6th place – 79 PT wins – 5th place

5th place – you kidding me!! Thunder Day loyalists are up in arms. Don Mattingly at first, Gregg Jefferies at second, Jose Oquendo .370 OBP plays second and short and will play someplace, Shawon Dunston also plays short, Terry Pendleton third base. Daily players all around the infield. Lonnie Smith steals 26 and hits 21 HRs and when Vince Coleman gets on base his 65 steals are just like hitting doubles or triples. Rob has enough players with ABs to keep the same lineup and develop team chemistry. Jim Deshaies, Scott Bankhead, Kirk McCaskill, Kevin Brown will get most of the action. Rob will spot start Jose Rijo to get the most of his 20 starts. No HOFers and more importantly, no bums. Another team that will look for a bridge between starters and closer Bobby Thigpen. He should be 45 or more chances to close out the W for the Damage. A 5th place finish might take a collapse from more than two or three players. Doubtful it will happen, but it could.

Astoria Zoo Crew – Joe Dezarlo – 96-66 2nd place – 69 PT wins – 6th place

Can't get no respect. Oh, how have the mighty fallen? Power outage? Poor pitching? Don't really see it here. Aside from the Plainsmen at the top, the NL West could be a division that is too even to call. Last year saw this division with all teams over .500 going into the last month. The Damage were 77-85 good enough to finish 3rd in two divisions. Cal Ripken plays every day at SS and is the power with 21 HRs. Tim Lincecum will be on base in front of Cal on a daily basis. Joining Raines in the outfield: Lenny Dykstra, Mookie Wilson and Harold Baines. Four players to fill in three spots. Joe has a similar issue in the

infield. Juggling Steve Buechele between second and third in order to allow Gary Sheffield playing time. Catching Trio will see 41 year old Bob Boone, Bob Melvin and Junior Ortiz behind the plate. First base has a supporting cast to back up Greg Brock. Zoo Crew starting rotation can march out lefties: Sid Fernandez, Derek Lilliquist, Paul Kilgus and throw righty Dave Stieb on a regular basis. Spot starters could sneak in a few wins. Handing the ball over to closer Jeff Reardon is not a sure thing. Michael Jackson “he he” will be a bright spot as he moon walks in from the bullpen on pitching changes. Last in the division – could be and could be in 2nd place. It’s that close in the NL West.

Once again, first crack at this – so don’t expect too much. Guess a who is gonna win what is also expected. So here it is:

AL – Mets

NL – Plainsmen

WS – Mets

Maybe later I may extrapolate on more cause right now – I’m bushed. Heck, as I was looking at the team and writing things up more than once this thought came to mind “what, you got to be kidding?!? How could they be rated here?” - oh wait, I’m doing this. I can place them where I want. Nah, too much trouble to change things. SO – GOOD LUCK EVERYONE!! Enjoy the season.