

Here's a playoff preview for the upcoming 1st round of the playoffs. Out of the four series I feel strongly about only one of my predictions, Kitsilano over Birmingham. The other three look like close matchups and I wouldn't be surprised by any result, especially in a short series. Either way we'll know in a week or so.---Greg Henning, League Reporter

PLAYOFF MATCHUPS

NL

BIRMINGHAM VS KITSILANO

What Birmingham must do to win-They've got to conquer the outstanding Hedgehog starting pitching. It will be tough especially against lefties Langston and Key. The Cloverleafs struggled against lefties all year. Manwaring needs to stifle the Kitsilano running game.

What Kitsilano must do to win-Keep the starters in the game as long as possible. A thin pen can't be worn down in the series. Butler and Bagwell need to continue their star seasons.

All the stars are aligned in Kitsilano's favor. They've got the best five man staff in the league and one or two of them will help out in the pen. Their offense is better in average, onbase and speed. Meanwhile Birmingham struggled to finish over .500. Kitsilano won 6 of 10 season matchups. Let's call this one Kitsilano in four games.

KANSAS VS RED BLUFF

What Kansas must do to win-Kansas has tons of power and they'll need it against a fine Red Bluff staff. Griffey is a player who can carry a team on his back. Greg Harris must carry over his 20 win regular season stuff.

What Red Bluff must do to win-The starters are a playoff managers dream-strong and five deep. Lefties McGriff, Baines and Boggs need to unload against the all right handed Kansas rotation.

On paper the advantage looks very strong for Red Bluff despite the fact that they split the 10 matchups during the regular season. They won 11 more games than Kansas, have a great rotation and were second in runs scored behind Kansas. But this is the playoffs and anything can happen. Kansas has the intangibles to make anything happen. However, let's call for Red Bluff to squeeze this one out in five games.

AL

BLACK SWAMP VS BROOKLYN

What Black Swamp must do to win-Their starters must continue to overachieve as they did during the season. Brady Anderson is the key to the offense and cannot fail.

What Brooklyn must do to win-The starting staff was the best in the AL and they'll decide if the Bridegrooms win or go home. Alomar is the key on offense as he sets the table for the big guns behind him.

On paper these teams are very close. Their team averages on both offense and defense matchup. Both had the best team ERA's and both scored within 15 runs of each other. Brooklyn has the better starters and Black Swamp the better relief corp. The key will probably be an unexpected offensive performance from one of the lesser batters. Let's call this one Brooklyn in a hard fought five game series.

BALTIMORE VS CHICAGO

What Chicago must do to win-Their offense must jack it up a step to match the high powered Redbird hitters. Their excellent starting staff needs to go deep into games and not hand it over to a suspect pen.

What Baltimore must do to win-Their starters need to keep the games close and allow the offense to do their thing and let a good pen finish the games. Bonds can carry the team by himself.

This is a textbook matchup between a high powered offense and an excellent starting staff. Whoever wins that battle wins the series. Baltimore won 8 of 10 regular season matchups, but interestingly scored more than 5 runs in only one of the games. I don't think the Redbirds will dominate like the regular season but it looks like they'll win this in five games.