

Friday, August 27, 2004

The Satan-Rays have granted me powers

Did I call it or did I call it? Daniel Cabrera, in fact, has not figured things out under the tutelage of Ray Miller and walked five Athletics in 2.2 innings. The A's then walked twice more in the game, for seven total, one shy of the eight I half-predicted yesterday, on their way to a 9-4 win over the Orioles.

I'm done covering my ass with half predictions, though. I'm going full out from now on, no more "if this, then this, or maybe this."

Anyway, Barry Zito had a thing for fours yesterday, which isn't all that good: four hits, four runs, four walks, four strikeouts, though at least he pitched more than four innings. Zito had one bad inning (not the fourth), but put up zeros in the first, second, fourth, and fifth while the A's had six runs at the end of the fourth, so his mediocre performance was good enough to land him a win.

Oakland's bullpen has been unusually strong of late, and Ricardo Rincon, Chad Bradford, and Chris Hammond threw the last 3.2 innings without giving up a run.

The game was close (6-4) until Scott Hatteberg smacked a bases-loaded, bases-clearing double in the sixth against John Parrish. That hit capped the scoring for both squads, though the Orioles got close to a run in the top of the seventh when Tim Raines, Jr., ended up on third base after some wild pitches and passed balls. However, after an infield single by David Newhan that wasn't able to bring Raines home, Bradford came in and got a double play ground ball to end the threat.

It's impossible to say too much about Eric Chavez. In this game, he hit his 16th double of the year, his 25th homer, and was intentionally walked, earning his 71st free pass on the season, which ranks him fifth in the American League. If he hadn't had his hand broken earlier in the season, he'd almost certainly be on top in that category.

All around, this was a good game for the A's, and a great series. Oakland's on a run right now that has pushed them to the third best record in all of baseball, behind the Yankees and Cardinals and tied with the Dodgers.

The Competition

Chan Ho Park was revived much more successfully than Terry Mulholland, so the Twins's starter allowed seven runs in just 3.2 innings, leading to an 8-3 drubbing by Texas and grenade in the gullet from old pal Bruce Campbell.

Park wasn't great, but the A's have to hope he doesn't throw six innings with two runs allowed every time out, because any solidification of the Ranger rotation could spell trouble to the rest of the AL West.

Bronson Arroyo allowed a few baserunners against the Tigers, giving up six hits, including four doubles, and two walks in 7.1 innings, but just one man came across the plate for Detroit, and even that was an unearned run.

On the other side, Jason Johnson pitched five innings, allowing nine hits and three runs (two earned) while striking out five and walking two. Except for the hits, that's pretty much an average outing, isn't it? I wonder if Tiger fans are bored of Johnson or if they're excited to have someone so decent pitching for them.

Either way, the Red Sox won this one, so they remain a half game back of Oakland. Texas's win keeps them 2.5 behind the A's. The Angels were idle, though, so the A's win pushes Oakland a full game ahead of Anaheim.

Today

Derek Lowe, who might have set a record from 7/15-8/6 by giving up exactly four runs in five straight starts, brings his 5.32 ERA to the park to face off against Mike Maroth. Maroth seems to basically be the same uninspiring pitcher that Jason Johnson is: 4.47 ERA, 4 K/9, 1.5 K/BB, 1.4 GB/FB, blah blah blah. The difference is who he's pitching against. Hope for another Derek Lowe implosion leading to a deficit that even the Sox offense can't overcome, but don't bank on it. Sox win 8-5.

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Baltimore visits Texas, with Erik Bedard leading things off for the Orioles. He was the first pitcher in the four-game sweep they put on the Rangers earlier in the month, so we can have some hope, especially when we check out the even-more-corpse-like-than-Chan-Ho-Park Scott Erickson, who's starting for the Rangers.

Erickson's arm will probably fall off (or else Bruce Campbell, not really satisfied with Park's good outing yesterday, will blast him with his boom stick), while the Orioles gets hoisted by their own Bedard. Someone has to go home with a win, but it's going to come down to the bullpen this time. Call it for the Orioles, say 9-7.

Minnesota sends Brad Radke to Anaheim to face Aaron Sele. I'll take Minnesota going away without even delving into bad puns or statistics. 5-2.

Finally, Mark Hendrickson comes to town representing the Devil Rays against a fellow Mark for the A's: Redman this time around, though Mulder will pitch the series closer. Hendrickson's a big guy who's had three good outings in his last ten, and seven awful ones. Those good games came against the Orioles, Orioles, and Royals, and while he threw six good innings against the A's the last time around, I wouldn't count on it happening again. Look for Redman to avenge a 2-1 loss to the Satans in his last start. 6-2.

Posted by jason in Baseball, Oakland A's at 12:31

Merci

Anonymous on Dec 19 2004, 12:54