

Wednesday, September 8, 2004

A's Sliding

Poll results may be inconsistent and subject to interpretation. Baseball results are what they are.

The A's are on a three-game slide right now, and the Angels have managed to close the A's lead to just 1 1/2 games in the West. I never said they were done, just the Rangers.

The last two days, Oakland's been pretty well beat up by the Red Sox, 8-3 and 7-1. Those are resounding victories that give Boston a clear mandate to claim the AL East crown and, eventually, the American League title as well. We'll see about the World Series when we get there.

If the standings stay the way they are (i.e. A's in front of Twins, Boston takes the Wild Card, not the East), Oakland would, unhappily enough, face the Red Sox in the first round of the playoffs. Since it's looking more and more like the Wild Card is actually going to come from the East (the Red Sox have opened a four game lead over the Angels in the Wild Card hunt), the ways Oakland could avoid playing Boston in the first round are either the Red Sox winning the Wild Card while the A's fall behind the Twins, so that they have the third-best record of the division winners, or the Red Sox winning the East and the A's staying ahead of the Twins, so the Sox would play the third-best team, Minnesota.

A first-round matchup with the Yankees, fearsome offense and all, would look lovely right now after the manhandling the Red Sox have given the A's. On the other hand, we'll see what happens when the front of the two teams' rotations are represented in tonight's game, when Tim Hudson goes against Pedro Martinez. Mark Redman, yesterday's loser, seems unlikely to start a playoff game for the A's and, if there's any justice, Barry Zito won't pitch an important game, either, though it was the Oakland bullpen that turned yesterday's loss into a rout, rather than a winnable 4-3 ballgame.

In any case, I'd go with a three-man rotation: Hudson, Mulder, Harden, and only throw in Zito if a lack of off-days somewhere necessitates it. At this point in the season, the way Hudson and Harden are pitching, I think it'd be criminal to see one of them only once in a five-game series. The A's have a predilection for four-man rotations in the playoffs, though, so this is all a bit of a pipe dream.

Hell, the playoffs are going to be a pipe dream if the A's can't get straightened out and avoid a sweep tonight. It seems like Tim Hudson pitches against Pedro Martinez every year. It happened twice last year, once in Game 1 of the playoffs, when the two starters pitched each other to a stand-still and the A's won in extra innings, and once on August 11, when Hudson threw a masterful game, giving up just two hits and a walk in a 93 pitch shutout, while Pedro gave up four runs in five innings. Hudson has to continue his success against the Red Sox, and Pedro personally, for the A's to win this game. I'm afraid, though, that we'll see something similar to the aforementioned Game 1, but it'll be the Red Sox winning late, not the A's this time, say 4-3.

Posted by jason in Baseball, Oakland A's at 07:42

The view from OaklandAfter two straight drubbings, Jason is lookinlooks ahead: A first-round matchup with the Yankees, fearsome offense and all, would look lovely right now after the manhandling the Red Sox have given the A's....

Anonymous on Sep 8 2004, 12:11