

Thursday, November 4, 2004

Predictions, pt. 4 - Mets

The team I saw play the most in person this year was, I think, the Mets. I'm pretty sure I saw the Yankees three times (once with the baseball nerds, twice with friends from school) and the Mets four (once with the baseball nerds, once with friends from school, once with Austen, once by myself). I also spent a few too many hours watching the Yankees and Mets games at the same time (the PREV button the remote does wonders). This is not to say that I'm familiar with the teams, but I guess I'm more familiar with them, living here in New York, than I am with a lot of teams, even teams that I purport to like more (like the Padres, for example).

At least I picked their place in the division right, four games ahead of Montreal for fourth place. I'm going to try not to pile on.

It's not hard to find out what went wrong with this team. In fact, it's hard to even call it "went wrong" because it's not like it was a surprise. The Mets had an old, untalented, injury-prone team, with very little upside. The bright spots were supposed to be Jose Reyes, who underperformed and then got hurt again, Kaz Matsui, who underperformed and is now the subject of rumors of a future at second base, Mike Cameron, who hit for power but couldn't make contact (.231 batting average), and Mike Piazza, who was a disaster at first base and got himself hurt in the process. Piazza also showed his age considerably, managing just a .444 slugging percentage for the season.

On the pitching side, Tom Glavine and Al Leiter defied Father Time and had very nice years, but the rest of the rotation was full of mediocrities and disappointments: Steve Trachsel, Matt Ginter, Tyler Yates, Scott Erickson, and James Baldwin (yes, you read those last two names correctly) fall in the former category, Kris Benson, Aaron Heilman, and Vic Zambrano in the latter, and Jae Seo in both. The bullpen actually had a bunch of positive contributions from the likes of Mike Stanton, Braden Looper, and Ricky Bottalico. There wasn't anybody in the 'pen who was terribly good or dominant or who you'd actively want to have on your team, however.

At least the Mets made things interesting in-season. David Wright came up to play third base and hit pretty well, particularly for power (.232 ISO). Richard Hidalgo was acquired for a bag of Weathers and, while he didn't really hit, he was worth a shot and is easily let go (option declined) this year. On the pitching side, Kris Benson and Victor Zambrano were acquired for a supposed stretch run, which, since the team finished fourth, ends up looking disastrous, but if they could keep Benson long-term, it could turn out fairly well for the team. Zambrano, on the other hand, cost the team Scott Kazmir, which looks disastrous.

All in all, on the field, in the news, and in the transactions, it was a Mets kind of year for the Mets. It's just unfortunate for them that that's such a bad (or really, mediocre) thing.

Posted by jason in Baseball at 15:44