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Flip-flopping on Dan Johnson

This Associated Press story warms my little heart. Billy Beane is meeting in secret with A's coaches. Is a move forthcoming? Are the A's finally going to bring up Dan Johnson? Or maybe Ken Macha's on the way out and the A's are going to hire Davey Johnson!

Well, wishful thinking abounds if you let it.

At this point, though, should the A's bother? Sure, we're only about 20% of the way through the season, with 35 games played. At the same time, though, how much can Dan Johnson fix by himself? Is he going to make Jason Kendall hit? Can he turn around Erubiel Durazo? What about Eric Chavez and Byrnes? Will he bring Bobby Crosby and Nick Swisher back from injury (and help Swisher hit)?

No, of course Johnson can't do all that by himself. Even if the A's did something like acquire Reggie Sanders and call up Johnson, the best they could do would be to provide power boosts out of two positions. If Johnson is worth a win or two over Scott Hatteberg (and is he? That might be generous) and Sanders a win or two over Byrnes, how good does those two or four wins make the A's? Is striving for 77 wins instead of 73 really a goal?

This A's team is young. The vast majority of the players, while not necessarily signed for next year, will be back, most of them cheaply. This isn't a contract year for anybody important. In other words, this isn't a win-now year.

Do you just declare the season lost and start dumping veterans like there's no tomorrow? No, if only because there's an outside shot of something crazy happening and the A's putting themselves back into the race (at which point, of course, the team should not go crazy and sell off the future for the present, either).

As I drop into the depths of despair, then, I am actually going to reverse course on Dan Johnson. The A's should not bring him up to the majors to replace Scott Hatteberg. Nothing's happening this season for Oakland, so why start Johnson's service clock early? Beane should get in his car and drive down to Sacramento today to meet with Johnson, where he'll say, "Sorry, kid, you're going to play out the year in AAA again. But listen, you'll be up in September, and you're our first baseman next year. I know, I know, we've been dicking around with Scott Hatteberg all this time, and you, and even Graham Koonce, have been ready to step in for what seems like eternity. I know Sacramento sucks. But hey, this is a promise. Hatteberg's headed to the bench. He's going to be a \$2.5 million pinch-hitter. You're the man in 2006."

Posted by jason in Baseball, Oakland A's at 09:45

I see no reason why starting Johnson's service time clock is an issue since he's already 25 and he'd still be an A even at age 31, presumably well past his prime years. I would like to have him get up now so he gets 3/4 of year of hitting against MLB Ps so any adjustments can be implemented this year. It's not that Hatty is so bad; it's that he has no place on a team with no other power source. The A's have to see what Johnson can do.

The rumor is the A's are bringing up Matt Watson, lefty-hitting OF, to take Harden's place and probably will insert Yabu into the rotation instead of bringing up Etherton who's gotten in 1 start in SAC after being on the DL to start the season. I never thought I'd be criticizing Beane so much but here's another one: why move Yabu out of the role he's done well in when you have a ready replacement in AAA? Moreover, if Etherton does well then he or Saarloos could be used as trade bait later in the year to a team wanting to fill out the backend of a rotation. With Watson the A's are going with 5 OFs which is just crazy since Watson is another lefty. Heck, Thomas barely plays and Watson's just going to sit; another wasted roster spot.

This is one of the worst A's teams in recent memory with significant talent, leadership and now injury issues. Their best hope is pretty pathetic: trade Dotel and Byrnes or Durazo or Kielty to some team desperate enough to give us a real player(s) in return; lose as many games as possible to get a top '06 draft pick; hope Swisher and Crosby return and hit at .235; pray Ethier and Garcia and Suzuki aren't mirages; and finally, but most importantly, pray that one of the young Ps steadies himself. Looking objectively at the evidence so far I'm pretty pessimistic about most of those.

Anonymous on May 14 2005, 13:47

Not so smart now, are you fellas.

Anonymous on Aug 24 2005, 05:09

Well, I suppose not, though in recent days (constant losing to the Royals and now the Tigers), we're starting to look pretty intelligent again.

Anonymous on Aug 24 2005, 08:58