

Reggie to homer as Carter wiffs

by Alan Small

It is October again, which means daring prognostications and baseball hype will overcome us.

Yes, its baseball playoff time again!

Of course, for so many years, one person stands out as a baseball playoff institution and this year Reggie Jackson is back, possibly for his last hurrah.

Mr. October is back to vault the experience laden California Angels into the World Series past the weak hitting Boston Red Sox.

Weak hitting! Yes, if the BoSox weren't playing in that launching pad known as Fenway Park, their batting statistics wouldn't be so inflated. With the Green Monster in left field, its a wonder that the whole team isn't able to hit multitudes of home runs.

But this illusion won't matter. Reggie will dispatch these pretenders to the throne with little difficulty.

The Angels have a full four man staff. The Red Sox just have a slightly injured Roger Clemens and if they're lucky, a calm Oil Can Boyd. Against such hitters as Joyner, DeCinces, and of course Reggie, they don't stand a chance.

The Angels, on the other hand, have great starting pitching with the likes of Mike Witt and Canadian Kirk McCaskill. They should have no problem against oldtimers like Jim Rice, Don Baylor, and Dwight Evans.

With this great pitching and of course, Mr. October's outstanding hitting, the Angels are a sure thing. Take them in five games over the BoSox.

In the National League, the Mets will need some sort of miracle to overcome the powerful, but unknown, Houston Astros.

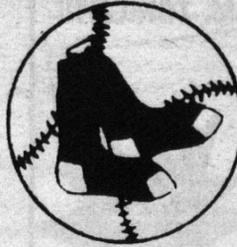
With pitchers like Mike Scott, Nolan Ryan and Bob Knepper, the Astros will be firing their fastballs past the likes of Gary Carter for the whole series. Remember that there is six (count 'em) no-hitters in the aforementioned group.

Everyone is saying, of course, that the Mets are a sure thing because they won their division by 21 and 1/2 games. With the competition in that division they should have won it in 30. The lack of talent in the NL East inflates their statistics just like it did for the Chicago White Sox, who won by more than 20 games three years ago in the AL West.

The lack of a pennant race for the Mets also means that they haven't played an important game since they lost the pennant to the Cards last September. At least the Astros had to play some important games in July and August. This should give them an important edge.

Finally, aren't all the Expos fans tired of Gary Carter. He wouldn't play to his potential when he was in Montreal, yet they gave him one of the biggest salaries in sports. Now he is in New York taking all the credit for the Mets' victory. Isn't that a typical thing for him, the hotdog of all hotdogs. It will be a great thrill to see him strike out half of the time against the Astros squad of outstanding pitchers.

Pick the Astros in five very easy games over these bunch of hot-dogs.



Mets have all the tools; Sox in six

by Mark Spector

They can lengthen the League Championship Series to a best of eleven if they want, it doesn't make any difference.

In a refreshing league where only those that are worthy are admitted into the playoffs, the longer they make the series, the more certain it becomes that the best team will prevail.

In this case, that means the New York Mets and the Boston Red Sox. First, let us talk about the Mets. No longer the Miracle Mets, this club has chalked up an amazing 108 wins, the most since Johnny Bench and the Big Red Machine.

The Reds won the World Series. Twice.

New York has what I consider to be the most important thing in pursuit of a pennant: an outstanding catcher. Not only is Gary Carter as good defensively as any catcher in the game today, but he has masterfully handled a young Mets pitching staff through their last two years of maturity. His 105 R.B.I.'s (third in the N.L.) don't hurt either.

The New York Yankees of the mid-seventies had a backstop like that in Thurman Munson.

They won the World Series. Twice.

New York leads the N.L. in pitching with a team E.R.A. of 3.11. Houston was a close second in that category, but the stats show that their staff gives up a few too many home runs. In playoff baseball, home runs mean the ball game, and with Darryl Strawberry, Carter, and Keith Hernandez, the Mets can hit 'em.

The Oakland A's of the early seventies had a team that could belt home runs when they needed

them.

They won the World Series. Three times.

It will be New York in a quick six. Now over to the American League, where the Boston Red Sox take on the old men from Anaheim in a series that is a tough prediction at best. And it's the intangibles that make it so.

The Angels have one huge factor in their favour: the fact that this is the last chance at a World Series ring for a whole bunch of veterans. These guys are going to be catching line drives in their teeth if it means a shot at the Mets.

But the A.L. pennant is traditionally won with the bat (see Dave Steib's immaculate performance in a deciding game loss last year), and the Sox are one up in that area, finishing third in the A.L. hitting race as compared to the Angels' ninth.

It will be the inevitable dingers hit by the likes of Jim Rice, Don Baylor, and Bill Buckner that will decide this series in favour of the boys from Beantown.

Boston hasn't won a World Series for over six decades, and although they won't this year, they will call on the ghosts of Red Sox past to give them a berth in the fall classic.

Fenway Park remembers. Ted Williams (The Splendid Splinter) remembers. Carl Yastremski remembers. There have been many disappointments since the second decade of this century, most recently 1975's seven game thriller which was lost to the Cincinnati Reds.

The Sox will once again have their day, losing to New York in the World Series after disposing of the California Angels in six.



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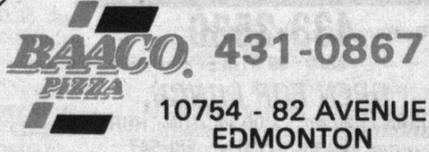
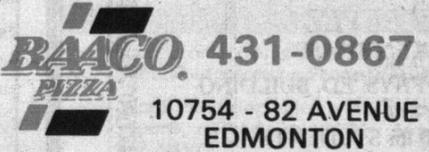
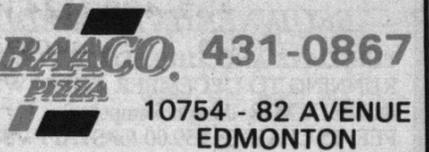
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