

Alan Small

continued from p. 11 will carry them to fifth place. With the departure of Lee Smith, everyone in Wrigley Field may leave after Harry Caray finishes the Seventh Inning Stretch. Wouldn't blame them.

Philadelphia Phillies — Hard to pick a team without good starters, a good outfield, and two old geezers

Only great pitchers escape the Cy Young Curse.

who carry the team. Steve Bedrosian will catch the Cy Young Curse, due to the fact that he isn't a great pitcher. Only great pitchers escape the Cy Young Curse.

NL West

Houston Astros — This team is fastball city, with the likes of Ryan, Scott, Andujar, Deshaies, and Kerfeld tossing heaters at everybody, including Andre Dawson. Dave Smith is still the best reliever in the NL. Bob Knepper also will endear himself to the macho Texan fans with his talk about women umpires. Okay he is wrong, but at least he speaks his mind and tries to back up what he says. The Texans will like that as well.

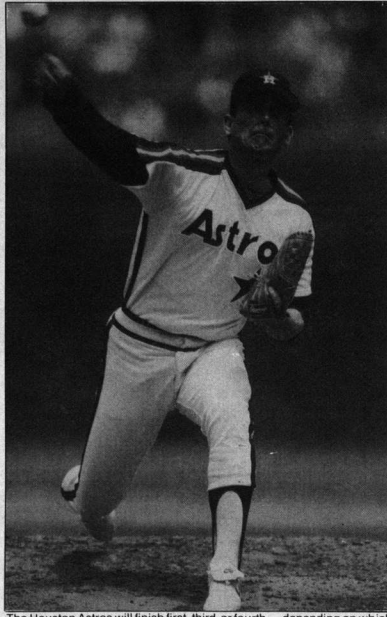
Cincinnati Reds — Best outfield in baseball will come up short when the pitching lets them down. Only one of their full time starters was over .500 last year, and without the clutch hitting of Dave Parker, things look even worse for the malfunctioning Red Machine.

San Diego Padres — Look for Lance McCullers to finally get out of the Goose's shadow and save 30 for the Padres. They have more young talent than anybody has, and will become next year's NL West champions. Still have weak pitching and untested infielders to make a serious run at pennant this season.

San Francisco Giants — The "smoke and mirrors" team of 1987 will break their mirror and have seven more years of bad ball clubs. Aging catchers, pitchers, and outfielders will bring the Giants back to earth. Will Clark will contend for MVP honors with his continuing hot bat and slick fielding.

Atlanta Braves — Math Quiz: What do you get when you add up no pitching, no infielders, no hitting, and a small ball park. No pennant for Atlanta for another year. (That excludes Dale Murphy, of course.)

Los Angeles Dodgers — They should be called the Dudsgers, since this team is a dud. Pedro Guerrero is the next Al Oliver. He is a liability on the field, but he is an asset with the bat. Look for him to get traded to the American League, where some team could use him at his best.



The Houston Astros will finish first, third, or fourth — depending on which Gateway pundit you believe.

rookies at short, second, and catcher on Opening Day should also guarantee another chance to be standing outside the church trying to catch some stupid flowers though.

St. Louis Cardinals — If Todd Worrell could pitch 500 innings, the Cards would have a chance. He can't, and they don't. They lost their later man, too, in Jack Clark, and need a third outfielder.

Pittsburgh Pirates — If all the Bucs youngsters do what they did in the last part of '87 for an entire season, they'll win the pennant. Oh well, at least visitors won't be mailing in their wins from Three Rivers this year.

Philadelphia Phillies — Shane Rawley won't win over fifteen. Steve Bedrosian won't save forty games. The Phils won't be in the race after May, but somebody will be even worse this year.

Chicago Cubs — Meet worse. Take an aging MVP with a bad attitude, and a daytime batting average about 50 points higher than at night, and add lights so he can play some home night games. These guys are

They spit and scuffed until the league started catching guys that did.

nuts. By mid-season, the Cubs will trade their entire roster for the Mets AAA Tidewater squad — and improve.

NL West

Cincinnati Reds — The best bullpen in baseball. Seven inning starters to get that far. A solid infield. The best young outfielder in the majors including ERIC DAVIS (.293, 30 HR, 100 RBI, 50 SB). Too bad, because Pete Rose and owner Marge Schott deserve much worse.

San Francisco Giants — A solid team from top to bottom, except that many of their key players are injury-prone. Need to stay healthy to contend, and some repeats of career years to win. Still, they are the only pennant team from last year with a shot at repeating.

San Diego Padres — Larry (the Lizard) Bowa is without a doubt the surliest bugger to run a major league squad since Billy Martin. With a young team like the Padres, he might just achieve something too. Bowa and his old buddy Keith Moreland in a manager/player relationship should be worth some fireworks on about, say, July Fourth.

Houston Astros — A team that slipped last year. They also spit and scuffed until the league started catching guys that did. Suddenly, cont. next page.

Randal Smathers

NL East

NY Mets — The Mets were close last year with a pitching staff injury list that resembled the white folks

casualty report from Little Big Horn. Although the offense might slip a little, the arms should be ready to throw up a pennant.

Montreal Expos — The bridesmaid is fat and forty and should be getting tired of watching somebody else sucking champagne. Having

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