

# SPORTS

A rich sports history of Penn State Harrisburg

## Major League Baseball Preview: AL Central, AL West

By **MEGAN RESSER**  
Sports Reporter  
MKR157@PSU.EDU

By **KRISTY FASANO and RYNE CRABB**  
Sports Reporters  
KLF200@PSU.EDU, REC161@PSU.EDU

Although I hope that by now many of you are aware that we have intercollegiate athletic teams at Penn State Harrisburg, I'm afraid that some of you may not be aware of this fact. This lack of awareness may be attributed to many things, but it is most likely due to the fact that intercollegiate athletics only returned to this campus in the fall of 2005, after a 12-year hiatus.

I recently sat down with Director of Athletics, Raissaam Carlton, and he helped me to better conceptualize the history of intercollegiate athletics on this campus as well as to better visualize the future of intercollegiate PSU athletics.

As far as the history of athletics was concerned, Carlton knows that the hiatus began in 1993. He knows that students competed on various sports teams at various times. These teams included, but were not limited to, men's basketball, baseball, golf, cross-country and softball. He did not know the reason why the hiatus happened, but he has heard that there may have been budgetary constraints. Another issue, which he imagines led to this decision, was the fact that the student body on this campus used to consist only of juniors and seniors who were more likely to be focused on graduating than playing sports.

When asked what the impetus was for the return of athletics to the campus, Carlton said that the transition to a 4-year college was the primary reason. Mr. Carlton and his administrative assistant, Andrea Howard, began working at PSU in 2005. During the fall of 2005, men's soccer, cross-country, baseball, and women's volleyball teams began intercollegiate play. The winter 2005-2006 season included men and women's basketball and the spring 2006 season included softball and baseball. All of these sports continued in the 2006-2007 school year, with the addition of co-ed tennis, women's soccer, and golf. Athletic Trainer Brandon Conway began working for PSU during the summer of 2006. Many of the PSU teams have enjoyed remarkable success considering their fledgling status.

With the transition to a 4-year college comes a dedication by the Athletic Department to make the transition to NCAA Division III status. This transition will begin in the fall of 2007, as the teams become provisional members of the North Eastern Athletic Conference, or NEAC. According to Carlton, this provisional status will potentially last for three years, but it will most likely take four years to achieve full Division III status. In order to achieve this, PSU must follow NCAA rules and regulations to the best of our ability. During the third year, we must follow all rules and regulations without exception. Throughout the provisional period,

In order to dispel some rumors about our needing to build facilities in order to be allowed to join Division III, I asked Mr. Carlton if this was true. He said that we currently have all needed facilities. With the building of a baseball field on campus, which is scheduled to begin this summer, all of these facilities will be housed on our own campus. This website can be accessed by clicking on the Intercollegiate Athletics link on the right side of the Penn State Harrisburg home page.

Carlton concluded his comments by saying, "It's an exciting time for us going into the NCAA and the new conference." He also said that he is proud of the fact that PSU will be one of only four Penn State campuses that are competing on the Division III level.

Interested students are encouraged to complete the Student-Athlete Prospect Form, which can be found on the Intercollegiate Athletics home page.



96-66

**Three to See**  
Matt Garza  
Justin Morneau  
Johan Santana

Johan Santana. This reigning Cy Young winner's name can strike fear into the heart of any lineup, flame-thrower Garza is the next great pitcher from the Twins farm system. Joe Nathan is a

world-class closer. Morneau won the MVP last year, and catcher Joe Mauer won the batting title. This might be the most talented Twins club in years, can they put it all together?

**Bottom Line:** They can't afford to keep the talent, so Twinkie fans better enjoy this year's team



95-67

**Three to See**  
Gary Sheffield  
Jeremy Bonderman  
Jim Leyland

Our favorite manager in cleats returns to lead his AL Champion squad to a World Series Championship. Sheffield has always played better with a chip on his shoulder, and having been

stripped off his pinstripes, he has a lot to prove in Motor City. Every season Bonderman lowers his ERA, and this season Leyland has given the 24 year old by the ball for Opening Day.

**Bottom Line:** This team is full of young arms, with Leyland at the helm, they are the team to beat



90-72

**Three to See**  
Jim Thome  
Jermaine Dye  
Paul Konerko

It has been two years since Chicago's "other" team has won a World Series; but with the 3-4-5 punch of Thome, Konerko, and Dye, this is a strong offensive team. The unpredictable Ozzie Guillen

keeps this team loose, and ready to play. The big question on the north side is how the rotation will react after losing staff ace Freddy Garcia in the offseason.

**Bottom Line:** If the Sox don't see the playoffs this year, Guillen might be shown the door



62-100

**Three to See**  
Gil Meche  
Alex Gordon  
Octavio Dotel

Meche got \$55 million for his 55 career wins; that contract puts him on the hot seat. Dotel tries to prove he can be a reliable closer. Third baseman Alex Gordon won't start the year with the

club, but once he gets there, he has Hall-of-Fame talent. Watch the news for his call-up, because you won't want to miss a minute once this kid hits the diamond.

**Bottom Line:** The Royals are a few years away from anything resembling a playoff team

### AL West



93-69

**Three to See**  
Mike Piazza  
Rich Harden  
Milton Bradley

The Big 3 Pitchers are all gone, with Harden left to pick up the pieces; is he ready to be an ace? Piazza plays his first game in the AL, hoping to find some magic Frank Thomas left

behind. Milton Bradley is the most talented, but most combustible, player on the field. Veteran Jason Kendall helps steer a less talented team hoping to repeat last year's team's division title.

**Bottom Line:** This might be the worst division, and Billy Beane always gives the A's a chance.



89-73

**Three to See**  
Gary Matthews, Jr  
Chone Figgins  
Vladimir Guerrero

The Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim might have the worst team name in baseball, but they also have the best closer in Francisco Rodriguez. Veteran leaders Guerrero and Figgins will try

to help a team stay focused amongst the HGH and steroid rumors surrounding off-season acquisition Matthews. Ervin Santana and Jered Weaver have electric young arms in the rotation.

**Bottom Line:** I wonder if the Rally Monkey can help them come back from the Matthews saga?



80-82

**Three to See**  
Sammy Sosa  
Eric Gagne  
Mark Teixeira

Texas: where past-their-prime veterans go to die. Sosa makes the comeback of all-comebacks, seriously, who saw that coming? Gagne tries to return from injury, Kevin Millwood and

Vicente Padilla try to lead a talent-stricken rotation. Kenny Loften is alive? Wow. Teixeira is a darkhorse MVP candidate, and Slammin' Sammy is 12 HRs away from 600 for his career.

**Bottom Line:** Texas is the Colorado of the AL; great hitting, but haven't had a rotation since, ever?



78-84

**Three to See**  
Ichiro Suzuki  
Felix Hernandez  
Jose Guillen

Ichiro moves to CF this year, will he move out of Seattle next? The best team in the Pacific Northwest has the offense, veterans Guillen, Adrian Beltre, Raul Ibanez, and big sexy Richie Sexton

will score some runs. Its up to young King Hernandez to lead a shaky rotation. Its now or never for the Mariners; they need to win this year to re-sign their Japanese superstar.

**Bottom Line:** Expect a big year from the King, Seattle has "sleeper team" written all over it

### World Series

Kristy: Tigers over Cubs      Ryne: Red Sox over Phillies

### Final Thoughts:

**Kristy:** I love Jimmy Leyland, and the Tigers have the young arms, World Series experience, and a pissed-off Gary Sheffield; it's going to be tough to derail the reigning AL Champs. Its no secret, my heart is always pulling for the Bronx Bombers, but at least one of us has to be an objective journalist, right?

**Ryne:** Just because I'm picking my favorite team to win doesn't mean I'm being subjective. The Sox simply have the best team in baseball. My girlfriend decided to root for the Yankees last year because Johnny Damon is "hot." Just another reason for me to hate everything about the New York Steinbrenners. Their pitching will keep them out of a playoff spot anyways, mark my words.

**Kristy:** I'm so fighting you right now. How can you pick a team that doesn't even have a closer? I'm picking Toronto as the wild-card, so have fun watching the playoffs without your beloved Sox. In fact, I'll bet you a beer at Guido's the Yankees finish with a better record than Boston.

**Ryne:** You're on. Tell Sara to keep the Magic Hat cold, I'll be cashing in come October.