

Two New Contenders To Battle Pittsburgh, Baltimore

By Glenn Davis

Now that the baseball strike is settled, it's time to take out your wallet and stick up for your team. Here's a guideline at what you can expect from your favorite team:

N.L. EAST: There is no reason to doubt why the Pittsburgh Pirates cannot repeat as division champs since they made no deals.

The Bucs will have their problems with the New York Mets, who recently acquired Rusty Staub, a 97 RBI-man last year. Always rated a strong contender, the St. Louis Cardinals have added a potential 20-game winner in Rick Wise and last year led all teams in batting (.275). The Chicago Cubs have only one consistent winning pitcher in Ferguson Jenkins and are a bad fit in the pennant frame.

The Montreal Expos should beat out the Phillies for the fifth place and might have a hidden talent since the additions of Mike Jorgensen and Kenny Singleton. The Phils? Until they get rid of John Quinn, will be nothing except a team with an amazing potential. Sure cellar-dwellers.

N.L. WEST: Fans can expect a down-to-the-wire battle between everyone except San Diego.

The Houston Astros look best here. They have terrific starting pitchers backed by a solid, everyday line-up led by powerful Lee May, acquired from Cincinnati. Next should be the Los Angeles Dodgers, who supposedly are the "team to beat." Walter Alston's men include such stars as Frank Robinson, Willie Davis, and 20-game winner Al Downing. With a good year from Bobby Tolan, the Reds should be in the midst of the pennant fight. If Johnny Bench has another .238 year, though, forget it.

With a satisfactory bill of health, San Francisco and Atlanta also figure to be threats for top team. All the Giants need is a healthy Willie McCovey and they'll be tough. Same goes for the Braves if Rico Carty can play every day. The Padres are still building.

A.L. EAST: This division shows the Baltimore Orioles to be a sure bet to fly the flag again. The orange and black boast a kid named Don Baylor, good enough to fill Frank Robinson's rightfield spot.

Attempting to catch the Orioles will be the De-

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THE LAKERS:

A DYNASTY BEGINS

By Ron Gioncoli

The reign of the Milwaukee Bucks, World Champions of the National Basketball Association, lasted 365 days until the Los Angeles Lakers dethroned them April 23rd.

The Lakers began wearing the crown after five games of their Championship series with the New York Knicks.

With probably the best backcourt combination in basketball in Jerry West and Gail Goodrich, the Lakers controlled the games.

Plagued by poor shooting in the Milwaukee semi-final series, West broke out his scoring guns in the finals.

"I'll do anything if it means victory," said West a few months ago after a game with the 76ers. "And my ultimate goal is an NBA Championship, to achieve it I'd cut my arm off."

West was a determined man having seen his team lose in the finals 7 out of the last 10 years. He and his teammates did not let this one slip away.

West was not the only determined member of the team. There was Wilt Chamberlain, who showed how much he wanted the NBA crown for his team, by being so dominate in all the games that he won Most Valuable Player in the NBA Playoffs. Happy Hairston, he had seen too many championships lost to let this one get away. Also the younger players like Goodrich and forward Jim McMillan, who knew the prestige and honor of a championship.

But determination alone didn't win the title, the Lakers have a deep, well-rounded team.

In the front court LA has Hairston who gets about 14 points and 13 rebounds a game, besides playing tough defense, a Laker trait. His partner up front is Jim McMillan, a third year player who is capable of scoring 42 points in a game as he did against the Bucks in a playoff game. McMillan will get a little over half the rebounds Hairston pulls down, but with his baseline jumpers is a valuable player to any team.

At center is Chamberlain, the top defensive center in basketball. Wilt has traded in his scoring for defense and rebounding, knowing full well the points will come from McMillan and the backcourt.

"If a team can shut down our backcourt from scoring and the points rely on me, we're in trouble," laughed Chamberlain.

The guards, West and Goodrich give the Lakers between 45-55 a game. This was a large reason for

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