

Baseball Playoffs '92

The Stretch Run

by Hal Coffey
The Collegian

If the saying "history repeats itself" is true, then the Pittsburgh Pirates should be a little worried about this year's NLCS against the Atlanta Braves.

Not since the Philadelphia Phillies, from 1976-78, has an NL East team won three straight division titles. Unfortunately, the Pirates may also do something else that the Phillies did, lose three straight league championships.

Over the season, the Braves

won 7 of the 12 meetings with the Pirates. In those games, center-fielder Otis Nixon had 20 hits as well as 7 stolen bases.

Also for the Braves, Tom Glavine was 4-0 with a 1.86 ERA against Pittsburgh this year, but ended the season with a 1-3 slump and a sore pitching arm.

If the Braves are going to win the series, they need a solid relief performance from reliever Mike Stanton and mid-season acquisition Jeff Reardon.

If the Pirates are to win the NLCS, they need MVP candidate

Barry Bonds to improve on his .156 batting average over the last two postseasons. Two players to watch for at the plate are catcher Don Slaught, .345 BA this year, and Jeff King, who had 15 hits and 9 RBI's against Atlanta this year.

The Pirates' keys will be strong starting pitching from Doug Drabek, Danny Jackson, and rookie Tim Wakefield, and if the defense keeps up their stellar performance of the regular season.

This NLCS should be as exciting as last year's with the

Pirates winning in six games.

Although Toronto and Oakland met in the 1989 ALCS, the two have changed drastically since.

Like the Pirates, Toronto has a habit of clawing their way out of the East, only to be beaten in the league championship by a western division team.

To change this pattern, the Blue Jays made several moves to get big name players like Jack Morris, David Cone, and Dave Winfield.

Roberto Alomar's 16 hits in the regular season against the A's should be a big factor.

The key for Toronto is pitching. With one of the deepest starting rotations, manager Cito Gaston hopes that his big five, Morris, Cone, Juan Guzman, Todd Stotymere, and Jimmy Key (66-38 overall this

year can hold off the A's.

Oakland has changed their "bash brother" image of the previous series to a club that more resembles a M*A*S*H unit. With 16 players on the DL 22 times, it's amazing that the A's are in the ALCS.

Along with big names like Mark McGwire and Rickey Henderson, the A's are counting on 2nd baseman Mike Brodick, .390 against Toronto this year, and emotional leader Carney Lansford.

Oakland's key will be their bench. If Jamie Quirk and switch hitting Jerry Browne can continue their excellent backup roles and the A's stay healthy, then Oakland will challenge the Blue Jays.

In the end, the Blue Jays should prevail in a thrilling seven game series.

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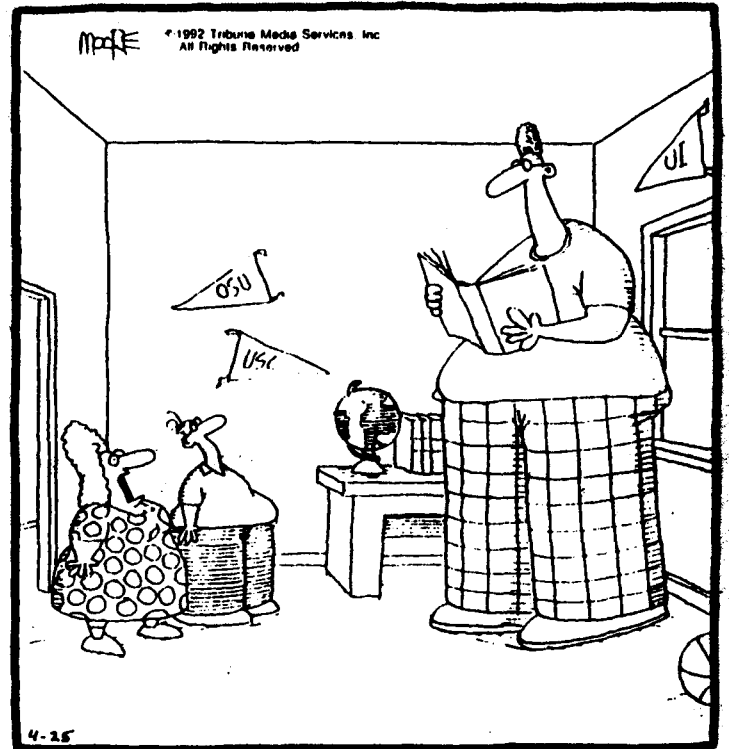
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IN THE BLEACHERS

by Steve Moore



"Look, Billy. Your father and I think it's wonderful that you're studying to be a brain surgeon. But, please, keep playing basketball, so you have something to fall back on ..."