



League News April 2002

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Matchup of the Month



VERSUS



Beginning this month *League News* will be featuring in the leadoff position the “Matchup of the Month.” It will take a series that appears intriguing headed into the month of play and then will be broken down and shared. For the inaugural Matchup I decided that I’d check in on an early season battle involving the two league heavyweights, Cook County and Ocala.

Cook County	Tale of the Tape 2001 Stats	Ocala
.311	Batting Average	.314
.971	OPS	.894
3.87	ERA	4.22
127	Errors	104
122-40	Record	113-49

The series started as the home opener for the defending champs at JABA Park. The Ocelots looked to BRASSball Series hero, Javier Vazquez to start the first game. Cook County turned to seasoned vet and key free agent signee, Jamie Moyer for the honors. Ocelots quickly got the board with a two run tater from Sammy Sosa in the bottom of the first. That would be all the Ocelots would need as they cruised to a 7-1 victory. Vazquez turned in seven strong innings. More offense came from off-season pickup, Brian Giles who was 2 for 2 and two ribbies.

Game 2 saw the Maulers make a surprising starter choice as they turned to recent draftee, Dave Williams to start. Jamey Wright went for Ocala. A Gary Sheffield rbi single and a Ray Lankford sac fly in the first two innings for the Maulers effectively countered Shawn Green’s solo blast to give the early lead to Cook County. In the sixth the Maulers got some breathing room with a 2 run single from Mike Piazza. Another solo blast in the eighth, this time from Sosa again, made it close, but Steve Kline finished it out effectively.

Game 3 pitted seasoned vet Roger Clemens vs the spring-sational rookie, Roy Oswalt. Again the Maulers got out quickly as Gary Sheffield had a two run first inning single. Kendall got a run back on a gapper in the bottom of the second. Both pitchers settled down and the game went into the eighth still at 2-1. But back-to-back doubles from Desi Relaford and Rich Aurilia gave the Maulers a critical two run cushion. Another Shawn Green homer got a run back in the bottom of the frame, but nothing could be put together against Mariano Rivera in the ninth as the Ocelots went 1-2-3.

Game 4 starters were Terry Adams and Glendon Rusch. Maulers got going early again thanks to Jeff Bagwell and Rich Aurilia homers to make it 4-1 after two innings played. Two doubles and a triple helped make it 6-1 after the visitors hit in the sixth. The Maulers ended up cruising to an easy 7-2 win. Aurilia finished the day 3 for 5 with 2 ribbies. The Maulers were to return home for their opener up three games to one.

Moyer got another opener start as he was scheduled to square off against rookie Shawn Chacon. No contest. Chacon was bombed early as he was unable to make it out of the fourth. By the time the dust settled in the fourth the Maulers were up seven zip and well on their way to another W. Aurilia was once again aces as he was 4 for 5 on the day. Vlad Guerrero homered twice and scored three runs. Moyer tossed a complete game, allowing only four hits to the Ocelots.

Game 6 saw Vazquez climb the mound again for the Ocelots while the Maulers went with Robert Person. This one was wild as it saw a couple lead changes. Aurilia continued to own Ocelot pitchers as nailed a two run homer in the bottom of the first off Vazquez. Shawn Green, though, got it back in the next frame as he blasted a two run tater of his own. A Sosa single and a Sheffield blast left it 4-3 Maulers after three innings. Ocelots got their first lead of the day behind a two out double from Giles in the fifth. But being the heavyweight they are, Cook County scratched across the tying run in the bottom frame on a Piazza groundout. Vazquez was left in to start the seventh, but could not finish. A walk, triple and single scored two go-ahead runs for the Maulers and chased Vazquez to the dugout. Two more runs in the eighth by the Maulers and they secured another win.

The finale pitted Jamey Wright against the rook Williams. With 47,000 plus in the stands, many with brooms chanting "SWEEP!" the Maulers had to feel good about their start. Two runs in the second from the Ocelots may have quieted things momentarily, but Vlad Guerrero's two run blast in the bottom of the second got the fans whoopin' and hollerin' again. Single runs in the third and fourth got the Mauler lead out to 4-2. A Shawn Green homer got it down to 4-3, but 2 unearned runs in the bottom of the fifth extended to the lead to 6-3 Maulers. A seventh inning solo blast from Sosa made it interesting, but Kline and Rivera maneuvered the eighth and ninth to give the Maulers a decisive 6-1 record in the first Matchup of the year.

AL Notes

In April the biggest surprise is in the form of the AL East's co-leader, Hessville. Some very impressive stats have already been accumulated by the Everreadys. The have made only 8 errors and have socked 43 dingers already. Dave McCarty is off to a surprising start (.380-6-12) while the new catcher, Charles Johnson (.330-8-17) has been more than expected. If slow starts by Jose Vidro and Larry Walker can be reversed than the Everreadys may continue to surprise all year long. On the mound the team's new closer, Tom Gordon, has registered 11 saves. Frank Castillo (3-0, 3.13) leads the starters while Josias Manzanillo (3-1, 2.79) continues to be one of the more unheralded performers in BRASSball.

AL East Standings

Hessville	18-10	---
Moline	18-10	---
Minnesota	17-11	1
Georgia	15-13	3

The other leader in the East is the not so surprising Moline Cutters. Barry Bonds is out of the gate strong (.330-10-29). Bonds' is also the leading reason the Cutters sport an impressive .377 OBP through April play. Luis Gonzalez (.327-7-17) and Ellis Burks (.270-7-17) are also early offensive mashers for Moline. On the mound Curt Schilling (4-1, 1.55), so far, is living up to his contract. As a team the Cutters sport an impressive 3.69 ERA. Jeff Zimmerman has yet to allow a run yet while garnering eight saves.

Checking in at third are last year's AL Champs, Minnesota. The Mudcats are off to solid start thanks much to Alex Rodriguez, (.330-8-23). Jason Giambi helping out as well (.300-6-22). Amazingly, Geoff Jenkins has mustered only one hit in his first 28 at bats. The pitching has been problematic so far. No starter has an ERA below 4.50 while the bullpen is being run through with all relievers having made at least 11 appearances already. Not good.

In a close fourth are the Braves. So far Georgia hasn't quite lived up to its pre-season billing as the top pitching staff. The Braves finished April with a 5.06 ERA. Only Tim Hudson (3-1, 3.33) checks in as a Brave starter with a sub-five ERA. Dmitri Young (.308-4-17) and Derrek Lee (.288-5-19) are keying the Georgia offense. No doubt this team can pitch better and move up, though.

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In the Central I guess this writer is not surprised by the April leading Maulers. Rather, I'm surprised at the quirky way they achieved a 16-12 record for the month. After all, Cook County took 6 from Ocala. That means they went a paltry 10-11 versus the other AL West teams. Rich Aurilia (.365-10-29) stands front and center on the Maulers already. Reigning AL MVP, Vlad Guerrero is off to a sluggish start, hitting only .258. Jeff Bagwell is also finding his new digs a bit bothersome for the moment as he hit only .255. I suspect these two will come around soon enough. The veteran members of the rotation, Jamie Moyer and Rocket Clemens are off to solid starts. Maulers need Robert Person (1-3, 7.55) to get on track.

AL Central Standings		
Cook County	16-12	---
Iowa	15-13	1
Plaza	13-15	3
Box City	11-17	5

Iowa is right there after 28 games. Big reason- 40 swipes on the base paths so far. This team can RUN! And the fastest guy on the team, Cristian Guzman, has his motor stalled at the moment as he only has three steals. Mags Ordonez (.352-7-24) is pushing for early MVP recognition. No to be outdone Jose Cruz had a fine month for himself (.280-9-25). The pitchers are having their problems though, as the Rube staff has a 5.29 ERA for the moment. Jason Schmidt (4-1, 2.86) is not the culprit, however. Their staff issues resemble greatly those of the Mudcats.

Sitting in third are the Lions. Heck they're almost at .500. Frankly, John may be the first to admit his surprise as all off-season signs pointed towards a rebuilding. Kevin Young (.327-6-29) and youngster Aaron Rowand (.324-3-21) are big reasons for the early successes. On a defensive note, Bill Selby committed 11 errors in 25 games of play. Some one hit him some more grounders up there! Rod Beck 6 saves for the Lions while Jose Lima appears content in Plaza (3-1, 4.13).

In last are the Boxmen. Only have to look so far down the stats to see the reasons: .227 BA and a 6.39 ERA. Amazingly, Omar Olivares leads the AL in wins out of relief for this team with five. Phil Regan would be proud. Jim Thome (.273-8-19) off to a solid start. Lenny definitely wants to see more from Kenny Lofton (.218), Miguel Tejada (.213), Darin Erstad (.212) and Jason LaRue (.158). Look for more solid performances from here on from Team Brown. They ain't this bad.

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The Mudhens have charged out of the gate to take the early AL West lead. After April they are the only team over .500 in the division. A very nice position to be in indeed. Jason Tyner is hitting a robust .353 with 19 steals already. Richie Sexson (.333-7-21) is quickly becoming a fan favorite. Orlando Cabrera is hitting .333 while making only one error through 22 games played. On the mound the pitchers continue to enjoy pitching in the canyon they call home, having allowed only 13 ding dings so far. Kerry Wood is 4-0 with 53 K's in 43 innings of work. Paxton Crawford went 3-0 and a 0.49 ERA in month one.

AL West Standings

Toledo	19-9	---
Brooklyn	12-16	7
La Crosse	10-18	9
San. Barbara	9-19	10

Brooklyn enjoys the second position within the division, but with a 12-16 record. Obviously, the Bulldogs want to contend but have gotten off to a shaky start. Free agent pickup, Phil Nevin, is blasting away with 8 homers and 23 ribs, but needs to hit a little better (.257). Tino Martinez (.282-7-18) helping to pick up the offensive slack. Roberto Alomar also checks in with a slumpish .255 BA after month one. On the mound things are much better as the Bulldogs have a 3.74 ERA. Greg Maddux (5-2, 1.86) appears to be in dominant form. The bullpen has frankly been stellar so far as they have allowed only 6 earned runs so far.

La Crosse sits in third for the moment. Rough start for Lager pitchers as they have a 6.12 ERA so far. They have allowed 50 taters so far, worst in the AL. On the other hand, the offense is doing its job quite well. Eric Chavez (.348-9-23) and Manny Ramirez (.266-10-22) are bombing away. Local boy Damian Miller is hitting .338 so far.

The Outlaws occupy last after April play. Offense is functioning well as it is hitting .291 with 53 steals. Geoff Blum (.391-5-20) and Garrett Anderson (.333-6-22) starring early. Adam Kennedy sits near the top of the AL steal leader board with 15 swipes. Pitching is off to a sluggish start. Guys like Bart Colon (3-4, 4.44) and Matt Clement (1-3, 4.19) should see better results. Their other numbers are solid.

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AL STATS LEADERBOARD					
Walks		Runs		Steals	
Barry Bonds, MOL	37	Rich Aurilia, CC	26	Jason Tyner, TOL	19
Jim Thome, BOX	22	Barry Bonds, MOL	24	Tony Womack, PLZ	16
Jason Giambi, MIN	22	Eric Chavez, LAC	23	Adam Kennedy, SB	15
Aaron Rowand, PLZ	21	Geoff Blum, SB	23	Luis Castillo, PLZ	15
Eric Chavez, LAC	20	3 tied with	22	2 tied with	10

“Granted, you don't want a tree sloth leading off because he'll clog up the basepaths. I learned this a long time ago, when I thought Mike Scioscia was a suitable leadoff man for my Strat-O-Matic team. Scioscia was the slowest player in the game – his running rating was 8 (with 20 the highest possible) -- but he easily had the highest OBP on my woeful team, so I thought I was being brilliant in leading him off. After just a few games, though, I moved him down in the order because he could never seem to advance more than one base on singles by his teammates. Drove me nuts. And real managers get driven nuts by such things, too.” – from Rob Neyer's ESPN Online column.

NL Notes

No division in BRASSball was more surprising in it's opening performance than the NL East. And hence, the most surprising team leads the division- Springfield. The 'Topes did it with pitching (3.86

ERA) because the team only hit .248 in April. Two young guns have been significant reasons behind the successes of Mr. Burn's Base Ball club. If Mark Mulder (5-1, 3.66) and Ramon Ortiz (4-1, 3.09) keep it up this club will hang around all summer. Billy Wagner has successfully returned from injury and has 11 saves already. Corey Koskie (.303-8-33) is off to a very strong start. Last year's ROY candidate, Mark Quinn, has started well and is hitting .279 with 12 doubles.

NL East Standings

Springfield	19-9	---
Glen Allen	18-10	1
Racine	16-12	3
Charlevoix	9-19	10

The Mets made sure no team ran away and hid from them as they too got off on the right foot, posting an 18-10 April. Glen Allen is being led by young hitting phenom, Albert Pujols (.337-5-22). Danny Bautista has 5 dingers and 18 ribs in only 50 at bats for the Mets. On the mound, Barry Zito is only 2-2 despite excellent numbers. Bob Wickman 8 saves while Todd Ritchie leads the starters (4-1, 3.26). The whole staff in general has been excellent as the team ERA is at 3.46.

In third it's nice to see the Racine Heat off to a fine start. A season above .500 and in the playoff hunt would be great for the patient Heat fans. Apparently ageless Devon White (.354-4-16) checks in with a red-hot start. The Heat are one of the BRASSball squads that are short on pop and have only 21 dingers so far. But veterans like Royce Clayton (.350) and Marty Cordova (.295) are off to good hitting starts. Weird Heat stat: 21 steals, 19 caught stealings. Ouch! 6 different Heat players have registered saves already led by Gene Stechschulte with 5, Billy Koch with 4 and Victor Zambrano with 3. Joe Mays has a nice 3.02 ERA but only 2 wins so far.

In last are the Tigers of Charlevoix. The Tigers are hitting well, but that is offset by pitchers who have a collective 6.01 ERA. Brad Fullmer (.318-8-25) leads the attack for the moment. Marvin Benard has somehow smacked eight taters already. Watchout for Lance Berkman. At .292 and only 5 homers it appears he's layin' in the weeds. Jimmy Anderson 2-4 despite a respectable 4.22 ERA.

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I can't explain what happened to the NL Central in April but I do know Stanley weathered it better than the others and now sit in a good spot despite a 15-13 record. Paul LoDuca (.310-6-13) performing well while Klesko, Dye and Kent provide pop. When Rafael Palmeiro (.224) and Bernie Williams (.184) get their act together the Sioux should start to notch victories at a quicker rate. Defending Cy Young champ Randy Johnson off to a strong start with a 3.06 ERA and 66 K's.

NL Central Standings

Stanley	15-13	---
Columbus	13-15	2
Bloomington	9-19	6
Fleetwood	7-21	8

Columbus is in second and playing OK. The offense is off to a decent start. Rookie Jimmy Rollins is hitting .333 with 8 steals. Carlos Beltran and Scott Rolen are driving in runs with 28 and 21 ribs respectively. I am quite surprised by the 3.80 ERA for the Bucks so far. They keep pitching like that and they'll hang around all summer. Six relief wins from a very good pen. Last year's NL ROY, Randy Wolf, off to a so-so start with a 2-3 record and a 4.03 ERA. He'll be better than that as the season wears on.

Now come two of the more shocking teams so far in BRASSball. First up are the Bees. They finished April at 9-19. Most observers were picking the Bees as a "sleeper" pick to do some damage in the NL. Offense off to a good start, led by rejuvenated Juan Gonzalez (.304-8-24). Bees have made only 9 errors so far. Japanese rookie Ichiro is hitting .333 so far. The key to the Bees was supposed to be their pitchers, but they have a 5.06 ERA at the moment. Late trade acquisition Armando Benitez has imploded as he has a 19.50 ERA to go along with a 0-4 record. Mussina, Carpenter and Buehrle all

sport solid numbers but are 4-7 between them. I suspect the pitching will straighten out. But the hole is a wee bit deeper than the Bees would like.

In last are the Walkers at 7-21. Only Metropolis got off to a worse start. The offense is OK, but stars like Bob Abreu (.248) and Jim Edmonds (.247) need to reverse ground quickly. Shannon Stewart is playing like an all-star with a .341 average and 14 doubles. Chipper doing well also (.286-7-21). The pitching, however, is second worst in the NL at 6.07. Every starter carries an ERA over six. Frankly, they will be better. There's no way the Walkers are this poor.



Ocala is off to the best start in BRASSball and sits comfortably atop the NL West after April play. Two words: Sammy Sosa. Oh my goodness his numbers are just plain ridiculous. He sports a .465 average, 17 homers and 50 ribbies. Oh, and 36 runs scored. The guy has already had the equivalent of Troy O'Leary's usual season. Shawn Green checks in with these early numbers: .313 average, 13 homers and 33 ribs. Javier Vazquez is 5-1 with a 3.92 ERA so far. Rookie Shawn Chacon has an 8.06 ERA, but a 2-2 record. Ah, the joys of pitching for Ocala ☺

NL West Standings		
Ocala	20-8	---
Gem City	17-11	3
N. Georgia	15-13	5
Metropolis	5-23	15

Gem City utilized the second best offense in the NL to tuck in behind Ocala. Greg Vaughn and Carlos Delgado are providing pop and driving in runs but aren't hitting too well so far. Off-season acquisitions Frank Catalanotto (.323) and Julio Lugo (.301) are hitting well. Of some concern for the Wolfpack is that they've made the most errors in the NL so far (24). On the mound Chan Ho Park leads all of BRASSball in victories as he won all six of his April starts. Rick Reed doing OK (3-1, 3.93).

North Georgia got off to a good start thanks in part to their centerfielder who did his best Sammy Sosa impersonation. For April Doug Glanville (yes, that's who) put up these numbers: .359 average, 10 homers, 29 ribs and 13 steals. Placido Polanco and Shane Spencer both hit over .330 in regular duty. Heck, the whole team sports a .302 batting average. Eric Gagne is off to bit of a surprising start on the mound (3-2, 2.25). Tony does have to be disappointed in Scott Schoeneweis and his 7.15 ERA.

In last is Metropolis. They have the worst batting average (.217) and ERA (6.43) in all of BRASSball. On the bright side Dean Palmer (7) and Aramis Ramirez (6) are clubbing some homers early on. Eddie Taubensee has managed to drive in 15 runs with a .202 average. On the mound Mac Suzuki is off to the best start, 2-3 with a 4.24 ERA.



NL STATS LEADERBOARD				
Opponent Batting Avg.		K's per nine innings		Innings
Mac Suzuki, MET	.130	Randy Johnson, STA	12.64	Chan Ho Park, GEM 51.1
Chan Ho Park, GEM	.138	Roy Oswalt, OCA	10.23	Mark Buehrle, BLO 48.2
Eric Gagne, NG	.167	Javier Vazquez, OCA	10.15	Eric Gagne, NG 48.0
Blake Stein, OCA	.175	Daryl Kile, GEM	9.91	Randy Johnson, STA 47.0
Barry Zito, GA	.176	Kevin Brown, STA	9.49	Jon Lieber, NG 46.2

Award Watch

Each month I will bring to your attention a different player for each of the league's individual player awards. The intent is to show different players each month that are having stellar campaigns and not to

highlight the players I think should win. You will see 36 different players occupy this section through the course of the season.

Award	Player	AVG	OBP	SLG	HR	RBI	R	SB	
AL MVP	Rich Aurilia, CC	.365	.425	.661	10	29	26	0	
AL ROY	Geoff Blum, SB	.391	.438	.600	5	20	23	7	
NL MVP	Sammy Sosa, OCA	.465	.515	1.035	17	50	36	0	
NL ROY	Jimmy Rollins, COL	.333	.407	.444	0	6	10	8	
		W	L	SV	ERA	IP	H	BB	K
AL CY	Greg Maddux, BRO	5	2	0	1.86	58	34	8	34
NL CY	Chan Ho Park, GEM	6	0	0	2.98	51	30	20	54

Roster Reminder

Guys, there have been some early errors in regards to rosters. We have had issues involving too many players being used, HAL playing guys that are inactive and other roster oversights. You can only use 25 players for a given month. If they are on MO or MTM contracts you need to inform Corey of your contract decisions on them if they are to play in a given month. Also, please insure that on the "Lineup & Usage" tab for BRASSball that "Minor Leaguers- ineligible" is checked. Thank you.

Net Play

If you have not tried this out yet I highly recommend it. Very enjoyable playing experience. In another hour from writing this I'll be headed online to play some games in another league. Have had only one big time problem but that was solved by Harlan's recommendation of the website www.somnetplay.com. Fixed the issue Paul and I had in no time.

BRASSball Uniforms

As Jon pointed out in an earlier e-mail he is designing/creating BRASSball unis. Cool! Pass along your ideas to Jon. The Fleetwood jersey can be found at: http://www.brassball.org/images/Other/uni_fleetwood.gif.

Web Standings

Good job so far in keeping the league standings updated out on the web. You guys are getting info in to me while Andy and I have been able to update the site 3-4 times a week, on average. Heck, out there right now you'll see different standings than those reflected here in *League News*. We already have some May results. Check it out if you haven't.

Fines

APRIL 2002: Charlevoix fined 1 million for late mailing of rotation to LD.

APRIL 2002: Columbus fined 1 million for late mailing of rotation to LD.

APRIL 2002: Columbus fined 1 million for late mailing of instructions to April opponents.

APRIL 2002: Metropolis fined 250K for instruction error that caused a replay.

APRIL 2002: Moline fined 1 million for using more than 25 players in the month of April.

APRIL 2002: Plaza fined 1 million for not properly reporting their signings.

Trades and Roster Stuff

Corey will be sending these out in a separate e-mail this month.

Upcoming League Deadlines

May 15th Trade deadline for June action

May 15th Results due to opponents and the statisticians (Dave & Corey).

May 25th Instructions and rotations due out for June play.

Next Issue of “League News”

The season continues. Will some of the early surprises fall off or do they strengthen their positions?