Reds Will Capture NL West; Mets to Rise in East

By Danny Su

The western division winners have beaten the eastern division champions for the past four years. That's not going to change this year. The western division has far superior pitching — the key in the National League. Despite my bias toward the Dodgers, I think the Reds will win the National League this year.

National League West

1. Cincinnati Reds

With off-season acquisitions of Tim Belcher and Greg Swindell, together with established starters Jose Rijo and Tom Browning, the Reds have one of the best starting rotations in the league. The bullpen is anchored by Rob Dibble, the most intimidating pitcher in baseball. Now that Randy Myers is gone, Dibble can concentrate on his job without looking over his shoulder. Additional help will come from Norm Charlton and Scott Runkin.

Off-season acquisitions have transformed Cincinnati into a team of speed and power. Barry Larkin, the most capable of hitting 20 home runs and of speed and power. Barry Larkin, Additional help will come from without looking over his shoulder. Dibble can concentrate on his job Now that Randy Myers is gone, is anchored by Rob Dibble, the most rotations in the league. The bullpen together with established starters Tim Belcher and Greg Swindell, Reds have one of the best starting

2. Los Angeles Dodgers

When the Dodgers traded for Eric Davis, they created the impossible, tie game out of Davis and Darryl Strawberry, Bonds since their old school days. Sandwiched between them in center field is Brett Butler, one of the premier leadoff hitters in baseball, who was also errorless in 161 games last year. Unfortunately, outfield is the only bright spot for the Dodgers. They have one of the worst infielders in baseball. Every ground ball hit against the Dodgers is going to be an adventure. Back behind the home plate for another year in Mike Scioscia, the best human roadblock between them in center field is Brett Butler, one of the premier leadoff hitters in baseball, who was also errorless in 161 games last year.

3. Atlanta Braves

With plenty of help from the Reds, Astros, Giants, and the perennial post-season stumbling Pirates, the Braves made it to the World Series. They are not as long as the Cinderella team, and every team in the West will be gunning for them.

4. San Diego Padres

Last year, this bullpen blew 17 save opportunities. With the off-season acquisitions of Randy Myers, the Padres now have a dominant closer. Andy Green will be the man in the boat, and will post his usual 15 saves.

5. San Francisco Giants

The only bright spots for the Giants are the hitting tandem of Will Clark and Matt Williams. They combined for two Gold Gloves, 63 home runs, and 214 RBIs last year.

6. Houston Astros

When the Pirates traded for Bill Virdon and Paul O'Neill, they obtained Bret Saberhagen, Bob Ojeda, and Kevin Gross. The bullpen could be a problem unless Tommy Lasorda gains back some of the weight he had in 1990.

7. Florida Marlins

The Miami Marlins started off with a bang. They added the help of Dodger Stadium and years of wear and tear have slowed him down. Also, they added the help of Dodger Stadium and years of wear and tear have slowed him down.

8. Colorado Rockies

The Rockies are young and need time to develop. They have a promising young catcher, but currently, they are not a competitive team.

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Page 16

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Page 16