

# 'Baseball Fever' hits again

The symptoms are all there. Sore throat. Throbbing headache. Achy body. High temperature.

It can only mean one thing to me...

Baseball season has arrived!

At this very second that you read this, I'm at home. In bed. Cold towel over my forehead. And plenty of baseball on the tube.

I'm bed-stricken with the same sickness so many Americans share with me on this day of all days: Baseball Fever.

Ever since fourth grade, I have mysteriously come down with some type of illness that forces me to stay home on Opening Day.

(Sorry Mom, but you have to admit, I always had you fooled.)

Today is shaping up to be one of the best ones yet.

A total of seven games will be on either ESPN or ESPN2 from 10:05 a.m. to 10:35 p.m.

Some of the more intriguing matchups include Ken Griffey Jr.'s debut as a Red against the Brewers, and Sammy Sosa (a.k.a. the Cubs) vs. Mark McGwire (a.k.a. the Cardinals) game.

And of course, there's the meeting between country superstar Garth Brooks' two teams, the Padres and the Mets.

To top it all off, sports junkies also get an added treat in the NCAA Championship game at 6:30 p.m.

But this day is all about baseball.

Opening Day always marks the beginning of the best time of the year — spring and summer.

Is there really a better feeling than walking around Eugene in the spring?

Maybe the only feeling that tops it is watching your favorite team play for the first time of the season.

And with that, let me look deep into my crystal ball and give you my predictions for the 2000 baseball season.

## NL West

Everybody is expecting Arizona to repeat as division champions after making no real changes to their roster. But what you have to remember is that many Diamondbacks had "career years." The team to watch may be the Giants. With the fancy new Pacific Bell Park — and its 307-foot right field porch — Barry Bonds and company may make some noise. And you can't count out the Padres, who added Ryan Klesko, Bret Boone and Al Martin. The only problem for San Diego is that their pitching is as

thin as can be. Notice which high-profile team I haven't mentioned? That's right. The Dodgers will once again prove that money (read: Kevin Brown) does not buy championships.

## NL Central

Home run central will attract plenty of attention, but the key to which team comes out on top will be the pitching. Expect St. Louis to edge out the Reds thanks to the addition of right-handers Darryl Kile and Pat Hentgen. The acquisition



Jeff Smith

Mike Hampton's left arm.

## NL East

The team to watch in this talented division is the Phillies. The starting rotation was bolstered with the addition of Andy Ashby, who should provide a devastating one-two punch with Curt Schilling. With that said, however, expect Atlanta to again grab the division crown with a healthy Andres Galarraga in the mix. The Mets will find that the loss of John Olerud will have a dramatic effect, and should they trade away Rickey Henderson, third place would be all theirs.

## AL West

Yo, Junior! I thought you wanted some pitching. Well, the Mariners have finally answered your request and they won't need you to win games. Olerud will provide a consistent bat, and Aaron Sele, Freddy Garcia and Brett Tomko will anchor a much improved starting rotation. The Oakland A's will surely provide stiff competition. But as it is with most teams these days, the pitching will not be enough to capture the division. Anaheim will also be in the race in this wide-open division, but the loss of Edmonds hurts.

## AL Central

Somewhere, Drew Carey is smiling. His Cleveland team is loaded and ready for a lengthy playoff run. How stacked is Cleveland on the offensive side?

Big-boppers David Justice and Travis Fryman, who would both be the main weapons in most lineups, are practically forgotten. Leadoff man Kenny Lofton will miss the first month or so recovering from a dislocated shoulder. But when he returns, watch out.

The only team that has a realistic shot at competing with Cleveland is Chicago. But although the White Sox have talent, they lack that all-so important veteran leadership.

## AL East

I hate to write this. Please, don't make me write this. All right, all right, I'll concede it. The "Damn Yankees" will once again capture the East, but don't expect them to three-peat ala the NBA's Chicago Bulls as World Series Champions. The Yankees need to improve their bench, acquire a decent No. 5 starter and find that necessary "home run threat."

## And the winner is...

Cleveland. Drew Carey will have plenty of reason to celebrate in October. The Cardinals' bullpen is their major weakness and the potent Cleveland lineup will capitalize.

There you go folks, the 2000 baseball season is here. Enjoy every bit of it.

And don't forget the magical words of James Earl Jones (as Terrence Mann) to Kevin Costner (as Ray Kinsella) in the classic movie "Field of Dreams."

"The one constant through all the years, Ray, has been baseball. America has rolled by like an army of steamrollers. It's been erased like a blackboard, rebuilt, and erased again. But baseball has marked the time. This field, this game, is a part of our past, Ray. It reminds us of all that once was good, and that could be again. Oh, people will come, Ray. People will most definitely come." Amen, and play ball!

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## Tennis

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March, when it hosted them in nonconference matchups.

Oregon was hoping for revenge against the schools after a 7-2 drubbing at the hands of the Huskies and a heartbreaking come-from-behind-loss to Washington State.

Revenge was not in store though as Oregon lost to both Washington schools and fell to 6-12, and 1-7 in the Pac-10.

On Friday, Oregon took on Washington State in Pullman. At the No. 1 spot, Senior Alina Wygonowska defeated the Cougars' Patrycja Gajdzik to start the match. Janice Nyland and freshman Jeanette Mattsson also won in singles play. The Cougars took the remaining singles matches, tying the contest at 3-3.

Doubles play, which was Ore-

gon's downfall in the earlier matchup, decided the match. The teams split the top two doubles, putting the burden on sophomores Adeline Arnaud and Valerie Young. The duo battled Moniek Van de Ven and Kathleen Pienaar to a 8-8 tie, setting up a tiebreaker that would decide the match. But the ball bounced Washington State's way.

The Ducks had to put the loss behind them and travel to Seattle on Sunday to face No. 34 Washington.

Freshman Monika Geiczys and sophomore Janice Nyland led the Ducks. Nyland upended her first ranked opponent of the season, upsetting No. 88 Zuzana Stunova, 7-6, 6-1. No. 58 Geiczys disposed of Ilona Kordonskaya in three sets.

The team of Wygonowska and sophomore Adeline Arnaud defeated Kordonskaya and Stunova in doubles play. But it wasn't enough as the Huskies won the remaining matches to win, 6-3.