



Brief Notes; Karma Dept.

Vince Coleman was always a figure of low drama, culminating in his debacle of assault, conviction, plea-bargain, and summary dismissal from the worst team in baseball. Lest we forget, let's re-cap.

He was Rookie of the Year for the '85 Cardinals, one of the best teams in the past twenty years. Although he could evade a tag at second base, he somehow couldn't elude a 5mph killer tarp machine at Busch Stadium, suffering a leg injury and contributing to a World Series defeat.

He was an annual stolen base leader with an abysmal on-base percentage. He could leg out impossible infield hits, but his strikeouts were a constant headache. He never could figure out how to steal first.

In '91, the Cards gave up on him, and he signed as a free agent with the Mets. He immediately established himself as a fixture of locker room strife and complaint, at one time claiming the Shea Stadium surface was costing his place in, get this, the Hall of Fame.

This litany of woe came to its predictable climax when Coleman tossed a chunk of dynamite into a crowd of his wage payers outside Chavez Ravine and then sped off in Darryl Strawberry's jeep, laughing.

At this time, I suggested that perhaps this over-paid, out of touch child could benefit from a "service job at the beach". Now, feeding other people can be a very spiritual thing when it's done right. It's also bloody hard and dangerous work. And therein lies the rub.

Dateline: Nov. 6, 1993, L.A. The Oregonian. Featured is a wire service photo, of an out of work ball-player. He's decked out in an apron and a paper hat. He's doing community service. He's serving food to volunteer fire-fighters in Malibu Beach. Yes, it's Vince Coleman.

And do you know what the best thing is about this picture? He's smiling. And this is the last time I will write about Vince Coleman.

Petty Bitchiness Dept.

Last year, Raphael Palmiero took the Texas Rangers to arbitration and won, with good reason. The Rangers had no case. Palmiero is one of the new stars of the game and a backbone of this team, along with Franco and Gonzalez. The last time we looked, the Rangers were one pitcher away from a pennant.

Nevertheless, in a fit of feudal temper, the owners of the Rangers refused to deal with Palmiero in good faith this year, and signed a lame duck Will Clark to a free agent contract instead.

In the following hubub, Palmiero named Clark a Union-Busting Greedhead, and Will said Raphael was entitled to his opinion.

Baseball is a business, involving vast amounts of money, and an owner can hire and terminate employees as he or she sees fit. Perhaps all professional sports should be socialized and treated as public works, with elected directors. But that's another issue.

Raphael Palmiero has just plain blown away Will Clark in every stat that counts for the last two years. He is clearly the better ballplayer. This contract decision is nothing more than a vendetta on the part of the Texas Rangers' managing partner, and the long suffering fans in Dallas deserve better. If you number yourself one of these, direct your correspondence to;

The Texas Rangers Baseball Club
1799 Copeland Rd.
Arlington, TX
Attn: George Bush III

QUIZ

1) Three sluggers had an astonishing career RBI per game ratio of .92. Who doesn't belong here?
A) Ted Williams
B) Sam Thompson
C) Lou Gehrig
D) Hank Greenberg

2) Locked into an epic groove, he hit 10 dingers in 20 at bats in 1968. Who was this guy?
A) Willie McCovey
B) Billy Williams
C) Richie Allen
D) Frank Howard

3) Who is the only Hall of Famer to homer in his first at-bat on opening day?
A) Paul Waner
B) Earl Averill
C) Lou Brock
D) Yogi Berra

4) Tony Perez is going in the Hall next year, if justice prevails. Which one of these guys has more RBIs than Tony?
A) Rogers Hornsby
B) Tris Speaker
C) Harmon Killebrew
D) Reggie Jackson

5) Everyone knows Al Kaline won a batting title at age 20, who was the youngest in the National League?
A) Rico Carty
B) Pete Reiser
C) Billy Hamilton
D) Bill Madlock

6) Who was the oldest moundsman to record 300 strikeouts in a season?
A) Steve Carlton
B) Tim Lincecum
C) Mike Scott
D) Don Sutton

7) And which of these geezers is the oldest player to hit 40 homers in a season?

- A) Darrel Evans
- B) Carl Yastrzemski
- C) Hank Aaron
- D) Mike Schmidt

8) Who is the only player to score six runs in a game twice?

- A) Ty Cobb
- B) Mel Ott
- C) Stan Musial
- D) Ricky Henderson

9) Which set of siblings garnered the most Major-League base hits?

- A) Hank and Tommy Aaron
- B) Paul and Lloyd Waner
- C) Joe, Dom & Vince DiMaggio
- D) Felipe, Matty & Jesus Alou

10) Which of these twirlers was the youngest when they won the Cy Young?

- A) Fernando Valenzuela
- B) Tom Glavine
- C) Dwight Gooden
- D) Bret Saberhagen

EXTRA CREDIT

Who was the only Cy Young award winner to have a son play in the Majors?

Next Month: Big League Hardball in Cannon Beach! Reader Mail: The State of the Game and a contest with PRIZES!

Baseball Quiz Answers-
1-A 6-C
2-D 7-A
3-B 8-B
4-D 9-B
5-B 10-C

EXTRA CREDIT- Vernon Law, whose son Vance tatted for the Portland Bevos before moving up to the Pirates in 1980.

Letters from Chicago
by Marsha Morgan

Oh, it was a very sad day in Bridgeport. Mighty Bo had struck out. Not to mention the "Big Hurt" and the even bigger Bell. Chicago had three mighty Caseys and they had all struck out.

As I walked to the bus stop on the day after the Sox ignominious defeat in Comisky Park, I saw a hand lettered sign in the gutter, "White Sox Suck" and graffiti on a newly painted wall, a more economical, "Sox Suk." It's not that south side fans are rude (they are), but they show their anger, disappointment and sadness. They don't make excuses, they just express themselves.

At first this didn't sit right with me. I'm a Cubs fan after all, and I was shocked when the Sox fans booed their own home team during the first two games of the playoffs. Cubs fans go out of their minds when the team makes it to .500, even when they win a game decisively, northsiders celebrate for days after.

A few days before, I attended a party on Taylor Street in what remained of the old Italian neighborhood before Mayor Richard J. Daley turned it into a sprawling, soul-less

university. Taylor street was experiencing gentrification, and the party I attended was a grand old six-flat, newly renovated and inhabited by migrating North Siders. The party was on two levels and downstairs, the large TV screen was surrounded by an upwardly mobile crowd cheering the Sox in that do-or-die Sox game in Toronto. I joined in, of course, at this point, happy to be cheering any winning Chicago team.

North side fans are forgiving. They wait until next year, they make excuses, they fill the stadium game after game and cheer for a team completely out of the running.

The south siders tolerate no excuses. There is no pretence at gentlemanly or ladylike sportsmanship. When the Cubs won the division and went to the playoffs against San Diego, Sox fans wore San Diego T-shirts and hats. When the Sox stink up the south side, the fans do not speak encouragingly about next year. They get mad. Sox suk.

Perhaps it is time we do the same, to speak out in anger and tell the Chicago Cubs organization just how disappointing it is to be a Cubs fan. How terrible it is to tell our children and our friends, year after year, to 'wait until next year'. To make excuses and talk about sportsmanship and sticking with your team, win or lose,

regardless of how crazy your friends and especially your children think you might be. Being a Cubs fan is like expecting the tooth fairy to leave money when you have your wisdom teeth removed.

Enough already. Let's quit saying wait until next year. The waiting should be over by now and the rewards should be forthcoming. Get it together, guys. I don't care whether it's management or coaching or leadership or hitting or pitching or the fact that the locker rooms are as old as Old Man Doubleday. For god's sake, let's fervently pray that the Cubs make their Number One resolution in 1994 to Play Ball, really Play Ball! Otherwise, I resolve to attend all Cubs games in the parking lot of the 7-11 across the street from the old friendly confines and yell, Cubs Stink. Cubs Stink. Oh, God. That felt sooo good. Just try it once. You'll feel so much better. Cubs Stink!

(Although we understand Marsha is just going through the winter withdrawal symptoms common in baseball fans, we feel we must print this disclaimer. Any opinions of the author about the Cubs or their fans, are strictly those of the author, and are not necessarily those of The Upper Left Edge, its publishers, editors, or its advertisers. It shall continue to be the policy of this paper to support the Chicago Cubs to its last dying breath. -ed)