

# SPORTS BOARD

SPORTS, GAMING, HORSERACING

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## 1987 Major League Baseball Season Underway

By William Ramirez

"Oh, no! It is that time again? Quick! Turn on the TV. No, wrong channel. I can't believe it's back already. Hon, will you bring me a cold drink?"

Yes, folks. It's that time again... BASEBALL, the "All-American" sport. Here we are with the season one month old and there is already one team trying to run away with the division, records being broken, players reaching milestones and there has even been a no-hitter.

The Milwaukee Brewers have surprised everyone this year, breaking an American League record by winning their first 11 games (previously held by the

Oakland A's in 1981); they then tied the Major League record by winning 13 straight games, with the 1983 Atlanta Braves. In their fourteenth game, the Chicago White Sox brought the Brewers down to reality, handing them their first loss of the season.

In the midst of the Brewers' winning streak, their young pitcher Juan Nieves tossed the first no-hitter in his career and for 1987. Nieves no hit the Baltimore Orioles. Another player making headlines was Mike Schmidt, who hit his 500th career homerun.

The Brewers may be having a great start, but they could stumble near the All-Star break. They'll have a tough time winning the division unless the Yankees,

PREDICTED FINISHES	
American League East	American League West
New York	California
Cleveland	Texas
Boston	Minnesota
Milwaukee	Oakland
Toronto	Kansas City
Detroit	Chicago
Baltimore	Seattle
National League East	National League West
New York	Cincinnati
St. Louis	San Francisco
Philadelphia	Los Angeles
Chicago	Houston
Montreal	San Diego
Pittsburg	Atlanta

who have already put together a nine-game winning streak this season, could overcome the Brewers and have the division wrapped up by early September.

Also contributing to the dogfight will be the Cleveland Indians and defending A.L. Champions Boston Red Sox. Toronto blew their chance two years ago and won't be back for a few years. Baltimore and Detroit will struggle as they try to rebuild.

In the American League West the Minnesota Twins are starting out impressively, but that's routine for them. The Twins have been known to start out strong, but just choke in the end. The teams to watch in the West are the California Angels and the Texas Rangers. Although the Rangers have had a slow start, they'll be in the race soon enough. Kansas City may have a 20-game winner in Danny Jackson, but they'll need help from their other pitchers to even contend. The same may be said for Oakland, as their pitching staff will need to shape up. Chicago and Seattle, both hot and cold teams, won't be able to put it together this year as the other teams won't give them a chance to get hot.

In the National League there really have been no surprises, as the teams that are in first place — the Cincinnati Reds and the New York Mets — were expected to be.

The Mets of the NL East should run away with the division as they did in 1986. The only teams that may challenge New York are Philadelphia and St. Louis. The Phillies' hitting is looking exceptional, while St. Louis could challenge for best pitching.

In the National League the Chicago Cubs had their best chance in 1984. Their glory won't return for awhile. The Pittsburgh Pirates and Montreal Expos will have a hopeless year and battle for the cellar in the East.

Now finally, the National League West, possibly the best division in the major leagues this year, with strong teams in Cincinnati, Houston, Los Angeles and San Francisco, will enjoy domination that harks back to the division's preeminence in the 70's.

The San Diego Padres took control of the West in 1984 and lost it the past two years. They won't be back until their team matures. Their team is full of youngsters, including 1st year coach Larry Bowa. The Atlanta Braves are in the same boat as the Padres. Since winning the division in 1983, they've been on a downfall. 1987 will be no different.

So there you have the final four of the 1987 Major League season — the Yankees, Angels, Mets and Reds. And for the World Series, well....

## Gooden leaves center

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Cheered on by New York fans, Mets pitcher Dwight Gooden waved goodbye to a drug rehabilitation center Wednesday and ended 28 days of treatment for cocaine use.

Gooden, wearing a green windbreaker and blue sweat pants, walked briskly out of the Smithers Alcoholism and Treatment Center shortly after 1 p.m. PDT. He entered a waiting car and was driven away, apparently to his home on Long Island.

The 1985 National League Cy Young Award winner was surrounded by a crowd of about 50 people outside the center, but did not speak. However, he did wave to a group of people gathered in a second-floor window at the center.

Gooden, 22, entered the center April 2 after testing positive for cocaine use. He is expected to resume pitching in the major leagues by June 1 following a training program that will include private workouts at Shea Stadium and a couple of starts at Class AAA Tidewater of the International League.

The Mets will hold a news briefing with General Manager Frank Cashen, Manager Davey Johnson, Dr. Allan Lanz of the Smithers center and Gooden Thursday afternoon at Shea Stadium. A Mets spokesman said the pitcher would read a prepared statement but wouldn't answer questions.

Baseball Commissioner Peter Ueberroth must give permission before Gooden is activated. Ueberroth had threatened to suspend the pitcher unless he sought treatment for his drug problem.

Gooden's lawyer, Charles Ehrlich, said last week he had been told that Gooden was an occasional user of the drug and not an addict.

The Mets held a 15-minute meeting about three hours before Wednesday night's game against the Houston Astros to brief the players on Gooden's situation.

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