

# Take me out to the ball...

If you were fortunate enough to watch the New York Yankees administer a little payback on the Boston Red Sox earlier this week by a score of 8-1, then no matter what the climate, it's safe to say the 2005 baseball season has finally arrived.

A sellout crowd at Yankee Stadium, bundled up like they were at a football game instead of a baseball contest, was the signal that "America's Pastime," baseball, dormant for the last five months, is here at last.

Baseball purists have been waiting — still shocked at the events that transpired last October with the remarkable comeback of the Boston Red Sox, down to 3-0 to the New York Yankees in the American League Championship Series, rallying to win 4-3 and, then, the unbelievable sweep of the St. Louis Cardinals in the World Series.

Boston's historical quest for the professional baseball championship had lasted 86 years, and the eventual failure to overcome some obstacles leading to defeat had always been a forgone conclusion in the past.

In the upcoming months during the regular season, the Red Sox can expect close scrutiny from the rest of the league and the public as they attempt to prove their triumph was not a fluke.

Only the New York Yankees — in 1998, 1999 and 2000 — have been able to repeat as baseball's premier team in successive years. Following their three-peat and coming close to victory in 2001, the Arizona Diamondbacks, the Anaheim Angels, the Florida Marlins and the Boston Red Sox have won major league baseball's subsequent annual grandest prize, the World Series.

With Boston's acquisition of Edgar Renteria, a free agent, the loss of Nomar Garciaparra doesn't seem as bad as expected, and former Yankee David Wells should help the Red Sox make up for the departure of Pedro Martinez to the New York Mets.

The Yankees, with Boss George Steinbrenner's big bucks, picked up Randy Johnson from Arizona, and he started their season's opener just where he was expected to deliver.

The Cardinals and manager Tony LaRussa are still



## SPORTS PACE

By Huel Washington

wondering what ran over them in the World Series with Boston, but they think they have a few tricks up their sleeves when they kept Reggie Sanders from leaving and have Albert Pujols, who was barely nosed out by Barry Bonds for the Most Valuable Player trophy last season.

Renteria left St. Louis, but the vacancy was filled by the signing of David Eckstein, who deserted the Los Angeles Angels for more money. The Angels are not in Anaheim any more. The Houston Astros snuck in the back door last year making the playoffs while the other teams, like the San Francisco Giants, Los Angeles Dodgers and the San Diego Padres, were battling and not watching their backs. They almost made the World Series and would bear watching.

Roger Clemens has decided to return for another year, and the three Bees — Larry Berkman, Craig Biggio and Jeff Bagwell — offer an offensive threat, every game, which frightens the opposition. They hit 81 homeruns. And Andy Petite, who convinced Roger to come home, is expected to help his team make the playoffs again.

Of course, the fate of Barry Bonds and his rapid recovery from knee surgery will certainly weigh heavily on the mind of San Francisco Giants manager Felipe Alou. His son, Moises, will be playing for him for the first time, and that will ease his mind somewhat while Bonds is recuperating.

Alou's son hit 39 homeruns last year with the Chicago Cubs, so SBC Park just might be to his liking on a sunny day, or even at night.

The pitching of Jason Schmidt, Kurt Rueter, Jerome Williams, and Armando Benitez to open for Ron Ney as the closer, might just be what the Giants' pitching staff needs to stay in the hunt for the division title and the playoffs in October.

Always a threat to make the playoffs in the battle of the North against the South are the Los Angeles Dodgers, who have added former Giant Jeff Kent, J.D. Drew, Jason Phillips and Jose Valentin, who combined last season for 88 homeruns for their teams last year.

Besides adding Pedro Martinez, the Mets obtained some power with Carlos Beltran roaming the gap in centerfield. With 38 homeruns and 104 runs batted in, Beltran was one of the best outfield acquisitions on the free trading market.

Each of the 30 clubs is considered a contender to the throne, but can Boston repeat their remarkable feat? Or, is this a once in a lifetime thing that occurs every 86 years? That will be the main subject for the ensuing months until late in the season.

Oh, yes, there is a new team: the Washington Nationals, formerly the Montreal Expos. Don't count them out. They have a few outstanding players and a very good manager named Frank Robinson, the pride of Oakland and the Cincinnati Reds.

## Corruption

(Continued from Page 4)

tion, one year of which she must serve under house arrest. She also must pay \$30,000 in restitution and a \$2,300 fine.

She was convicted in October on charges she conspired to defraud a city community college of about \$224,000 by setting up an adult-education program involving ghost students and nonexistent classes.

The case was based partly on financial records and partly on FBI wiretaps that recorded Ali discussing the scheme on the telephone.

Ali is married to Shamsud-din Ali, a Muslim leader known for his close ties to city Democrats. Both Alis are awaiting trial on racketeering charges more closely related to the corruption probe.

# IF YOU'RE READY TO MOVE UP, APPLY YOURSELF.



Announcing the start of something big. Your career at one of the world's most renowned resorts — The Mirage or TI. We promise you a fun, challenging environment with some of the most generous benefits in the industry; including comprehensive health coverage and more chances for growth and promotion than anywhere else. If you're motivated, outgoing, and ready to make a difference, contact us today.



[mgmmirage.com/employment](http://mgmmirage.com/employment)

For a complete listing of jobs at The Mirage or TI call 792-JOBS (5627) or log on to [mgmmirage.com/employment](http://mgmmirage.com/employment).

Located at the NW corner of the TI Guest Parking Garage.

Equal Opportunity Employer. Pre-employment drug testing is a condition of employment.