

## **MLB Baseball Weekly --- Friday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

### **BY MATTHEW HATFIELD**

Welcome to our first edition of MLB Weekly for this season on a Friday, the 18<sup>th</sup> of April. Baseball has been back a couple of weeks, and ever since the College Basketball Final Four concluded, I've kept a close eye on all the happenings on the diamond. Here's what has stood out to me thus far.....

#### **Marathon Match:**

On Thursday night, the defending National League Champion Colorado Rockies edged the San Diego Padres 2-1 in a 22-inning affair that didn't end until 4:21 AM (EST). The score would be an even bigger surprise if it was a game at Coors Field. Of course, it was played at the pitcher friendly Petco Park, making the score a bit more understandable. The length of the contest? Not so much. Overall there were only three extra base hits the entire evening *{and morning!}*, plus there were more guys left on base (30) than total hits (25) by the two teams combined.

Colorado got an RBI double from shortstop Troy Tulowitzki in the Top of the 22<sup>nd</sup> that proved to be the difference in the ninth longest game in baseball history. It was the longest game since 1993. There were 225 pitches thrown by the San Diego bullpen alone. Amazingly, the game was scoreless until the 14<sup>th</sup> inning when both teams scored their first run of the night. Willy Taveras, the Rockies' leadoff man, had ten at-bats, and it's a pretty safe bet that no player in the sport will get that many in a single game the rest of the year.

Two of the star players in the matchup, 2007 Cy Young Award winner Jake Peavy and NL MVP runner-up Matt Holliday, each performed at a high level. Peavy pitched eight strong innings, allowing only four hits, no runs and fanning 11, but unfortunately for San Diego it wasn't good enough for him to get the victory. Holliday got three hits and was walked three times, showing just what kind of respect he is given by the pitchers that have to face him.

The Padres and Rockies continue to look up at the reigning NL West division Champion Arizona Diamondbacks in the standings. At 11-4 overall, Arizona has the best record in the National League and in all of Major League Baseball. A matter of fact, the Diamondbacks recently had their first home sweep of the Los Angeles Dodgers since the 2005 season and also completed a sweep of the Rockies back on April 6<sup>th</sup>. That's the really bad news for the Padres, who must turn around and begin a three-game series with the D-Backs on Friday night.

#### **Tejada Talk:**

Earlier this week in an interview with ESPN 60, the network's attempt at creating their own sports version of CBS' *60 Minutes* program, Houston Astros shortstop Miguel

Tejada was shown a document. It was his birth certificate, which states that he's 33 years of age instead of 31 as previously thought. Tejada agreed to do the interview, but obviously was caught off guard and surprised when the reporter revealed that Tejada had been lying since he signed his first big league contract in 1993. In addition, published reports indicate that Tejada's name is spelled 'Tejada' on his real birth certificate.

Truly, the whole thing should not come as a shock to anyone. After all, we are talking about a baseball player who was born in the Dominican Republic. Several non-US born baseball players have their age question and some point in time. This isn't exactly the first lie that Tejada, the 2002 MVP and 2005 All-Star Game MVP, has been caught in either. Tejada was mentioned in the Mitchell Report that came out last December, alleging that he received \$1500 worth of steroids.

Obviously, ESPN's intentions were to humiliate a guy whose career is close to coming to an end, and they most definitely would not have done this type of interview. Case and point, where were Tim Kurkjian, Peter Gammons and company grilling Barry Bonds the past few years? No where to be found, and when they did have Bonds, they never asked him the tough questions or brought up steroids.

So the bottom line I guess is this – nobody really cares a ton that Tejada is two years older than originally thought considering he's not the first nor will he be the last to lie about their age *{like we really trusted Tejada to begin with, right?}*, and it wasn't the most professional of jobs done by ESPN in the process.

#### **HOT:**

**Diamondbacks pitcher Brandon Webb - The 2006 Cy Young Award winner could win another Cy Young this year. Webb is 4-0 with 22 strikeouts and a 1.86ERA for a Diamondbacks team that has the best record in all of Major League Baseball.**

**Cubs first baseman Derrek Lee - Hitting over .350 for a Chicago team in search of a second straight NL Central division crown, Lee is tied for the league-lead in home runs with six and has 24 base hits already.**

**Royals pitchers Zack Greinke and Brian Bannister - Each of these two Kansas City starters is 3-0 with an ERA below 1.00 (Greinke at 0.75 and Bannister at 0.86). Each also has thrown a Complete Game, helping the Royals' bullpen a great deal.**

#### **NOT:**

**Washington Nationals - After beginning the season 3-0, Manny Acta's club has lost 12 of their last 13. Their first three defeats were all by just one run, but since they've dropped seven games by three or more runs.**

**Red Sox DH David Ortiz - While teammate Manny Ramirez is tearing the cover off of the baseball, especially when playing the Yankees, Big Papi has somewhat struggled to begin the season.**

**Indians pitcher C.C. Sabathia - Through four starts this season, Sabathia is not off to the start he and the Tribe envisioned. He's 0-3 with a 13.50ERA and as many walks (14) as strikeouts.**



**Gil Meche, along with Zack Greinke and Brian Bannister, give the Kansas City Royals three serviceable starting pitchers to possibly surprise people and make a push towards .500 this season.** (Photo Courtesy of Jamie Squire of Getty Images)

**TRIVIA QUESTION OF THE WEEK:**

**Which active pitcher has the most 10-strikeout games in his big league career?**