

MLB Baseball Weekly --- Friday, June 20th, 2008
BY MATTHEW HATFIELD

Managers were fired left and right this week. The New York Mets and General Manager Omar Minaya decided it was finally time to part ways with Willie Randolph, a decision that was not as bad as their decision to let him go at 3AM in the morning on Tuesday following a win over the AL-West leading Angels in Anaheim. Jerry Manuel, a former AL Manager of the Year with the Chicago White Sox, takes over on an interim basis.

Seattle, the club with baseball's worst record, figured that John McLaren's tirade wasn't the spark the Mariners needed, so they dumped him in favor of bench coach Jim 'I'm not a wrinkled old man' Riggleman {*note - Riggleman is about 13 months younger than McLaren, who's 56*}.

Today, the Toronto Blue Jays gave John Gibbons the ax and hired the club's former Skipper, Cito Gaston. A former All-Star outfielder that played with the San Diego Padres, Atlanta Braves and Pittsburgh Pirates, Gaston is best remembered for guiding the Blue Jays to a pair of World Series titles in 1992 and 1993. He's had a weird, yet successful managing career as he began his stay in Toronto with four consecutive winning seasons, only to follow that with four straight losing years.



Willie Randolph's firing as Mets Manager not only was poorly timed, but probably did very little to boost the team's morale. The Mets had won three of their last four games prior to Randolph's dismissal at roughly 3AM on Tuesday morning. (Photo Courtesy of WFAN)

AMERICAN LEAGUE:



AL Starting Pitcher – Cliff Lee – Cleveland Indians



Starter – Ervin Santana – Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim



Starter – Joe Saunders – Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim



Starter – Daisuke Matsuzaka – Boston Red Sox



Starter – Justin Duchscherer – Oakland Athletics



Starter – Andy Sonnanstine – Tampa Bay Rays



Starter – Mike Mussina – New York Yankees



Reliever – Mariano Rivera – New York Yankees



Reliever – Jonathan Papelbon – Boston Red Sox



Reliever – Joakim Soria – Kansas City Royals



Reliever – Joe Nathan – Minnesota Twins



Reliever – Francisco Rodriguez – Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim



Reliever – George Sherrill – Baltimore Orioles

NATIONAL LEAGUE:



NL Starting Pitcher – Brandon Webb – Arizona Diamondbacks



Starter – Tim Lincecum – San Francisco Giants



Starter – Ben Sheets – Milwaukee Brewers



Starter – Jake Peavy – San Diego Padres



Starter – Ryan Dempster – Chicago Cubs



Starter – Edinson Volquez – Cincinnati Reds



Starter – Kyle Lohse – St. Louis Cardinals



Reliever – Brad Lidge – Philadelphia Phillies



Reliever – Chad Durbin – Philadelphia Phillies



Reliever – Matt Capps – Pittsburgh Pirates



Reliever – Brian Fuentes – Colorado Rockies



Reliever – Kevin Gregg – Florida Marlins



Reliever – Carlos Marmol – Chicago Cubs

HOT:

New York Yankees - Winners of seven straight and eight of their last ten, the Bronx Bombers are back in the AL Wild Card discussion thanks to sweeping the San Diego Padres this week during Interleague play.

Kansas City Royals - Both hot and cold throughout the year, the last place Royals are heating up again as they've won five in a row, including sweeping the St. Louis Cardinals.

NOT:

Houston Astros - Cecil Cooper's bunch has lost eight in a row to fall to 33-40, which puts them 12 games back of the first place Chicago Cubs in the NL Central and only 0.5 game ahead of the Cincinnati Reds.

Phillies second baseman Chase Utley - Still a possible NL MVP candidate, Utley is 0-for-20 his last five games. For the year though, Philly can forgive him because he's still in the running to lead the Major in home runs, which is never a bad thing.

TRIVIA QUESTION OF THE WEEK:

Cito Gaston has been named the Toronto Blue Jays' new Manager, replacing John Gibbons. When Gaston was fired by the club in 1997 with five games remaining, who replaced him as Skipper?

Last Week's Answer: Scott Williamson (1999)