

Baseball's Premier Magazine *Street & Schmooody's* brings you the SPB1 September/October regular season recap. What an ending to the 1985 season, where some very close finishes made division and wild card hopefuls either joyful or left on the platform to wait until next year.

In the AL East, not a single team played above .500 for the month, and the Cleveland Spiders (90-72) took advantage of the subpar performances to slip two games past the Flames, breaking their season long neck to neck battle and claim a consecutive divisional flag (and third in a row, winning the NL East before realignment). Even with a dismal 13-17 September record, the Spiders settled for the AL ERA title. 20-game winner and September AL Pitcher of the Month SP John Tudor (5-1 1.07 40k 7GS 5CG 2ShO) literally carried the Spiders across the finish line and will be the workhorse for this playoff team.

Not taking advantage of the poor September play by the Spiders, the Cuyahoga River Flames (88-74) matched the futility with a five game losing streak before the start of their series with the Spiders. Now trailing by four games, the Flames managed to pick up a game in the series with the Spiders, but then unfortunately ran into a buzzsaw losing five straight at home to the Hoosiers, basically sealing the end of their season. The Flames are a team with some potential to break their five straight second place finishes. Staying away from long losing streaks will help.

The Highlanders (72-90) played ten games under .500 in a Jeckyl-Hyde September. Their September team ERA was a respectable 3.57, but the team hit .233. They had ninety wins two years in a row followed by ninety losses two years in a row. Hitting and pitching will need to be on the same page to get back to ninety wins.

For the Zorros (57-105) a 10-14 September could not prevent a 105 loss season. For Zorros fans, the Milwaukee Road has gone from a 105 loss season to an 80 win season this season. So there is that hope. The Rockford Forest Citys also duplicated the Road's feat this season with a 23 game improvement, going from 81 wins to 104 and a wild card. Honorable mention goes to the Bloomington Hoosiers 22 game improvement (87 wins to 109). But all hail the New York Mets 30 game improvement from 76 wins to 106. The Zorros may need an identity change as they are hardly mentioned in their own review.

A 6-24 September gave the Triangles (47-115) the most losses since the '81 Niskayuna Nationals 116 loss season. A September 5.69 team ERA and .201 team batting average have got fans wondering: can anyone on this team play baseball? Perhaps SS Hubie Brooks (.301 1 11) but not much else for the future, except maybe CF Devon White. 40 year old Steve Carlton, 35 year olds Vida Blue (1-16 7.87 has got to be one of the most futile pitching lines in SPB1 history) and Milt Wilcox, and 34 year olds Ray Burris and Vern Ruhle identify Triangles needs next season.

In the AL West, the Bloomington Hoosiers (109-53) used a crushing 20-4 September to nail down the best record in the SPB1 and the first divisional flag for Steve Lehman. September Player of the Month 1B Keith Hernandez (.419 6 24) led a team that hit almost 30 points better in September than the next closest team. A rotation hitting its prime, these Hoosiers will be looking to repeat last season's championship.

The Rockford Forest Citys (104-58) used two old timers, Bob Forsch (2-2 1.93) and Jim Slaton (4-0 1.98) to pitch the Forest Citys to a 22-8 September record and an eleven and a half game lead over the second wild card. Like the Hoosiers, this team is trending upwards beyond the playoffs. MVP candidate 38 year old 1B Darrell Evans led

the SPB1 with 43 home runs. Could the playoffs be his last swan song? The Forest Citys almost captured the AL September home run flag, losing to the Alley Cats 42-41.

The Frankfort Tigers (93-70) won their seventh game out of their last eight when they defeated the Indy Alley Cats in an end of season one game play in for the second AL wild card spot. The Tigers .292 September batting average (2nd) and 2.88 ERA (T1st) shows balance and should strike fear in any playoff opponent. Using ace and AL Cy Young candidate, SP Dwight Gooden (25-5 2.27 274k) in the one game playoff might throw Gooden and DeLeon and whoever else into a rotational dilemma. The Tigers finished with an AL best second half (48-28 .632) and their pitching staff was the only one to record over 1k (1053) for the season. MVP candidate 3B George Brett (.361 27 99) will try to lead these Tigers deep into the playoffs, even from a wild card position.

The Alley Cats (92-71) lost four games to the Hoosiers in a critical home series to end the season. Two of the losses were by a single run and a third by two runs. Any one of those games gets flipped and the Alley Cats are slurping wild card champagne. Wait til next year never sounded so broken-hearted. This is a team that had six players hit 20 or more taters. But an aging rotation, Rick Reuschel (36yr old) and Doyle Alexander (34yr old) may have exposed a weakness.

The Evanston Black Sox (78-84) had a tremendously successful September (17-7) but with only one other month at .500 and playing in a division with two teams over 100 wins and two other teams over 90 wins, the Black Sox 78 wins is all the more impressive considering the lineup they field. A September team leading 2.88 ERA led by SP Kirk McCaskill (3-0 1.75) might portend a brighter future for this pitching staff, however, no one stands out on the batter's side on this team and this may be a problem.

The Kenosha Eagles (76-86) played their worst month of the season (11-19) ruining any chance for a .500 record. Were these the swan song seasons for DH Pete Rose (.233 6 34) and the Niekro brothers, Phil (10-11 3.03) and Joe (6-10 6.17)? GM Dave Lauer will need to find some more old farts to keep his geriatric style of play in vogue. Hopefully, all the wheelchairs won't hinder speed demon LF Vince Coleman, who stole 21 bases in 22 attempts for September. His batting line .235/.284/.309 needs improvement and scoring 67 runs in 149 games won't cut it if this team wants to fly over .500.

In the NL East, the New York Mets (106-56) finished their season by besting all National League teams by ten games and tied the Mountaineers for the NL best September record (20-10). RF Dave Parker (.368 7 23) and 1B Don Mattingly's (.309 30 125) MVP season has the Mets primed for a deep run into the postseason. SP Rick Mahler (5-0 2.43) and Oil Can Boyd (3-0 2.90) lead a formidable pitching staff that led the NL in strikeouts with 967.

The Blue Ridge Mountaineers (96-66) tied the Mets for the best NL September record (20-10) thanks in part to a NL team leading 2.78 ERA and ended the season with the SPB1 ERA crown (3.28). SP Don Sutton had a memorable September (4-1 1.46 18k) to earn NL Pitcher of the Month. Sutton threw a no-hitter in his last start of the season against the first place New York Mets. Ken Dixon (3-0), Charlie Hough (3-0), Bob Knepper (3-0), and Scott Sanderson (2-0) help lead a superb pitching staff into their third straight playoffs. This team lost last year's championship to the Bloomington Hoosiers.

The Asheville Tourists (80-82) had SP Dave Stieb (5-0 1.79 37k) and little else for a dismal September (14-16) that saw them finish three games out of the last wild card. Some aging bats, LF George Foster (36yr old) and Ben Oglivie (36yr old) and arms, Dick Ruthven (34yr old) and Burt Hooten (35yr old) will need reevaluation as this team

continues to trend upwards. Having a terrible August following their fantastic July, these Tourists kept near .500 but will need to upgrade their play to compete with the Mets and the Mountaineers.

The Flushing Rats (80-82), like the Tourists, finished three games from the last wild card and a 12-18 September did them in. A brutal road trip (4-8) to start the month, then losing five of six at home to the Mets, basically ended the Rats season. The Rats will need to replace aging SP Tom Seaver (40yr old) and MR Kent Tekulve (38yr old) but have some young lefties ready to make a stamp on this team: Mark Langston, Frank Viola, Bob Ojeda. This is a team to watch out for in 1986.

The Fairfax Peppers (65-97) winning September (14-10) kept them out of the 100 loss column even with a NL September worst ERA (4.71). SP John Candelaria (2-1 3.00) led the Peppers staff, but make no mistake, this team is in a big rebuild. LF George Bell (.280 24 88) will be the anchor for the future. Now all the Peppers need is a boat.

The Beast Coast Brushbacks (53-109) had a September and season to forget. A September .237 batting average and a 4.14 team ERA and you have to wonder, except for SP Bud Black (12-6 4.07) does this team even want Charles Hudson (3-15 4.76) or Steve Trout (4-16 7.08) back next season throwing for the Brushbacks? Rumor has it that GM Chris Longo is eyeing two way prospect Felipe Patata with their high draft pick to bolster the pitching staff. Patata has been clocked at 104.7 mph, but scouts are pretty sure that was while in a very fast car.

In the NL West, the Bolton Hill Scotties (90-72) wrapped up their third consecutive divisional title (tied with the Cleveland Buckeyes for the 1983 AL West). The Scotties won their division by seven games, while having a record that would be tied for the fifth best in the AL. MVP candidate 3B Wade Boggs (.373 7 96) leads the Scotties into the playoffs along with 1B Mike Schmidt's NL leading 38 dingers and RF Dwight Evans 35 dingers, and CF Tim Lincecum's NL leading 74 steals. The Scotties are the only team in the playoffs with a plus 4.00 ERA (4.37). This may be their Achilles heel.

The Las Vegas Thunder (83-79) were two games out for the last wild card to start the month and a 17-13 September put the Thunder three games ahead of their rivals and into the playoffs as the last wild card. Posting a 3.15 team ERA for the month and going 9-3 over their last two series of the month on the road spelled doom for Road, Rats, and Tourists fans. This team will be enjoying its first playoff appearance in franchise history (1969-1985).

The Milwaukee Road (80-82) matched the Brushbacks for worst NL September (8-16) as they watched their playoff hopes vanish down the road winning only five games in their last three series of the season on the road. The lineups used for those last series exposed the weakness of this Road team. The first pick of the 1985 draft, SS Ozzie Guillen (.234 1 46) may not have shown the offense expected, but he did lead all shortstops in fielding (.984 in 733tc). Eight straight losing seasons. Count on a ninth one next season.

The Spirit Mountain Volcanoes (78-84) came close to a consecutive wild card, falling five games short even while going 16-14 in September. This is a team that had the same record in the first half as in the second half (39-42). SP Bryn Smith (3-2 2.82) led the Volcanoes pitching staff in September and slugger 1B Bob Horner slammed 10 dingers to lead the NL in September.

The Ottawa Lynx (66-96) went 9-15 in September to continue their consecutive 90+ loss season streak to four. The Lynx had a September 2.84 team ERA, but a .207 team batting

average for the month dragged this team down into the depths. The Lynx failed to have any player hit double figured dingers and were the only team in the SPB1 to fail to hit 100 home runs.

For the Season ending October 3, 1985

Best Home Record:	New York Mets	58-23	.716
Best Away Record:	Bloomington Hoosiers	54-27	.667
Best Division Record:	New York Mets	43-17	.717
Best Interleague Record:	31-11	Bloomington Hoosiers	
Most extra inning games:	25	Flushing Rats	
Best extra inning record:	11-4	Bloomington Hoosiers	
Most one run games:	54	Alley Cats, Mountaineers, Tourists	
Best one run games record:	29-14	Rockford Forest Citys	

AL Batting Ldrs - September AL Player of the Month: Keith Hernandez, Hoosiers
(.419/.526/.742/1.268 6hr 24rbi 69tb)

BA:

.419 Keith Hernandez, Hoosiers
.366 Keith Moreland, Hoosiers
.360 Sugar Bear Rayford, Alley Cats

OBP:

.526 Keith Hernandez, Hoosiers
.430 Steve Balboni, Zorros
.429 Keith Moreland, Hoosiers

SLG:

.742 Keith Hernandez, Hoosiers
.640 Sugar Bear Rayford, Alley Cats
.610 Ozzie Virgil, Hoosiers

HR:

9 Carlton Fisk, Alley Cats
9 Darrell Evans, Forest Citys
8 Ozzie Virgil, Hoosiers

RBI:

29 Sugar Bear Rayford, Alley Cats
24 Reggie Jackson, Alley Cats
24 Keith Hernandez, Hoosiers

Total Bases:

73 Sugar Bear Rayford, Alley Cats
69 Keith Hernandez, Hoosiers
68 Reggie Jackson, Alley Cats

NL Batting Ldrs - September NL Player of the Month: Bob Horner, Volcanoes
(.279/.323/.615/.938 10hr 30rbi 75tb)

BA:

.392 Tim Teufel, Peppers
.390 Wade Boggs, Scotties

.368 Dave Parker, Mets
OBP:
.459 Toby Harrah, Rats
.447 Tim Teufel, Peppers
.434 Wade Boggs, Scotties

SLG:
.629 Mike Davis, Thunder
.617 Dave Parker, Mets
.615 Bob Horner, Volcanoes

HR:
10 Bob Horner, Volcanoes
9 Eddie Murray, Mountaineers
7 3 tied w/

RBI:
30 Bob Horner, Volcanoes
27 Eddie Murray, Mountaineers
24 Kirby Puckett, Thunder

Total Bases:
82 Dave Parker, Mets
75 Bob Horner, Volcanoes
65 Eddie Murray, Mountaineers

AL Pitching Ldrs - September AL Pitcher of the Month: John Tudor, Spiders
(5-1 1.07 7GS 5CG 2ShO 59ip 40k)

Wins:

5-1 John Tudor, Spiders
4-0 Dwight Gooden, Tigers
4-0 Dave Dravecky, Hoosiers
4-0 Jim Slaton, Forest Citys
4-0 Matt Williams, Hoosiers

ERA:

1.05 Dwight Gooden, Tigers
1.07 John Tudor, Spiders
1.38 Scott McGregor, Highlanders

IP:

59.0 John Tudor, Spiders
51.2 Dwight Gooden, Tigers
49.0 John Denny, Black Sox

K's:

52 Dwight Gooden, Tigers
40 John Tudor, Spiders
37 Mario Soto, Flames

Sv:

9 Dave Smith, Black Sox
8 Rich Gossage, Forest Citys
8 Ron Davis, Alley Cats

NL Pitching Ldrs - September NL Pitcher of the Month: Don Sutton, Mountaineers (4-1
1.46 18k 1 no-hitter versus the NYMets)

Wins:

5-0 Rick Mahler, Mets
5-0 Dave Stieb, Tourists

4-1 Don Sutton, Mountaineers

ERA:

1.46 Don Sutton, Mountaineers

1.79 Dave Stieb, Tourists

2.10 Curt Wardle, Lynx

IP:

45.2 Frank Viola, Rats

45.1 Dave Stieb, Tourists

44.2 Charlie Hough, Mountaineers

44.2 Bryn Smith, Volcanoes

K's:

40 Floyd Bannister, Volcanoes

40 Frank Viola, Rats

37 Dave Stieb, Tourists

Sv:

6 Don Carman, Rats

6 Frank Williams, Peppers

6 Jeff Reardon, Scotties