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Divisional Outlook – AL Central

By Jay Nault

The AL Central race is beginning to take shape as we move into the second month of the baseball season, and it appears that teams are lining up to engage in a season-long chase of the defending World Series Champions Chicago White Sox. Each team's progress, or lack thereof, is detailed below.

Chicago White Sox

Currently After a magical run to the title last season, the White Sox are back on top of the division. Many members of the baseball public, writers, pundits and fans alike, expected a bit of a swoon from this team after winning its first title in 88 years last fall. As of this writing, nothing could be further from the truth. The White Sox are sustaining last season's success with a lethal combination of heavy hitting and stingy pitching. Six regular players are batting over .300 at this point, and Jim Thome is leading the AL in home runs. The pitchers, led by Jose Contreras' AL-leading 1.41 ERA, are third in the AL in team ERA.

Outlook There is no reason to foresee the White Sox doing anything but continuing to excel. When a team has several players having good years and the momentum and confidence that come with a championship, an aura and an expectation of winning persists. The White Sox will ably defend their title.

Detroit Tigers

Currently Under the leadership of new manager Jim Leyland, the Tigers, after years of struggling, are off to a surprising start. The Tigers sit just behind the White Sox and appear to have a nucleus in place that could change the losing culture in Motown for good. Five regulars are hitting over or near .300, and two players, Magglio Ordonez and Chris Shelton, have already reached double digits in home runs. The pitching staff is also performing at a high level, as the Tigers lead the AL in team ERA. It appears that the team is finally constructed to fit the pitching-friendly confines of Comerica Park.

Outlook If young players including Mike Maroth and Nate Robertson can continue to contribute heavily to the Tigers pitching effort, and equally young players Shelton and Brandon Inge stay in their grooves,

the Tigers will challenge the White Sox until October.

Cleveland Indians

Currently The Indians, coming off a 93–win 2005 season and a 6–1 start to the 2006 campaign, have struggled lately. However, the team is hanging around at near .500 and hoping that their pitching staff gets healthy and improves. The Tribe is an offensive juggernaut, leading the AL in runs scored, hits, doubles, RBIs and team batting average. However, their young pitching staff has been ravaged by injury problems, and several young hurlers are being thrust into the lineup, perhaps too soon. The Indians rank near the bottom of the AL in staff ERA and opponents' batting average.

Outlook If the pitching staff can come around, the Indians will be a major factor down the stretch. Their hitting is scary for any opposing pitching staff, and players like Ben Broussard, Casey Blake and Victor

Martinez are leading the efforts.

Minnesota Twins

Currently The Twins have long been known as "The Small Market Team that Could." Although the Twins are hanging around much like the Indians, their statistical outputs thus far are a bit troubling both in terms of hitting and pitching. The Twins rank near the bottom of the league in runs scored, hits and team batting average. Their pitching staff is currently second–from–last in team ERA. What's good about the team? Despite these statistical trends, the Twins are staying competitive, and young phenom Joe Mauer is blossoming before our eyes.

Outlook The Twins have been bad on the stat sheet, but their record is better than what these stats would normally indicate. If Mauer continues to grow, their pitching staff comes around and the always–young team gels as the season progresses, they'll wind up where they always seem to – in contention for the postseason.

Kansas City Royals

Currently The Royals have been victims of several circumstances – a young team, injuries, and placement in one of the most difficult divisions in all of baseball. As such, their record thus far is disappointing. The Royals do appear to have some developing talent with the likes of Shane Costa and Esteban German, but the overall offensive firepower is lacking. The team's pitching ranks towards the bottom of the AL in several categories.

Outlook The Royals need to continue to develop young talent, take their lumps and hope that they can continue to add pieces to a young nucleus. Kansas City is a loyal sports town, and the victory–starved fans would like nothing better than a show of tangible progress as the season continues.

Written by Jay Nault sponsored by

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Why Stick With Email Clients Like Outlook?

By Iulia Pascanu

Why Stick With Email Clients Like Outlook? by Iulia Pascanu

Trying to figure out a stream in banning one email client or another is no easy job. As soon as somebody rises up saying

Outlook is bad, somebody else comes saying it's good and the other one is bad. And the story goes on and on.

On one hand, email clients like Outlook Express and (even more) MS Outlook do a really good job when it comes to user

friendliness. What email client allows you to use more options on the agenda, bell ringers, flag wavers and contact managing

tips than MS Outlook?

The ease of use perfectly molds on human indolence. That means I would never question about Microsoft Outlook being or not a

good email client if it comes together with my Office pack that comes together with Windows that comes together with my

computer.

Here is another red flag: MS Outlook is not free as long as I'm paying for my Windows license. This should count when

choosing an email client.

Moreover, everything is so easy to install with those cute wizards, and installing sessions are ready within minutes.

Until... well, until I spend enough time online, using email, starting to receive viruses, worms and other

creatures that do

bad things to computers. If you ever had to do one of the following when using Outlook or Outlook Express:

- * try very hard not to click on a message subject that looked suspicious; anyway, not without using a small trick (that

used to work for me): pressing Shift, selecting the suspicious messages and then hitting Del,

- * try hard not to select some very good and very important messages together with the suspicious ones,

- * accept phone calls from extremely upset clients accusing you of infecting their computers with God knows what worm

(personally got in trouble with BugBear),

- * working on an extremely low system because an efficient AV is doing its job scanning, updating, warning, locking etc.

- * delete all your Outlook contacts in order not to become infectious for friends and clients in case your computer

somehow got infected,

...then you know what it's like. Both Outlook and Outlook Express, while different applications, with no related history,

have security as their weakest link. And that's why some people switch to other email clients that are said to be more

secure.

It is true that most worms are today Outlook dedicated because Outlook has both more users and more security holes. It is

also true that Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates set security as a top priority back on 17th January 2002 (it's been almost two

years by now). While I don't mean to ban Outlook or Outlook Express, I'd like to choose the best for me, and the best doesn't

seem one of the fore mentioned, at the moment.

Iulia Pascanu writes for <http://www.emailmarketingsoftware.org/> where you can find more information about

Email Marketing Software

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