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BASEBALL Brief

SATURDAY, JULY 20, 2024



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Ballpark orientations
(N,S,E,W)

SATURDAY, JULY 20 – Today is the 55th anniversary of the first landing on the moon by the Apollo 11 spaceship, featuring lunar walks by astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin. Poor Michael Collins had to sit in the command module and watch, in case moon people were planning a home invasion or a hijacking of the craft to Mars while all three were out collecting moon rocks at the same time and nobody was home. I watched this truly “historic” event take place live at my grandma’s house with my brother and sister. Our grandpa had passed away suddenly of a heart attack one month earlier. Grandma, who, along with Grandpa, had passed through Ellis Island emigrating from Italy in the mid-1920s, was still grieving, wasn’t in a good mood. She would have none of this man on the moon stuff, and waved her hand at the TV in disgust:

“I no believe-a! It’s all a-fake-a! They make-a da’ movie!”

Eh, probably not, Grandma.

To mark this occasion, last night my wife and I watched the first half of the movie, “*The Right Stuff*,” and will watch the second half tonight. The movie covers the Mercury program, which preceded the Gemini and Apollo missions. These were dangerous exploits in which science was to “sort of” be trusted even though the goal was to do something for the first time. Government officials had no problems placing astronauts in danger for the sake of progress (or, was it just to beat the Russians in a Space Olympics?) that eventually totaled only 17 hours of activity on the moon before the Apollo program was scrapped. Gus Grissom, a Mercury vet, Roger Chaffee and Ed White had been killed during a training exercise for the Apollo 1 mission because of faulty electrical wiring in the spacecraft cabin. Fifty-one years later, government officials were afraid that every death attributed to COVID would be on their heads if they didn’t shut down the U.S., force people to wear masks, and allow states to shell out billions of dollars to companies and people who couldn’t work because of the shutdown, my helpless, protesting self included in that pool.

Progress? Some people might think it was. I never will. It was an example of a country gone soft. Never live in fear.

I’d better link this to sports in a hurry or risk violating policy: In 1969, the technology existed – at huge financial cost -- to put men on the moon, give or take a few lost lives here and there. In 2024, the technology – at much less financial cost -- has long existed for balls and strikes in baseball to be called electronically, instead of by some clown in a mask looking over somebody’s shoulder at a little pill arriving at 100 mph. No lives will have ever been lost in the development and implementation of this technology. So, why hasn’t it been established? In fear of a lawsuit from the umpires’ union for the loss of 15 or 16 umpires union jobs? Or some other ridiculous reason? Fifty-five years after we put a man on the moon, the MLB commissioner thinks it’s progress to put a man on second base starting in the 10th inning. Give me a break. – *Bobby Smith, Editor*

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BASEBALL

SATURDAY, JULY 20

6:45 pm

BEST BET

CINCINNATI REDS -115 (Lodolo)

At Washington (Gore)

On July 1, we had this to say in an "Over" play with MacKenzie Gore as one of the starters: "MacKenzie Gore... his form has taken a downturn in his last two starts... The 14 hits, 5 walks and 9 runs he has surrendered vs. Arizona and at San Diego were certainly a departure from a majority of low-run, long-inning outings by him in 2024. All along, his WHIP and BAPIP have been in high ranges, which you were willing to overlook because of his high K-9 Rate (10.48, #11 In MLB). The WHIP is 1.39, the BABIP (Batting Average on Balls in Play) .361, which is the highest among regular starters. Near him on that high end of the BABIP list are non-All Star caliber Ryan Feltner, Patrick Corbin, Logan Allen, Yusei Kikuchi, Kevin Gausman – all of them being knocked around lately." That game had a 9-7 final score and was actually the only one of Gore's last five starts – four losses -- in which he pitched well. The score in the one win was 14-6, in which he allowed 5 runs in 3 1/3 innings. The BABIP is up to .363. Go, Lodolo, go. Pitch to that 2.27 ERA and .159 On-Base Against in your five road starts. You're not in Great American Death Trap Yard tonight!

8:10 pm

RECOMMENDED

COLORADO ROCKIES +136 (Freeland)

Vs. San Francisco (Webb)

The Kyle Freeland bandwagon is not a big one. But we hopped aboard it when he returned from a two-month layoff with a 12.00+ ERA. The Rockies are 3-1 in his four starts since. In the one loss, Freeland pitched 6 innings of 1-hit, shutout ball. Alrighty, then. Did you know that the Giants haven't won a road game at night in which the other side has started a left-hander? They're 0-7 in that case. Of course, this isn't really a night game, as it begins at 6:15 pm, local time. So, why'd we bother mentioning it? Ah, whatever. The 0-7 is part of San Francisco's 11-18 record when the other side starts a lefty. San Francisco starter Logan Webb was lousy in the All-Star Game on Tuesday night. Hopefully, he'll Atlee Hammaker tonight. We'll use any reason we can to invoke the memory of Atlee Hammaker, the Giants' pitcher who got crushed in the 1983 All-Star game and was never the same afterwards.

7:10 pm

**RECOMMENDED TOTAL
OVER 7.5**

| Teams | Time | ML | To | Tot ML | Starters | R L | SR Line |
|--------------|------|------|------|--------|--------------------|-----|---------|
| Cardinals | G1 | 125 | 8.5 | -120 | Kyle Gibson | R | 7.8 |
| Braves | 1:00 | -155 | 8.5 | -100 | Charlie Morton | R | -163 |
| Rays | | 136 | 8.5 | -102 | Taj Bradley | R | 8.1 |
| Yankees | 1:05 | -162 | 8.5 | -120 | Nestor Cortes | L | -174 |
| Tigers | | 108 | 8 | -112 | Reese Olson | R | -125 |
| Blue Jays | 3:07 | -126 | 8 | -108 | Yusei Kikuchi | L | 7.6 |
| Angels | | 110 | 8.5 | -110 | Jack Kochanowicz | R | 9.4 |
| Athletics | 4:07 | -130 | 8.5 | -110 | Mitch Spence | R | -149 |
| Mets | | -172 | 8.5 | -110 | Luis Severino | R | -172 |
| Marlins | 4:10 | 144 | 8.5 | -110 | Rodderly Munoz | R | 9.2 |
| Phillies | | -168 | 8.5 | -115 | Cristopher Sanchez | L | -139 |
| Pirates | 6:40 | 142 | 8.5 | -105 | Luis Ortiz | R | 8.6 |
| Reds | | -116 | 8 | -115 | Nick Lodolo | L | -127 |
| Nationals | 6:45 | -102 | 8 | -105 | MacKenzie Gore | L | 8.4 |
| Orioles | | -124 | 8 | -105 | Grayson Rodriguez | R | 8.1 |
| Rangers | 7:05 | 106 | 8 | -115 | Max Scherzer | R | -125 |
| Padres | | -108 | 7.5 | -110 | Dylan Cease | R | 8.4 |
| Guardians | 7:10 | -108 | 7.5 | -110 | Gavin Williams | R | -150 |
| White Sox | | 168 | 8.5 | -114 | Jonathan Cannon | R | 7.9 |
| Royals | 7:10 | -200 | 8.5 | -106 | Brady Singer | R | -208 |
| Brewers | | 106 | 7.5 | -115 | Freddy Peralta | R | 8.9 |
| Twins | 7:10 | -124 | 7.5 | -105 | Pablo Lopez | R | -136 |
| Diamondbacks | | -126 | 8.5 | -105 | Zac Gallen | R | -156 |
| Cubs | 7:15 | 108 | 8.5 | -115 | Kyle Hendricks | R | 9.3 |
| Red Sox | | 120 | 9 | -115 | Brayan Bello | R | 10.4 |
| Dodgers | 7:15 | -142 | 9 | -105 | Justin Wroblewski | L | -162 |
| Cardinals | G2 | -102 | 8.5 | -115 | Sonny Gray | R | 7.6 |
| Braves | 7:20 | -116 | 8.5 | -105 | Bryce Elder | R | -118 |
| Giants | | -162 | 10.5 | -115 | Logan Webb | R | 9.3 |
| Rockies | 8:10 | 136 | 10.5 | -105 | Kyle Freeland | L | -137 |
| Astros | | 100 | 7 | -105 | Framber Valdez | L | -135 |
| Mariners | 9:40 | -118 | 7 | -115 | George Kirby | R | 6.4 |

Milwaukee at Minnesota (Peralta vs. P. Lopez)

Two veteran righties who've had their moments in their careers, and this season, hook up in what seems like it's destined to be a pitchers duel. Maybe it will be. Hopefully it won't be. Peralta allowed 10 hits to Washington on July 12, and needed 104 pitches to go 4 innings at the Dodgers in his prior start. His ERA is 4.11. His Brewer buddies rank #8 in runs per game (4.80), right behind the #7 Twins (4.85). Minnesota starter Pablo Lopez has a 5.11 ERA. The Twins have won five of his last six starts, but the five wins were against the sub-par offenses of the White Sox, Mariners, A's, Rays and Rockies, who couldn't hit a snail with a steamroller. Therefore, Pablo cruised. The one opponent he faced in that stretch with some hitters on it, the Astros, was part of a 13-12 game.