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Do the Yankees need to take two out of three in Oakland this weekend?

 Yes

 No

Giambi Playing A Familiar Tune

Authored by Bob Souza - 3rd September, 2005 - 10:32 pm


He appeared headed to oblivion. An early season slump left him mired with a dreadful .195 average, and the Yankees tried to nudge him to the minors for some sorely needed adjustments. But Jason Giambi said no – he had a different song in mind.

Oakland A's manager Ken Macha has heard the song too, and the memorable melody has also been heard throughout the league. Those old refrains finding their way back from the past.

"It takes a man to stand up and face the music," Macha said. "He did that. I commend him for that. He did a good job of rebounding from a bad last year and this year, particularly in light of the scrutiny from the media."

Facing the music must have been where he discovered his song.

While not in contention for another MVP, the former slugger is having a better than solid season. He's batting .276, with 26 homers and 67 RBIs. He also leads the majors with a .444 on-base percentage.

"Obviously, we couldn't be more pleased with what we've seen, the explosiveness he's shown," said Yankees manager Joe Torre. "Even through the times he was failing, he was dedicated with his work ethic. I know the players appreciated that."

They also appreciated Giambi's 3-run shot Saturday, which helped the Yankees to a 7-0 victory over the A's. The win tied them with Oakland for the wild card spot.

"This has probably been the toughest year in my big-league career, trying to come back from everything. So it's been definitely gratifying so far. So we'll see at the end of the month," Giambi stated.

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To expect that Bradley could go an entire season without a **blow-up** with Kent seems, in retrospect, laughable. It's hard to imagine a more oil-and-water combination than Bradley and Kent. The dour Kent is never shy about criticizing when he feels it's warranted—just ask Barry Bonds.

Graham Flashner, 23rd August, 2005.

Is Griffey Worth The Chance?

The Reds have a major decision to make. They can trade their marketing centerpiece to help build the future or they can sell tickets for the rest of the season and seasons to come. The choice is clear-cut. They need to move Junior to the highest bidder and build for the future.

Paul Falewicz, 16th August, 2005.

Chicago's Steve Zizzou Versus Boston's Hamlet

With the Red Sox curse now over, sights our set on the Cubs' curse. Maybe it is because of the beer, bricks and ivy, but you just don't see people in Chicago marching down Sheffield trailed by the tears of their 97 seasons of despair. They are figures of tragicomedy like the lovable Steve Zizzou.

Christopher Reina, 27th July, 2005.

Sibling Rivalry

Both the Cubs and Red Sox have had their share of heartaches, both have incredibly passionate fan bases that span the country, both have bitter divisional rivals, both play their home games in historic ballparks, and both have had to deal with so-called "curses".

Dennis Hobein, 10th June, 2005.

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Hard to believe it was tougher than last year.

The BALCO case, and his subsequent admission to the grand jury about his use of steroids was the start of it. Then there was his rambling public apology where no one knew for sure exactly what he was apologizing for.

Of course, all that stuff followed his pathetic 2004 season when he hit just .208 in eighty games, with 12 home runs and 40 RBIs. Plus, a sprained ankle, an intestinal parasite, a benign pituitary tumor, and you have quite the hideous chapter.

"I just felt sick. I just felt like I couldn't function. I was dizzy all the time," he recalled. "I was a vegetable. I just wanted to sit in front of the TV or do nothing because I wasn't functioning."

Many felt it was because he was now off steroids. They believed he was scared to death of the ramifications, and would slither away into the darkness, never to be heard from again. Out of mind. Kaput. Don't bother to write.

Nobody thought he could come back – a least not without the juice.

"They kicked dirt on me. They had the gravestone out. But I wasn't going to let that ruin it for me because all I've ever wanted to be was a ballplayer," he growled. He also wanted to justify his 7-year, \$120 million dollar contract.

"I think New York magnifies everything. There were some unfair things that happened to him," Torre said. "The expectations are so high because the money is so high. Any time you don't do it, you're a bum and you're letting people down."

Giambi is quick to credit his teammates for helping him through the fog. Derek Jeter stepped forward for him, and other teammates sheltered him from criticism. Former teammate Mark McGwire has called often to lend support and give advice.

His off-season agenda has certainly paid off. The strict schedule of running, lifting weights and hitting gave him the physicality and agility he desperately needed. Working with batting coach Don Mattingly didn't hurt either.

At one point, the Yankees were searching for a way to terminate Jason's contract. Apparently that thought is long gone – as well it should be.

Even George Steinbrenner said, "I'm very happy for him. He's gone through a lot. He's proven to be a winner, and I'm proud of Jason Giambi."

Imagine that.

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