

# Mets underachiever awards

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Staff Writer

## ANALYSIS

The 1987 regular baseball season is over and the time has come for evaluations, planning and rewards. Some of the New York Mets might be happy to know that I've devised a bunch of individual awards for contributions, good and bad, to this year's 92-70, second-place squad. The awards are as follow:

**Mr. First Half:** Terry Leach, p. Undefeated at the all-star break, Leach had nine wins. His final record was 11-1 with a 3.22 ERA.

**Mr. Bomb:** Jesse Orosco, p. His numbers speak for themselves, 3-9, 4.44 ERA. Orosco dug his own grave, yeilding game-deciding homers in five games, including the 10th-inning killer to Luis Aguayo and the Phillies in the last week of the season.

**Mr. Disappointment:** [tie] Wally Backman, 2b, and Gary Carter, c. Backman's .250 average was sub-par and six doubles in 300 at bats was simply disappointing. Carter, surprisingly, still hit 20 homers with 83 RBIs, despite a quiet year at .235. His season ending 1-for-27 slump was ill-timed.

**Mr. Surprise:** Howard Johnson, 3b. Just when his head was approaching the block, he went out and had a .265, 36, 99 banner year. The first 30-30 man in Mets history [32 SB], he's young

and improving. New York fans have forgotten Ray Knight.

**Mr. Comeback:** Dwight Gooden, p. Despite his cocaine rehabilitation and public humiliation, Gooden registered a 15-7 record and 3.21 ERA. Although his strikeouts were down, he's a legitimate Cy Young candidate.

**Mr. Heat:** Randy Myers, p. This guy throws hard, no questions asked. He had 90 Ks in 75 innings. His 3-6, 3.96 numbers should improve next year as the stopper for the Mets.

**Mr. Good Effort:** Barry Lyons, c. Early on, Lyons (accidentally, of course) stumbled into the St. Louis Cardinal dugout on a foul pop and landed on Card ace John Tudor. Tudor was out but not for long enough. Nice try, Barry.

**Mr. Consistency:** Keith Hernandez, 1b. As always, Hernandez was superb. A career high 18 homers added to his .290 average and 89 RBIs. No signs of fading from this legend. Incidentally, Hernandez did not steal a base this season. So there, Vince Coleman.

**Mr. Acquisition:** Kevin McReynolds, lf. He quietly went out and did the job every day. Leading the team with 590 at bats, he hit 29 homers, 95 RBIs with a .276 average as the Mets' most dependable outfielder.

**Mr. Almost:** Parryl

Strawberry, rf. The guy had an all-world season with 39 homers, 104 RBIs and a .284 average. He walked 94 times and joined Howard Johnson as a Met 30-30 man (36 SB). He decided to play ball instead of sleep in during the second half and he's been quoted as saying he hopes Davey Johnson decides to stay as manager after the '88 season. All this and I still get the feeling he could be so much better. Maybe next year he'll be the first Met 50-50 man. He has that potential.

**Mr. Rookie:** Dave Magadan, 1b-3b-of. It's a shame there's nowhere for him to play. The Mets are set at the corners and it looks like the outfield is set as well. The line-drive hitting Magadan hit .318 with 24 RBIs in 192 at bats. He needs playing time, but where? Runner up: Keith Miller, 2b. Although injured often, Miller hit .373 in 51 tries as a Met. If management decides to take a chance, Miller could be at second next spring.

**Mr. Injury:** Sid Fernandez, p. Here's another guy who started out hot and fizzled. His 12-8 record and 3.81 ERA were worse than they sound. He was 3-3 after the all-star break and is 7-7 in the second half the last two years combined. Shoulder and weight problems make him expendible.

**Mr. Roller Coaster:** Ron Darling, p. After he promised a great season, Darling

bombed in the first half. He came back to end up 12-8 before he, too, went down injured.

The Mets' season was a solid one overall. They were near the top in most hitting and pitching categories and for the fourth straight season won over 90 games. They'll be as strong next year, as well.

**Things to Watch:** Look for the resurgence of the Mets pitching staff. The healthy return of Darling, Fernandez, Bob Ojeda and Roger McDowell from the beginning will help. Gooden is back in top form, and the addition of John Candelaria, should they keep him, will be a boost. Rookies Dave Cone, John Mitchell and Jeff Innis are all great prospects who need time.

Look for some big trades during the off-season, including Mookie Wilson, Rick Aguilera, Rafael Santana, Jesse Orosco, Doug Sisk, Tim Teuffel, and maybe Fernandez, Magadan or Candelaria. Maybe for all these players the Mets could throw in a few players to be named later and pick up Tim Lincecum from Montreal or Rickey Henderson from the Yankees. How about one of the Moseby-Barfield-Bell trio from Toronto. And wouldn't Harold Baines look good in Shea?

Most of all, look for the Mets to be better in '88. For now look for the Giants to knock off the Cardinals and take the series.

## Flyers 87-88 continued from p. 19

hockey. 5. Black Hawks: Nice uniforms, great fans, but uniforms and fans don't win games.

### Smythe Division

1. Oilers: Wayne Gretzky. Enough said. 2. Jets: Good goal tending and Dale Hawerchuk can lead the Jets into a showdown against the Oilers. 3. Kings: No sophomore jinx to stop Jimmy Carson and Luc Robitaille, Calder Trophy winner, from carrying L.A. into contention. 4. Flames: An old team which will get older this season. 5. Canucks: Ugly uniforms.

Now that we have given a rundown of all the teams, we feel that the Flyers and the Oilers will once again fight for the oldest trophy in North America, the Stanley Cup. By winning the series in six games, the Flyers will have their names engraved upon Lord Stanley's Cup.

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