

ERIN RYNNING Last Week: Charlotte (Loss)

Game - San Francisco (Wellemeier) at Los Angeles (Padilla) - Friday
BEST BET: #966 Los Angeles

A rivalry renewed this weekend with the Giants traveling south to battle the Dodgers. The Giants are expected to send Todd Wellemeier to the hill in this matchup. Wellemeier is very much a "go against" pitcher as he continues to fight shoulder problems. He had spurts of success with the St. Louis Cardinals over the last three years thanks to pitching coach Dave Duncan's strong history of bringing the best out in arms. But the 5.89 ERA he put up last year should have served as a red flag that something was wrong. Meanwhile, the flaky Vicente Padilla is scheduled to toe the rubber for the Dodgers. Padilla certainly had issues in his first two starts of the season (8.2 innings, 11 earned runs), but keep in mind that both of those starts were on the road. He pitched much better in Dodger Stadium last year, and he matches up well against this Giants lineup. With the starting pitching advantage, bullpen edge and more run producing ability the Dodgers are in a favorable position. Play Los Angeles at a reasonable price with confidence this Friday.

ANDREW LANGE Last Week: Baltimore Over (Loss)

Game - Chicago (Floyd) at Cleveland (Carmona) - Sunday
BEST BET: #970 Under

In watching them play, it doesn't take much to notice that the Chicago White Sox are going to be an under team. The pitching staff as a whole is above average for the American League and the offense features way too many holes. Over their first six games of the season, the highest game score was only nine and all but one was decided by two runs or less - AL team, NL style. Sunday will be a "getaway day" afternoon affair for both teams. Gavin Floyd is scheduled to toss for the White Sox. Since coming over from Philadelphia, Floyd has shown to be a very reliable starter. He'll never be the ace of a staff but he has trustworthy stuff and already has a quality start in the books against this same Indians lineup. Fausto Carmona has never had issues with stuff as control is always his biggest enemy. But as seen in his first start against Chicago - six walks, one hit - he'll face a lineup that simply isn't strong enough to take advantage of his shortcomings. Teams can change throughout the course of the season but for the time being, it looks as if pitching is ahead of hitting with these two clubs. Play it under.

TEDDY COVERS Last Week: Milwaukee (Loss)

Game - Arizona (Jackson) at San Diego (Latos) - Friday
BEST BET: #964 San Diego

Don't be fooled by Arizona's success through the first week of the season. The D-backs were -165 or greater favorites in four of those six games; something they won't be here against Padres phenom Mat Latos. Latos didn't walk a batter in six solid innings against Colorado last weekend, but he was vulnerable to the gopher ball in the Mile High air, allowing three home runs. Latos pitched well in the pitcher-friendly confines at Petco Field as a rookie last year, and those gopher ball problems at Coors Field are extremely unlikely to carry over to Petco on Friday Night. San Diego did not hit at all through the first week of the season, compiling a .213 team batting average and a .270 on-base percentage. Those numbers should help bring an attractive price for this ballgame, and they can only get better against Edwin Jackson. Jackson has bounced around the league, failing with the Dodgers and Rays before finally earning some level of success with the Tigers last year. The Padres hit him last week and Pittsburgh's light hitting lineup hit him on Sunday. Expect more of the same here.

HELMUT SPORTS Last Week: Houston Under (Win)

Game - Chivas USA at Houston - Saturday
BEST BET: Under

No reason to get fancy as we stick to what works. Last week the Dynamo offense was about as anemic as they come. Sure they played the whole second half down a man but they were at full strength for almost the entire first half and could not even generate a shot on goal. Through three games this season the Dynamo have only score three goals with two of those coming on penalty kicks. Clearly the offense has taken a step back without players like Kamara and Holden from last year's team. They are also hurt by the injury to Brian Ching. The Houston defense however is good and last week's game maybe should have been a little closer as Pat Onstad did not come up with what should have been an easy save on a short angle shot from almost the goal line. The Red and White had difficulties scoring last season and finally got their first two goals of the season last week against New York. The goal scoring difficulties became even more magnified on the road where dating back to the start of the 2009 campaign, they have netted only nine goals in 17 games. Considering the injury to Ching and the fact both of these teams are very good on defense, I just don't see many goals in this one. Take the under.

BRENT CROW Last Week: No Play

Game - Chicago (Buehrle) at Cleveland (Talbot) - Friday
BEST BET: #970 Under

The starting pitching in this matchup is of little concern as we look to take advantage of two sub-par offenses. Chicago has really struggled to score runs in the first week of the season, and a quick glance at their lineup suggests that those woes will continue. They've totaled 21 runs in their first six games of the season, scoring three or less in four of those games. The team batting average is just .209 with seven homers and three stolen bases. The lineup is full of guys that have yet to come of age like Gordon Beckham and Alexei Ramirez or on the downsides of their career like Juan Pierre, Mark Kotzay, Andrew Jones and even Paul Konerko. Overall, the offense has the look of below average National League outfit. Cleveland is also struggling at the plate, hitting just .224 as a team with only four home runs and 22 runs scored in their first six games. This is another young lineup that will have a tough time scoring runs this season. We expect a solid outing Mark Buehrle and feel that Chicago's lineup isn't strong enough to do much damage despite the limited resume of Cleveland's slated starter, Mitch Talbot. Play it under.

TIM TRUSHEL Last Week: Arizona Under (Loss)

Game - Baltimore (Millwood) at Oakland (Braden) - Friday
BEST BET: #978 Under

In 2009, not one everyday player for the Orioles managed a batting average above .294 against left-handed pitching. The team ranked 14th out of 14 American League teams in OPS (.691) and 13th in OBP (.317) against southpaws. We are only a week into the season but Baltimore's struggles have continued with just six hits and seven total bases in 34 at-bats against left-handers. On Friday, the Orioles travel to Oakland where they will square off against lefty Dallas Braden. Braden looked extremely sharp in his first two starts, allowing four earned runs in 13 innings. He struck out a career-high 10 in his last outing against Seattle and overall looks to be primed for a breakout campaign. Oakland's offense showed a little pop in a recent three-game set in Anaheim but this team will struggle to produce runs more often than not with a current lineup anchored by Ryan Sweeney, Kurt Suzuki and Kevin Kouzmanoff. Kevin Millwood is slated to toss for Baltimore and we project his fly-ball tendencies to be a good fit at night in Oakland. Play this one under the total.

ROB VENO Last Week: Chicago (Loss)

Game - Baltimore (Millwood) at Oakland (Braden) - Friday
BEST BET: #978 Under

Both of these two starters put up solid numbers through their first pair of outings and I expect that to continue on Friday. In his opener, Kevin Millwood's (2.13 ERA, 1.18 WHIP) ran to 100 pitches in just five innings but he constantly fought his way out of trouble and left with a 3-2 lead. Last Sunday, Millwood coasted through 7.2 innings allowing just three of the first 26 Toronto hitters to reach base before a Miguel Tejada error led to back-to-back home runs. Considering this venue and the fact that Oakland has the AL's second worst HR-to-AB ratio (1-to-49.2), I don't figure the long ball to be much of a problem here. What could be less of a problem in this game is the Orioles' lineup against A's lefty Dallas Braden. Braden owns a 0.85 WHIP in 13 innings of work and Baltimore struggled in their only game against a left-handed starter as Dana Eveland threw 7.1 shutout innings. With lead-off hitter Brian Roberts out, Baltimore's offense should be further weakened. With Baltimore righty Jim Johnson now slated for save duty, the bullpen can keep the back end clean and keep this contest under the projected 8.5.

FAIRWAY JAY Last Week: No Play

Game - Los Angeles (Santana) at Toronto (Romero) - Sunday
BEST BET: #972 Toronto

Following an outstanding rookie season, Jay's left-hander Ricky Romero was in top form in his 2010 debut going seven innings and allowing just one run at Texas. The Blue Jays opened the season with six-straight road games and stand 5-1 atop the AL East thanks to the American League's current top pitching staff (2.70 ERA, .199 BAA). Their bats weren't hitting for average (.233 BA), but they showed some pop as they lead the AL in home runs (11) and extra base hits (28). Shortstop Alex Gonzalez is an outstanding defender and appears to have been a huge pickup for the Blue Jays during the offseason. He hit four home runs the opening week to add some power to the lineup in the absence of second baseman Aaron Hill. Solid starts by Vernon Wells and Adam Lind along with the return of Hill should spark some more solid offensive production against the Angels' Ervin Santana and poor relievers. Los Angeles pitchers have already allowed an AL-worst 12 home runs while getting pounded by opposition (5.57 ERA). Romero, a Los Angeles native who pitched at Cal State Fullerton, should continue his productive pitching against the Angels.