

Paw Print

November 2007

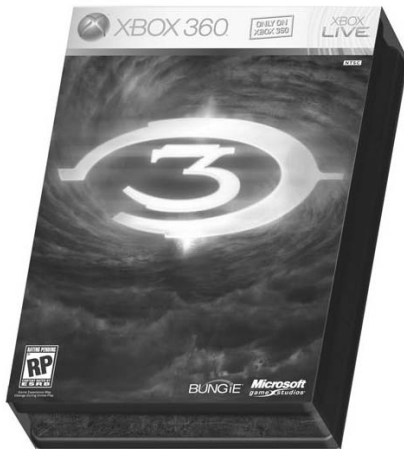
The *Halo* Phenomenon



The Masterchief Mechanism

In honor of the release of *Halo 3*, we look back to when it all began... and where it's headed. P.2

The *Halo* Phenomenon



The popular video game series has made immeasurable changes to the popular culture of gamers across the globe, and continues to transform the world in which we live.

By Jason Rosenbaum

Ever since the release of Halo: Combat Evolved on November 15, 2001, Bungie Studio's epic shooter has flanked a path into the hearts and minds of gamers all over the world, invading the disc drives of Xbox's from America to Australia. Everyone knows the iconic Spartan-117; the armor-toting, lead-packing Master Chief. The terms "beat down" and "overkill" have stuck to the gamer vernac-

ular as everyday terms. The Halo series has become not a local cultural phenomenon, but a worldwide one, as people from every nationality are jumping on the bandwagon and dishing out virtual destruction.

When the development of Halo was first announced in early 1999, the game Bungie Studios envisioned was a far different product than the blockbuster shoot-em-up we have all come to love. Halo was origi-

nally going to be a self-proclaimed sci-fi rip-off of Myth II: Soulblighter, a simple real-time tactical game of the time in which the player ordered medieval-style units to loot and pillage the thatched-roof cottages of his (or her) foes. Fortunately, Bungie realized early into development that Master Chief wasn't meant to burninate the countryside, but another unresolved issue remained - would Halo be developed for the PC/MAC or

for Microsoft's soon-to-be-released Xbox gaming console? Bungie Studios disappointed its hardcore PC fanbase by announcing that Halo would launch on the Xbox and would "eventually" be ported to the PC by a third-party studio. This decision was a shock to fans of the Marathon series and other Bungie classics, but it would prove to spell success unprecedented in gaming history. When Halo was released shortly after the initial slew

of disappointing Xbox launch titles, it quickly rocketed the Xbox to the top of sixth generation video game consoles in sales and popularity, becoming the "killer app" for Microsoft's risky entry into the console world. By the time its sequel was released on November 9, 2004, Halo: Combat Evolved had become the most adored console shooter since Goldeneye 64 for the Nintendo 64, and had generated massive revenues for Bungie Studios.

What has caused the Halo series to generate so much popularity? What has led to its translation and distribution in several dozen different languages? Maybe it's the amazing orchestral soundtrack that has immortalized the games as immersive masterpieces. Maybe it's the pick-up-and-play controls that can toss even the clumsiest of noobs into the thick of battle. Maybe it's the wide array of difficulty levels, the lack of loading screens,

and the elimination of a health bar that have revolutionized shooters on the PC and consoles alike. Or maybe it's the cumulative of all these things. The



Halo 3's multiplayer component is exciting and thrilling - as is the entire *Halo* series

sales records for Halo 3, the third and current installment in the Halo trilogy, are a testament to the series' massive appeal - the game achieved revenue of \$170 million on the very first day of its launch. The Xbox Live population for the multiplayer component of the game has reached an upwards of over a million simultaneous players at primetime, not accounting for the legions of people

playing split screen multiplayer. As a basis of comparison, World of Warcraft, the most popular massively multiplayer game of all time, only achieved a peak

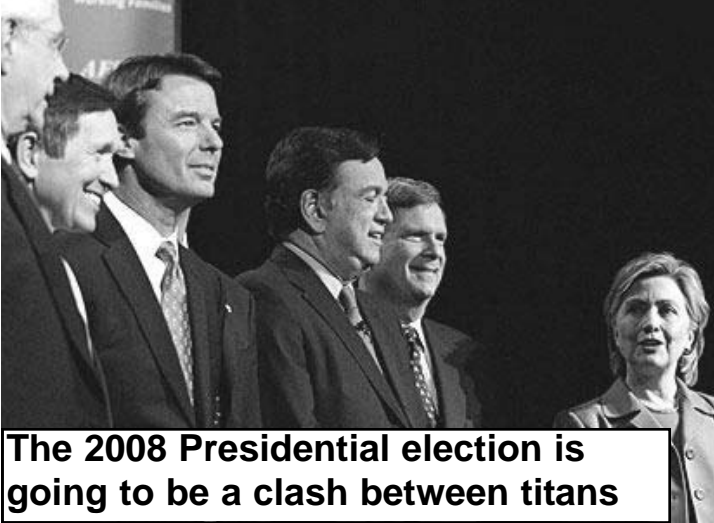
the Halo series for the first time with their incorporation of Halo 3 into winter events. Believe it or not, Halo is actually becoming a competitive sport, comparable to the likes of Major League Baseball and the National Football League.

Is the future of gaming really nested in professional tournaments and Hollywood-level developing budgets? Are video games destined to become the new medium for American entertainment? The Halo series is pushing the gaming market towards new landmarks and levels of success deemed unattainable a decade ago. Halo, along with the dozens of other famous video game franchises, is transforming the world around us, revising popular culture all throughout the world. If Halo is not a cultural phenomenon, then nothing is.

of 200,000 simultaneous players the winter following its launch.

The Halo series has spawned so much popularity that it is even being introduced to the professional gaming scene. Multi-million dollar competitive gaming leagues with huge cash prizes, such as the Cyberathlete Professional League and Major League Gaming, are paying serious attention to

Election 2008: GAME ON!



The 2008 Presidential election is going to be a clash between titans

By David Hanover

Since the 2008 presidential election is to be held more than a year from now, many causal observers may be fooled into believing that it is early in the process. This is decidedly untrue, especially in this cycle, as rapid-fire primaries and caucuses are scheduled to be held as soon as the calendar hits January. With this, the races are already strongly defined and the fields have taken shape.

The Republican Party appears to have, by far, the more com-

petitive primaries of the two major parties. Three candidates all are exhibiting strengths in certain areas of the schedule and the country. Former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney has solidified a lead in Iowa, which will be the first contest held, and also holds a small lead in New Hampshire, while remaining competitive in Nevada and recently expanding his base in South Carolina. The reason for his success in these states is widely speculated; although an extensive advertising



campaign and personal charisma are most frequently cited. Meanwhile, two other former officeholders are showing some muscle as well. Ex-New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani is polling well in many states scheduled to vote on February 5th, and is polling a solid second behind former Tennessee Senator Fred Thompson in most of the southern states. The strength of each of these three candidates leads some to speculate about the possibility of a deadlocked convention - an unlikely spectacle, but exciting

nonetheless.

Meanwhile, Hillary Clinton looks as if she will put a lock on the Democratic nomination. Barack Obama appeared to have an opening to make a strong move in late June, but has failed to live up to the hype generated by his campaign in the early-going. He has been competitive with Clinton in fundraising, but that has failed to translate into votes thus far. The only hope for Obama, and rival John Edwards, likely lies in Iowa, where most polls show Clinton with a small but surmountable

lead. If either Obama or Edwards can pull an upset in Iowa, it is conceivable that each would gain enough momentum to compete in other states, particularly South Carolina. But the comeback trail seems far steeper for Edwards, who is polling a distant third to Clinton and Obama in nationwide polls and is so uncompetitive in fundraising that he has accepted public financing of his cam-

paign, seen by some as a white flag. A wild-card could drastically shift the dynamics of the primary campaign - Al Gore. A prospective Gore candidacy seems more and more unlikely by the hour, but his ambiguous half-denials have left many folks to wonder. Bettors are not yet convinced by Gore's inactivity, either. Intrade, an online futures market, has placed

Gore's odds of winning the Democratic nomination at a relatively staggering 10.8%, within percentage points of Obama. Gore's high numbers are shocking as there is seemingly little chance that he will run. The New York primary is scheduled to be held on February 5th, along with about two-dozen other states. Most of Whitman's senior class will be eligible to vote in the

primary, as will those who will turn 18 by November 4th, 2008, as long as they have registered. While some may view the prospect of voting as exciting, it is entirely possible that both the Democratic and Republican primaries will be far from competitive. Opinion polls in New York consistently show New Yorkers Giuliani and Clinton trouncing their respective fields.

Friends or Family?

By Murielle Jean-Baptiste

Over the years we begin to make stronger and special relationships with friends, considering them like family and often find our parents to be "un-cool". We wanted to know what the real deal was considering friend and family relationships. Surveying a total of 75 of our very own Whitman students by grade, we asked "Friends or Family?" Overall, 49 out of 75 (65%) students chose solely family, and 18 out of 75 (24%) chose solely friends,

the rest choosing both family and friends, which were 8 out of 75 (10%).

Percentages were out of the total amount of students surveyed in their grade

Freshmen:
25 out of 33 (76%) chose Family.
8 out of 33 (24%) chose Friends.

Sophomores:
11 out of 13 (85%) chose Family.
2 out of 13 (15%) chose Friends.

Juniors: 8 out of 12 (67%) chose Family.
4 out of 12 (33%) chose Friends.

Seniors: 5 out of 9 (56%) chose Family.
4 out of 9 (44%) chose Friends.

It is apparent that a majority of our students take family as their top priority, however friends will always come close in second. When asked why family was important to them freshman responses varied from "Family should always come first..." to "...they will always be there for you while friends

sometimes won't be there," said 9th grader Ryan Naughton. These answers were similar for those who picked family, "Friends come and go, they are replaceable, but family could never be replaced. They will be there for you in the long run and that's what really counts more if you think about it," said 10th grader Kerima Osman.

Job and School: Do I Have to Make a Choice?

By Liz Gress

Everybody wants money; the only way to make money is by working. New York State allows a 16 or 17 year old student to work up to 26 hours a week and until 9 p.m. on school nights. Unfortunately, managers of local busi-

nesses seldom adhere to these rules. I have worked in the mall every school day from 4pm to 10 pm, the closing time at the Walt Whitman Mall. (The long hours made it difficult to finish this story!) No longer do I have time for schoolwork. The second I get home, I am exhausted. I just

eat dinner, take a shower and go to bed. No time for homework - but teachers still insist that students should be able to work and go to school.

Katelyn Campbell, a senior that works at PetSmart, works until closing almost every day, and works up to 9 hours on

Saturdays. "I never have time for anything; hanging out with my friends, and if I actually do my homework, I'm up until 1 a.m. or later." Making money is great, it makes us more independent; however, it has a price - doing well in school!

Let Someone Else Walk in Your Shoes

Imagine your house crumbling around you in the middle of the night, scrambling through the wreckage to locate your screaming children. Even worse, imagine doing this in the dark, wearing no clothing, and no shoes. Even if you are lucky and manage to get your family out alive ...your home, neighbor's homes, and more than eighty percent of your belongings are destroyed.

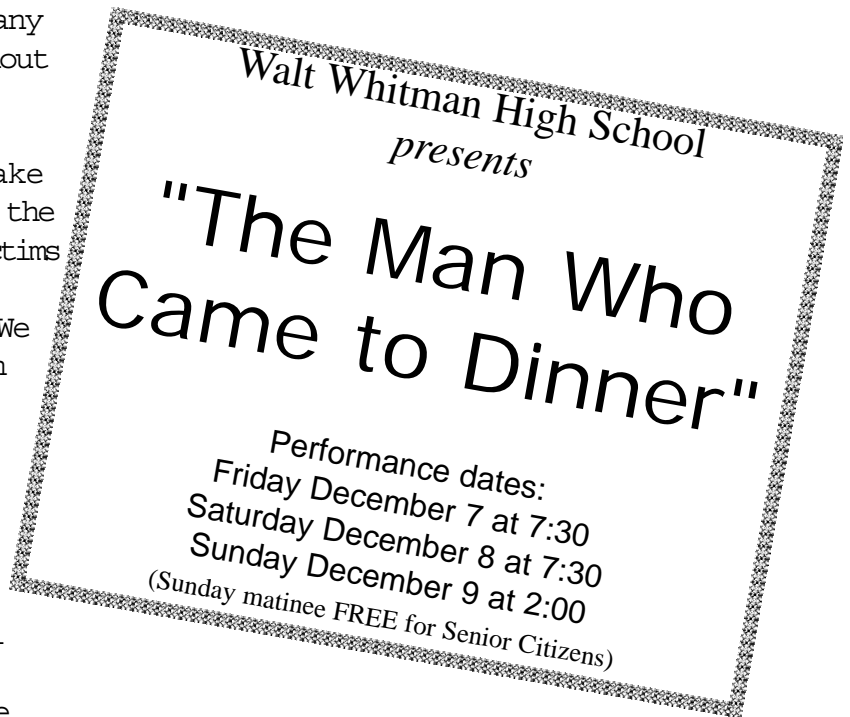
JUST IMAGINE.

This just happened in Pisco, Peru. The massive 8.0 earth-

quake on August 15th has left tens of thousands of people homeless, and many of whom are without shoes.

You can make a huge impact on the lives of these victims in Peru and surrounding areas. We need you to clean out your closets, and donate any new or slightly worn shoes. All donations will be sent by Soles4Souls to all people in need. Help these people get back on their feet.

Bring all donations to room 524.



Community Service and School to Career

By Chris Bustamante & Hannah Wagner

Many Students don't know what community service and the school to career events are.

Community service is a huge opportunity to make a student's chances of getting into the college they desire more realistic. The school to career program is a way to help students start to adapt and get to know what they wish to do in the working environment. Taking place in these events will most defiantly be in a great interest for any student trying to get into college.

Community service is when a student does any task for the community without pay. There are many opportunities in Huntington to obtain community service credit. The amount of hours of community to obtain a credit is, 50 hours for half a credit and 100 hours for one full credit of community service. Locations in Huntington in need of volunteers can be found on Ms. Zamow's e-board, address, number, and person in charge are all listed. Once a student has

completed any amount of community service, it's recommended they print off a community

ter understanding of the career itself. Internships are a great way to experi-



Above: Ms. Zamow smiles for the camera!

service form from the school website, <http://www.shufsd.org/schools/wwhs/main.html>. Community service is a great credit to have on your transcript to college and is recommended that all students take place in it.

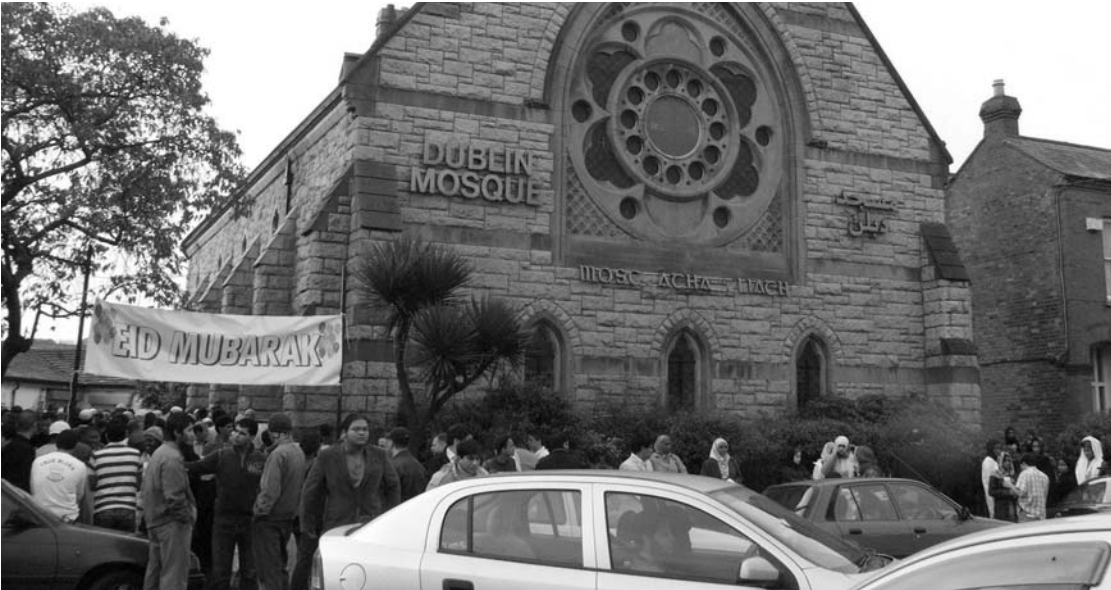
The school to career program consists of job shadowing, internships, job listings, and career day. Job shadowing is when a sophomore goes out for a day and goes with an adult who works in an area of interest of the student and they observe the adult to get a bet-

ter understanding of the career; this is when a student goes with an adult after school and learns and gets hands on work in the area of interest. Internships are almost like jobs that don't pay that will appear on your transcript. Another exciting event for sophomores is career day. Career day is when sophomores get to get a schedule for a day and go and hear adults speak about what they do, this is an excellent way to get information on different careers. There's also a fully updated list of places in the Huntington area

looking for students interested in working, all the information is listed and can be found on Ms. Zamow's e-board. Finally the word is that Ms. Zamow is trying to get a new program approved, the basis of it will be, and some students will be able to teach for a day to get hands on learning on how it's like to be a teacher; let's hope this program pulls through.

Community service and the school to career programs can be very fun and extremely useful when applying for college. Just stick with a friend and try to knock out some community service hours together, you will both get credit and have fun while doing it. The school to career program is a great way to experience which area of interest you think you'll want to go into. Any more information on community service and the school to career program can be found on Ms. Zamow's e-board.

Holy Month of Ramadan



**To the Left:
Muslims celebrate Eid-Al-Fitr
at Dublin
Mosque in
Ireland.**

By Sehar Babar

Hey, do you want to know why you heard stomachs growling at school a few weeks ago? From September 13 to October 13, we were participating in the holy month of Ramadan, a month in which we must fast during daylight.

Ramadan is one of the twelve months of the Islamic calendar, which is based on the phases of the moon rather than the sun. Every year Ramadan starts ten days earlier than last year. If we are lucky, Ramadan will be taking place during the winter, when the days are shorter than they are in the sum-

mer. Unfortunately, in a few years, Ramadan will be during the summer, which means we won't be able to eat or drink anything for more than 15 hours at a time!

Finally, after Ramadan is over, you will see Muslims walking around with huge wads of cash burning a hole in their pockets and purses, all thanks to that very special holiday called Eid-Al-Fitr, which marks the end of Ramadan. This holiday lasts for 3 whole days! During this holiday Muslims spend time with family and friends celebrating the end of fasting. When we greet family and

friends on Eid-Al-Fitr we say "Eid Mubarak!" which means "Happy Eid!" At the end of the first day, all of the family and family's friends gather at a family member's house. Everyone brings his or her best dishes and we all have a feast. We also exchange gifts with each other. The kids and teenagers of the family usually get the most of the presents, which is usually money!

The purpose of fasting in the first place is to feel the way poor people do because they cannot afford food. It teaches people lessons on not to take things for granted, be thankful

for what you get and give to charity. So to everyone who has been fasting for those hard, long 30 days, congratulations and Eid Mubarak! But don't get too excited because next Ramadan is right around the corner!

The Women's Choir

By Rubab Rehman

It was only a few weeks ago when many aspiring singers auditioned for a chance to be a member of Women's Choir, a small and selected ensemble with big talent. The students were all filled with anxiety as they went in one by one to show Ms. Leopold the quality of their voice and their ability to read music. Several people made the cut, and even freshmen were given the opportunity to be part of this exceptional group. Although some may

consider singing a simple task, it does require physical effort and being able to recognize the right notes and pitches. After a summer of sending some of her students to Europe, Ms. Leopold was determined to make her singers better than ever this year. With weekly rehearsals, the group is committed to excellence in the performance of diverse and challenging choral literature for women's voices.

Women's Choir sings an assortment of music, including early classical, romantic,

contemporary music, and some spirituals as well. Some of the upcoming performances will take place in Millredge Inn in December, and the school itself during the spring. Ms. Leopold, conductor of Women's Choir says, "The group has the most heavenly sound anyone can possibly imagine. I tried to balance as many members from each grade as possible, and we have grown into one large family in the process. It is wonderful how high the potential is, and exciting to see the

new girls learning quickly to the veteran members. I couldn't be more proud of them this year." Even the singers themselves gave their input on the group, and explained the positive aspects of being a member. Christina Zrake, a junior in the high school says, "Woman's choir is pure gold." Overall, the goal of Women's Choir is to broaden the musical horizons of those who love to sing, while rehearsing and preparing for our performances.

New activities at Whitman!

By Fuschia Ray

Come one; come all to the wide array of clubs at Whitman. These amazing activities range from community and environmental clubs like Habitat for Humanity to international business organizations like DECA (Whitman continues to gain outstanding ratings in regional DECA competitions year after year) The variety of activities speaks to a diverse

student body that possess assorted interests and hobbies.

For those interested in the areas of mathematics and science, the Mathletes or Robotics Club are perfect fits for you! For the musically inclined and those interested in performing in an ensemble, the Chamber Orchestra, Jazz Band, and Whitman's Chorale are ideal clubs to join. Available to potential dancers is Whitman's

nationally ranked Dance Team; it's been recognized for its stellar performances in kick, hip hop, and pom dances.

One of the newest additions to Whitman's wide array of extracurricular activities is the Model United Nations Club. This group, advised by Miss Goldrich and Mrs. Meier, is mainly concerned with solving problems on a global scale.

Many of the clubs, including The

Paw Print, are constantly seeking new members and are interested in accepting new additions to their organizations.

With all of these opportunities offered at Walt Whitman, students are sure to remain busy, involved, and entertained. This diverse range of clubs and activities is sure to speak to anyone who is looking for an outlet for their creativity!

Who's Piloting This Jet?

By Kyle Ryan

In Week 1 of this 2007 season, in the midst of getting beat down by the New England Patriots 38-14, New York fans witnessed Chad Pennington get injured once again. He struggled to the sideline, barely able to make it there on his own. As he denied offers of help from teammates, I was only able to believe what I saw because Pennington seems to get injured every season. What I couldn't believe was what I heard as New York fans were cheering Pennington came out and Kellen Clemens, 2nd year quarterback out of Oregon, came in.

The Kellen Clemens bandwagon began after his solid preseason while Pennington posted miserable numbers. Pennington does have the weakest arm in the league,

and New York fans are tired of it, as they want to see the gunslinger Clemens under center. Clemons showed great leadership in Week 2 as he figured out one of the better defenses in the league, the Baltimore Ravens, and almost led an amazing 4th Quarter comeback. He did all he had to do that game, but was let down by his wide receivers. However, that game might have been a blessing in disguise. Had Clemons won that game, pressure would have increased even more for Mangini to name Clemons the starter. And that would be the wrong choice.

Pennington may have a worse arm than Clemons, but he is one of the smartest leaders in the league. Chad understands the game and uses every inch on that field to make the offense

work. He gives the Jets experience, inspiration, and a role model for the whole team. He works out intensely every off-season, usually in rehab, and when he plays for the Jets they have looked like a playoff worthy team. I think Clemons will be a great quarterback for the Jets, but let him gain experience while Pennington gives the Jets the best chance they have to win every game. The earliest Clemons should start is late this season, only if the Jets don't make a run for the playoffs in these next couple games. As long as the Jets are competing, they should leave Pennington out there and bring Kellen in next year or maybe even the 09-10 season. The best advantage of handling the QB situation this way is that there is no rebuilding year,

as you go from one QB who can lead you in Pennington to another QB in Clemens who will be ready to lead the team.



Above: Chad Pennington in all his glory.



Above: Kellen Clemens dodges a tackle.

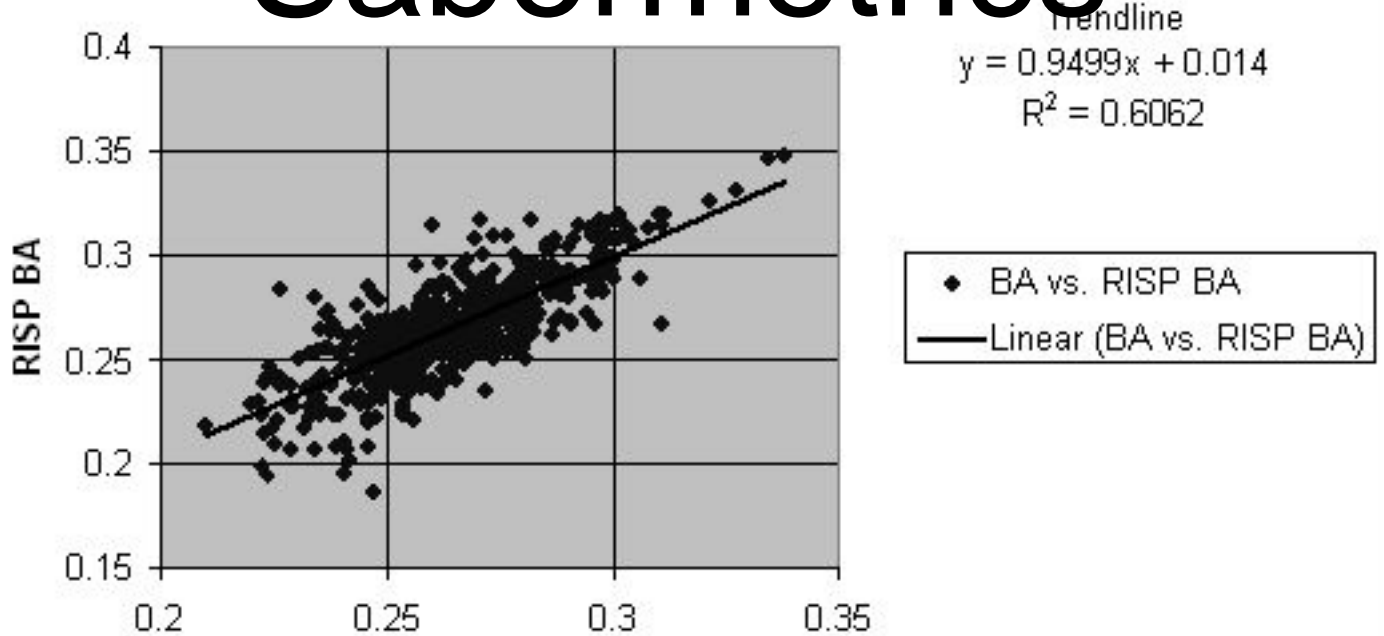
With all this in mind, remember that you have two great options to choose from, and since Pennington is your starting QB, support the guy. He is 2nd all time in completion percent-

age at 65.5%, has a 78-51 TD-Interception ratio, and an 89.3 rating this year, which is pretty good since he won comeback player of the year last year with an 82.6 rating.

The Jets are a different team without Pennington, and he will help the Jets rebound. They barely lost their game to Baltimore, and although they lost to New England 38-14, San Diego, a supposed powerhouse, lost to them 38-14, the Bills lost 38-7, and Cincinnati lost 34-13. Their losses versus Buffalo and New York are inexcusable, but last year the Jets lost to Buffalo and Cleveland, two teams whom they could've beaten easily. You have to have a short-term memory

in the NFL and the losses shouldn't affect the team in upcoming games. It is a hard schedule for the Jets but you shouldn't be worried yet, as we have a decent chance in every game left this year with the exception of New England. Give Pennington a chance this year, and if you aren't too busy complaining about a lack of deep bombs, try to see more than just a passer. Chad Pennington is in every way, the leader of the New York Jets, and that's why he deserves to pilot this Jet.

An Introduction to Sabermetrics



Sabermetrics brings statistical analysis to the baseball diamond ^A

By David Hanover

While watching a baseball telecast, you will invariably be showered with dozens of numbers through the course of a game. Statistics such as runs-batted-in, home-run(s), batting-average, and earned-run-average are some of the mainstays. But, are these traditional statistics actually the best in quantifying a players' production? A large and growing school of alternative thought would respond with a

resounding "no."

Many baseball fans are unaware of an alternative statistical paradigm dubbed "sabermetrics." The most influential thinker in the history of sabermetrics is Bill James. James began his baseball writings in the 1970s while doing night shifts as a security guard. A typical James writing stated a question, and using scores of data and analysis, would provide an answer. James began self-publishing an annual report

called The Bill James Baseball Abstract in 1977, which provided pages of James' raw analysis and data. However, despite the publication, he gained little respect from baseball's establishment due the stark contrast between James' writings and traditional baseball thought.

James began gaining respect in the 1980s, as he garnered mentions in news magazines and found a publisher for his annuals. The sabermetric movement gained more

steam underground, too, as the number of his followers grew and began research on their own. Two of these thinkers, John Thorn and Pete Palmer, first developed the now-mainstream statistic OPS (on-base percentage plus slugging percentage) in 1984.

The sabermetric movement continued to grow in acceptance in the 1990s, culminating in the hiring of sabermetrician Billy Beane as the Oakland general manager in 1997. Beane has an

undisputed record of success in Oakland, leading the A's to five playoff appearances and four division championships during his reign.

Three other men with noted saber-metric leanings have been hired as team general managers after Beane's success; these include Theo Epstein in Boston, Paul DePodesta in Los Angeles, and Jon Daniels in Texas. DePodesta was fired after two seasons, but won a division title in 2004 and laid much of the foundation for the Dodgers' 2006 wild-card playoff berth. Epstein, with the aid of a large payroll, led the Red Sox to a 2004 World Series Championship.

Dozens of statistics have been developed by James and other sabermetrics over the last few decades, and to discuss them all would be both impossible and time-consuming. Instead, a brief overview of three important statistics is likely the most economical approach. Among

these three are two of James' creations: win shares and defensive efficiency. The other is VORP, developed by Keith Woolner.

Win shares combine every aspect of a player's performance and roll them into one statistic, which quantifies how many wins a player contributed to his team. One win share represents one third of a win; this multiplication by three allows for increased variance to be viewed between players. The website HardballTimes.com has a sortable win shares database available free of charge. Both New York third basemen led their respective leagues in win shares in 2007: David Wright of the Mets led the National League with 34 (meaning, he was responsible for about 10 1/3 of the Mets' 88 victories this year), and Alex Rodriguez led the American League (and all of baseball) with 39.

Team defensive efficiency is a

very simple statistic to calculate; it is a team's percentage of balls in play turned into outs. It is a response by James to the traditional statistics it combats, which are errors and fielding percentage. James argues that errors are a useless statistic, as it represents, in his own words, "the only major statistic in sports which is a record of what an observer thinks should have been accomplished." Other fielding matrices have been developed that attempt to quantify individual defensive productivity, such as zone rating, range factor, fielding runs above average, and fielding win shares, but these are considered and admitted to be far from perfect by their originators.

VORP is a one-dimensional statistic which only measures how much a player contributes in one aspect of the game. There are two different types of VORP; one measures only offensive contributions and the

other measures pitchers' contributions. The statistic is defensive-independent. Both types of VORP are measured in runs above replacement level; replacement level being the projected contributions of a AAA player being called up to the major leagues. Once again, the two New York third basemen led their respective leagues in VORP. Alex Rodriguez was worth 96.6 offensive runs above replacement in 2007, while David Wright was worth 81.1 runs.

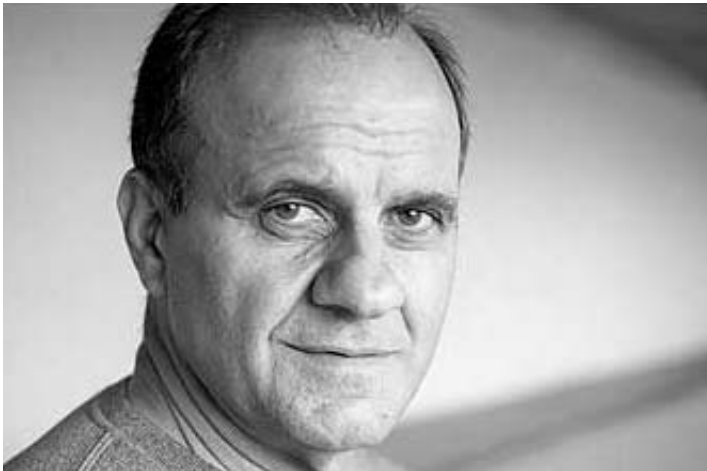
For further readings and studies on the topic, visit HardballTimes.com and BaseballProspectus.com.

What Will the Off-season Hold for the Yankees?

By Michael Giambrone

On May 29th, the Yankees dropped to 21-29, 14½ games behind the Red Sox in the AL East Division, ending many fans and player's hopes for a postseason birth. Although the Yankees did not win the AL East Division Championship for the first time since 1998, the Yankees entered the playoffs via the Wild-Card, boasting an outstanding second half record of 51-24, the best in the major leagues. The Yankees season ended just as disappointing as it began as they lost three out of four in the ALDS to the Cleveland Indians. Now a new season starts for the Yankees, the off-season, and there is a possibility of major changes in the Bronx. Who will replace Joe Torre as the Yankee's manager? Which big name players, such as Alex Rodriguez and Mariano Rivera will be will be re-signed? Yankees owner

George Steinbrenner mentioned before Game 3 of the ALDS that manager Joe Torre's job would be



Who will replace Joe Torre as manager of the New York Yankees?

in jeopardy of the Yankees were to lose the ALDS. After the Yankees lost the series, the front office decided to give Joe Torre a one year 5 million dollar contract offer, with bonuses for the team's performance in the playoffs. Joe Torre, who felt insulted by the 2.5 million dollar pay cut, ending his twelve year reign as the Yankees manager. Possible replacements for the job are Don Mattingly, Joe Girardi, and Tony Pena. Don Mattingly was the Yankees

first baseman from 1982-1995 and was the Yankee's bench coach last year. Joe Girardi was the

Yankee catcher from 1996-1999, and earned three World Series rings. He was awarded NL Manager of the Year in 2006 for the Florida Marlins. The third main candidate, Tony Pena, was the Kansas City Royal's manager from 2002-2005 an earned the AL Manager of the Year award in 2003. He has served as the Yankee's first as coach since 2005. The front runners for this position are Don Mattingly and Joe Girardi, due to their personal experiences with the team.

Arguably the best free-agent that may test the market this year is Alex Rodriguez. A-Rod answered the critics' questions this year by posting mind-boggling numbers. A-Rod seems bound for his third MVP as he posted for a batting average .314 with 54 homeruns and 156 RBI's. He was the first player since Roger Maris in 1961 to lead the league in homeruns, RBI's, and runs scored in the same year. A-Rod's agent, Scott Boras, has hinted that he wants A-Rod to test the free-agency. Yankees General Manager Brian Cashman has previously stated that he will not pursue A-Rod if he opts out of his current contract. A-Rod has until 10 days after the World Series to announce whether he will or will not stay with the team. As, A-Rod is bound for a huge contract, the Yankees may have an edge over other teams to sign their

slugger due to their free spending habits.

Jorge Posada, Andy Pettitte, and Bobby Abreu are some other free-agents that the Yankees are considering re-signing. The Yankees plan to offer Jorge Posada, who is coming off a career year, a new contract before other teams can begin negotiating with him. Andy

Pettitte has a player option for \$16 million, and New York has a \$16 million option on right fielder Bobby Abreu. Both Jorge Posada's and Andy Pettitte's decisions on whether to return to New York will be also be influenced on Joe Torre's decision not to manage in 2008.

Mariano Rivera has been the

Yankees closer for the past 11 years, collecting 438 saves in that time frame. He has been one of the most dominant closers of his era, and his level of post-season success cannot be challenged by any closer. Mariano's decision of whether to stay with the

Yankees will be heavily influenced by the Joe Torre's decision to stop managing the team. When questioned about Joe Torre's current situation, Mariano stated, "I wish he's back, definitely. If you ask me what I would want, I want him back".

Take Me Home: New York Knicks Upcoming Season

By Jeff Haber

The Knicks did get better this off-season this year, but are they going to be good enough for the playoffs? The New York Knicks certainly got better as they acquired all-star power forward, Zach Randolph from the Portland Trailblazers, in exchange for Channing Frye. So The Knicks did improve, especially now since the Knicks have to big body's in Eddie Curry and Zach Randolph to dominate the paint, and get big rebounds. Yet getting Randolph was a big move, but he is not that big of

an increase in performance. Randolph can be a selfish player, and Thomas is trying to get the team to work together. Frankly the Knicks is a team of individual all-stars with Stephon Marbury, Jamal Crawford, Eddie Curry, and now Zach Randolph, but the Knicks have learned

Below: Eddie Curry (left) takes on Yao Ming (right).



in the past that to make a playoff caliber team, those all-stars need to collaborate. Eddie Curry said it best "it's all about the team". Also getting Randolph is not as big of a move as fans think. He gets into trouble off the court, and he is an injury-prone player. Plus the Boston Celtics countered the Knicks getting Randolph with added arguably the best power forward in the game, Kevin Garnett.

Yet there will be some positives. The Knicks starting lineup is a pretty excellent one on paper. With Marbury



Above: Quentin Richardson taking a jump shot.

(the team's leader in assists and team veteran) and Crawford (who last year averaged 17.6 points per game, and a .838 free throw percentage) in the backcourt. Then they have Quentin Richardson (a high-quality 3-point shooter), all-star Zach Randolph (who averaged a double

double with an average 23.6 points per game, and 10.1 rebounds per game), and Eddie Curry (who averaged 19.5 points [7 more than

Below: Jamal Crawford drives to the hoop.

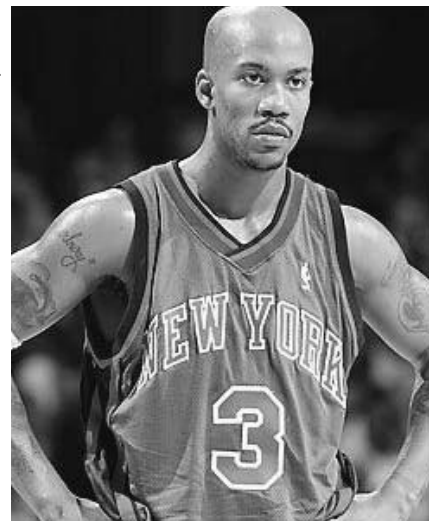


the 05-06 season] and 7 rebounds [one more than the 05-06]). Plus David Lee coming off the bench who had a break-out year averaging 10.4 rebounds per game and 10.7 points per game, and had a couple of 20 rebound games last season.

Plus along with the Knicks getting Randolph coach Isaiah Thomas and Stephon Marbury were involved in a

case of sexual harassment. This off the court distractions may lead to sloppy play, and dreadful coaching.

So to answer the earlier question, is probably not. The team looks like the same exact team as last year. The only difference is more distractions off the court.



Above: Stephon Marbury stares down his (doomed) opponents.

Contributors

Editors:

Jeff Haber - Sports
David Hanover
Jason Rosenbaum - Layout

Writers:

Sehar Babar
Chris Bustamante
Michael Giambrone
Liz Gress
Jeff Haber
David Hanover
Murielle Jean-Baptiste
Fuschia Ray
Rubab Rehman
Jason Rosenbaum
Kyle Ryan
Hannah Wagner