

## **Baseball Playoffs: Yanks, Not Mariners, Would be Favored**

by Stephen Nover  
TheRx.com  
September 11 , 2001

LAS VEGAS - The baseball playoffs are three weeks away, but you might be surprised who the favorite in the American League would be.

Hint: It's not the Seattle Mariners, who are merely threatening to break the 1906 Chicago Cubs record for most regular season victories.

If the American League Division Series were to begin today, the New York Yankees would be favored. That's according to Cesar Robaina. He should know. He's the head oddsmaker for Las Vegas Sports Consultants, which make the betting line for most of the hotels in Nevada.

"It's hard to imagine a team could win 115-117 games and be a 'dog in their opening series," Robaina said.

That would be the case if the Mariners were to open against the Yankees. But as it stands now, the Mariners would play Cleveland while the Yankees would meet Oakland.

If the Mariners were to host the Yankees, though, they would be underdogs.

"The Yankees would be a small favorite, believe it or not," Robaina said.

Robaina would make Roger Clemens a slight road favorite in Game One against Jamie Moyer. If the pitching matchup for Game Two were Mike Mussina against Freddy Garcia, Robaina would make the game around pick.

Then the series would shift to Yankee Stadium, where Robaina would make Andy Pettitte and Orlando Hernandez around minus \$1.20 pitching at home.

If Clemens or Mussina got to pitch at Yankee Stadium against the Mariners, Robaina would make them in the vicinity of minus \$1.35.

"You put all those factors together and it comes out to Yankees around minus \$1.20 or even minus \$1.30 in the series," Robaina said.

Of course all this advance figuring could be meaningless if the Yankees were to open against Oakland and lose in the best-of-five series.

Robaina estimates he would open the Yankees around minus \$1.60 if they were to meet Oakland.

"Home field advantage and Clemens," he said.

The series price might even open higher considering the public would look to play the Yankees. Chances are some sports books also would open the Yankees higher than usual to offset future book play. The Yankees annually draw heavy action to win the World Series. Oakland, on the other hand, is not a public team.

This doesn't mean the Yankees are necessarily the side to bet. The A's can match the Yankees with four solid starters.

The Yankees also have had trouble with the A's, losing six in a row to them. The A's swept the Yankees at home on August 10-12.

In the National League, things are too close to project at this point.

---