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'Can do' replacing old sense of doom

These Devil Rays could have more legitimate talent than perhaps any of the previous nine teams.

By MARC TOPKIN
Published April 22, 2007

ST. PETERSBURG - These Devil Rays could have more legitimate talent than perhaps any of the previous nine teams.

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They definitely have more confidence.

Where past Rays teams saw roadblocks and lost causes, these Rays - whether it's true ability, youthful exuberance or even naivete - see opportunities for success.

Facing aces such as Roy Halladay, Johan Santana, Erik Bedard and C.C. Sabathia, as they just did in a 12-game stretch? Bring 'em on.

The Yankees are coming this week? So what? "They're vulnerable right now," Delmon Young said. "A lot of teams are vulnerable."

Sports News Video

The change in attitude, Carl Crawford said, is a direct result of the increase in ability.

"It's a different feeling, and everybody can tell," said Crawford, one of only five active Rays left from the 2004 squad. "We try to have the attitude that we can compete. It takes a lot of things to win, but as long as we know we can compete, you never know what can happen after that.

"As long as we're telling ourselves every day we can give these guys a run for their money and see what happens toward the end, you'll always see us not really being too worried about who we're playing against."

And they say that's the case whether it's the Yankees, who drop in Monday and Tuesday, or the Red Sox, whom they'll play 18 times in a 73-game late-summer stretch, or anyone else, anywhere else.

"We're confident because we know we have talent," Young said. "We're not really intimidated. We play the two biggest teams in baseball 18-19 times each. So if we can go and compete with them, we think we can go and compete with any other team."

DOLLARS AND SENSE: Forbes ranks the Rays 29th out of 30 major-league teams with an overall value of \$267-million, though that's up nearly 30 percent from last year, the fourth-biggest increase. Forbes also says the Rays have the 11th-largest operating income, \$20.2-million before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization; the 27th-most revenues, \$134-million; and a relatively low debt/value ratio of 15 percent. The Rays, who also have the lowest opening day payroll in the majors at \$23.2-million, don't say what they think of the estimates.

RAY'S RUMBLINGS: The Rays have to notify MLB by May 31 of their new name (dropping Devil) and color scheme (blue and yellow?) but don't plan to announce it until after the season. ... Yankees reliever Mike Myers tells ESPN.com the Trop's visiting clubhouse food spread is "definitely" the game's best and that Guy Gallagher and staff "would win the award hands down every year." ... The Rays were one of five teams to get an A from University of Detroit professor Mike Bernacchi for the quantity, quality and creativity of their promotions. ... With ESPN plus Japanese radio and TV crews, Monday's game could have the most credentialed media of any in Trop history. ... Sports Illustrated's Jon Heyman lists CF Rocco Baldelli among five players who "could use a change of scenery" and mentions the Marlins and Rockies as potential trade partners. ... Cute touch by TV's

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Dewayne Staats and Joe Magrane to open Friday's broadcast in hospital masks. ... Richie Hebner, in the Montgomery Advertiser, said of his firing as Durham's hitting coach: "I didn't think it was fair, but a lot of things in life aren't fair." ... Fired Durham manager John Tamargo is back with Milwaukee's Class A Brevard County team. ... More and more it sounds as if the Astros will keep Brad Lidge, at least for a while. ... The only Ray ranking among Sports Weekly's 50 most influential people in baseball was medical director Dr. James Andrews, at No. 33.

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by Leah

04/23/07 04:47 PM

The D-Rays are one of the best teams talent-wise out there, and I really like what I'm seeing from them. They have power, speed, and they are all competitive players. The rotation is pretty good; the bullpen needs to step up, though.

by Dan

04/22/07 10:28 AM

Rays have been in most of the games, and scores have been relatively close. Rays are doing fine standing the other teams down. Fans: you've cried "at least if they were competitive...". Well, they are. Now support 'em. YOU GO, GUYS!!!!!!!

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