

Spring brings fresh start

Orioles look to put troubling season in past

By DAVID GINSBURG
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla.

The Baltimore Orioles opened spring training camp Wednesday confident that this season couldn't possibly be as problematic as last year.

"This is a new spring, a new year," first-year manager Sam Perlozzo said. "Dwelling on the past is a negative, and we would like to deal with positives."

Then Javy Lopez showed up. Lopez made it clear that he's still not enamored with the idea of learning to play first base during the final season of his three-year, \$22.5 million contract.

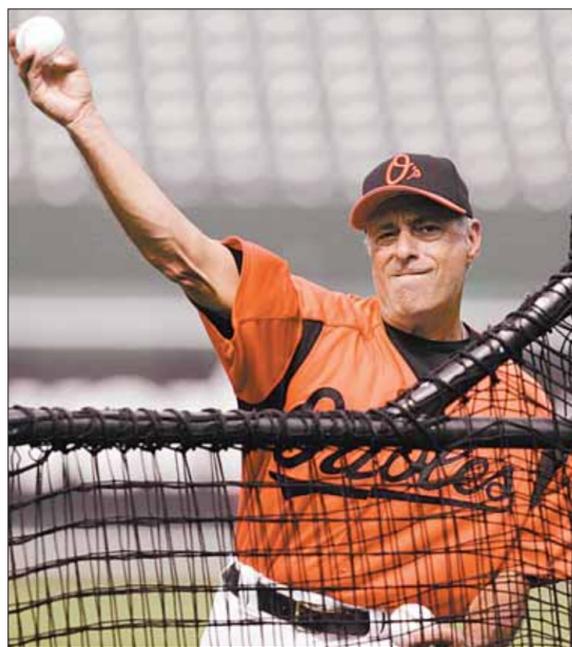
Lopez, a catcher throughout his entire major-league career, was asked to master a new position after the team signed free-agent catcher Ramon Hernandez during the winter.

Lopez, 35, would have felt a lot better about the switch if it came with a contract extension.

"It's going to be a challenge for me. If I don't do well, I'm in trouble," he said. "The change of positions is a good idea; the timing is what the problem is."

"It's the last year of my contract, and if I want to find a job next year somewhere else, not playing catcher the whole year is going to make it harder for me."

Soon after the Orioles signed Hernandez, Lopez asked to be traded, then rescinded the re-



Orioles manager Sam Perlozzo, shown pitching during batting practice in Baltimore on Aug. 11, took over the team last season after Lee Mazzilli was fired. Baltimore started fast but finished fourth in the American League East.

quest after speaking with team officials.

He said Wednesday he would like to finish his career in Baltimore but couldn't mask his displeasure with his current situation, which will also require him to be a designated hitter.

"If I have to do it, I'll do it, but I told (Perlozzo) how much I hate being DH," he said.

Lopez expected to be traded soon after Hernandez signed and still isn't sure if he's wanted by the Orioles.

"I don't want to put myself 100 percent set here because I know the Orioles might do something unexpected," he said. "It's kind of frustrating because nobody wants to be in a place where you don't know where you're going to end up."

Lopez's uncertain situation, combined with Miguel Tejada's offseason request to be traded, proves the Orioles aren't in position to start anew this spring training, no matter how much Perlozzo is seeking to distance

himself from a disastrous 2005 season. Perlozzo finished the final two months as interim manager.

Baltimore led the powerful AL East in late June before finishing fourth. That was only a small portion of what went wrong.

The Orioles had to deal with the steroid-related suspension of first baseman Rafael Palmeiro, who denied using the performance-enhancing drug and enraged Tejada by implying that the positive test stemmed from a shot of B-12 provided by the All-Star shortstop.

Baltimore also was forced to cope with the firing of manager Lee Mazzilli, the antics of Sidney Ponson and the angst of watching Sammy Sosa struggle to hit.

"We've got a new cast of characters on the team and the staff," Perlozzo insisted.

Perlozzo will attempt to end the Orioles' run of eight straight losing seasons with aid from pitching coach Leo Mazzone, who came from the Atlanta Braves, bench coach Lee Elia and bullpen coach Rick Dempsey.

The new faces on the field will include Hernandez, pitchers Kris Benson and LaTroy Hawkins, first baseman-outfielder Jeff Conine, infielder Kevin Millar and outfielder Corey Patterson.

Then there's Lopez, who will adjust to a new position in camp and playing with Puerto Rico in the World Baseball Classic.

"I think Javy is a great guy. He's no different from anyone else as far as his contract is concerned," Perlozzo said. "But when he gets his uniform on and gets out on the field, when we get him at first and behind the plate and he steps in the batter's box all the time, hopefully that will soften everything."

Giants

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1)

he was catching fly balls with the outfielders, and after that it was all downhill.

"He's got to get in shape, but he's a smart man and a smart player. The earlier he gets started the better."

General manager Brian Sabean seemed unconcerned about where Bonds will bat, adding, "I just hope he's in the lineup to bat somewhere."

The 41-year-old Bonds hit five home runs in his brief time on the active roster last season, entering 2006 with 708 career homers, six behind Babe Ruth and 47 shy of Hank Aaron on the career list.

With Bonds in the final year of his contract, Sabean was asked if discussions had begun on an

extension for 2007, when Bonds likely would be close to overtaking Aaron's 755 if he remains healthy this year.

"It has not been brought up by their side, or our side," Sabean said. "From what I understand, his offseason conditioning has gone well. But until he gets here and into a regimen, we have to be open-minded."

"It's a day-to-day proposition, starting with the day he shows up."

Sabean seemed relieved that Bonds was not participating in the World Baseball Classic, even though as a designated hitter there would have been less of an injury risk. The general manager has concerns about 39-year-old outfielder Moises Alou playing for the Dominican Republic.

"I'm not worried about pitchers, but I have some concerns about Mo," Sabean said. "Guys will be running 90 feet, throwing long, going all out."

unionfederalbank.com

Need to consolidate debts?
Need money for tax time?



More financing options for you.

Home Equity Line of Credit

4.99 % APR*

GREAT LOW INTRODUCTORY RATE.

Home Equity Term Loan

5.99 % APR**

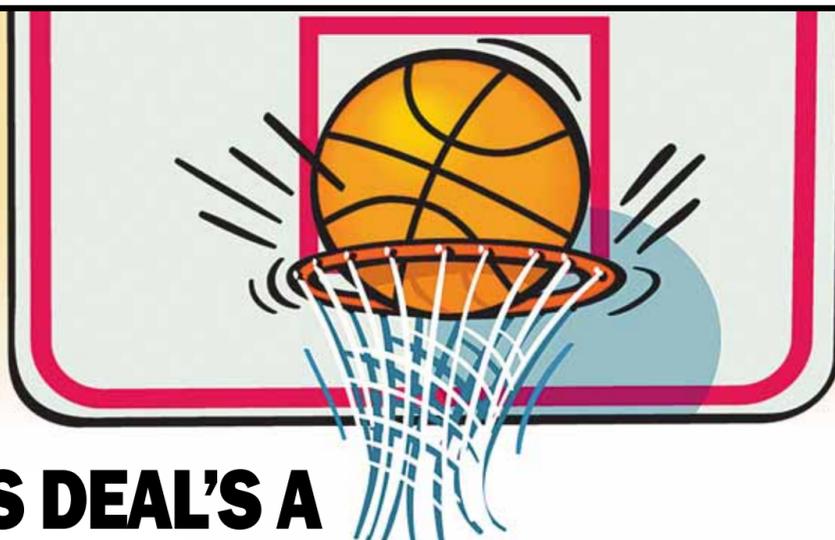
NO STRINGS ATTACHED. NOT A TEASER.

Put the equity in your home to work for you with a UFB Home Equity Loan or Line of Credit. Leverage your home's value to refinance, remodel, consolidate debt or pay for college. The interest might even be tax deductible. Stop in any neighborhood branch or call 1-888-EZ-LOANS for details or to apply by phone. Find out for yourself why UFB is ranked #1 in customer satisfaction in greater Indianapolis.

UFB
UNION FEDERAL BANK

THE OFFICIAL BANK OF THE INDIANAPOLIS COLTS

*4.99% APR (Annual Percentage Rate) introductory rate effective on home equity lines of credit for 4 months. Thereafter, rates are variable and subject to change based on changes in market conditions (6.99% as of 2/1/06), with a maximum APR of 18.00%. Homes with loan-to-value greater than 89.9% are not eligible for the introductory rate. No closings costs; however, if the line is closed within 36 months, you will be required to reimburse Bank for closing costs which could range from \$150 - \$300. No more than 1 promotional offer within a 12 month period. **The APR on home equity loans depends upon the term of the loan, loan amount, and loan-to-value (LTV) ratio of your home. In the example above, 5.99% APR is based on an LTV of up to 80.0% with a 5 year term and automatic payment deduction from a Union Federal account. No closing costs; however, a prepayment penalty equal to 2% of the balance applies. The following terms apply to both lines and loans: Minimum amount of \$10,000 and automatic payment required to receive advertised rates. No annual fee or private mortgage insurance. All rates are subject to approval. Credit approval, property insurance and, in some cases, flood insurance are required. Loans must be secured by primary residence. Some property types excluded. Limited time offer. See branch for details. FDIC Insured.



THIS DEAL'S A
SURE SHOT!

Subscribe to the DAILY JOURNAL in March and Receive our Best Offer Yet!

GET ALL THIS AND MORE!

Local News • School & Education News • In-depth Coverage • Obituaries
Business & Economic Development News • Local Columnists
Thursday's GO! Entertainment Section
Thousands of Dollars in Coupons
High School Sports Coverage • Colts & Pacers Coverage
TV Week • Special Features • Police & Fire News



New Subscribers Only!

Take Advantage of Our Special Offer:

4 Months for Just \$31.20

8 Months for Just \$62.40

12 Months for Just \$93.60

That's One Month FREE!

Limited Time Only!

PLUS Get Unlimited Access to
thejournalnet.com
with any subscription!

DON'T PASS THIS ONE!

CALL 317-736-2777 TO SIGN UP TODAY!

Visit the Daily Journal on the Net: www.thejournalnet.com