

Denver's pro sports teams

Who would have thought that every major sports team in Denver would fire their coach/manager except the Nuggets?

There may never have been a greater collection of "in over their heads" head men than in Denver this past season.

Clint Hurdle is a classic underachiever who had one month of a seven year stint during which his team played "lights out" and saved the manager's job for more than another season. It's hard for fans to accept, but teams do have short spurts of success that they will never duplicate. The Rockies of October 2007 were an oddity. Few teams have such runs as the Rockies did and even fewer have those incredible streaks at the end of a season. That success was a mirage. To make matters more confusing, the Rockies won playoffs over mediocre teams and reached the World Series.

That was the end of the road. The Red Sox exposed the Rockies as an over-achieving group that would have lost to any American League team they would have faced in the 2007 World Series.

The Florida Marlins started the 2009 season 11-1. At this writing, they are 29-33. They have one great position player in Hanley Ramirez, a fair one in Dan Uggla and not much else. Their fans probably didn't get excited about the fast start - they didn't order World Series tickets or place large bets in Vegas.

Why Rockies fans had great expectations out of spring training is puzzling. The team had lost its best player and clubhouse leader in Matt Holiday, its closer, All-Star Brian Fuentes, the team's "ace" in Jeff Frances, and the team's fastest man, Willie Taveras. Most of the veteran pitchers signed did not remain with the team in May. What was to be optimistic about? The owners had hired a manager-in-waiting in Jim Tracy so they could dump Hurdle at any time. They waited far too long but finally made the move. Can Tracy resurrect the team and maybe finish at .500? His potential to do that is much better than was Hurdle's.

At least the Rockies didn't play mind games with their guy like the Avs did. Few readers understand or care much about hockey so this will be brief. Tony Granato is the brother of the best women's hockey player in history. That is his best claim to greatness in hockey. He cannot lead a team. He proved that once before but the Avs GM is a believer in advancing those he knows and gave Granato a second chance. Too bad LaCroix was negotiating with Patrick Roy while he let Granato swing in the wind. Roy is too smart to get involved with a team at the bottom - not headed toward the top. At least the GM found a job for his son.

Winning isn't critical to the Broncos bank account. With only eight home games a year, with a couple preseason games forced on season ticket holders, waiting

lists are common for even the worst football teams. Teams are measured by post season appearances and the Broncos have been watching those games on TV.

So, when an owner like Pat Bowlen hires an untested and unproven young coach like Josh McDaniels and allows him to run off a franchise quarterback, there is still nothing to worry about - financially for the team. Every game will be a sell-out and nobody expected the Broncos to be competitive this year anyway - not even with one of the best half dozen qb's in the NFL - Jay Cutler. Before the regular season begins, odds are that McDaniels will have traded the best receiver on the team - Brandon Marshall. The child with the power will not allow a player to challenge him.

The Nuggets had a much longer run than anyone expected. Their success in the playoffs was not a carryover from the regular season because the regular season was very ordinary. Fifty-four (54) wins is not that great a regular season. A championship in a mediocre division and a No. 2 seed gave the Nuggets home court advantage for the first two series and that was critical. They performed very admirably and won each series 4-1.

Except for George Karl's failure to have an inbounds play, they might have won another series. The first game they lost when Karl inserted the shortest guy on the team as the inbounds passer. The Lakers put a "wall" (Lamar Odoms) up in front of Anthony Carter and he couldn't find a teammate so he threw it to a Lakers player instead. The next game, Karl had Kenyon Martin as the inbounds passer and he threw a lazy pass that was intercepted. Regardless, their decent season won't be repeated next year. Chauncey Billups is but a good, not great, player. Especially at his advanced age.

Letterman is a pig!

Because Conan O'Brien's humor is for college-aged kids and younger, I had decided I'd probably watch Letterman if I have the TV on that time of night. Even though he beats his "Uma-Oprah" brand of repetitive comedy to death most nights, he just seemed a more grown-up choice.

Then, he stupidly and crudely included the 14 year-old daughter of Sarah Palin in an off-color joke involving Alex Rodriguez. When he apologized, he said he meant the 18 year-old older sister Bristol. And that made the joke all right?

A celebrity parent like Sarah Palin expects jokes to be made at her expense. She's an attractive female politician, for God's sake. And a Republican. How rare is that? Letterman once included her in a joke about multiple-partner sex involving Michael Phelps, when Phelps' misbehavior was smoking "something" from a bong. Palin said nothing. But, to include a daughter, especially the 14 year-old who was with Palin at the Yankees game, is inexcusable and unacceptable. Don Imus was fired for using the words, "nappy headed ho's." Which is worse - Using a line like that on a basketball team of young women or including a 14 year-old girl in a sex joke involving a 32 year-old man to get a laugh? What a pig!

To use references of "Sarah Palin's daughter," "knocked up," and Alex Rodriguez to make a joke for his Top 10 list, Letterman crossed a line and disclosed a sick mind that will do anything for a laugh. On the same "list," he used "slutty flight attendant look" about Sarah Palin herself. She did not complain. Letterman must not fly commercial. The airlines are not obsessed with youth or beauty anymore and Palin would improve the attractiveness in most airline cabins. Also: Bristol Palin was "knocked up" by a boyfriend, not a predator celebrity and the world knows it. And A-Rod's marriage dissolved because of Madonna, a much older woman, not a child.

City budget

A city budget that nearly doubled over eight years should not be difficult to hold in check or even reduce slightly when revenues slow. But, city officials are whining like a 3 year-old boy just because they won't have several million dollars growth in their revenue for the upcoming fiscal year.

The City of Cheyenne will not have to do with less revenue - just less of an increase than they've become used to over the past eight years. It is a bit surprising that the city governing body hasn't reminded residents that the sales tax elimination on food (groceries) is probably responsible for some of the reduced increase in revenue. The State compensates cities, towns and counties for the loss of sales tax on food but there is no perfect formula for what is "lost" so cities like Cheyenne will always claim that they're not getting all the money they should get.

In 2001, the first budget put together by

Jack Spiker (for FY2002), the City received an unexpected payment of over \$7.5 million from the State - "rainy day funds." Since then, a greater amount is expected from the State every year.

That State "gift" became like the employee's \$250 Christmas gift. Instead of considering it a "gift," employees began to expect it as "pay." It was a bad idea from the get-go. Unnecessary, too, as employees religiously received at least a 5% annual raise. A \$500 "gift" costs taxpayers more than a quarter million dollars - \$250 half as much. Department heads making \$84,625 a year don't need a \$250 Christmas gift at your expense. And it didn't buy Jack the love he hoped for.

Rick Kaysen inherited a dismal financial situation with the City and it hasn't fully surfaced yet. Unless the economy miraculously turns around in the next two years, Rick will have to face employee layoffs by FY12. Unpleasant but true.

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