

A baseball future in the cards for McCatty

By JAY DUNSTAN

With the start of every new baseball season comes a new set of baseball trading cards. If you go to your favorite candy counter and spend a quarter for one pack containing 15 cards and a slick of gum, the chances are one in 60 that you'll get card No. 231.

"If you do get card No. 231, the name on the front will be Steve McCatty. It will tell you that he is a pitcher for the Oakland Athletics."

Turn to the back and you'll learn that he is 6-foot-3, weighs 200 pounds, throws and bats right-handed and is from Troy, Mich. There will also be a statistical history of his baseball career.

What you won't learn is how he was discovered, what it's like to play in Oakland and what it will be like to play in former Detroit Tiger and New York Yankee manager, and the Athletics' new one, Billy Martin.

McCatty, a 1972 graduate of Troy High School, will be starting his first full season as an Oakland A in April. It will also be the first time he will have a chance to impress his new manager, Martin.

"I think he'll help the club," McCatty said. "If someone makes mistakes, you can be sure he'll jump all over them."

IF THINGS ARE the same this year for the A's as they were in 1979, Martin will have plenty to jump about.

Oakland was dead last in the Western Division of the American League with a 54-108 record. They led the league in errors with 174, had the lowest team batting average at .239, and their pitching staff compiled the second-worst earned run average (ERA) at 4.74.

Even with Martin as manager, most experts believe the A's will end up pretty much the same as last year — last.

McCatty was a bright spot in an otherwise dreary 1979 season. He had an 11-12 won-lost record with a 4.21 ERA. He was responsible for more than one-fifth of all the A's victories.

To prepare for the coming campaign, McCatty spent this past winter playing baseball in Puerto Rico for Ponce, a team managed by Manny Sanguillen, former Oakland catcher now playing for the world champion Pittsburgh Pirates.

"Manny knows a lot," McCatty said.

"He's a super guy. McCatty was instructed by the A's management to throw nothing but off-speed pitches in Puerto Rico. With the help of A's pitching coach Lee Stange, McCatty has developed what he calls "a pretty good slider."

McCatty wasn't always a pitcher. He was an All-League catcher at Troy High and was still positioned behind the plate in 1973.

HE WAS PLAYING Class A ball on his father's team when he got his first real opportunity to pitch. Still a catcher at the time, McCatty pitched in a 7-6 loss and caught the attention Fred Goodman and Mark Esper, two of the A's scouts.

They signed him as a free agent on June 26, 1973 and he started his minor league career immediately with stops in Lewiston, Modesto, Chattanooga, Tucson and San Jose before being called up by the A's in 1977.

McCatty claims his biggest baseball thrill was signing a pro contract and fulfill his only goal — to play in the major leagues. "I don't really try to set goals," McCatty said. "My goal now is not to get sent back to the minor leagues."

"In the big leagues the pay is better, the meal money is better and you're always assured of better hotels. Everything seems to be made easy for you."

Playing for the A's means playing for flamboyant owner Charlie Finley in front of 45,000 empty seats.

"Last year Charlie didn't care about the team at all," said McCatty. "If he stays like he was last year — no calls to the manager — OK. But, if he gets like before..."

Finley is considering moving the A's from Oakland to Denver. The move, necessitated by poor attendance in the Bay Area, must be approved by the other baseball owners, a majority of whom have expressed public discontent with the way Finley runs his ball club.

"I'D RATHER PLAY in Denver," said McCatty.

McCatty. "When you don't draw anybody into your own ballpark, it isn't fun playing there. I'd love to play in Detroit."

There is one thing about Oakland McCatty likes. "The best place to pitch in the American League is Oakland. The ball doesn't carry well there at all. The worst places are Detroit and Boston. The ball carries well in Detroit and in Boston you've got that short leftfield fence."

McCatty was 2-2 against the Tigers last year. Both his victories were complete games — 3-2 in Oakland and 7-3 in Detroit.

The sophomore jinx, an old baseball proverb that a player will slump in his second season in pro ball, doesn't bother McCatty. "I just don't believe in it."



Steve McCatty: "When you don't draw anybody in your own ballpark, it isn't fun playing there. I'd love to play in Detroit."

Final cage standings

AREA PREP CAGE STATS		METRO CONFERENCE		A-B DIVISION	
FINAL STANDINGS		W L GB		CENTRAL BRACKET	
METRO SUBURBAN ASSOCIATION					
W L GB		W L GB		W L GB	
Overall Standings		Final Standings		Regular Season	
W L GB		W L GB		W L GB	
Brother Rice		Hantamack		Catholic Central	
Southfield		Harper Woods		Brother Rice	
O.L.S. Mary's		Lutheran East		Mt. Carmel	
BH Labser		Lutheran North		Notre Dame	
SFD Christian		Lutheran West		DeLaSalle	
SFD Manogian		Country Day		Bishop Borgess	
SFD Labrop		METRO SUBURBAN ASSOCIATION		C.D. DIVISION WEST BRACKET	
Rochester		W L GB		W L GB	
Cranbrook		W L GB		W L GB	
North Farmington		W L GB		W L GB	
Birm. Groves		W L GB		W L GB	
BH Andover		W L GB		W L GB	
Farm. Harrison		W L GB		W L GB	
Roper		W L GB		W L GB	
W.L. Central		W L GB		W L GB	
Troy		W L GB		W L GB	
West Bloomfield		W L GB		W L GB	
Roch. Adams		W L GB		W L GB	
Farmington		W L GB		W L GB	
Country Day		W L GB		W L GB	
Avondale		W L GB		W L GB	
Birm. Seaholm		W L GB		W L GB	
Troy Athens		W L GB		W L GB	
MICHIGAN INDEPENDENT ATHLETIC CONFERENCE		W L GB		W L GB	
W L GB		W L GB		W L GB	
SFD Christian		W L GB		W L GB	
U-Liggett		W L GB		W L GB	
Reverie Bapt.		W L GB		W L GB	
Oak. Christian		W L GB		W L GB	
Huron LV		W L GB		W L GB	
Bram. Leth. NW		W L GB		W L GB	
GREATER OAKLAND ATHLETIC LEAGUE		W L GB		W L GB	
W L GB		W L GB		W L GB	
Clarkston		W L GB		W L GB	
Rochester		W L GB		W L GB	
Wal. Kettering		W L GB		W L GB	
BH Andover		W L GB		W L GB	
W. Bloomfield		W L GB		W L GB	
Milford		W L GB		W L GB	
SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION		W L GB		W L GB	
W L GB		W L GB		W L GB	
Perdala		W L GB		W L GB	
Southfield		W L GB		W L GB	
R.O. Kimball		W L GB		W L GB	
Berkley		W L GB		W L GB	
Birm. Seaholm		W L GB		W L GB	
Hazel Park		W L GB		W L GB	
WESTERN SIX LEAGUE		W L GB		W L GB	
W L GB		W L GB		W L GB	
Waterford Mott		W L GB		W L GB	
Plymouth Canton		W L GB		W L GB	
Liv. Cheneville		W L GB		W L GB	
Farm. Harrison		W L GB		W L GB	
Northville		W L GB		W L GB	
W.L. Western		W L GB		W L GB	

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