

Predicting Revolution vs. locals game not easy

COLUMN By JEFFREY A. JOHNSON *The York Dispatch*

It may be in the backroom of one of York's comfy watering holes.

Or in the cereal aisle at the grocery store.

Or even while I'm sweating bullets on an elliptical trainer at the gym.

Wherever this lowly scribe turns, the question seems to follow: Does a group of Susquehanna and Central League all-stars have a chance of knocking off the York Revolution?

And here's my politically correct answer: it's complicated.

I find myself siding with the team I cover every day, assuming the 90-mph heat and nasty breaking balls the Revolution undoubtedly possess will be enough to thwart any group of amateurs.

Yet I also find myself siding with the locals. They've had quality leagues for decades in York County. And surely on any given day, anything's possible.

So let's weigh the locals' chances by measuring the pros and cons.

The pros: The Revs currently have 20 players under contract with the April 18 exhibition closing in. Of that group, 11 are first-time Atlantic Leaguers.

In other words, 11 players unaccustomed to York's short spring camp may very well show up in horrendous shape. Or with shoulder capsules about to implode. Or with rotator cuffs hanging by a thread thinner than the lace on a Janet Jackson bustier.

Sure, the locals -- many heading quickly toward AARP cards -- may also be lacking in the physical conditioning department. But if you had to pick a day to tangle with the Revs, what better time than the first week of York's spring training?

The cons: A lot of people in the locals' corner don't realize how good the Revs really are -- especially when it comes to pitching.

The York pitching staff has eight players who pitched in the majors. They're good enough to make a breaking ball drop faster than General Motors' stock prices.

There's also the matter of common sense: if the locals were *that good*, wouldn't they be playing professionally too?

Conclusion: This game will be closer than you think.

Probably because York's players -- many who probably don't even know the game exists yet -- will treat it as a normal exhibition. And the local sandlot heroes will put every ounce of energy into every foray to first base.

But if you're asking me to break out the crystal ball, here's my take: Revs 8, Local All-Stars 2. It rains like hell the day of the game. The stadium is packed anyway. And what's truthfully a rather large publicity stunt turns into a lasting memory for both sides.

Hey, I told you it was complicated.

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