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Far left: Andy Pettitte pitches against the Baltimore Sun during Game 2 of the American League Division Series. Middle: Los Angeles Dodgers outfielder Carl Crawford during spring training. Right: Los Angeles Angels owner Arte Moreno applauds at the news conference introducing free-agent signee Josh Hamilton.

last year: the Detroit Tigers and San Francisco Giants. The defending champion Giants have done very little to build on their championship roster. Instead, the Giants looked to resign key members of their 2012 team, including infielder Marco Scutaro, center fielder Angel Pagan and relief pitcher Jeremy Affeldt to a combined 10 years, \$78 million. The Dodgers may have gone for broke in 2013, but the Giants are still the champions and will compete for another divisional title and perhaps a third World Series in four years.

The Tigers have made little noise in the offseason. They signed veteran outfielder Tori Hunter and allowed Delmon Young to depart for Philadelphia. However, one of the biggest additions to the Tigers comes from a player who has already been on the roster. Catcher Victor Martinez missed all of last season due to injury; however, the catcher/designated hitter/first baseman is poised for a return in 2013. Martinez, in his first season with Detroit in 2011, had 103 RBIs and hit 330. It is difficult to expect that Martinez will pick up where he left off two seasons ago; however, his presence on and off the field will be a huge boost for the Tigers.

The New York Yankees have been extremely quiet during this offseason. The Yankees signed Kevin Youkilis to fill the third-base spot while Alex Rodriguez is out recovering from surgery. They also resigned pitcher Andy

“With a new season comes a new hope for all 30 teams.”

Pettite and outfielder Ichiro Suzuki. However, the puzzling part is how the Yankees allowed so many players to leave for free agency. Veterans Rafael Soriano, Andruw Jones, Nick Swisher, Eric Chavez, Russell Martin and post-season hero Raul Ibanez have all signed elsewhere. The Yankees, who are notoriously big spenders, were unwilling to spend big money to resign any of these players. As hard as it is to believe, the lowly Pittsburgh Pirates were willing to spend more on Russell Martin than the Yankees. And the Washington Nationals outbid the Yankees on reliever Rafael Soriano. The Yankees are getting old fast. And when players like Mark Texiera come out and say they are overpaid, there is definitely a cause for concern. An old roster and a lack of a starting catcher can be a real problem, especially in the extremely competitive American League East.

Elsewhere around the MLB, there are a few more interesting storylines. The Kansas City Royals are trying to post a winning record for the first time in quite a while. The Royals traded for Tampa Bay Rays pitcher James

Shields, who came off an impressive season of 15 wins and an ERA of 3.52. Also in the trade, the Royals picked up Wade Davis. The Royals' quest for starting pitching continued with the acquisition of Ervin Santana from the Angels. Considering the Royals are playing in the meek American League Central, the Royals should be able to compete with the Tigers well into the summer.

With the expansion of the postseason to include an extra wild-card team in each league, the 2012 season was extremely exciting, with several teams playing meaningful games late into the season. The 2013 season looks to be no different, with over a dozen teams feeling like this could be their year. The Washington Nationals will have Steven Strasburg and Bryce Harper for a full season. The Cardinals, who were one win away from a second straight World Series appearance, can continue to prove they don't need Albert Pujols. The surprising Baltimore Orioles will try to prove they have staying power.

As far as predictions go, many "experts" will lean toward the sexy picks of the Angels, Dodgers or even the Toronto Blue Jays. However, in the past few seasons, the same teams end up playing deep into October. That being said, I like the Yankees over the Tigers to win the American League and the Giants over the Dodgers in the National League. I don't see the Giants repeating, as the Yankees will beat the Giants in 6 games. ■