

Beltran and Suppan are finishing strong



Beltran

This has been a coming-of-age time for CF **Carlos Beltran**. When he had a perfect night against the Angels last week (4-for-4 with four RBIs), he had hit safely in 31 of 35 games with a .368 average. The Royals want to sign the 1999 A.L. Rookie of the Year to a multivear deal, which they figure will put the worry-prone, introverted **Beltran** more at ease. But his agent is **Scott Boras**, an expert on high numbers and long negotiations. ... RHP **Jeff Suppan** is well on his way to another strong finish. He came within seven outs of a no-hitter in a complete-game, 4-1 victory over the Angels last week that ran his record to 5-2 in his last seven starts. That was a good sign for a team that desperately needs a No. 1 starter to emerge in 2002.

SCOUTING REPORT: A torn left calf muscle kept C **Gregg Zaun** sidelined until July 23, but he is improving rapidly. He has been catching and throwing much better lately, though his 6-for-22 mark against basestealers is subpar. Coach **Jamie Quirk** had Zaun change gloves and got him to pull his hand out a bit from the glove, giving him a softer touch. As a result, he's able to make a quicker transfer from mitt to throwing hand. Zaun also hit .319 in the first 26 games after his

TSNUMBER 300 Victories produced by **Tony Muser** as Royals manager, third most in team history. Only **Whitey Herzog** (410) and **Dick Howser** (404) have recorded more. Herzog and Howser had winning records, however. Muser has 403 losses.

BATTERS	AVG	G	AB	R	H	HR	RBI	OBP	SB	K	BB	E
Sweeney	.311	127	488	94	152	27	90	.375	10	57	53	9
Zaun#	.305	27	95	9	29	3	14	.343	1	9	6	3
Beltran#	.295	135	532	89	157	18	78	.356	25	103	48	4
Ibanez+	.286	88	220	39	63	12	47	.371	0	37	30	4
Alicea#	.280	105	361	43	101	4	29	.329	8	52	23	14
Quinn	.276	99	384	46	106	15	53	.299	7	61	8	5
*Brown+	.262	91	325	34	85	5	36	.301	5	67	18	1
Mayne+	.256	40	133	9	34	2	17	.301	1	12	8	2
Randa	.248	133	516	51	128	9	77	.301	3	67	37	9
Ortiz	.247	52	150	12	37	0	11	.294	1	23	9	3
McCarty	.245	86	188	26	46	7	25	.324	0	43	23	8
Febles	.237	60	219	36	52	6	20	.297	5	46	18	6
Perez#	.237	41	169	17	40	1	10	.276	3	14	9	3
Sadler	.133	46	98	15	13	0	2	.218	3	16	9	2
*Berger	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0
*Berroa	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0

GRAND SLAMS: **Beltran**, Randa (1)

PITCHERS	ERA	W-L	IP	H	R	ER	HR	K	BB	SV	AVG.
*Voyles	0.00	0-0	1.0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	.000
*Mullen+	1.42	0-0	6.1	6	2	1	0	3	4	0	.240
Grimsley	2.86	1-5	72.1	62	28	23	6	56	21	0	.235
Bailey	3.38	1-1	58.2	52	24	22	3	52	24	0	.239
Byrd	4.05	6-6	93.1	110	45	42	11	49	22	0	.298
Hernandez	4.26	4-5	57.0	61	30	27	6	38	19	23	.276
Suppan	4.52	9-11	189.0	193	103	95	23	105	62	0	.264
Durbin	4.54	7-14	156.2	173	90	79	20	78	49	0	.285
*Austin	4.58	0-0	19.2	20	11	10	3	22	10	0	.274
*Wilson	4.96	6-5	105.1	125	73	58	26	65	29	1	.293
Stein	5.17	5-7	109.2	98	65	63	16	96	69	1	.241
Reichert	5.54	8-8	113.2	124	76	70	13	69	59	0	.282
Henry	6.10	2-1	69.1	69	49	47	13	50	40	0	.262
*George+	6.29	3-5	48.2	58	35	34	10	24	13	0	.302

SHUTOUTS: None

COMPLETE GAMES: Durbin (2), Byrd, Suppan (1)

return. As a hitter, he has a good grasp of the strike zone, makes consistent contact and handles breaking pitches well.

SEE A DIFFERENT GAME: Manager **Tony Muser** ordinarily doesn't make many lineup changes during a game. One reason: His pinch-hitters have been abysmal. But against Angels RHP **Troy Percival**, Muser unleashed five straight lefthanded batters in the ninth. Percival retired **Luis Alicea** and **Dee Brown**, but **Raul Ibanez** got an infield hit. So did SS **Neifi Perez**. Then **Beltran** launched a three-run homer to give the Royals a 6-6 tie. Percival had a better record against lefties (.159) than righties (.221) at the time, but Muser had a hunch and it paid off. The Angels, however, rebounded to win the game in the 10th. —*Dick Kaegel*

Struggling bullpen hastens club's descent



Hawkins

The Twins' bullpen, specifically closer RHP **LaTroy Hawkins** and setup men RHP **Bob Wells** and LHP **Eddie Guardado**, was a key to the Twins' early-season success. But the relievers have been a major factor in the team's second-half collapse. Hawkins is having trouble locating his fastball. In his first 13 appearances after July 29, he had an 0-3 record, four blown saves and a 19.72 ERA. RHP **Todd Jones**, acquired in late July, failed to win the closer's job when manager **Tom Kelly** turned to him. Wells has been almost as inept as Hawkins, and even the normally-reliable **Guardado** has floundered at times. The bullpen was 1-4 with a 6.87 ERA in 22 games after August 14. Hawkins, **Guardado**, **Wells** and **Jones** had a combined 9.00 ERA during that span, allowing 46 hits in 28 innings.

SCOUTING REPORT: CF **Torii Hunter**, 26, must become consistent at the plate to be the All-Star-caliber player the team thinks he can be. Hunter has the Twins' best combination of speed and power. But his swing varies almost daily, going from the short, quick stroke the coaching staff preaches to a long, looping swing that makes him vulnerable to high fastballs. He has displayed power this season but lacks patience and chases bad pitches

TSNUMBER 3.92 Hits and walks per inning **LaTroy Hawkins** yielded in his first 13 appearances after July 29. That's right—almost four baserunners per inning. There are slow-pitch softball pitchers who allow fewer baserunners than the Twins' closer.

BATTERS	AVG	G	AB	R	H	HR	RBI	OBP	SB	K	BB	E
LeCroy	.500	2	2	1	1	0	0	.500	0	0	0	0
Mientkiewicz+	.315	137	499	73	157	15	72	.394	2	83	62	4
Guzman#	.308	104	439	74	135	9	48	.345	23	70	20	17
*Buchanan	.292	59	168	26	49	10	29	.351	1	52	14	1
Pierzynski+	.292	101	343	45	100	6	46	.327	1	52	15	9
Koskie+	.279	133	491	87	137	25	96	.366	22	97	59	12
J. Jones+	.270	131	429	50	116	10	43	.328	10	85	34	5
*Rivas	.254	134	485	61	123	7	42	.309	25	85	36	14
Hunter	.253	128	494	69	125	24	78	.291	8	116	21	3
Ortiz+	.252	71	254	43	64	16	43	.340	1	53	33	0
Prince	.242	54	165	19	40	7	22	.311	2	31	11	0
Hocking#	.236	101	292	32	69	3	20	.307	6	61	28	4
*Kieley#	.208	23	72	4	15	1	10	.274	2	17	7	2
Maxwell	.197	33	66	3	13	1	10	.293	2	22	9	3
*Mohr	.133	7	15	0	2	0	3	.176	0	8	1	0

GRAND SLAMS: Guzman, Hunter, J. Jones, Koskie (1)

PITCHERS	ERA	W-L	IP	H	R	ER	HR	K	BB	SV	AVG.
Duvall+	0.00	0-0	1.0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	.250
*Fiore	2.84	0-0	6.1	5	2	2	0	5	2	0	.217
*Cressend	3.20	2-2	50.2	42	19	18	6	35	15	0	.225
Mays	3.40	14-13	198.2	182	78	75	23	102	48	0	.244
Guardado+	3.62	7-0	59.2	44	25	24	5	58	23	5	.205
Radke	3.96	12-9	193.0	212	91	85	18	119	20	0	.283
Milton+	4.26	13-5	188.0	195	92	89	29	131	47	0	.262
T. Jones	4.38	5-5	63.2	83	38	31	8	50	28	13	.317
Miller+	4.47	1-4	48.1	51	28	24	4	30	19	0	.273
Carrasco	5.10	3-3	67.0	74	40	38	8	64	29	1	.289
Reed	5.11	3-3	44.0	65	28	25	7	27	4	0	.344
Wells	5.48	8-5	64.0	70	39	39	12	46	16	1	.281
*Lohse	5.94	4-7	83.1	97	58	55	16	54	27	0	.290
Hawkins	6.13	1-5	47.0	54	32	32	2	33	37	28	.290
*Johnson	7.48	1-2	21.2	24	19	18	6	15	11	0	.289

SHUTOUTS: Mays, Milton, Radke (1)

COMPLETE GAMES: Radke (5), Mays (3), Milton (2)

when he falls behind in the count. Hunter's strength is defense. His range, leaping ability and powerful arm make him a Gold Glove candidate.

SEE A DIFFERENT GAME: Even veterans sometimes take remedial courses in fundamentals. RHP **Rick Reed** has been throwing in the bullpen twice between starts with pitching coach **Dick Such** in an effort to iron out mechanical flaws. Reed thinks his problems can be traced to faulty delivery mechanics that have caused him to fall too far to the side, forcing his body to fly open as he throws. That has led to poor location and velocity, which cause him to fall behind in the count. The Twins hope the tinkering works because Reed, acquired in July, has two years left on a large contract. —*Dennis Brackin*

KC

LINEUP

Name	Pos.
Beltran**	CF
Randa	3B
Damon+	LF
King	1B
Conine	DH
Krueter#	C
Dye	RF
Febles*	2B
Sanchez	SS

ROTATION

Appier
Rosado+
Suppan
Rusch+
Pichardo

SETUP

Service
Whisenant+
Pittsley

CLOSER

Montgomery

*Rookie -Lefthanded
#Switch hitter

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ROYALS

Projected finish: 4th
A.L. Central

Youth holds promise for the future

1998: 72-89; 3rd in A.L. Central.

KEY ADDITIONS: RHP Erik Hanson, C Chad Kreuter, LHP Alvin Morman, 3B Joe Randa, SS Rey Sanchez.

KEY SUBTRACTIONS: RHP Tim Belcher, RHP Ricky Bories, OF Shane Mack, DH/OF Hal Morris, 2B Jose Offerman, 3B Dean Palmer, IF Terry Pendleton, RHP Pat Rapp.

REASON TO GET EXCITED: The team is young and enthusiastic and has had an excellent spring training. Exhibition games may be paltry, but winning breeds confidence, which is what this team needs. Rookies CF **Carlos Beltran** and 2B **Carlos Febles** are strong prospects with good defensive skills and basestealing potential.

REASON TO WORRY: They're young and inexperienced. The Royals will use rookies in center, second and eventually at DH (Jeremy Giambi, once he's healthy). None of the three has played 20 games in the majors. Plus, four out of six potential starting pitchers are 26 or younger. Of those, only LHPs **Jose Rosado** and **Glendon Rusch** have had full big-league seasons.

PLAYER ON THE SPOT: Rosado will work under intense scrutiny. In the event Kevin Appier is traded, Rosado will need

to be the ace, and give the team a chance to win every fifth day regardless of run support. Added responsibility means his first step is to reverse an 8-11 record from 1998.

OUTLOOK: It's not likely the team can avoid prolonged adjustment periods with so many inexperienced players. But there is plenty of potential to develop. **Beltran** needs to continue improving his hitting, Febles must get on and steal bases and Giambi and RF **Jermaine Dye** have to find a way to stay healthy. Though potential doesn't win ballgames, G.M. **Herk Robinson** won't set down any guidelines for how long the team will wait out slumps. At the least, the young players will get valuable experience this season. Also, LF **Johnny Damon** has started to showcase the talent expected of him. He just needs to build on last year's success—18 homers and 26 steals.

WHEN IT'S ALL OVER: The Royals aren't going to light anyone's fire with this roster. But manager **Tony Muser** only asks that they ignite their own. The team should be capable of staying out of the division cellar for a second consecutive season. But playing .500 ball in 1999—something the team hasn't done since 1991—is an unreachable goal. —Luciana Chavez



ROYAL WELCOME: Carlos Febles' glove and bat convinced the Royals not to re-sign Offerman, who was the team's leading hitter in '98.

GRADING OUT

STARTING PITCHING D
RELIEF PITCHING C
CLOSER B
SPEED B
RUN PRODUCTION B
POWER D
MANAGER F
FRONT OFFICE C

TSNumber
125

The team's errors in '98. The mistakes should decrease with key defensive additions at third (Joe Randa), short-stop (Rey Sanchez) and catcher (Chad Kreuter). Rookie CF **Carlos Beltran** solidifies the outfield defense.

PROSPECT WATCH

CARLOS BELTRAN, CF. Beltran, who turns 22 in April, is the focal point of the team's youth movement as the scheduled starter in center and the likely leadoff batter. Despite his age, club officials believe he's ready to handle the physical and emotional strain of a big-league season. His growth as a hitter will take time, but his knowledge of the strike zone should help his progress. He's an excellent defensive player, with an above-average arm and range.

M

LINEUP

Name	Pos.
Latham*#/Hunter*CF	CF
Walker+	2B
Lawton+	RF
Cordova	LF
Ortiz+	DH
Koskie+ /Gates	3B
Mientkiewicz*+	1B
Coomer	C
Steinbach	SS

ROTATION

Radke
Milton+
Hawkins
Sampson*+
Lincoln*

SETUP

Trombly
Guardado+

CLOSER

Aguilera

*Rookie -Lefthanded
#Switch hitter

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TWINS

Projected finish: 5th
A.L. Central

Club has talent but still too young

1998: 70-92; 4th in A.L. Central.

KEY ADDITIONS: C George Williams.

KEY SUBTRACTIONS: SS Pat Meares, RHP Mike Morgan, CF Otis Nixon, LHP Greg Swindell, RHP Bob Tewksbury.

REASON TO GET EXCITED: Brad Radke and Eric Milton should give the team a solid 1-2 punch in the rotation. Radke, disappointed with a mediocre 1998 performance after he won 20 games the previous season, worked out in the offseason for the first time. Milton has corrected a flaw in his delivery and has regained the snap on his curve and 5 mph. Lefthanded hitters **Matt Lawton** and **Todd Walker** could become stars. Lawton surged in the second half of last season and is developing into a potential power hitter. Walker has a smooth stroke and the knowledge of a future batting champ.

REASON TO WORRY: Although the Twins are optimistic about their young talent—**Corey Koskie**, **Doug Mientkiewicz**, **Chris Latham**, **Torii Hunter** and **David Ortiz**—it will be on-the-job training. What chance does that give them against teams with established players? Manager **Tom Kelly**'s successful seasons have been with rosters made up of veteran role players.

PLAYER ON THE SPOT: Marty Cordova has had two consecutive seasons ruined by injuries and his unwillingness to commit to one batting style—a problem that could be solved by new hitting instructor **Scott Ullger**. Cordova has the capability of hitting 30 homers, driving in 100 runs and batting .300. This is the final year of his contract, which could motivate him to have a breakout season.

OUTLOOK: There's reason to believe the team will be better than last season's because of the infusion of youth, the potential turnarounds of Radke and Cordova and the improvement of Milton, Walker and Lawton. But even if everything goes right for the Twins, they still don't have the firepower and experience of the American League's elite teams. The Twins desperately need a fast start to embolden their young players and attract lost fans. But of their first 28 games, 22 are against Toronto, Cleveland, Texas, Boston, Baltimore and New York.

WHEN IT'S ALL OVER: The Twins will start slowly, weed out the players who aren't ready, call up their best prospects and, with the pressure off, begin playing well midway through the season—too late to salvage anything in 1999 but in time to resurrect promise for a young club in 2000. —Jim Souhan



SHAPING UP: Brad Radke worked out in the offseason for the first time after his record dropped to 12-14 in 1998; he was 20-10 in '97.

GRADING OUT

STARTING PITCHING D
RELIEF PITCHING B
CLOSER B
SPEED C
RUN PRODUCTION D
POWER D
MANAGER F
FRONT OFFICE F

TSNumber
115

The Twins have had pitching problems recently, but for the first time in ages they have to worry as much about hitting homers as allowing them. They hit 115 in 1998. Among A.L. teams, only Tampa Bay (111) hit fewer.

PROSPECT WATCH

COREY KOSKIE, 3B: Koskie is what every major league team wants—a power-hitting, lefthanded-batting third baseman. If he's Robin Ventura, the Twins' rebuilding process could be smooth and promising. If he's not, the Twins will have to play Ron Coomer and Brent Gates at the position, meaning Coomer won't be as available to do spot duty at first base and DH. If Koskie is ready, he'll give the Twins some much-needed middle-of-the-lineup power.

Anaheim



TAKING A CHANCE: The team dipped into the low Class A South Atlantic League to pluck Phillies pitching prospect **Derrick Turnbow** in the Rule 5 major league draft. G.M. **Bill Stoneman** believes Turnbow, who went 12-8 with a 3.35 ERA and 149 strikeouts in 161 innings for Piedmont (N.C.) last season and has a 94-mph fastball, has the potential to leap to the big leagues as a long reliever. His selection provides another glimpse at the direction the Angels appear headed—toward a younger, less experienced and less expensive roster. ... The team has expressed interest in free-agent 2B **Mickey Morandini**, who hit .241 with 37 RBIs for the Cubs. He's a solid fielder, but he has limited range and no power.

CENTER FIELD ANALYSIS: **Jim Edmonds** is capable of hitting .300 with 30 homers and 100 RBIs every season. He has no fear of crashing into walls or diving into gaps to make spectacular catches. He also has an outstanding arm and instincts. But the team has four very good outfielders in Edmonds, **Tim Salmon**, **Garret Anderson** and **Darin Erstad**, and Edmonds will be a free agent after 2000. He likely will be dealt before then. Erstad's speed and fearless approach would seem more suited to center, but he has played left (and first) and doesn't seem to get the jump on balls from center that he does in left. Anderson can play any of the outfield spots very well. —*Mike DiGiovanna*

Boston



FRONT AND CENTER: The team believes it solved its offensive problems by acquiring CF **Carl Everett** from the Astros. Everett should produce runs in the middle of the lineup. The team did not raid its roster in the deal, sending Class AA SS **Adam Everett** and Class A P **Greg Miller** to the Astros. Everett was stuck behind **Nomar Garciaparra**, so his only future with the club was at second. ... **Tom Gordon** may have pitched his last game for the Red Sox. Gordon had elbow surgery and will miss the 2000 season. Gordon has one year left on his contract and the team won't exercise a 2001 option, instead buying him out for \$500,000. ... The club added a capable reserve infielder when it traded **Damon Buford** to the Cubs for **Manny Alexander**, a solid defensive shortstop who can play third and second.

CENTER FIELD ANALYSIS: Everett hit for average (.325) and power (25 homers) in 123 games for the Astros. He stole 27 bases and played above-average defense in center. Everett, a former first-round pick of the Yankees, was considered an underachiever with the Marlins and Mets before his solid play with the Astros. After five full seasons, Everett, 29, is just entering his prime. Everett may not match **Darren Lewis'** overall defense, but he has a much stronger arm (10 assists) and covers lots of ground. Lewis, the starter last season, probably will return as a backup. —*Paul Doyle*

Cleveland



FILET MIGNON FOR CHUCK: The team overpaid for **Chuck Finley**—three years for \$27 million. He's 37, but G.M. **John Hart** had to improve the team's rotation. Finley should be the No. 2 starter. He figures to start 32 to 34 games and pitch 200 innings, a total he has topped eight times in his 14-year career. Finley (165-140) had spent his career with the Angels. ... The team goes into spring training with **Bartolo Colon** as its No. 1 starter. Finley, **Charles Nagy** and **Dave Burba** follow. **Jaret Wright** will compete with Cuban defector **Danys Baez** for the fifth spot. Some in the organization want Baez to start the season in Class AAA.

CENTER FIELD ANALYSIS: **Kenny Lofton** probably will be out until the All-Star break after rotator cuff surgery on his left shoulder. He missed six weeks with a pulled hamstring. He got off to a hot start last season (.340 in the first two months), but his production fell dramatically. He stole two bases after the All-Star break, when he said he was going to run less because there were no big awards for winning the stolen base title. In Lofton's absence, **Dave Roberts** and **Jacob Cruz** will play center. Manager **Charlie Manuel** favors Roberts, who can hit leadoff. If he wins the job, Manuel won't have to tinker with the lineup. The manager is reluctant to break up **Omar Vizquel** and **Roberto Alomar** in the second and third spots. —*Steve Herrick*



TABBED FOR REHAB: Lofton probably won't play until July.

Detroit



FALLING STOCK: The **Bobby Higginson** merry-go-round has stopped for now, but the possibility remains that he could be wearing another uniform in 2000. New manager **Phil Garner** liked Higginson's aggressiveness and production when he managed the Brewers, but neither of those attributes were evident last season. Higginson, slowed by a toe injury, hit just .239. He also said it probably would be best to move on, a stance he changed after Garner was hired. G.M. **Randy Smith** has been trying to deal Higginson since the season ended, including recently to Tampa Bay for light-hitting OF **Randy Winn**. The Devil Rays said no thanks—an indication of just how far Higginson's stock has fallen.

CENTER FIELD ANALYSIS: With the departure of **Gabe Kapler** to Texas, **Juan Encarnacion** is the only viable candidate to play every day. However, the club is exploring options that include Atlanta free agent **Gerald Williams** and **Winn**. Although Encarnacion has played some center, the team would prefer an experienced center fielder who can cover the deep Comerica Park outfield and its expansive power alleys. If Encarnacion ends up with the job, the Tigers will have a player who runs well and has a great arm but is still raw. Encarnacion has the tools to become a 30-30 man, perhaps this season. However, he walked only 14 times last season and must learn to use the whole field. —*Reid Creager*

Baltimore



NOT-SO-FINE TUNING: Director of player personnel **Syd Thrift** has high hopes of upgrading the pitching staff, but the club so far has made only minor adjustments. The deal that sent LHP **Jesse Orosco** to the Mets for LHP **Chuck McElroy** basically was an even-up swap to separate Orosco and new manager **Mike Hargrove**, who didn't see eye-to-eye when both were in Cleveland. The Orioles signed backup C **Greg Myers**, but the overall makeup of the club hasn't changed dramatically. ... Rumors of a possible deal for RHP **Scott Erickson** seem unlikely. Why would the club trade a steady pitcher who is locked into a favorable, long-term contract? Despite an abysmal 1-8 start last year, Erickson won 15 games for the third straight year.

CENTER FIELD ANALYSIS: **Brady Anderson** continues to play solid defense and put up substantial offensive numbers out of the leadoff spot. He probably isn't going to hit 50 homers again, but he hit 24 last year with 81 RBIs. How many leadoff hitters did that? In the field, he still has good speed and very good defensive skills. The Orioles auditioned prospect **Eugene Kingsale** in center for much of September, but he will be out of options this spring, so the club will have to find a place for him with the big club or risk losing him on waivers. The next full-time center fielder might be **Darnell McDonald**, but he's still at least a couple of years away. —*Peter Schumuck*

Chicago



LAST TRY: The team still plans to give struggling SS **Mike Caruso** a long look in spring training. But if Caruso doesn't look like he's the answer as the starter, expect the team to look to Toronto for help. G.M. **Ron Schueler** has talked to the Blue Jays about **Alex Gonzalez**, but he wants to make sure the slick-fielding shortstop is healthy after having season-ending surgery on his throwing shoulder last June. Schueler probably would offer starting RHP **James Baldwin** to the Jays. ... It's looking more like holdover 3Bs **Greg Norton** and **Craig Wilson** will return in 2000 and platoon at the position until top prospect **Joe Crede** is ready around the All-Star break. Norton started very shaky on defense but settled down, and it saved his job. Wilson isn't much of an offensive threat, but he does provide much-needed defensive help.

CENTER FIELD ANALYSIS: **Chris Singleton** platooned for the first two months of the season with **McKay Christensen** until Christensen was sent to the minors. Singleton batted .300, and he hit 17 homers, drove in 72 runs and stole 20 bases. He has good offensive skills and has a chance to become an above-average defensive player. Christensen also has the potential to develop into a very good player once he learns to take more advantage of his speed. In addition, the team has prospect **Brian Simmons**, who likely will be traded before the season. —*Scot Gregor*

Kansas City



ROSADO SIGNS: The team rewarded LHP **Jose Rosado** for his solid season by giving him a two-year, \$5.5 million deal. Rosado always has had superior stuff, including a good curve and great changeup, but hadn't always been resilient in tough situations until '99, when he was 10-14 with a 3.85 ERA. Look for Rosado to be a force now that he is an established ace. He has the potential to win 15 games if he gets enough help. He took losses in four of his five complete games. ... C **Brian Johnson** and RHP **Jerry Spradlin** were acquired last week. Johnson has the edge to start over **Sal Fasano**. Spradlin could replace retired **Jeff Montgomery** as the closer or **Scott Service** as a setup man.

CENTER FIELD ANALYSIS: **Carlos Beltran**, who in '99 became the eighth rookie to score 100 runs and drive in 100, is the team's best overall position player and a legitimate five-tool player. Next season will be a much bigger challenge for **Beltran**, 22, because pitchers will have a better idea of how to attack him. **Beltran** will work in the spotlight more as he makes what looks to be a permanent switch to the No. 3 spot. He has made his biggest improvement on defense, getting better fundamentally and reducing his wild throws. If **Beltran** rests at all, LF **Johnny Damon** would move to center field, and **Scott Pose**, **Mark Quinn**, **Jeremy Giambi** or **Todd Dunwoody** could take a turn in left. —*Luciana Chavez*