

Can the Red Sox Repeat?

- Michael Simmons

It has been a long winter in New England. Spring is coming and that means the start of the Boston Red Sox Season. Last year was magical for the Red Sox. Hopes are high for the 2014 Season. Major League Baseball opens the 2014 Season on March 22 in Sydney, Australia, when the L.A. Dodgers face the Arizona Diamondbacks.

The Red Sox didn't make many changes in the offseason after winning the 2013 World Series. Jarrod Saltalamacchia was let go and signed by the Miami Marlins. In his place the Red Sox signed veteran catcher A.J. Pierzynski from the Chicago White Sox, who will split time with David Ross. The Sox also signed former Cleveland Indians star outfielder Grady Sizemore, who is coming off a serious injury which has limited his play the last couple of seasons. If Sizemore can get healthy again, this could be a great signing. The team also made a couple of minor signings to help their bullpen. The biggest move of the offseason was the loss of Jacoby Ellsbury, who signed with the New York Yankees for big money. The Red Sox did not seem interested in having to pay Ellsbury the money it would have required. Pitcher Ryan Dempster also announced recently that he will be retiring for at least the 2014 Season.

Most experts are not sure what to expect from the Red Sox in 2014 because they are viewed as standing still, while other teams made significant moves in the offseason. That being said, the Red Sox still have excellent starting pitching. They also had great clubhouse chemistry in 2013, and most key players will return. There are many that believe the Red Sox will be World Series contenders in 2014.

In 2014 the Red Sox's schedule for interleague play will include teams from the National League Central. They will play the Atlanta Braves, who are considered the Red Sox's natural rival. The new teams the Red Sox will be playing are: the St. Louis Cardinals, the Cincinnati Reds, the Pittsburgh Pirates, and the Milwaukee Brewers.

The Red Sox have raised ticket prices for 2014 by an average of 4.8%. This is the first ticket increase in three years. The changes in ticket prices will depend on the type of seat you purchase. A Field Box ticket for Opening Day will cost \$165.00 or \$160.00; a Loge Box is \$129.00 or \$123.00; a Pavilion Box will be \$101.00 or \$85.00; an Infield Grandstand will be \$73.00 or \$70.00; a Right Field Box will be \$ 70.00 or \$65.00; an Outfield Grandstand will be \$42.00; the Bleachers will be \$40.00; the Budweiser Right Field Box Standing Room will be \$40.00; a Pavilion Standing Room will be \$35.00; a General Standing Room will be \$30.00; and the Upper Bleachers will be \$20.00.

My prediction for the 2014 Season is that the Red Sox should do as well as they did last year during the regular season. Having a solid starting rotation, plus the majority of key players back from a great clubhouse, should lead to success. Whether or not they win the World Series again is the question. As for predictions on several of the key players: David Ortiz will do great like last year at First Base when the Red Sox play National League Teams, and as Designated Hitter

against American League Teams. Dustin Pedroia is the Second Baseman for the Red Sox. He had a great season in 2013, and he made a lot of important outs. Also, he hit the baseball very well for the Red Sox. I hope he will do great again in 2014.

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