

Dynasty League Baseball Reviewed by Greg Salvatore

Last weekend, the 2001 Diamondbacks squared off against the 2001 Boston Red Sox at Fenway Park. Randy Johnson and Pedro Martinez matched with expected results, 14 and 16 strikeouts, respectively, with a brisk, 2-1 Diamondbacks win behind solo home runs from Luis Gonzalez and Damian Miller.

Oh, yes, Miller is long gone, as are many of the 2001 Diamondbacks, but they can easily be brought back to action through Dynasty League Baseball, a board game that uses player cards, dice, scorecards and, of course, strategy and guile.

Dynasty League is, without contest, the most realistic baseball simulation on the market today; this coming from a reviewer who grew up hooked on Strat-o-Matic (and I still have a fond recollection of the 1985 Joaquin Andujar card and the 1979 Gorman Thomas card, which seemed to guarantee a home run almost every other time you rolled the dice). Dynasty League, however, incorporates features that make it go far beyond games like Strat-o-Matic or APBA, which are certainly fun to play but pale in comparison to Dynasty League, which has seemingly incorporated everything that can happen over the course of a game or season.

For example, one of the most intriguing features of Dynasty League is the "Bizarre Play" which will get rolled once or twice per game. One such play in the aforementioned Diamondbacks vs. Red Sox game had a Boston runner barely avoiding a pickoff attempt at first base by Miller. Other bizarre plays that can crop up include the pitcher being ejected on a disputed ball four call, a line drive back to the mound that hits the pitcher, a third baseman being hit in the face on a bad hop and—a play that harkens back to José Canseco—a ball bouncing off the head of an outfielder for a home run. Many of the bizarre plays can be disastrous in a season, since players' individual injury ratings can effect how many games they will miss in each circumstance.

Two more things that effect the game are errors and "Range Plays," which, when rolled, will test the defensive abilities of your team. An outstanding defensive team, like the 1999 New York Mets with John Olerud, Rey Ordoñez and Robin Ventura in the

infield, is going to allow considerably fewer unearned runs over a season than a team like the 1995 Cleveland Indians, which had Manny Ramirez and Albert Belle in its outfield.

Weather is also a factor (not at Bank One Ballpark, of course, but elsewhere) and a



particularly hot day can affect the stamina of your starting pitcher. A particularly cold day can increase the chances of errors by fielders and, of course, precipitation can postpone or delay the game. In a season with the Chicago White Sox or Philadelphia Phillies, you will have more rainouts and doubleheaders than you would with the Diamondbacks or Houston Astros.

Dynasty League Baseball is available in its original board-game style, as well as a computer simulation that replicates the original game. For players looking for a different experience, there are various season sets with which to play Dynasty League, including the 2001 season (perfect for Diamondbacks fans, of course) and various other single seasons, as well as the "Greatest Teams" sets, made up of many of the best teams of the last century.

All Dynasty League products are available at DesignDepot.com.