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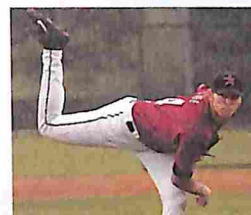
MLB 2005



EXTRA CREDIT

They've got Schilling up front, Foulke at the back of the pen and Ortiz in the middle of the order. But no one's more critical to the Red Sox's success than their captain, Jason Varitek.

BY JEFF BRADLEY



76 NEW FUNDAMENTALS

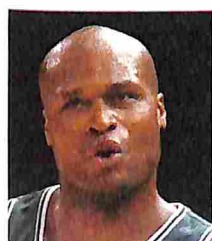
Old gospel: never throw a strike on 0-2. Nonsense, says Astros closer Brad Lidge, one of a number of MLBers keeping a different faith.

BY BUSTER OLNEY



82 WILD TIMES

The Marlins will ride on Miguel Cabrera's back all the way to the postseason. Buster Olney and Tim Kurkjian give you the down-low on how the other 29 teams will fare.



52 ON SECOND THOUGHT ...

Antoine Walker's triumphant return to Boston is a case study in You Don't Know What You've Got 'Til It's Gone.

BY TOM FRIEND



58 FIGHTING SPIRITS

Like Deron Williams and his Illini, the teams that survived the road to St. Louis just won't accept the meaning of the word final—as in, it's over.



102 STAT FACTORY

No one gets to first base better than Ichiro—225 singles prove it. So who better to lead off our celebration of baseball's most famous firsts?



104 REPLACEMENTS

Bye, Randy Moss. Hi, Nate Burleson. That's just one of the big changes that will make or break NFL teams this coming season.

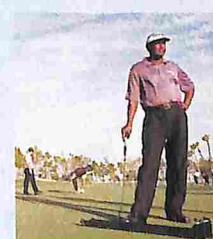
BY BRUCE FELDMAN



112 COLD BLOODED

Everyone says Florida State 'backer Ernie Sims is a real nice kid. Unless you steal his ride—or carry a football.

BY GENE WOJCIECHOWSKI



116 VIJAY AND ME

Spend nine days with golf's hardest-working and most enigmatic star, and you'll learn to love him. Almost.

BY GENE WOJCIECHOWSKI



128 FOR THE FUN OF IT

Chamique Holdsclaw lost the fun in her game—and in her life. She's working at getting both back on the quieter courts of Spain.

BY RACHEL NICHOLS

NFL SILLY SEASON FINAL FOUR ON THE FLOOR VIJAY SMILES (SORT OF)

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