

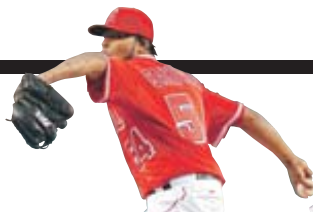
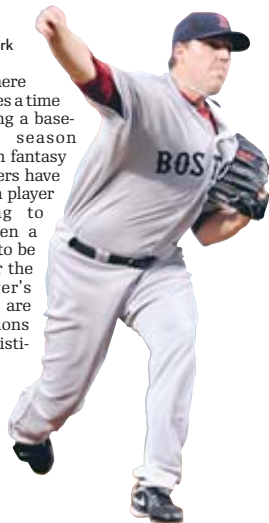
Sub in some stat boosts

BY KYLE STACK
Special to amNewYork



There comes a time during a baseball season when fantasy owners have to face reality. If a player isn't performing to expectations, then a replacement has to be sought no matter the struggling player's star power. Here are four such situations arranged by statistical categories:

John Lackey's strikeout rate has declined sharply.
(PHOTOS: GETTY)



OUT: JOHN LACKEY, BOSTON, SP, 56 KS IN 94 IP

IN: ERVIN SANTANA, L.A. ANGELS, SP, 92 KS IN 105 1/3 IP

K

An 8-3 record can't totally make up for Lackey's other dismal numbers — a career-high 4.69 ERA and 1.57 WHIP and a career-low 5.4 K/9 rate. Lackey had struck out at least seven batters per nine innings every year since 2005, making this year's plummeting K total even more perplexing.

His former Angeles teammate, Santana, has rediscovered his groove after a middling 2009 campaign (5.03 ERA, 1.48 WHIP). Santana used to be a fantasy spot-starter whom you avoided on the road, but his 3.04 road ERA makes him a safe starter at all times. Only two-thirds of ESPN and Yahoo! leagues have rostered him, so you can still take advantage of his comeback year.



OUT: RICKY NOLASCO, FLORIDA, SP, 4.92 ERA

IN: BRETT MYERS, HOUSTON, SP, 3.20 ERA

ERA

Nolasco was a preseason Cy Young candidate but that possibility has melted away, right along with the 3.59 ERA he sported on May 16. Since then, he's permitted 10 home runs in seven starts leading to a 6.81 ERA during that period.

It's been four seasons since Myers posted 12 wins and a 3.91 ERA for the Phillies, but he's on pace to post similar numbers this year for the Astros. After struggling from 2007-09, Myers has induced hitters to ground out in 49 percent of their at-bats and to fly out in just 31 percent of their batted balls. And he's widely available in ESPN (10 percent) and Yahoo! (19 percent) leagues.



OUT: ADAM LIND, TORONTO, OF, HITTING .203

IN: JONNY GOMES, CINCINNATI, OF, HITTING .290

AVG

Lind's offensive production has nosedived thanks in part to his strikeout percentage of 27, more than 8 percent higher than his rate last year. It'd be foolish to give up on the 26-year-old — he hit 35 homers and accumulated 114 RBIs in 2009 — but no fantasy owner wants a lineup relying on someone who's batting barely above the Mendoza line.

Gomes has hit above .284 just once in four previous seasons of 300-plus at-bats but he could be a great fill-in while Lind continues to struggle. That he has three 20-plus homer seasons makes him a fine power plug-in while Lind tries to find his swing. It won't be difficult to find him available in Yahoo!, where he's owned in just 38 percent of leagues.



OUT: JASON BAY, METS, OF, 4 HOME RUNS

IN: JOSE GUILLEN, KANSAS CITY, OF, 13 HOME RUNS

HR

Bay's power drop-off from 2009 (36 home runs, .537 slugging percentage) was expected once he signed with the Mets and called pitcher-friendly Citi Field home — just not to this degree. His .425 slugging percentage represents only the second time in his eight-year career he's dipped below .500.

Meanwhile, Guillen is plugging along with another productive season. He had back-to-back 20-homer, 90-RBI campaigns from 2007-08 and is in line to accomplish that again with 47 RBIs. He won't hurt you in batting average with a .282 mark, and he's owned in just 58 percent of Yahoo! leagues.

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