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# SPORTING GREEN

## Fantasy-League Tip: Youngsters With Injuries

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**Quality players, those with All-Star ability, are the guys who make or break their teams, whether in the major leagues or in the fantasy leagues.**

One way a savvy fantasy-leaguer can build a quality team at bargain prices is to bid for All-Star caliber players coming back from bad or injury-plagued years.

How successful is this strategy?

Last season, 10 hitters arguably of All-Star caliber were on the disabled list long enough to miss at least 40 games. In 1989, not surprisingly, some have been bargains, but others have been busts.

Pedro Guerrero (103 games played in 1988) has come back from last year's early-season injuries and midseason trade to be the Cardinals' best hitter this season. Von Hayes (104 games), who missed six weeks after elbow surgery last season, has been among the N.L. batting leaders all season.

In 1988, Lou Whitaker (115 games) continued the slide he'd started in 1986. But his '89 average is back up,

and he has already bettered last year's homer total. Devon White (122 games) started 1988 on the disabled list, and he finished it with another season of "potential" (.259, 11 homers, 51 RBIs). This season, with an average around .280 and his power numbers up, that potential may be fulfilled.

Tim Raines (109 games) and Willie Randolph (110 games) hit for career low averages in '88. This year, they've both bounced back.

But while these six hitters have returned to All-Star form, four others, plagued by new injuries and sick bats, haven't even made it to mediocre.

Foremost among these is future Hall of Famer Mike Schmidt, whose bad shoulder ended his '88 season after only 108 games. But even last year's .249, 12 homers and 62 RBIs look great next to his .203 average before he retired this season.

Carlton Fisk, Keith Hernandez and Alfredo Griffin haven't fared much better. All were disabled in '88 and reinjured in '89. Fisk has returned from eight weeks on the DL. Griffin is back, too, but until recently hadn't improved much on last season's .199 average. Hernandez may be out for the season with a broken kneecap.

Ten injured players are hardly a scientific sample,

but their 1988 seasons provide interesting contrasts. When the injury came in the season seems to make no difference, but the severity of the injury is important. Fisk, Hernandez and Griffin lost the most time last season, and all got hurt again this season.

But the factor that stands out most is age.

The three youngest players, White (26), Raines (29) and Hayes (30) have all bounced back big. The three oldest, Fisk (41) Schmidt (39) and Hernandez (35) have had a terrible time. There is a split decision on the three 32-year-olds; Guerrero and Whitaker are having good seasons, Griffin is not. And Randolph, at 34, is the comeback kids' senior citizen.

Is this just a one-year coincidence? Probably not. If you are looking for a bargain next season, and you gamble on a top-level player who was hurt in 1989, pass on Dave Winfield and Andre Dawson and put your money on Kent Hrbek or Kal Daniels, or maybe the big kid with the red car, Jose Canseco.

Don't forget that in 1988 a young Giants player fought injuries all season long and finished a disappointing .251 with 19 home runs. In '89, he's Kevin Mitchell, superstar.