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A Fresh Season for Managing Regret

It's never easy getting back into the baseball season, what with the sport's self-generated scandals and star-crossed narcissists. Fans yearning for the plain nine-inning deal — bat, ball, glove and hopes under open skies — lately had to wince at testimony about the monstrous side effects of illicit hormones taken by batters obsessed with hitting even more home runs. All Babe Ruth ever was reported abusing were hot dogs and beer.

In the New York game, money is inevitably in the lineup. Yankee players sound ecstatic at finally being rated underdogs to the Red Sox, who spent with Yankee abandon in hiring new Boston players. The Mets, in contrast, have hit such grim times that a piece of the team is being offered for sale to keep the club operating.

The team, as everyone knows, was hard hit in the Ponzi scheme concocted by Bernard Madoff, who is in prison as this season opens. Mets fans desperate for the crack of the bat still reel from the auction of Madoff property that saw his satin personalized Mets jacket fetch \$14,500. They'd consider it just if he can't get the Mets on cable.

Nine innings of distraction are a cure for life's setbacks, and Mets loyalists can comfort themselves with that universal mantra of wait 'til this year. Hope is the thing with flutters, as last season's comeback Met, R. A. Dickey, demonstrated with his looping knuckleballs and postgame philosophical riffs. "This game is about how to handle regret. It really is," Dickey advised, a worthy theme for the brand-new season.