

WORLD SERIES '99

Prominent Islanders like Yank chances

■ Most agree
Bombers will top
Braves in World
Series and defend
their crown

ADVANCE STAFF REPORT

An event as momentous as the World Series has everyone ready to weigh in with an opinion.

We polled a group of well-known Staten Islanders, some with baseball backgrounds and some just fans, to find out how they thought this Fall Classic would go. Here's what they said:

Pete Rapp, Staten Island Academy baseball coach: "I like the Yankees because I think their starting pitching is a little more consistent. I think the Braves are somewhat vulnerable, especially coming off that draining series with the Mets. I think the Yanks will win in six games."

Bob Steele, McKee/S.I. Tech baseball coach: "The Yankees will win because they have proven to be the best team over the year."



"I'm a Met fan, but my heart has to go with New York because I want to see Atlanta take a beating."

CSI softball head coach
Gina Battista

Their whole game — pitching, hitting and defense — is better than the Braves."

Bill Cali, College of Staten Island baseball coach: "I like the Yankees. I think they match up better in the outfield and infield. I think the only question is on the pitching mound."

Tom Tierney, Tottenville HS baseball coach: "I like the Yanks because I like their professionalism and class. Atlanta is a good team, but the Yankees have Charlie Wonsowicz (a former player of Tierney's who is now a batting practice pitcher for the Yanks and the team's video coordinator) Also, Joe Torre does a great job. I think he is a better manager than Bobby Cox."

Matt Galante, Houston Astros' bench coach: "I have to pick the Yankees to win the whole thing because they seem to always get it done when it's time to get it done."

Rich Vitaliano, former Wagner College baseball coach: "I think Atlanta will be a little burned out after that series with the Mets. I think if the Mets hit (Braves' closer) John Rocker, anybody can hit him. I also think the Yanks have better pitching and defense."

Gloria Cordes-Elliott, ex-pro women's baseball player: "I really don't know who's going to win. It's going to boil down to whoever gets the most favorable calls from the umpires. The Braves always seem to get the pitching calls off the plate, while the Yanks get their share off calls in the field. I imagine it'll go seven games."

Larry Musanti, Monsignor Farrell baseball coach: "I like the Yankees because of their experience and depth. The Yankees are very confident. They have that certain swagger about them that 'We are the champions. Come and knock us off.' And I don't think the Braves are going to do it."

Gina Battista, CSI softball coach: "I'm a Met fan, but my heart has to go with New York because I want to see Atlanta take a beating. I'm tired of seeing John Rocker's expressions on the mound. I figure if he pitches again in New York, especially in the Bronx, they'll give it to him."

Matty Iacovelli, St. Peter's baseball assistant: "I've been rooting for the Braves since 1959 when they were in Milwaukee. They're young and I think they are quite hungry after losing to the Yankees in '96. If their pitching is on, the Yankees are in trouble."

Assemblywoman Elizabeth Connelly, D-North Shore: "I predict the Yankees, not necessarily because I'm a fan, but because they're just a team that is capable of overpowering the opposition. I also believe Joe Torre makes a difference."

Robert Connelly, CYO Advisory Board Vice Chairperson: "I like the Yankees in five. They're a classy team that has a lot of history on their side. They should come out as champions again."

Sen. John Marchi, R-Staten Island: "I've been a Yankee fan since the days of Lou Gehrig and Joe Dimaggio and they're a class organization that never disappoints. That's why I like them to win. This team always gives maximum effort with maximum effect and it seems almost obscene to even think they won't win."

Jerry Cammarata, Staten Island representative, Board of Education: "I like Mayor Rudy Giuliani's (favorite team) in four. There's no arrogance in Joe Torre, and I think that's important. He sets the team's goals and they usually carry them out. Torre's tranquility, focus and compassion for his players helps them do what they have to to get the job done."

Hon. Bill Murphy, Staten Island District Attorney: "I'm a National League fan and I'm rooting for the Atlanta Braves. Of all the contending teams, they have the best pitching staff to go against the Yankees and I think they're going to win."

Assemblyman Eric Vitaliano, D-Mid-Island: "I'm a National League fan and my son (Michael) is a Braves' nut and he's convinced me that Atlanta is going to win the World Series. The emergence of Kevin Millwood and John Rocker will make a difference this time around, although I think the series will go seven games."

Sen. Vincent Gentile, D-East Shore (S.I.)-Brooklyn: "I definitely think the Yankees are going to win. Between the Yankees' hitting, pitching and fielding, I think they have the edge. The Yanks also have tradition and history on their side."

Hon. Barbara Panepinto, Civil court judge: "I'm rooting for the Yankees and I think they have a good chance. They have a quality team and a lot of experience to help them win another World Series."

Joseph Panepinto, Executive Director of CYO of Archdiocese of New York: "I think the Yankees will win in five, mostly because I sit on the U.S. Olympic Committee



"I'm a National League fan and I'm rooting for the Atlanta Braves."

District Attorney Bill
Murphy

with George Steinbrenner and he'll kill me if I don't pick them. But also because they have a team that works hard and communicates and I think that will get them through."

The Reverend Monsignor Peter Finn, co-vicar Staten Island: "I've been a Yankee fan for 50 years and there's no doubt they will cap off a quarter of a century of world championships this year. Professional has been a word used often to describe them and they seem to have a togetherness and respect that stems from Joe Torre and his coaching staff down."

John Franco, Mets reliever: "I'm a New York guy, so I'll be pulling for the Yankees. I hope they crush the Braves."

City Councilman Steve Fiala (R-South Shore): "Nothing less than a Yankees sweep."

City Councilman James Oddo (R-Mid Island): "I'm a huge Mets fan, but as of 12:06 Wednesday morning I became a Yankee fan. I think the Yankees in six."

City Councilman Jerome X. O'Donovan (D-North Shore): "The Yankees are going to blow them away."

Assemblyman Robert Stranieri (R-South Shore): "Yankees in six."