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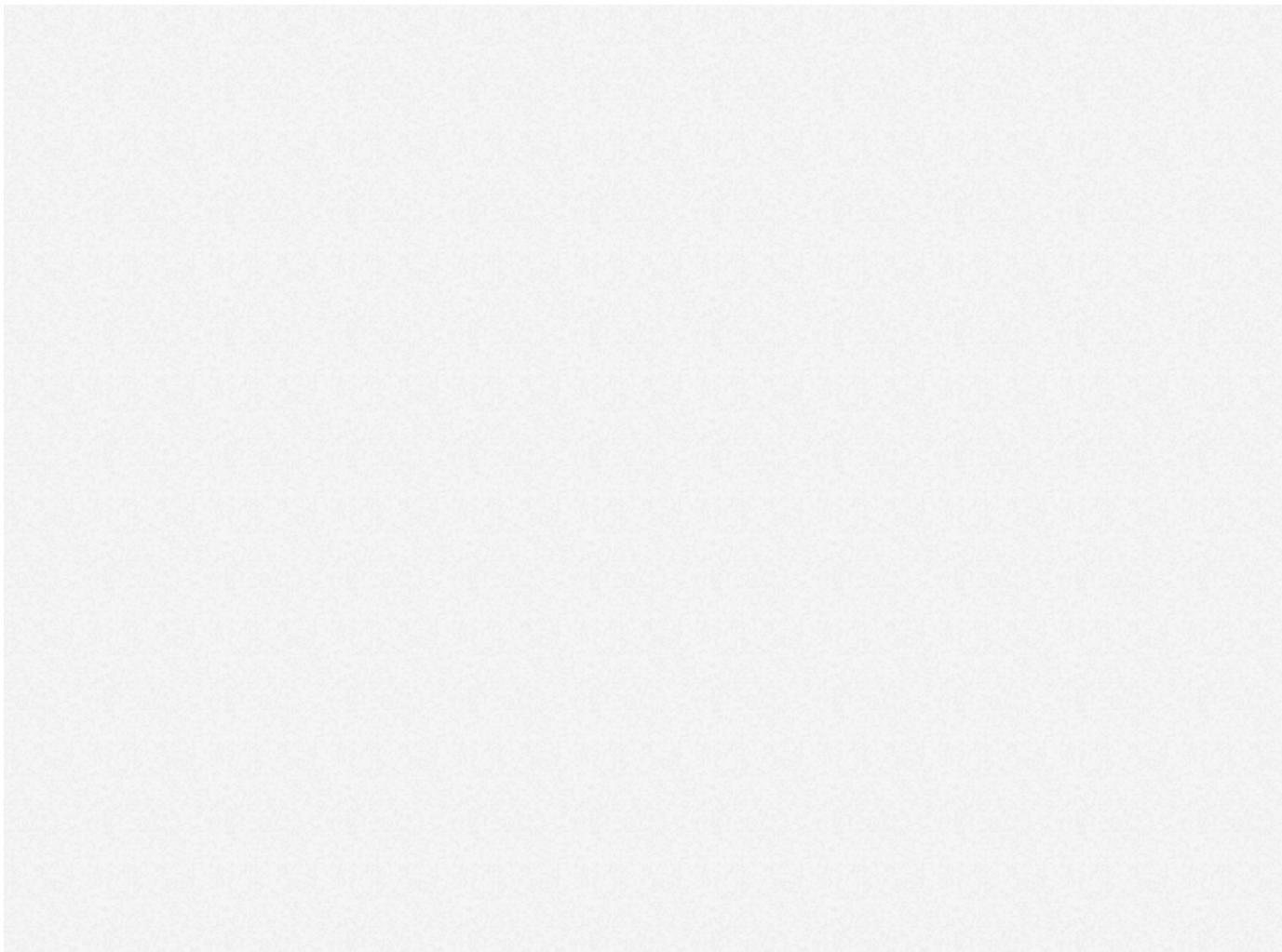
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## Phils fans pumped up for season





By **Jeff Wolfe**, *Delaware County Daily Times*

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Opening Day of the Major League Baseball season may not be a national holiday yet, but for the fans of almost any team it is a national day of hope.

The Phillies opened their 2014 season at Texas Monday afternoon and



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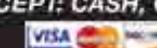
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showed something that had been lacking for much of spring training — an ability to score a lot of runs. The Phillies scored 14 runs to the Rangers' 10.

And so for at least one day, there was some optimism around a team that most national baseball prognosticators feel will struggle to finish .500 this season.

“My feelings are strong that the Phillies are going to get in the playoffs as a second wild-card team this year,” said Michael Gordane, of Marple, who was watching the game at Xfinity Live in Philadelphia. “I think their starting pitching and their bullpen is going to be good. They just have to be consistent with their offense.”

The offense did its share Monday, spurred by a Jimmy Rollins' grand slam in the second inning that gave the Phillies a 6-0 lead. That amount of run support will probably be plenty enough for staff ace Cliff Lee this season, but it wasn't in this one. Lee lasted five innings and allowed eight runs and 11 hits. He did leave however with a 9-8 lead.

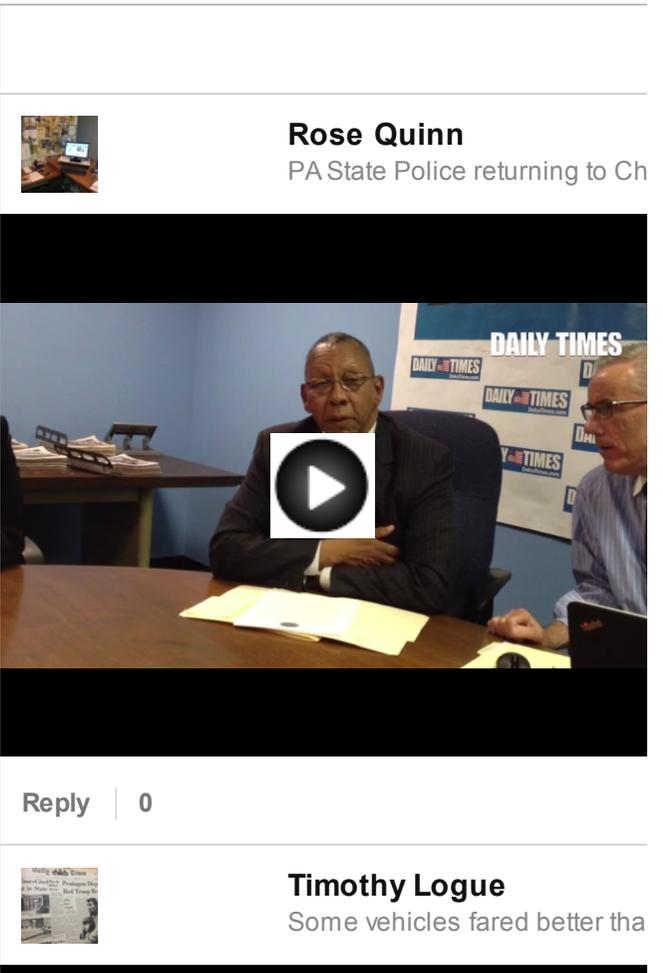
“He has never pitched well in that ballpark,” Gordane said of Rangers Ballpark in Arlington.

Gordane hopes the Phillies can use their savvy to win games, too. The team's core offensive players of Chase Utley, Ryan Howard, Jimmy Rollins and Carlos Ruiz from the 2008 World Series champion team now has an average age of 35.

“They are an experienced team that knows how to win,” Gordane said. “Hopefully, they can teach some of the younger players how to win, too.”

Doug Dillon, also of Marple, and also watching the game at Xfinity Live,

**Applebees in Havertown held their Baldwick Bar Games, Monday and this team's theme was the Phillies Opening Day. Pictured starting from left are Brian Wolf, Sarah Andrews, Helen Kuper, Joey Brudnak, Jeff Caldwell and Rodney Kurtz. (Times Staff / JULIA WILKINSON)**



A Facebook post from Rose Quinn, a PA State Police officer. The post features a video thumbnail showing two men in an office setting with 'DAILY TIMES' logos in the background. The video has a play button icon in the center. Below the video, there is a 'Reply' button with a count of '0'. The post is from Timothy Logue, with a partial comment visible: 'Some vehicles fared better tha'.

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was taking a more wait-and-see approach for the season.

“I’m a little more neutral at this time,” he said. “I went out to take a phone call and we were ahead 6-4 and then I came back and we were behind 7-6.”

Dillon does believe this team could be similar to the 1993 team, which unexpectedly won the National League East Division and made it to the World Series before losing to Toronto.

“I think they can be like the 1993 team and surprise some people,” Dillon said. “But my gut tells me that their age is going to take a toll.”

But no matter what the team’s record is during the season, Dillon and Gordane say they will be faithful fans. They have been season-ticket holders since 2007.

“They have to work now to please the average fan,” Dillon said. “They didn’t have to do that before.”

“We don’t quit,” Gordane said.

Dillon added that the somewhat smaller crowds does have some benefits.

“It used to be you had to wait in line for everything,” he said. “Now you can just go right out and get what you want.”

And he said, the faithful fans know who each other are.

“The casual fans aren’t coming out as much now,” he said. “But the loyal fans, we are hanging around.”

The Phillies won’t play in front of their home fans at Citizens Bank Park until next week. After three games at Texas and then three games at Chicago against the Cubs over the weekend, they play host to the Milwaukee Brewers for a 3:05 p.m. game next Monday.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jeff Wolfe is a general assignment reporter for the Daily Times who specializes in transit. He also writes a Sunday transit column. Reach the author at [jwolfe@delcotimes.com](mailto:jwolfe@delcotimes.com) .

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