

BREWSTER BASEBALL ASSOCIATION



2056 MEDIA GUIDE

CHARM CITY DOES IT AGAIN!!

GOOD COP BAD COP
THE LOSERS OF LEXINGTON
REWIND THAT S##T!


OF MINOR IMPORTANCE

ELITE EIGHT
BIG LEAGUE CHEW
...AND MORE

25 CENTS

MVP - LF TADATAKA YOSHIKAWA LEADS JIMMIES

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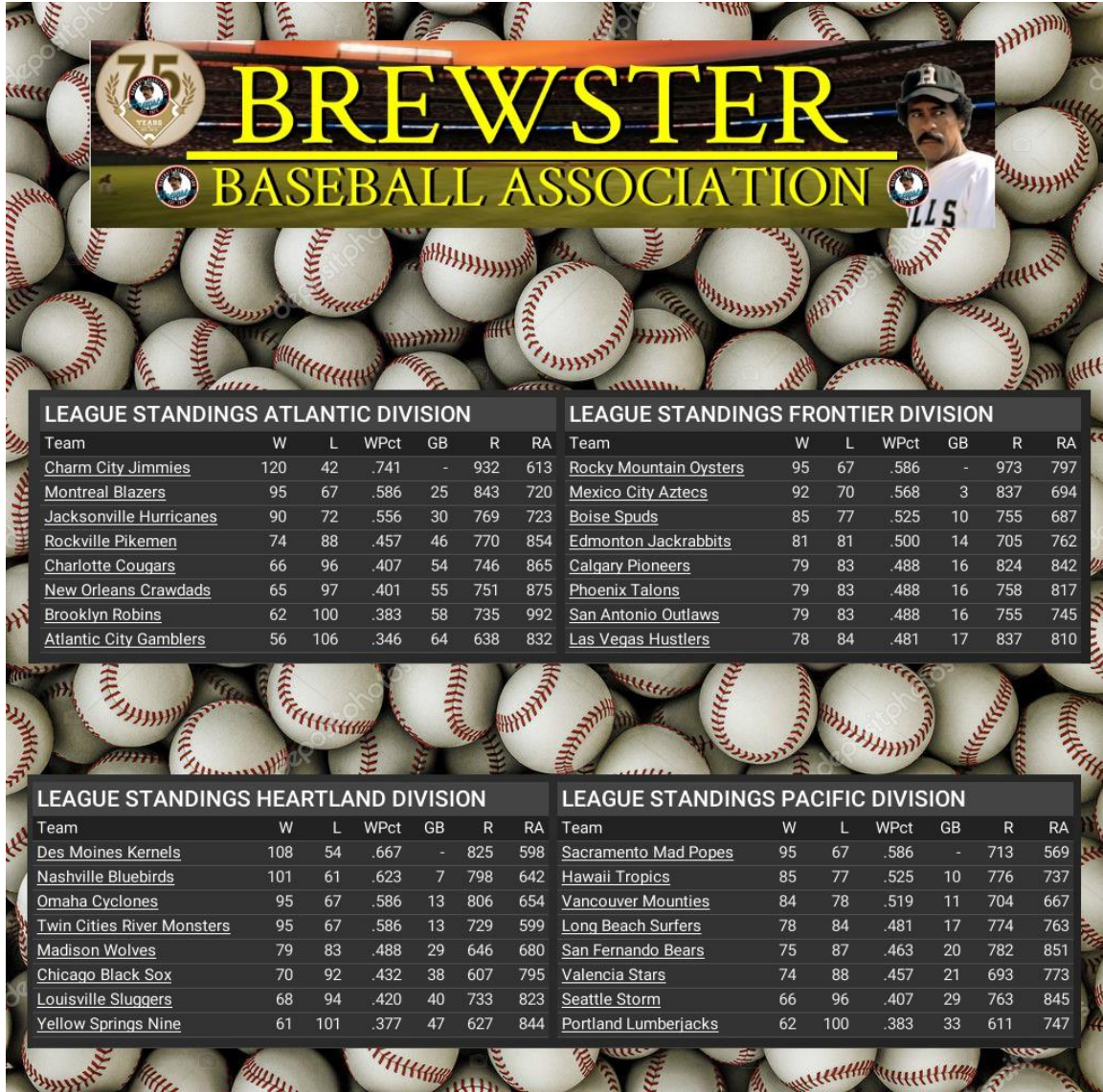
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Turn the page and step inside the world of the
Brewster!



LEAGUE STANDINGS ATLANTIC DIVISION							LEAGUE STANDINGS FRONTIER DIVISION						
Team	W	L	WPct	GB	R	RA	Team	W	L	WPct	GB	R	RA
<u>Charm City Jimmies</u>	120	42	.741	-	932	613	<u>Rocky Mountain Oysters</u>	95	67	.586	-	973	797
<u>Montreal Blazers</u>	95	67	.586	25	843	720	<u>Mexico City Aztecs</u>	92	70	.568	3	837	694
<u>Jacksonville Hurricanes</u>	90	72	.556	30	769	723	<u>Boise Spuds</u>	85	77	.525	10	755	687
<u>Rockville Pikemen</u>	74	88	.457	46	770	854	<u>Edmonton Jackrabbits</u>	81	81	.500	14	705	762
<u>Charlotte Cougars</u>	66	96	.407	54	746	865	<u>Calgary Pioneers</u>	79	83	.488	16	824	842
<u>New Orleans Crawdads</u>	65	97	.401	55	751	875	<u>Phoenix Talons</u>	79	83	.488	16	758	817
<u>Brooklyn Robins</u>	62	100	.383	58	735	992	<u>San Antonio Outlaws</u>	79	83	.488	16	755	745
<u>Atlantic City Gamblers</u>	56	106	.346	64	638	832	<u>Las Vegas Hustlers</u>	78	84	.481	17	837	810

LEAGUE STANDINGS HEARTLAND DIVISION							LEAGUE STANDINGS PACIFIC DIVISION						
Team	W	L	WPct	GB	R	RA	Team	W	L	WPct	GB	R	RA
<u>Des Moines Kernels</u>	108	54	.667	-	825	598	<u>Sacramento Mad Popes</u>	95	67	.586	-	713	569
<u>Nashville Bluebirds</u>	101	61	.623	7	798	642	<u>Hawaii Tropics</u>	85	77	.525	10	776	737
<u>Omaha Cyclones</u>	95	67	.586	13	806	654	<u>Vancouver Mounties</u>	84	78	.519	11	704	667
<u>Twin Cities River Monsters</u>	95	67	.586	13	729	599	<u>Long Beach Surfers</u>	78	84	.481	17	774	763
<u>Madison Wolves</u>	79	83	.488	29	646	680	<u>San Fernando Bears</u>	75	87	.463	20	782	851
<u>Chicago Black Sox</u>	70	92	.432	38	607	795	<u>Valencia Stars</u>	74	88	.457	21	693	773
<u>Louisville Sluggers</u>	68	94	.420	40	733	823	<u>Seattle Storm</u>	66	96	.407	29	763	845
<u>Yellow Springs Nine</u>	61	101	.377	47	627	844	<u>Portland Lumberjacks</u>	62	100	.383	33	611	747

League Champion:

CHARM CITY

75 YEARS
BREWSTER
BASEBALL ASSOCIATION

LEAGUE STANDINGS GBC

Team	W	L	WPct	GB	R	RA
<u>Athens Fighting Centaurs</u>	99	63	.611	-	952	770
<u>Cairo Pharaohs</u>	94	68	.580	5	823	650
<u>London Monarchs</u>	92	70	.568	7	842	711
<u>Jerusalem Hebrew Hammers</u>	86	76	.531	13	743	783
<u>Sao Paulo Pilots</u>	77	85	.475	22	728	777
<u>Tokyo Pearls</u>	73	89	.451	26	701	749
<u>Buenos Aires Brisas</u>	64	98	.395	35	653	848
<u>Sydney Sharks</u>	63	99	.389	36	661	815

League Champion:

CAIRO

2055 Caleca Award Winner

Best “Team News” Of The Season

Talons Facing Nightmare as Area Businesses

Cash in on Joseph Mother Craze

Phoenix, AZ—

Ahh, free enterprise. The concept that, if a market exists, a business will spring up to exploit it.

But for the Talons (and their law student interns), it just means more work filing cease and desist orders against a number of Phoenix area entrepreneurs who have quickly moved into the “Mother” space without the permission of the player or the team.

The first to rebrand, as soon as Joseph Mother hit his first BBA home run on the night of his debut, was a rather obvious one:



Soon thereafter, a rather inventive take on a new quick service chicken restaurant concept:



Mere hours later, a new Phoenix-area gaming facility opened its doors:



And, as duty calls, another business was quickly formed to clean up the mess:



Be sure to patronize these fine Central Arizona establishments while you can! The Talons legal team is on the case!!!



VIC CALECA was one of the great figures in BBA History; a skilled GM and a good guy who was always willing to share his knowledge with newbies. He was a career journalist and a writer of some of the finest team news posts ever, and this award was established to honor his memory.

A Rare Feat in Baseball History: Pitching Excellence and Versatility Combined

In the illustrious history of baseball, a sport known for its myriad statistical achievements and awe-inspiring moments, certain accomplishments stand out as truly exceptional. One such feat is the rare occurrence of a pitcher starting over 100 games, winning over 100 games, and saving over 100 games in their career. This trifecta of pitching prowess and versatility has only been achieved by a select group of individuals, making it a remarkable achievement that speaks to the extraordinary talent and dedication of these players. In the 80-year history of the Brewster Baseball Association, only eight pitchers have managed to etch their names into this exclusive record. Who are they? ***The Elite Eight.***

The elite eight who have managed to conquer this challenging feat are truly a testament to the power of determination and skill in the world of baseball. Let's take a closer look at these extraordinary individuals who have left an indelible mark on the game:

<p>San Fernando Bears</p> <p>50 P</p>  <p>Eric Beckmeyer</p>	<p>Louisville Sluggers</p> <p>36 P</p>  <p>Gil Daniels</p>	<p>San Antonio Outlaws</p> <p>54 P</p>  <p>Nick Machiavelli</p>	<p>Valencia Stars</p> <p>73 P</p>  <p>Ken Howell</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Years Active: 1979 - 1992 • Seasons Played: 13 • Complete Games: 6 • Games Started: 237 • Games Won: 143 • Saves: 109 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Years Active: 1983 - 1996 • Seasons Played: 13 • Complete Games: 0 • Games Started: 104 • Games Won: 116 • Saves: 200 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Years Active: 1987 - 2005 • Seasons Played: 18 • Complete Games: 10 • Games Started: 298 • Games Won: 124 • Saves: 152 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Years Active: 1984 - 2005 • Seasons Played: 21 • Complete Games: 21 • Games Started: 432 • Games Won: 250 • Saves: 135 • Hall of Fame: Yes

<p>New Orleans Crawdads</p> <p>46 P</p>  <p>Jeffrey Baeza</p>	<p>Nashville Bluebirds</p> <p>27 P</p>  <p>James Endres</p>	<p>Seattle Storm</p> <p>22 P</p>  <p>Stuart Pearce</p>	<p>Rockville Pikemen</p> <p>17 P</p>  <p>Dave Martin</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Years Active: 1999 - 2013 • Seasons Played: 14 • Games Started: 188 • Games Won: 111 • Saves: 189 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Years Active: 1999 - 2018 • Seasons Played: 19 • Complete Games: 1 • Games Started: 308 • Games Won: 148 • Saves: 215 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Years Active: 2017 - 2031 • Seasons Played: 14 • Complete Games: 16 • Games Started: 232 • Games Won: 116 • Saves: 187 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Years Active: 2029 - 2045 • Seasons Played: 16 • Complete Games: 41 • Games Started: 402 • Games Won: 182 • Saves: 102

A Feat of Unprecedented Skill

The achievement of starting, winning, and saving over 100 games in a baseball career is a testament to a pitcher's remarkable versatility and enduring excellence. This feat requires a mastery of various pitching roles, from being the dependable starter who sets the tone for the game, to the high-pressure reliever tasked with securing a lead in the late innings. Each of these eight pitchers not only displayed exceptional pitching ability but also demonstrated a unique understanding of the nuances of the game.

An Exclusive Brotherhood

With only eight individuals having accomplished this rare feat in the span of the league's 80-year history, it stands as one of the most exclusive accomplishments in the league. These players have carved their names into the annals of league history, setting an example for aspiring pitchers and leaving a legacy that will be cherished by fans and celebrated by the baseball community for generations to come.

As fans, let's take a moment to appreciate the magnitude of this extraordinary achievement, applauding the dedication, talent, and hard work that went into reaching such a remarkable milestone. The legacy of these eight pitchers will forever remind us that in the world of baseball, greatness knows no bounds.

The Losers of Lexington

In the desolate town of Lexington, where the once-promising Lexington Sycamores were mired in an unprecedented pit of despair, a new chapter unfolded on July 16, 2055.

The Rookie League affiliate of the Brooklyn Robins had a lamentable record of 0-39, casting a shadow over the entire baseball community. As they endured defeat after crushing defeat, the bitter taste of disappointment became a constant companion. Seven losses in their last eight games, with runs surrendered in double digits, had magnified their woes, turning each game into an agonizing spectacle.



If a team loses in front of 300 fans, does it make a sound?

But on this fateful summer day during Spike Nolan League play, as the Sycamores faced off against the Russellville Rockets in the climactic finale of a three-game road series, a glimmer of hope dared to emerge. Down 3-2 in the eighth inning, a rally ignited within their dugout, dispelling the prevailing aura of despair. It was as if the weight of those 39 losses was momentarily lifted, replaced by a fleeting sense of possibility.

The spark of this revival came from an unexpected source. First baseman Frank Liyongo stood in the batter's box with a determined resolve. The count reached one ball and two strikes, the tension palpable. Then, in a single electrifying moment, Liyongo swung with all his might, connecting with the baseball in a resounding crack. The crowd watched in astonishment as the ball sailed over the outfield wall for a game-tying solo home run.

But the Sycamores weren't done just yet. Luis Escobar, their third baseman -- and a pitcher, apparently -- stepped up next. Escobar, owning a 13.24 ER in 17 IP despite never pitching ever before in his amateur or professional career until this season, displayed a level of offensive precision that was almost poetic. With the count in his favor, he unleashed a powerful swing that sent the ball soaring beyond the outfield fence. Back-to-back home runs, a sudden turn of events that lifted the Sycamores into a 4-3 lead.

The tide of the game was shifting, but the Rockets wouldn't go down without a fight. In the bottom of the eighth, Dale Hodge, a Rocket known for his power, stepped into the batter's box and sent a pitch hurtling over the fence, knotting the score at 4-4. The collective sighs and heavy hearts of the Sycamores' faithful seemed to confirm their worst fears—that victory was an elusive dream.

Yet, there, amidst the backdrop of a game that defied the team's tragic narrative, a moment of redemption arose. With two outs in the ninth inning, Lexington's Nathan Barry defied all expectations. The count reached its climax, and with a resounding crack, Barry connected. The ball soared off his bat, tracing a graceful arc into the distance before landing beyond the outfield wall. A 403-foot home run that transformed the unthinkable into reality: **A LEAD IN THE NINTH INNING!**

The euphoria in the Sycamores' dugout was palpable, a jubilant celebration of a moment that had eluded them for far too long. As the jubilant cheers of their supporters echoed through the stadium, Wazir bin Hashim – third baseman by trade, pitcher by gross negligence by Brooklyn management – took the mound. With an air of determination, he faced the Rockets' batters with unwavering resolve. Six pitches, one after the other, he coaxed weak hits and pop-ups, retiring the side 1-2-3.

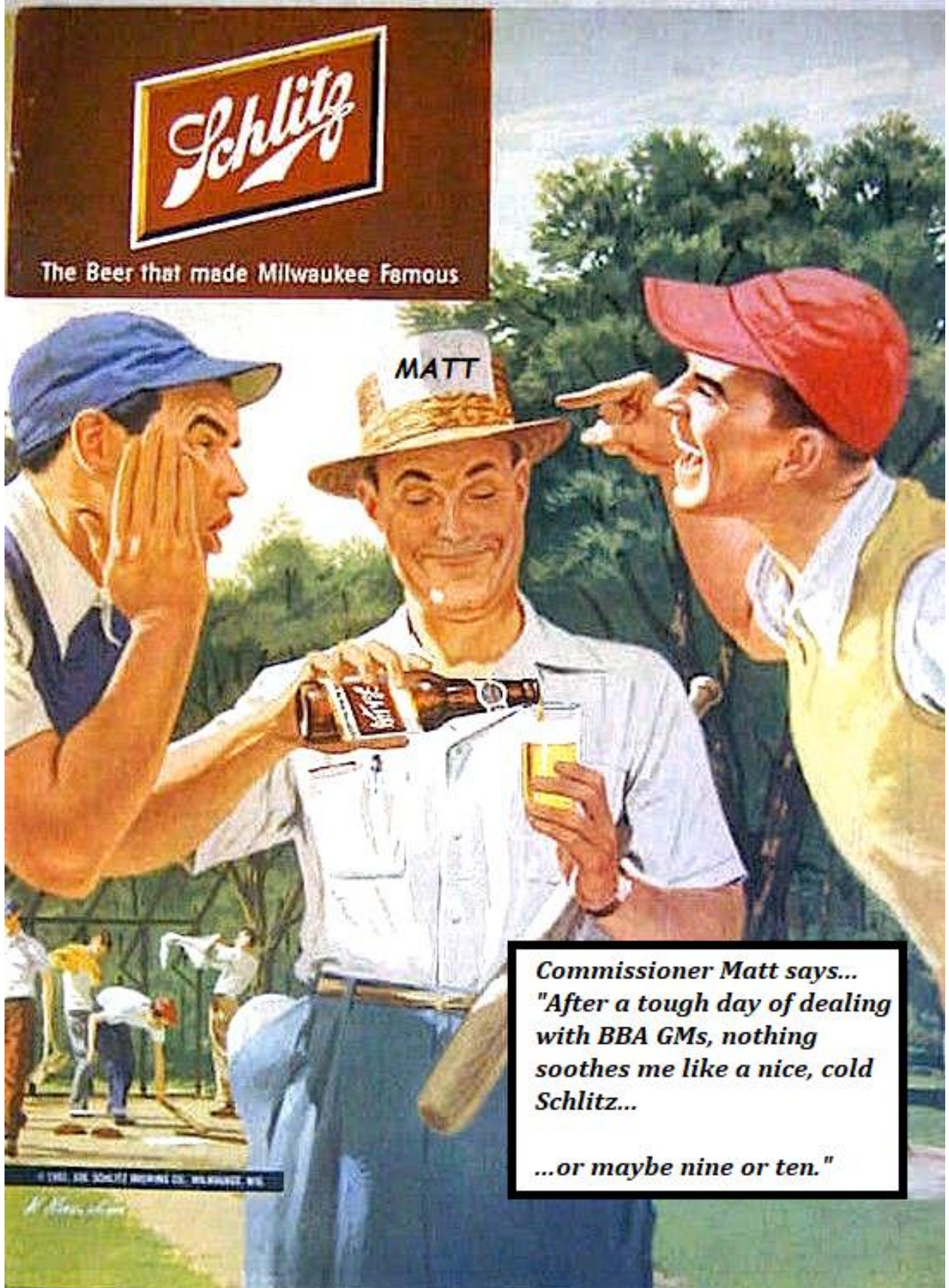
The impossible had happened...the Sycamores had secured their first victory of the year! The drought was over, and as they celebrated amidst a backdrop of tears and triumphant embraces, the weight of despair that had plagued them seemed to lift, even if just for a moment. In the midst of their shattered dreams, a glimmer of resilience had emerged, a testament to the power of persistence in the face of insurmountable odds.

The annals of baseball history would forever remember this unlikely victory, a turning point that sparked a rekindling of hope for a team that had endured more than their fair share of hardship. The legacy of the Lexington Sycamores would forever be intertwined with this moment—a reminder that, even in the darkest of times, the human spirit had the capacity to rise, to defy, and to triumph.

LEXINGTON SYCAMORES (R, BRK)

3-65, .044 PCT, 37 GB - 6th in the FL Big Country

11.60	Starters ERA	16th
10.73	Bullpen ERA	16th
8.09	FIP	16th
-12.3	Pitching WAR	16th
238	Strikeouts	16th
.610	Defensive Eff.	16th
-37.1	Zone Rating	16th



The Beer that made Milwaukee Famous

MATT

*Commissioner Matt says...
"After a tough day of dealing
with BBA GMs, nothing
soothes me like a nice, cold
Schlitz...*

...or maybe nine or ten."

© 1961, THE SCHLITZ BEER CO., MILWAUKEE, WIS.

H. H. ...

A DEEPER DIVE INTO TEAM AGE



(Featuring the “YETI”)

Finding out who has the youngest team is easy, right? I mean, you can just look it up on Stats Plus, and there it is, right? Except everyone kind of knows it’s a bunch of hooley...

For one thing, one guy in his late 30s can skew the whole average. For another thing, it’s just a flat average of everyone on your roster, not taking into account how important they are to your team. A scrub who appeared in three games at the end of the season counts as much as your team MVP.

I’m going to try, in my limited way, to do better.

Of course, going into this, there are some hurdles to this that I’m never going to jump over. Players are celebrating birthdays every day, and thus obviously becoming less young. Players are also changing teams at the usual rate. So I’m trying to hit a constantly moving target here, but I’m still going to shoot my shot.

I’m going to use WAR as my basic arbiter of value; I know it’s not perfect, but by God that’s what I’m going to use. A player needs to have accrued a positive WAR in the majors in 2055; this isn’t about all your hot minor league prospects. I’m going to define a “young player” as any ML player under 30. And I’m going to use the league as it was on March 7, 2056; the day I started this project. If you’ve made

a bunch of moves since then that involve young players, I'm sorry, but I've kind of got a deadline here.

So to recap, our pool of players consists of players under age 30 who posted a positive WAR in 2055 in the majors. Let's start with total team WAR; teams that as of March 7, had the most 2055 WAR from players under 30:

1. Charm City- 42.8
2. Des Moines- 31.9
3. Rocky Mountain- 28.2
4. Nashville- 22.2
5. Chicago- 22.1 (Sacramento and Omaha both sit at 22 even)

Well, that's bad news for 31 BBA teams. The defending champs have the most young talent. We can only hope they soon become too expensive to keep.

Let's break it down further by doing batting WAR only:

1. Charm City- 28.2
2. Rocky Mountain- 21.8
3. Des Moines- 16.1
4. Sacramento- 15.3
5. Valencia- 11.8 (Hawaii, San Fernando, Long Beach, Nashville all bunched at around 11)

And now, pitching WAR:

1. Des Moines- 15.8
2. Chicago- 15.6
3. Charm City- 14.6
4. Omaha- 13.7
5. Seattle- 13.7

At last, a list without Charm City on top.

Another question that can be answered at this point is: what team has the most young players on their roster who posted positive WARs in 2055?

1. Chicago- 19
2. Hawaii- 16
3. San Fernando- 14
4. Des Moines, Charm City, Rockville, Nashville, Madison, and Sacramento- all 13

And then, I got a little bit crazy. Surely, I thought, a 22-year-old who posts a 3.0 WAR season is more valuable than a 29-year-old with the same 3.0. The 22-year old has more capacity for growth, and would be worth more as a hypothetical trading chip. So what if I weighted all the WARs so that age within the 20-29 range was taken into account? I played around with several formulas, and here's what I decided to do: I multiplied all the WARs by a factor relating to the age of the player. A 29-year-old got multiplied by 1, that is to say, not multiplied at all. Age 28 players got multiplied by 1.25; age 27 by 1.5, then the multiplier was increased by 0.5 for every year younger, until a player at age 20 who posts a positive WAR had it multiplied by 5.0. It's all pretty arbitrary, but I think it's defensible. Anyway, doing that multiplication resulted in what I call the Young Talent Index, or "YETI" (see,

you were wondering where that term from the title would show up). So, without further ado, here are the top teams in YETI:

1. Charm City- 70.85
2. Rocky Mountain- 68.25
3. Nashville- 51.4
4. Des Moines- 49.55
5. Omaha- 44.78 (Chicago at 44.4; no one else over 35)

And the top ten YETI scores for individual players age in parenthesis):

1. Resurrection Santos III (23)- 25.2
2. Federico Linares (24)- 16.5
3. Dave Ackerman (25)- 15.0
4. Tommy Akers (23)- 14.35
5. Arturo Meza (23)- 14.35
6. Hector Silva (24)- 13.2
7. Brooks Eliot (23)- 12.6
8. Dirk Bessi (23)- 11.9
9. Kazunari Chikafuji (27)- 10.65
10. Jim Fleming (24)- 10.5

Interesting... Rocky Mountain has the top two, but then a big drop off. Charm City has #3 overall, and five of the top 30.

So there it is; take it for whatever you think it's worth. Remember, if you're not on any of these lists, you probably have some young stud matriculating in the minors who's going to take the league by storm and render this whole exercise moot. I will say, it's not good news for those of us who have to share the Atlantic Division with the Jimmies, but what are you gonna do? And as we all know, in the topsy-turvy world of the Brewster, pretty much anything can happen.

Rewind That S***t!!!

Revisiting the 2046 Amateur Draft (Round 1 and top bargains)


By Lem Piker Sr., Winter 2056










***Foreword:** A lot of these players were traded or landed with multiple teams. For grading purposes, we're mostly considering the career output of the individual player - not the net reward for the team that drafted the player.*





If you like pitching, then you are in for a treat. This draft report will entertain you like a Mark Twain classic. I probably would have to consult with other columnists and historians to see if this could be considered among the best pitching classes in BBA draft history. Maybe it's not, but gosh it's gotta be up there. There were a few early retirees in this draft, but even those men had some solid success in the majors before things went awry.




And it wasn't all about the pitchers. You'll also find a few north star position players were also selected in this draft, such as Hector Cano Jr and Sammy McNeill. The overall success rate in the first round was quite good in this draft. It's good to review this qualified bunch and see the dreck of 2-3 years ago mostly gone. Let's get underway ...

Team	Pick	Player
	Round 1 Pick 1	CF Hector Cano Jr: There were few question marks about Cano Jr when he was drafted and he looked the part of an everyday BBA center fielder. But few thought he would transcend to this level. Thus far, he is only 28 years and has won 3 Sawyer Silk awards. He also sports blazing defense in center and has 5 Zimmer awards and counting. This is the kind of generational player teams dream about when making a first overall pick. You've got to hand it to Rocky Mountain (aka El Paso) for drafting him, and also Des Moines for




Team	Pick	Player
		trading for him. GRADE: A+
	Round 1 Pick 2	<p>SP Ken Sparks: The Lumberjacks wasted little time in letting Sparks prove what he could do. He joined Portland's rotation in 2047 and over the years has become the ace of the staff. That was especially true in 2052 when he led the Frick in ERA (3.05) and recorded a 17-10 record. The last few years he has fell off though, along with the rest of the team, as indicated by his Frick leading 18 losses in 2055. He's better than this though, and we expect him to rebound eventually - even if 2052 was his peak. Sparks is an anchor and was a great choice.</p> <p>GRADE: A-</p>
	Round 1 Pick 3	<p>SP Ken Arroyo: Like Sparks chosen before him, Arroyo was given just a lone season in minors before being handed a BBA rotation spot. It's worked out nicely for Valencia. Arroyo has become a fine control pitcher and a stalwart of the Valencia staff. He's made 5 All-Star teams, which is quite impressive in a Frick League that has more than enough good arms. For his career, he has a 99-75 record with a 3.86 ERA and only gives up 1.9 BB per 9 innings. A model of consistency.</p> <p>GRADE: A</p>
	Round 1 Pick 4	<p>SP Steven Clayton: Surprisingly, Clayton has only made one Frick All-Star team despite the success he's had with Nashville. He was originally drafted by Des Moines with the 4th overall pick and had some rough patches in the minors. The Bluebirds believed in his potential and their ability to develop Clayton and all of that has paid off nicely. Whether or not it was worth trading star OF Hasheem Makin to get him may be another story. But of all the pitchers selected thus far, scouts believe Clayton has the most left in the tank as he pitches into his 30's.</p> <p>GRADE: A-</p>
	Round 1 Pick 5	<p>SP Kyle Smallwood: Charlotte got a ton out of Smallwood, but his flame burned very quickly. Before retiring in 2053, he won a Gillstrom (rookie of the year) award and made two All-Star teams. He finished with respectable career totals: a 49-34 record, 3.71 ERA, 1.22 WHIP and 14.5 rWAR over 125 starts. He had a brief stint in Omaha before retiring. His skills started to diminish and that may have contributed to his decision to</p>





Team	Pick	Player
		<p>walk away from the BBA while still young. But in considering my grade, I can't hold that unusual demise against Charlotte. GRADE: B+</p>
	<p>Round 1 Pick 6</p>	<p>SP Stephen Best: The run on starting pitching continued with the selection of Best at #6 by Jacksonville. His career year thus far came in 2049 when he was just 23. That season, he notched a Johnson-leading 19 wins with only 4 losses, along with a sublime 2.53 ERA and 1.05 WHIP. He didn't win the Nebraska award but certainly got some consideration. Since then, he has tailed off a bit but is still a good #2 or #3 option in the BBA. He was traded to Des Moines and then quickly again to Rocky Mountain. He's pitched well for the Oysters when healthy, and is currently trying to rehab a nasty shoulder injury. He should still be solid. GRADE: B+</p>
	<p>Round 1 Pick 7</p>	<p>SP Dave Corfield: The #7 pick was very much the lucky one for Mexico City in 2046. He became an instant starter for an Aztecs team in big need of pitching help and he has answered the call time and time again. Opposing hitters roll their eyes when they see it's Corfield's turn to start. His curveball and changeup combo is possibly the most prolific in the league. If you need any further proof of Dave's excellence, he'd be happy to show you his 4 Nebraska awards, including his most recent one from 2055 which still has the trophy shop smell to it. Mexico City has him signed through 2058 and he very well could finish his probable HOF career south of the border. GRADE: A+</p>
	<p>Round 1 Pick 8</p>	<p>SP Jay Hodge: Hodge joined the big club as soon as he signed his contract, and the pick really paid off for Las Vegas. Hodge was a ready-made BBA arm and in his youth was a direct contributor to the last Las Vegas 3-peat. In that stretch he managed a sub 3.00 ERA and bolstered both the rotations and the bullpen. Since then, he's settled in as a starter and has been a reliable BBA arm, even if the fantastic output of his earlier years isn't quite there. After the winning ways of the Hustlers died down, Jay was involved in a few trades, even one involving fellow #6 pick Stephen Best. He's now in the midst of a long-term deal with the Talons. GRADE: A</p>





Team	Pick	Player
	Round 1 Pick 9	<p>SP Rick Childress: For a few moments, Childress looked as if he might hang in there with all of the fantastic pitchers taken before him. But it was not meant to be for Rick or Vancouver. A notorious string of rotator cuff and shoulder injuries brought an early end to what could have been a solid career. He only made it to age 26 before the doctors told him it was over. His career consisted of 211.2 innings and a 3.87 ERA with the Mouties and a brief trial at the end with Twin Cities.</p> <p>GRADE: B-</p>
	Round 1 Pick 10	<p>SP Kevin Shepard: Like Childress taken before him, Shepard has had his own injury issues, but at least he is still hanging in there in the high minors. Childress had some nice seasons with Atlantic City, particularly a 2050 campaign where he was clearly an All-Star snub. For his career, he put together a 76-56 record and a 4.06 ERA over 1132 innings. The odds might be against him returning to the majors with stuff that just isn't as sharp anymore. But he gave the Gamblers a solid contribution for a time. He's now in the minors with Jacksonville.</p> <p>GRADE: B</p>
	Round 1 Pick 11	<p>CL Todd Stone: Relievers always play second-fiddle to good starting pitching. But Stone is a special arm that any team would want with the game on the line. Since being drafted by Madison, he's won 3 Egan (top reliever) awards and been slotted on 7 All-Star teams. He's been recently signed by San Antonio, and we'll see if he continues his bullpen excellence. I think you can bank on it, because Stone's control is pinpoint and he paints the corners religiously with his slider/fastball combo. For his career, he's tallied 209 holds and 126 saves in roughly 1000 innings with a 2.73 ERA.</p> <p>GRADE: A-</p>
	Round 1 Pick 12	<p>SP Seth Harris: Harris is the antithesis of many pitchers taken before him, because his legacy points to the risk incurred when rushing a young arm up the majors. Harris didn't take very well to being promoted instantly by Seattle, as jumping from college to the majors proved to be too big of a leap. His confidence was shattered by a 1-17 campaign for Seattle in 2048 with a 6.69 ERA. He also had a few injury issues, but it was more mental than physical ailment that led to Harris' early retirement in 2052.</p>





Team	Pick	Player
		GRADE: C-
	Round 1 Pick 13	<p>C Sloth Fratelli: The 2046 draft needed a backstop to go with all of these high pedigree pitchers, and the man named Sloth certainly will do. He's been one of the finer hitting catchers in the BBA, as evidenced by his two Puckett awards. San Fernando made a good pick here, but nonetheless Sloth was traded to Des Moines and then to Omaha where he now currently plays. His defense is also fairly solid. He makes up for his utter lack of base running speed by throwing out other runners aplenty. Great value here for pick #13.</p> <p>GRADE: A</p>
	Round 1 Pick 14	<p>RF Unem Ploid: Contrary to his name, this man has very much been employed in the BBA since being selected 14th overall by Sacramento. He was given a few years to develop in the minors and in 2050 really came into his own with staggering numbers: 125 runs, 78 steals and a .359 average. He is always in position to lead the league in stolen bases and is a poster child for the Mad Popes run-n-fun style of play. I'm not sure if the player was selected to fit the scheme, or vice versa - Camacho would know. But either way, it worked out.</p> <p>GRADE: A-</p>
	Round 1 Pick 15	(unknown selection, player not signed)
	Round 1 Pick 16	<p>SP Pat Sloan: Here we have another retirement sob story. Sloan just had some knicks and knacks and no major injuries after being drafted by Twin Cities. Nonetheless, it just didn't work out and his skills and confidence seemed to erode after making the majors in 2047. He couldn't gather himself in AAA after struggling. When he became a free agent after 2050, his phone remained silent. He decided to pursue other interests in 2052 and filed for retirement.</p> <p>GRADE: D+</p>




Team	Pick	Player
	Round 1 Pick 17	<p>C Jeff Taylor: Jeff has an interesting profile as a backstop: a switch-hitter with a penchant for gap power and some home run ability, but he lacks a good eye and strikes out often. He can do enough on defense though to hang around even when his bat struggles. So far he's only started 6 games in the BBA and may be destined to stay in the minors for a few more years before the next young crop of catchers supplant him. This pick did not turn out very well for Boise, and he pales in comparison to Sloth taken earlier.</p> <p>GRADE: D+</p>
	Round 1 Pick 18	<p>SP Richard Bullock: Unlike other starters taken before him, Richard was groomed conservatively in the minors before cracking the Charm City rotation in 2051. In 2054, he had a career year that coincided with the Jimmies' first title. That year, he posted a 16-5 record with a 3.09 ERA and an All-Star selection. His 2055 follow-up effort was iffy however with a 4.75 ERA, thus Charm City decided to trade him to Chicago. He should stabilize the Black Sox rotation and fare okay, but it does appear his 2054 campaign may have been an outlier.</p> <p>GRADE: B+</p>
	Round 1 Pick 19	<p>CL Josh Doughery: Josh has electric stuff and the scouts are in love with what he can do on the mound. But it hasn't really translated to the production that other top-flight relievers experience in the BBA. His control has wavered at times during his career and that has brought down his numbers. His best season thus far was probably in 2052 with Boise when tallied 33 saves with a 3.96 ERA. He's currently with Las Vegas and has the skill to play quite a while longer in the BBA. But it's questionable if he is going to put together the terrific seasons his measurables say he's capable of. But at age 27, there is still time for him to figure it out with the Hustlers.</p> <p>GRADE: C+</p>
	Round 1 Pick 20	<p>SS Sammy McNeill: With ample speed, great fielding and the ability to hit for reliable contact, Sammy was and is the ideal middle infielder you build around. It results in winning baseball as he's now collected championship rings with both Nashville and Charm City. His 2050 championship season with the Bluebirds in particular was most excellent: .302 average, 104 runs, 83 steals, 32 doubles and a boatload of great defense that earned him a 6.9 WAR total. His steals were down, but he just equaled that same 6.9 WAR again with</p>

Team	Pick	Player
		<p>the Jimmies 2055 in their championship run. The pitching that the Jimmies traded away to get McNeill has yet to shine, but still could. I think it's still too early to call the Jimmies the winner of that trade ... but if you do so defiantly, I wouldn't argue.</p> <p>GRADE: A+</p>
	<p>Round 1 Pick 21</p>	<p>SP Jason Hurt: In a 2046 draft filled with quality pitching talent, this pick Hurt for Montreal. Jason got an immediate chance with the Blazers but struggled with his opportunity in the rotation and didn't fare much better in the pen. He was optioned down to the high minors, where he putzed around for about 5 more years before opting to retire in 2054. Considering the calibre of players taken near him in this draft, this was a pretty costly whiff by the Blazers.</p> <p>GRADE: C+</p>
	<p>Round 1 Pick 22</p>	<p>2B Billy McKay: McKay's solid defensive profile propelled him to San Antonio's major league outfit almost immediately, and the youngster from the Gillette Razors figured out hitting in the BBA as he went. The hard work paid off, particularly in 2054 when he made the All-Star team with a slick .304 average and 2.9 WAR. McKay is not the sheer force of nature that McNeill is, but he's a very valuable contact hitter and reliable middle infield glove for the BBA level. He's now been rewarded with a free agent contract with Edmonton where he hopes to sustain his solid play.</p> <p>GRADE: B+</p>
	<p>Round 1 Pick 23</p>	<p>LF Chris McFadden: Reaching the majors in 2049, Chris has developed into a trusty right-handed hitter that you can either platoon or let play everyday. After giving Brooklyn six solid major league campaigns, McFadden was traded to Rocky Mountain where he did his part to try to elevate the Oysters and earned a Doubleday MVP award. But the BBA is a league laden with trades, and he was recently shipped to Charlotte where he will help the team with their rebrand to the Flyers.</p> <p>GRADE: B-</p>

Team	Pick	Player
	Round 1 Pick 24	<p>SS Steveland Morris: Morris is a switch-hitting middle infielder who has been very successful like McNeill taken earlier. But it does seem like McNeill is a half-tier higher in terms of talent and productivity. But on a team that has had other shortcomings, this was a splendid pick for Long Beach that continues to pay off. Morris only has one All-Star appearance on his resume, but he could easily build on that. Long Beach trusts Morris, and the Saginaw, Michigan native is under contract with the team through 2059.</p> <p>GRADE: A-</p>
	Round 1 Pick 25	<p>C Taylor Michaels: Michaels' excellent defense allowed him to advance to the majors in 2050, where he's been a steady contributor for Louisville ever since. The Sluggers will tolerate their catcher's Mendoza-line hitting, since he at least provides respectable home run power and terrific framing and defense for the team. Louisville clearly believes in Taylor and the catcher has a huge long-term contract to show for it. But unless the pitching truly relies on Michaels' defense behind the plate to prosper, it seems like a lot of money.</p> <p>GRADE: C</p>
	Round 1 Pick 26	<p>CF Angelo Lucchesi: Lucchesi has provided the excellent defense in center field that Hawaii drafted him for. He reached the majors in 2049 and has since earned two Zimmer awards for patrolling the Tropics' outfield. On the hitting side, Lucchesi makes respectable contact to help offset the fact that he only has 5 career homers in 3172 at bats. The Italian is a bit outspoken and might not be the best fit for the locker room, but the team needs what he brings to the lineup. Angelo was an okay value for late in the first round.</p> <p>GRADE: B-</p>
	Round 1 Pick 27	<p>SP Billy Kelly: This southpaw spent three years as a pro learning the trade in the Crawdads bullpen before being transitioned to be a workhorse in the starting rotation. He can string together the K's and was an important part of New Orleans' 2051 championship title. He was traded to Rocky Mountain as a rental last season as it was clear the Crawdads are somewhat in a rebuilding state. Nashville just became a firm believer in Kelly's talent, signing him to a 6-year deal worth \$86 million in free agency. With his durability and big strikeout totals, he probably deserves that contract.</p>

Team	Pick	Player
		GRADE: A-
	Round 1 Pick 28	<p>SP/RP Ryan Cline: Cline, a lefty out of Lockheed High School, was high on Charm City's list in 2046. In 2048 he made the majors and for the next 5 1/2 years he was a sturdy starter in the Jimmies rotation, keeping his ERA around 4.00 mark and providing quality outings. But he's lost a little since then and now he's kind of a tweener that is neither a good starter or a reliever. As a result, he's ended up in AAA with Omaha and is on the outside looking in at an eventual return to the pros. Nonetheless, Cline was a decent value in his prime.</p> <p>GRADE: B-</p>
	Round 1 Pick 29	<p>SP Mike Alexander: Alexander is one of those players who isn't quite as good as his scouting report, but you could do worse than having him in your rotation. His best years actually came when he was fresh out of college and promoted to the Omaha rotation. He managed good numbers and an ERA well under 4.00 while age 22 and under. Since then, he's looked more like a replacement-level starter than a star. He was traded to Valencia and continues to be a steady presence in the Stars' rotation.</p> <p>GRADE: C+</p>
	Round 1 Pick 30	<p>SP Eric Whitehead: Whitehead seemed like a solid pick by Calgary, and in 2048 he shined with a 17-7 record and a 3.43 ERA. But he failed to replicate that career year and eventually became an odd man out in the Pioneers' rotation. He's been a good arm in AAA for the last four seasons and is now a minor league free agent coveting a majors/minors deal. But there's a host of other options out there for Eric to compete with.</p> <p>GRADE: C+</p>
	Round 1 Pick 31	<p>RP Brick Pollitt: After being drafted by Chicago, it took quite a while for this reliever to make the majors, but he finally broke through in 2054. And he's done well - in 170 innings in the major he's posted a 3.65 ERA and 1.19 WHIP. He may not be closer material but is a solid setup man. He now works in Phoenix's bullpen following a mid-2055 trade. He's still making the league minimum and is a good value for the Talons.</p> <p>GRADE: B-</p>

Team	Pick	Player
	Round 1 Pick 32	<p>C John Kinsella: Edmonton was ecstatic to come away with Kinsella late in the first round. John is a backstop with top tier defense and has four Zimmer awards sitting at home. He's also an adequate enough contact hitter to not be a complete liability in the bottom third of the lineup. The Jackrabbits traded him to Sacramento for pitcher Gary Owens and it seems like the Mad Popes get the best end of that deal. Kinsella has been a stalwart presence behind the plate for the recent dominant run of Sacramento pitching and you can be sure that John is a big reason why. The Popes have him signed through 2060 as management clearly understands his importance.</p> <p>GRADE: B+</p>
	Round 1 Pick 33	<p>RP Edward Johnson: Johnson has been an above average reliever since coming out of high school and now he has a consistent track record of good production in the BBA on his resume. This was a solid selection by Rockville. But as often happens with relievers, they get moved around and Johnson has now also played Twin Cities, Mexico City and now Madison. That said, he'll continue to be a reliable bullpen arm in the BBA for years to come, wherever he is.</p> <p>GRADE: B</p>
	Round 1 Pick 34	<p>RP Damian Taylor: Yellow Springs wasted little time in getting this reliever to the bigs. And Taylor had some nice success for a while, first for the Nine and then for Rocky Mountain (El Paso) before the wheels came off in 2051 and 2052. An 8.36 ERA crushed Taylor's spirits and he decided to call it a career. To me it seemed like he had the talent to eventually bounce back, but what's done is done.</p> <p>GRADE: C-</p>
BONUS!		2046 TOP BARGAINS!
	Round 2 Pick 58 overall	<p>RP Ollie Lowry: Nashville made a fine selection in Lowry. He's a super-reliever who is somewhat of a throwback to BBA years past. He has three excellent pitches but not enough control to start games, so he shines bright from the Bluebirds pen whenever called upon. He's one of the most feared lefty relievers in the BBA today.</p>

Team	Pick	Player
		GRADE: A-
	Round 7 Pick 232 overall	<p>SP Brody Picot: Brody is a power-pitching innings eater in the BBA. He was taken by San Antonio and although he isn't known for low ERA's you could do a lot worse for the bottom of your rotation. The one thing of great worry about Picot is his agent - right now he has his client asking for way too much money on the free agent market for a pitcher who has only made one All-Star game. He's unlikely to get the money he's asking for and will need to settle at some point.</p> <p>GRADE: B</p>
	Round 7 Pick 212 overall	<p>3B Scott Torres: Jacksonville stole this productive infielder in the 3rd round. Torres has an unusual power-hitting profile for a player who can play the middle infield spots. He'll be in demand for years to come. Right now, he's an important part of Rocky Mountain's slugging machine.</p> <p>GRADE: A</p>
	Round 10 Pick 335	<p>SP Joe King: You've made it to the end now readers and we've saved the biggest steal of the draft for last. Joe is probably one of the best 7th round picks in BBA history, as he's made two All-Star teams, won a championship and has taken home a Nebraska award. On top of all that, he is only 27 and is still building out a potential Hall of Fame resume if he can maintain his form. He was drafted by Rocky Mountain (El Paso) and then traded to Sacramento in what turned out to be a huge get for the Mad Popes.</p> <p>GRADE: A++</p>



LEM PIKER SR. - 2046? You've got the right stuff!

Of MINOR Importance

The Top BBA Minor League Performers of 2055

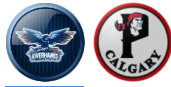
By Mike Bauer, Edmonton Jackrabbits

AAA



Rupert Horn Memorial League

1st Place:



3B Ollie Long, St Paul Riverhawks (BBA Calgary)

This 20-year-old probably won't be in the minors much longer. His contact tool is BBA legit and he does a fine job defensively at the hot corner. Long turned heads in the Horn league with his .354/.415/.518 line and 6.2 WAR. The #79 rated prospect should see some major league action this year unless he is completely blocked.

2nd Place:



SP Loan Duval, Surprise Talons (BBA Phoenix)

Duval was a workhorse, leading AAA in innings pitched (203.2) and complete games (6) behind an impressive 15-7 record, 2.96 ERA and 1.18 WHIP. Based on this superb performance, it's conceivable he could find a major league home - at least in the GBC. But as of this writing he remains a minor league free agent.

3rd Place:



2B Carl McIndoe, Brooklyn Fighting Pheasants (BBA San Fernando)

McIndoe is a useful super-utility man, but it was his performance with the bat that stunned onlookers. He cranked out a 1.031 OPS with a .347 average, earning a September call-up. He stayed scorching hot, hitting .356 in the BBA in his limited time. Given this performance, he may be used as a major league backup for the Bears this upcoming season if there's room.

4th Place:



LF Lloyd Reesink, Gotham Heroes (BBA Jacksonville)

The Belgian Reesink meant business in 2055, hitting 41 homers and a jaw-dropping 129 RBI's for the Heroes. When you put forth those kinds of counting numbers, it's easy to forgive a .258 batting average. This vet may not have the contact or glove needed to reach the show, but he should have no problem producing in the minors going forward.

5th Place:



RP Vonne Baloloy, Annapolis Sailors (BBA Charm City)

The sidearm hurler from the Philippines made up for lost time after going unsigned in 2054. He produced 40 saves with a 1.09 WHIP for the Sailors. He has had a lot of major league experience with Brooklyn and that plus this performance may garner some major league interest. But he's probably blocked with Charm City.

AA



Warren Cox League

1st Place:



1B Balbinder Polamreddy, Santa Cruz Spartans (BBA Yellow Springs)

Balbinder actually started with the Omaha AA team in 2055 before being traded to Yellow Springs. But the transition had no effect on this young first baseman - he managed to hit 135 RBI's with a .354 average in 554 at-bats between the two teams. His bat is definitely ready for the BBA, but first base has endless depth in the league and that may be stalling his promotion.

2nd Place:



CL Ajwad Ayyad, Bismarck Churchills (BBA Sacramento)

This Egyptian dominated as a reliever in 2055, compiling a 2.44 ERA and 1.14 WHIP with 36 saves. This hard-throwing lefty is good enough to start or close in the minors, and we'll have to see what his role is going forward. He'll also need to play in AAA soon due to his age (27 years old).

3rd Place:



SP Sean Noah, Medicine Hat Flaming Nukes (BBA Phoenix)

This starter registered a mind-numbing 233 K's in just 29 starts. That kind of strikeout ability was sure to grab someone's attention. In this case it was Edmonton, who selected him in Rule V. Noah provides big-time strikeout ability, but his control is a big issue. He'll need to be handled carefully.

4th Place:



SP Mark Lolololo, High Point Hammers (BBA Nashville)

No one dared laugh out loud at this #9 overall prospect with the juicy numbers he posted in 2055. His 15-7 record and 3.13 could be a good sign of things to come. He may have the best curveball pound-for-pound in the minors. If Mark adds to his velocity and rounds out his other pitches, he could be a future BBA All-Star.

5th Place:



1B Rommel Awit, Duluth Dragons (BBA Calgary)

Awit posted a bonafide career year in 2055. He improved his batting average from .226 to a league-leading .383 in one of the biggest turnarounds that will ever be seen. He's ranked fifth here because we worry about his strikeout rate long-term and we need to see him pull off this kind of success again to believe it.

A



Charley Pegler League

1st Place:



SP Nick Rivers, Toledo Liberty (BBA Phoenix)

In a bit of a numbers game, Rivers started the season down in A ball despite starting 24 games with the Talons in 2054 and pitching capably. As a result, the 26-year-old pitched with a chip on his shoulder, going 12-0 with a 1.61 ERA in 20 starts. That grabbed the attention needed to return Rivers to the majors later in the season. He'll probably stay in the BBA for good now.

2nd Place:



1B Victor Lugo, Billings Cowboys (BBA Twin Cities)

As a free-swinging switch hitter, Lugo was really dialed in and recorded a surprising .337 average with 50 HR and 141 RBI in 2055. Despite this gaudy performance, scouts are still skeptical and expect the Puerto Rican to return to the .250 and 20 HR range this year with AA. It's on Lugo's shoulders to prove last year was not a fluke and he really has the contact and power ability shown in 2055.

3rd Place:



SP Theophilus Markoullides, Springdale Roosters (BBA Nashville)

This Greek righty had his best season as a starter so far in the minors, posting a mighty 20-5 record with a 2.18 ERA, 1.02 WHIP and 9.6 rWAR. Despite this sensational campaign, it appears Theo may still remain in A ball for 2055. Stories like Theo's are a sign of how deep the pitching ranks are in the current BBA.

4th Place:



SP//LF Raul Morales, Springdale Roosters (BBA Nashville)

This talented righty was drafted late in the first round of 2054 and continues to do some fine work. As a starter, he managed a 2.64 ERA and 1.13 WHIP in 11 starts. But his hitting overshadowed his pitching success. He decimated the Pegler

League with a .381/.433/.603 line and 5.2 WAR in 423 AB.

5th Place:



LF Winston Carreon, Toledo Liberty (BBA Phoenix)

The newer, younger 2055 edition of the Liberty proved their winning days were not behind them, thanks in part to a good performance by this 23-year-old left fielder. An elite contact hitter, he hit .371 in 572 at-bats to prove that his 2054 output of .393 and .993 OPS in rookie ball was no fluke.

S (A)



Angela Drake League

1st Place:



1B Jumah Abdul-Ghafur, Cat Island Pirates (BBA Yellow Springs)

Jumah got bored with singles and doubles, but kept hitting them anyway. He notched a .467 average and only struck out 17 times in 255 AB in 2055. Jumah doesn't have the defense or well-rounded hitting game to make the BBA, nor any speed at all to contribute as a smallball player. But he'll play in the minors for another 5-10 years if he keeps this up.

2nd Place:



RF Randolph Clarke, Hastings Haymakers (BBA Omaha)

The man they call "TELIQUA" gave minor league fans plenty to party about in 2055. The outfielder posted a stunning 1.200 OPS in 253 AB with a .379/.461/.739 and won the Drake award for most outstanding hitter. It now appears he'll start in AA for 2056. Skipping a level may be a sobering experience for Teliqua.

3rd Place:



SP Samir Qasim, Santo Domingo Sea Turtles (BBA Nashville)

This Iraqi hurler wasn't getting the reps needed in A, so the team carved out a role as a starter for him in the Drake League for 2055. Qasim made the most of his opportunity, going 14-1 in 16 starts with a 1.66 ERA and 6.4 rWAR. His fantastic curveball should help him continue this success going forward.

4th Place:



2B Ted Davis, Havana Cigars (BBA Calgary)

Davis is only 21 but seems fully developed. He's a solid and speedy contact hitting second baseman, who hit .377 with 72 runs and 20 steals in 2055. His defense is adequate if not BBA high-end. This Rochester, MN native born at the Mayo clinic might not make the majors, but if you needed a fill-in for a short stint you could do a lot worse.

5th Place:



CL Leland Shelton, Philipsburg Saints (BBA Sacramento)

This lefty curveballer led the Saints bullpen in 2055, notching 22 saves in just 41.1 innings with a slick 2.40 ERA and 1.28 WHIP. Lefties with good stuff are always in demand in the BBA. If he develops to his potential, he could advance to the BBA but it's going to be quite a ways down the road.

R



Spike Nolan League

1st Place:



SP Pete Hulett, Lynchburg Whiskeyjacks (BBA Nashville)

Hulett didn't spend his whole year in rookie ball. A 0.96 ERA and 0.71 WHIP in 11 starts caught the attention of management who then promoted him to A ball. He struggled to adjust there with a 5.64 ERA in 6 starts, and maybe that was a little too much pressure for the 17-year-old who was Nashville's first round pick. But scouts still expect Hulett to settle in and prosper with great talent around him in Nashville's loaded farm system.

2nd Place:



1B Archie Jones, Albany Atoms (BBA Atlantic City)

This 3rd round pick in the 2055 got to work like no other, tallying a .359/.439/.791 line and a 1.229 OPS with 25 homers. The excellence shown last year was recognized as early indications are that he may start 2056 at the A level. Don't expect him to hit for so much power against A level pitching, but he should still manage a positive WAR.

3rd Place:



CL Cisco Moran, Port Arthur Pythons (BBA Jacksonville)

This control-oriented reliever stayed true to his reputation and only issued 1.1 walks per 9 innings. But what came as a surprise were his 25 saves and 1.35 ERA. He's only 18 and could still benefit from staying in the lower minors but we will have to see where he is slotted for 2056 and if he still closes. He should!

4th Place:



SP Hector Delgado, Cayucos Surf (BBA Long Beach)

Yet another 2055 draft 3rd rounder excelled in his debut. Delgado sported a sterling 1.43 ERA and 0.90 WHIP in 12 starts with the Surf. He only went 4-5 though and received poor run support. But Long Beach has to be thrilled with his progress, considering his last season in high school was a struggle (4.59 ERA).

5th Place:



LF Ed Cline, Ogden Thunder Ducks (BBA Seattle)

At 20 years old, Cline is a seasoned rookie ball vet who in 2055 mastered his craft. He hit .365 with 24 doubles and seems to be ready for the next challenge. Scouts love his ability to hit for contact and avoid strikeouts. On the negative side, his defense is pedestrian and his speed is non-existent. He'll need to become an even better contact hitter to overcome those weaknesses and get to AA or AAA.

A Public Service Announcement



***Sure...We all know how it is.
Prepping for the draft can seem
overwhelming at times. But when all
the stats and ratings get you down, just
remember the words of the Phoenix
GM...***

"Doesn't matter- They all suck anyway!"



In this session of Big League Chew we travel to the Midwest and sit down with Patrick, GM of the Des Moines Kernels, to discuss the BBA, life and other topics of interest. Patrick took over the Kernels during the 2054 season and guided the team from 87 wins that year to 108 wins in 2055. He clearly loves the game and is getting his bearings in the BBA. Here is an excerpt from our chat.

Tim: Hi Patrick, glad that we could set this up. I was so excited about the Kernels this last season and they seemed to be one of the major feel-good stories of the year. Are you surprised at how well the Kernels did?

Patrick: Yes and no. I knew we were a playoff team with a few tweaks. The roster had talent that just needed to be shifted around. But I don't think I ever expected 108 wins.

Tim: It was a very successful year as an entry to the league. Great job. What brought you to the BBA, how did you find us?

Patrick: I hadn't played OOTP for a number of years and got the itch again. I spent about a year inquiring about different leagues and getting cold feet. When I found BBA on the OOTP forums, I applied.

Tim: We are certainly lucky that you have done your due diligence and took some time to find the right league. It appears to be a great fit. How long have you been playing OOTP?

Patrick: I started playing in 2005-2006. There were some stretches of a few years break but I probably logged a solid decade from 2005-2015.

Tim: What other leagues had you been a part of, either single player or online?

Patrick: Never been a single-player guy. Sometimes I will do single-seasons of historical but that's about it. I was in the BLB (<https://www.blbsim.com/>) for a long time. Made a lot of friends through that league.

Tim: I've run some historical single player leagues in the past and have had a ton of fun seeing the old names pop up. Rebuilding with Stormin Gorman, Yount and Molitor is always a blast. The BBA is an immersive league that fills the multi-player needs for sure. I have found that after a few years of BBA they almost start to seem like historical players in and of themselves. You'll start to build that history and knowledge in no time. What is your overall GM style?

Patrick: I really enjoy the micro-managing OOTP. As far as roster building, I prefer to draft and free-agency. I will only trade when I think it makes sense for both GM's. Nothing is worse for a league than GM's who rip off other teams.

Tim: Having long term GMs who want to do the right thing for the health of the league is a huge value. What other GMs do you look up to and why?

Patrick: Great question. I look up to Ron a lot just because I know how much time it takes to do those research projects and to do a regular podcast. I did one for my old league and it was a lot of work to keep up. I also look up to Commish of course. When I was much younger, I thought anyone could be a commissioner. Now that I'm older, married, with a kid, I understand what it takes to be a great commissioner and I have the utmost respect for the people who put in that kind of time.

Tim: Yeah, I agree. Matt and Ron are a huge part of who and what we are as a league. Having the right GMs who go above and beyond, like everyone on the governing board, and them working hard to make this the best league out there is huge. It creates a long-standing league with high activity and great owners top to bottom. Who are your favorite players in the Monty?

Patrick: I don't think I've really been in the league long enough to have strong feelings towards any specific players. I do have an affinity for SP Ishtaq Dar on my team though. He probably doesn't make a lot of BBA rosters based on ratings but I feel like he pitches above his ability. He's a versatile piece than can start, pitch in relief and works well as a lefty specialist.

Tim: I love the role players that pop up as part of the team building process. It is always cool to hear the personal favorites of each of the GMs. I guarantee that you'll remember him decades down the road. Speaking of decades old, have you ever seen Brewster's Millions?

Patrick: I've been meaning to get around to it but ever since I joined the league it's just been a really busy stretch for me.

Tim: It's on my to do list also. I've only seen clips. Being busy is always good. Do you have time for any hobbies outside of OOTP?

Patrick: I'm a big sports fan, gambler, gamer, reader and traveler/hiker.

Tim: What MLB teams do you follow?

Patrick: I was born and raised in Seattle but haven't lived there in almost two years. So, I follow the Mariners over all other MLB teams but I don't consume as much real baseball as I once did.

Tim: Do you follow other sports?

Patrick: Yes - NFL and NBA mainly.

Tim: What other games do you play?

Patrick: Currently the only other game I'm playing is Draft Day Sports Pro Football 2023. It's a football simulation that I play in a league. I used to be an avid sports gamer but these days the only non-sports simulation I play is the occasional FPS (Counter-Strike or Call of Duty) or Madden every now and then. But I've played a lot of sports sims. Football, Basketball, College Football, College Basketball, etc.

Tim: Reminds me of when I played Front Office Football and had a few leagues going. That was when I had more time though. You mentioned traveling as well. Have you ever been to Des Moines?

Patrick: No. Seems unlikely I ever will.

Tim: Are you more of a baseball fan or a software fan?

Patrick: I like OOTP more than MLB. I probably haven't really followed the MLB on a high level in over a decade. Just lost interest in it. But for whatever reason, I feel like OOTP is the premier sports simulation.

Tim: How much time do you spend on OOTP each day?

Patrick: It really depends. I was a bit overwhelmed when I took over, learning new players, teams, rules, etc. But once I get into my groove of familiarity with the team, I can usually get my export down to about 15 minutes a sim. But like anyone who loves this game, on certain exports I can spend hours just looking for a small tweak here and there.

Tim: That's the beauty of the software and league setup I think. There is a comfort level once you are adjusted and it allows you to focus on all of the little tweaks and options. What is your wish list for future versions of OOTP?

Patrick: Fix scouting. Bring back multiple scouts. Fix contract "tricks." I guess I wish the game, and this is almost every game, went more into the beauty that is the game itself and less effort into ways to make money. I think OOTP is a special game but like a lot of great games these days, they just put on a fresh coat of paint each year.

Tim: What would you like to see for the future of the BBA?

Patrick: No input really. It's a great league and I'm in no place to have input, really.

Tim: Do you pay attention to the GBC?

Patrick: I honestly don't but I'm sure I will when I get more comfortable with the league and what not.

Tim: Appreciate your time to chat today. Thanks!!

Patrick: Thank you!



ATLANTIC

Brooklyn:

GC – Young stars Emilio Morales Jr. and Stephen Clulow Jr. struggled early on, but Wilson Prieto seems to have been properly developed and ready to help this club in a big way.

BC – The Robins have lost 100 games or more nine of the last ten seasons. That's never happened before to a franchise in the history of the Brewster Baseball Association. The only thing developing in Brooklyn is a losing culture and frustrated fanbase.

Jacksonville:

GC – Pablo Lara and Daniel Pepper replace Pedro Guzman's production on offense and arguably the league's best rotation returns as the Hurricanes look to compete for best team in the Atlantic.

BC – The road to the top of the Atlantic still runs through Charm City, and I'm not talking about the I-95 North. Speaking of 95, that's how many wins Montreal had last year and they're not looking to get leapfrogged in the standing by the 'Canes.

Montreal:

GC – The Breum Boys have been active in their first season with the team and signed Calvin Johnson, Pedro Huerta, and Aarnoud Budding among others to bolster their lineup, though trading away Carl Vincent will hurt their rotation.

BC – The front office handed out money to old guys like it was the Social Security Administration. It's a tale as old as time: new GM(s) spend big and overhaul a roster in year one, only to take a few steps back and find themselves in a difficult spot moving forward.

Atlantic City:

GC – A franchise low 56 wins in 2055 means the Gamblers can only go up from here. Right? Signing Tyler Ober, Lee Hogan, and Eddie Armstrong should help.

BC – In 2055, the Gamblers became just the 19th time a team has had a collective negative offensive WAR for a season in the past 50 years. The average win improvement the next season for those 18 teams? 9.1. Don't expect a big jump this year even with those new signings.

Rockville:

GC – Top pitching prospect, Dabir Nawful, appears to be nearing the Bigs. He will help get this team close to .500.

BC – This team blew the most saves last year (33), yet have three-time Egan winner Danny Leach in the rotation. I FEEL LIKE I'M TAKING CRAZY PILLS!!

New Orleans:

GC – The Crawdads suffered their most losses since 1998, but signing Steven Flannery will help. Rookie, Jason Nelson, is another face that will strengthen the rotation and get the rebuilding Crawdads back on track.

BC – N'awlins had by far the worst team defense last year, highlighted (?) by the collective -40.99 (!) Zone Rating from their shortstops. So what's their solution? Signing Frederick Manchild's noodle of an arm and career -28 ZR at the position.

Charm City:

GC – 120 wins and another Monty. How does a team improve on that? How about adding southpaw Carl Vincent. Should be another easy path to the championship for the Jimmies.

BC – How does one Bad Cop the back-to-back champions? One could nitpick that their offense and defense took a hit losing Duggan in center, but now they have the potential for hilarious Mike Cox jokes in team news. I dunno, I'm kind with the Good Cop on this one.

Charlotte:

GC – New GM. New name. New hope.

BC – Speaking of hope, I sure hope the Flyers make the whole 27-man roster out of whatever the black box is made of. “Ladies and gentlemen, we’re experiencing some turbulence. Please return to your seats and fasten your seatbelts.”

FRONTIER**Mexico City:**

GC – While the Aztecs may have fallen to second best Frontier League team after finishing with 92 wins in 2055, they have some good arms in the farm system ready to join Dave Corfield and retake their crown in the division.

BC – The Aztecs lost just over 10 WAR from last year’s squad with nary an off-season addition. Sure, there’s still time to strike with \$20M in cap space but like Fred’s famous banana bread, you wait too long and those fruits of labor can go from perfect to rotten in a second.

San Antonio:

GC – A 9 win improvement last season with a shot at making .500 this season. Not ready for playoffs, but this team is getting better.

BC – “Blast” McBearett is no Calvin Johnson (yet) and the replacement for Lee Hogan’s 120 OPS+ is a guy who hasn’t played in the big leagues since 2051? Sure, they had a positive run differential last year but the Frontier looks to be improved as well.

Calgary:

GC – Michael Little tore up AAA last season and is looking to help the Pioneers get back to .500. They still have the cap room to bolster the roster, too.

BC – Yeah, they can hit, but that bullpen is suspect. In 2055, they had no relievers rank in the top 50 for ERA or K% and didn’t make improvements this off-season. I haven’t seen a group of Pioneers this lost since I played The Oregon Trail in fifth grade and died of dysentery before even reaching The Big Blue River Crossing

Las Vegas:

GC – Vegas has a deep farm loaded with upper minors players ready to make an impact. This is going to be a short rebuild for the Hustlers as the new wave is ready to take over, headlined by #1 BBA prospect, Tankut Saltik.

BC – Saltik maybe be #1 but he’s developing slower than a coherent ending to a David Lynch film. Maybe the additions of Martinez and Payne will help the rotation, but this rebuild is still a year or two away.

Phoenix:

GC – Like Your Mom, the Talons went down on Frontier standings, but they hope Michael O’Holloran can help make them rise again.

BC – Yo’ mama is so dumb, she thought the Montreal Blazers was a Canadian formalwear brand. Yo’ mama so fat, she couldn’t fit in San Fernando’s outfield. Yo’ mama so stupid, the first time she met the Des Moines Kernels, she saluted.

Edmonton:

GC – Edmonton is a .500 baseball team with a ton of cap room. Expect some late preseason additions and this club will sniff the playoffs.

BC – May I suggest using that cap room and building a missile defense system around the ballpark to keep any opposing team’s inevitable homeruns from entering Canadian air space? That pitching staff is not good and no spending spree this off-season will fix it.

Boise:

GC – Joe Lederer returned last season after Googling “Boise Studs” and fumbling across an opening for GM for a baseball team. He’s in good position with a similar squad that went to the playoffs in 2055 and rookie David Molina looks to be an ace in the making.

BC – Have you seen the juggling act planned for the line-ups? This has the potential to have more platoon failures than the Gallipoli Campaign. (Don’t look at me like that...try picking up a book sometime!)

Rocky Mountain:

GC – The Oysters are poised for another stellar season with Silk candidates, Malik bin Mazin, Resurrection Santos III, and now last season’s FL Silk winner, Aaron Haney. They also have perennial Nebraska candidate, Alaric Wullenweber. They should exceed their 95 win total last season.

BC – Know what else they’re going to exceed? The \$120M salary cap if they are not careful. If injuries start to mount, it’ll be difficult to finesse the roster with such little financial leeway.

Frick Heartland

Des Moines

Good Cop: The outfield of Makin, Cano Jr., and Romero could be the greatest outfield in Brewster history.

Bad Cop: Know what would be better? Having the reigning Silk winner in the outfield...oh yeah they let him go.

Nashville

Good Cop: No team is set to go on a decade-long run like the Bluebirds. Excellent big league club and a slew of elite prospects. Their 10th best prospect would be #1 on about 15 other teams.

Bad Cop: This guy's not really gonna let Grun play 2B again, is he?

Omaha

Good Cop: Some teams can't recover from front office turnover. The Cyclones won't have to worry about that with Shaw (two-time champ) now at the helm.

Bad Cop: "I'm gonna rebuild! "I'm gonna keep it the way it is!" Pick a lane. Either way, the Omashaw Cyclones will have to get used to sending their star players down to the minors for a few weeks.

Twin Cities

Good Cop: One of the best defensive teams in 2055 just added Dick Walton. I'm not sure any ball hit on the ground is getting thru that infield.

Bad Cop: *sniff* *sniff* Smell's like Dick in here. This lineup is gonna need some Viagra to stay up in the standings again this season.

Madison

Good Cop: Almost guaranteed not to finish last in the division given Chicago's state of affairs. Oh, and they've decided to go from "Rebuilding" to "Neutral". Look out, world!

Bad Cop: If they're not careful, they'll lose their only remaining fan. Actually, what happens first? Madison makes the playoffs or Gertie dies?

Chicago

Good Cop: Um, the owner is going to make quite a profit this year?

Bad Cop: I've been paid by Santino Vitale not to say anything negatively.

Louisville

Good Cop: Despite not a lot of change in the off-season, some prediction models have them at around .500 coming off a 68-94 year. Positive regression to the mean?

Bad Cop: Can we rename this team to the Louisville Slugged? Ya know, past tense since there's not much slugging going on nowadays.

Yellow Springs

Good Cop: Good news, Ron Collins is back!

Bad Cop: Better news for Nine fans: he's not managing Yellow Springs so there's still hope for a Monty, even if it's only 0.001%.

Frick Pacific

Sacramento

Good Cop: That pitching and defense in that park is going to edge out A LOT of wins over the course of 81 home games.

Bad Cop: Bad news, Ron Collins is back!

Hawaii

Good Cop: The signing of Gerardo Rea along with Gurani and Hilliard make this the best front-line trio of starters in Hawaii in about ten years. (Remember how good the law firm of Wullenweber, Destefani & Johnson was?)

Bad Cop: Those are the best trios Hawaii has produced? Explains why there's been no titles in Hawaii since '25. Harris gonna have his work cut out for him this year.

Vancouver

Good Cop: Phil Cole was an All-Star in '50, '52 and '54...see the pattern? Going out on a limb and predicting not only an All-Star nod this year, but a top-five Nebraska finish too.

Bad Cop: The Mounties haven't won a title this millennium. See the pattern?

Long Beach

Good Cop: The farm system is stacked! Help is on the way, if fans can be patient for another season or two.

Bad Cop: Even their top pitching prospect threw out his arm to avoid having to play in Long Beach.

San Fernando

Good Cop: This was a top-5 offense in the Frick last year. All they need is some pitching and better defense behind those arms.

Bad Cop: They also need an appropriately sized field to humble the "top-5 offense." Plus, Bears is so early 2000's. It's the year of the Twinks.

Valencia

Good Cop: Lots of roster turnover during the off-season. They brought in some pretty big names this winter to fill in the gaps.

Bad Cop: By big names, do you mean Meenakshisundaram?

Seattle

Good Cop: Umm, I guess when a team hasn't drawn 2M fans since 2046, the fans who do show up are guaranteed to get whatever promotion is being handed out at the turnstiles.

Bad Cop: You know who's not getting a promotion? The Storm's GM. He needs a demotion, if anything.

Portland

Good Cop: It can't get much worse than 62-100, right? There's gotta be some sort of dead cat bounce coming, right? Right?

Bad Cop: Wrong. There's literally 62 ways they can be worse in 2056 and I think they'll achieve one of them this year.

"Trust me... I'd never put any harmful substances into my system!"

*Baseball star Hugh
Mangrouthormone*



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**LESS NICOTINE
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than the NEW, Smoother, Better Tasting

Raleigh

PLAIN OR TIPPED

Johnson League- Atlantic

The Charm City Jimmies set a Brewster Baseball Association record with 120 wins against just 42 losses in the 2055 BBA Season on their way to their back-to-back Monty's. The Johnson also provided two of the wild cards with the Montreal Blazers claiming one with a 95-67 record and the Jacksonville Hurricanes spun up a 90-72 season to come in 3rd. The Rockville Pikemen finished 46 games back followed by Charlotte, New Orleans, Brooklyn, and Atlantic City.

Final order of finish in 2055:

Charm City	120-42
Montreal	95-67
Jacksonville	90-72
Rockville	74-88
Charlotte	66-96
New Orleans	65-97
Brooklyn	62-100
Atlantic City	56-106

Atlantic City Gamblers



GM- John Momberg (chicoruiz)
Lifetime Record 820-1126

2055 Season: 56-106

Key Losses- SP Ken Sproul (FA 2.4 WAR), LF Keith Schultz (FA 1.3 WAR), 1B Erik Wignes (FA 1.3 WAR), SS Frederick Manchild (FA 0.1 WAR), RP Art Cherry (WAIVERS CHI 0.1 WAR), Tak-keung Liao (Trade SA 0.1 WAR)

Gains- 1B Tyler Ober (FA SFB 2.1 WAR). SP Francisco Ortiz (FA CHI 0.3 WAR), LF Lee Hogan (FA SA 2.7 WAR), SP Eddie Armstrong (FA VAL 1.9 WAR)

2056 Season

Starting Pitchers- The Gamblers lost Sproul to free agency but added Francisco Ortiz from Chicago and Eddie Armstrong from Valencia. They have 8 possible guys they can slot into the rotation or work out of the bullpen. The most likely candidates to start will be James Robinson, Tokugawa Takahashi, Leo Hill, Armstrong, and Ortiz. Armstrong had short stints in Nashville and Twin Cities before moving west to Valencia. He made 39 starts and 46 appearances for the Stars in his 4 ½ seasons there. He is 59-56 with a 3.95 ERA in his career. Robinson made 12 starts last season and was 4-3 with a 3.00 ERA and a 2.0 rWAR. He struck out 33 and walked 23 but gave up 6 homers in 69 IP. Atlantic City may just go with whoever is hot at the time. Matt Schneider looks to on the bubble for a starting or bullpen role or may be in AAA as depth.

Bullpen- The 'pen has four arms that pitched last season led by Guo-liang Chen. Chen pitched 84 times racking up 111.2 innings and posted a 4.11 ERA. He was 7-8 with a save and 12 holds. Josh Miller is a guy that the OSA scouts hate but he is a consistent performer for the Gamblers. Miller made 57 appearances throwing 81.1 innings with a 4.32 ERA. He was 6-6 with 8 saves and a hold. William Warren gets a little bit love from scouts and pitched 70 innings over 41 appearances. He was 2-1 with a hold and a save. He fanned 58 batters and issued 16 walks.

Position Players- The Gamblers use a platoon at catcher with Craig Hughes making most of the starts and Spencer Clough the facing some righties. Together they hit 12 homers and drove in 49 runs and posted a 103 wRC+. Atlantic City has some cap space but is short on budget space to acquire backstop.

Tyler Ober replaces three-year starter Erik Wignes who left for free agency and signed late in spring training with the Charm City Jimmies. Ober comes in from San Fernando after a 9-year career with the Bears. He put up 22.7 WAR for the Bears with 220 homers, 624 RBI and slashed .255/.373/.465.

Yodo Sato will play the keystone for the Gamblers for the second consecutive season. He slashed .287/.333/.427 but posted a 0.7 WAR due to his bad defense. His strikeouts were up last season but with his high Avoid K should see it fall.

Ernesto Gonzalez played 3B for Atlantic City, but he will have some competition this season in Spring Training by Sam Kelley. Gonzalez has the edge, but Kelley may make this team with his versatility.

Matthew Hewat and Breslan Hadingham are both decent options at SS, but they may make a solid double play combination with one of them at 2B. Hewat put up negative WAR (-0.2) last season in Chicago while slashing .253/.282/.349 and playing mostly at short. He won't strike out much but won't walk either. Hadingham was the starter at short last season in Atlantic City but also put-up negative WAR (-0.6) and played suspect defense.

LF Lee Hogan was signed as a free agent out of San Antonio. GM John Momberg said that Hogan would play left against righties and DH versus left-handers. Jin-soo Chong made 42 starts in 60 games played last season between Las Vegas and Atlantic City. He hit well slashing .290/.342/.314 and may get the job against lefties.

Manchu Li played 52 games in center last season in Chicago and managed to have a 0 WAR. He hits for a low average but did get on base at a .324 clip. CF Bill O'Toole was acquired via trade with Twin Cities and will face lefties in a platoon in center with Li. O'Toole's has a bit more range than Li and may also see time as a defensive replacement of LI .

RF is locked down by Bronx Cortez. Cortez has been around the block a few times and had a good season in his first season in Atlantic City. He slashed .274/.323/.497 and a 110wRC+. He hit 35 homers and drove in 110 runs, both career highs. DH is a toss-up.

Final Words- GM John Momberg has improved this team through free agency and trail just Jacksonville in WAR gained this offseason at 2.6 WAR. The Gamblers have a long way to go to catch Charm City in the Atlantic Division, but they've made a nice start.

2056 Prediction 65-97



Brooklyn Robins

GM Ben Heuring (lordtoffee)

Lifetime Record 1024-1491

2055 Season 62-100

Key Losses- SP Bruno Bugbie (FA 3.3 WAR), 1B Raul Fernandez (FA 2.1 WAR), SP Chad Keever (FA 1.7 WAR), 2B Ben Copeland (FA 0.4 WAR)

Gains- None

2056 Season

Starting Pitchers- There are many questions about the Robins staff going into the 2056 season. Brooklyn GM Ben Heuring is looking to replace Bruno Bugbie and Chad Keever who departed in free agency. The team has gone quiet as North Korea. Neil Fenemore, Stephen Clulow, Jr., Nasih bin Amid and Hoaka Etana return but bin Amid may miss opening day.

Bullpen- The bullpen needs some work but has some mis-rated players by the OSA scouts. Adrian Kraft is the best of this group that includes an under performing Jose Hernandez. Kraft strikes out more than one batter per inning but also has a high walk rate. Hernandez hasn't been able to get batters out and gives up a ton of homers with 17 in just 69 innings last season.

Position Players- Gerardo Eremítani is the starter at catcher with Phil Lewis his backup. Eremítani slashed just .214/.291/.377 with 19 homers and 61 RBI and posted a 0.8 WAR. He is one of those streaky players and he may have a bounce back season in 2056. Lewis was better in his backup role slashing .273/.355/.508 with 7 homers and 21 RBI in 132 at bats.

Ernest McBride manned 1B last season and held his own in the field while terrifying pitchers at the plate. He hit 55 bombs and drove in 135 runs for the Robins while batting .307 with a .369 OBP and a .636 Slug. He posted a 157 OPS+ and 5.6 WAR.

2B Pete Brace can hit but is a black hole in the field. He slashed .274/.339/.465 with 21 homers and 70 RBI but lost WAR with his defense to post 1.8 for the season.

Jorge Lugo took home the Zimmer Diamond Glove at 3B last season and hit well but not for the expected power from a corner infielder but is a very consistent player.

There is no one in the entire organization that can play SS.

Wilson Prieto is ready to take over the LF job for the Robins.

Brooklyn will cart out veteran Po-sin Shi to center this season after a good defensive performance last year. His offense at this time in his career is suspect.

Final Words- Brooklyn has lost 100+ games 9 out of 10 seasons. The Robins haven't filled any needs through free agency, trade, Rule 5 or waiver wire all winter. Their budget is just \$104 million with a player payroll of \$82+ million. Fix the money 1st and the rest should follow.

2056 Prediction 60-102



Charlotte Flyers
GM Nathan Garrison (Krathan)
Lifetime Record 89-75

2055 Season 66-96 (Final season as the Cougars)

Key Losses- LF Brett Powers (FA 3.9 WAR), SP Lance Harrison (FA 2.8 WAR), 1B Bob Irwin (FA 1 WAR), SS Mauro Soto (FA 0.9 WAR), RP Jae-ho Chang (Trade RMO 0.7 WAR)

Gains- 1B Pancho Costa (Trade RMO 4 WAR), LF Chris McFadden (Trade RMO 0.7 WAR), RP Ross Brown (FA DM 0.5 WAR)

2056 Season

Starting Pitching- The former Cougars now Flyers look for an engine restart in the Atlantic Division and it starts with pitching. The Flyers have the 1-2 punch of Jamie Barber and Ruben bin Majid al Din. They both struggled with the long ball last season and will need to keep the ball in the park to give this team a chance. Al Din made 36 starts last season and threw 236 innings with a 111 ERA+. Barber is three years distant from his torn flexor tendon and threw 188 innings in 30 starts to a 96 ERA+. Liam Johnston comes to the BBA after toiling in the GBC and will vie for a spot in the rotation. Trey Raynor, Brian Ioneki and Antonio Cuartas will battle for the final two spots.

Bullpen- Nobuhito Kan is the leader of the 'pen but continues to also give up homers that cost this team wins. Luigi Tibbits and Hector Fuentes made multiple starts for Charlotte while moving back and forth from the bullpen. They can now concentrate on relief duties and give Charlotte some innings. Ross Brown and Sabastian Seabert have incredible stuff and can get some crucial outs late.

Position Players- Adalgiso Bosendorfer is the starter at catcher, but the backup spot will most likely go to newcomer Alfredo Rodriguez. Bosendorfer was awful last season as he put up -3.1 WAR and 71 wRC+.

Pancho Costa was acquired by the Flyers via trade with the Rocky Mountain Oysters in the offseason. He is the best defender at first on the team and should get the majority of the reps there. He can play a bit of LF and may also DH. Su'ud Adnan will get a shot the spring to make this team after being drafted in the Rule 5 from Twin Cities. Last season's 1B Yalew Angolwisye put up -1.3 WAR last season and may be the DH against lefties.

Ricardo Munoz is the incumbent at 2B but will be in a spring training battle against Rule 5 pick Jesus Diaz. Munoz is a glove first second baseman and may end up in a platoon with the left-handed hitting Diaz.

Ryobe Watanabe will be joined at third by Vasco Fonzarelli. Fonzarelli is another Rule 5 pick by Charlotte that will get a chance in the spring. The Fonz has nice power against right-handers and can play 1B, 2B and 3B without embarrassing himself.

SS Robert Menzies put up some crazy numbers in 2055 as he slashed .340/.420/.495 in 483 at bats. He posted a 5.3 WAR and a 137 wRC+ while being a solid defender at short.

Chris McFadden will patrol left for the Flyers. He missed three weeks in 2055 with an injury and put up just 0.5 WAR. He slashed .302/.360/.460 with a 110 wRC+ but his defense may have suffered due to the injury.

Team Captain Aurelio Dieguez plays center for the Flyers. He posted a positive WAR for the 1st time in his career with 1.1 WAR in 2055. His defense was not great but not bad either. He slashed .271/.346/.351 and stole 30 bases out of 35 attempts. At 30 years-of-age this could have been a career year.

Qadir bin Gamel is in right for the Flyers and posted a 1.6 WAR in 2055. He slugged 23 homers and drove in 92 runs to a 108 wRC+. He played solid defense in RF and threw out 7 baserunners.

Final Words- The Flyers have made improvements to catch up to the Big 3 in the Atlantic and we will see if they take shape during the season.

2056 Prediction 74-88



Charm City Jimmies
GM Dave Burcicki (DaveB)
Lifetime Record 933-655

2055 Season 120-42 Atlantic Division Champ and Monty Brewster Champ

Key Losses- CF Arvin Duggan (FA 4.4 WAR), 1B Colm Alker (FA 2.5 WAR), RF Norihisa Yokoyama (FA 2.4 WAR), SP Gerardo Rea (FA 2 WAR), SP Hotha Buyoya (FA 1.6 WAR), SP Richard Bullock (Trade CHI 1.3 WAR), CF Bill Morley (Trade MTL 1 WAR), LF Shirai Matsumoto (Trade MTL 0.1 WAR)

Gains- RP Bill O'Connor (FA 0.8 WAR), RP Wayne Dorsey (FA 0.4 WAR), SP Carl Vincent (Trade MTL 4.4 WAR), 1B Erik Wignes (FA ATC 0.9 WAR), CF Chuck Dickens (FA LV 0.4 WAR)

2056 Season

Starting Pitchers- The Charm City Jimmies pitchers from their 2055 Monty Championship team, two to free agency and one with a trade. The Jimmies have Hector Silva, Rannal Seldon, Allen Davidson and Wassem bin Suhayb returning. Silva was 17-9, Seldon was 15-6, Davidson was 14-4 and bin Suhayb was 13-5. Silva is probably the next pitcher that will win multiple Nebraska's with his stuff, movement, control and 5 pitch mix. Carl Vincent was added in the pre-season after a trade with a Montreal made him a Jimmie. He is another lefty that gives Charm City options. Ty Vanatta, Norm Collyer, and Qing-lai Ou-yang could join this group out of spring training. The Jimmies have a good combo and lefties and righties they can matchup against opponents.

Bullpen- This bullpen can bring the heat and is led by Manuel Barrera. Barrera made 72 appearances throwing 79.1 innings with a 5-5 record with 46 saves and 2 holds. He posted a 1.82 ERA and a 4.3 rWAR. You-de Szema added 100.1 innings in 57 appearances with a 3.68 ERA. They have added former Long Beach reliever Wayne Dorsey to the mix. Last season he pitched 91 innings in 54 appearances with a 4.15 ERA. This group will strikeout batters in bunches and will make it difficult on teams to score.

Position Players- The catching situation will remain the same as Tokimasa Yano is the starter while Hollis O'Hara carries his luggage. Yano posted a 1.8 WAR while O'Hara chipped in 0.8 WAR. Yano is a good pitch framer and defensive backstop.

Jules Le Gal inherits 1B from the free agent Colm Alker. Alker is still on the market and is rumored to be asking over \$10 million per season so a return to Charm City may not happen. Le Gal is younger, cheaper, and capable. In 240 at bats last season, Le Gal slashed .275/.338/.512 with 14 homers and 39 RBI. Late in the spring, the Jimmies signed free agent 1B Erik Wignes. Wignes has been promised a starting role in his new two-year deal with the Jimmies and may allow Le Gal to ease into 1B. Wignes doesn't have any power but hits for average and gets on base while also being a Captain.

Dave Ackerman is one of the best 2B in the Association but his average, OBP dropped while his Slug jumped. He struck out a bit more and waked less but his defense more than made up for the drop. He hit 45 HR and drove in 104 and scored 91 runs while slashing .245/.308/.549. He was worth 2 wins just in his defense and posted a 6 WAR in 2055.

Manny Collazo is back at 3B for the Jimmies in 2056. Collazo had a down year as he struggled with a sprained elbow. He posted a 0.5 WAR after struggling at the plate and in the field. Robert Villanueva may get a long look in spring training along with Asil Colasan.

SS Sammy McNeil is the other half of the best double play combo in the Brewster. McNeil matched Dave Ackerman's defense then had a nice season at the plate. He slashed .306/.384/.403 with 5 HR 63 RBI and scored 105 runs while posted a 6.9 WAR.

Tadataka Yoshikawa has a stranglehold on LF after he put up a 6.5 WAR season in 2055. Yoshikawa slashed .312/.382/.601 42 HR and 125 RBI.

CF is up in the air right now as the Jimmies lost Arvin Duggan in free agency. They have Mike Cox and recently signed Chuck Dickens. Dickens has more experience and is a Captain while Cox is young and has shown flashes of talent. Both can play all three outfield positions.

Kazunari Chikafuji patrols RF for the Jimmies. He had a big season in 2055 as he put up 7.1 WAR after slashing .305/.367/.607 with 47 HR, 108 RBI and 111 runs scored.

Final Words- The Jimmies took a small step back with their losses in free agency but have some young players that can step in. CF is the biggest question mark, but it may be solved before the end of spring training.

2056 Prediction 102-60



Jacksonville Hurricanes
GM Aaron Weiner (aaronweiner)
Lifetime Record 4471-4107

2055 Season 90-72 Johnson League Wildcard

Key Losses- LF Pedro Guzman (FA 1.4 WAR), 2B Mike England (FA 1.3 WAR), 3B Ivan Sosa (FA 0.3 WAR), SP Matt McCartney (FA 0.2 WAR)

Gains- 2B Daniel Pepper (FA MEX 4.7 WAR), 1B Pablo Lara (FA MEX 1.8 WAR)

2056 Season

Starting Pitchers- The Hurricanes have the luxury of their entire rotation return for the 2056 season. Bernie Stuart leads this group of starters that includes Bob Anderson, Mark Thomas, Gerald Sizemore, and Juan Marroquin. Barring injury, this group should put up better numbers. Stuart was fantastic making 33 starts with a 15-3 record and a 3.03 ERA. He posted a 6.8 rWAR and a 3.65 FIP. Thomas and Sizemore were steady with Thomas going 10-7 and Sizemore 11-6. Anderson and Marroquin both struggled posted losing record. Marroquin had an especially rough year as he fanned 84 batters and walked 48 in 144 innings. They both should bounce back.

Bullpen- The bullpen also looks to be the same as last season and are led by closer Alejandro Chavez. Chavez made 66 appearances pitching 66.2 innings with a 5-4 record and 43 saves. He posted a 2.97 ERA and 1.5 rWAR. The 'pen doesn't give up a lot of homers and keeps this team in the game.

Position Players- Luis Gonzales and John Jorgensson share the catching duties with Gonzales getting 113 at bats more than Jorgensson. Gonzales put up better numbers offensively while Jorgensson handle the staff just slightly better. Look for the younger player Gonzales to take more at bats from Jorgensson.

The Hurricanes have some wealth of talent at first base added to by the addition of Pablo Lara. Jim Hopewell and Pedro Hozven shared 1B in a platoon last season and together put up 37 HR and 111 RBI but played poor defense. Lara has some utility as he can man 1B and LF while also getting on base a bit more. With Natsume Kondo in left Lara is the better choice at first with Hozven and Hopewell in the DH role.

Daniel Pepper is the hired gun to take over second base for the Hurricanes. Pepper hit 32 HR and drove in 99 runs between time in Valencia and Mexico City last season. He split time

between 3B and 2B last season and may see the same in Jacksonville. The Hurricanes have Ka'im Muntasir that can also play second and third so it will be interesting to see how the 'Canes can get these players on the field.

Stefan Adlov was the starter at 3B last season and slashed .254/.332/.394 in 543 at bats but his poor defense at third held him back as he posted a 0.6 WAR for the season.

Orlando Lopez proved last season that he can play SS at the big-league level. He will need to improve at the plate as well as with the glove to keep his job.

The Hurricanes have many options in the outfield led by Kondo in left, Manoell Whanon in center and Donald Miller in right. Add in Greg Godwin, Yoshitoki Goto, Taro Kudo and Lao Kum they can provide defense off the bench and depth in case of injury.

Final Words- With the additions of Pepper and Lara, this team is better on offense and defense. With some Jacksonville now has a chance to run down the Charm City Jimmies in the Atlantic.

2056 Prediction 97-65



Montreal Blazers

GM Bob and Erik Breum (breum, Bob Breum)

Lifetime Record 92-70

2055 Season 95-67 Johnson League Wildcard

Key Losses- CF Pedro Rosales (FA 5.2 WAR), RF Matthew Reilly (FA 3.5 WAR), 1B Bastiao Fardos (FA 3.1 WAR), SS Dick Walton (FA 1.6 WAR), LF Fuad Demirel (FA 1.6 WAR), SP Carl Vincent (Trade CCJ 4.4 WAR)

Gains- C Calvin Johnson (FA SA 4.3 WAR), RF Pedro Huerta (FA HAW 3.9 WAR), SS Mauro Soto (FA CHA 0.9 WAR), LF Ramao Saturnino (FA HAW 0.8 WAR), CF Jorge Rincon (FA POR 0.3 WAR), 1B Arnaud Budding (FA PHX 3.8 WAR), CF Bill Morley (Trade CCJ 1 WAR)

2056 Season

Starting Pitchers- The Montreal Blazers traded starter Carl Vincent to division rival Charm City but will add Bill McIntosh to their rotation. He will join Bill Mills, Boris Milatovic, Ralph Boyd, and Cheslav Evgrafov. Milatovic and Boyd pitched well last season, but Bill Mills struggled a bit. He had a drop in Ks and gave up a few more homers but he should bounce back this season. Evgrafov made 22 starts and pitched in 24 games but look for him to eat more innings this season. Bill McIntosh made two starts late last season with mixed results. He throws a good curveball, decent cutter with a circle change and a straight change that are still developing. They may resort to Benno Steeneveld and Jorge Santos if they want to give McIntosh more time to develop those pitches.

Bullpen- The Blazers have a two headed Dragon in relief with closer Mitch Purcell and Max Birstall that pitch late in games. Birstall made 41 saves last season in 70.2 innings and 64 appearances. Purcell missed some time with a sore back last season then made 58 appearances and threw 56 innings. He was 2-2 with 5 saves and 13 holds. Ming-hoa Jing and Rob Anthony put up some innings in relief, but they will need some help to get the Blazers through this season. Carlton Casson will give 40-50 innings, but he has more value as a hitter.

Position Players- Calvin Johnson joins the Blazers in free agency and will be paired with Jake Rising to field a great catching tandem. Both help their staff out with framing and defense and put-up decent numbers on offense. It's unknown how they will be used or if Rising is trade bait. We will wait and see.

Arnaud Budding was signed as a free agent out of Phoenix and may be paired in a platoon. He has a good eye, contact and power vs righties but has a steep drop off vs lefties. Ricardo Rivera is a possible platoon mate as he is seeing time at first in spring training.

Lineu Aldo returns to the Blazers and will play 2B. Last season he hit 24 homers and drove in 106 runs while playing good enough defense to be a positive. Veteran Aleksandr Ginevglekov was signed in free agency and can come in as a defensive replacement at second and short.

Eduardo Gonzalez is back for another playoff run with Montreal and play third. Last season he hit 21 homers and drove in 108 runs. He slashed .306/.367/.529 and posted 4.8 WAR.

Mauro Soto comes in from Charlotte as a free agent and will play shortstop. Soto is not a great hitter, but he is an elite SS.

Ramao Saturnino was signed as a free agent out of Hawaii to play left. He is a solid fielder with speed and will provide some offense.

CF will be a combination of Jorge Rincon and Bill Morley. Rincon comes in as a free agent from Portland and Morley via a trade with Charm City. They more than likely be in a platoon, and both can play right or left field late in games to lock down the outfield defensively.

Shirai Matsumoto will patrol RF for Montreal after being acquired in a trade with the Charm City Jimmies. He plays right and left field well and is learning 1B, 2B and CF. He played sparingly last season but should provide some offense.

The Blazers signed another ageing outfielder as they acquired another former Tropic Pedro Huerta. Huerta is a bat first fielder with a great arm, but he will be the DH in Montreal. He hit 30 HR last season and added 89 RBI. He slashed .290/.336/.576 with a 4.2 WAR. Carlton Casson may get his chances to swing the bat and hit some homers for this team.

Final Words- The Blazers tag-team GMs of Bob and Erik Breum jumped in quickly after they took over to fill in the losses in free agency and gave the team some leadership and flexibility. This team may also be able to reel in the Jimmies along with Jacksonville.

2056 Prediction 97-65



New Orleans Crawdads
GM Jim Roberts (JimBob2232)
Lifetime Record 5394-4788

2055 Season 65-97

Key Losses- 3B Juan Hernandez (FA 1.7 WAR), 1B Joe Melucci (FA 1.6 WAR), SP Jim Wilkinson (FA 1.4 WAR), SP Kaden Umair (FA 0.6 WAR)

Gain- SP Steven Flannery (FA OMA 1.7 WAR, RP Toby Bundy (FA MTL 1 WAR), 2B Tomas Borges (FA RMO 3.1 WAR)

2056 Season

Starting Pitchers- The Crawdads began to revamp their rotation in 2055 by bringing in Arnold Cantrell and Micah Harrington on June 30th of last year in a trade with the Rocky Mountain Oysters. Cantrell had struggled with the Oysters but found his groove in the French Quarter. In 15 starts he threw 89.2 innings and was 2-5 with a 3.81 ERA. His BABIP dropped from .311 to .295 and almost cut his HR/9 in half. Harrington made a small improvement, but he is young and had a way to go. Steve Flannery was signed in free agency from Omaha. He has made just 3 career starts but has the makeup to start and get the job done. These pitchers will join Steve Anderton and John Lucas to form a nice rotation. The rotation is all right-handed.

Bullpen- Arturo Trevino anchors the bullpen and should get more save chances this season. Last year he made 57 appearances and threw 66 innings going 7-6 with 7 save and 4 holds. He had a 3.14 ERA but gave up 13 HR and he will need to bring that down. Toby Bundy has been signed in free agency away from Montreal to bring some stability to the back end. Jason Nelson was called up late last season and made an impact. Gunawan Pakpahan will begin his 2nd season with the 'Dads and with his stamina he can eat some innings late. The bullpen is also all right-handed.

Position Players- After shopping catcher Todd Tatlock around the league with no takers, the Crawdads have a logjam behind the plate. He will be paired with Jim Inman who is a slightly better hitter but weaker defensively.

Luis Estrada is an excellent left fielder but is being worked out a 1B in the spring training. Woody Baker is an option there against righties, but he is short for a first baseman. Chang Jiu could also be an option as a better fielder but has limited time in the majors.

Tomas Borges was signed in spring training and will be the primary second baseman. But with Jason Newton, who came over in that June 30 trade last season with the Oysters, he may share the position with Newton.

The Crawdads drafted Han-su Chong from themselves and will give him the shot at third this season.

Frank Manchild was signed to play shortstop after he played the last two seasons in Atlantic City. He is better at second base at his age he is just a stop gap.

LF is Juan Donestevéz's job and there are no questions about him now. He bounced back after a down 2054 and hit much better last season. He slashed .308/.363/.474 with 24 HR and 84 RBI while posting a 3.1 WAR.

Jared Boll will play the majority of the time in center for New Orleans. His defense is passable, but he doesn't get on base much and doesn't provide much offense.

RF Brad Parkinson's 1st season in New Orleans was a success as he bounced back from some rough seasons and even a stint in the GBC. He slashed .258/.324/.542 with 43 HR and 101 RBI while posting 2.6 WAR. He played some 1B last season, but he also has a height issue.

Inman and Donestevéz will share DH duties.

Final Words- GM Jim Roberts did this on the fly with some foresight. This should be made into a manual for GMs to follow. Roberts still has some moves to make to fill some roles, but this is a great start.

2056 Prediction 75-97



Rockville Pikemen
GM Jim Slade (JimSlade)
Lifetime Record 525-579

2055 Season 74-88

Key Losses- RF Stewart Illingworth (FA 2.1 WAR), 2B Logan Niles (FA 0.7 WAR), 3B Brian Dixon (FA 0.5 WAR), RP Ernesto Viera (FA 0.2 WAR)

Gains- None

2056 Season

Starting Pitchers- The Pikemen are rolling with last season's rotation which consisted of Danny Leach, Joe MacIndoe, Nathaniel Davis, Jon Keys and Nasir al Din bin Sahir. Danny Leach had the best performance for them going 11-10 in 183.2 innings with a 4.51 ERA and a 3.1 rWAR. MacIndoe and Key struggled last season as they both had ERA's above 5.80. Yoshimatsu Miyauchi and Todd Jones are battling for a spot on this team but one or both may end up in AAA. The Pikemen have Dabir Nawfal in AAA and may get a shot with the big club later in the season.

Bullpen- The bullpen has some decent pieces led by Luis Gonzalez. Gonzalez made 69 appearances and threw 64.2 innings going 1-2 with 35 saves and 13 holds. He had a 4.73 ERA and a 3.96 FIP. Gonzalez has high stamina and could be an effective, multi-inning stopper. He could get some help in that department by Richard Bryant. Bryant has good stuff and decent control with a solid fastball and curve. He has low movement, but he gets the job done and has the stamina to throw multiple innings.

Position Players- The Pikemen can field three catchers but have two good ones in Garm Guldemond and John McMuttray. Guldemond gets the bulk of the starts behind the plate because he handles the pitchers better while McMuttray as the DH for his bat.

There is a battle going on in spring training with four true 1B but during the season the starter will be Cam Whitten. Whitten fielded his position well and slashed .272/.335/.440 with 18 HR and 74 rBI.

Ruben Alvarado and Travis Harrell may share second base in a platoon. Harrell made just 13 starts last season and played 14 games but slashed .292/.346/.375 but struggled defensively. Alvrado struggled at the plate and played average defense at second.

Brian Dixon is the starter at third, but he has his issues at the plate. He doesn't strikeout much but also doesn't draw many walks and has a low OBP (.292). He hit 17 HR with 59 RBI last season.

Socrates Kazantziakis is a fantastic fielding SS that can provide offense at the plate. He slashed .269/.349/.329 last season while posting a 1.8 WAR and stealing 20 bases in 24 attempts.

Eric Wagner will split time between right and left with Julio Barajas. Wagner hit 14 HR last season while driving in 55 but Barajas was stellar with 37 HR and 117 RBI while scoring 99 runs.

Varnik Tuncay made the majority of starts at center last season and played reasonably well defensively. But offensively his average, OBP and slugging dropped as he put up -0.5 WAR.

Final Words- The Pikemen have some cap room to add a CF and range-y 2B to tighten up their defense but it may take a few seasons to catch up to the big boys in the Atlantic.

2056 Prediction 78-84

FRONTIER DIVISION

Perhaps washed out by the whole 120-win Charm City mega-beast story in the Atlantic Division, the Frontier was quite the interesting scrum in 2055. Rocky Mountain came out on top, with Mexico City and Boise just behind. But the story here isn't in the top half of the gaggle, but instead down through the mix. Bottom line: it took 78 wins to come in last in the division. That's an interesting number. Even more interesting is that it took 79 to come 5th. Think about that. The bottom four teams won 78-79 games. I wonder how often that's happened in the past. I'll have to look it up...all right, I looked it up. I'll tell you when the last time that happened: never. The closest that we've every come is 2045 in the Johnson league where Jacksonville and Atlantic City tied for 7th and 97 with 73 wins, Charlotte managed 74, and Charm City took 5th with 78.

Bottom line: the Frick League in 2055 had no pushovers, and was arguably full of at least reasonably good, but not great teams. Ultimately, that takes away one of my best preview tools—that being the old reversion to mean concept. How do you predict a reversion to mean when everyone is already pretty much right there?

I guess that's why they pay me the Big Bucks.

At the end of the day, I think projecting the Frontier is basically like playing Yahtzee and needing a large straight. You leave the Rocky Mountain "5" on the board and pick up that other seven dice, throw them into the cup, rattle them around and let 'er rip.

Here's my guess for how they wind up. Read the previews for why I think it.:

Rocky Mountain: 102-60

Boise: 94-68

San Antonio: 86-76

Mexico City: 86-76

Las Vegas: 84-78

Phoenix: 81-81

Calgary: 79-83

Edmonton: 74-88



Rocky Mountain Oysters:

2055: 95-67 - 2056 Projection: 102-60

So much depends on a red Wullenweber, glazed with time, beside the calendar. I think that's what it really boils down to for Rocky Mountain. With the venerable Alaric Wullenweber, the staff is elite, without him everyone has to step up one notch, and the Oysters look mashable. Ultimately, I suppose this is good news for Rocky Mountain fans. Wullenweber looks good. But he's had that little nudge down in the movement column, and in that ballpark, that's not a good sign. To make it worse, kid starter Ken Steele made his debut last year and got knocked around pretty good in 64 innings.

The bullpen is sneaky-good, but I ponder if 2055 was a bit of a mirage. Stepping through them, so many of those arms came from other places, and proceeded to have better 2055s than 2054s. Despite that park of theirs. If the bullpen is really that good, and if Wullenweber is a "Go," this is a top unit—and if this is a top-flight unit, it's hard to see the team dropping out of the top spot.

Because ... while offensively, the team is now officially Malik bin Mazin's (he signed a big-boy contract that will keep him with the team until next decade. This is a good thing, and one expects he'll "bounce-back" from his paltry 4.6 WAR to that 6-7 WAR peak). But he'll be joined by this guy names Aaron Haney. You might have heard of him. He comes fully equipped with his own personal Sawyer Silk carrying case. Bottom line, the contract Haney signed will make Rocky Mountain a top-end contender not just for the Frontier, but also the Monty Brewster. Assuming Haney is the same Haney at the end of the year as he is at the beginning. He's 37. Stranger things have happened. For purposes here, we'll say the club gets full-bore Haney.

Then there's Resurrection Santos III. He's 23. He's probably the best center fielder in the game.

After that it's a bit harder to call because that offense plays in that park, and the park makes my grandmother look like Baby Ruth, despite the fact she's been dead for some time. Regardless, there are good filler parts here, and the park will help as the park will help. Probably the best hidden part of the club is the glove work of the left side of the infield.

Projection: Wullenweber will fade, but not enough to make a difference.



Mexico City Aztecs

2055: 92-70 - 2056 Projection: 86-76

The Aztecs are fighting the good fight against father time, and some might say they can hold on to the glory years for another season. I'm not sure I'm buying it, though. I mean, if 90% of the game is pitching, I think they are going to be fine. Alas. Their problem will be with the offense, where the club has lost a few players who were a focus in the stretch run.

There are, of course, a few guys who can hit.

Exhibit A is Felix Roman. If Resurrection Santos II is not the best CF in the game, it would be because Roman is still around. He's 36, though, and the scouts are whispering that he's lost a step in the field. Will that matter? Well, it might. Because Ramon is the big fish in Mexico City's medium sized pond. Both Roelof Klooster and Fernando Moreno did more than 3 WAR last year, but those guys are also 36 and 37, like Roman. Beyond that, things look slim.

Maybe 22-year-old RF prospect Jonathan O'Quinn will cram the development pedal to the metal and make an impact?

If it turns out the Aztecs can score a bit more than I think they will, the staff will be enough to make a run of things. At 31, Dave Corfield 4th Nebraska last year. That's right. Four of a Freaking Kind. I don't see a fade occurring. Eiichi Takahashi's spring training elbow inflammation was minor, but will raise concerns because, well, concerns. He won 15 games last season, mostly from the bullpen, but with 127 innings, I'll count him as a de facto member of the rotation. The Aztecs are going to need that and more this year. Add in Vassilis Zorba and Cesar Macias and you've got a serious rotation that keeps the ball in the park. That's pretty much mandatory in the Frontier division.

Even better, the club has a pair of 23-year-olds (Jameel Khanum and Mufid Kedar) nearly ready in the wing. If they develop up, they'll be here before long, and if nothing else they'll debut into a bullpen that's already pretty good if not spectacularly deep.

If you get the idea that the Aztecs can pitch, you're getting that down pretty well. The problem, of course, is that—especially in their ballpark, they need to score runs, and I just don't see that happening.



Boise Spuds

2055: 85-77 - 2056 Projection: 94-68

I like spuds. I like them fried, and I like them boiled. I like them mashed. A roasted spud fresh out of the oven can be heaven. Add a little butter or garlic. Some pepper. Yum. Dice 'em Slice 'em. Bake them in foil under the rotisserie like my grandpa used to do. Oh, my, god.

I like the Boise Spuds, too. I do. It seems like they are a really good potato metaphor — a very good, all-purpose baseball team that can be put to multi-purpose utility. I mean, there's a lot to like about Boise. They are moderately young for the Brewster, it seems, with three of their top returning offensive players at 30 or under. They also have an exciting prospect in center field in Lou Bayou who is allllmmmmooooostt ready. As an odd aside, I like the addition of OF John Oliver because he can hold onto CF for a little while, and slide to a corner when Bayou is really ready...and he can mash at tater or two in the process. 1B Bastiao Fardos should be an upgrade, too, though I'd like the contract better if it was one guaranteed year other than two (welcome to the club, say Spud fans).

I also like that addition of Andy Elmer as the primary catcher. He can hit a little, and he's going to improve the pitching staff. Which, by the way is pretty good. Call them homey roasted sweet potatoes, or maybe candied yams. Especially if the ballyhooed arrival of David "The Fanning from Banning" Moliina's arrival is as worthy as it's been advertised. Personally, I think it is. I see no reason to think the kid won't be jumped from AA to the bigs, and pretty much become a name in the conversation for the Nebraska straight off. I mean, the last time Molina registered an ERA north of 2.00 at any level was 2053. He's a pitcher's pitcher, too. Lots of junk. Lots of outs. He's 2-1 this spring with a 2.08 ERA.

The bullpen is young and top-heavy, but deep with interesting pitchers. If the club can mix and match them, it could be the kind of group that is better than its parts. Again, like a good spud, right?

Here's the final thing. Boise was a post season team last year. They are young(ish) and growing. I think they will be a be a better baseball team at the end of the year than they are

at the beginning, and I kinda like them now. Maybe I like them too much? Dunno. But with Mexico City fading, I like them at 94 wins.

Edmonton Jackrabbits



2055: 81-81 - 2056 - Projection: 74-88

Steven Collins III is returning to the Jackrabbits and that's big news. Or, at least it would be if it were Steven Collins a few years back. Now the guy is a bit bent and busted and returning for one last lap around the tundra before the Hall of Fame calls.

To be honest, I'm not sure what to make of the Jackrabbits' performance last year. By the numbers they really shouldn't have managed to break even on the year. The pitching looks good enough on paper (Edmonton gave up the second fewest runs in the division, but in that park they have to be tops to be considered strong, and second is not top). Likewise, the offense was not good at all. Their 705 runs scored was the worst in the division – by 50 runs. That's huge. Their combined player WAR was 26.6 – worst in the division. A win expectancy equation says they should have finished 75-87. And, yet: 81-81 was their final tally. Was it luck? Was it exceptional finagling in the front office? I have no idea. But I feel like I need to start the team's baseline at something closer to the projection than the reality of what happened.

My Magic 8 Ball has somewhat bad news for Edmonton. First, it's obvious that the addition of Collins III was about fan service. He's pretty much done. The club added solid 2B Bill McKay and can look forward to the coming of young outfielder Dean Proctor. Those are good additions. But they lost 5 WAR of offense. If McKay and Proctor match that, the Jackrabbits are treading water offensively. On the hill, Mahad Einan would look great as a #2 and outstanding as a #3, but with Edmonton he's got to be the ace. Curt Fields seems like he should be a useful middle-rotation guy. The bullpen includes Bill Young, who might be the best arm on the staff. But otherwise, the collection seems like a patch-work of guys with holes.

Looking at this team makes me reconsider the whole question at the top of this little essay - was Edmonton just lucky last year, or did the front office do their mad-scientist, mastermind thing to such an excellent degree that they found six extra wins? Alternatively, did Edmonton just do better at eating up the Atlantic Division fodder even better than their division mates? I'm going to guess a little of all the above and say 74 wins. I'm not holding my breath, though. A couple bad draws and this could get ugly.

I suspect the luck will even out, and that the Atlantic Division will get a little better. That says that no matter how much fiddling the front office is worth, 2056 will be longer than fans will like. Luckily, they'll have Steven Collins III to say goodbye to.

Las Vegas Hustlers



2055: 78-84 - 2056 - Projection: 84-78

Hustler fans are in a strange situation. The team is not winning, and hasn't won for a couple seasons. In that sense, it's part of the whole Frontier thing, I suppose. The club was 82-80 two seasons ago and still came 5th. They haven't won their division for six years. They announced a fire sale last year, and managed to at least fan some flames, but after top prospect Tankut Saltik the system is a little thin down in the ranks (at least by the cruddy OSA ranking system). Yeah, I know. Strange.

This is, of course, the Commissioner's team, though. The one thing you can guarantee is that the club is going to move on quickly—and with Sawyer Silk winner Tom Rudge returning to lead an offense that was second in the division in scoring, the club continues to be dangerous. Given that bit, it's not surprising that the Hustlers added arms in the off-season, signing SP Jose Martinez, and Peter Dean to go with reliever Kinzo Iwamoto. Add in the fact that (regardless of what OSA says), the minor leagues are teeming with a conveyor belt of young arms that look interesting. I'm not certain that the Hustler pitching staff will be upper division this year, but I'm also not certain they won't be.

That said, I'm inclined to believe in Recte.

What's more interesting to try to assess is the offense. Yes, Rudge is back, and at 36 he still looks to be in complete control of his faculties. At 39, Kidane Ata is squeezing the last drops out of that sponge of time. I mean, he did win a Zimmer last year in the field. The Hustlers have lost a lot of lumber, though, and so the question I'm pondering is how much to assess the value of growth for early 20-somethings Claudio Morgan (Catcher), Tristan Lloyd (3B), and Joe Edwards (DH). Each of them showed they belonged in the league last year, and if each of them can take serious steps forward, then the ship will be sailing free. I like 21-yo DH Chris Hall, too. He struggled last year, but could serve as a platoon DH.

It's worth noting that unlike Edmonton, Vegas severely underperformed their expected win total, and so if you believe in that reversion to mean, 2056 should be a positive one. You can count me among the group that believes. Maybe I'll be off by a year, but I think the kids will

rise and the random number generator will be in the Hustler's favor. Not enough to compete for the division, but enough to say 84 wins.



San Antonio Outlaws

2055: 79-83 - 2056 - Projection: 86-76

I think Outlaw fans are probably walking on edge. Slowly but surely their beloved baseball club has been dredging itself up from the depths of nearly a decade of losing baseball. And, to be fair, too, the club they fielded last year was probably a little better than its fate. But now they face a situation where their two best hitters are either entering their last contract year (Patrick Stolz) or their last two of team control (Majid bin Husam). With SP Sakutaro Kawano showing signs that he might be an actual ace (13-12, 3.62, 79 FIP-), the building blocks are in place at the top-end, and even though the team lost some names in the game of Free Agency musical chairs, there's a strong enough supporting cast to suggest the final surge is possible – especially if the bottom half of the rotation can manage to keep the team in games.

The stat I keep looking at though, is home runs. As in, the Outlaw staff gave up a bunch last year -- second most in the division, and as far as I can tell that's not going to get a whole lot better, though free agent starter Tak-keung Liao should be able to keep it in the park, so there's hope. In that light, though, adding Madison's Todd Stone in free agency was a big value, I think. It boosts an area that needed boosting. If Owen McKelvey can bounce back from a down season, the Outlaws have three reliable arms in the pen.

Assuming the arms can be at least mid-pack, which is possible, the questions then turn to the supporting bats. Was 3B Taroemon Omori's 2.3 WAR in 194 PA an indicator of added value? Can GBC catcher Bradford McBearett shake off a horrible first year in the BBA? Can Ricardo DeJesus lead the league in walks again?

Bottom line: I think the answers to these questions are positive enough that the Outlaws could wind up seriously competing for a post season bid. Unfortunately, I'm not sure it's sustainable. The beauty of the situation is that there's lots of room in the salary cap to keep the stars in place. They are young enough and good enough to deserve big deals. The harsh reality is that the owner is skin-flinting the club out on the budget side. The Outlaw budget of \$110M is the smallest in the league. Those shackles are going to hurt.

Ultimately, this means that to kickstart the financial engine, the Outlaws probably need to win now, and win big or suffer the fate of simply being unable to keep the kiddoes in place. If that doesn't happen, then the Outlaws, and the fans thereof, could fall right off that edge.



Calgary Pioneers

2055: 79-83 - 2056 - Projection: 79-83

Per win expectancy, the Pioneers finished right where they shoulda. Which is odd. I mean. Lary Stinson and Carlomaria Donadoni are getting old, but are perennial Pucket nominees—and both won them last year. How is it possible to have two Puckett winners, and still project to sub-.500 baseball? Therein lies the beauty of the game, right? For all its individual battles, the season is long and fraught with danger. You need the whole roster to be up to snuff, not just a couple stars. Fact is that despite that pair of thumpers, the Pioneers were only 4th in the division in runs scored, and home runs. Third in extra base hits and OBP. With 22% of the lineup being elite, and with the now-departed Robert Chenoweth and Girolano LArchibudelli dropping a combined 6 WAR, that kind of team performance speaks volumes.

Add the fact that pitching-wise the story was worse, and you get a true idea of why this team struggled inside the division.

The good news there, though, is that the Pioneers have a core of fairly young pitchers growing into what should be their peak. Shinsui Hasegawa is a top-flight #2 who is going to have to hum a few bars at being a stopper/ace. Leon Ludeman has been a steady inning eater, if not really successful. He needs help from the bats. Ramon Gonzalez really should have been better last year. But holy Baby Jesus, help him, the guy gave up 42 dingers last year. That's Forty-two. That can't happen again, can it? Bottom line, it's a rotation that has glimmers of hope, and if 22-year-old Caniel Thornton can make his way into the league proper-like, it could actually surprise.

The bullpen is a bit angsty, though. Closer Joe Walter has been making hay with the saves, averaging just south of 30 a year, but he hasn't had one of those dominant closer kind of seasons since 2052. I'm not going to start believing in the second coming just now. The staff as a whole had the smallest K%-BB% in the division, and the bullpen was probably part of that. Maybe 29-year-old minor league free agent Heng-zong Tang and GBC reliever Will Mitchell will help remedy that. But maybe not, too. I'm sure that fans are not going to be impressed until they see the pudding in the proof.

This is a difficult team to project. OSA says 76 wins. I don't think that's out of bounds, but I'm guessing the pitching is better enough to bump that a notch or two. Let's say three and go with a 79-83 reprise.



Phoenix Talons

2055: 79-83 - 2056 - Projection: 81-81

To be honest, this coming season in Phoenix is best summed up in two words: Your Mom. The guy is trending across the globe, and for perfectly good reason. Look up the definition of “Heartthrob” on any online dictionary, and you see a picture of one Joseph Mother, mustache razor trimmed and perfectly coifed, starlet on his arm. Look up the definition of power hitter in the BBA Baseball Almanac and you see a VR representation of Joseph Mother’s swing, and a audio clip of the ball hitting the bat while women and men for miles around swoon—though sometimes for different reasons. The adults, they want to date him, the kids, they want to be him. So, yeah, all paths in Phoenix run through Your Mom, and Your Mom wouldn’t have it any other way.

The guy slashed .382/.442/.594, with 10 homers and six doubles in only 170 AB. Is it possible for him to be a 6 WAR DH? Yes. It’s possible.

Of course, if we know anything about baseball, it’s that the team needs a few other guys to stand around on the field while Your Mom blasts off. Luckily, the Talons have a few of those. The outfield may be a little ugly to watch in the field, but Reggie Vargas can still hit as he’s drawing to the end of a nearly 50 WAR career, and Andrew Wright will come over from Vancouver to try his hand at raking in Denny’s Paul D. Lunn Memorial Stadium. He’ll find it a happier place to swing in that Vancouver’s chasm, and that’s even after Your Mom takes him around town. 40-year-old Angel Zalapa looks like he can still play, and is on a year-by-year kind of deal that lets the team out if he can’t. Probably the most intriguing story here is 23-year-old Michael O’Halloran, a minor leaguer who comes to the team on a major league contract. Depending on his development path, he could be a late season callup. Call him the walking deadline deal.

Adding Steve Warren to the rotation and Derrick Chaney to the bullpen is the kind of facelift the team probably needed. The 2055 Talons did not pitch particularly well. I’m a fan of both those guys. Warren joins a rotation that is maybe thinner at top but stronger on the bottom. (How’s that for a catch phrase?) Slobodan Omeragic is the kind of guy who really looks like he should be better than he’s been. Maybe this is the year he mimics an ace. If so, things look a whole lot better.

I don't know, though. I think I'll wimp-out and say that Your Mom's team wins 81 games. If I'm wrong, I think I'm too low.

CLUELESS! Frick Heartland Preview *By Mike Bauer*



**Buckle in and hang on
in the Heartland!**

2056 is gonna be wild!!!

2055 Final Standings:

Des Moines Kernels	108-54
Nashville Bluebirds	101-61
Omaha Cyclones	95-67
T.C. River Monsters	95-67
Madison Wolves	79-83
Chicago Black Sox	70-92
Louisville Sluggers	68-94
Yellow Springs Nine	61-101

Nashville Bluebirds	105-57
T.C. River Monsters	99-63
Des Moines Kernels	98-64
Omaha Cyclones	91-71
Madison Wolves	76-86
Yellow Springs Nine	74-88
Louisville Sluggers	70-92
Chicago Black Sox	66-96

2056 Clueless Predictions:

.....CLUELESS! Frick Heartland Preview *By Mike Bauer*

.....(cont'd).....

Nashville Bluebirds

General Manager: Chad Nason

2055 record: 101-61 (Lost Doubleday 4-2)

2056 prediction: 105-57 (+4)



Can the Bluebirds rule the Heartland roost again?

Key Losses:

— LF Felipe Vega
(FA/???)

— SP Manuel Garcia
(FA/YS9)

— CF Frederick Brisset
(FA/SEA)

— 3B Rhys Brickell
(FA/???)

— RP Mike Allain
(FA/SA)

Key Additions:

+ SP Billy Kelly
(FA/RMO)

+ SP/RP Ricardo Rivera
(FA/LBC)

2056 Outlook:

The Bluebirds have maintained their great farm system and have a well-earned reputation for being one of the BBA's most consistent winners. It's been 10 years since they last had a losing record, and they've also had four 100+ win outings since that time, including last season's edition. There are few key changes in 2056, but there's no reason not to pencil in Nashville as a top-two team in the Heartland with a solid chance to reclaim the division.

The biggest departure of the offseason is **LF Felipe Vega**. Vega turned back the clock last season and had his best year since 2051. But Vega is 36 and the team decided the age was a concern. And so has the BBA apparently, as Vega still remains unsigned as of this writing. **3B Rhys Brickell** is also gone after a one-year stint with the Bluebirds. That move was not much of a surprise given Brickell's horrible .204 average and underwhelming production in 2055.

The pitching staff will change a little, as **Manuel Garcia** left and Nashville countered immediately in free

agency by signing **Billy Kelly**, and later **Ricardo Rivera**. The Bluebirds bought low on both players and are banking that one or the other will come through and fill Garcia's rotation spot.

When you have a farm as strong as Nashville's, you never lack for talent. Instead you have several potential logjams. A particular one is in the infield where **Helmut Grun** is blocking second base for a deserving **Colby Triska**. Some promising young players may receive their first year of full-time play, including RF **Majd bin Nawaf** and big bopping **1B Jorge Cano** due to Vega's departure. The Bluebirds have one of the more exciting spring training seasons annually as potential future stars in the BBA begin to earn their stripes.

The Nashville rotation was a bit underwhelming in 2055, but certainly not two-time Nebraska winner **SP Barney Lindsay**, who led the Frick with 17 wins and posted a pretty 3.01 ERA. If the rest of the rotation returns to form and Kelly finds his, the Bluebirds could be cooking with gas. Lefties **Quirke Roddis** and **Ollie Lowry** are a great bullpen tandem and will probably continue to share closer duties. This seems a likely year for Nashville to retain control of the Heartland. Two-time Silk winning **1B Wafid Bishr** has been fairly quiet lately and is bound to get rolling sometime. Look out for the Birds.

.....CLUELESS! Frick Heartland Preview *By Mike Bauer*

.....(cont'd).....

T.C. River Monsters

General Manager: Alan Ehlers

2055 record: 95-67 (Lost Brewster 4-1)

2056 prediction: 99-63 (+4)



Losing the Brewster has the sea serpent out for vengeance!

Key Losses:

➖ RF David Simpson
(FA/???)

➖ 3B Roberto Rivera
(FA/???)

➖ SP Jose Martinez
(FA/LV)

➖ 2B Edgardo Encarnacion
(FA/RMO)

➖ C Andy Elmer
(FA/BOI)

➖ CF Bill O'Toole
(Trade/ATC)

Key Additions:

➕ 3B Alfonso Trinidad
(Trade/LV)

➕ SS Dick Walton
(FA/MTL)

➕ CF Alonso Martinez
(R5/SF)

➕ C Pepe Prieto
(FA/POR)

➕ LF Shane Webb
(Trade/ATC)

➕ 2B Francisco Arrendondo
(FA/VAN)

2055 Outlook:

GM Alan Ehlers pulled all the right levels and guided the wildcard River Monsters all the way to the Brewster. But the team did not have enough to overcome a dynastic Charm City group. The River Monsters will try to get back to the top this year, but it won't be easy in the competitive Heartland.

The Twin Cities signed extensions to some of their core players, notably 46-save closer Peter Fuller, 2B Felix Ramos and SP Yoshii Takuda, but the River Monsters also made a lot of changes and were not content to "run it back". With age a key concern, the team decided to let RF David Simpson and 3B Roberto Rivera leave in free agency. Most of the infield was completely remade, with 2B Francisco Arrendondo and SS Dick Walton arriving in free agency, and star 3B Alfonso Trinidad was acquired from Las Vegas for prospects.

Looking to increase their run production in 2056, the team signed C Pepe Prieto, a veteran who is known for his switch-hitting power. Twin Cities also acquired LF Shane Webb from Atlantic City to bolster their

outfield depth. Rule V draftee **Alonso Martinez** may also factor in, but he's still a pretty raw talent and will need to fill a reserve role or be returned.

But the Monsters strength is in their pitching staff, as that was the asset that got them into the playoffs and all the way to the Brewster last season. The group will need to fill the role of departing **SP Jose Martinez**. 25-year-old **Jerry Stone** hopes to build off an excellent 2055 showing. More great options in the rotation include **Erik Brooks**, **Edward Crutcher** and **Yoshii Takuda**. While the Monsters may lack a bona fide Nebraska-tier ace, they make up for it with overall depth and a fantastic bullpen led by **Sergio Herrera** and Fuller.

The reworked infield and the well-established pitching core should help the team stay in contention for the division. Maybe they'll make some playoff noise again in 2056.

.....CLUELESS! Frick Heartland Preview *By Mike Bauer*

.....(cont'd).....

Des Moines Kernels

General Manager: Patrick McLaughlin

2055 record: 108-54 (lost Doubleday 4-3)

2056 prediction: 98-64 (-10)



Can Des Moines repeat with another 100+ win harvest in 2056?

Key Losses:

➖ 2B/SS Larry Barkin
(FA/SEA)

➖ 1B Barney Miller
(FA/VAL)

➖ RF Aaron Haney
(FA/RMO)

➖ SP/RP Scott Davis
(FA/???)

Key Additions:

➕ 2B Dan Emerson
(R5/NSH)

➕ SP Chris Rankin
(R5/BOI)

➕ C Loren Hall
(R5/NSH)

2056 Outlook:

There's a reason this preview series is called "Clueless". In the BBA it's very hard when you are only a week into spring training to forecast which team "has it" - which sleeping giant will awaken for a fantastic season.

In 2055, that team was clearly the Kernels, who performed 25 wins better than had been anticipated here this time last season. Now, much to the chagrin of the rest of their Heartland rivals, we will need to take them much more seriously and give them big credit where it is due.

This season, the Kernels will have to find a steady replacement for **SS Larry Barkin**, who had a career year that helped catapult Des Moines. The veteran infielder took a big payday with Seattle, and it remains to be seen how Des Moines will replace that productivity at second base. Rule V selection **Dan Emerson** is a possibility, but that is a lot of responsibility for a newcomer. There is a fairly good chance that the Kernels, who still have a good amount of cap space left and who've been absolutely silent so far in free agency, will pounce and make a bargain signing before opening day.

But Barkin's loss pales in comparison to the surprising release of RF Aaron Haney following the post-season loss to Twin Cities. The eventual Sawyer Silk winner signed with Rocky Mountain and left a major hole in the outfield. And while it's true RF Jose Romero will slide in to replace Haney, Romero then will leave DH vacant and Des Moines will still need to replace Haney's annual 35+ HR and 100+ RBI. This seems to signal that a big bat may be acquired by mid-April unless there is a surprise batter in spring training who is setting the cornfields ablaze.

But no such stress is apparent on the pitching side as only Scott Davis leaves. Tommy Akers will continue to be one of the best young pitchers in the BBA and he has plenty of help in the rotation and in the pen. 100+ wins may not be in the cards with Haney's exit, but the Kernels aren't going away either.

.....CLUELESS! Frick Heartland Preview *By Mike Bauer*

.....(cont'd).....

Omaha Cyclones

General Manager: Stephen Shaw

2055 record: 95-67 (Lost Geoghegan 3-1)

2056 prediction: 91-71 (-4)



Now under new management, the Cyclones are a tough team to forecast.

Key Losses:

➖ RP Steven Flannery
(FA/NO)

➖ RF Manuel Torres
(FA/SEA)

➖ RP Juan Martinez
(FA/LBC)

➖ 1B Yo Miyamoto
(FA/???)

➖ 1B Kenan Reis
(FA/???)

Key Additions:

➕ SP Ivan Molina
(FA/GBC JER)

2056 Outlook:

In 2055, the rest of the Heartland rose up and Omaha found themselves tied at the third place in the division at the end of season. A quick exit in the postseason and the offseason departure of long-time manager Justin Niles has fans worried. Is their championship window closing? Big bats such as Luis Mendoza and Wilson Estrada remain, but the team finished second worst in batting average and struck out more than any Frick team. The pitching was pretty solid in 2055, so generating better contact at the expense of a bit of power might be the emphasis for new GM Stephen Shaw.

The losses in free agency were not too substantial for the Cyclones. It was actually their bullpen that took the biggest hit, with Juan Martinez and Steven Flannery departing after very fine 2055 campaigns. Weak-side platoon OF Manuel Torres also left, and his glove will be missed but not his sub .200 average.

The only addition in free agency thus far is former GBC starting pitcher Ivan Molina. This may be the year that the logjam in the upper minors is resolved for Omaha and multiple talented youngsters make their debut. There are some notable ones, including OF Stephen Futon, 2050 1st overall pick OF George McCoy and knuckleball starter/reliever Enzo Bouton.

Longtime catcher **Sloth Fratelli** returns, and he'll aid a pitching staff that seems to be on the rise. In addition to the newcomer Molina, the Cyclones have **Robert Wilson** and **Takashi Nakamura**. Both of those starters had great 2055 campaigns and are still in prime form. Young ace **Arturo Meza**, who made his debut last season, is also a building block for the future.

The Cyclones have the talent to stay above .500, but winning the title in a loaded Heartland seems unlikely. Shaw will need to settle the logjam in the outfield and there are a few weak spots on the team, but cap-wise Omaha is in good shape and the right moves could keep the team in contention.

.....CLUELESS! Frick Heartland Preview *By Mike Bauer*

.....(cont'd).....

Madison Wolves

General Manager: Mike Simon

2055 record: 79-83 (no playoffs)

2056 prediction: 76-86 (-3)



Can the young and hungry Wolves' feast in 2056?

Key Losses:

➖ RP Todd Stone
(FA/SA)

Key Additions:

➕ CF Nazim Uruisamoglu
(R5/EDM)

➕ CF Ronald Duggan
(R5/SF)

2056 Outlook:

Madison is a team that prides itself in building continuity and making few changes from year to year. When a vacancy arises the team is more likely to draw on their farm rather than sign a big-name veteran. Thus the drama of this offseason was more about a plethora of arbitration hearings than anything going in free agency.

This year the Wolves did have one big loss in free agency, and that was super-reliever **Todd Stone**. He leaves a ton of innings to replace. It was surprising to see the Wolves go after two young center fielders in Rule V rather than nab a possible replacement for Stone. We'll have to see how the bullpen fares without their major arm in 2056.

That change aside, there's little else to talk about except all of the Wolves' incumbents. Even with Stone's departure, the pitching side seems a bit stronger than the offense. **SP Buwono Mainaky** is close to being a young ace if he takes that next step. 35-year-old **Reynold Voermans** provides stability and veteran leadership to the rest of the rotation, which is somewhat unsettled if last year is any indication. There are some young pitchers who are trying to cut it as starters and the team is unsure which guys have it and which ones don't, hence a lot of shuffling.

The hitting is a little easier to decipher. Two-time Silk winner **RF Manobu Simizu** is locked into a contract that will keep him a Wolf until he's 40 and he's likely to finish his entire BBA Hall of Fame candidacy in Madison. He's still a very productive .300+ hitter and his big arm for right field remains intact. **Zia**

Abdul-Samad is one of the best offensive-centric catchers in the BBA and hit .322 in 2055. The infield of 2B Joe Drayton Jr, 3B Mark Shook and SS Ken Proctor so far looks pedestrian. They will all need to pick up their hitting soon or replacement could come down the road. Aging 1B Jose Hernandez had a 2055 outing with a .280 average that may be hard to replicate.

There's some talent here to consider that perhaps the Wolves could eventually give us a Des Moines-style surprise and catapult to the top of the Heartland. But that's a very high ceiling that would be difficult to reach. A status-quo finish slightly under .500 seems more likely.

CLUELESS! Frick Heartland Preview *By Mike Bauer*

.....(cont'd).....

Yellow Springs Nine

General Manager: Rob McMonigal

2055 record: 61-101 (no playoffs)

2056 prediction: 74-88 (+13)



Fans are hoping for 9+ more wins and an escape from the division basement.

Key Losses:

➖ 3B Jeremy Pickens
(FA/???)

➖ C Reggie Leeper
(FA/???)

➖ RP Philippe Dumont
(FA/???)

Key Additions:

➕ CF Arvin Duggan
(FA/CCJ)

➕ RP Brian Smith
(FA/LBC)

➕ C Parker Davenport
(FA/EDM)

➕ CF Fareed bin Sa'eed
(R5/JAX)

➕ RP Usama Awad
(Waived/CHI)

➕ SP Juan Nunez
(Trade/BOI)

2056 Outlook:

The team that finished last in the Heartland in 2055 is showing a few positive signs that they might be snapping out of their funk and starting to put something together long term.

Veterans **3B Jeremy Pickens** and **C Reggie Leeper**. But these are players who are past their prime and were asking for too much money, and it appears it was a good move for the Nine to let them walk. With those players and **RP Philippe Dumont** being the only significant departures, there's a sign that the team may be able to make some progress this year.

Center field got a lot stronger with the big signing of Jimmies' starter **Arvin Duggan**. Arvin will bring championship experience and hold down a position fielded by journeymen last year that couldn't cut it. With 4.2 WAR last season, Duggan shows no signs of slowing down and will provide consistent power and defense that is sorely needed in the Yellow Springs outfield. In addition to Duggan, Rule V pick **Fareed bin Sa'eed** is a good prospect that the Nine can bring along slowly and in a few years he could acclimate to full time play.

Catcher **Parker Davenport** provides depth behind the plate, and **SP Juan Nunez** acquired recently via trade seems like the kind of wildcard pitching prospect that just might pan out for someone.

The Nine have **1B Burhan Tahir** and **RF Nazeeh Ragheb** who are good contact hitters who can make pitchers work. The rest of the offense is more of your three-true-outcome type of players. Adding Duggan and bin Sa'eed to this mix might make the offense a little better.

On the pitching side, **Alejandro Morin** needs to rebound from a horrific 2055 and prove he still has top 3 starter ability in the league. Last year's Rule V pick, **SP Cory McGuire** has some very good upside and could also pay dividends as soon as this year.

There's a few good pieces to start with in Yellow Springs and the management seems to have the right approach. It's going to be a long road, but I think the team will make steady progress in 2056.

.....CLUELESS! Frick Heartland Preview *By Mike Bauer*

.....(cont'd).....

Louisville Sluggers

General Manager: Brian Pinnell

2055 record: 68-94 (no playoffs)

2056 prediction: 70-92 (+2)



Does future Hall of Fame 1B Semei Kwakou have anything left for a career finale?

Key Losses:

➖ RP Manuel Cruz
(FA/SEA)

Key Additions:

➕ RP Tom Bennett
(FA/VAN)

➕ RP James Kidd
(FA/PHX)

2055 Outlook:

Louisville had a surprising downturn in 2055. They somehow inverted their record from 94-68 to 68-94. Fans in Kentucky are miffed and are wondering what happened to their team. To make matters worse, little changes were made in the offseason. Thus, there will be pressure on a lot of veterans to return to form, or some changes could be made. The team is capped out and the team may need an overhaul if things go poorly again.

Closer **Manuel Cruz** left in free agency and is now with Seattle. But with him at 34 and having an off year in 2055, the team thought it best to move on. A pair of younger and less proven arms in **Tom Bennett** and **James Kidd** will try to fill the vacancy.

One of the big reasons for Louisville's cap problems is **1B Semei Kwakou**. He'll be making \$26.5 million, but at least he is in the final year of his large deal. Last year he took a sudden downturn, hitting a career-low .253. That was a horrid sight for a player that once won the Silk award in his youth and has a .319 average in his long and storied career with the Sluggers. This season will help sort out if Kwakou has anything left, and that could guide his decision to return to Louisville at a reduced rate or perhaps retire.

3B Mal Fountain will try to rebound after a disappointing first season in Louisville. If not, DH Jeffrey Smith will need to carry the offense again in 2056. Last year he tried to keep the team in contention with a .303 average, 34 HR and 133 RBI, but he had very little help in the lineup around him. On the pitching side, outside of a solid #1 man in Greg Shaw, the Sluggers seem like a team in flux. 27-year-old starters Tim Gibbs and Antonio Valdez are in contract years and coming off of very poor 2055 outings. Perhaps playing for their next contract will spur a rebound.

If young SP Callum Martin takes a big step forward in his sophomore season, and the Sluggers find a way to hit better around Smith, a modest improvement could occur in 2056. But another sub .500 finish in the competitive Heartland seems very likely.

.....CLUELESS! Frick Heartland Preview *By Mike Bauer*

.....(cont'd).....

Chicago Black Sox

General Manager: Kevin Chmura

2055 record: 70-92 (no playoffs)

2056 prediction: 66-96 (-4)



Can the Black Sox make more than incremental progress in 2056?

Key Losses:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ➖ RF Cordell Vaughn
(FA/???) | ➖ SP Ernesto Delgado
(FA/???) | ➖ SP Francisco Ortiz
(FA/ATC) |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|

Key Additions:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ➕ SP Richard Bullock
(Trade/CCJ) | ➕ SP Anthony Jones
(FA/RMO) | ➕ C Clinton Tyler
(FA/VAL) |
| ➕ RP Art Cherry
(Waived/ATC) | ➕ RP Paul Berry
(Waived/RMO) | ➕ RP Ken Foreman
(R5/POR) |

2056 Outlook:

The Black Sox somehow improved their record by 3 games despite finishing with the Frick's worst offense. They won a slew of sweaty games as evidenced by their +9 differential. Fans need to be on the lookout for a worse season unless this luck holds.

Thus it's a good thing that GM Kevin Chmura isn't counting on luck. The team traded for recent champion [Richard Bullock](#) (Charm City) to bolster the rotation, and also signed [Anthony Jones](#) (Rocky Mountain) in free agency. The Sox are counting on these two pitchers from very accomplished Johnson teams to provide can-do and leadership for the Sox so-so pitching unit. The team also decided to invest in the catcher position with [Clinton Tyler](#) now on board. He's known more for his defense, but the lefty once in a while has a successful game against righty pitchers.

Where the Black Sox run into problems is offense. No player hit more than 16 home runs last year. And one of them, [RF Cordell Vaughn](#) left in free agency. The team is currently biding their time with a cap

total of just \$45 million. It seems like the strategy might be to go all-in on free agency once they are happy with some of their young foundation. The 2056 campaign does not appear to be that year. Fans are clamoring for some offensive signings with plenty of experienced talent available on the market. But management is being very deliberate about any commitment to veteran help outside of the starting rotation.

If there is a bright spot on the offense, it might be 3B Jeremy Starks. The switch-hitter averaged .281 with 3.0 WAR last season and is only 26. SS Matthew Hewat has a good glove and can at least avoid striking out at the plate. It's hard to see the offense progressing much at all this year though. The team hit an anemic .241 in 2055 and a repeat performance seems quite possible.

The team does have young future aces Carlos Moya and Dirk Bessi in the fold who are rounding out nicely. The organizational spending and buy-in from management to participate in free agency might finally arrive when they hit their prime. That's likely a few years away.

Pacific Division



HAWAII TROPICS

2055 Record: 85-77

PITCHING: Elvin Hilliard came over from Boise in a mid-2055 deal, and now looms as the staff ace. Semi Gurani and Ricardo Tapia should slot in nicely behind him, then Troy Reynolds. The fifth starter may be up in the air. Gerardo Rosa is listed as a starter though he's never started a BBA game. Looking at his ratings, though, there's no reason he can't do it. The bullpen is pretty nondescript except for young lefty Bill Ritz, who might be good enough to drag the whole pen up a notch.

CATCHING: The Islanders employ two excellent glove men here: Katsumi Matsumoto, who usually hits around .220, and Frank McMillan, who doesn't even hit that well, but whose willingness to take a walk still makes him a valuable piece.

INFIELD: Karunamaya Makarand has plus power and a nice glove; two key attributes for a first baseman to have. Adhyapayana Mehta, plays second, bats leadoff, steals bases and hits doubles. He's the real deal. Thomas Kramer is now 35, but he still fields shortstop well and gives you a little more offense than most glove-first shortstops do. Switch-hitting Mitch Wareham supplanted Will Patterson at third base. Adam Backhouse, a GBC legend turned BBA star, will back up 1B and be the stellar DH he always has been.

OUTFIELD: Left fielder Shafiq Zahir provides big-time power and good defense at a pretty reasonable price. Next to him in center is Angelo Lucchesi; his .280 batting average was mostly singles-driven, but the glove is the real deal. Open auditions for the right field slot would include youngsters Carlos Sanchez, Russ McHaney and Vicente Mendez.

OUTLOOK: Too many holes here to prevail in the rough Pacific Division; put me down for 80-82.



LONG BEACH STARS

2055 Record: 78-84

PITCHING: Long Beach's pitching staff is really starting to take shape with plenty of depth. Lucas Wood, Barry Short, Eng-hee Kim, Lance Harrison, and Joe MacLeod look like the 5 that will begin the season in the rotation. All good pitchers, but nobody stand out amongst the others as a true ace. However, the team is prepared if anyone goes down with injuries and can turn to Sam Rutgers or Johnny Cochrane in a bind. Travis Wilson was expected to pitch somewhere in the rotation, but his spring injury made those plans easier to cancel. The bullpen is good, as well, with Scott Everard and Luis Manuel Rodriguez closing out games.

INFIELD: Farid bin Mubarek is the current backstop, but just until Rhys Atticus can prove he can hit enough to be called up. Atticus is expected to be an elite defensive catcher, but has not been able to hit consistently at any level thus far. Keith Kerfoot has averaged 30 HR a year over the past two seasons and will be the mainstay at 1B, but he's about the only source of power in the infield. Austin Nolan and Terry Cole are amazing prospects without real positions. They'll be fighting with Kerfoot for 1B duties next year. At secondbase you have Ryan Geauxinue and Steveland Morris. Both are good players, but Morris has proven he doesn't have the hands to play shortstop effectively. Insert Reynante Alvero – a glove first SS with great range and LHB. He can play anywhere in the infield and make it look easy. Alejandro Cordova look like the starting 3B and the Surfers hope they can get another 3.4 WAR season out of him.

OUTFIELD: Emilio Reyes was drafted in the first round of the 2054 draft to play CF and he will do just that. The Paki Rican has great range and can hit for enough average to earn the position. Glenn Fox hits righties hard and will be the team's starting LF, while veteran, Fernando Castillo, mans RF. At 39, Castillo is still producing with 3.1 WAR last season. There isn't much depth here, but the team has plenty of cap room to fill in the roster with another impact outfielder.

DESIGNATED HITTER: As previously mentioned, Cole and Nolan don't really have a position, so they will fight for the DH role.

OUTLOOK: This is a solid squad that will compete for a wildcard position. Pitching is great, but the offense is a little lackluster. The Surfers finish just short of the playoffs with 89 wins



Portland Lumberjacks

GM- Chris Wilson (7teen)

2055 Season 62-100

Key Losses- 2B Felipe Reyna (FA 3.4 WAR), LF Jiao-long Ma (FA 2.1 WAR), SP Mike MacRobb (FA 2 WAR), LF Ramon Paga (FA 0.7 WAR), RF Juan Rodriguez (FA 0.6 WAR), 17 total players for a loss of 10.1 WAR

Gains- CF Pedro Rosales (FA MTL 4.8 WAR), SP Ken Sproul (FA ATC 2.5 WAR), RP Zach Davis FA SFB 0.9 WAR), RP Francisco Franco (FA SA 0.8 WAR), RP Javier De Jesus (FA RMO 0.6 WAR), 9 total players for 9.9 WAR

2056 Season

Starting Pitchers- The Portland Lumberjacks bring back four starters from their 2055 season and add two from free agency. Randolph Marable and Ken Sparks made 33 starts each last season with mixed results. Marable was a bit more consistent than Sparks and had a 13-12 record while Sparks struggled to a 6-18 season. Umayr Suhayl made 5 starts and had 25 total appearances last season but pitched well in his 65 innings with a 3.74 ERA and a 5-3 record. He had some help from his defense as his FIP was 4.30. These four will be joined by free agents Cristian Burgos, Ken Sproul, and Zach Davis. Burgos last pitched in 2054 with the New Orleans. He made 33 starts that season going 11-10 with a 5.64 ERA and a 5.26 FIP. Ken Sproul made 28 starts last season in Atlantic City posting a 2-13 record with a 4.45 ERA and a 4.38 FIP. Davis made 32 starts with San Fernando last season and was 8-12 with a 5.75 ERA. This group will need some their defense to be good and some good luck.

Bullpen- GM Chris Wilson added some arms to the bullpen in the offseason with signings of Francisco Franco, Michael Kalil, Javier De Jesus, and Matt McCartney. Franco made 7 starts last season for San Antonio but also had 26 saves and a hold in relief. De Jesus pitched 101.1 innings last season making 13 starts and 31 appearances between Las Vegas and Rocky Mountain. McCartney mase 6 starts and 47 appearances last season going 8-8 with 2 save and 6 holds. He had a bloated 6.51 ERA with a 4.89 FIP. Rafael Gomez is listed as a closer but can start. He mase 15 starts last season for Portland while adding 30 relief appearances. He pitched 112.2 innings with a 4.79 ERA and a 4.32 FIP.

Position Players- The Lumberjacks will begin the season with Joe Bradshaw behind the plate with former Seattle Storm catcher Juan Cabrera as his backup. Chris Wilson will have a decision to make in about five months when Felipe Delgado is ready to return from a broken elbow suffered in spring training.

Aging 1B Ricardo Yanez is the starter and may need Tynan Potter as a platoon-mate.

Jose Sanchez is the probable second baseman, but Shane Smith is there in case of slump or injury.

Willibald Akbulut is another ageing player in this infield and will take his position at third on opening day. His heir, Hideaki Ohayashi has had a tremendous spring but will need a small bit of seasoning in AAA but may get a call up this season.

Slick fielding Sid Turcotte returns to Portland for his 4th season with the Lumberjacks Organization. He played much better last season, and the team is counting on at least one more.

The outfield will be patrolled by Pedro Bustamante, Pedro Rosales, and Carlos Flores. Rosales (32 HR) and Bustamante (29 HR) combined for 61 homers last season.

Final Words- The Lumberjacks are an old team and have more old guys stored in AAA. They do have a couple of exciting prospects in A ball in C Allan Uecker and 2B Edward Roundfield IV. Uecker is an outstanding defensive catcher and Roundfield is a future power bat.

2055 Prediction 69-93



SACRAMENTO MAD POPES

2055 Record: 95-67

PITCHING: Carlos Flores...Thomas Turner...Joe King...Robert Hanson...Ruben Vazquez. Go ahead; try to find a weak link there. I'll wait... You can't, can you? (The sad part is, I at different times owned both Flores and King, and I'm still helping pay Flores's salary). Felix Vidaca (who I also traded away) is an able swing man, and Ayala, Ramos, and closer Michael Craig make the pen a position of strength on a team that has a lot of them.

CATCHING: John Kinsella has no power or speed to speak of, but his defense more than makes up for it. He's like having a great mechanic to tune up your fleet of Rolls Royces (aka the pitching staff). Backup Don Hunt is also a strong glove man. Maybe there's something for the rest of us to learn here, eh?

INFIELD: First baseman Bob Dempsey is probably a placeholder until prospects Joe Jackson and Fareeq bin Su'ud are ready; in the case of Jackson, that might be soon. You can write 30 steals and a BA close to .300 down for 2B Dallas Dixon pretty much every year. Shortstops who can both hit and field at a high level are scarce in the BBA. The Mopes have one in Badr Isam, and they've rewarded him with a lucrative deal that runs through 2059. Juan Vera did not show well in a brief major league trial last year, but he's only 21 and there are plenty of tools there (wasn't Plenty O'Toole the name of a Bond girl?).

OUTFIELD: Glove-only guy Don Keagle is the incumbent in center. LF will be some permutation of Keithing Law, Lee Stone and the currently injured Curt Lehman. Okyay Nisanci has been a little bit better than just Okyay in right field. The speedy Unem Ploid looms as the DH; he's had some big years, and he's still under 30. Akeem Joffer is even speedier, but not quite ready yet.

OUTLOOK: There are some really good teams in the Pacific, so it will be hard to win 100, but what the heck... put me down for 100-62. We're not going to make any snide postseason remarks here; we're too classy for that.



SAN FERNANDO BEARS

2055 Record: 75-87

Pitching

The Bears pitching staff will be headlined once again by [Dan Small](#) and [Shea Valance](#), though they hope [Alexander Swanson](#) can not only repeat his success found in his first full season, but build upon. The 24-year-old features an arsenal of pitches and keeps the ball on the ground; a skill especially valuable Chico's Bail Bonds Field and their fair poles set just 279 feet away from home plate.

Veteran, [Scott Davis](#) was signed to a \$12M deal, but showed signs of decline as soon as he hit the field for the Bears, so he might not be the best candidate for the rotation. However, the other options are [Fernando Ferretti](#) and [Bruhier Najeeb](#), so Davis doesn't really have the stiffest competition. The Bears will be hoping top pitching prospect, [Keith Mays](#), will develop into a middle of the rotation starter, but he will begin the season on the IL. [Candrata Parmar](#)] got a cup of coffee last season, but he, too, will begin the season on the IL. Parmar has the most upside of any of San Fernando's starters, but shouldn't be relied upon as an ace. The rotation is filled with uncertainty and GM Kurt Imber can't be too confident with the men taking the hill each night.

It's not like the manager can turn to the bullpen early, either. With no lockdown relievers, the Bears will have to squeeze the most out of the little talent they have in the pen. [Joel Woollams](#) and [Paul Norton](#) will likely be the best two options for save chances, which should make Frick League batters drool with chances for the late game heroics. The rest of the bullpen is filled out with warm bodies, but by no means is there a reliable guy in the bunch.

Infield

The signing of [Joe Zwicker](#) was a nice one and his framing ability should help disguise some of the pitching staff's weaknesses. His left-handed bat is valuable and is coming off two straight seasons with an OPS+ over 100. Slugger, [Francisco Martinez](#) was signed to replace Tyler Ober at 1B and put up 9.2 WAR for the Storm over the past two seasons. [Marcello Custello](#) has been a consistent fixture in San Fernando and has settled into his role as 2B nicely after struggling to play shortstop early in his career. He does a little bit of everything and averaged 2.5 WAR a season for the past two years. Imber is gambling that [Pepe Espinosa](#) is able to stay on the field for enough games to make an impact, but his best shortstop days are behind him even if he does stay healthy. You could spend \$7 million worse ways. Expect a platoon at the hot corner with [Ron Ritchie](#) and [Murray Healey](#). The pair won't hurt you, but don't expect a ton of production.

Outfield

[Jamie Angwin](#) appears to be the best option to patrol CF, but his range isn't gonna get the job done in the massive baseball boneyard in centerfield. [Jim Young](#) and [Hyeon-uk Hong](#) are my two best bets to man the corner outfield positions, but one of them will be losing a job when top prospect, [LF Michael Schultz](#), arrives in the Valley in a few weeks. Schultz had an impressive spring and now it is just a matter of service time before he become the Bears next star. Regardless, the lack of defense in the outfield is worrisome.

Designated Hitter

To be honest, pick any outfielder not named Angwin and insert him into the DH role. The Bears have some mashers, but most of them can't play a lick of defense. [Tynan Rose](#), [Vio Gal](#), and [Don Moore](#) are all options and I expect Moore to get the majority of the time here. [Naoaki Kurioka](#) is another candidate for the position versus southpaws.

Overall, the Bears are still an incomplete rebuilding team. They might score a lot of runs, but they'll give up far more on the defensive side. I see the Bears taking a step back this season and finishing with 70 wins, five fewer than last season. It might be a fun team to watch, but will be Bad News Bears for the most part.

SEATTLE STORM



2055 Record: 66-96

PITCHING: The Storm pitching staff took a hit this spring when emerging ace Lucio Suarez was forced to go in the injured list with shoulder inflammation. His return in 2056 is doubtful. The cupboard is not bare, however; young star Samuel Nebraska and steady Doug Eckhoff could be starters for a lot of BBA teams. The back of the rotation could be an issue, however; Neither Joe Jackson nor Enrique Aguilar inspires much confidence. Aguilar is a favorite of scouts, but has yet to translate his talent into results. He's only 25, so no one's giving up on him.

Like the rotation, the bullpen suffered a shredded shoulder this spring. This one belongs to Manuel Cruz, who's not quite as essential as Suarez, but still... Cliff Crudge is a fine closer, and there should be enough other pieces laying around so that the pen, if not a great strength, should at least not be a great weakness. Mahmut Binark is the future here, but he's got quite a ways to go.

CATCHING: The much-traveled Kaz Saito had himself a nice little year, batting .311. He's 36, though, and 2055 looks more like a triumphant farewell tour than anything one could count on happening again. Backup Rafael Mendoza is almost as old as Saito, and has been mostly a GBC in recent years.

INFIELD: 21-year-old 1B Clyde Hughes has barely reached AAA, but as I write this he's listed as the starting first baseman. He might hit for average with a bit of gap power, but his defense and home run chops leave something to be desired. The other listed 1B is Frank Lee. Frank Lee? I don't give a damn... 2B is manned ably by Wilson Andrade, who hit .359 and can provide splendid defense at second, short or third. Larry Barkin was signed as a free agent after some nice years in Des Moines, he's similar to Andrade in a slightly lower key. Run-ming Gui plays third and hits homers by the bunch. If he could improve his contact rate or eye a bit, he could become a star. The aptly named Ab Elders is around to provide depth.

OUTFIELD: The excitement here is 22-year-old Michael Buckley, who looks ready to burst onto the scene in a big way. He's been moving methodically through the system, one level at a time, and now he's ready. He'll play right, and opposite him will be decorated BBA veteran Theo Bourges. In between- well, there are several center fielders on the roster, but it's hard to get excited about any of them. If someone

like Robert Shephard or Kevin McKnight would step forward, the Storm would really be cooking; they might even move Bourges to 1B, where he would excel.

PREDICTION: Honestly, it's hard to see how this team did so poorly last season. If Suarez were healthy, I'd pick them as a sure wild card candidate; as it is, I'll still put them down for a 17 game improvement to 83-79.



VALENCIA STARS

2055 Record: 74-88

PITCHING: Southpaw, Hotha Buyoya, replaces Eddie Armstrong in the rotation after signing a 3 year deal. The acquisition of Adam Hines in the Daniel Pepper deadline trade seems to be paying off huge dividends as the righty seems to have taken his game to the next level and looks like he could be the Stars ace of the future. Mike Alexander is a solid pitcher being paid really well, but he might be able to loosen up and improve upon last season now that the rotation won't be so dependent on him. Esteban Cruz looks to build off a strong year and should provide decent numbers despite not going deep into games. The Plainsman, Ken Arroyo, is a shell of his former self, but should slot in nicely towards the end of the rotation. Former superstar, Bill Constable, will be an insurance option, but should be good out of the bullpen if not being used as a starter. Speaking of bullpen, the Stars brought in Lindsay Barber to help Martin Roman lock down games. Pitching looks like it is deep this year and the Stars hope their new trainer will keep these arms healthy.

INFIELD: Clinton Tyler leaves as the team's primary catcher, leaving most of the duties to Sergei Bobrovsky, who hit 17 HR last year despite only starting 89 games. Barney Miller was signed in free agency to play 1B and he will be a reliable option against RHP. Prabhu Vogelsang and Ani Meena(...) will split time at 2B. They are both plus defenders with decent enough on-base skills. Quintin Trewartha has incredible range up the middle at SS and remains valuable despite not being able to hit much. The club hopes Tim Bartlett really breaks through this season and supplants himself as the team's next franchise player.

OUTFIELD: Centerfield will be patrolled by Habeeb bin Ameen and he is one of the league's finest. He surprised many with an OPS+ of 112 before missing the final two months of the season. Ulvi Basgil and Zhi-jun Xin will plug the corners, but you'll see some Koray Kapkin as well. No superstars out there, but the bunch of outfielders they've got aren't too shabby.

DESIGNATED HITTER: Mark Kimball and Carlos Souza will split time at DH. Kimball smashes RHP and Souza's switch hitting ability will be valuable and he might see more time against pitchers with low control due to his ability to draw walks.

OUTLOOK: I like the Stars a lot this season, but then again, I'm always high on them on paper only to be let down to a laundry list of injuries. I'm glass half full on the new trainer and keeping them healthy. With about \$10M in cap space available, I see the Stars obtaining an impact bat before the trade deadline at one of the COF spots or in the infield. In a division with a bunch of 'mid' teams as the kids would say, Valencia reigns supreme and is crowned 'mid king' and 92 wins and a wildcard berth.



VANCOUVER MOUNTIES

2055 Record: 84-78

PITCHING: Phil Cole has blossomed like a flower since leaving the old El Paso hitter's paradise. He led the league in walks in 2055, but still accrued 3.6 WAR. Lefty Armando Rodriguez and righty Gamal bin Badr are currently the #2 and #3 starters, they're adequate if not particularly exciting. Fourth starter Marcus Olivares pitched poorly in Vegas but seems to have found his mojo in the Pacific Northwest. Maybe he didn't like the heat. Youngster Dave Cain is listed as the #5 guy, but it's not hard to see a scenario where he moves up. The pen is led by closer Xuan Ngo, Rodney Keely, and maybe even GBC legend Knox Sked, who still hasn't been able to gain traction in the BBA.

CATCHING: In addition to having a great name, Davenport Hinkle has a great glove and light-tower power. It would behoove him to stay healthy, because backups Woody York and Ramon Perez have neither of those things.

INFIELD: After sitting out 2055, 1B Manny Toledo returns to his spot this year. When last seen, he was a .233 hitter, so journeyman Bob Irwin was brought in from Charlotte as insurance. Irwin may more likely end up at second, where his competition would be significantly weaker. Ewan Allman, the lost Allman Brother, can play all over the diamond, but slots in best at shortstop. Third baseman Tony Frost was a solid 5.0 WAR guy last year; he has a gun for an arm. It seems like they could use another middle infielder, but maybe I'm missing something here...

OUTFIELD: Eduardo Correa did well in a small sample size last year, and will get a shot in left. Ramon Moreno is a defense-first center fielder; a mold they never seem to break in OOTP. He does steal a bunch of bases. RF Elmer Willis hasn't had a chance to build much of a big league resume, but he brings power, speed and arm to the party, which sounds like a right fielder to me. Jorge Gutierrez is the incumbent DH; he's classic high-power DH.

OUTLOOK: This seems like a .500 team to me; if I believed in the middle infield a bit more I'd go higher. I'll predict they duplicate their 84-78 record from last year.

2056 GBC PREVIEW



ATHENS FIGHTING CENTAURS

2055 Record: 99-63

PITCHING: An area that needs a little work. Jin-Suk Im needs to throw more strikes. Youngster Eduardo Romero may help, but the other rotation candidates are all on the wrong side of 30.

HITTING: Quinn Greene, the greatest player in GBC history, is a nice place to start. And it doesn't stop there; the first five hitters in the order should all be good, and the other four should be at least okay.

OUTLOOK: *Very rosy. The team will win a lot, and fans in the outfield bleachers will catch a lot of Centaur home runs.*



BUENOS AIRES BRISAS

2055 Record: 64-98

PITCHING: A new broom has swept clean here; among the projected starters only Ostoja Omeragic took the mound for the Brisas in 2055. There's some hope here, but it will take some time to get it all sorted out and find out who's the real deal and who isn't

HITTING: The Brisas scored the fewest runs of any GBC team in 2055. Youngster Isacco Aglietti will help fix that, hopefully. 37-year-old Per Bakhuis was signed to play shortstop; he's aging like fine cheese, but may still have a bit left in the tank.

OUTLOOK: *Eventually there will have to be a total teardown and rebuild; for now, a lineup full of oldsters will try to hold the fort.*



CAIRO PHAROAHS

2055 Record: 94-68

PITCHING: Grigore Balas throws four plus pitches and looked at times like an ace in waiting last year. The rest of the rotation shows promise as well, and Jason Hone is a fine closer. Ricardo Quadrado will be fun to watch; he's 37 and hasn't pitched in the majors since 2052, but he's been lights-out in AAA.

HITTING: 1B Kyung-suk Yi can go Quadrado one better; he hasn't been in the majors since 2051, but he's a career .334 hitter in AAA. The question is at catcher, where Luis Colon has never hit, and Ramon Camacho may have aged out of the position.

OUTLOOK: *Well, they're the defending champs, so I'd say the outlook is pretty darn good.*



JERUSALEM HEBREW HAMMERS

2055 Record: 86-76

PITCHING: Everybody's okay, but no one's outstanding. If I were to bet on someone to take a step forward, it would be 24-year-old curveballer Afzul Chishti, with Paris Zervakos right behind him. Right now, the Hammers have a 17-year-old kid listed as their closer, which would be pretty gutsy if true.

HITTING: Catcher Patrick Faber is a solid base to build on, and prospect Callum Montgomerie will make it to the Show at some point and hit some homers. Nice to see long-time Brewster figure Tomas Guillen get onto a roster for his 20th year in professional ball.

OUTLOOK: *With Athens and Cairo in the league, it's going to take more than "just okay" which is where the Hammers are. A jolt to the system is needed.*



LONDON MONARCHS

2055 Record: 92-70

PITCHING: Pretty darn good. Ielemia Faletose is an actual ace, and Borque, Joo and Yamamoto are solid behind him. The #5 slot is a bit shakier; bin Zuhair had a nice spring training, but I'm not sold. You could say the same about most of the pen

HITTING: RF Faical Engeitado has crushed the ball as a part-timer in '53 and '55. In '54 he got a full time job and the results were less impressive. He'll share an outfield with Josh Koka, who hit 15 homers in a half-time role last season. 2B would seem to be an open wound right now, but maybe there's a plan I don't see.

OUTLOOK: *If pitching is 80% of the game, or whatever it is they say, the Monarchs should be all right this year.*



SAO PAULO PILOTS

2055 Record: 77-85

PITCHING: Owen Geddes has been a force in the GBC seemingly forever, and has the contract to prove it. Last year was not one of his best, but he'll be given a lot of rope. Watch out for closer Ivan Ruiz, who appears to be primed for a breakout season.

HITTING: OF Wan-Ling Koo should be a Rookie of the Year candidate if he can overcome his lackadaisical work ethic. Teenage first baseman Katsunan Hashimoto is also one to watch, if not now, then soon. 3B Ron Paul should provide veteran leadership.

OUTLOOK: *If a couple of the young position players step up, I'd say an improvement to .500 isn't out of the question.*



SYDNEY SHARKS

2055 Record: 63-99

PITCHING: Niegloslaw Woywitka has all the stuff to be one of the premier starters in the GBC, and having just turned 24, there's a lot to like. Another 24-year-old, Dorian Tzannetaklis, seems destined to be a solid starter as well. Workhorse Arapeta Ebena heads the bullpen; he's the only pitcher on the roster making more than 600K.

HITTING: Seems like every good player on this team is 24; here's another one. OF Milojica Kraljevic was an on-base machine in the minors. 1B Harry Stamper and 2B Geaney Fay are two high-salaried veterans counted on to lead all the younger talent.

OUTLOOK: *There's no way to put a positive spin on the team's 63-99 record from last year, but they have enough young talent to make their fans dream of happier times ahead.*



TOKYO PEARLS

2055 Record: 73-89

PITCHING: Umar Dogar is entering his sixth season in Tokyo and is still only 27. He led the league in WHIP and BABIP last year, and he's a good starting point for a staff. Alonso Blanco, last seen with Seattle in 2052, will slot in behind him. Huan Cheng (as in "Everybody Huang Cheng tonight") is also a plus.

HITTING: Nobody here to throw your hat into the air about, although Manchu Kim could be that guy when he's ready. The current everyday lineup has only two guys under 30, and they're 29 and 28.

OUTLOOK: *Like several other GBC teams, the Pearls are in need of a youth movement, especially in the everyday lineup. Here's hoping they can get that accomplished while their pitching staff is still good.*



*Good luck to all
Brewster
GMs...*

*Hope your
2056 season is
“Pitch Perfect”!*

Anna Kendrick