



SAN DIEGO UNION POST

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One signing, no trades, and a season slipping away

BY TRINA BOSANKO · SAN DIEGO UNION POST

Here is the complete list of everything this front office did between November 1 and today: signed Justin Curry on March 4 for two years and \$6.5 million.

That is it. One name. No trades, at any level, in the offseason or since. A club that went 77-85 last year and has the 16th-highest payroll in baseball at \$145.5 million looked at its roster in December and decided it was fine.

It is 21-27, and it has lost eight of its last ten, and it has scored 176 runs, which is 29th of 32 teams.

Look at who is being paid to produce those runs.

Jose Marulanda is owed \$27.2 million this season and is hitting .219. Craig Turcios is 34, is owed \$13 million through 2033, and is hitting .216 with a .262 on-base percentage. Joaquin Manriquez is 34, is owed \$9 million, and is hitting .180. Craig Noftall is 33, is owed \$8.5 million, and is hitting .195 with a .221 on-base percentage, which means he has drawn six walks in 165 plate appearances. Jack Withers is owed \$9 million and is hitting .217. Tyler Elgie is hitting .204.

Six hitters. Roughly \$67 million. Not one of them above .220.

This team's batting average of .227 ranks 30th. Its on-base percentage ranks 29th. Its slugging percentage ranks 28th. There is no category in which this lineup is average and there is no player in it under the age of 25 getting regular work.

Thirty-two years of building by trade and by checkbook, five Most Valuable Player awards purchased, zero Rookies of the Year ever developed, and this is what the method looks like when the checks stop landing: a lineup of 33-year-olds hitting .200 with no one behind them.

The schedule does not explain it either. San Diego went 18-18 inside the division, dead even, and 3-9 since the crossover. The moment this roster had to face somebody outside the Ruby, it fell apart.

Now the one genuinely excellent thing in this organization, and note how it got here.

Al Charles is 25 years old. He has struck out 111 batters, which is the most of any pitcher in The Big League. He is 7-3 with a 3.09 earned run average and a 0.90 WHIP over 67 innings, the most on the staff. He makes \$3.9 million.

He arrived in a trade in March 2031. Somebody else developed him.

Behind him the rotation is Gordie Wheeler at 5.07, Alex Guerra at 6.09 and 1-7, Antonio Duran at 4.21. Bryce Dragic is 39 years old, has a Cy Young Award from a long time ago, and has a 2.51 earned run average in 18 relief appearances, which is the second-best thing on this pitching staff.

The bullpen has blown two saves all season, the fewest of any club in baseball. That is the one number in this entire report that reflects well on somebody currently employed here.

Chujiro Doi is hitting .299 with a .474 slugging percentage and is 33 and is in the final year of his deal, and he is the only hitter on this roster anybody would take a phone call about.

The road record is 8-16. The record against clubs outside this division but inside the conference is 3-9. The run differential is minus-50.

Alex W. has run this baseball team since 2001, and there is nothing on the record explaining why a \$145.5 million roster with the 29th-best offense in baseball went an entire winter without a single transaction. Draw from that what everyone in this press box has already drawn from it.

There are, for the record, some numbers at the lower levels. There is also one set of them somebody in that front office should be made to explain.

Jessie Hughes, the seventh overall pick in 2029, is 21 and 5-0 with a 1.53 earned run average over 53 innings at Jackson. He is the best thing this organization owns. He is not the problem.

Medina is the problem. Jesus Vasques is hitting .195. Willie Perez is at .186. Cullen Judy is at .203. Andre Rumbley is at .217. Cesar Castro is carrying an 8.62. Five men this club has spent years telling this city about, all at Triple-A, all failing at once, on a team that is 11-25.

Justin Dingman has a 1.83 at Medina. Rich Kemp and Bob Prosser, both taken last June, are both under 2.50 at High-A. Tyler Joyner is hitting .321 at Medina and Chris Rasmussen .357 at St. Joseph.

Somebody ought to be asked what happened at Medina this spring.

Those are box scores from cities most of this readership could not find on a map, and this organization has turned very few of those lines into big-league regulars. Not one Rookie of the Year in franchise history.

Hughes may be the exception. The rest can come back when one of them is playing here.

The deadline is two months away. This roster has a 25-year-old leading the league in strikeouts on a \$3.9 million contract, six expiring deals belonging to men hitting .220, and a front office whose entire winter was one signing in March.

Somebody is going to have to explain that, and the explaining should start before July, not after.