



SPOKANE CHRONICLE

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Spokane is 14-34 and its best arm is 22 at Triple-A

BY HAL ONDRUSEK · SPOKANE CHRONICLE

Jonathan Montano is 22 years old, he is at Walla Walla, and he has struck out 36 men across 44 1/3 innings for a club that has lost 26 of 36. His earned run average is 4.87 and it is the last thing anybody in this organization looks at. He is the best pitcher in this organization by a clear margin and most of this city has not heard his name.

Behind him, Jordan Matamoros has an 8.28 at the same level, which is a figure about a bad Triple-A club as much as about a pitcher. Alex Bueso has a 2.19 in 12 1/3. Eric Clark has a 3.57 at Sandpoint. Johnny Carrera is 19 at Tacoma and has not thrown enough to report.

Toby Newman was a sixteenth-round pick in 2027, which is the round where organizations stop paying attention, and he has a .400 on-base percentage across 120 plate appearances at Sandpoint at 22. He is the closest position player in this system to being ready, and being ready is a relative term.

The rest of the report is batting averages. Matthew Lockwood has a .453 on-base percentage at Tacoma. George Shoemaker is hitting .369 there. Caleb Gorgonio, a second-round pick in 2026 who arrived here in March, is at .350. Joe Smiddy is at .315. David Cruz has a 3.19 over 48 innings at Sandpoint, John LaPeer a 2.82 at Walla Walla, Benito Rodriguez a 1.35.

They are useful men and several of them will play in this ballpark. None of them changes what this organization is.

The one who might has not thrown a pitch yet. Aaron Myers is 17 and at Yakima, which has not opened its season.

Now the big-league club, and it has to be said plainly because the numbers are not close to anything.

Spokane went 12-24 inside the division and 2-10 since the crossover, which is the worst mark in baseball since the schedule opened up. Both halves say the same thing.

Spokane is 14-34. That is tied for the worst record in The Big League. The pitching staff has a 5.31 earned run average, which is 32nd of 32, the worst in baseball. It has walked 191 batters, which is also 32nd, the most in baseball. The starting rotation's earned run average is 5.98, which is 31st.

The lineup has drawn 104 walks. That is the fewest of any team in the league by a margin of 15. Its on-base percentage of .286 is 31st. It has stolen 11 bases, 31st.

Fewest walks drawn and most walks allowed. Both extremes, both this club, in the same season. There is not much to interpret there. A team that cannot command the strike zone on either side of the ball is going to lose about two of every three, and it has.

Vince Collins is 0-7 with a 7.39 earned run average and has walked 22 men in 35 innings. Keith Davis is 1-7 with a 7.34. Luis Meza is 0-4 with a 7.71 and has walked 22 in 39 2/3. Alex Caldera has walked 30 men in 35 2/3 innings out of the bullpen. Those four are 1-18 between them.

Tyler Holman is the exception and deserves to be named for it. He is 26, makes the league minimum, was a 2027 draft pick out of this system, and has a 2.98 earned run average with 60 strikeouts across 11 starts on a staff where nobody else is under 4.60. He has been given three wins to show for it.

At the plate, Shane Romans is hitting .277 with seven home runs at the league minimum and Jeremy Olivas has 10 home runs and 31 runs batted in. Joe Kavka is 24 and hitting .271. Edgar Hernandez is 34 and has eight home runs. After those four it falls away fast: Frank Gehrman is at .193 in 206 plate appearances, Wil Reyna is at .182 with a .194 on-base percentage, Will Schopf is at .213, Jose Serna at .209.

The payroll is \$106.7 million, 27th in the league, and the four largest contracts on it belong to men who are not in the lineup above.

Two free agents were signed all winter, for \$800,000 and \$500,000. No trades were made at any level, in the offseason or since. Sly D. is in his fourth season and this is the quietest winter of the four.

There is no public plan on the record after three and a half years, and this column would rather wait for one than print a guess and call it reporting. Chris O. ran this club for 26 years and the questions worth asking took about that long to learn.

One thing for the record, because it gets muddled every time it comes up. This franchise won a championship in 2008. It won it over the Boston Boom, who became the Carolina Reapers and are now the Chicago Black Sox. The current Boston club, the Beacons, were the Lehigh Valley Scrapples in 2008, went 78-84 and did not make the postseason. Two different franchises, two different cities, and the one Spokane

beat does not exist under that name any more, which is most of why nobody outside this town remembers this town won a title.

Fourteen and thirty-four, then. The 2029 club won 98 games and that was three years and one general manager ago.

What there is: a starter with a 2.98 at the league minimum, a 22-year-old with a .400 on-base percentage at Double-A, a .453 on-base percentage at High-A, and 114 games to play that will not decide anything.

The names above are where this gets decided, and the earliest any of them matters here is 2034.