



VANCOUVER LEDGER

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We strike out less than anybody in baseball and we cannot score

BY SIMON BEAUDRY-NASH · VANCOUVER LEDGER

You have sat through about four hundred at-bats this month and wanted to scream about every single one of them. Here is why.

THREE HUNDRED FORTY. That is how many times this lineup has struck out in 48 games and it is the LOWEST TOTAL IN THE ENTIRE LEAGUE. Nobody puts the bat on the ball like we do. Nobody.

We have scored 181 runs, which is 28th out of 32.

Go ahead and sit with those two sentences next to each other, because they are the most Vandals thing that has ever been printed in this space. We do the hard part. We make contact, every night, more consistently than Milwaukee or Somerville or anybody, and then the ball lands in somebody's glove and we walk back to the dugout and the scoreboard says nothing happened.

Forty-three home runs, tied for 28th. One hundred twenty-six walks, tied for 25th. A .305 on-base percentage, 23rd. We hit .246, which is 14th, middle of the pack, totally respectable, and it produces the fifth-worst offense in baseball because none of it goes anywhere.

The record is 20-28. Seventh in the Ruby. Eight games out of a playoff spot.

And before anybody blames the schedule: we went 16-20 inside the division and 4-8 since the crossover. Same team, different opponents, same result.

Bob Labbe is hitting .321 and makes \$500,000 and has been the best thing about this season. Adrian Crosier has eight home runs and a .470 slugging percentage from behind the plate. Alex Carrasco is at .259 with a .340 on-base percentage. That is three. After that: Phil Gudel at .216 in 204 plate appearances, Gabe Reed at .213 and signed through 2035, Alex Enriquez at .244 with two home runs in 184 trips.

Adam Bickler has struck out 83 men, fourth-most in all of baseball, with a 3.91 earned run average across 71 innings, which is more innings than any pitcher on this staff by 24.

He is 2-6.

TWO AND SIX. A man throws the fourth-most strikeouts in the league and this team hands him a record that will follow him into arbitration hearings for the rest of his career, and if you want to know what wearing this uniform does to a pitcher, there it is.

Ryan Wallace came in March on a one-year deal for \$12 million. He has a Cy Young Award. He is 3-4 with a 4.56. Mike Shealy was signed in January and is 1-5 with a 7.16 and has given up 15 home runs in 44 innings, which is the worst home run rate of any starter in this division. The rotation's 5.05 earned run average is 27th, and the staff has allowed 71 home runs, third-most anywhere.

The payroll is \$103.7 million. That is the lowest in this division and 28th in the league. Two signings and one transaction all winter, and the transaction was shipping a 24-year-old minor-league second baseman, Mike Kirschbaum, to Kansas City on May 10 for one dollar.

Last year we won 79 games and made October for the first time since 2018, and this city allowed itself about five weeks of something and then it ended the way it ends. Thirty-one seasons, eight postseason trips, and NOT ONE CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES. Not one. Andy Kerrigan won three straight Cy Young Awards here to start this league's history. Eric Gilbride won two Most Valuable Player awards here. Christian Loredó won one here, and Loredó is in Honolulu right now hitting .339 at the age of 37 with two MVPs and seven Platinum Sticks, and not one of them came in this uniform either.

That is not on them. It has never once been on them. Every one of those men came here, did something nobody else in the league was doing, and left before anything got built around it, and the people responsible for the building have had thirty-one years and eight Octobers and zero finals to show for the whole thing.

Now here is the part this space is going to be insufferable about, so brace up.

Willie Lomeli is 23 and hitting .415 at White Rock with a .495 on-base percentage and a .720 slugging percentage. Jay Andara is at .385 with a .667. Dan McMullen is hitting .374 with a .455 on-base percentage at Kelowna. Mitch Fischer is at .368 there. Ahmed Porter has a .434 on-base percentage. Dan Moses has a 0.44 earned run average over 20 innings. Travis Leger has a 1.48 at Victoria. Bryce Jensen has a 2.15.

Terrific. Now look at the birthdays. Five of those men are 27 and the other two are 25. We have spent two months cheering a Double-A club full of men the same age as our starting infield.

Here is who we should ACTUALLY be talking about. Jake DeLong is hitting .469 at White Rock. Jarrod Benschel has 44 strikeouts across 43 innings at Kelowna. Ernie Flores has 34 in 34 2/3 at Victoria. And at

Kamloops, which has not played one game this year, there are three more in Jeremy Warner, Troy Morris and Micah Patterson.

Not one of us has seen those three play. That is the most Vandals sentence anybody has ever written.

THREE MEN, AND THREE MORE WE HAVE NOT SEEN. The first three are hitting and pitching better right now than anything being run out here every night.

Somebody go get them.

We contact the ball better than any team in baseball. We are 28th in runs. There is a version of this where that is just what happens when a roster has no power anywhere in it, and there is a version where it is the thing that has been following this franchise around since 2001, and after fifteen years of watching it from this seat you already know which one gets believed around here, and this space is not taking questions on it today.

Twenty and twenty-eight. One hundred fourteen to go. Lomeli is hitting .415.