KANSAS CITY STAR-JOURNAL

OCTOBER 8, 2032 · THE KANSAS CITY SCOUTS BEAT

Scouts' walk-off habit: 10 since deadline, nine in extras

BY **CORBIN DIETRICH** · KANSAS CITY STAR-JOURNAL

Start at Kansas, the rookie club, where Jimmy Glover finished his first summer as a professional with 14 starts, a 2.83 earned run average and 53 strikeouts in 57 1/3 innings. He is 19, and the league's top-100 list has him ninth. Jon Crawford, who played at Kansas and Davenport this year, is 17th on the same list. Carlos Castillo, the teenage catcher I have mentioned twice now, played alongside Glover at Kansas and hit .277 with nine home runs in 46 games at 17. All three of them are still Scouts, and that is the first thing to say about this club's deadline.

In August I wrote that Kansas City had made no moves since May, had posted nothing on the trade board, and that standing pat was the right choice for a first-place club, because what a seller would ask for was Glover, Crawford and the bats at Davenport. Brad did not stand pat. On deadline day he sent the 2033 second-round pick to Southland for Francisco Ojeda. He sent the 2033 third- and fifth-round picks, the 2034 fourth-rounder and Chris Malloy, an 18-year-old outfielder at the rookie level, to Myrtle Beach for Tommy Lee and Jeremy Moseley. He did it without touching any of the names I listed. I was wrong about whether he would buy, and right about what he would not sell, and I will take the second half.

Ojeda did what he was brought here to do. In 45 games he hit 13 home runs and drove in 35, and he finished the year with 41 home runs, tied for fifth in the league, between two uniforms. The 300th of his career came on September 28, in Southland, a three-run home run in the eighth inning against the club that traded him. Lee hit .265 at second base. Moseley hit .188.

Now the part of this season nobody will believe in 10 years.

From August 2 to the end of the season the Scouts won 10 games on the last swing of the night at home, and nine of those came in extra innings. Ruben Munoz singled in the 11th against New Orleans on deadline

day. Jared Mettler homered in the 11th against Huron on August 24. Dan Espeseth homered in the 11th against Southland on September 3, and Tommy Lee singled home the winner in the 11th the next night. Sergio Soto hit a three-run home run in the 12th against Virginia on September 15. And on September 25 and 26, against San Juan, the club that comes here this week, Francisco Ojeda and then Justin Olsen ended games in the 11th inning on consecutive nights.

Kansas City went 19-7 in extra innings this season, 11-2 after the deadline, and 33-19 in one-run games. I have covered this club since the expansion draft and I have never seen anything like it. A bullpen with a 2.89 earned run average, second-best in the league, explains most of it. Ben Taylor saved 43 games, tied for third in the league, and after the deadline he had a 1.07 earned run average and 43 strikeouts in 33 2/3 innings.

The rest of the record is less magical. On August 2 the Scouts led the Topaz by two games. They finished 97-65, second, three games behind Virginia, which went 40-17 over the same two months. The offense finished 22nd in runs, and after the deadline it hit .221 as a team. Nate Peterson carried the rotation: 14-9 with a 3.30 earned run average over 223 2/3 innings, and a 2.46 after the deadline. Freddy Echeverria, in the first year of his five-year, $191.6 million deal, went on the injured list on August 23, made seven starts after the deadline and finished 13-6 with a 4.52 earned run average. In July Brad told me he expected Echeverria to turn to form in the second half. He was better after the deadline, 3.96, than before it. It was not the season anybody signed.

And Jared Mettler, who led baseball in home runs and steals when I last wrote, finished with 43 home runs, tied for third, and 98 stolen bases, the most in the league by 23. He scored 107 runs. With runners in scoring position this season he hit .333 and slugged .701. He is 24 and makes $500,000, and his contract question is now the biggest one this franchise has.

The payroll finished at $116.2 million, 24th in the league, after the deadline added Ojeda's salary. It was 29th in August.

Down below, the bats I wrote about in May held up better than I feared in August. Ryan Patton, 19, hit 14 home runs at Davenport after he was sent down there. Scott Joyce hit 15 home runs at Sioux Falls. Pedro Huante hit 24 home runs across two levels. Dante Muro, the arm I worried about, had a 3.98 earned run average in 10 starts at Maple Grove and a 6.20 in nine at Sioux Falls.

Now San Juan.

The Stogies finished 82-80, the same record as Huron and Milwaukee. The series opens here on October 8 and 9, goes to San Juan for Games 3, 4 and 5 from the 11th, and comes back here for Games 6 and 7 if needed. Kansas City won nine of 12 from San Juan this year and outscored them 53-35. One of those wins took 16 innings, in San Juan on August 30. Two more were the walk-offs on September 25 and 26. San Juan won 1-0 here on September 24.

The clubs have never met in October. San Juan had been to 17 postseasons before this one, and the franchise won a championship in 2006 as the Louisville Rivermen. Kansas City had been to five before this one and played in one final, in 2026, against Rochester.

I have compared four Kansas City teams to the 2026 club in print, and every one came up short. That club won 99 games and the division. This one won 97 and did not win the division. In August I said this one would wait until October had its say. October starts here tonight.
