THE STRAIGHT LINE

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Moneyline go up 2-0, drop final to 82-win Stogies

BY **PRIYA RANGANATHAN** · THE STRAIGHT LINE

Twenty-one runs to 20. San Juan won 82 games this season and Somerville won 106, and over seven games in the final San Juan outscored Somerville by one, batted .210 to Somerville's .212, and won the last game 2-1 at Moneyline Stadium on Monday. Bob Reyes struck out 10 and allowed two runs, both in the fourth inning, on Frank Mildner's home run and Willie Martinez's fly ball to center. Dave Tyler doubled home Eli Jones in the eighth, and Somerville left the tying run on second base in the ninth.

Somerville won the first two games at home, 3-1 behind Chase Martin and 7-3 after six runs in the sixth inning of Game 2. Then it scored three runs in three games in San Juan and lost all three, 1-0, 7-3 and 2-0. Back home it scored six in the sixth again and won Game 6, 6-5. Over the seven games, 12 of its 20 runs came in those two sixth innings and eight in its other 58 turns at the plate. With runners in scoring position it went 9-for-46.

The pitching did its share. San Juan hit .210 and struck out 73 times, and the bullpen allowed four earned runs in 23 innings. Martin finished the postseason with 66 strikeouts, the most any pitcher in this league has had in one October. The record he passed was 60, set last year by Dustin Potter for Denver, and Potter won Game 4 of this series for San Juan. Reyes started Games 3 and 7 and allowed three runs in 11 and two-thirds innings. Somerville did not score while he was on the mound in either one.

This was Somerville's fifth final and its fifth loss, and the second time it has won the first two games at home and lost the series. The first was to Huron, in 2020.

Somerville has made the postseason 27 times in 32 seasons. Line up each year's field by regular-season record, then count how often any other club in Somerville's place in that line has gone on to win the

championship. Add it up over 27 Octobers and a club in those places would average about two and a half titles. Ending up with none happens about one time in 17.

In four of the 27 Somerville had the best record in the league: 2024, 2029, 2031 and this year, the four best records in franchise history. In 32 seasons the club with the best record, or a share of it, has won the championship eight times, one year in four. Four tries at one in four come up empty about three times in 10.

One in 17 over 27 Octobers is long odds, and that sample stopped being small a while ago. The four Octobers in which Somerville was the best club in baseball have gone about the way the best club's Octobers go in this league, and all four have come since 2024. Martin, who just set the strikeout record, is 26. The oldest and most expensive piece is Antonio Reyna, 37, who is owed $32.8 million in 2033, the last year of his deal. Chris Charvet, who pitched in 14 of the club's 25 postseason games, and Joel King are free agents, and Jason Shannon goes to arbitration on the 23rd.

JR's first post after the last out was "CONGRATS!" to Chuck, for the whole league to see. In October he told me the baseball has no memory. By that arithmetic, it is the best news this club has had all week.