CINCINNATI REGISTER

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Regents bring back 100-win club, start in Tampa Bay

BY **WENDELL BARR** · CINCINNATI REGISTER

March 28, at Tampa Bay. The Regents open with almost every player who won 100 games for them last season.

The winter was the shortest I have covered here. Josh Walters, a relief pitcher, signed for one year and $1.2 million. Lance Forman, the third baseman, signed an extension that pays him $3 million in 2034 and $5.5 million in 2035. Six players left, and none of them played much. That was all of it.

I asked Chris why every deal he made this winter was for one year. He told me I had it wrong.

> *"That's not really true is it?" he said. "We signed Lance Forman through his arbitration years and that was important signing for us as he's beginning to show some real pop in his bat. We didn't have much to add this offseason so we kept things simple."*

He was right and I was wrong. Forman's deal runs two years past this one.

The other question was what he expects after 100 wins and a first-round loss to Boston.

> *"Yeah, that was a fun season, wasn't it?" he said. "I think we overachieved a bit and it will be a real test to see if we can continue to be just as competitive this season. We want the postseason be a baseline for this club."*

A general manager who says his club overachieved is a general manager I can work with. The numbers agree with him a little. The Regents scored 776 runs and allowed 626. That is the run differential of a club that

wins about 98 games, not 100.

Much of it came from the infield. Joe Duemler won the Great Glove and the Platinum Stick at second base, hit 36 home runs and finished second in the Most Valuable Player vote. Danny Badillo won the Great Glove at third. Eric Chini won the Platinum Stick in right field with 29 home runs, and this is the last year of his contract. Matt Kopacka hit 22 at shortstop. All four are back. So are Matt Burke, Josh Baker, Akira Nakamoto and Chris Hartke, who started most of the games last year. Baker went 17-6.

Jordan Montanez tore his labrum on October 4 and was expected to miss three months. He is healthy this morning. Mario Mendez, a relief pitcher, is not. He is expected to miss the season.

The farm was ranked 28th by DSA Reports in December. One Cincinnati name is on the game's Top 100 this morning: Mauricio Dominguez, a catcher, 41st. He hit 16 home runs at Triple-A and is in camp. The Regents pick 23rd in the draft this week.

The payroll is $161.7 million against a budget of $200 million. Juan Martinez, the left fielder, is the highest paid at $32 million, through 2035.

Spring went 18-13 with four ties. I have seen better springs turn into worse summers.

The Regents were 82-81 two years ago and lost a tiebreaker in Baltimore. They were 100-62 last year and lost in six to Boston. The first made it 22 years without October. The second ended that. Three games in Tampa Bay, then Rochester comes in on April 1.