VANCOUVER LEDGER

MARCH 28, 2033 · THE VANCOUVER VANDALS BEAT

Vandals lock up Bickler through 2038, add Kilby, open vs. Rams

BY **SIMON BEAUDRY-NASH** · VANCOUVER LEDGER

WE KEPT HIM. Adam Bickler signed a five-year extension in December, $23.2 million a season from 2034 through 2038. He threw 216 innings last year, struck out 232 and was worth 5.2 wins. He was a year from free agency, and Ben kept him.

Is Bickler the ace? Look at the numbers. He is.

Then Ben bought a second starter. Marty Kilby, who went 10-7 with a 3.65 earned run average for Denver, signed in March for two years and $34 million, with a player option. Sean Chaney, a reliever, signed for four years and $20 million. David Torres, Ross Colson and Danny Smiley came for the bullpen on short deals. Brian Baker, a shortstop worth 1.5 wins in Toronto, signed for a year. Salvatore Paez came from Denver for a fourth-round pick.

Ryan Wallace is gone. He went 8-16 with a 5.88 and signed with Southland, and I wish him every happiness there.

Two years running at 79-83. Third in the Ruby in 2031 with a trip to October, fifth last year with none, 12 games behind Big Horn. What changes this year? The honest answer is the rotation. Last year Bickler was alone, and behind him Wallace lost 16. This year it is Bickler and Kilby at the top, and that is a different club in the first three days of every series.

The lineup is mostly back. Gabe Reed, the shortstop, hit .284 and was the most valuable position player on the club. Bob Labbe hit .297. Alex Carrasco, signed through 2035, hit 16 home runs. Nobody on this roster hit 20. That is the part Ben did not fix.

And the farm. THE FARM. Six Vandals on the game's Top 100 this morning: Jeremy Austin 27th, Micah Patterson 34th, Kyle Gregson 42nd, Ernie Flores 58th, Roberto Acevedo 60th and Luis Ramirez 75th. Austin, the fifth overall pick in 2031, hit .316 at Kamloops last summer. Five of the six are position players, which is exactly what this lineup is going to need. And this week, with the sixth pick in the draft, Ben took Casey Wayman, a shortstop.

This winter the Hall of Fame took Eric Ryan. He pitched here from 2014 to 2016, at the end of his career. One more plaque with a Vancouver summer on it.

The payroll is $122.4 million against a budget of $184 million. Spring went 16-15 with four ties.

Big Horn, the division champion, comes to Vancouver tonight. The team that won the Ruby by one game, against a team that finally has two starters. I have been waiting all winter for this one.
