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MAY 23, 2033 · THE BIG HORN RAMS BEAT

Rams feast on losing clubs, go 4-11 against winners

BY **WESLEY TALLGRASS** · SHERIDAN PRESS AND THE WYOMING WIRE

Big Horn is 27-21, third in the Ruby, two games behind Myrtle Beach. Against teams with losing records the Rams are 17-5. Against teams with winning records they are 4-11. Both numbers are the season.

They beat Oahu five times out of six and Spokane five out of six. They went to Kansas City in the middle of May and lost four straight, part of a six-game losing streak. They are 1-2 against Myrtle Beach and 2-4 against Phoenix, the two clubs ahead of them.

In April I asked Johnny about home and road. The Rams were 9-3 here and 5-7 away.

> *"Wyoming is a place of peace and tranquility, while the other places are not," he said. "We feed off our home crowd, we've gotta find a way to feed off the boos and jeers we get when on the road."*

They are 16-8 here now and 11-13 on the road. The other places are still not peaceful.

I also asked how long the depth could hold with five men hurt. Johnny said Josh Ferguson coming back from the injured list would be a huge boost. Ferguson came back. In 24 games he is hitting .333 with a .423 on-base percentage, and he was player of the week on May 9. Johnny was right about that one.

The bat nobody counted on is Ernesto Sanchez, 24, at first base. He is hitting .311 with 12 home runs and 34 runs batted in, fifth in the league, and he is paid the minimum. Bill Raymond has 13 home runs, tied for

fourth in baseball, and 13 steals. Brad Battiste is at .282. Danny Hess, paid $30.5 million this year, is hitting .219. Ken Christensen, the Great Glove in center, is hitting .217 and has not hit a home run.

The bullpen has been the best part of the club. It has a 2.97 earned run average, fifth in baseball, and has blown one save all year. Malachi Lott, 35, has 38 strikeouts and six walks in 33 innings. Devonte Streeter has a 1.09. Orsino Felan has not allowed a home run. John Underwood and Lott have three saves each, Jason Hopkins four.

The rotation is the problem. Its earned run average is 4.80, 28th in the league. Alex Cardenas, the 34-year-old signed for three years and $34.5 million to replace Miguel Sanchez, is 1-1 with a 6.57 in 10 starts. Mike Dibrell has a 4.85. Nick Williams, the man Johnny paid to keep, is 5-2 with a 3.25 and has walked 11 in 52 and two-thirds innings. John Morris, 24, has a 3.66. Chris Kempner, 36, is 5-2.

Jim Marge is 55th on the game's Top 100, with a 1.91 in High-A Miami. Steve Fox has 10 saves at Triple-A Huntsville. The Rams took Burton Sisson, a center fielder, 26th in the draft.

San Juan for two this weekend, here. Then four in Milwaukee and on to Oklahoma City. A team that beats the bad clubs and loses to the good ones finds out which it is in June.