VANCOUVER LEDGER

MAY 23, 2033 · THE VANCOUVER VANDALS BEAT

Vandals score 201, allow 201, sit at exactly 24-24

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

TWO HUNDRED AND ONE. That is how many runs we have scored this season. Want to guess how many we have allowed? Two hundred and one.

We are 24-24. We are 12-12 at home and 12-12 on the road. We are 8-8 in one-run games. I have covered this team since 2017 and I have never seen a .500 club this committed to being a .500 club.

Here is the good news, and I will take it: 24-24 has us tied with Oklahoma City and Mexico City for the last playoff spot in the Fire Conference. We are fifth in the Ruby, five games behind Myrtle Beach.

In April I asked Ben whether Adam Bickler was the ace.

> *"Yes Bickler is our ace," he said, "that's why we wanted to get him his extension."*

He is. Bickler has made 12 starts with a 2.72 earned run average and 72 strikeouts, third in the league. And Marty Kilby, the second starter we waited all winter for, has a 3.28 and 62 strikeouts in 60 and a third innings. Two starters. I SAID in March that two starters would make this a different club. The two starters have done their part.

The other days are the problem. Sean Chaney, who signed in January as a reliever, has made 10 starts. He has a 5.85. David Torres made six starts with a 6.83 before he went on the injured list. Ken Reifman has a 2.00 in five starts and should be getting more of them.

I also asked Ben what this team needed to catch Myrtle Beach.

> *"We're not looking at Myrtle Beach right now," he said, "they've got a great team but we're just focused on ourselves."*

Fine. Myrtle Beach is 3-7 in its last 10. I am looking.

David Furlong, 35, has 13 saves, tied for the most in baseball. Shane Pruitt has a 1.19. Gabriel Chacon has a 1.96. The bullpen as a whole has a 4.08, 26th in the league. The rest of it has not been close to those three.

The lineup still has nobody hitting home runs in bunches. Alex Carrasco is hitting .302 with eight. Phil Gudel has eight and 31 runs batted in. Gabe Reed, our best position player last year, is at .238. Antonio Belanger is at .186. Brian Baker, the shortstop signed for a year, is hitting .386 in 20 games. Somebody give that man more at-bats.

THE FARM. Micah Patterson is up to 23rd on the game's Top 100, from 34th in March, and is hitting .329 at Double-A Kelowna. Jeremy Austin is 27th. Kyle Gregson is 42nd. Jeremy Warner, 21, has a 2.92 in five starts at High-A White Rock. Ernie Flores, who was 58th in March, has been on the injured list all season.

Oklahoma City is here for two, the team we are tied with. Then four in Memphis. I would like to be 25-24. I would like it a lot.
