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Regents go 9-3, trade Baker; run gap stays even

BY **WENDELL BARR** · CINCINNATI REGISTER

June 27, at home. Oahu 2, Cincinnati 1. The Regents were 27-52, and that was as low as it went.

They are 17-9 since. They are 44-61, last in the Jade, 20 games behind Denver and seven out of the last playoff spot in the Ice. They went 9-3 this sim, took all three in Phoenix and all three at home from San Diego, and won six straight, the longest streak of the year. It came about two months after it could have done anybody any good.

Here is the number. The Regents have scored 381 runs and allowed 380. Plus-one. They have the record of a club that should have been out of it by the Fourth of July, and they have outscored their opponents. Only three clubs have allowed fewer runs. In May I said the mean had not come. It still has not. Cincinnati is 13-22 in one-run games, and it is 7-25 against clubs in its own conference outside the Jade. I do not have an explanation. I have stopped asking for one.

I asked Chris what he had changed.

> *"Well, the season hasn't gone as planned and it appears no changes are going to turn this ship around this season," he said. "We've made some key players available to contending teams including SP Josh Baker, as well as OFs Eric Chini, Shane Carignan and Pat Colonna."*

Baker went on July 18. Phoenix took him and half of what was left on his deal and gave Cincinnati a 2035 second-round pick and a 2035 fourth. He was 6-9 with a 3.32 here, and he struck out 116 in 100 and a third

innings. He made two starts for Phoenix, and on July 31 he tore a flexor tendon in his elbow. He will miss about nine months. Chris got his picks in time.

Two weeks earlier he paid Myrtle Beach $5 million for Andre Rumbley, a second baseman who had been hitting .378 in High-A.

> *"There didn't seem to be a whole lot of interest in the cash market so I took what I could get," he said. "Rumbley is a risk I'm willing to take as I think I can get more out of him despite his developmental window nearing its close."*

Rumbley is at Lexington and has hit .268 in 43 plate appearances. That is about all anybody can say so far.

Three Regents went to the All-Star Game. Juan Martinez, the left fielder, is hitting .289 with 19 home runs and 61 runs batted in, on $32 million, and he was player of the week on July 4. He has earned it this year. Danny Badillo is at .268. Mauricio Dominguez, the best news of the spring, has come back to .235. Luigi Oliver has climbed from .201 to .272, on the minimum. Joe Duemler, second in last year's MVP vote, is on the injured list and is hitting .221. Eric Chini has 15 home runs and a .192 average in the last year of his deal. Matt Kopacka is at .210 and is owed $17 million for two more years.

The staff has been the good part all year. Nick Addison moved into the rotation and has a 2.44. Chris Hartke has a 2.14. Danny Sotelo has 19 saves. The other Juan Martinez, a 36-year-old pitcher signed in April for $800,000, is 5-10 with a 3.82, and I would not trade the box scores for anything. Jaylen Jenkins, 99th on the game's Top 100 and the only name left on it from this organization, has come up and made two starts, with a 3.27.

I said in March I had seen better springs turn into worse summers. A hundred wins last year, and a pace of 68 this one.

Three in Huron, then Kansas City and San Juan at home. They will probably play well. It is that kind of year.