SAN DIEGO UNION POST

AUGUST 1, 2033 · THE SAN DIEGO SEALS BEAT

Seals spend $355 million on two; sit last at 44-61

BY **TRINA BOSANKO** · SAN DIEGO UNION POST

Three hundred and fifty-five million dollars. That is what Alex committed to two players in June. Al Charles got five years and $179 million. Trey Wood got five years and $176 million. Both deals start in 2034.

The club those two play for is 44-61. It is last in the Ruby, 15 games behind Myrtle Beach and 11 short of the last playoff spot in the Fire Conference.

In March Alex told me this team was "expecting to be in the playoffs and competing for the Ruby Division." In May I printed that next to a 12-24 record against the Ruby. It is 17-28 now. It was 26-46 on June 19, the low point. Say this for the club: it is 18-15 since. It also lost 11 of 12 from late May into June, and it is 19-39 against clubs with winning records.

I will not argue with the two contracts. In May I wrote that somebody should start working on them, and somebody did. Charles has 212 strikeouts, the most in baseball by 46. He has a 2.45 earned run average and an All-Star Game on his record. He is 27. Wood is hitting .298 with a .390 on-base percentage and 22 home runs, and he was Batter of the Month for May.

Here is what I will argue with. Charles is 7-11. Look at that record and tell me what this club has built around him. It is 11-21 in one-run games. That is the worst mark in the Fire, and a club does not get there by accident. The starters are good. Their 3.79 earned run average is ninth in baseball. The bullpen is 27th. Charles has handed the game to a bullpen with a 4.12 and watched it go.

Tony Mendiola. Four draft picks and $84 million through 2038. In May he was hitting .222. He is hitting .239 with 12 home runs. Better, and still nowhere near what it cost. The extension has not even started.

Carlos Ayala, the third overall pick in 2026, is at .213 with four home runs in 458 plate appearances. Alex Francisco, $8.5 million, is at .191. Craig Noftall, $7 million through next year, is at .210 with a setback on top of it. Jack Withers, who is paid $28.4 million this year and has that money through 2037, was player of the week on July 4, and he took a pitch on the foot on July 20 and is out. Tyler Elgie is hitting .291 on the minimum and is the best deal on the roster.

Gordie Wheeler is 5-10 with a 4.84. Alex Guerra is 34 and has 10 wins, the most on the staff. Juan Ramirez, 37, has a 3.59 and a 2-8 record.

Look under the big-league club and it is worse. Medina, the Triple-A team, is 31-62. Jackson is 35-58. Fremont is 28-53. St. Joseph is 30-51. Jessie Hughes is second on the game's Top 100, and he is 3-5 with a 4.37 at Medina with 29 walks in 57 and two-thirds innings. He is the only Seals name on that list.

So who has to answer for this? Alex has run this club for more than 30 years. The checkbook works. It has always worked. In the last three seasons it has bought 77 wins, then 80, and a club on pace for 68. Two more contracts, however good the players, do not fix a roster with nothing under it. Those two deals average $71 million a year between them, and that is before he pays anybody else.

They just swept Tampa Bay at home. Philadelphia comes in for three, then New York and Baltimore on the road. The deadline is next sim. Alex has already done his shopping. It was for the 2034 Seals.