VANCOUVER LEDGER

AUGUST 1, 2033 · THE VANCOUVER VANDALS BEAT

Vandals sweep Denver, go 9-3; three back of Mermen

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

WE SWEPT DENVER.

Let me say that again, in a normal voice, like a person. Denver came to Vancouver with the best record in baseball, and we beat them 4-3, we beat them 4-3 again, and we beat them 7-5 on Sunday, and they left here three games worse. I have been covering this team since 2017. I would like to frame that series.

We are 56-49. We have won four straight. We are 8-2 in our last 10 and 9-3 this sim, and July was 16-8. We are second in the Ruby, three games behind Myrtle Beach, sixth in the Fire, and for the first time this year we are looking at something other than .500. In May we were 24-24 and I said I had never seen a club this committed to being a .500 club. Then we went 1-7 and hit 25-31 on the last day of May. We are 31-18 since then.

Now, about Myrtle Beach. Ben told me in April that he wasn't looking at Myrtle Beach. I AM. They are 6-4 in their last 10. We play the rest of the season in the same division as those people.

Here is what has done it. Adam Bickler is 12-6 with a 2.84, tied for the most wins in baseball, with 151 strikeouts. I said in March that two starters would make this a different club, and Marty Kilby is 7-5 with a 2.87 and has walked 29 men in 135 innings. And the third one. KEN REIFMAN. I said in May that he should get more starts. He has 16 starts now. He was Pitcher of the Month for June. He is 7-2 with a 3.06 and he makes $500,000. I would like it noted that I said that.

David Furlong has 28 saves, second-most in baseball, and at 35 he has a 4.14 and has lost six games, so every ninth inning here is a small medical event. He keeps getting there anyway. We are 7-2 in extra innings. We are 19-9 against the Ice Conference. We don't know why. Don't touch it.

Alex Carrasco is hitting .309 with 17 home runs. Jared Littrell, on the minimum, is at .285 with 15. We are fourth in the league in batting average and 10th in runs. Casey Taylor is at .250. Adrian Crosier is hitting .272 behind the plate. The lineup still doesn't scare anybody, and it has stopped needing to. Gabe Reed is at .239. Antonio Belanger is at .207. Justin Dora has 13 home runs and a .218 average, and he is not going anywhere soon.

Bob Labbe was player of the week in June and he is on the injured list. Phil Gudel is on the injured list. Gabriel Chacon is hurt. Carrasco and Reed are banged up. Jonathan Pietsch went 2-8 with a 6.31, and we have decided to stop talking about it.

You know what we did not do? WE DID NOT SEND ANYONE TO THE ALL-STAR GAME. Not one Vandal. Bickler was tied for the league lead in wins and he stayed home. I am aware that I'm supposed to believe the curse broke in 2031. I am telling you the curse has a vote.

THE FARM. Kelowna is 57-36, and Vernon, a real team with a real name, the Dumpster Fires, is 56-25. Micah Patterson is 29th on the game's Top 100, hitting .318. Ken Morgan, a second-round pick in this year's draft, is 48th. Jeremy Austin is 51st, Kyle Gregson 54th and Roberto Acevedo 72nd. Jeremy Warner, the ninth pick in 2030, is 5-5 with a 4.54 at White Rock. Ernie Flores has still not played a game this season.

We have $121.5 million on the payroll, 25th in baseball, and a chance. Ben has one sim. If he tells me he's focused on ourselves, I will scream.

Toronto is here for three. Then Somerville and Chicago on the road. You know the word. It starts with an O and we have not seen it since 2031.