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OCTOBER 6, 2033 · THE BIG HORN RAMS BEAT

Rams tie Myrtle Beach at 91, lose Ruby on head-to-head

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

The first snow came off the Big Horns on Tuesday and stayed up on the high ground, the way it does in October. Down here it was cold and clear, and it will be cold and clear on Friday when Oklahoma City comes in. That is the weather. It has helped this club before.

The Rams finished 91-71. So did Myrtle Beach. On the morning of October 5 the Mermen were a game ahead. Big Horn won 6-1 in Mexico City behind Dan Gonzalez, and Myrtle Beach lost 1-0 in Phoenix, and the two clubs finished level. A tie is not a title. Myrtle Beach won the season series between the two, seven games to five, and the Ruby is theirs. Big Horn is second, the fourth seed, and plays at home.

In September I asked Johnny, five games back of Myrtle Beach, whether he was still chasing first. He chased it. From September 12 the club went 14-7. It took two of three from the Mermen here on the last homestand, 2-1 and 6-2. It ran out of room on a tiebreaker.

In July this club lost 21 of 32, and I wrote that the bullpen could not stop the slide. After August 1 it went 36-21. Eighteen and 9 in August. The pitching finished with the best walks-and-hits rate in baseball and the fewest walks, 406. Nick Williams went 13-4 with a 2.52, and a 1.92 after the deadline. John Morris, 25, on the minimum, won 14. John Underwood, 35, won 12 out of the bullpen. Devonte Streeter had a 1.68. Micho Shibata saved seven after the deadline. Malachi Lott, also 35, had a 0.98 there.

Johnny bought on August 1. He sent Southland his 2034 first- and second-round picks and two players, Randor Hernandez and Steve Fox, for Chris Goers, Emmitt Moffatt and Dan Gonzalez, with Southland keeping half of what each is owed. In September I asked him if it was worth it. Goers caught 49 games and

hit .280. Moffatt pitched 11 innings with a 2.45. Gonzalez made 11 starts with a 2.91 and won the last game of the season, five and two-thirds innings, one run, eight strikeouts. He is also hurt now, and the club expects him to miss about three months. So the man who won the last game will not pitch in the next one.

On those picks, one more thing. In August Dana Whitcomb reported on TBL Tonight that the league is talking about adding four clubs, as soon as 2036. A man drafted in 2034 is a man who would be getting close to a big-league job right about then. I have asked around whether that makes the two picks Johnny gave up worth more or worth less. Nobody would say.

The lineup hit. The Rams hit 232 home runs, third in baseball. Bill Raymond finished with 36 home runs and 40 stolen bases and hit .294 after the deadline. Brad Battiste, on the minimum, hit 34 and played his 1,000th game on September 28. Ernesto Sanchez hit 29 and has had a setback with his injury. Josh Ferguson was suspended four games after the fight in Oahu on September 26. He has served them.

Oklahoma City won 93 games, two more than we did, and opens here because of where the two clubs finished in their divisions. We split four with them in May, 20 runs apiece. We have met them three times in October, in 2012, 2013 and 2030. All three went seven games. Big Horn won all three.

I have watched too many good Septembers here turn into short Octobers to promise anyone anything. Two championship series, both lost to Denver. The Rams were 55-26 in this valley this year, tied for the best home record in the league, and the first two games are here.