

THE GALVESTON GROTTO

OCTOBER 6, 2033 · THE GALVESTON GREMLINS BEAT

Turner hits .340, Gremlins take Jade's second seat at 79-83

BY **RUTHIE ALCORN** · THE GALVESTON GROTTO

We are in. Seventy-nine and 83, second in the Jade, and we play Boston here on Friday.

I know what the record says. It says we lost more than we won. It also says we were 27-41 on June 14 and 50-55 on the first of August, and that every club behind us in the Jade had a chance to pass us in the last week and none of them did. The math closed on October 2, when we beat Denver 4-2 here. That was the 13th time we have been to October.

In July Jeremy told me Ashton Turner was going to get some help soon. In September I asked him if Lance Fitzgerald was that help.

> *"Yes," he said.*

Fitzgerald tore that abdominal muscle in the second game of the season and came back at the start of August. He played 56 games after that and hit .294 with 10 home runs and 36 runs batted in. Jeremy said in July he needed Turner to hang in there until then. Turner did, and Fitzgerald batted behind him.

Then there is Turner. He hit .369 after the deadline with a .435 on-base percentage and 11 home runs. He finished at .340 with 33 home runs, 50 stolen bases and 121 runs scored, and he won the batting title in the Ice. He was Batter of the Month for July and player of the week on August 22. He played his 1,000th game on September 27, here, against Cincinnati. Nobody in the league was worth more to his club, and it is not close. He has won the MVP twice. If they give it out for anything besides the standings, he has a third coming.

It was not a straight line to get here. We won two of three in Rochester to start the September 12 sim, which is exactly what Jeremy told me he wanted. "2 wins would be nice," he said. Then we lost seven in a row. Las Vegas came in and shut us out three straight nights, 3-0, 2-0 and 1-0. Then Fort Collins beat us three times, twice in extra innings. On September 21 we were 73-77, tied with Rochester, and I was scared.

We went 6-6 after that, and it was enough. The night we clinched, Jeff Buckmaster and Aaron Roy held Denver to two runs.

Buckmaster is the reason I believe we can win a game against anybody. He went 6-2 with a 2.18 after the deadline and finished 13-7 with a 2.34, and he walked six men in nine starts. Greg Wilks finished with 209 strikeouts. Chris Cawley gave us a 3.41 in 10 starts after the deadline. Aaron Roy had a 2.72 out of the bullpen.

We lost a lot of arms getting here. Antonio Perez, our closer, tore his labrum in Rochester on September 12. He had 33 saves and a 2.34. In New Orleans in the last series, Matthew Tenner tore his labrum and Ricardo Sainz hurt his shoulder, and both are done for the year. Since Perez went down, Jahiem Bryant and Aaron Roy have split the ninth inning. Bryant has blown three saves since the deadline, and I am going to try not to think about that until Friday.

Down at Red Bud, Chris Hein is 18th on the game's Top 100 at the end of the season. Josh Bassett is 70th and Bill Lacey is 79th.

Boston won 92 games. They swept us here in June, four straight, and they will tell you that. We have never played them in October. Boston was 39-42 on the road. We were 49-32 at home and 30-51 everywhere else, so I am glad the first two are here.

I have been asking you all year to come out. You came. In the 54 home dates before August, our crowds averaged 25,906. In the 27 since, they averaged 30,968. On Friday I would like to see what this building sounds like with all of you in it. I think Turner would too.