RÉCORD CIUDAD

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Luchadores lose Coon, Brady late, miss by one game

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Eighty and 82. One game. On the morning of October 5 Mexico City, Huron and Kansas City were each 80-81, with one playoff place left in the Fire. Big Horn won 6-1 here. Huron won 1-0 in 10 innings in Kansas City. The run of three straight postseasons, 2030 through 2032, ended on the last day.

The model I use for this club has one input it cannot handle, and this September it was the whole story: who was available. In the last five weeks of the season Mexico City lost, in order, Arturo Rivera, to shoulder inflammation in Spokane on September 3; Michael Klaassen, to a torn meniscus; Ted Sowell, to a torn flexor tendon, for 14 months; Jonathan Coon, to a sprained ankle on September 21, for the season; and Adam Brady, also for the season, on September 26. Eric Marchitto was already gone with his elbow. In September I asked Larry who takes Rivera's starts.

> *"Our bullpen is key to maintaining success so most likely we will need to bring up Sean Phillips from AAA to eat some starts and hope we can score enough runs in those games," he said. "Our pitching staff as a whole has been completely decimated by injurires down the stretch of the season."*

That was an accurate description. Phillips came up and pitched in relief, nine innings with an 8.00 earned run average. The starts went to Joseph Vandercook, Ed Waterman and Chris Gresham. Rivera, before he went down, had made six starts after the deadline with a 1.50 earned run average and 47 strikeouts in 36 innings. He is 36, and he is owed $63.4 million over the next two seasons.

The losses on offense were the more expensive ones. Coon, on the minimum, was hitting .293 with a .552 slugging percentage after the deadline and finished with 31 home runs, 96 runs batted in and 36 stolen bases in 148 games. Brady, also on the minimum, finished with 19 home runs and 29 steals. In August I described the two of them and Dave Henson as the core of a top-five offense. Mexico City scored 708 runs, 10th in baseball, and slugged .421, fifth.

Dave Henson finished with 40 home runs and 108 runs batted in, fifth in the league. After the deadline he hit .231 with eight home runs. A .634 slugging percentage over the first 103 games and a .412 over the last 56 are both Dave Henson. The second number is the more recent one. Fernando Lopez hit 17 home runs after the deadline.

The second question I asked Larry was about Myrtle Beach, against whom this club was 1-8. He said the lineup goes quiet against their pitching and that Danny Kuntz, who has been hit hard by them, should not be the one closing out close games against that club. The club went to Myrtle Beach on September 16, won the first game 7-4 with Steve Parker getting the save, and lost the next two, 6-5 and 12-4. The season series finished 2-10. It was the difference between this club and the field several times over.

A few more numbers describe the season. The club went 24-31 in one-run games. It was 40-41 at home and 40-41 on the road, which I have no causal claim about. The staff finished 19th in earned run average, and by the end it was pitching without Rivera, Marchitto and Sowell.

On the game's Top 100 at the end of the season, Antonio Velazquez is 22nd and Kevin Clarke 39th. Both moved up since August. Neither is a 2034 answer.

Larry has run this club since 2013. This is the first October since 2029 that it will watch from home. The numbers say the roster was good enough when it was whole. In September it was not whole.