

HONOLULU STAR-ADVERTISER

OCTOBER 6, 2033 · THE OAHU PADDLERS BEAT

Paddlers sweep Mexico City at home, finish 73-89

BY **KAMALEI HOʻOKANO** · HONOLULU STAR-ADVERTISER

The last homestand of the year ended on the 2nd of October, a Sunday, the light already going gold over the Waianae range by the seventh inning. Oahu beat Mexico City 2-1. It had beaten them 5-4 and 6-3 on the two days before. Mexico City finished one game out of the playoffs. The Paddlers probably meant nothing by it. The water here has a long memory, and the visitors went home with less than they came for.

Then the club went to San Diego and lost three, two of them by a run, and the season was over. Seventy-three and 89, sixth in the Ruby. Four games fewer than last year. The Paddlers were 48-33 here and 25-56 everywhere else, and I have no explanation for that except the one I have offered for 32 years, which is that this is a hard place to leave and a hard place to come to.

In July Paul in Oahu called the rest of the season auditions. In September I asked him whether Juan Chapa had made next year's team, after Chapa gave up eight earned runs in 11 and two-thirds innings. Chapa, who signed on the 12th of April and came from nowhere, made 11 starts after the deadline with a 5.04 earned run average, and finished the year 8-5 with a 3.76 in 131 and two-thirds innings. He walked 33 men all season. A man who throws strikes gets more auditions than one who does not.

I also asked about Adam Bills, who hit three home runs in one game in Mexico City in early September. Bills finished with 22 home runs and a .352 on-base percentage, at 25, and he is signed through 2037. That answers the question for me, if not for the box score. Curt Schalla, 24, hit 27 home runs and walked his way to a .370 on-base percentage while batting .207. The Paddlers drew 560 walks, third-most in baseball. They did not hit for much, .227 as a club, but they waited.

The young arms began to arrive this summer, and they arrived the way young arms do. Gary Walters, who was fourth on the game's Top 100 in August, made seven starts here with a 3.86 and 45 strikeouts in 35 innings, and he walked 22. His recovery from an injury went slower than hoped at the start of October. Casey Emerson, who was 11th, made eight starts with a 6.52 and gave up 10 home runs. Nick Lee, 25, struck out 74 in 61 and two-thirds innings after the deadline. Neither Walters nor Emerson is on the list anymore. They are on the club, which is the point of the list.

And still there are more coming. Oliver Zimmer is third on the game's Top 100 at the end of the season. Carlos Navarro is 26th, Nick Kunz 37th, Julio Figueroa 45th, Matt Lee 46th, Jimmy Link 76th and Dan Williams 93rd. That is seven names, with two graduated.

The injured list was long all year. Travis Sudduth, 4-4 with a 2.42, has not pitched since early June, and Shane Drew and Chris Charvet were lost in May. Odoardo Carrascalo was lost for the season in August. Christian Loredo, who is 38, last played on the 24th of September. He finishes the year with 534 home runs and 1,379 walks, and I have watched him take most of those walks the way a fisherman waits on the tide.

Paul in Oahu has said 2034 is the target. He has been here since the first game this franchise ever played, and so have I. I have believed him about most things. The arms are arriving. The water is coming back.
