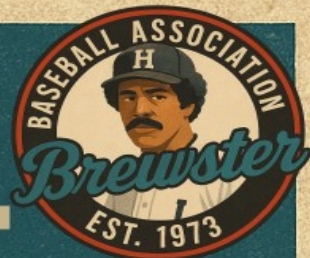


BREWSTER BASEBALL ASSOCIATION



2063 MEDIA GUIDE



**THREE PEAT PERFECTION:
THE BLUEBIRDS KEEP FLYING HIGH**

BREWSTER

BASEBALL ASSOCIATION



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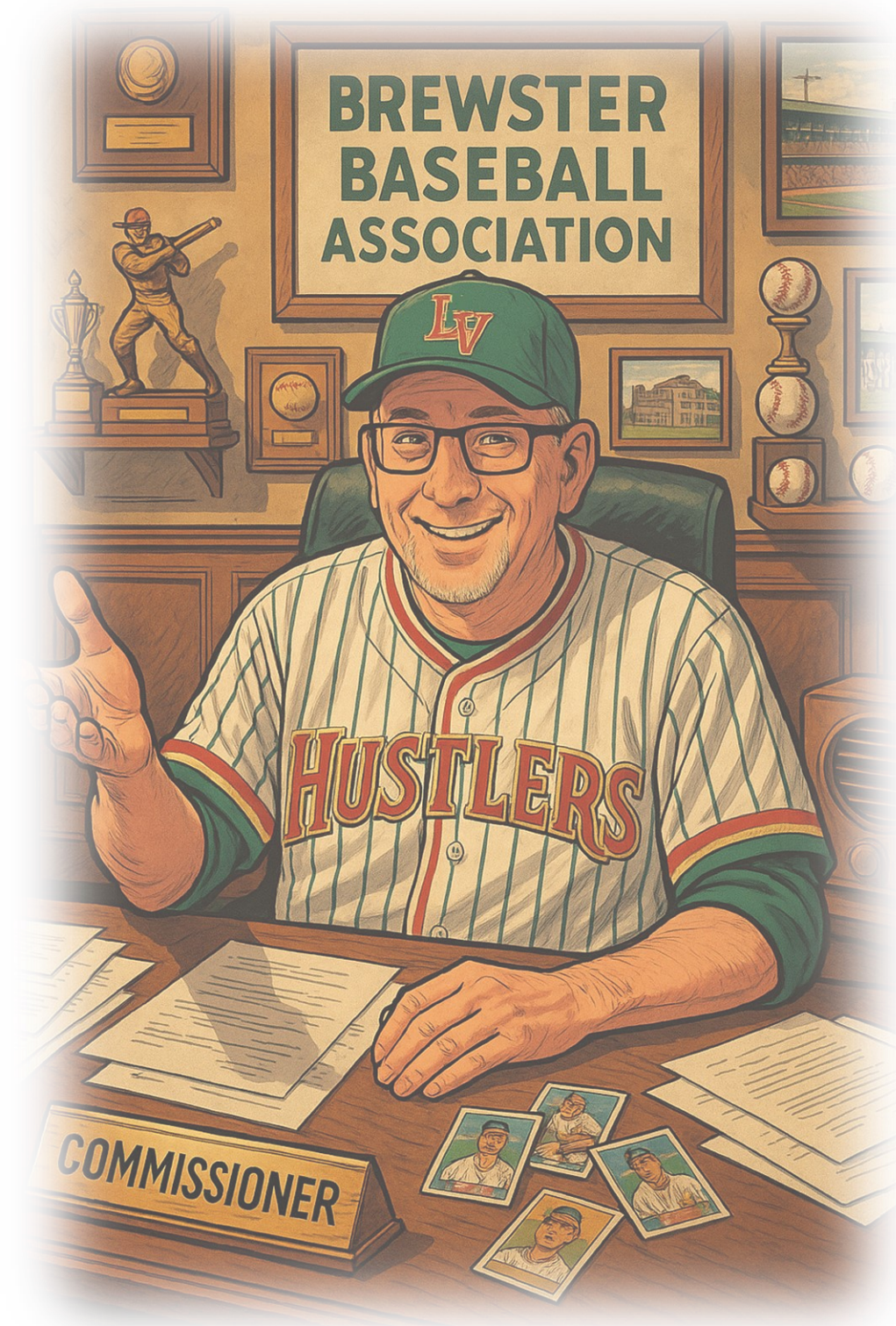
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The Folks With the Power: BBA

Team	GM
Atlantic City Gamblers	John Momberg
Austin Shredders	Chuck Valenches
Bikini Krill	Ron Collins
Boise Spuds	Ben Teague
Brook Park Brownies	Kevin Spencer
Calgary Pioneers	Kevin Dickson
Cape Fear Swamp Foxes	Woody Donahue
Charlotte Flyers	Nathan Garrison
Charm City Jimmies	David Burcicki
Chicago Black Sox	Renato Umali
Cobble Hill Robins	Doug Olmsted
Des Moines Kernels	Jessie Ramirez
Hawaii Tropics	James Walker
Jacksonville Zombies	Aaron Weiner
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Madison Wolves	Mike Simon
Mexico City Aztecs	Brandon Tucker
Montreal Blazers	Bob and Erik Breum
Nashville Bluebirds	Chad Nason
New Orleans Crawdads	Jim Roberts
Phoenix Talons	Sean Marko
Portland Lumberjacks	Chris Wilson
Rosenblatt Bombers	Justin Niles
Sacramento Mad Popes	Ben Heuring
San Antonio Outlaws	Tim Meseck
San Fernando Bears	Kurt Imber
Twin Cities River Monsters	Alan Ehlers
Valencia Stars	Gregg Greathouse
Vancouver Mounties	Aaron Wharram
Yellow Springs Nine	Rob McMonigal

The Folks With the Power: GBC

Team	GM
Athens Fighting Centaurs	League Control 3
Buenos Aires Brisas	Steven Luker
Cairo Pharaohs	Will Dymek
Jerusalem Hebrew Hammers	League Control 6
Johannesburg Gold	Graham Luna
London Monarchs	Grant Hawthorne
Moscow Thunder Bears	Bill Koepsel
Sao Paulo Pilots	Ryan Cometa
Sydney Sharks	Scott Watkins
Tokyo Pearls	League Control 1



2062

THE YEAR THAT WAS

Caleca Award
Year in Review
BBA Playoffs
GBC Standings & Playoffs
Hall of Fame (*Matt Rectenwald*)

2063

THE PROJECTION ROOM

2061 Preamble (*Ron Collins*)
JL Atlantic (*James Walker*)
JL Frontier (*Chuck Valenches*)
FL Heartland (*Ron Collins*)
FL Pacific (*Ron Collins*)
GBC (*Woody Donahue*)

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Some BBA GMs (As Others Imagine Them) *John Momberg*
Kevin Morales Award (*Rob McMonigal*)
Welcome to the Brewster, Buddy (*Graham Luna*)
Big League Chew (*John Momberg*)
All Modern-Era Team: Charm City (*Nathan Garrison*)
Your Weird-As-Shit, Completely Non-Official, 2063 GBC
League Preview (*Graham Luna*)

Cover Design (Mike Simon) – Publishing (Ron Collins)

YOUR OPENING DAY PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT



A large crowd of people, mostly men, are gathered in what appears to be a stadium or arena at night. They are all cheering and raising their right hands, pointing their index fingers upwards. The man in the center foreground is wearing a grey hoodie with a Boston Red Sox World Series patch and has a wide, open-mouthed smile. To his right, another man in a red jacket with a large 'R' on the sleeve is also cheering. The background is filled with more fans, some wearing red, and the bright lights of the stadium are visible.

THE YEAR

THAT WAS

2062 Caleca Award



Our writing and other contributions are what make the Brewster the community it is. Each season the BBA Community Awards the finest (meaning most fun!?) writing on the Brewster Forums with the Caleca Award. Vic Caleca was a fine writer, a great competitor, and one of the bright beacons of joy we were lucky enough to have in our league. When in doubt, be a Vic.

Your 2062 nominees for the Caleca Award

<i>Ch 3: The Phoenix Talons Revenge Tour</i>	Mike Simon
<i>Ch 10: A Horse of A Different Color</i>	Mike Simon
<i>Will Hsung and His Aunt Open A Few Packs</i>	Renato Umali
<i>Blood, A Contract, And Immortality</i>	Alan Ehlers
<i>Deckard Sets A Record</i>	Ron Collins
<i>Crowding The Plate</i>	Chuck Valenches
<i>Clubbie Hands Out Wrong Shirts?</i>	Alan Ehlers

Find Our Forum At: <http://montybrewster.net/forums/index.php>

YOUR 2062 CALECA AWARD WINNER

Renato Umali

2062.10 - Will Hsung and His Aunt Open a Few Wax Packs (08/27/2062)



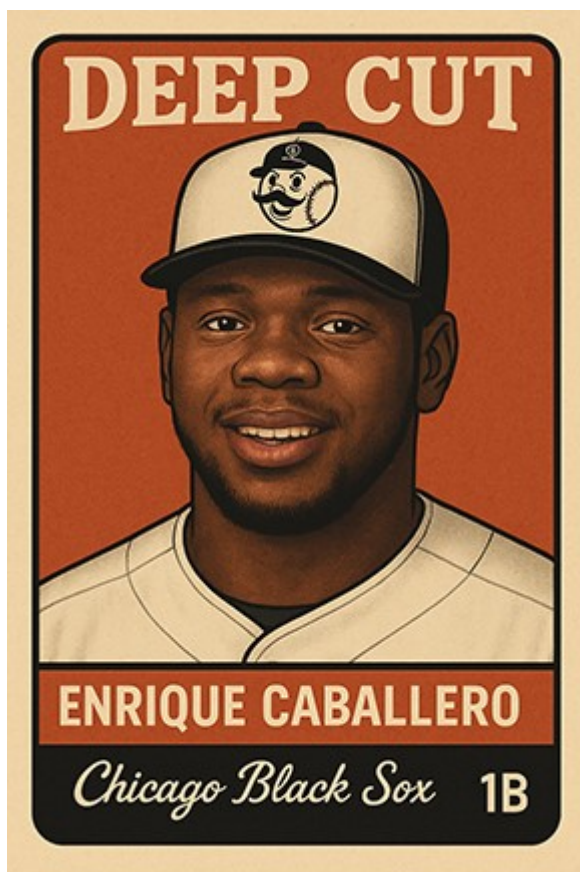
15-year-old Will Hsung's descent into baseball fandom took a few more steps downward (upward?) as his sophomore year began.

He was at the thrift store with his aunt trying to find some cheap stuff: a book bag, a lunch box, maybe a cool shirt or two. Having found none of that, they went over to the Mini Wallbert and picked up some overpriced groceries for lunches and the requisite hot cheddar rippled chips as a reward for walking the way there. At the unusually long self-checkout line - there was only one live cashier in the entire place it seemed, and he was dealing with a family of six at the antiquated passport photo section - there was a wall of candy bars, beef jerky packages, breath mints, something called "vim pips", and, wax packs of Shin-Jysy, Crafting, and yes, baseball. There was a cheap pack from the conglomerate, K-Toy, and after his aunt figured out it was not a gambling scheme, she bought a 3-pack.

"You open one and I open one and whoever gets the most, say, Chicago cards, gets to open the last one."

It had been such a nice day that they had decided to walk to the thrift store, but now laden with a couple of bags, they decided to take the El on the way back. Waiting at the stop for the Brown Line back to Ravenswood, and after mumbling their wishes for the pack, they ripped them open.

Will pulled the only Chicago one: a cool-looking "Deep Cut" edition for a first baseman named [Enrique Caballero](#).



He was quietly stunned. They had gone to Vinnie's two Fridays ago and they witnessed Caballero's first hit: a home run that broke a 1-1 tie with the Wolves. Caballero was a rookie who had been called up two Sims ago when outfielder [Omar Robles](#) went down with torn ankle ligaments. Caballero had been tearing it up his first year at AAA Rockford, slashing .310 / .405 / .521 with 27 HR and a remarkable 65:72 BB:K ratio. But he had been hitless in first 3 games with the Black Sox.

On the strength of that home run, the Black Sox would win 3-1 and get back to .500 that night. On the Blue Line platform, rowdy Black Sox fans had struck up a chant: "We're Five Hun-Dred!" Clap, clap, clap-clap-clap! And his aunt seemed to be one of the louder revelers. "I can hardly remember when they've been .500 this late in the season."

In the next two games, [Enrique Caballero](#) would register two more hits, each of them a 1-run home run. He would end his 2nd sim with just those 3 hits in 22 ABs, an .136 average. Will hopes that his 5 walks to 4 strikeouts (.296 OBP) and .545 slugging will be good enough to hold down the DH role.

"Caballero. Not bad. First three hits, all home runs.

That's gotta be some kind of record. Could be your new favorite player."

"Nah. I still rate [Timofei Gadomsky](#)." Will flexed his meager muscles, each hand still held a plastic bag of groceries, and raised his voice to say Gadomsky's nickname: "Full Pack!"

"You just like him because he's on your fantasy team."

"I like him because he's leading the team in home runs and RBIs."

"Look at you!"

Will scoffed but couldn't help adding, "Yeah, he had something like 26 RBIs in August. He started - I don't know - selling out for power."

"To think you did not know what an RBI was 6 months ago."

"I knew what an RBI was!" To be fair, 6 months ago Will knew more about how to cool tires on an F1 car than even the more basic metrics used in baseball.

They stood on the train platform. Will's aunt looked at her cards: all dreck. Although one was from a series called "Fan Favs." It was of a guy she remembered was on the Yellow Springs 9: [Burhan Tahir](#). There was another one of a guy she's never heard of before: [John Coxtolstoy](#). She turned over the card and read that his nickname was "Friend of Alan's." She let a laugh.

"What?" Will asked.

"This guy's nickname is 'Friend of Alan's'."

"Oh, Coxtolstoy. He's a rookie, too. 3rd baseman for Louisville. He was just here last month and killed our pitching." Will looked at the card. He thought of what his friend at Science Camp said: "I'm collecting all the rookie cards, from K-Toy, OsChar, all the top card makers." Will intuitively knew collecting cards was throwing good money after bad but it was fun to open up the pack.

His aunt interrupted his thoughts and said "You should send that to him."

"Send what?"

"The card. Send it to Enrique. Players are required to do a certain amount for fans. There's a metric called 'Fan Interest' that's important for the health of the team."

"Huh. Carley Motet does that."

"Who?"

"F1 driver for Renault."

"Well, you should send that card to Enrique. Write a nice letter, too. And send a self-addressed stamped envelope and you'll get it back signed. I can practically guarantee."

"For real?"

"Really. I mean, there's a chance he's a turd but most likely there's a block of time on his schedule for him to do community outreach. Responding to social media and signing memorabilia and writing letters probably all counts towards that."

"You think a cup of coffee guy like Caballero is required to do that?"

His aunt smiled at the phrase "cup of coffee." When did he learn that? He had pointedly used the phrase "can of corn" during the game two weeks ago. The vernacular is rubbing off on him. "Sure. Look, the card is worth pennies and if you get his signature and have it verified then it'll be worth, I don't know, nickels."

"Not everything has to be about money, Auntie."

"We're springing for the El aren't we?"

As if on cue, the station started to rumble. The Brown Line was coming. Will's aunt breathed a sigh of relief. They were on the verge, just on the verge, of starting an argument - a discussion - about money. It had started earlier in the day when she had suggested walking over to the thrift store. All she had really wanted was to get some solid time to talk to him about the upcoming school year. Which she got.

She gave him the unopened wax pack and he took it without a word. They found adjoining seats on the train and settled in for the short ride.

Before he opened the pack, Will said, "What's your wish?"

Without missing a beat, she responded: "Matthes rookie. Rainbow Rookie."

Chanting "Matthes rookie, Matthes rookie" he tore open the pack.

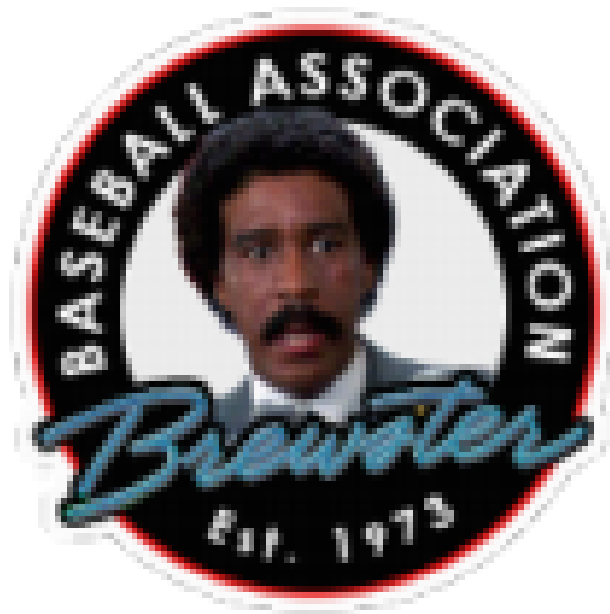
[Enrique Caballero](#) had an excellent spring. He received 23 starts and amassed 60 PAs, slashing .340 / .417 / .491. He hit only 2 home runs but he walked as many times as struck out. But he failed to make the Opening Day roster. [Timofei Gadomsky](#) has 1B on lock. And the Black Sox were paying [Jorge Gutierrez](#) \$9.5m. So, Caballero promptly went to AAA Rockford and mashed: .310 / .405 / .521 with 27 HR in 114 games.

The injury to Oscar Robles was the opening Caballero needed. But in his first two games he had 8 ABs and struck out 4 times. He relied on his eye to get on base, walking his first two times at bat in his 3rd game.

His first three hits were indeed home runs. The first was against [Mauro Ruiz](#), the second against [Tyler Murray](#) in a losing cause, in a game called by weather in the 6th, and the third against [Ruben Flores](#).

How They Finished

BBA



2062 Johnson League Final Standings

Atlantic Division

Team	W	L	PCT	GB	Pyt.Rec	Diff	Home	Away
Charlotte Flyers	97	65	0.599	-	96-66	1	55-26	42-39
Charm City Jimmies	96	66	0.593	1	92-70	4	51-30	45-36
Montreal Blazers	95	67	0.586	2	89-73	6	51-30	44-37
Cape Fear Swamp Foxes	89	73	0.549	8	90-72	-1	49-32	40-41
Jacksonville Zombies	80	82	0.494	17	80-82	0	43-38	37-44
New Orleans Crawdads	74	88	0.457	23	72-90	2	42-39	32-49
Atlantic City Gamblers	73	89	0.451	24	83-79	-10	42-39	31-50
Brooklyn Robins	60	102	0.37	37	60-102	0	33-48	27-54

Frontier Division

Team	W	L	PCT	GB	Pyt.Rec	Diff	Home	Away
Las Vegas Hustlers	89	73	0.549	-	90-72	-1	51-30	38-43
Calgary Pioneers	88	74	0.543	1	92-70	-4	53-28	35-46
Mexico City Aztecs	87	75	0.537	2	85-77	2	48-33	39-42
Austin Shredders	78	84	0.481	11	74-88	4	43-38	35-46
Rocky Mountain Oysters	78	84	0.481	11	73-89	5	38-43	40-41
San Antonio Outlaws	72	90	0.444	17	75-87	-3	35-46	37-44
Boise Spuds	72	90	0.444	17	69-93	3	37-44	35-46
Phoenix Talons	68	94	0.42	21	83-79	-15	34-47	34-47

General Manager of the Year

Nathan Garrison – Charlotte Flyers

2062 Frick League Final Standings

Heartland Division

Team	W	L	PCT	GB	Pyt.Rec	Diff	Home	Away
Nashville Bluebirds	109	53	0.673	-	114-48	-5	60-21	49-32
Twin Cities River Monsters	101	61	0.623	8	97-65	4	58-23	43-38
Des Moines Kernels	91	71	0.562	18	91-71	0	49-32	42-39
Chicago Black Sox	83	79	0.512	26	87-75	-4	49-32	34-47
Louisville Sluggers	72	90	0.444	37	70-92	2	39-42	33-48
Yellow Springs Nine	70	92	0.432	39	71-91	-1	39-42	31-50
Omaha Cyclones	69	93	0.426	40	68-94	1	39-42	30-51
Madison Wolves	61	101	0.377	48	60-102	1	37-44	24-57

Pacific Division

Team	W	L	PCT	GB	Pyt.Rec	Diff	Home	Away
Sacramento Mad Popes	95	68	0.583	-	100-63	-5	46-36	49-32
Hawaii Tropics	94	69	0.577	1	94-69	0	53-28	41-41
Vancouver Mounties	89	73	0.549	5½	85-77	4	51-30	38-43
San Fernando Bears	88	74	0.543	6½	88-74	0	48-33	40-41
Portland Lumberjacks	79	83	0.488	15½	90-72	-11	45-36	34-47
Bikini Krill	78	84	0.481	16½	77-85	1	40-41	38-43
Long Beach Surfers	60	102	0.37	34½	63-99	-3	35-46	25-56
Valencia Stars	58	104	0.358	36½	50-112	8	30-51	28-53

General Manager of the Year

Alan Ehlers – Twin Cities River Monsters

2062 BBA Playoffs

Geoghegan Round



Montreal Defeats Cape Fear (3-0)

Hawaii Defeats Des Moines (3-1)

Charm City Defeats Calgary (3-2)

Twin Cities Defeats Vancouver (3-1)

Doubleday Series



Charlotte Defeats Montreal (4-3)

Nashville Defeats Hawaii (4-2)

Charm City Defeats Las Vegas (4-2)

Twin Cities Defeats Sacramento (4-3)

Cartwright Cup



Charlotte Defeats Montreal (4-3)

Nashville Defeats Hawaii (4-2)

Charm City Defeats Las Vegas (4-2)

Twin Cities Defeats Sacramento (4-3)

Monty Brewster Memorial Series



Nashville Defeats Charlotte (4-2)



2062 BREWSTER BASEBALL ASSOCIATION CHAMPION

**SECOND
THREE-PEAT
IN BREWSTER BASEBALL ASSOCIATION
HISTORY!**

(Las Vegas Husters – 2047, 2048, 2049)

HOW THEY FINISHED

GBC



2062 GBC Final Standings

Eurasia Division

Team	W	L	PCT	GB	Pyt.Rec	Diff	Home	Away
Tokyo Pearls	94	68	0.58	-	95-67	-1	49-32	45-36
Jerusalem Hebrew Hammers	85	77	0.525	9	87-75	-2	42-39	43-38
Moscow Thunder Bears	84	78	0.519	10	81-81	3	45-36	39-42
London Monarchs	75	87	0.463	19	78-84	-3	38-43	37-44
Athens Fighting Centaurs	64	98	0.395	30	66-96	-2	32-49	32-49

AFSAMOC Division

Team	W	L	PCT	GB	Pyt.Rec	Diff	Home	Away
Cairo Pharaohs	107	55	0.66	-	99-63	8	52-29	55-26
Sao Paulo Pilots	83	79	0.512	24	85-77	-2	45-36	38-43
Johannesburg Gold	75	87	0.463	32	73-89	2	40-41	35-46
Buenos Aires Brisas	74	88	0.457	33	72-90	2	44-37	30-51
Sydney Sharks	69	93	0.426	38	72-90	-3	33-48	36-45

General Manager of the Year

Will Dymek – Cairo Pharaohs

GBC Playoffs

Wild Series



Moscow Defeats Cairo (4-3)

Jerusalem Defeats Tokyo (4-3)


Grand Slam Cup by Denny's, Marko and Subaru



Moscow Defeats Jerusalem (4-1)



2062 GLOBAL BASEBALL CONSORTIUM CHAMPION



2062-63 HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

(Matt Rectenwald)

It's that time of year again where I get the great honor of unveiling the latest inductees to the Brewster Hall of Fame, I feel like I should be excited about doing this, and I usually am. This year is different, Everything about it is different. I have put this off until Media Guide Eve as I fear that my utter contempt for what just happened to the 2062 Hall of Fame nominees will become all too obvious the more I write about it. Guess there's only one way to find out.

What happened was.....2062 was probably the single most loaded ballot in the history of our current voting system. The hell with it, not probably. It certainly was. I have been here through all of our ninety seasons and that makes me something of a Brewster history expert. Can I ascertain what constitutes a historically impactful player? Of course I can. That being said, after careful analysis of the candidates, I was able to put together a list of ten players who earned my vote. It was nearly impossible to come up with my ten. In fact, I could have voted fifteen guys in had the rules allowed it. Players with more than 3000 hits were left off of my ballot. My long, long advocacy for Lorenzo de'Medici (on his last ballot) was no longer possible. There were so many more qualified players.

All of that being said, the casual observer would expect a huge Hall of Fame class. A casual observer lacks the inside knowledge about the folks in our league, though. So while it may seem that we should have had a historically large class, I come to you today to announce that only two made the cut.

Two. That's all. It's not a mistake, nor a typo. Two. So before I descend into a full blown rant, let me properly honor the two new members of the Brewster Hall of Fame.

Aaron Haney



Haney's election to the Hall was fairly easy. On his first ballot, he earned 91.9% of the vote and now joins the legends of the game. He's 8th all-time in WAR, 7th in HR, 5th in Runs Scored....and so on, and so on. When I think of a five tool player, Haney easily comes to mind. He could do it all offensively and defensively. He goes in with a Valencia Stars hat.

Congratulations Aaron Haney!

Larry Stinson



Someone will have to explain to me how a guy who is All-Time #2 in Home Runs (881), #3 in RBI (2480), #2 in Total Bases (7163) only garners 78.4% of the vote. Everywhere I look on the leaderboards Stinson is among guys named Puckett, Kengos, Pennebaker, et al (and a guy named Roman; as an aside, if Roman isn't unanimous when he becomes eligible I cannot promise I will be able to control my unbridled rage). Anyways, Larry Stinson is truly one of the greats. When I think Calgary, I think Larry Stinson. In fact, I forgot that San Antonio was his first team and somehow decided it would be a good idea to trade him away. Congratulations, Larry Stinson!

Ok, so here were the results. I'll rant a little afterwards.

Name	%	Votes
Aaron Haney	91.9%	34
Larry Stinson	78.4%	29
Carlos Flores	73.0%	27
Jeffrey Smith	59.5%	22
Eduardo González	51.4%	19
Felipe Vega	51.4%	19
Lorenzo de' Medici	45.9%	17
Tom Rudge	45.9%	17
Tony Frost	45.9%	17
Tiernan O'Macken	35.1%	13
Lineu Aldo	32.4%	12
Ricardo Rivera	29.7%	11
Fernando Castillo	16.2%	6
Dave Lee	16.2%	6
Pedro Guzmán	16.2%	6
Adam Backhouse	16.2%	6
Fernando Moreno	16.2%	6
André Ly	10.8%	4
Tomás Guillén	10.8%	4
Girolamo L'Archibudelli	10.8%	4
Mike Campbell	8.1%	3
Bing-de Zhào	8.1%	3
Bill Constable	8.1%	3
Weaver Ripley	8.1%	3
Quant Kouros	8.1%	3
Ramón Pagán	5.4%	2
Ron Shiplack	5.4%	2
Donald Miller	5.4%	2
Reggie Vargas	5.4%	2
Pedro Bustamante	5.4%	2
Pedro Huerta	5.4%	2
Kidane Ata	5.4%	2
Mal Fountain	5.4%	2
Wilson Andrade	2.7%	1

RANT MODE: ON

In what world is Carlos Flores not a Hall of Famer??? I have no words. The numbers should tell the story.

Year	Age	TM	LVL	W	L	SV	ERA	G	GS	IP	HA	ER	HR	BB	K	WHIP	HR/9	BB/9	K/9	BABIP	ERA+	WAR
2043	22	ATC	BBA	11	3	33	3.43	61	0	76.0	49	29	10	24	99	0.96	1.2	2.8	11.7	.238	116	1.6
2044	23	ATC	BBA	6	6	32	1.94	57	0	60.1	39	13	7	11	86	0.83	1.0	1.6	12.8	.260	216	2.2
2045	24	ATC	BBA	17	7	0	3.03	31	31	187.1	148	63	19	50	270	1.06	0.9	2.4	13.0	.320	159	7.4
2046	25	ATC	BBA	14	10	0	4.18	33	33	189.2	168	88	26	58	238	1.19	1.2	2.8	11.3	.315	104	4.8
2047	26	ATC	BBA	11	12	0	4.06	32	32	179.2	146	81	21	69	250	1.20	1.1	3.5	12.5	.317	105	4.7
2048	27	ATC	BBA	17	2	0	1.78	33	33	207.1	123	41	12	72	285	0.94	0.5	3.1	12.4	.256	235	7.9
2049	28	ATC	BBA	18	5	0	2.40	32	32	194.2	141	52	14	68	271	1.07	0.6	3.1	12.5	.305	173	7.2
2050	29	ATC	BBA	17	4	0	2.54	32	32	201.2	131	57	17	63	293	0.96	0.8	2.8	13.1	.284	163	7.4
2051	30	ATC	BBA	11	8	0	4.10	32	32	204.1	196	93	22	69	182	1.30	1.0	3.0	8.0	.296	115	4.3
2052	31	ATC	BBA	15	9	0	3.46	32	32	218.1	195	84	16	60	189	1.17	0.7	2.5	7.8	.289	133	5.9
2053	32	ATC	BBA	16	6	0	3.64	33	33	225.0	189	91	21	86	194	1.22	0.8	3.4	7.8	.267	126	4.7
2054	33	ATC	BBA	0	10	0	5.58	11	11	69.1	82	43	16	22	59	1.50	2.1	2.9	7.7	.304	83	0.2
2054	33	SAC	BBA	5	9	2	4.62	33	11	99.1	80	51	12	46	102	1.27	1.1	4.2	9.2	.264	93	1.2
BBA Total 2054	33		BBA	5	19	2	5.02	44	22	168.2	162	94	28	68	161	1.36	1.5	3.6	8.6	.282	93	1.3
2055	34	SAC	BBA	15	8	0	3.55	31	31	215.2	198	85	13	67	223	1.23	0.5	2.8	9.3	.317	118	7.3
2056	35	SAC	BBA	11	5	0	3.09	25	25	171.2	147	59	15	48	174	1.14	0.8	2.5	9.1	.290	135	4.8
2057	36	SAC	BBA	5	5	0	3.43	23	23	123.1	137	47	6	40	134	1.44	0.4	2.9	9.8	.375	124	4.5
2057	36	LBC	BBA	7	2	0	2.91	11	11	58.2	43	19	6	17	50	1.02	0.9	2.6	7.7	.236	145	1.3
BBA Total 2057	36		BBA	12	7	0	3.26	34	34	182.0	180	66	12	57	184	1.30	0.6	2.8	9.1	.332	143	5.8
2058	37	LBC	BBA	0	2	0	7.52	7	3	20.1	26	17	2	10	11	1.77	0.9	4.4	4.9	.358	54	-0.0
TOTAL				196	113	67	3.37	549	405	2702.2	2238	1013	255	880	3110	1.15	0.8	2.9	10.4	.296	130	77.2

Add to these raw numbers one other: 4.

As in the man won not one, not two or three, but *four* Nebraska awards.

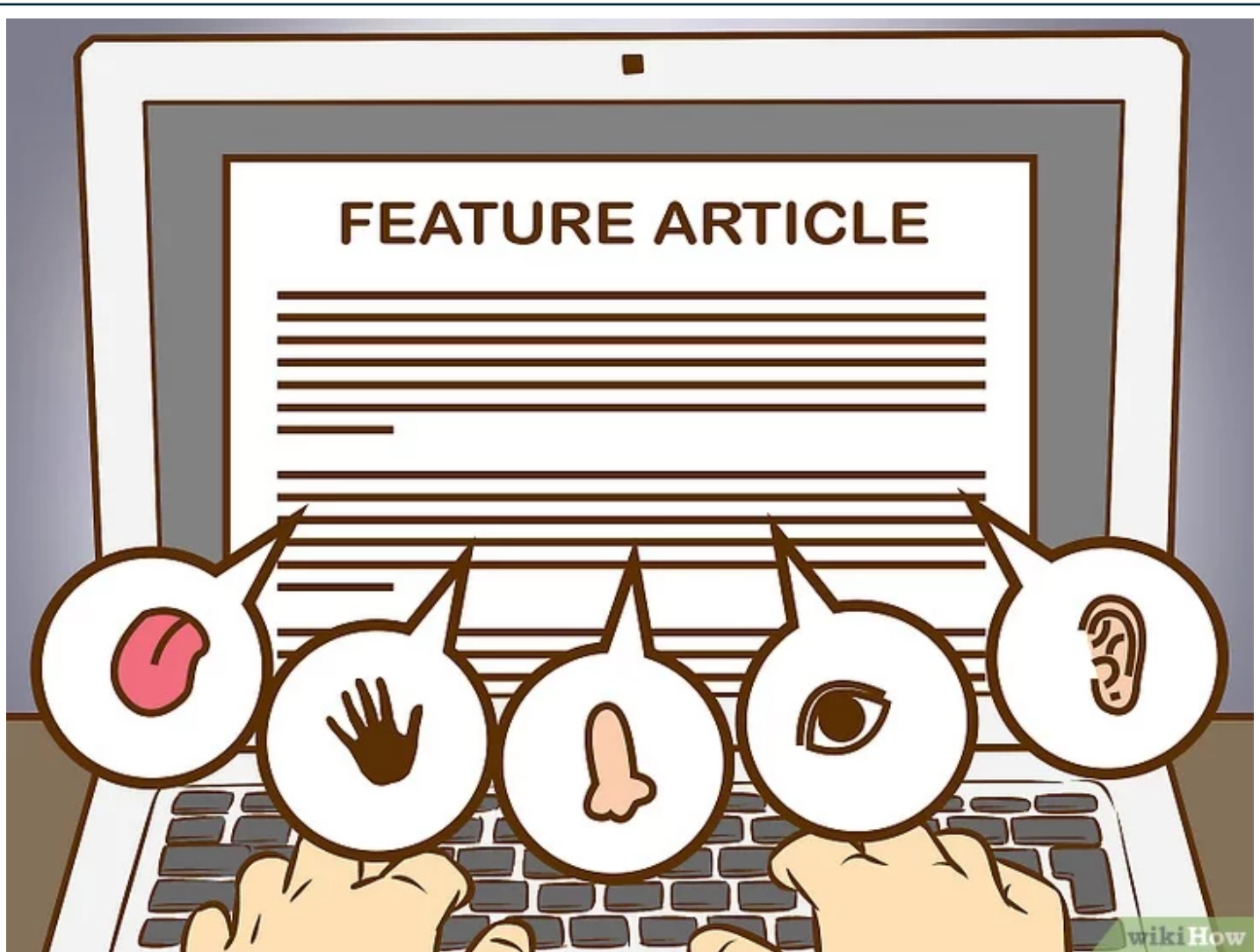
Are you kidding me?

After Flores, I could be convinced that a lot of the other players may have created a glut on the ballot, making it hard for anyone to gain a majority. We have to say goodbye to the long and ultimately fruitless candidacy of de'Medici. But a ton of worthy candidates will remain. And there are more coming in the upcoming years. Something has to give. Do we create a Veterans Committee to rehash the candidacy of guys who don't make it? Should we raise the maximum players that can be voted for? Can we stop the Phoenix/Tokyo madness of only voting for players who played for them? I digress. This ballot was stuffed with All-Time greats and I was probably naive to think we'd get five or six guys elected. Fernando Moreno, for example, amassed 3800 hits. That's a crazy number of hits, baseball fans. For his trouble he received a whopping six votes. Kidane Ata was one of the best

centerfielders of his generation and he got two votes. I think that speaks to the craziness of this particular voting cycle, and I doubt that it gets better over the next ten ballots.

I'll just ask for a simple favor. Next year, when the Hall of Fame Ballot comes out, really take some time to study these players and their place in Brewster History. Small Hall, Big Hall, whatever your philosophy is- let's make sure that worthy players get to take their rightful place among the greats.

Thank you for your time, and may the spirit of Monty Brewster himself grant you a successful season!



(I'm sure that's supposed to be the five senses, but that middle one might be a ... well ...)

MEDIA GUIDE FEATURES

Some Brewster GMs

(As Other GMs Imagine Them)

John Momberg



NASHVILLE BLUEBIRDS



BIKINI KRILL



MONTREAL BLAZERS



LAS VEGAS HUSTLERS



The 2043

Kevin Morales Award!

(Rob McMonigal)

Welcome back to the annual Kevin Morales Award, as we look back at who was the "best" 20th round draft pick of each year. Inspired by the Fictional National Football League's concept of Mr. Irrelevant, aka the last pick of the draft, it's named for arguably the most successful late round draft pick of all time. Mr. Morales had one heck of a career for a man drafted in the 25th(!) round, winning 204 games, three championships, and a Nebraska award. In honor of his achievements, the Kevin Morales award is given to the player drafted in the 20th round of a given year who had the most success as professional baseball player.

Success, of course, is extremely relative here. These *are* 20th round picks we're talking about here. At least so far, there hasn't been much of career for any of these guys. Here's a look at past winners:

Running Totals:

Number of BBA alumni: 3

Number of GBC alumni: 1

Max Pro Career: 17 seasons (2042)

Best Year So Far: 2041 (1 BBA and 1 GBC alumni, median pro career of 5 seasons)

Worst Year So Far: 2040 (8 players with negative WAR for their pro career)

Best Median Pro Level: 2042 (A/AA Ball Split)

Best Median Pro Career: 2041 (5 years)

Best Career BBA/GBC WAR: 1.7 (Steve Tucker from 2042)

Best Career Minor League WAR: 22.34 (David Graham from 2042)

The 2042 Kevin Morales Award Fun Facts:

Previous Award Winners:

2040: Catcher Rodrigo Valles

673rd pick overall
no BBA or GBC service time
highest level AAA
career minor league WAR of 12.61

2041: Outfielder Theron Fairchild

685th pick overall
40 career BBA games
.202 average, -.54 WAR
career minor league WAR of 10.85
14 professional seasons

2041: Outfielder Steve Tucker

675th pick overall
2 BBA Seasons totaling 66 games
Career ZR 2.55
.244 average, 1.7 WAR
career minor league WAR of 18.11
17 professional seasons)

32 of 32 are listed in Stats + - 1st complete draft record!
3 Position Players and 29 Pitchers (!!)
7 Years was longest pro career
0 Players Made the BBA
1 Players Made the GBC

Mean Median and Mode Fun Part 1: Leveling Up (or not!) – BBA Level Data

Mean: 2.5 (Squarely between Short A and A)
Median: 2.5 (Squarely between Short A and A)
Mode: 1 and 3 (R and A, 7 each)

Mean Median and Mode Fun Part 2: Hiding from the GM (for a bit, anyway) – Career Length Data

Mean: .72 Pro Years
Median: 2 Pro Years
Mode: 1 Pro Years (10)
Outliers: None, aka everyone sucked

Notable Stats:

- A whopping 4 players never even made it onto a pro roster, a first
- Only 1 player made it (briefly) to the GBC
- 10 players drafted had negative WAR in high school
- 3 players drafted had negative WAR in college
- Best Minor League WAR was 8.17

Other Cool or Interesting Facts:

- The Devil's Draft curse is back! 6 players had 6 pro years
- I suspect but can't prove, due to the large number of pitchers and the extremely poor records of those pitchers in their high school careers, that this was almost entirely an auto-drafted round.
- These players who "made it" to AAA were basically used as emergency filler, which breaks the stats of the 2043 year a bit.

Hoo boy, this was a bad year. There was a strong temptation to announce no winner for this edition, but hey, they still give out Oscars even when the movies are mediocre, right? But when you have a year with only 6 players making it to over 3 minor league WAR, it's hard to pick anyone to be your "winner."

But wait! Rob, shouldn't you just give it to the player who made it to the GBC? Oh, you sweet summer child. I have no idea why anyone put "pitcher" Tony Bustamante onto a big league roster, even a GBC one. Jerusalem quickly regretted it, as he only played in 11 games, with a

6.75 ERA and zero WAR. His total minor league career featured a -.26 WAR. Oof. Yeah, that's not going to cut it. This former Hawaii draft pick just never went anywhere. He's not even the runner up.

That honor goes to Jose Moreno, also a pitcher, who had great success at Short A. In 28 starts, he was 17-3, with a 1.34 WAR. Yes, that's how weak this class was in the 20th round. He was a New Orleans pick, and while he never got above A ball, he was a Drake wunderkid.

So who gets the dubious distinction of being the "top" guy? Well, your 2043 Kevin Morales Award-Winner is...

Your 2043 Kevin Morales Award-Winner is...

Pitcher Jesus Noriega!



Jesus Noriega, drafted 639th by the Twin City River Monsters, may have been noticed primarily for his distinctive name that mixes the profound and the profane more than his total ability, though OOTP indicates that he had decent stuff and control potential at the time he was selected, with his movement being an issue. Sent straight to Short A, Noriega pitched well, going 8-3 with a 2.96 ERA and 1.9 WAR. By 2044, he was in AA, where he was 9-6 in 28 starts, with a 3.85 ERA and again, a 1.9 WAR. Moved to AAA in 2045, he did solidly if not spectacularly, going 8-13 with a 4.75 ERA. Moved to the bullpen in 2046, his last professional season, Jesus wasn't able to resurrect his career, but he did manage to save 4 people, er, I mean games.

Noriega hung up his pro cleats after that, retiring at age 27. He had a career minor league WAR of 5.97 and a career minor league rWAR of 8.17. In a year of really piss-poor picks in the final round, Noriega was head and shoulders above the rest. It's not saying much, but it's good enough to get the nod.

Learn more about him here: <https://statsplus.net/brewster/player/42049?page=pitch>

After 2042's Tucker being a lot of fun to look into, this year was...well, not that. We'll do this again next year, when we look at 2044. See you then!

Welcome to the Brewster, Buddy

(Graham Luna)

It's the pre-season and a new GM to the Brewster Baseball Association is meeting with Matt "Recte" Rectenwald, the league's commissioner.

New GM (excited, leaning forward slightly):

Thanks for meeting with me, Recte. I'm excited to join and be part of the greatest OOTP league in the world.

Commissioner (smiling calmly, nodding):

We're happy to have you in our little fun, fictional world. If you have any questions, let me or the governing board—or really any other GM—know. We're happy to clear things up for you.

New GM (even more excited, flipping open a notebook):

Great, I can't wait to get busy.

Commissioner (suddenly serious):

Well, let me stop you there. He's under contract in Atlantic City. I just can't give him to you.

New GM (blinks, caught off guard):

Sorry, what?

Commissioner:

You wanted to get Bizi?

New GM (still blinking, confused):

Correct. Not sure what the confusion is...

Commissioner (matter-of-factly):

Well, good luck getting Bizi, but I really doubt Momberg will just give him to you.

New GM (frowning):

...Right.

Commissioner:

He's not available either! He's one of my best players in Vegas. I can help you with recommendations, but he's off-limits.

New GM (snaps head up):

Wait, what?

Commissioner (smiling slightly):

Wright. Although I'm not surprised you're interested in him.

New GM:

Who are we talking about?

Commissioner:

Wright.

New GM (pointing at self):

Oh, you're telling me that Huo is a player in Vegas?

Commissioner:

No, that's Wright.

New GM (rubbing temples):

No, I'm wrong or yeah, I'm right?

Commissioner:

Yeh is in left.

New GM (muttering):

Left where?

Commissioner:

Mexico City.

New GM (exasperated, throws hands up):

I'm lost. Anyway, so...

Commissioner (grinning):

You are lost! [Tsao](#) isn't in Mexico City. He was in Nashville, but now he's in Cobble Hill, which used to be Brooklyn and is now run by the former GM in Sacramento.

New GM (shaking head):

There is so much to learn.

Commissioner (philosophically):

I agree. Tsao still has a ways to go to reach his full potential. It's something every GM has to deal with. Just be patient. Some guys rush prospects up too fast and really screw up their plans.

New GM (worried):

Oh no...

Commissioner:

Exactly!

New GM (half-laughs, half-groans):

Exactly what?

Commissioner:

[Ono](#) is another guy that needs some development, just like Tsao.

New GM (deadpan):

So...

Commissioner (nodding):

Absolutely. Didn't we just talk about this?

New GM (looks up, exhausted):

Nuh.

Commissioner (genuinely impressed):

Wow, I'm really impressed with your knowledge of some fringe players.

New GM:

Who is a fringe player?

Commissioner:

Nuh.

New GM (throws pen down):

Okay, let me get this straight. Nuh is basically nothing, I can't get busy because he's in Atlantic City and I'm correct in saying you're right.

Commissioner (grinning):

My Wright? Yes.

New GM:

Yes! Okay. But you didn't say yeah, because that's left field.

Commissioner:

In Mexico City.

New GM (staring into the void):

Okay, I'm getting the hang of this. Anything more?

Commissioner:

Moore? About three of them in the league currently.

New GM (standing up):

Whatever. This is taking forever. I gotta hurry up and go.

Commissioner:

Wait, did you hear rumors that Ron is going to move Hurry up in the order?

New GM (yelling):

Oh my god, I am so done!

Commissioner:

You're not Dunn. He's a pitcher in Rosenblatt, which used to be Rocky Mountain. You follow?

New GM (slumps back down into chair):

I can't take this anymore. I quit. You guys need to get a life.

Commissioner (smirking):

No, he's in the GBC.



BIG LEAGUE CHEW

A conversation with Atlantic City GM John Momberg

So John... Describe yourself in one word.

Old. Really old. I'm not a withered husk or anything, but I'm pretty sure I'm the oldest Brewster GM, and I'm picking up on fewer and fewer of the pop culture references around here.

Give us a brief bio... and keep it brief because no one really cares.

OK... Born in Cincinnati, lifelong Reds fan, went to Kent State and then spent the next 40 years behind the scenes in local TV, first in Cincinnati, then in Indianapolis. Retired and living in Peoria, Illinois. That brief enough?

It will have to do. So what is your history with sim baseball?

Well, when I was a kid I had the "All-Star Baseball" game- the one with the spinners and the discs for each player. Then I remember devising my own game I could play quickly by flipping over cards from a standard deck. I remember a red ace was a homer. I played whole seasons out that way... When computers became a thing I got into a variation of the Earl Weaver game called "Old Time Baseball". Then the internet happened and I got into Diamond Mind and then OOTP.

So how long have you been playing OOTP?

Well, I registered on the OOTP forums in 2002, so about that long. When I started though, I had a bad habit of getting involved in leagues that promptly went defunct, so I eventually drifted away for a while. Then, when I came back, I resolved to get involved in the best league I could find. That was, of course, the Brewster, but I didn't feel savvy enough to compete. So I joined a couple of other leagues, did OK in them, and finally considered myself ready to run with the big boys here in the 2044 season.

Are you still in any other leagues?

I'm in three OOTP leagues, and all of them with Shoeless- am I a glutton for punishment, or what? And I'm in a couple of Diamond Mind historical leagues, and let me tell you: if you ever want to complain about the OOTP engine, be glad you've never encountered Diamond Mind. It's hopelessly clunky. But at any rate, I spend more time working on and thinking about the BBA than the other four leagues combined.

What's your philosophy of team building in OOTP?

My philosophy is based on what I think I can do well. I focus on draft and develop because I feel like I can draft about as well as anybody else. I sign a lot of lower-price free agents because I don't have a job and can devote lots of time to scouring the nether regions of the free agent pool for bargains. On the other hand, I don't make a lot of big-name trades because I feel like I'm probably not as smart as the average GM I'm talking trade with.

Yeah, I was going to ask you about that. Your career win-lost record is... not good.

True, but I can rationalize that. My first BBA team was in El Paso, and it took me quite a while to realize how much that extreme hitter's environment was skewing everything. Then I moved to Atlantic City, which was in way over its head financially, and I had to strip it to the bare studs and start over.

Plus, since this thing is a hobby, I have a real problem doing any aspect of it that's not enjoyable for me. I see the statistical deep dives that some of the other GMs post, and I'm in awe, but that's not my wheelhouse, and if that means they're going to consistently finish ahead of me, so be it.

What do you find most appealing about the league?

I think it's the idea that the vast majority of the general managers work so diligently not just to make their own teams better, but to make the league as a whole more enjoyable. Oh, I know they're getting participation points for it, but even so, most of them go above and beyond to create and sustain this baseball universe and make sure there's something for everyone to enjoy.

So you're enjoying yourself even with your limited success?

Oh, absolutely. And really, I consider myself a successful general manager by my personal standards. I've always preached that the most successful GM is not the one who wins the most games or the most championships, but the one who extracts the most fun from the whole experience. Maybe that's a cop-out, but I truly believe it, and by that standard I'm a very successful GM indeed.

Well, that's about it, John. Thanks for your time, and good luck in 2063.

I'll need it. Have you looked at the freaking Atlantic Division?



ALL MODERN ERA TEAMS

Who are the best players who ever played the game for your favorite teams? It's a fun game, right? Go back in time and put the names of the past together with the stars of the current.

Well...

Join Nathan Garrison as he embarks on a massive project to do just that with every team in the league—the first four (Atlantic City, Brooklyn, Cape Fear, and his own Charlotte club) appeared in 2062's Media Guide. This season we get one more!

ALL MODERN ERA TEAM CHARM CITY



The Charm City Jimmies were an expansion team, added to the league in 2029. The team has a winning percentage of .530, with 17 playoff appearances and 3 championships. In this article, I am going to determine the franchise's best player at each position during that time. All statistics and accomplishments used in this article are from the players' time with Charm City.

CATCHER

Top Candidates:

- Tokimasa Yano (.304/.349/.467, 120 wRC+, 222 2B, 128 HR, 568 RBI, 29.6 WAR in 1,037 Games from 2054-2062-He threw out 21% of attempted base stealers in Charm City-Currently a Free Agent at the time this article was written.)
- Quinton Lara (.281/.338/.456, 106 wRC+, 251 2B, 149 HR, 568 RBI, 24.7 WAR in 1,138 Games from 2040-2049. He threw out 30% of attempted base stealers in Charm City)
- Don Logan (.257/.376/.420, 117 wRC+, 91 2B, 14 3B, 97 HR, 284 RBI, 435 R, 106 SB, 16.7 WAR in 755 Games from 2029-2034-He threw out over 34% of attempted base stealers in Charm City)

Yano was a 5 time All-Star, 2 time Platinum Stick winner, 3 time League Champion, and 2 time Playoff Series MVP.

Lara was a 3 time All-Star and a 4 time Platinum Stick winner.

Logan was the Gillstrom Rookie of the Year in 2029.

My choice for the top Catcher in the modern era for Charm City is Tokimasa Yano. It was very close for me between Yano and Lara but Yano did just enough to put him at the top of the list and he was behind the plate during the most successful era of Charm City baseball.

FIRST BASE

Top Candidates:

- Colm Alker (.269/.356/.510, 131 wRC+, 173 2B, 216 HR, 557 R, 591 RBI, 18.3 WAR in 1,095 Games from 2048-2055)
- Juakin Hebner (.294/.379/.425, 112 wRC+, 274 2B, 50 HR, 448 R, 324 RBI, 15.5 WAR in 867 Games from 2037-2043)
- Byron Hearle (.252/.375/.443, 117 wRC+, 104 2B, 104 HR, 358 R, 309 RBI, 13.2 WAR in 746 Games from 2031-2037)
- Jules Le Gal (.262/.342/.481, 131 2B, 166 HR, 471 R, 489 RBI, 121 wRC+, 11.6 WAR in 812 Games from 2054-2060. Currently in the GBC at the time the article was written.)

Alker is a 2 time league champion.

Hebner is a 1 time All-Star.

Le Gal is a 2 time league champion and 1 time Diamond Glove winner.

My choice for the top First Baseman in the modern era for Charm City is Colm Alker. He was the most productive hitter in the group and played with the team for the longest time.

SECOND BASEMAN

Top Candidate:

- Dave Ackerman (.258/.318/.519, 195 2B, 44 3B, 383 HR, 948 R, 1,009 RBI, 291 SB, 120 wRC+, 60.2 WAR in 1,439 Games from 2051-2062-Currently active at the time the article was written.)

Ackerman is a 6 time All-Star, 3 time league champion, 7 time Diamond Glove winner, 3 time Platinum Stick winner, and 9 time playoff series MVP winner. He has finished 2nd and 3rd in Silk voting. Ackerman led the league in home runs in 2062 and was 2nd in the league in home runs the two previous seasons. He Also led the league in WAR twice.

My choice for the top Second Baseman in the modern era for Charm City is Dave Ackerman. Ackerman has more than ten times the amount of WAR as the second best second baseman in team history.

THIRD BASEMAN

Top Candidates:

- Carlton Winson (.240/.373/.555, 140 wRC+, 148 2B, 346 HR, 803 RBI, 37.9 WAR in 1,121 Games from 2033-2041)
- Gary Allen (.292/.345/.510, 130 wRC+, 134 2B, 23 3B, 143 HR, 458 RBI, 17.6 WAR in 718 Games from 2047-2051)

Winson was named the Silk Batter of the Year in both 2033 and 2034. He was a 4 time All-Star, 2 time Platinum Stick winner, and 1 time Playoff Series MVP. Winson led the league in RBI twice, HR twice, Runs once, OPS once, and WAR twice while in Charm City.

Allen won 1 Diamond Glove at 1B and 1 Platinum Stick at 3B.

My choice for the top third baseman in the modern era for Charm City is Carlton Winson. Allen was a good player but Winson was one of the best players in the league while playing with the Jimmies.

SHORTSTOP

Top Candidates:

- Wilson Andrade (.308/.350/.517, 124 wRC+, 284 2B, 163 HR, 611 R, 584 RBI, 70 SB, 32.7 WAR in 974 Games from 2040-2046)
- Sammy McNeill (.299/.362/.401, 108 wRC+, 81 2B, 17 3B, 22 HR, 276 R, 196 RBI, 60 SB, 17.7 WAR, over 70 ZR at SS in 447 Games from 2054-2057. Currently active at the time this article was written.)

- Pepe Espinosa (.266/.312/.464, 105 wRC+, 227 2B, 45 3B, 150 HR, 529 R, 543 RBI, 79 SB, 16.4 WAR in 1,017 Games from 2048-2054)

Andrade was the Sawyer Silk Batter of the Year in 2044, a 3 time All-Star, 3 time Platinum Stick winner, and 1 time Playoff Series MVP. He led the league in hits and WAR in 2044 and doubles in 2043.

McNeill was a 2 time All-Star, 2 time League Champion, 2 time Diamond Glove winner, and 1 time Platinum Stick winner.

Espinosa was a 3 time All-Star, 1 time League Champions, and 1 time Playoff Series MVP.

My choice for the top shortstop in the modern era for Charm City is Sammy McNeill. It was pretty close for me between McNeill and Andrade. Andrade was clearly a better hitter, but McNeill's defense was so much better than Andrade's. McNeill was still an above average hitter at a premium position while adding tremendous value with his glove. McNeill did not play for the Jimmies as long as Andrade but put up more WAR per season on average.

LEFT FIELDER

Top Candidates:

- Alfredo Salazar (.293/.407/.521, 145 wRC+, 126 2B, 168 HR, 538 R, 571 RBI, 247 SB, 31.1 WAR in 808 Games from 2030-2035)
- Tadataka Yoshikawa (.288/.371/.555, 145 wRC+, 154 2B, 172 HR, 535 R, 507 RBI, 22.2 WAR in 708 Games from 2052-2056-Currently active at the time this article was written)
- Ramon Rodriguez (.296/.349/.578, 147 wRC+, 79 2B, 106 HR, 239 R, 294 RBI, 11.3 WAR in 368 Games from 2060-2062-Currently active at the time this article was written)

Salazar was a 3 time All-Star, 4 time Platinum Stick winner, and 1 time Playoff Series MVP. Salazar was inducted into the BBA Hall of Fame.

Yoshikawa was a 3 time All-Star, 2 time League Champion, 1 time Platinum Stick winner, and 1 time Playoff Series MVP.

Rodriguez finished third in the Silk voting in 2061. He is a 1 time All-Star and 1 time Platinum Stick winner.

My choice for the top left fielder in the modern era for Charm City is Alfredo Salazar. This one was really close between Salazar and Yoshikawa. I went with Salazar because he played 100 more games for the Jimmies than Yoshikawa with a similar production level. With a few more seasons at his current level of production, Rodriguez could overtake both of them.

CENTER FIELDER

Top Candidates:

- Felix Roman (.281/.350/.565, 147 wRC+, 61 2B, 86 HR, 175 R, 198 RBI, 55 SB, 14 WAR in 315 Games from 2049-2050)
- Maximmo Quezado (.246/.303/.463, 98 wRC+, 67 2B, 14 3B, 129 HR, 323 R, 341 RBI, 179 SB, 12.4 WAR in 633 Games from 2030-2035)
- Mike Cox (.297/.335/.394, 97 wRC+, 129 2B, 20 3B, 31 HR, 340 R, 255 RBI, 62 SB, 11 WAR in 769 games from 2051-2058-Currently active at the time this article was written)
- Keith Jahnke (.296/.341/.467, 117 wRC+, 112 2B, 72 HR, 264 R, 289 RBI, 10.6 WAR in 543 Games from 2058-2062-Currently active at the time this article was written)

Roman finished 3rd in the Silk voting and was named an All-Star in 2049.

Quezado was a 1 time All-Star

Cox finished 3rd in the Gillstrom Rookie of the Year voting in 2052. He was a 3 time League Champion.

Jahnke was a 1 time All-Star and 1 time League Champion.

My choice for the top center fielder in the modern era for Charm City is Felix Roman. He was only with the Jimmies for a short time but he was outstanding in Charm City, putting up more WAR in 2 seasons than any of the other 3 in a longer period of time.

RIGHT FIELDER

Top Candidates:

- Kazunari Chikafuji (.295/.347/.541, 135 wRC+, 248 2B, 44 3B, 370 HR, 1,022 R, 1,069 RBI, 238 SB, 53.4 WAR in 1,538 Games from 2051-2062 Currently active at the time this article was written)
- Tomas Guillen (.311/.372/.521, 136 wRC+, 271 2B, 56 3B, 197 HR, 821 R, 629 RBI, 39.2 WAR in 1,292 Games from 2041-2050)
- Aubrey Anderson (.283/.323/.541, 121 wRC+, 184 2B, 177 HR, 406 R, 518 RBI, 18.1 WAR in 736 Games from 2030-2035)

Chikafuji was the Silk winner in 2057 and finished 3rd in voting for the Silk in 2060. He was a 4 time All-Star, 3 time League Champion, 2 time Diamond Glove winner, and 1 time Platinum Stick and Playoff Series MVP. He led the league in HR in 2057 and WAR twice.

Guillen was a 3 time All-Star and a 1 time Diamond Glove winner. He led the

Anderson was the Gillstrom Rookie of the Year in 2031. He won the Diamond Glove in 2032.

My choice for the top right fielder in the modern era for Charm City is Kazunari Chikafuji. Guillen was also an outstanding player but Chikafuji was an easy choice for me.

DESIGNATED HITTER

Top Candidates:

- Brian Whitten (.299/.3345/.448, 110 wRC+, 67 2B, 74 HR, 279 R, 364 RBI, 11.1 WAR in 591 Games from 2029-2032)
- Mario Guerrer (.298/.359/.528, 123 wRC+, 95 2B, 107 HR, 286 R, 307 RBI, 7.9 WAR in 460 Games from 2039-2041)

My choice for the top designated hitter in the modern era for Charm City is Brian Whitten.

STARTING PITCHER

Top Candidates:

- Hector Silva (145-66, 3.35 ERA, 3.28 FIP, 75 FIP-, 51.8 WAR, 53.3 rWAR in 282 G, 282 GS from 2053-2062-Currently active at the time the article was written)
- Rannal Seldon (148-98, 4.26 ERA, 4.36 FIP, 99 FIP-, 28.8 WAR, 36.1 rWAR in 378 G, 349 GS from 2051-2062-Currently active at the time this article was written)
- Bill Constable (76-39, 2.73 ERA, 2.66 FIP, 64 FIP-, 36.6 WAR, 35.6 rWAR in 207 G, 155 GS from 2044-2051)
- Allen Davidson (109-60, 3.96 ERA, 4.14 FIP, 94 FIP-, 25.8 WAR, 31.6 rWAR in 256 G, 256 GS from 2054-2062-Currently active at the time this article was written)

Silva finished second in the Gillstrom Rookie of the Year in 2054, was a 4 time Pitcher of the Year, and finished in the top 3 voting for the Pitcher of the Year 4 more times. He was a 6 time All-Star, and 3 time League Champion. He led the league in Wins once, shutouts and complete games twice, and WAR and rWAR 4 times.

Seldon was a 3 time League Champion. He led the league in Wins twice.

Constable was the Gillstrom Rookie of the Year in 2045, was a 5 time All-Star, a 1 time Pitcher of the Year and finished in the top 3 for Pitcher of the Year 3 other times. He led the league in wins, strikeouts, ERA, WAR, and rWAR twice each.

Davidson finished 2nd in the Pitcher of the Year voting once, was a 1 time All-Star, and a 3 time League Champion.

My choice for the top starting pitcher in the modern era for Charm City is Hector Silva. There are some fantastic pitchers on this list but Silva is easily at the top.

RELIEF PITCHER

Top Candidates:

- Manuel Barrera (51-73, 420 Sv, 3.28 ERA, 3.98 FIP, 91 FIP-, 9.8 WAR, 21.67 rWAR in 687 G, 0 GS from 2052-2062)

- Wilmot Schlondorff (40-52, 183 Sv, 3.36 ERA, 3.87 FIP, 90 FIP-, 7.5 WAR, 13 rWAR in 523 G from 2029-2035)
- Fernando Marquez (52-66, 257 Sv, 3.84 ERA, 4.09 FIP, 90 FIP-, 9.2 WAR, 11.5 rWAR in 650 G, 0 GS from 2039-2048)

Barrera was a 4 time All-Star, a 3 time League Champion, a 1 time Reliever of the Year, and finished 2nd in the voting for Reliever of the Year 4 times.

Schlondorff was a 3 time All-Star and 1 time Reliever of the Year.

Marquez was a 2 time All-Star.

My choice for top relief pitcher in the modern era for Charm City is Manuel Barrera. Schlondorff was very good but Barrera was great for a very long time..

CHARM CITY ALL MODERN ERA TEAM:

C: Tokimasa Yano
 1B: Colm Alker
 2B: Dave Ackerman
 3B: Carlton Winson
 SS: Sammy McNeill
 LF: Alfredo Salazar
 CF: Felix Roman
 RF: Kazunari Chikafuji
 DH: Brian Whitten
 SP: Hector Silva
 RP: Manuel Barrera



THE PROJECTION ROOM

It's that time, of course.

Everyone, of course, knows the drill by now.

A set of BBA junkies all go off and do their finger counting and teeth gnashing and wild explorations of whatever inner space exists in the brain of a BBA pundit. And when the smoke clears (or maybe when it's at its thickest), they step out of their laboratories and scholarly halls to present the answers to all the biggest questions in life.

In other words, we have a bunch of fun talking Brewster as if we know anything at all about it.

Or, in other words, welcome once again to *Who's Brewster Is It, Anyway!* The previews where everything is real and the points matter more than the world around us can ever know.

How will the guys do? Well, that's maybe not completely the point here, but at the same time all indicators are that predicting the Brewster is going to be particularly tough this year. As so many people have put it on Discord, the

Forum, and various podcasts, the GMs we have on board right now are as active as any set we've seen. This means you can't take your foot off the accelerator for a moment without suffering the consequences.

So, what are we to make of this Brewster Baseball universe as it careens off into 2063?

You can see uncertainty in the results in the polls where, for example, **Sacramento**, **Vancouver**, and **Hawaii** are all equally splitting the vote, with one lone wingnut in **Long Beach** stuffing the ballot box. The **Hustlers** still show as Frontier favorites, but the ever omnipresent **Calgary Pioneers**, the reformed **Rosenblatt Bombers**, and the upstart Liberty...er...**Phoenix Talons** are gaining supporters. The voice of the people say **Charm City** will reclaim last year's lost division crown, but not without vanquishing **Montreal**, and ... um ... **Cobble Hill**? Yes, you read that right. The totally revamped, pitching and defense first Cobble Hill Robins (rebranded from Brooklyn after going into a witness protection program) are receiving votes. Take that for what it is, but the most interesting thing here is that teams like Charlotte (*who won the Atlantic last year!*), Cape Fear, Jacksonville, and Atlantic City are running under the radar. How do you assess that situation? We'll find out.

Things are so interesting that even in the Heartland, where **Nashville** has been the only vote required, and where polls are generally split to ask not whether Nashville will win, but by how much—the feeling is that the Bluebirds are possibly only five games better than the competition, with the majority being under ten. It's of note that both Chicago and Twin Cities have garnered votes, however, so despite the late signing of Max Shepperson, it appears that a tiny bit of the luster could be coming off the Bluebird mystique.

It all adds up to a mosh pit of a scrum at the top of each division.

But the league is pushing from the bottom up, too.

Of last season's cellar dwellers, we've already discussed the machinations of Cobble Hill's potential reappearance and the true rising of the Phoenix out west. But add Valencia and Madison to the mix of teams who took a whooping last year, and have come through the off-season with all the wheels spinning. We'll see if they are pointed forward or now.

And the men in the middle are no less interesting.

It is, I think, generally acknowledged that the Atlantic and Heartland divisions are, at this moment, the deepest and strongest of the four, but if you base such

assessments on raw competition, don't be surprised to see the Frontier and Pacific be the most entertaining divisions.

Even the Global Baseball Consortium, the independent international league that operates inside the Brewster universe, has three teams gathering votes, and a gathering of GMs that are as committed to making things happen as any in the BBA.

Because the Brewster is a league that never sleeps, it seems.

And for that, I think we can all be quite grateful.

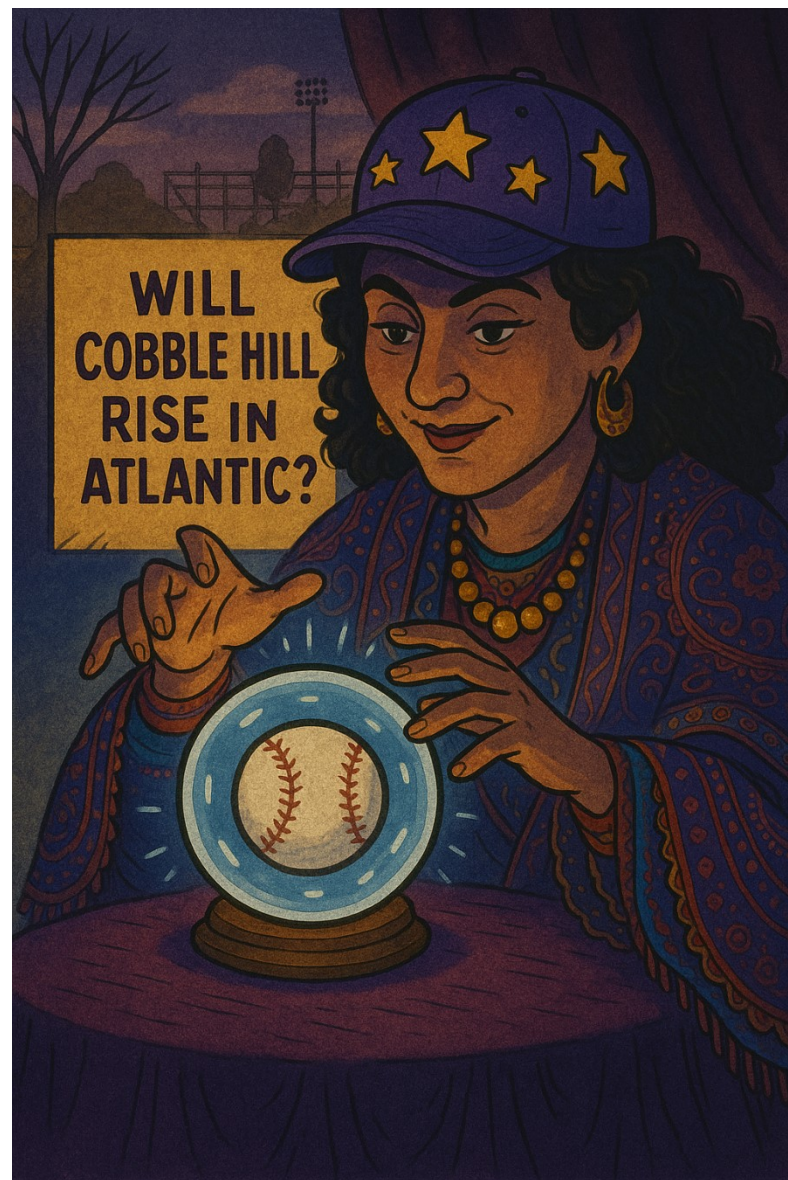
So, yes, what are we to make of this Brewster universe as it moves into 2063?

As it settles into a newish financial structure that kicked in in 2060, but was on a glide path to the future that may not even itself out for another few seasons? What are we to make of a league that it entering its 91st season of existence, and in which some of the very best OOTP general managers on the face of the planet have squared off with each other across that span?

What are the projection room pundits going to say?

How are they going to square these circles, or is it circle these squares? Will they go with the flow of the wisdom of the BBA crowds, or will they forge ahead and make their own way?

Well, let's go find out, shall we?



The Atlantic Division: 2063

The Charm City Jimmies streak of 9 consecutive Atlantic Division titles ended in 2062 as the Charlotte Flyers flew by the Jimmies taking the division by just a game. The Montreal Blazers were hot on their tail just a game back of the Jimmies for third and a wildcard spot. A surprise Cape Fear Swamp Foxes beat their prediction of 84-79 by five games and earned themselves a wildcard spot.

Jacksonville was predicted to push for a playoff spot but struggled through the season and finished two games below .500 at 80-82. The New Orleans Crawdads hit their prediction at 74-88 a good six games back of the zombies. Atlantic City were dealt a tough hand and fell from 2nd in the division last season to 16 games under .500 at 73-89. The Brooklyn Robins lost all their momentum from 2061 and fell to last in the division at 60-102.

In the playoffs, the Blazers eliminated the Swamp Foxes in a sweep while the Jimmies survived a five-game shootout with the Calgary Pioneers to move on. The Jimmies then ended the Las Vegas Hustlers season with a 4-2 series win while the Flyers won their Doubleday Matchup with the Blazers in seven games. This set up an all-Atlantic Division Johnson League Cartwright Cup that ended with Charlotte moving on to the Monty in seven games. The Flyers eventually fell to the juggernaut Nashville Bluebirds in the Monty 4 games to 2.

Final order of finish in 2062:

Team	Wins	Losses
Charlotte	97	65
Charm City	96	66
Montreal	95	67
Cape Fear	89	73
Jacksonville	80	82
New Orleans	74	88
Atlantic City	73	89
Brooklyn	60	102



Atlantic City Gamblers

2063 Season

The Gamblers return their starting rotation intact from last season but are hoping for better results from the 3, 4 and 5 starters. #1 starter Brian Whitford was a workhorse for Atlantic City throwing 223.2 innings with a 2.90 ERA and was 15-9. Following him in the rotation was Dewey McKim with 182 innings going 14-10 with a 3.56 ERA.

Harry King, John Avery and Kent Johnson struggled for the Gamblers leading to a below .500 season. SP Angel Medina is ready and should battle for a rotation spot or at least be in the bullpen. Tom Brothers will push for a rotation spot in spring training to usurp King or Johnson. Brothers will give up less homers than Johnson while King is a better fit in the 'pen.

The bullpen is a work in progress after the losses of Jimmy Fisher and Juan Oliver in free agency. GM John Momberg filled one of those openings in the 'pen with a trade with Charlotte to bring in RP Faddei Popleteev. King moves from the rotation to the bullpen to join closer Jesus Martinez in the back in of relief. Relievers Kreshnik Bizi, Arapeta Ebena, Satyajit Neel and Alonso Arroyo may struggle with control and long ball issues. RP George Vallis had a great season in AA and his ratings show he is ready for the bigs and should get a shot in spring training.

The Gamblers offense score 49 less runs in 2062 than they scored in 2061 but hit just one less homer. Strikeouts dropped but so did the amount of walks the offense drew leading to a loss of offense. Young second baseman Javier Aguilar did his part with another 20+ homer 70+ RBI season while posting 5 WAR. He will get some help with the additions of Bane McCoy and Masahiko Harada to

Lifetime Record 1287-1793

2062 Season 73-89 (Predicted 93-69. I missed this one. I blame OOTP)

Key Losses- 3B Mesrak Youssef FA 0.6 WAR, RP Juan Oliver FA 0.4 WAR, C Luo-lang Bi FA 0.4 WAR, SP Jimmy Fisher FA 0.3 WAR, CF Khayyat Isa Trade (TWC) 0.2 WAR, 18 players totaling 2 WAR.

Gains- C Abid Kakakhel FA 1.3 WAR, 1B Bane McCoy Trade (CCJ) 1.3 WAR, 1B Masahiko Harada Trade (CPF) 0.7 WAR, RP Faddei Popleteev Trade (CPF) 0.6 WAR, 2B Wilson Prieto Trade (CHR) 0.1 WAR, 3B Izz al Din bin Riyad Trade (CCJ) 1.2 WAR, 13 players totaling 4.4 WAR.

the offense. This will give the Gamblers a 2 through 5 of McCoy, Harada, Aguilar and Vandika Zabodoyan. This group should give protection in the lineup and produce over 100 homers early in the lineup. SS Jafar Seif al Din is in his prime years now and has put up a 4.6 and 4.8 WAR seasons. If he could run, he would be a good leadoff hitter, but he may be lower in the lineup. Atlantic City made a catcher signing in mid-December of Abid Kakakhel. The Gamblers are missing defense in center that will haunt the pitching staff until they seal this hole.

In the minors, C Jesus Durango is in AAA but should get a chance to backup or even supplant Cecil Clark on the Boardwalk. With the signing of a veteran catcher Clark, Durango or Romo may be trade bait.

2063 Prediction 85-77



Cape Fear Swamp Foxes

2063 Season

The Cape Fear Swamp Foxes return their rotation from the end of last season after the re-signing of SP Antonio Ramirez after he hit free agency for a short time. He rejoins Nathaniel Davis, Jose Barron, Liam Johnson and Harry Stewart.

The bullpen has a decent core of Kalaila Cobar, Earl Cox, and David Wade. Raul Castaned and Kasib Majd will need bounce back seasons to keep a spot late into next season for the Swamp Foxes to stay in the division race. Lurking in AAA is pitcher Monanani Nana is ready to play in the majors and is listed as a starter but could give this team a lift in the bullpen.

GM woods (Woody Donahue)

Lifetime Record 795-990

2062 Season 89-73 Johnson League Wild Card (Predicted 84-78, Close again!)

Key Losses- SP Logan Hill FA 2.7 WAR, SP Wilson Lopez FA 2.3 WAR, SP Grigore Balas FA 1.4 WAR, C Guillermo Chapa Trade (LBC) 1.1 WAR, SP Nasir al Din bin Sahir FA 1.1 WAR, 18 players totaling 10.7 WAR.

Gains- SS Ken Proctor Trade (MAD) 1.6 WAR. 15 player totaling 1.8 WAR

This team put up 818 runs and hit 204 homers leading the team to a playoff appearance. Swamp Foxes RF Octavio Martinez had a breakout season in 2062 posting 7 WAR with a slash line of .341/.381/.564 and 24 homers. C Sam Butler blasted 27 bombs and put up 5.7 WAR. All but one position player had a positive WAR season for the Swamp Foxes. Cape Fear GM Woody Donahue improved the defense with a trade with the Madison Wolves for SS Ken Proctor giving his pitchers some help in the field. Proctor is a light hitter, but his glove will make up for it.

2063 Prediction 88-74



2063 Season

The Charlotte Flyers bring back the Triumvirate of Buwono Mainaky, Arturo Trevino, and Bob Anderson to lead the rotation. Mainaky led the team with 15 wins followed by Ignacio Lewis with 13. Bob Anderson struggled after coming over from Jacksonville via trade but turned it on for the playoffs and led the team with three playoff wins. Logan Hill was signed in free agency and will vie for a spot in spring training along with Felipe Cummings with the group. Two-way star Jacquot Natta will likely miss the 2063 season after elbow ligament reconstruction.

Josh Dougherty led the bullpen with 44 saves in 64.1 innings. Eduardo Moreno made 60 appearances and pitched 86 innings while fanning 142 batters. Was 2-2 with 17 saves and posted a 2 rWAR. The Flyers bullpen has some pitchers with

GM Nathan Garrison (Krathan)

Lifetime Record 674-625

2062 Season 97-65 Atlantic Division Champion (Predicted 79-83. WTF was I thinking?)

Key Losses- RP Luis Perez FA 2 WAR, SP Brady Picot FA 1 WAR, SS Jose Villa Trade (LOU) 0.1 WAR, LF Onan Ogun Trade (CHR) 0.1 WAR, 8 players totaling 3 WAR

Gains-SP Logan Hill FA 2.7 WAR, 2B Alfredo Trujillo Trade (CHR) 1.5 WAR, RP Clarence Moore FA 1.3 WAR, RP Dana Munce 0.2 WAR, 8 players totaling 5.4 WAR

high K rates but that goes with the high HR/9 rates. Relievers Clarence Moore and Dana Munce were signed in free agency to shore up that high HR rate.

The Flyers will miss Natta's 29 homers, 87 RBI and a slash line of .300/.368/.545. Wani Matos will fill in nicely for Natta but won't have near the number of homers as Natta. The signing of Alfredo Trujillo will make up for the loss of homers in the lineup. Domingo Chavez, Jose Bedreddin and Ben Graybill along with Trujillo will power the Flyers offense. Charlotte plays solid defense all around the diamond.

The Flyers don't have much depth in AAA making any injury outbreak a disaster for Charlotte in the long term.

2063 Prediction 95-67



2062 Season

The Charm City Jimmies are coming off a season that would be considered great for most teams but in Baltimore is a letdown. The Jimmies missed out on their 10th consecutive division flag, but they are set up to get back to the top quickly. Beginning with a solid rotation of Hector Silva, young improving Jorge Nava, John Mellon, Allen Davidson and Ian Tolley.

The bullpen is also returning a talented group mixed with young and old that keep the finish off wins for the Jimmies. Seung-jin Cho won 14 games in 59 games in relief and 104.1 innings. Ageing vet Rannal Seldon will likely remain in

GM Dave Burcicki (DaveB)
Lifetime Record 1625-1097

2062 Season 96-66 Johnson League Wild Card (Record prediction was 105-57, Again, I'm an idiot.)

Key Losses- RP Candrata Parmar Trade (ROS) 1.3 WAR, 1B Bane McCoy Trade (ATC) 1.3 WAR, 7 players totaling 3.6 WAR

Gains- 5 players totaling 0 WAR

the bullpen for Charm City and give them an innings eater in the middle relief role.

On offense, Dave Ackerman is the straw that stirs the drink smashing 46 homers and driving in 114 runs while playing great defense. Jorge Cardoza and Ramon Rodriguez provide Ackerman protection in the lineup with 31 homers each. Young SS Luis Guevara is coming off a big offensive year that earned him a Puckett. Guevara was signed to a nice five-year deal in in October that will net him \$48+ million. RF Kazunari Chikafuji is still providing power but has watched his RBI totals drop the last couple of seasons.

In the minors, RF Matt Bamber is lurking in AAA and looks to be ready which could lead to some movement of some outfielders on the big club. RP Evgeny Partyka has found it difficult to gain a foothold in the major league bullpen probably due his problems with lefties. The Jimmies has some bullpen depth at AAA Annapolis with Jason Gomez, Partyka and Augusto Gonzalez able to fill in.

2063 Prediction 98-64



2063 Season

BBA Commisioner Matt Rectenwald approved a trade of GMs between the Brooklyn Robins and Sacramento Mad Popes making Doug Olmstead the GM of the Brooklyn Robins. Olmstead went to work immediately reshaping and rebranding the team in his image. First, the name. Gone is Brooklyn but the

Cobble Hill Robins

GM Doug Olmstead (shoeless.db)

Lifetime Record 2196-1538

2062 Season 60-102 (Predicted 80-82. Not EVEN close.)

Key Losses- 3B Jorge Cano Trade (WC) 3.6 WAR, 3B Emilio Morales, Jr. Trade (LBC) 2.6 WAR, LF Chan Yuan Trade (TWC) 2.1 WAR, SP Todd Jones FA 1.8 WAR, SP Steven Anderton FA 1.6 WAR, 40 players totaling 13.6 WAR.

Gains- RF Eric Wagner Trade (TWC) 1.7 WAR, LF Onan Ogun Trade (CHA) 0.1 WAR, 1B Dallas Dixon FA 1.5 WAR, SP Leon Ludeman FA 0.1 WAR, 35 players totaling 1.5 WAR

60

BREWSTER BASEBALL ASSOCIATION 2063

Robins are now calling the Brooklyn neighborhood of Cobble Hill as their home. Then the players. Olmstead tore apart the team in his grand experiment with hints of being modeled after teams of BBA great Vic Caleca.

After a flurry of trades, the bullpen consists of Larry Jensen, Dave Woolford, Ramon Buettner, Cody Glynn and Felix Feliz. This will change 10 times before the season begins.

Jose Torres is a starter but is in the stopper role due to his low stamina rating. He will have Ryan Harmon, Topan Adjeng, Noori bin Mu'awiyah and Felix Vazquez in middle relief in front of him.

The fielders are a hodge podge of backups and minor leaguers that will get their shot at making the club because they can field, run or hit better than their ratings suggest. Dallas Dixon extended his career and signed with the Robins to reunite with Doug Olmstead. This will be fun to watch!

The top minor league prospect in the organization is 1B Santiago Rodriguez at AA Memphis (team subject to change). He is a 45/65 as of now and will probably be on another team's roster before the spring.

2063 Prediction 62-100



Jacksonville Zombies

2063 Season

The Jacksonville Zombies shuffled to an underwhelming 80-82 record last season and make some changes for 2063. The Zombies will lean on youngsters in the rotation with Mahilai Manaalii, Bartolo Borquez and Tony

GM Aaron Weiner (aaronweiner)

Lifetime Record 5078-4634

2062 Season 80-82 (Predicted 91-71. Nope, I stink.)

Key Losses- SP Nelson Thompson Retired 1.5 WAR, RP Clarence Moor FA 1.3 WAR, RP Pedro German FA 1 WAR, C Ziad bin Majid al Din FA 0.7 WAR, SP Ruben bin Majid al Din FA 0.7 WAR, 9 players totaling 6.2 WAR

Gains- SP Mathis Gerard FA 1.4 WAR, 3 players totaling 1.4

Gallegos joining veterans Mathis Gerrad and Dan Voelzke. Chi-Cuong Bui will get some mound time in spring training but is still a year away. An ageing Juan Marroquin has an outside shot to make the opening day rotation but will likely be in the bullpen.

The 'pen will have its share of youngsters with Jim Baker, Luc Cervini, Ramon Marroquia and Antonio Sepulveda getting looks in the spring. Victor Braden and Juan Fernandez are ready for the big leagues and should be in the mix. Zombies GM Aaron Weiner will likely fill in with veteran free agents in the coming weeks.

Jax is short a backup to catcher Roy O'Donnell but there are plenty to be had in the minors or free agency. The offense will be formidable with the lineup filled with mashers. The Zombies could possibly have 8 players top the 20-homer mark, 3 of those also eclipsing the 30-homer mark. Gabriel Manuel led the tea, with 45 homers last season while Pepe Aragon had 35. Aragon and Steve Holcombe have the ability to top 40 homers. The defense up the middle is suspect and with Aragon set to play short but he has a spectacular arm. Center defense is solid but the corners are suspect.

2063 Prediction 74-88



Montreal Blazers

2063 Season

The Montreal Blazers turn back the clock to 2062 with the same rotation. They will need #1 starter Lucio Juarez to stay healthy to keep the Blazers in the playoff picture. He will be joined in the rotation by Umar Dogar, Samuel

GM Bob and Erik Breum (breum, Bob Breum)

Lifetime Record 704-592

2062 Season 95-67 Johnson League Wildcard (Predicted 89-73. I was close, really!)

Key Losses- RP Augusto Ayala FA 1.3 WAR, RP Joshua Blenkhorn FA 1.3 WAR, 1B Vicente Rivera FA 1.2 WAR, 8 players totaling 3.8 WAR

Gains- 4 players totaling 0 WAR

Nebraska, Peter Ramsey and Luis Gonzalez.

Montreal doesn't rely on relievers with great stuff but uses guys with high HR rating and a cavernous park to get the job done. Adam Bristcoe is the workhorse on the back end and put up 132.1 innings last season. He struck out 133 batters and posted a 2.6 rWAR. Veteran Todd Stone pitched well last season and looks to replicate his 64 innings and 1.27 ERA performance.

The Blazers offense produced 4.4 runs/game last season and hit 169 homers which was their highest HR total since 2058. Dan Wilkinson led the team with 23 homers and 76 RBI. Manny Burgus hit 19 homers with 64 RBI and posted a team high 3.5 WAR. 3B Denes Terovolvas also hit 19 bombs with a team leading 83 RBI. They are also a very good fielding team finishing 3rd in the BBA with 81.1 Defensive Plays Above Average.

2063 Prediction 85-77



New Orleans Crawdads

2063 Season

Crawdad starter Ed Smith begins his 2nd BBA campaign as the clear #1 starter for New Orleans. Smith made 34 starts going 13-12 with a 4.76 ERA. He's looking to lower his walk and home run rates to improve. He will be joined by Juan De La Cruz, Grigore Balas, Leland Rogers and John Lucas. Jose Flores may get some starts in the regular season but is likely relegated to the 'pen.

GM Jim Roberts (JimBob2232)

Lifetime Record 5996-5320

2062 Season 74-88 (Predicted 74-88, Five Ring!)

Key Losses- SP Cristian Burgos FA 0.4 WAR, 6 players totaling 0.4 WAR

Gain- SP Grigore Balas FA 1.5 WAR, RP David Prigent FA 0.6 WAR, RP Kent Grange FA 0.5 WAR, 3 players totaling 2.7 WAR

The top 3 relievers in the bullpen are Eduardo Jimenez, Carlos Miranda and David Prigent to pitch late in games. Bob Rolf has a shot to make the bullpen out of spring training with his high stuff and velocity. Jayin Ranjani, Joe Shaw, and Peter Fuller are sure things.

There is more to look forward to for the Crawdads on the position player side of the club. 3B Tom Guenette has reached his prime years hitting 37 homers and driving in 109 runs. Jason Newton has re-upped and will be the DH after hitting 20 bombs last season. New Orleans has a balance of older players, players in the their prime and youth that have a promising future.

2063 Prediction 65-97

PROJECTED RECORDS: ATLANTIC DIVISION

Team	Wins	Losses	GB
Charm City	98	64	-
Charlotte	95	67	3
Cape Fear	88	74	10
Montreal	85	77	13
Atlantic City	85	77	13
Jacksonville	74	88	24
New Orleans	65	97	33
Cobble Hill	62	100	36

The Frontier Division: 2063

About twenty years ago I was talking with a starting pitcher who had gotten shelled the night before. He was pitching for the Nashville Sounds, then the AAA affiliate of the Pittsburgh Pirates. It was a horrible outing for him. Something like seven runs in four innings, seven walks. It was bad. I had noticed from the press box in the fourth inning that when the manager came out to get him after he had given up a single and then walked the bases loaded, that the pitching coach had been pretty animated. Not only that, but the other infielders on the mound were covering their faces with their gloves like they were trying to hide that they were laughing. When I asked the pitcher what the manager had said he told me that the manager came out to the mound and said, “You see the other manager, (name deleted)? When he was with the Yankees, he used to fuck Morgan Fairchild. She didn’t roll over and show her ass half as well as you are doing tonight.”

Welcome to the Frontier Division. Pretty much rolling over and playing dead since 2053,

In the last ten years, the Frontier Division has had one team go to the Monty Brewster, Rocky Mountain in 2056. Now I know it is not for lack of trying and the division has good GMs, but 2062 once again saw the two playoff teams bow out in their opening series. The Calgary Pioneers were done in five and the Division Champs, the Las Vegas Hustlers were done in six. Both fell victim to Charm City.

Why does this happen? The obvious culprit is pitching. Last year the Atlantic Division had four of the top five staffs, with Las Vegas the only division team to crack the top five. It should also be noted that the second best offensive team in runs per game in the division, the Pheonix Talons, finished in last place.

Will lack of pitching doom the division again? Have the various clubs made enough moves in the offseason to improve their arms and make it deeper into the playoffs? Will my predictions suck as bad as they did last year (I had Calgary, Mexico City and Austin finishing 5, 6 and 7. Instead they finished 2, 3 and T4.

Okay. The dartboard is up, the digitized mad libs is running so lets get this scientific look at the Frontier Division underway. One note. No offseason summaries this year, because I was lazy.



Austin Shredders

In 2062 the Austin Shredders chickens finally began to come home to roost. If one or two of those chickens could pitch, they might have made the playoffs.

2062 Record: 78-84, Tie 4th Place, 11 GB. +4 Diff
2062 OOTP Projected Record: 84-78, 4th Place
Attendance: 3,017,519
Payroll: \$74,117,500 (26th)
Farm System Rank: 1st

This was the year the farm system began to pay off. Jorge Herrera exploded on the scene. Leading the league in batting average, OPS and RC/27. Herrera made his mark batting a league leading .357 with 30 HR and 101 RBI. In many years he would have run away with the ROY award, but he happened to make his debut in the same season George Stickler and Domingo Chavez did, so his gaudy numbers were not quite gaudy enough. He is still a franchise cornerstone and looks to be a franchise player for the Shredders. The team also may have struck gold with their first pick of the 2062 draft as well, SP Harry Bransington. A steal at #6, Bransington , made 17 starts in the minors, dominating at every level, before making his debut . In eight starts, Harry, “The Steamboat” went 5-1 with a 2.56 ERA and a 1.13 WHIP. The Draft rebuild has been somewhat of a success. Nine of the last ten #1 picks are still in the organization and eight of those are either in the rotation or the lineup. The team did improve their defense a bit with the move to first of Felix Cabral and the addition of defensive specialist Michael Crowder in CF. The pitching is nominally better with Bransington, but Austing missed out on any real help for the rotation in free agency. The team should improve, but not as much as hoped.

Catcher: Let’s be clear. Haydar Syeda can’t hit. As they like to say, he has the same swing as Willie Mays, just with different results. But that is not why Syeda was signed. Syeda was signed to handle the pitchers and throw out base runners and he handled the pitchers. Syeda had the highest frame rate in the league at a

whopping 33.1. He gave the Shredders pitching staff every advantage he could, was not horrible throwing out runners and led the league in games started behind the plate. For this, Syeda was given a one-year extension at 1,4 mil. He will be back behind the plate on an everyday basis this year as well. To be honest I can't remember the other catchers name, so not much will be expected of them.

Infield: The only big Free Agent signed by the Austin club is 28-year old Bill Irvine who signed a two-year, 8.5 mil per deal. Like Syeda, Irvine was signed mainly for his glove. Austin may have had the worst defense up the middle the last few years and it cost them. With this move they improve the defense at 2B, move Felix Cabral to 1B where he will hopefully punish the ball as much as he did last year while providing better defense at the corner. Jack Wesman is back at SS due to a lack of options in the organization and in the market. He is weak and his days are numbered. The Old Professor, Socrates Kazantziakis actually put up a solid year at 3B, batting .262 and getting on base at a .362 pace. He was allowed to stay and fulfill his contract while the club ate the last year of Glenn Fox and Ray Hoskins to get them off the roster.

Outfield: This where the cup runneth over for the Shredders. Jorge Herrera in LF, slugging .357 with 30 HR, Takanobu Komatsu in RF, who hit .273 with 33 HR and 97 RBI. The new addition will be 2061 #1 pick, Julio Blanco who hit .367 in AAA Odessa after coming back from a long stint on the IL. Blanco will get a chance to claim the CF spot. However, he is fragile and if he can't improve defensively from the ZR deficient Komatsu (average ZR the last two years of - 24.0) he will make room for Mike Crowson, a more accomplished glove in CF. The OF is so full right now that Luis Rubio, another #1 pick, has been pushed to the bench, though he should get plenty of opportunity to play.

Rotation: Austin really needed to make more improvements to the staff in the offseason, but instead stood by as teams like Louisville snapped up the best free agent arms. The rotation should be better this year, simply due to the presence of Harry Bransington, but that even that may be suspect as the switch to OOTP 26 brought Harry's score down a bit, but not his potential. He may actually see a sophomore slump and need more seasoning in AAA. The rest of the rotation is the same cast of misfit toys that underperform every year. Glenn Hargrove will have 15 or so quality starts and get his Johnson knocked off in the rest. Pablo Guerrero will get an audition at some point, but his development is suspect as is

his work ethic. Juan Cruz was signed to a minor league deal and maybe the crafty 36-year old still has a few starts left in that creaky arm.

Bullpen: A few nice arms here, led by closer Nelson Middlebrooks as well as Manny Aguilar, Pedro Arenas and Motuha Kalinda. The pen should be better this season and should be better still if they are able to keep Pepe Rivera from having to make too many starts as they have in the past.

Possible Call-Up?: SP, Pablo Guerrero still has a lot of development left, and he's lazy. He throws six pitches, none of them particularly well, but has good movement and control. Bert Densmore deserves a roster spot, but doesn't play good enough defense to warrant it. He will likely compete for a AAA hitting award and be the first call-up if an OF gets hurt.

Projected record: 82-82. The pitching is still a big problem. Yet, the offense is fine and the defense should be improved. Just moving Komatsu out of CF might be worth 3-4 wins.



Boise Spuds

Boise is a club doing their best to shed salary and build up their farm system. They had the 19th best system at the beginning of the 2062 season and the 26th best system now, so that doesn't appear to be going all that well. However, their system is better than it looks. Yeah, there are not any surefire studs, but I like what Ben is trying to do. Pretty much the best prospect at every level is a SP and I think that is the right focus. Unfortunately, many of Ben's picks have sputtered and he has already dealt away last year's #1 pick, Emilio Diaz to Nashville for 20-year-old Cosmin Grigore. The trade was a risk, though he did get an extra \$3 mil thrown in. Grigore may be better on paper, but is already an injury risk at just 20. It looks as if Boise will continue to try and assemble the pieces. They have the #10 pick this year so maybe they can find an impact player to start building around.

2062 Record: 69-93, 6th Place, 17 GB. +3 Diff.
2063 Projected Record: 75-87,
Attendance: 2,448,608
Payroll: \$99,700,700
Farm System Rank: 26th

Catcher Tadanobu Otani is an excellent catcher. A good combo of defense and offense. He is unfortunately lazy and so dumb they have to water him twice a week. But the league is full of lazy idiots who put together stellar careers and Otani is definitely worth the risk. At just 24 and just going into arbitration, he will be here for at least three more years. Ubaid bin Saleh will back him up with his clubhouse presence as a team Captain being about the only thing he adds to this club

Infield: Boise does not have a typical infield. Their first baseman is a contact/speed type hitter who led the league in triples, sending many typical first basemen spinning in their graves. They still have one thumper in the lineup in 3B Bill Kuhn, another 24-year-old Boise can build around. Good power, good eye, good enough defense. If they can find a better solution, possibly in the draft, Kuhn should eventually move to 1st. Up the middle they have an excellent glove in Dan Raymond. He can't hit, his OPS+ was just 24 last year, but he is a stellar defender with an average ZR of above 18, which is what they need. Fernando Segura is another all-glove no-hit middle infielder who also had an OPS+ score of 24 last year. He might get the nod over 38-year-old Damodaragoun Neela as he seems to be unable to field or hit anymore.

Outfield: The Spuds outfield is not a home to a bunch of Mashers (Get it? Get it?). It mostly consists of players in their late 20's who hit a little, hit a few homers play better than average defense, especially CF Amphibian Johnson. But Boise fans still miss Lou Bayou. Bayou, along with SP Mario Rivera, were traded to the Mad Popes for ten players. None of them have turned out to be Lou Bayou. The hope is that at least two of them can become solid starters. In the meantime, above average OF Tsutomu Yamauchi will man the right corner and Cosmo Pan will man the left. Both are solid if unspectacular players.

Rotation: Josh Clark and Niegloslaw Woywitka were the big FA acquisition in the offseason and Clark may be worth the risk, signing a 5-year, 4-years guaranteed deal averaging about 11 mil a year. If Clark holds up, it will be worth it, even after his subpar season last year. But Clark has had 13 injuries to his right side and could be a frequent flyer to Dr. Jobe to get various ligaments reattached. I think Mahad Einan still has a little gas left in the tank. I personally think Woywitka's signing was an excellent one at 9.3 mil. Especially coming off of a 16-5 season. Dan Boman and Thomas Turner round out the rotation and give Boise a better than most back end of the starting five.

Bullpen: This should continue to be a strength of the Spuds. Arguably the two best players on the roster reside in the pen. Alfredo Moran, a closer in waiting with a ton of potential and Mario Santos, a closer who has already arrived and still has a lot left in the tank at only 26. I would probably trade Santos

as I have always felt that a top-of-his-game closer is fairly useless when you can't hand that closer leads to close. Somebody gunning for a playoff spot might depart with a few prospects down the stretch. The rest of the rotation is a mixed bag, but with Santos and a developing Moran, this bullpen will be just fine.

Possible Call-up?: Alfredo Moran will likely start the year in AAA to develop, but if he does start to catch up to his potential, look for him to be handed a ticket to Boise.

Projected Record: Boise has the pitching staff to avoid the basement and good defense up the middle. I doubt they will compete for a playoff spot and the team is young enough that adding some core players will help in a few years. But they are probably looking at a 77-85 record.



Calgary Pioneers

What happened to Calgary? I asked this question last year before I completely soiled the bed in my prediction. Last year I thought this team would finish under .500 at 74-88 and instead they finished 88-74 and just a game out of winning the division. Hats off to Kevin for stapling and paper clipping together a playoff caliber team.

What was the difference? Probably Shinsui Hasegawa and Nalany Ahotaein. The two went a combined 31-16 with ERAs below 4.00 and Hasegawa especially did it while pitching a ton of innings. In Hasegawa's case, a league leading 238.2 IP.

Does Kevin have more tricks up his sleeves? The roster and the pitching staff are almost the same as last year, so there is room to hope. Hasegawa and Ahotaein are still in their prime, but are approaching the back end of it. We should probably take a closer look.

2062 Record: 88-74, 2nd Place, 1 GB. -4 Diff.

2063 Projected Record: 85-75,

Attendance: 4,353,605

Payroll: \$106,305,000

Farm System Rank: 22nd

Catcher: Celik Lufi will get the bulk of starts behind the plate, despite an off-year in 2062. He hit seven fewer homers, hit just .227 and only threw out 16.7% of base stealers. He has good enough upside to hold on to the job for now, especially as his backup, John Chitwood is below average in almost every area and is not a late-inning defensive upgrade over Lufi.

Infield: Like many teams, Calgary is relying on good defense up the middle and pop from the corners roster. They have solid gloves at 2B and SS in Jose Cervantes Bilent Kazaz and both can hit a little too. Calagry has a thumper at 1B in Michael Little, slugger of 31 HR in 2062. In the other corner, Ollie Long handles 3B and continues to carry his lifetime .331 average with him year over year. The defense is not top of the league, but they are not bad at all and they can all hit.

Outfield: This is a dangerous outfield comprised of 21-year-old pesky flea, Rusty Harmon and living breathing buzzsaw Resurrection Santos. Both are excellent hitters, with both able to hit well over .300 and Santos also combining that with prodigious power. Both play excellent defense and both are capable of stealing 30-40 bags a year. Justin Vaive in CF is an excellent glove and while he is not the hitter Santos and Harmon are, he did steal 84 bases last year and put up a .345 OBP so the outfield is in fine fiddle here. Felix Torres can roam as a 4th outfielder and spell any of these three at any time.

Rotation: One of the better staffs in the league as long as Hasegawa and Ahotaein remain in form. They have a good 1-2 combo and are aided by Victor Evans who will be back in the rotation for his sophomore season. Add in lefty Bob English who led the league in wins last year going 17-5. English is not a lock in the rotation with Rich Tidwell, Christian Herrera and Edmond Thomas vying for the 4-5 spots in Spring Training. In the end, English Bob may still be the best option.

Bullpen: This is where we may see the biggest change. Last years closer, Edward Harrison, did save 36 games, but they plenty of them were near misses. Harrison was lit up for a 4.31 average and may best be suited for a heavy middle relief workload now that Calgary's second round pick last year, Martin Viera appears ready to assume the role. This may be the weakest part of the team and it doesn't have as many true stars as the rest of the teams areas, but it is solid enough and I am sure Kevin will manage to muddle his way through with tweaks throughout the season.

Calgary has solid pieces all throughout. This team is very likely good for the next couple of years. However, the window for the Pioneers may be closing faster than they hope. Hasegawa and Ahotaein are in their 30's and in this league, old

age ain't for sissies. But for now, they have the pieces and I expect them to compete in the post season.

Possible Call-Up?: Kelly Sims has some awesome talent and may only be a year off from inheriting the closers role himself. He should get a teste of the big leagues this year to get him acclimated though Calgary may just give him a full year in AAA St. Paul

Projection: 86-66. The division is full of good hitting. Not many teams can combine it with good pitching as well. It's a wild card or division title for Calgary.



Las Vegas Hustlers

As much as we all complain about Nashville's dominance in the Frick League, no team has dominated their division like the Las Vegas Hustlers. A BBA league leading 10 championships and 47 playoff appearances. How do they do it? Simple. They cheat. Okay, maybe that is just jealousy talking, but lets face it. Vegas is a den of iniquity where they have newspaper machines with stacks of flyers to get "happy endings" (Not that I have ever opened or read one of those). In the reality of a fake baseball league, Matt does it by keeping a strong staff, solid defense and solid hitters. You don't see the names of Hustlers players in the top five for many statistical categories. Jim Fleming puts up hellacious strikeout numbers, 37-year-old Tadataka Yoshikawa was in the top five for OBP, SLG% and OPS, but that is pretty much it. What makes Las Vegas strong is the number of players who rank 5-15 in the league with no glaring weaknesses, except for Matt's weakness for the aforementioned pamphlets.

2062 Record: 92-70, 1st Place, -1 Diff.

2063 Projected Record: 92-70

Attendance: 3,556,688

Payroll: \$101,205,500

Farm System Rank: 29th

The Hustler's are expected to finish second. They won't. They will finish first. They will likely win the division by 3-5 games and the hope is this year is that they can avoid getting knocked out in their first round.

Catcher: Claudio Morgan will get the nod again, possibly because it is an odd-numbered year. In even numbered years he hits below .300 with a WAR below 3.00. In odd-numbered years he hits over .300 with an ERA above 3.0. Defensively he is fine, though he does have atrocious frame rates that doesn't seem to affect the performance of the staff. Maybe they just shake him off all the time. He will be backed up by Don Van Horn who will assume the same role he has every else. Backup catcher. A catcher who can block bad pitches, doesn't make waves and carries the seed bag to the bullpen every once in a while, can have a long career.

Infield: The previously mentioned Tadataka Yoshikawa is back at 1B. For a guy who is classified as Wrecked, he sure does play a lot. In the last 11 seasons he has started fewer than 100 games only once. In OOTPs defense, he did suffer 13 injuries last season and 44 injuries throughout his career going back to his time with the Bucharest Impalers. Randy Wright continues to be a very solid, if not firework triggering second baseman with excellent skills at the plate and in the field. At SS Jorge Madris is an excellent defender as well and pretty much an all-or nothing hitter at the plate, with the all being an infield single or ground ball up the middle instead of a homer. At 3B is where the Hustlers may look to upgrade though it is not an emergency. Armando Diaz will likely be the starting 3b as a rookie. And, while he can make contact, he does not have much power and draws very few walks.

Outfield: The outfield is just another example of good, even better than good players. Not great, but solid all around an outfield where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. In Left field Alejandro Tejo will start the season on the IL, but will be the best OF they have when he returns providing some power and average. I've always liked Tankut Saltik as a RF and if he stays healthy, he provides solid defense in right and should hit more than 11 HR. In CF, Roberto Hampton will cover a lot of ground, steal a lot of bases. If he continues to develop, look for him to draw more walks as well, which will help his leadoff cred.

Rotation: This has been a mainstay of the Las Vegas club for years and may be showing cracks. Jim Fleming continues to be the anchor. He should be posting more wins, but somehow has not won more than 12 games since 2058. He is still a strikeout machine. Some other good pitchers include Carlos Berrera who may have trouble keeping his spot in the starting five as long as his arm keeps falling off. Brett Harrell has posted back-to-back 16-win seasons with seemingly nothing but a piece of sandpaper and some Vapo-Rub. The other arms are all a mish-mash of not-hurt-you, not-help-you pitchers who can get you to the bullpen, hopefully with the lead.

Bullpen: A work in progress, the bullpen has more suspects than other areas of the roster. The top three pitchers in appearances, Alejandro Chavez, Rafael Gonzalez and Augusto Dominguez all had WHIPS above 1.35. The rest mostly put up better numbers, albeit with far fewer appearances. Look for pitchers like Ricardo Martinez to get more opportunities this year and prove they can contribute. CL Rafael Gonzalez should also be better this year. He has ungodly stuff and is the type of strikeout closer that teams need.

Possible Call-Up? It is hard to say who the first call-up might be, but I think you can bank on it being a reliever. There are plenty of young options.

Projection: Look for Vegas to get back above 90 wins. I will project 92-70.



Mexico City Aztecs

Here is yet another team I seriously underestimated last year. I said Father Time is undefeated and that the aging Aztecs were beginning to feel Chronos the Time Watcher nipping at their heels. Yet, the Aztecs seem to be doing their best to at least fight him to a draw. Mexico City finished 87-75 and missed a wild card spot by just five games and the division

2062 Record: 87-75, 3rd Place, 2 GB. +2 Diff.
2063 Projected Record: 84-78
Attendance: 3,221,738
Payroll: \$96,572,508
Farm System Rank: 4th

title would have been theirs with just three more wins. Brendan may have run out of Ben-Gay, but his team still has some life.

Ageless Dave “Burner” Corfield may not have had a typical year, but it was still solid. Despite a 10-14 record, he still kept his ERA below 4.00, pitched over 200 innings and with his 10-14 record, moved into the Top Ten in career victories.

This year? Who knows. They are bringing back most of the lineup for a team that finished in the bottom half of the league in most categories, not dramatically so, but still, this team’s offensive rest on the shoulders of Wafid Bishr. The pitching is a little older, yet the rotation will include a couple of homegrown products to start the season in Manny Ortega and Tim Gingras.

It is best to just not underestimate this team again, even if OOTP is predicting they will fall off a cliff. Brandon will likely find some toothpicks and gum to hold this team together.

Catcher: Ross Deville will likely get the most starts behind the plate. He did post good offensive numbers for a catcher (.288, 19 HR) and was surprisingly effective defensively, throwing out 33.8% of base stealers. This was good enough that Mexico City allowed Abid Kakakhel to depart via free agency. Mexico City might wait for the start of the season to try and find a backup on the waiver wire, but if worse comes to worse, Ernesto Gray is excellent defensively, though he is hopeless offensively.

Infield: Mexico City has gambled on some aging players and for the most part, that has paid off. Wafid Bishr is a prime example. Signed to a \$79.5 million dollar deal over four years at the age of 33, Bishr has continued to deliver, clubbing 36 HR and driving in 125 runs. At 35, there has been little sign of decline. Zero Dimotsios continues to be a perfectly serviceable second baseman, Edmond Spits continues to excel defensively at short and perform abysmally at the plate, but his glove is what he is there for and his 17.5 ZR will keep him there. Zhi-fu Huang is gone via free agency, but Mexico City has replaced him with an exact clone in Juan Nunez. Really the main improvement has been in shedding some salary with the departure of Huang.

Outfield: Not much has changed in this area. Nestor Saatsakis will continue to show above average power and offense and play a decent left field, Julio Martinez will cover most of the ground in the outfield and do a fine job of it. He won’t be counted on for much offensively, though he did hit .270 last year, and hopefully Tian-Yun Yeh will get more time in right as he has corner OF power and is a decent right fielder with a powerful arm.

Rotation: *"I ain't as good as I once was, but I'm as good once as I ever was"* And that's the cold hard truth. I said that last year and I'll say it again. The top half of this rotation is getting on in years. The mistake I made last year was in thinking the rotation was done. They still had some life left in them. The 4-5 starters from last year have moved on and it looks as if Manny Ortega and Tim Gringa may inject some youth into the rotation. Ortega, especially, has high expectations. It's hard to say if this rotation will hold together. It has been on the precipice for a couple of years, but continues to dance along the edge and put up good numbers. Even money that it falls apart this year, which means it might just still put together another solid season.

Bullpen: Sergio Tormes has led the league in saves the last two seasons and last year posted a career high 45 saves. Looking at his numbers, it has to be a trick of light that he accomplished this at all. A 4.54 ERA, a 1.70 WHIP, a 4.1 BB/9 IP. Somehow, he still saved 86% of his opportunities. Here's to clean living I guess. The rest of the bullpen is a collection of effective pitchers and innings eaters. Mexico may feel the absence though, of RP, Dvimurdhan Sameer who tore his elbow tendon in spring training and is out for the year.

Possible Call-Ups: Yasin Numair is entering his sixth season in the Aztecs system and it is time to see what he has. Numair has excellent potential, but has been slow to develop. Time to put up or shut up.

Projection: The team has gotten older, they have not added a ton of new talent, but they still manage to surprise year-after-year. 84-78.



Phoenix Talons

Tough year for Phoenix. They finished last in the league, the first time they have ever done that, and lost 94 games, 3rd worst in franchise history. Phoenix has stuck with a strategy of making sure their A ball

2062 Record: 68-94, 8th Place, 21 GB. -15 Diff.
2063 Projected Record: 84-78
Attendance: 3,092,430
Payroll: \$65,510,000
Farm System Rank: 27th

club wins every year, yet the franchise, overall, is below .500, It's not as if Sean makes a bunch of bad decisions. His draft picks are fine, rookie G'tuda Choppa was in the running for the Joe Gilstrom Award and the Talons have a trio of absolute sluggers to build around. Phoenix even made a big splash in free agency by dealing last years #1 pick, Daniel Grasia, to Nashville for Mark Lolololo. Who knows? Maybe they need to build a new ballpark that is not a launching pad for Space X, who knows. Maybe this year it all comes together for the Talons.

Catcher Tony Lopez is a perfectly satisfactory catcher. He hits well, calls a decent game, blocks the plate effectively. Yeah, you wish he could throw out more baserunners, but almost any team would be happy to have Lopez behind the plate and in the lineup. Diego Montoya, acquired via trade from San Fernando in spring of 2062 could serve as a back up or may need some more seasoning down on the farm. Dorian Zoitakis will likely get the backup role and get the occasional Sunday afternoon start.

Infield: Phoenix has two primo corner infielders here in G'Tuda Choppa at 1B and Mas'ud bin Salah al Di. Both are good for 40 homers and higher. Both get on base, are solid defenders and both are still under team control. It's hard to argue with either of these two. Rich Dares needs to go. A .224 hitter with no power and a -15.2 ZR is an albatross hanging from this team. Though they are stuck with him through 2065, the Talons still need to find a decent glove and plow Dares on the bench. Jose Molina may have lost his job at second to Tsu-Bahr Hru, but only until he has another injury. So I predict that Molina will once again get the bulk of the starts here, which will work out for Phoenix better anyways,

Outfield: The remaining leg of the three-legged stool that is the Phoenix Talons is Adrian Tallent. An undeniable talent with one 'L' but plenty of oomph in his bat. He was a great all-around player. Solid defense, finished near the top in batting average and stole 47 bases and is still only 23. The Talons may have struck gold this season with a couple of more players that have been playing in Toledo in Sergio Leon and Pedro Toro. Both are a good combo of power and defense. Both appear to be ready for the BBA and both will be upgrades in the outfield. In fact, if they produce as expected, Phoenix may have the best overall offensive lineup in the league.

Starters: I am generally not in favor of dealing your best young pitchers, especially top draft picks, but this deal is hard to argue with. Mark Lolololo is a top pitcher who has won at least 15 games each of the last five years while keeping his ERA well below 4.00 runs per nine. With the Talons having such a

potent offense, maybe Sean felt it was time to maximize his window and dealt for Lolololo. “Bender” is a bit of an injury concern, but none of his injuries has ever been more than four weeks and even that was back in 2052. Nick Rivers will be a steady #2, but his lack of a true out pitch is worrying. Francisco Moreno is almost fully developed and could be a stud. Three solid pitches that may yet need some more seasoning, but he will eventually blossom into a good pitcher. Javier Duarte, like Moreno, could be a solid piece.

Relievers: The Talons only managed 32 saves as a team overall last season which will happen when you only win 68 games. They should win more this season and Ernesto Juarez should get more opportunities to close. I’m not sure why he struggled a bit last year, but look for a solid season this year. Ishtaq Dar may serve as a nice setup man for Juarez and relievers like Jodie Hanna will help as well. The rest of the pen is pretty suspect.

Possible Call-Up? If Manny Parra does not make the Opening Day roster, look for him to join by the end of May. Another elite closer type just waiting for his opportunity.

Projection: Sean keeps assembling talent at Toledo. It’s time for them to grow up. 84-78.



Rosenblatt Bombers

True to last year’s projection, under new GM Justin Niles, the Rocky Mountain Oysters fell last year below

the .500 mark for the first time in a decade, winning only 78 games. It was such a traumatic event the owner John Weber took advantage of the situation to enact the audacious path of moving the whole kit and kaboodle to Omaha.

2062 Record: 78-84, 5th Place, 11 GB. +5 Diff.
2063 Projected Record: 83-79,
Attendance: 3,006,463
Payroll: \$98,517,500
Farm System Rank: 10th

True to his nature, veteran GM Justin Niles—now in his second year at the helm of this franchise—made his return to the league with his trade guns blazing and his free agent check book wide open, signing big-splash guys like David Molina and Badr Isam for a combined \$172M total cash layout (not including bonuses, of which there will be at a least a few pennies here and there). At one point, Niles announced that the expected he'd brought the team up to 84 wins, and now was shooting for more.

That's the kind of audacity that brings in the fans, one would expect.

The question here, though, is whether his braggadocio is worthy. Will the club win at least 84 games, and has he then made it better. If this is so, the club will be back in the hunt for a Frontier title. So, tell us, Joe, now that you're eligible for the Hallof Fame in that other world, is it so?

Let's take a look.

Catcher: Last year's rookie, Ed Henderson, got the call and made a pretty good go of it. His bat was a tick above average and the glove work surprised with a +1.4 Framing count and a noodlish arm that still managed to throw out 24% of base runners. Not staggeringly good, but certainly in the mix. He's still a kid, and kids should get better as time goes.

Infield: Malik bin Mazin did another 5 WAR season at first base last year—in other words, his average. On most other folks that would be a performance you paste into the record books as completely solid, but bin Mazin is 35, so any purely analytical examination of it has to include the question of whether that 5 WAR is really a regression from a previous mean of, say, 6.5 WAR, and does it portend further falloff. Even if the worst case is true, he's still a highly productive guy right now, and this guide is about what happens now. Look for Derek Hopkins (22) to make a jump from AA to the bigs. Both his glove and bat both should be above average if he settles into the bigs well enough. Also get the call this year. He came from Charm City in last year's swap that sent Lucio Guevera away. I'm thinking it's a year too early, but he could well prove me wrong. Scouts say he'll have prodigious power once he grows out of his baby face. Which brings us to Isam. Who will certainly play shortstop, though the question is how often and for how long. He's 36 now, and his contract says he'll play until he's forty. In the “what have you done for me now” vein, his Zone rating and EFF dropped to +3.2

and 1.023 (both are essentially career worsts), and his overall value “faded” to 3.4 WAR. Unlike bin Mazin, I worry about what that means even now. And injuries have begun to sneak into Isam’s arsenal. As I type he’s nursing tendonitis in his wrist, his second springtime boo-boo. If he’s not the shortstop, then right now I’m not sure there’s another answer.

Outfield: With the Shepperson era officially over, Bomber fans are free to anticipate the arrival of rookie Chris Walker, who stumbled a bit at AAA last year, but the brass seems to trust well enough to punch his ticket. He’ll handle right field while fellow youngsters Mark Busse (22) and Juan Miranda (25) swap spit in the other corner. Or something like that. Federico Linares will be back at center. He’s 31. He’s fine, I guess. His glove is average, and his bat has been sneaky good. One assumes that “swing for the fences” Kiyoshi Nagai will figure in the mix, too. His power is immense, but the hitch in his swing can reduce air conditioning bills. Maybe that’s a positive?

Rotation: While some debate can be made about whether David Molina is best used as a stopper/closer, Rosenblatt’s staff says that David Molina is going to start, so that’s a thing that lifts the rotation into the upper ranges pretty much no matter what. End of story. Except that the rest of the rotation is a bit more suspect. If the spring has anything to say for it, we’re going to rely on Ichizo Taguchi and Marvin Winston for a lot of innings—or at least a lot of starts. Which is key phrasing. The rest of the rotation feels like it’s going to be a shuttle with guys like Ken Steele (who had a disaster of a 2062 after a solid 2061), Rule V pick Bobby Sherman, and Hayden Bennion. That’s a bit worrisome, especially in the offensive-minded Frontier.

Bullpen: Closer Sergej Gijsberts saved 29 games last year despite an ERA that edged up a bit more than normal. The FIP- was good, though. He should be fine, though at age 37 anything could happen. That makes the pen a bit risky, too, Maybe we’ll see Bobby Sherman slip out of the rotation to take innings in the middle, or maybe rookie Yerik Lejin will keep his heater over the plate often enough to become the closer of the future? Or maybe that will be fellow rookie Ed Jaynes. What I’m saying between the lines is that the Bombers don’t have that big arm to anchor the pen, so it’s going to rely on sending whole squadrons of arms to try to soften up opposing offensive thrusts. Will it work? I don’t know. But it seems like a plan.

Possible Call-Up: RF Trading Antogone Louganis to the Krill for a pair of relievers makes for an interesting situation. 21-year-old Ernesto Morales may be the best bullpen arm in the organization, but he's not quite ready. If the Bombers find themselves in a real chase, though, need might drive them to go get him.

Projection: 83-79. If the answers to all these questions land on "heads," things will get interesting. But I think the coin will come up "tails" often enough that their GM's projections might be just a touch high.



San Antonio Outlaws

It's fair to say that the George Stickler era began last season. The phenom hit the Alamo with a vengeance, dropping 46 bombs on Frontier opposition, making the All-Star team, and leading the league on wOBA, wRC+ and WAR. For these feats, he pretty much swept the post season awards, nabbing Gillstrom ROY, a Puckett Silver Slugger, and the big Kahuna itself, the Sawyer Silk Award.

2062 Record: 72-90, 6th Place, 17 GB. -3 Diff.
2063 Projected Record: 76-86,
Attendance: 2,835,262
Payroll: \$57,920,800
Farm System Rank: 19th

With Stickler in the fold, the Outlaws' win total improved....

Two games.

The pre-season projections have Tim Meseck's team doing it again. Two more games.

At this rate, San Antoni will be competing for reals come about 2068.

Hmmm.

The good news here is that 72 wins was three fewer than the numbers projected, but even then, 75 wins had to be a little bit of a disappointment, as the Outlaws came out of the gate with aspirations of making things interesting for division mates. The good news is that this season should see the continuation of a flow of younger players out of the farm system—which has been stocked pretty well by the front office. Will it be enough? The primary problem in 2062 seemed

to be an inability to consistently produce runs, so an infusion can't hurt but to help, which is important because, while Stickler should be a shoo-in to duplicate his numbers, the team's ageless wonder, Hector Cano, Jr, isn't getting any younger. He did 4.3 WAR last year while posting almost 600 PA—his most since 2054. I'm not sure the club can expect that to happen again.

The time is nigh, though.

San Antonio fans are likely getting ansty for a number that would put them over .500.

Catcher: Will this be the year Ralph Green sees a majority of the reps, or will defense first Bradford McBearett continue to hold down the plate? It's a quandary. Green posted + numbers in AA, but will never be confused with a Zimmer kind of glove. At 22, you figure he's the future, and in San Antonio, the future would appear to be something close to now. McBearett, though, has been posting workmanlike 2.5ish WAR for three seasons, albeit mostly with his framing the cannon on his shoulder that doubles as a theft protection device. If Green's can is kicked down the road, Sonny Wadden will serve for now.

Infield: Kid first sacker Herkermer Homolka (who's name alone should be a marketer's dream) came up last September and lit San Antonio on fire by posting a 1.043 OPS in his 41 plate appearances, a number built on a couple doubles and three homers. Much was hoped for this year, but in classic Outlaw fashion, the kid will miss the first three weeks with a hammy damaged in spring training. If he comes back well, his power and plate discipline should help. Young Anthony Corfield appears to be the dream at second. He's got the base skills, but at 19, he might be better served down in the minors for a shade longer. Tough call there. At issue is that Lou Tinter mostly showed all 37 of his years in 2062, and we can't expect much better now. Likewise Julius Lewis at shortstop. His ZR dropped from the sublime 20+ range to "only" 12, but the clock keeps ticking. Husnan Baloch jumped from being a #1 pick in 2061 to starting 149 games last year. He's barely legal to drink now, and while his numbers were pedestrian last year, we can expect progression.

Outfield: As noted before, this is now officially George Stickler's team. And Hector Cano, Jr. will have a role as long as the wheels hold out and the resolution is strong. If Orlando Bott could make the jump from AA to hold down LF, that would solve a few problems with who else they might want to run out there.

Rotation: 2062 saw George White (24) become the pitcher most everyone in Texas was hoping for—at least those not in Austin. He made all 36 of his starts, threw 213 innings of solid baseball. Give the Outlaws a whole rotation of those guys, and watch out. Theoretically, he's got room to grow, too. Jorge Casillas (also

24) was a solid match for White. Cesar Franco (25) actually won 15 games. In fact, it's fair to say that San Antonio's tepid bats covered up a solid performance on the hill. Look for a few more young arms to fill in the cracks, with Dave Horton (23) soon to be one of them.

Bullpen: It's hard not to be intrigued with the San Antoni bullpen, which operated mostly by committee last year to some success. To this mix they added Jian-cheng Shi from Cape Fear. This means the relief corps carries three pitchers (Quinton Manning[12], Shi [19], and Steve McFarland [26] who each registered 12 or more saves. I'd think they should be able to do it again, and should be able to do it again. The debut of last year's second round pick, Jesus Rodriguez (1.04 ERA in 17 innings), was a solid one. There's more where that came from.

Possible Call-Ups" I'm guessing that SP Dave Horton will be sent to spend a stint in AAA working on his control, but I'm also guessing that this stint might be short-lived.

Projection: There are open questions on this roster, and it's certainly possible the fans in San Antonio could wind up getting what that want. It's possible the club could break that elusive .500 barrier for the first time since Davy Crocket came south to help out. Young teams do tend to get better. But there's a pattern brewing in Alamo City, and it's bad ju-ju to go against it. So I sawy the team gets a two-win improvement, up to 76-86.

PROJECTED RECORDS: FRONTIER DIVISION

Team	Wins	Losses	GB
LAS VEGAS	92	70	-
CALGARY	85	75	
AUSTIN	84	78	
MEXICO CITY	84	78	
PHOENIX	84	78	
ROSENBLATT	83	79	
SAN ANTONIO	76	86	
BOISE	75	87	

The Heartland Division: 2063

My, oh my, what a difference a season makes. After a stint where the Nashville Bluebirds played Regina George to the rest of the division's *Mean Girls* wannabes, 2062 saw the Heartland up and became something considerably closer to at least a pilot for the next Justice League spin off.

Of course, if that spinoff were to happen, the Bluebirds are still in the role of Clark Kent's alter-ego. You're going to have to knock Superman out, after all. But there are some scuff marks on Kal-El's aura right now. Or, perhaps it's best to put the Bluebirds in the role of Thanos? Of course, that breaks the whole Justice League thing. The Bluebirds lost David Molina and Colby Triska to free agency, and traded away top starter Mark Lolololo. Sure, the organization is deep, but those kinds of losses are enough to make one wonder if Batman, the Flash, Green Lantern and Aquaman might be able to scrounge up just enough kryptonite to make things even more interesting than last year.

With Shazam, Wonder Woman, and maybe even J'onn J'onzz in the wings someday, I can see it happening. I'm getting the feeling that other fans around the division can see it, too. Des Moines is solid again. Chicago looks to take another step up, and a new-look Twin Cities has flashed enough bravado to go with their fine new duds to make a person think they might be serious about getting racy in the Bluebird's slipstream. Then there's the Sluggers, who put together the patchwork of a solid pitching staff in free agency, and the kids in Yellow Springs playing it cagy with a solid offense. It's been enough that the Omaha Cyclones went into the witness protection program and emerged in Brook Park—which is cool, too.

I'm figuring it might be a long year for Madison as Gertie cleans house and begins afresh, but that's a thing that brings interest, too.

You can feel it in the air, right?

The Heartland is feeling its oats again.

So, you say, what's going to happen?

Tells Obi-Ron-Kenobi, who is going to win the Heartland, and by how much?

Well, as noted, I see Madison in total regroup mode. I see Brook Park taking a season to get into their new digs. I see Yellow Springs still just barely on the outside looking in.

I see Louisville making a serious jump.

I see Des Moines and Chicago joining the Sluggers to make for a thoroughly entertaining post season bid.

And, put on your seatbelts and hold on tight, but I'm going to actually do it. I'm seeing the River Monsters making the most of their push. Perhaps it's an injury that puts them over the top, or maybe it's the slick application of an Alan Ehler's parlor trick at a key moment, but you read it here first. The Twin Cities River Monsters are going to take down the behemoth with the Big "S" on their chests, and for the first time in eight seasons, I see a new head-honcho in the Heartland's DC/Mean Girls universe.

Brook Park Brownies



Welcome to the BBA, Cleveland. Good luck with that.

I say that because the club moved to Brook Park partially on the kindness of GM Kevin Spencer, and perhaps almost as much as the idea that the club crashed to 69 wins and the Cyclone fans blew them out of town. Who's to say which is right? And I say that unless the club gets a serious dose of fairy dust spread about their spiffy new park, I don't suspect 2063 is going to see any real improvement.

The good news there is that I suspect some of this is on purpose. Brook Park is building. The Heartland has, however, turned into a division where rebuilding could be particularly painful.

So let's get into the deets a bit, shall we?

The Brownies are built on a couple of dynamic young pieces in outfielder Jorge Delgado (24 homers, 45 steals, 4.7 WAR) and first baseman Stan Lodge (36 steals, 4.2 WAR). Otherwise, however, I worry. Defensively the team is a bit of a mess. Center fielder Steve Pick (24 HR, .219, -13 ZR) can hit 'em far but not often, and was clearly overmatched in the field last year. Shortstop Juan Flores was

claimed on waivers, which leaves Joe Roy (humorously listed as a shortstop) and newly signed Yazeed Saleem (\$2M for the year). If Saleem actually spends time at short, it will stand testament to how hard it is to find a real one. Match that with Fernando Tovar, who turned -4 ZR in some 50 games at second base last year, and you've got Trouble in River City, and it starts with E.

The team's combined pitching and defense was 14th of 16 last year.

They've added overpaid veteran Steve Flannery and a solid, if fully aging reliever You-cheng Hang to the mix. So things should maybe get better in that area. Those two join last year's bright spot, 21-year-old starter Antonio Fox (the Fox says 3-6, 3.99 ERA), Felipe Mendez (9-11, 4.28), 23-year-old rookie Jose Mendez, and probably Oscar O'Halloran—who fans hope proves the fact that you've got to be pretty good in order to lose 18 games. If Rule V guy Jose Martinez can stick the landing, that would certainly help.

Now that David Ferrell was dealt to Cape Fear, the bullpen has become a bit less interesting.

But, unfortunately, I'm not feeling it for the Brownies in their Brook Park debut.

Fans should plan to go to the park for the love of the game anyway, right? The market seems ripe for the move, after all, and there's not much better to do on a warm summer's night but to head to the park, grab a foot-long Brownie Dog and a box of Cracker Jack, and wish for a cool surprise.

2063 Prediction 72-90

Chicago Black Sox



The Black Sox appear to be on Cruise Control. This is good news/bad news. The Good News part is that team has real players, and with 83 wins last year manages to crack the .500 mark for the first time since the franchise's last post season run in 2048. The Bad News is that 83 wins is unlikely to make the post season, and indeed, did not.

I suspect fans were foaming at the mouth to have the front office throw money at the problem this off-season, but instead GM Renato Umali has played the mostly patient hand, adding journeyman shortstop Jim Vineyard to the mix along with relievers Augusto Ayala (at \$9.2M across two seasons) and Christian Walker. While there was (and still is) some cap room available, taking a scan at the team's finances lets you see why the club might be reticent to take on big numbers for a lot of years.

I'm not saying that was the right read. I'm not saying it wasn't.

What I will say for sure is that the team's offense—which was 10th in the Frick last year, should improve with both natural aging of Dave Matthes (31 HR, 5.1WAR), Timofei Gadomsky (35 HR, 3.0 WAR), Angel De La Cruz (whose arm limits him as SS, but one figures he might need to play there some, with Vineyard becoming a defensive replacement?), and the full arrival of BBA legacy slugger Tony Cochrane.

This improvement should fit Chicago well, because the pitching, led by Carlos Moya and Adam Hines, was fifth in the Frick at run prevention last year. If the addition of arms to the pen could improve on that, well, you might see Chicago right in the middle of things. Behold Augusto Ayala, the 33-year-old closer bwho saved 43 games for Montreal last season (and proves that I was stretching a little by saying the team was on cruise control). His presence makes the pen better simply because every other arm can take a step back into a role better suited for them.

If Ayala can manage 43 saves again, the tune could change in Chicago

The problem for fans in the Windy City is that the Black Sox aren't the only team working the path, and Nashville is still Nashville. The team could literally be better on paper, but still not win more on the field.

2063 Prediction 81-81

Des Moines Kernels



If you liked what Des Moines did last year, you'll be happy again this year. This is because GM Jessie Ramirez has circulated press releases promising more of the same—and is in fact, returning pretty much the whole roster intact.

So....

This means any preview of the Des Moines Kernels has to start with the lumber—or maybe we call it the trashing machine that is the Kernal offense. The lineup is solid up and down the list, with pretty much everyone able to go yard. It's no surprise that the club led the Frick in homers (by a very wide margin) and slugging and were second in the league in total runs last year. This despite playing in only a gently offensive park.

Nine Kernels hit double digits in HR, and most of them are still young and growing. The outfield foursome of Julio Perez, Dan Morris, Ken'ichi Okubo, and Wang-ling Koo are solid all around. Catcher Masakado Matsunaga (who just signed a three-year extension) is a Gillstrom and two-time Puckett winner, and shortstop Pedro Gongora is solid in the field and pesky at the plate.

Perhaps 34-year-old Felix Parreno will fade a little more at the plate? He only managed 2.4 WAR last year.

It takes zero polishing of the crystal ball to predict that the Des Moines offense is going to light up Frick League pitchers.

That said, how you feel about RHSP Garth Dobbs might go a long way toward your view of the 2063 Des Moines Kernels. The guy is 28 now. He's been in the league for seven seasons, and been good all seven—the first five, though, in the bullpen. Then, two years back the guy goes to the rotation for good, and he's fine. Solid. 12-7, 4.00, 94 FIP-. See? Solid. Nothing that would prepare you for what was to come—which was a 15-10 campaign last year that came with a 2.88 ERA and an 84 FIP-. Along the way, he led the league in innings pitched and finished with 4.7 WAR.

Not quite Nebraska territory, but certainly in the area code of the ace.

So, was that real? Will it repeat in 2063?

Maybe, maybe not.

If it does, Des Moines should once again be really good. If it doesn't, the club will be good, not great. But as we've noted elsewhere, Good may not cut it in the Heartland this year.

Cutting to the chase, everything about life makes me inclined to expect a regression.

Which means a lot of Des Moines' other pitching prowess will need to stand up—and with Tommy Akers having been tempted away by several buckets of Slugger cash, that's worrisome. Arnold Cantrell, Steven Clayton, and Micah Harrington (acquired mid-year from New Orleans) will be back. They are older, but maybe they can pick up for Dobbs. Will one or more make a play? No idea, but if they do, Scott Everard is still standing there at the back end. He's a pretty bold closer.

I'm not certain Des Moines is going to get to Everard often enough, though.

I mean...yeah...it could happen.

But...as my farmer grandfather used to say, don't you till the field corn till the cob's been shucked.

2063 Prediction 83-79

Louisville Sluggers



By the end of last season, it's fair to say that the general consensus surrounding the Louisville Sluggers was that it was an amazingly brilliant set of young bats surrounded by the BBA's equivalent to a frozen tundra of a pitching staff.

Obviously, GM Brian Pinnel and the rest of his staff got to work on that.

Out goes \$93M. In comes Tommy Akers from Heartland rival Des Moines. In comes Bikini's Jon Brown. They will join Roberto Rodriguez to revamp the rotation. In also comes bullpen guys like Ludwig Werber, Huang Cheng, and Joshua Blenkhorn (though Cheng is out until mid-summer, so there's a risk). It doesn't hurt to say that Ford Prefect, a bit of a bust in the rotation, proved to take well to a role in the bullpen, too.

Will it be enough?

I don't know.

And I say that to really mean, no. It probably won't be enough to make them true contenders for the Heartland crown. I think Twin Cities and Nashville will make sure that doesn't happen. But I also really mean, yes, because when paired with this offense, it might well be enough to send the Sluggers to the postseason—and, of course, if a team can get into the post season, anything can happen.

If that “something” does happen, however, it will almost certainly be because of the bats—led by 21-year-old outfielder Justin Weatherford (3.8 WAR), and 24-year-old hot corner denizen Don Hale (4.5 WAR). Add 30-HR capable Jose Jackson and Jose Barrera, and you've got a lineup that—while not slick in the field—can score runs.

And, yes, that “not slick in the field” could wind up causing a few issues. I'm not seeing a real shortstop in the mix right now, though Jose Villa can hit a little, and might at least even out his somewhere around average glove. My guess is that rookie prospect Jerry Woodall will man center. He's been a star in AAA, and should be able to handle the field, but the jury is out whether his bat will translate to the BBA level.

Bottom line here is that my heart wants me to project the Sluggers over the Kernels.

But my intellect (no jokes there, please) is calling for the Kernels.

2063 Prediction 84-78

Madison Wolves

Here's a bright spot for Madison fans. At least new owner Gertrude “Gertie” Haines knew what she was getting when she put her cold-hard cash on the barrelhead and bought the team this off-season. Because as it stood the Madison Wolves are mess pretty much all the way up and down the organization, at least partially because GM Mike Simon has been in stasis due to



issues in the multi-verse, partially because the team's development system has not succeeded, and partially because the base plan of defense, defense, and more defense left the bats barren.

Financially, the team's projected spending cap is only \$104M (worse than anyone not playing in San Antonio or Cobble Hill (Brooklyn), and their publicly available cash balance is effectively zero.

Add all those up and it's no surprise, for example, that last year's "ace" Josh Clark, executed his option to go elsewhere—specifically, Boise.

There is a real glimmer of hope around this franchise, though, and that is the fresh energy that Gertie has brought with her. As best I can tell, the team they field this year will be a total revamp. Peel the band aid off quick, and get to work on the new era.

I would like to step through the team position by position and weigh in on various elements of the roster, but to be honest, I'm not sure it matters right now. I'm guessing that beyond 3B Curt Holter (22) and CF Gary Keller (25), and 21-year-old Gary Fellers, none of the bats will be impactful, if, indeed, even around for very long, though I like kid shortstop Boyd Fitzgerald. He's 19 and enthusiastic to go along with being a pretty fair LHB. The pitching staff has exactly zero players who are both under 31 years old and rated by OOTP at 50 or above. I'm the last guy in the world to focus intently on OOTP overall ratings, but that's probably not good.

The Wolves have six or eight guys in the AAA/AA/A pipeline who might yield some service in the next few seasons—a majority being workable arms. A-level Jose Romero (22) could be interesting, too.

There are a few positives, though.

Coaches up and down the organization seem to be pretty fair. Under Gertie, the team is investing a bit more into the development systems than perhaps the have. And then there's Gertie Haines herself.

It is a truism that winning starts at the top.

And Gertie is clearly a winner at heart.

So, fear not Madison faithful. The darkest hour is just before dawn.

2063 Prediction 58-104

Nashville Bluebirds



How is it possible for a team to lose pitchers like David Molina (to free agency) and Mark Lolololo (traded), and still be considered odds-on favorite by most of the league to sweep their way into their 8th straight division title?

Well...I suppose having Eric Stevens at the top of the rotation doesn't hurt. And having Bin-ying Yen, Jim Ploughman, Armando Ortiz, and Javier Basanta filling out the rest of the rotation says the rest. Then having the cash grunt around to sign Max Shepperson.

These guys are good.

And we haven't even gotten to the stack of arms sitting in the Bluebird AAA roster, arms that includes Daniel Grasia, the guy they got from Phoenix in the Lolololo deal. And we haven't even gotten to RH RP Gustavo Modica, who will probably add another 20 IP to his total with Molina gone.

Still, the fact is that none of these guys are going to really "replace" Lolololo and Molina. It's just not going to happen.

And at the end of the day I'm going to go out on a very thin limb and say that, yes, this is the year that Nashville goes down. It will, however, be a very short down. Because, while the Nashville Bluebirds are maybe taking a moment to reload a little, make not mistake—they are simply reloading. And if the Heartland doesn't get them this year, they may not get them for another decade.

Carter Cramer is 22 and arguably the best player in the league. If Carter isn't the best player in the league, you could argue a case for RF Alfonso Gonzalez—who now has a long-term deal. At 3B, Francisco Calderon (25) is already a Gilstrom and Puckett winner. Brooks Elliot is 30, and still has it at shortstop, but Lucas McNeill, Jr is waiting in the wings after having debuted as a major league during the Bluebird Monty run. LF Akeem Joffer still has about the best wheels of any one in baseball. I'm guessing this will be the year we see catcher Michael Cantu (22) fulltime in Nashville. 21-year-old LF Fernando Hawkins is probably a year out.

The team has half a BBA rotation in AA. A full bullpen at A-Level.

Based on raw talent, 18-year-old R-level RF Cuneyt Tanju may be the best outfield prospect in baseball, but sits at #31 likely due to age-based risk factors.

There is a reason why my common theme is to suggest only trading with a behemoth if you can be certain you're getting even more than a fair share, and that long list is it. If properly motivated, Nashville will outspend anyone—and GM Chad Nason is very good at what he does.

Anyway...

Put this all together, and realize that with the Lolololo trade, the team has a little bit of financial wiggle room (and the ability to hold them all together, and you can see why I say this is the moment.

Go get 'em now, Heartland.

The window is as “open” as it's likely to get for awhile.

2063 Prediction 95-67

Twin Cities River Monsters

It could be argued, I suppose, that for the past decade, give or take, the Twin Cities River Monsters have been Wile E. Coyote to the Bluebird's Road Runner.

In this case, I think the “E” must stand “Every Season.”

As in every season another idea. Every season another time left hovering over the cliff for that pregnant pause before cascading down to the distant canyon floor.

Beep, beep, Mutherf...

Sooner or later, right? If something were to just happen to the Road Runner. If a break went Wile E.'s way. If the system design were to be just right.

Meet the team designed to hunt Bluebirds.

Or at least if not precisely designed to hunt them, at least the team gathered together with the express purpose of making something better than a cascading fall to the depths of the canyon floor happen. And make no bones about it, the



Twin Cities River Monster fans are ready for it. Their team has been a bridesmaid five of the last six seasons.

In that light, the River Monster off-season has been a relative whirlwind of activity, activity that includes a rebrand of uniforms and logo that seem quite snazzy. Consider it Wile E.'s attempt to don a disguise to confuse the enemy. I think that acquisition of Joe Mother and CF Juian Cabrera from Phoenix will have a bigger impact on the field, but never discount a little tomfoolery. Mother is not quite the impact hitter he was, but he's still an impact player, and if there is a GM who knows how to wring extra quality from every player, Alan Ehlers is that GM. Mother may or may not be aging, but for now he can play. And the River Monsters care about now.

Cabrera is a fine glove in center.

The team added middle infielder Miller Shed late last season, and solid young corner OF Chao Yuan as Cobble Hill (Brooklyn) unloaded their ballast on a quest to get their payroll to subterranean.

Bottom line, Twin Cities is loaded.

Their bats were upper third last year. They should be better this year.

Their pitching was top quartile last year, but the Ehlers still used some cap space to roll the dice on adding a recovering Phil Cole. Assuming he does recover, he's a great addition on an inventive contract. But even if he doesn't, the firm of Stone, Brooks, and Yamashita should do the team fine. The River Monsters are known for swapping guys into and out of the rotation, after all. They started ten different guys in 2062. I expect more of the same.

The bullpen will be buoyed by the addition of Brian Goves (on another inventive deal), but I'm not sure they needed it so much as they might as well. The TWC bullpen is not as sexy as a few others, but it is very good and very deep.

It's the comprehensive depth of the Twin Cities roster, and the sudden appearances of chinks in the Goliath's armor that has me scratching my head this year and thinking..."yes, I think this is the year."

If it's true, then maybe I'll take another gander at Wile E., too.

He's gotta win once, doesn't he?

2063 Prediction 97-63

Yellow Springs Nine



Growing up in Louisville, I heard a lot about horse racing. Against that background, let me say this: There's a thing jockeys do when they are running mid-pack and know they have horse left—it's a waiting thing, a thing that tries patience, letting the horse cautiously run but always looking for that one sliver of daylight that represents room to run. They time it, you see. Find the open space, and then with a flick of the wrist or whatever, hit the rockets.

Secretariat did it one legendary day at the Preakness.

It can be a beautiful thing to watch.

That's the feeling I get when I look at Yellow Springs right now. The horses are coming together for them—enough of them to be in a serious discussion, anyway. The finances are about as strong as they are going to get. But there's Nashville at the top and Twin Cities. And Des Moines on the outside. And ... well, how do you time this run, eh? Too early and you run into resistance and fade. Too late and your horse is done used up.

This is the quandary GM Rob McMonigal seems to be in.

The offense has some young skill players in CF Don Anderson (33 steals, 4.5 WAR) and LF Roberto Gabriel (32 HR, 4.0 WAR). One assumes this is the year that super-SS prospect Leslie Hartman will join the infield band that includes Juan Silva (3 WAR) at second, Tony Bunce (2.1 WAR) at the hot corner, and Emilio Navarro (2.2 WAR) on first. Admittedly, the depth is not strong, and the catching situation could probably stand some improving, but just looking at the bats the kids are a solid core. Yellow Springs could go racing.

It's the pitching that remains a question mark.

Fun fact of the moment: the Nine's pitching staff led the Frick League in Line Drive % Allowed last season, and not in the right direction.

I suppose they'll be better than that in 2063.

Maybe.

I mean, if I squint, it could be better than the pundits will probably say. Yellow Springs brought in aging wonder Barney Lindsay on what could wind up being a two season deal. Same for Richard Bullock and Nasid al Din bin Sahir. If all three

make a mark, things could look better than I think, but at time of this writing I'm not sold. That said, the young core of the rotation—while not splashy—got a lot done last year. Hector Delgado (24) and Dewey Harris (25) each made more than 30 starts, and posted ERAs in the range s of 3.60. Veteran Corey MaGuire could make a go of it. Could it have been better just to let them pitch?

Either way, the rotation still seems to be a bit of a field bet.

The bullpen looks more stable, but is so raw that it's hard to project. If 22-year-old Carlos Torres grows up fast, things would look better because then there would be a big guy at the back of the game. But Torres can't be the plan, so that bottom line here is that I see the Nine pen being staffed by young Jose Rios and a collection of solid guys who were once rotation hopefuls.

It should be workable, I'd think.

Assuming that games can get to them.

But that's the problem for Yellow Springs and the whole "wait for an opening" approach to building a team. The Heartland is getting pretty well filled up with thoroughbreds these days. McMonigal has been open about the Nine plan with its "looking ahead" kind of philosophy. In real baseball, that kind of thing kind of works. But the BBA is more like real horse racing, and the problem a jockey has with that wait and see approach is that sometimes they get boxed in—sometimes they are ready to flip the switch and find that the competition got there first.

2063 Prediction 78-84

PROJECTED RECORDS: HEARTLAND DIVISION

Team	Wins	Losses	GB
Twin Cities	97	65	-
Nashville	95	67	1
Louisville	84	78	13
Des Moines	83	79	16
Chicago	81	81	18
Yellow Springs	78	84	21
Brook Park	72	90	27
Madison	58	104	41

The Pacific Division: 2063

The Pacific Division was a media darling just a couple season's ago, sending five teams to the playoffs and looking dominant against Captain Bluebird and the Seven Dwarfs. Now the division leaves a different taste, some closer to a more highbrow Frontier flavor, super competitive, but in the end these West coast elites are mostly just bumbling around in the dark, staking their claims, and going gaga for the pyrite that comes out of them.

Bottom line: there was a lot of misery pouring down on followers of the best division in baseball last year.

Top contenders for the most disappointed fanbase in the division are Portland (who never got out of the gate last year), Bikini (who played a season long game of yin and yang before crashing 11 games), San Fernando (who seem to be making "The Slightly Underperforming Bears" their new brand), and Hawaii (who, despite going to the playoffs, managed to fumble the division pennant with Ugly Ball down the stretch). Honorable Mention to Vancouver fans for having to watch their postseason hopes fade with the injury to Dirk Bessi. Or, I guess you could bring on Beach and Valencia's fanbase into the mix, seeing that each will be suffering PTSD from the total combustion of teardowns they watched unfold as the season progressed. The Stars, in particular, left nothing but bone and sinew on their Pacific plate.

Even the Mad Dopes following the Mad Popes of Sacramento can complain, as they all know GM Shoeless unloaded a ton of future in a run for the Monty that, alas, was found to be nothing but that Fool's Gold I mentioned above.

So, with the new sheriff in Sacramento, will any one of these guys be able to make hay in 2063?

Safe money says no.

On paper, though the division still looks scrappy, new GM Ben Heuring's team looks stronger than the rest. The safety factor is gone, though, and something as silly as an unfortunate bout with the injury beast and the M'opes could be looking up at the top as quick as anyone else.

And if that happens, my thought here is that Portland is arguably first up in the catbird seat. The team won 91 games two seasons ago, then collapsed to 79. Anyone who believes in bad juju and the truth of regressing to mean knows that this means the Lumberjacks gonna be chopping good wood this year, and they've got the arms to do it. The 'Jacks, in fact, are—obviously—my dark horse to win it.

The rest is a tossup scrum.

Some will point to the Tropics in Hawaii as a bigtime player now. It's hard to disagree, yet I'm going to. I think the Tropics cashed in some long-owed luck chips last season, and overperformed. Their pitching doesn't seem any stronger than last year, and it was certainly more lucky than good then. Instead I see the eternal squabbling of the Vancouver Mounties and San Fernando Bears carrying them over the hump, with the winner completely decided by how healthy Dirk Bessi's arm is. Given that he's officially "wrecked," I've got to predict the Bears come out on top in 2063.

Slide the Tropics in after them.

I've been bit by over-predicting Bikini in the past. So let's just say they go .500 this year and see what happens. It could happen, but a shortage of wins suggests fewer than 81.

Then comes the question of Stars or Surfers.

My cash is on the Stars because wannabe GMS could do a lot worse than study what Gregg Greathouse did on his teardown. While any respectable prediction device would lose credibility by saying it's going to happen, it's not impossible to see them sticking their toes into the upper division. The Surfers, however, are in deep-water trouble as best I can see. This was a really bad season to try to build in Free Agency, and the addition of Emilio Morales was nowhere near enough to fix the fact that, with the exception of Steveland Morris, pretty much every LBC star of the recent past has hoped waves out of town or into retirement. And while Morris can still play, really, it might be for the best if he were to do it, too.

Bikini Krill



Celebrations were had across the atoll when, while closing shop at their Catalina Island spring training facility, news came that bigtime pundits inside the OOTP universe had picked the Krill to win the Pacific division.

Hmm.

I guess that sounds good in a conference room, but I admit I don't really see that. There are just too many question marks at this point, and the team seems to be stuck in a moment with that "deer in the headlights" expression on their collective faces. For fans of the team, it's got to be annoying. And all the annoyance going on has to start at the top.

Assessments of personnel are what a GM gets paid to do, and trust in the system is a virtue. These are some hallmarks of what Ron Collins brought to the moribund Seattle organization when he took the GM's reins back in 2057. Find players and let the kids play. Stick with them through the tough times and expect them to play their way out of their funks.

In other words, trust your ratings.

And plans really are great.

Alas, however, at some point one does have to look at the actual results down in the details and decide if they are working.

Point in case: Mike McClure. What is he doing still on the roster? Assuming he is, anyway. For any serious time. For a while last season, it appeared Collins had learned his lesson about corner outfielders, and brought a multiple season test to a halt by acquiring Julio Lopez and Al Schumann, and calling up Kusuma Prawiranega. With Abhijana Swami and Juan Ramos in the wings, it seems unlikely that Krill fans are going to ever have to watch the likes of Marty Barnett and Fernando Bushy play serious time ever again. If both those kids are 80-90% what the team dreams of, the offense should do just fine. And, to be fair, it seems like Collins finally faced the music with his infatuation with "switch hitting" Kata Ishibashi—who was not tendered this year. Third base will be manned by either Manuel Martinez or rule V find Isaac Buggins.

But McClure remains.

You could probably say the same thing about the pitching staff. When Jon Brown up and left, Collins wasn't successful in replacing him, commenting on the subject by bringing up the names of AAA and AA prospects Steve Truss, Herman Deckard, and Nelson Williams. This fits the style we've grown accustomed to from

Collins. Build mostly from within, go outside only when necessary. Still, the process result appears right now to have been less than successful. That leaves the Krill swimming in a riptide of uncertainty in several positions, not only the rotation.

Insiders say Williams will be in the #4 hole come opening day.

We'll see what happens.

Second base, for example, seems to be in another holding pattern with incumbent Napoleon Mellott holding down a role simply because he's been too inconvenient to replace. Perhaps newly acquired Agatone Louganis can hold down the position for a bit, but this is us not holding our breath. The stated hope that 20-year-old Ramon Sanz would be ready to take on the chore of center field was at least buttressed by the signing of GBC Buenos Ares veteran Amin Abdul-Halim to a front-loaded multiple season deal, but on one is out buying season tickets because of that.

SMH, right?

The team needed something bigger.

Getting back to the rotation, we guess Takashi Nakamura has been something close to expectations, but Arturo Meza has been doing his best Invisible Man routine. He's fine, we suppose, but fans expected better when the club acquired him from (then) Omaha. At the end of the day this means Paul Worboys probably takes over the gavel of Ace. I'm not sure that's a great thing, but it might be okay.

The bullpen is the one place where the team's developmental system seems to actually be working. Winston Morris and Enrique Villarreal should still be premium at the back end of games. Felix Vidaca, Masami Kichida, Brain Capps, Antonio Salazar, and John Hurry are all quality arms. One assumes Tony Vasquez will be up early this year.

Defensive changes made mid-stream last year means the team should be better this season than it was over the whole of last year.

If the club can score runs (which it should), and if the rotation can keep the team in games (which it should most of the time), the bullpen really should settle the score. That said, a scan of the results say the pen has not performed as well as expected in either of the past two seasons.

So...

That's the thing with Bikini. They've generally been better than they look, or worse than they look. Which will it be this year?

The game thinks the team will be better.

I'm not so sure.

2063 Prediction 81-81

Hawaii Tropics



The OOTP Pre-season predictor shows the Tropics unseating the Mad Popes, notching 95 victories to win the Pacific Division. Interestingly, it also indicates only Hawaii outfielder Eric Owens as one of the Frick's top performers. Which makes as much sense as anything, I suppose. I think Hawaii's roster may be the prototypical stereotype for the near future—full of solid, but not spectacular players that just win.

Still, let's not get going so far here that we outrun our tracks.

It's certainly possible that Hawaii could win the division. I'm just not buying it as a core prediction. On a run production/prevention basis, the Tropics registered the 4th best offense in the league in 2062, and the 6th best pitching staff. As long as they stay healthy, I can see the bats still performing. Maybe not quite #4 in the league, but I figure the Tropics to score some runs. But how the pitching did what the pitching did last year is a bit hard to fathom—and on paper the arms don't look as good now as they did.

Specifically, longtime ace Semih Gurani is starting to show some tread, but there are other question marks, too.

Perhaps the best way to tell that the Tropic front office agrees is to not that a bulk of their off-season efforts added up to bringing three starters into the mix in Ruben binMajid al Din (\$3.5M/1), Slobodan Omeragic (\$2.5M/1), and Daniel Thornton (\$3.2M/2). Of the three, I ponder if Omeragic will be the bigger impact.

If the Tropics can get to the bullpen (as I seem to be saying for a lot of teams), things get rosier. 2060's second round pick hard-throwing lefty Gheorghe Sollomovici spent his first year with the big club, and was more than solid. Expect him to take a bigger role as he develops. He and 33-year-old closer Utkan Gocek paired up for 33 saves last year, and they'll lead a crew that is likely eight pitchers deep in high quality arms.

Offensively, the arrangement of the infield is probably going to depend on whether GM James Walker decides 20-year-old prospect Harry Surface is ready for prime time or not. If he is, then maybe Jeff Dodd slides over to first base. With

(guessing) Carlos Schumann sitting at short, and Mitch Wareham at second base, one would expect that to comprise a better than average infield with both the leather and the lumber. With Owens leading an outfield that carries a bit of star power itself in the Vincentes Marinez and Mendez, Jose Ordonez, and slick center fielder Carlos Sanchez, you can see why I figure the offense to be productive.

One wonders if an upgrade at catcher might be in the offering, though.

Bottom line—this is a good team now. Maybe not a division winner, but a team that the Frick League is going to have to contend with on a nightly basis.

2063 Prediction 86-78

Long Beach Surfers

RP Gavrilovich Mastinsky 2/\$13M

SP Brody Picot \$4/1



In surf lingo, I think it's fair to say that the Long Beach baseball club did not just wipeout last year. They both pitched over, got sucked over, and went completely over the falls before getting totally ragdolled in the after wave. The only silver lining is that there was no coral reef directly below them.

2062 was neither a tasty wave nor a cool breeze. The team won only 60 games, barely enough to stay above Valencia for the division cellar.

I wish I could tell Surfer fans that 2063 would be better, but I find it best not to lie. Sure, GM Stephen Lane went out and signed Brody Picot and Gavrilovich Mastinsky to solid contracts, and they made a deal to bring 3B Emilio Morales, Jr. in to play 3B (where DDNM—Defense Does Not Matter). Picot and Mastinsky should slip directly into the rotation, but unfortunately they will slip in at the top of the table rather than the middle or bottom. And the second unfortunately in the mis is that the Surfers also subtracted out a total of 4.4 WAR of last year's starters in

You-de Szema and Stephen Clulow, Jr. (Not to mention losing another WAR with easily lost Aaron Nolan).

They may win more games, at least, but I'm not sure that's going to matter.

While the surfers can field a lineup full of what I call interesting players—lower-rated guys who can probably exceed their expectations (Emilio Reyes is sneaky-good in center, and Elvan Masuki has continued to provide value at shortstop), there is very little of start quality around to get them over the hump when things get down. Steveland Morris, for example, is 35 now. If you believe in his on-again, off-again cycle, he's due for a 4 WAR kind of year. But can he do that at 35? If so, he'll hope to pair with 26-year-old 1B Gustavo Espinoza, who led the league with 51 homers last year. 22-year-old OF Vicente Lopez, who showed prodigious power while still sputtering in a 110 PA debut last year.

You can add in catcher Rhys Atticus, too, but all his value is with the leather, and that rarely gets the blood pumping or sells tickets. He's also on the bad end of a five-season streak that has seen his value drop steadily from a miraculous 7.0 WAR down to 1.2.

These are the guys, though.

Right now, only Espinoza seems like you can chalk him in and expect anything big for certain.

A scan of the bullpen shows only 25-year-olds Wilson Perez (who may start) and Jose Owens managed to post better than league average FIP-. Most would expect veteran right hander Tulon Koruturk to bounce back from last year's aberration to make that a trio, but even if that happens, that's not good.

And, no, Virginia, while there may be something in the water in Long Beach, there's not much in the upper regions of the Surfer minor league, either. This all adds up to why, for the foreseeable future, I don't see much more than suffering in Long Beach.

Of course, not that I've said that, Land will go out and turn the entire cart on its head and make the playoffs now. Because that's kind of Lane's MO.

So, really, we'll see what happens as it happens.

That's the beauty of baseball, after all. Right?

2063 Prediction 58-104

Portland Lumberjacks



I admit it, when I started really looking at Portland, I wasn't sure how you could pick anyone except the Lumberjacks as the favorite to win the Pacific division this year.

The rotation features Murali Patachili (28), Mauro Esperanda (22), and John O'Leary (23) with a couple of additional interesting early-20s kickers. And to this they added wonder-vets Barney Stuart and lefty Steve Warren (both 38, and at least one likely to pitch some from the bullpen). And to that pen they added 36-year-old Ross Brown.

Put that rotation behind a lineup that includes the ultra-stellar base hit machine Mynorli Gaajlimitz and shortstop Bumper McNeill, Jr, and throwing to a guy in Allan Uecker, who is the alpha model when it comes to displaying every catcher skill known to mankind, and you've really got something. That's not even counting an upper third first baseman in Greg Squires (who did 3.8 WAR last season), quietly solid outfielder Greg Dodson (3.6 WAR), and the imminent arrival of star-to-be outfielder Tim Heywood (21, with rock-solid contact).

Greg Squires is 24. He struggled a little in 2062, but should have a bounce-back season at second.

Same for corner outfielder, 22-year-old Bartolo McFadden.

And Matt Pruitt is a perfectly good plug-in at center field.

Add in vagabond Catcher Farid bin Mubarak, who is making a mint extending his career with any team who needs a solid backup, and you get a lot of interesting pieces.

So, why not Portland?

That's where I was an hour ago, anyway.

But there are some dark underbellies here, too.

The team doesn't really have a right fielder now. McFadden or Dodson could slide over and fill the slot, but their arms are suspect for that side of the diamond. And the always-present question about how McNeill will age were raised again at the idea that some scouts might be dropping their assessments of his range.

Then we come to the bullpen, where you get exhibition A for why at least one of those arms hired in the free agency market will be best used in relief. I'm not saying that the team has no pitchers are all in the pen, Erasmo Gonzalez has closer stuff, and Ernie Mark pitched well last year (though my jury is still out on him). And you can go down the list and find more guys who were your average workaday lunchpail arms. But, while those guys are fun to root for, they do not scream Pacific pennant.

Then I scanned the minors, of which there are a few guys on their way, but no movers and shakers. Maybe Jayden Nichols will keep his career moving by throwing some innings sometime.

It's hard to see a team without any depth in the pen at all

And when I looked at it this way, I see age in a few places, too (not the least of whom is McNeill, Jr.), and I got a bit gun shy.

No, however. Despite reconsidering my reconsidering, I'm pretty sur Portland will not win the 2063 Pacific Pennant, But I fully expect them in the hunt, and it makes sense they would be one of those I favor for taking a Wild Card slot.

2063 Prediction 90-72

Sacramento Mad Popes

Newly anointed Mad Pope GM Ben Heuring's Sacramento ball club will be the odds-on favorite to win the Pacific Division this year, but they are also Exhibit A in the conversation that says 162 games is a very long season.

The lineup, starting with Lou Bayou once again in center field, is pristine. His outfield cohorts of Pedro Alvarez and Craig Williams are both Plus players. The infield is going to miss Badr Isam (who left for richer fields with the Bombers in Rosenblatt), but Mohammad bin Mus'ad is a 3+ WAR guy at third (and a superstar if he ever grows into those insane ratings ... yes, friends, we can dream) and Yoshitoro Goto should hopefully recover from knee surgery to be a solid fixture at second. There are two options at first, which is nice, and ten you still have John Kinsella behind the plate for what one assumes are his last few seasons as a true star in the league.



One assumes Daniel Kenner will be the shortstop. He's what racers call a rolling chicane in the lineup, but pitchers will cherish every moment he's on the field behind them.

And the rotation—augmented by Heuring's signing of Sakutaro Kuwano—is still a thing of beauty. Kuwano joins Michihiro Tanaka and Mario Reyes to make a Big Three. Joe King is on his last legs, but he can join Jamie Baber at the bottom of the rotation just fine. Whenever 21-year-old phenom Claudio Torres arrives (this year?), he'll push one of them out of the cycle.

The bullpen, too, is a beast made beastlier by Heuring bringing Cade Miller and his 32 Brooklyn saves with him to anchor games. Don Jordan and Pedro Gonsales will team with Miller to make up the three guys who fit Recte's bullpen rule, and Yurochka Erenkov is an extra. There's also the requisite cast of capable lunchpail fillers that make a bullpen work day to day.

So, yeah, I'd feel like this was a truer beast if Isam was back, but it's hard to find a major fault anywhere...

Except...

Baseball is a very long season. And the Injury List is there for a reason.

You know where I'm going, right?

Sacramento's depth is a problem.

After something around two full seasons of trading away pieces of the system, the organization has a few journeyman fillers at AAA, and maybe a few guys at AA you could press into service for a week here and a week there. But with the M'opes, right now it look like it's mostly a What You See is What You Get moment. Which means I don't know what to do in a final assessment. On paper they still have to be considered the best team in the Pacific division, but a few random rolls go the wrong way and things could change fast. And the division around them is both young and aggressive, so the degree of difficulty is not low.

In the end, I'm assuming they'll get a little lucky on the injury front and leaving them at the top of the chart. But it's a pick with a wide degree of failure.

I expect another Pacific pennant, but a few bad twists and the ship could go down pretty quickly.

2063 Prediction 92-70

San Fernando Bears



To say that Yuu Suzuki likes the friendly confines of Chico Bail Bonds ballpark is like saying *The Big Bang Theory*'s Sheldon Cooper had a thing for Star Trek. His two seasons since coming to San Fernando have been gargantuan 7 WAR blast-o-beasts. It's to the point that one can actually have an argument that asks how long he has to keep that up before he becomes a candidate for the Hall of Fame.

Of course, we're not here to make that argument. We're here to ask how his team is going to do in 2063, which, seeing that his team won 91 games two seasons back and slipped into the playoffs but won only 88 last season and missed by a game, is a more complicated thing. The opening gambit, however, is that we see no reason why Suzuki, who will be 29, can't do it again—"it" being 50ish homers and 120ish RBI. Assuming he does so, it seems natural that the Bears will once again be in the upper pantheon of run creators in the Frick League.

That said, there are a few questions as to who Suzuki's supporting cast will be, particularly in center field, where Sonny Bigalow, one of the league's better gloves, has held court, but where Jim Sitton (22) appears to be about ready to rake. Sitton won't be elite in the field, but looks like he can handle it well enough. And his bat will be well above average for the position. Is this his year? Shortstop has a similar situation in which veteran Qutuz Mahdi is back, but at age 36 one wonders for how long. Especially since 24-year-old Jason Steward made a brief debut last season and appears to have pushed Mahdi to second base. The Mahdi/Steward conversation is the polar opposite of the one in center field, as the incumbent is the better offensive player while the kid usurper is the one with the splendid glove, though if GM Kurt Imber's TN releases can be believed, Steward had a successful pass through the team's development complex this winter.

It's a quandary, I tell ya.

A real quandary.

Expect Mahdi to slide to second base, though, simply because I'm not sure there's a different option right now.

What's not a quandary is that Jose Reyes and his 33 doubles and 20 homers to go with his 3.9 WAR in only 468 PA will be at third base, and Keith Tims will likely DH and get the reps at first when Suzuki takes a day off. Tommy Harrison and his 3.6 WAR should be back in right field. Barring other moves, left will be a Miguel Lussier/Rafael Marquis platoon. Similarly, the catching duo of Augusto Annis and Manny Trujillo will reprise their roles. Reyes's acumen at the hot corner will likely relegate rookie Jose Mendoza to the designated hitter slot whenever GM Kurt Imber decides it's time.

It's a good offense.

Pitching is a different thing, of course, and it goes deeper than the odd HR-inducing expanse of Chico Bail Bonds. The rotation is a BBA version of Ground Hog's Day in which every pitcher kind of looks the same (unless Orhan Atil wins a spot, in which case one of the days will be left-handed. Otherwise, yes, he'd look the same. Morris Chappa and Ielemia Faltose are the more recognizable names, but here are last year's FIP- for the contending starters: 95, 99, 111, 101, 96, 106 (AAA), and 121. In other words, it's not bad, just not good.

That last entry (121) is interesting, though, because it's Rick Marriott, who's off-season essay about how he spent last summer was titled "Recovering from Tommy John." Marriott is 25 now. If he returns full to his pre-recovery form, he would arguably qualify as the Ace of the staff.

The bullpen should be solid, though it will be without the great story of Bryan Longstaff. Look for Carlos Williams to take over late innings without a hitch. If the starts can get to the 7th inning, things should work out pretty well for the Bears. That is a big if, though. If not, the team will have to simply outscore teams—something that works some of the time and leaves teams on the outside looking in at others.

Which will it be for the Bears this year?

I'm thinking they'll be playing postseason baseball.

But what do I know?

They sit there in the middle of the scrum looking quite dangerous, though.

2063 Prediction 86-76

Valencia Stars



With all the fuss about running their mega Blue Light Sale last year—which went down without a hitch I’d say, I think some people are considering Valencia to be pretty close to destitute for the next couple seasons. Including the in-game pre-season projections that have Valencia winning 70 games.

But here’s the thing. The Stars are going to sneak up on some teams now.

I don’t mean to go hyperbolic here. There will be no post season for Valencia in 2063, and likely not in 2064. The front office is working to get the financial wheels back on after a failed run the past couple seasons, and that takes some attention. But they aren’t totally bereft of talent at the big league level now, and the rash of trades served to fill the rosters down through the organization such that I can see shock waves rolling through space from light years away.

The fun parts sound like this:

22 year-old catcher Betram Helwich is a solid bat, and he’s ready. 24-year-old 1B Gabriel Bacaloglu is the same. He’s not going to play in All-Star games (I’d think) but when he connects, ball go far.

The middle infield is a bit of a mess unless 25-year-old Jose Romero’s debut was mostly jitters. The glove is good, though, and his bat rates to be better than it was, so maybe anxiety was the cause. 23-year-old Jorge Garcia (acquired from Charlotte) is the same. He looks ready, and should be able to play.

The outfield is more of the same.

I don’t know that they have a real center fielder, but Bill Nesbitt and Ismael Ramirez (22, and 23) can both hold down a corner to a better than nothing degree.

In other words, don’t blink now, Mama, but I think there will be times when Valencia’s offense heats up a little, and makes things annoying for opposing pitchers.

The pitching is a different kind of picture, but more of the same.

Other than 23-year-old Shiro Takahashi, who made a lukewarm debut late last year), the rotation is going to need a Geritol drip hanging for them between innings, but is not all bad. GM Gregg Greathouse held a hand over his good eye

and threw a couple darts, finding Todd Jones (36), Michael Dixon (38), and Gerardo Rea (37) on one-season deals. Jones was effective in 130 innings last year. Dixon has been an enigma at times, but seems like a solid gamble given the situation. 32-year-old Alvin Anstey was workable at times in 120 innings, too.

Until Takahashi grows a bit, the rotation doesn't have any top-end slump stoppers, but it can keep the club in the game.

If that happens, the bullpen arms are pretty solid—specifically kid closer Dave Furman (21). 35-year-old Luis Perez was retained to help, and we assume will eat up as many innings as possible. He's another one of those "good" pitchers flying under the radar screen as noted by his 75 FIP- in 75 innings between Charlotte and Valencia last year.

So, yeah.

I'm not going off my head on Valencia. Not right this moment. But time is on the Star's side, and good teams will overlook them at their peril.

2063 Prediction 76-86

Vancouver Mounties

Vancouver broke a three-season playoff drought by winning 89 games and slipping in on the last day of the season.

Never a doubt, right?

By my count, GM Aaron Wharram has committed *only* five trades. That's what counts as a quiet off-season up north of the border. Admittedly, two were after posting his 2063 "starters" which is par for the course. Goodbye Amphibian Johnson, long live new CF King Bob Hills. The team also signed free agent starter Kinzo Iwamoto and second baseman Colby Triska to some pretty big cash to go along with their post-season extension of rolling injury magnet Dirk Bessi. Ah, yes, and let's not forget that the Mounties dropped \$44M on GBC starter Motka Betelev. So rumors of a quiet off-season are probably misguided.



Given the club's youth, the club's finances are in great shape even if Bessi's contract goes belly up. So, on the whole I like where they are at. At least conceivably. At question once again, though is whether the team can win without scoring many runs.

Vancouver squeaked into the playoffs while sporting an offense that sat #13 in runs scored last year—and that's with Gilstrom candidate Royce Hinkle doing gargantuan things with the bat. Sure, some of that is to be expected. That ballpark...yada yada yada. But some of it is also in raw roster construction. Hinkle hit 32 homers, for example. No other returning player managed 20. Sergio Mendoza (22) will have a full season in the bigs this year. He did 12 dongs in 90 games last year. Maybe he'll be able to add a little punch. Mitchell Goater is another 22-year-old guy who can hit a little. He and left fielder Greg Clover were the only other two bats who finished with OS+ values better than league average.

Adding Colby Triska as a leadoff guy is supposed to help—and maybe it will, but Triska has been on a bit of an aging curve, and I'm not sure that career .350 OBP is a real thing right now. Especially with half his games in Vancouver's park. He can play some solid first, though. I guess that's all part of the defense first thing. I dunno. But teams that can't score will struggle against teams that can, and I'm still anxious about Vancouver's foundation in the lineup.

As a relevant aside, let's take Tyler Conklin, who appears to be the guy at short this year (aside: are Vancouver shortstops the BBA equivalent to Spinal Tap drummers?). Conklin has been a starting BBA shortstop for six seasons. In those six seasons he's had a cumulative Zone Rating of something like +65. He's a very good glove. But his overall value has been replacement level, if that. Conklin's DP mate is Oskar Lojdahl. He's also a very good defender. His bat is not great, but at maybe 85 OPS+, it's workable. Maybe. But he's your average 2 WAR kind of guy, counting great defense.

My question here is: can a team with Conklin and Lojdahl in the lineup survive if it has no power and only four guys you can guarantee to be average or above in producing runs?

I dunno, but it doesn't feel good.

Of course, the park helps Vancouver pitchers, and one suspects Beteev will find it to his liking as he steps into the rotation with Bessi and 28-year-old Juan Garcia. Those are quality arms. Alfredo Anaya looks workable at the back end of the rotation, but one has to wonder how long of a leash Sam Fisher might be on. If they can manage to bring games to Jesus Garcia and last year's rookie sensation Serge Elovsky in the pen, then Vancouver is looking stout.

I think Vancouver is a playoff team. But this is going to be a really competitive season, and I think there are several playoff teams that won't actually be going to the playoffs. Will the Mounties be one of them?

That his the \$64M question, though, isn't it.

Well, that, and who gets traded if they aren't.

2063 Prediction 86-76

PROJECTED RECORDS: PACIFIC DIVISION

Team	Wins	Losses	GB
Sacramento	92	70	-
Portland	90	72	4
San Fernando	86	76	6
Vancouver	86	76	8
Hawaii	86	76	10
Bikini	81	81	15
Valencia	76	86	18
Long Beach	58	104	20

GLOBAL BASEBALL CONSORTIUM

Are you ready for a different narrative, dear casual fan? At this point in the Media Guide, it's been 100-plus pages of Nashville this and Nashville that. Surely that's becoming tiring to read about?

Well, what if I told you I have just the remedy. An independent baseball league, with a global talent base, more exciting pennant races, and better player names. You think they've got guys like Abdul-Sami bin Ya'qub and Tashfin Gitonga in the BBA? Please.

Last season, the Moscow Thunder Bears won the Grand Slam Cup, in what many considered an upset. But Moscow is set out to show the world that their victory wasn't a fluke. With a star closer and a deep pitching roster, Moscow hopes it's got the arms to bring the parade back to the Red Square.

The Cairo Pharaohs were the previous "dynasty," whose run of three consecutive titles was halted by Moscow. They also would like for me to stop talking about their dynasty in the past tense. They have the best player in the world, Blair Peyton, who is perhaps one more lost championship away from deciding to leave Cairo and try his talents in the BBA. There's a lot at stake.

The Jerusalem Hebrew Hammers have made it as far as the Grand Slam Cup in each of the last two seasons, but they can never close the deal. But this year, they may have an answer to Moscow's star closer, in the form of a budding superstar pitcher of their own. Davida Keealoo may be young, but he's shown he's ready for the big stage, and the Hammers' hopes are riding on him.

The Tokyo Pearls are also chomping at the bit for another shot at a title, and fueled by home runs, more home runs, and a pitching staff that throws pure gas.

And let's never count out the British Empire. The London Monarchs' young core of prospects is starting to graduate to the big leagues. Could this be the beginning of the new reign?

The Sharks are in a similar boat. #2 GBC prospect Ilia Arakchaa is knocking on the door to the big leagues, which will begin a new era in Sydney.

Then there's São Paulo, who came close to the playoffs last year, and really want to make it there before their young star first baseman, Katsunan Hashimoto, flees for BBA money. They also make more trades than any team in the BBA

universe, so if they find themselves in need of a piece or two, they'll go out and get it.

Meanwhile, Buenos Aires actually made the biggest free agent splash of any GBC team, spending \$20 million to bring Ira Patterson to the Brisas. But don't worry; I'm sure he'll be playing for São Paulo before long.

The Johannesburg Gold are even showing some positive signs, with the emergence of young players like catcher and captain Simão Hayagawa.

Athens' continued ineptitude will certainly have you wondering how a place like that became so historically associated with sporting games.

All this is to say the scrum that is the GBC this season is certain to delight, surprise, and possibly have you shutting off your TV in disgust.

Let's get into the previews.

GBC EurAsia Division

	W	L
Moscow	97	65
Jerusalem	86	76
Tokyo	85	67
London	76	86
Athens	69	93



Athens Fighting Centaurs

2062 record: 64-98, 5th place in EurAsia

Notable additions: 3B Rob Howell, SP Zafir bin Hamzah*, RP Hughie Dunstone, SP Carlos Martínez, SP Vicente Hernández, 2B Nick Ashwell, 3B Jack Acheson, SP Travis

Wearne, SP Abdul-Muhaimin Saleem, LF Matthew Woods

Losses (and 2062 WAR): OF Luis Urbina (-0.4), SP/RP Cathmor Burnby (-0.3), SP Bob Fults (0.0), 1B Hanbal Sayyid (-0.2), SP/RP Paul Mullins (-0.2), SP Bintang Kartodirdjo (-0.1), RP Lance Barrett (0.4), RP Aaron Anderson (0.5), SP/RP Jim Achbar (-0.5), OF Joe Powell (0.1), SP/RP Edward Crutcher (0.9), 2B Riyadh bin Hakeem (0.4), 3B Augusto Vargas (0.5), SP/RP José Díaz (0.8), 1B Mun-Wah Hsu (0.7), SP/RP Carlos Torres (0.9)

Star power: Matthew Woods is the new, shiny prize for Athens, a hitter with an already highly-decorated career, having won the GBC Platinum Stick award at DH in each of the past three seasons. He's certainly an elite power hitter with an incredible batting eye, but he's trending downward, coming off the lowest-WAR season in his GBC career. With Athens' two-year commitment to him, they're hoping he can pick it back up, but even at last year's level of production, he'll be a solid middle-of-the-order hitter. I just hope they don't try to make him play defense, where he hasn't logged more than a few emergency innings in a season since 2059.

Sneaky-good player: The Centaurs' revamped starting rotation deserves some credit, as they went out and assembled as formidable a staff as their resources allowed, but my top pick as a player who might surprise some people is **Pat Rhodes**. One of the few players held over from last year (i.e., not traded to São Paulo), the 27-year-old has gained some movement and control since last year, and has really emerged this spring, with an 0.52 ERA in five starts. He should do well to limit home runs, a skill which seems to have been Athens' focus in building its pitching staff, as rotation-mates Travis Wearne and Abdul-Muhaimin Saleem are likewise quite adept in that department.

Weakness: I could pick Athens' offensive ineptitude at one of many positions, but the worst is at catcher. They have not been able to replace the production of Njoroge Akins, ever since he was — surprise — traded to São Paulo. They'll probably go with Jake Bryant as the first-string backstop, who managed a truly awful .460 OPS last year, but is at least okay defensively. One hopes they've got some budget left over to throw at some of the leftover free agent pickings.

2063 prediction: 69-93. Last year's biggest problem was the starting pitching, and they've fixed that, well enough at least that they shouldn't be last in starters' ERA. The offense is still a problem, but with some waiver wire pickups, they might find enough replacement-level hitters to keep them in a few games. I would conservatively say Athens could see a 5–10 game improvement.



Jerusalem Hebrew Hammers

2062 record: 85-77, 2nd place in EurAsia

Notable additions: SP Wilson López, 1B Salih Ali*, RF Amitatman Praveen*, CF Júlio Camacho, C Tokimasa Yano, SP Luke Seddon, CF John Moore, RF Luis Chávez, LF

Quentin Bronson, RF George McCoy, RP Dagobert Schroder

Losses (and 2062 WAR): SP Hassan bin Zuhair (0.6), 3B Pedro Rocha (-0.2), SP Ed Noble (3.0), SP Paris Zervakos (2.7), RP Arturo Damasco (-0.5), RF Bob Pope (0.0), C Robinson Rodríguez (0.5), RP Paul Cherry (0.3), 1B Ira Patterson (2.3), LF Jamal bin Majd (1.8), CF Jaicus Bigornia (0.3), SS Juan Benítez (0.0), SS Chance Wilson (1.4)

Star power: Right fielder **Ted Benson** has led the GBC in homers two years running, and Jerusalem just rewarded him with a new contract to continue mashing through 2064. And now he'll be reunited with his old teammate, catcher Tokimasa Yano, who also arrived on a two-year deal. The pair won championships together in Charm City, so why not in Jerusalem?

Sneaky-good player: The Hammers have a new tool in the toolbox this year, and it's last year's first-round draft pick (8th overall), reliever **David Keealoo**. The 18-year-old already looks ready for the big leagues, despite having no professional experience, and having missed the last two years (that's 11% of his life) due to a labrum injury. He's absolutely taken the league by storm this spring, allowing no runs in eleven relief appearances. My questions are: 1) Did this kid have the Henry Rowengartner surgery, or what? He actually gained 2 mph on his fastball, plus movement, since he last threw a pitch. And, 2) Would Jerusalem risk bringing him up right away, or ease the kid through the minors first? He's fragile, so the team might not want to expose him to too much too fast. But on the other hand, how long can they hold down a guy who could be the best closer in the GBC?

Weakness: Starting pitching depth. Losing Ed Noble and Paris Zervakos from last year's rotation are a lot of innings to make up, and their replacements have some red flags. Wilson López has awful splits and will get lit up by right-handers, while Luke Seddon hasn't started in the majors since 2057. There may be some promise in Leonard Squillari, who was a reliever last year, but who they've been trying out in the rotation this spring.

2063 prediction: 86-76. One wonders whether Jerusalem is all-in this year, after getting bounced in last year's Grand Slam Cup by the underdog Thunder Bears. If so, we may see them continue to improve their squad throughout the season, with trades and other moves, in order to finally get that elusive championship. But for now, they'll make it as far as their pitching will take them, which is pretty far, but still a bit behind Tokyo in the standings.



London Monarchs

2062 record: 75-87, 4th place in EurAsia

Notable additions: SP Rafael Álvarez, SP Rick Clarijs, 1B Michael Pedarzolli, CF Mike Cox, 1B Lee Bundy, SP Cristo Muñoz, SP Brian Ioneki, SP Rick Patrick

Losses (and 2062 WAR): RF Júlio García (0.0), 2B Naruhiko Okada (-0.6), RP Lev Lutsenko (-0.9), RP José Arredondo (0.1), LF Thomas Hohenwart (0.8), RF Reed Jewers (-0.2)

Star power: Newly-signed veteran starting pitcher **Rick Clarijs** will assume the role of team captain, and lead an improved rotation for the Monarchs. Despite being 38 years old, he can still limit home runs and walks very well, which is much needed for a staff which last season allowed way too many of each.

Sneaky-good player: **Mika Taine** has looked more promising year after year, until peaking at #3 on the GBC Top Prospects list last October. Now the Marshallean infielder is basically assured of a starting spot in the big leagues, after getting called up late last season and slashing .331/.411/.444 while playing great defense. The only real question is where to play him. Taine has the range and arm to be able to play shortstop or third base, as well as his normal position at second. I suppose it'll come down to other roster decisions, and we'll learn the answer once spring camp breaks.

Weakness: Not enough power. While London has done well to supplement the lineup with professional hitters like center fielder Mike Cox, DH Michael Pedarzolli, and first baseman Lee Bundy, the Monarchs are still lacking a real power threat to drive in runs. It certainly doesn't feel very London-like to get out-slugged by all their opponents. You're the British Empire, for crying out loud, don't play small ball!

2063 prediction: 76-86. The Monarchs are on the cusp of a youth movement, and we may see the first wave of prospects, including starting pitcher Germán Martínez and third baseman Daniel Sparks, appearing in the GBC this season. But they don't need to rush anything. If they continue to draft well and stockpile youth, they'll truly be a force in a couple years.



Moscow Thunder Bears

2062 record: 84-78, 3rd place in EurAsia; Denny's & Subaru World Cup Champions

Notable additions: 3B Kozma Gizikis, SP Trevor Lawrence, RP Garrison Hewitt*, SP Chiah-jen Xú*, RP Ubbe Bakboord*,

1B Juan García

Losses (and 2062 WAR): 1B Carlos Arroyo (-0.1), RP Héctor Fuentes (0.2), RP Patrick Whitlock (0.2), 1B Maximilian Nielsson (1.3), 1B Tsuyoshi Kobayashi (0.5), SP EwungaGoiba Ghera (2.0), C So Huynh (0.1), RP Juan García (-0.4), LF Sangmok Kim (0.4), RP Edward Morrow (0.1), SP/RP Trey Raynor (0.4), C Jesse Holman (-0.1), 3B Ryobe Watanabe (3.2)

Star power: The Thunder Bears have the biggest pitching star in the GBC, and that's closer **Riyadi Subandrio**. He led the GBC in saves last season, and he seemingly has the power to, at will, go months at a time without allowing a run. As of this writing, he hasn't allowed a run since August 26 of last year, and that includes pitching through two playoff series, and all of Spring Training, completely scoreless. I could rattle off ridiculous Subandrio facts all day, but the important thing is this: Moscow has a pretty limited window while he's cheap, during which to win as much as possible. They won it all last year — which is exactly what they were supposed to do. Now they need to try and do it again.

Sneaky-good player: An upcoming pair of young pitchers should help the cause: starter **Siaosi Kane** and reliever **Mataio Hanale**. Hanale pitched very well in Double- and Triple-A last year before tearing his shoulder, but he'll be rehabbing soon, and hopefully in the majors by early May. Kane has started three games this spring and looked excellent, but we'll see if Moscow decides to start him in the minors to try to unlock more of his potential.

Weakness: Weirdly, first base. At one of the easiest positions to find a decent hitter, the Thunder Bears don't seem to have one. The best they could do on the free agent market was Juan García, a career minor leaguer who is more of a DH than a first baseman. You mean to tell me that a team enjoying the savings from having a minimum-salary superstar on the team couldn't go out and sign a Pedro Hozven, or a Jeff Sawyers? I don't buy that they're done yet — maybe they're still waiting for the price to come down.

2063 prediction: 97-65. The pitching is championship-caliber, and the offense is good enough. If Moscow wants to, they can absolutely run it back and win again. And there is only more youth coming through the system. We may be witnessing the beginning of the next GBC dynasty.



Tokyo Pearls

2062 record: 94-68, 1st place in EurAsia

Notable additions: LF Manuel Flores, SP Barry Short*, SP Jonathan Bryant, SP Steven Anderton, RP Dane Colclough, 1B Jules Le Gal

Losses (and 2062 WAR): RP Joe Jackson (0.0), CF Peder Stubbe (0.0), 1B Helmut Grün (0.3), SP/RP Michael Richardson (-0.4), 3B Stan Moten (0.1), SP/RP Eddie Armstrong (0.3), SS Ricardo Muñoz (1.0), 2B Ra'id bin Tamir (1.5), DH Matthew Woods (2.1), RP Derek Dyce (0.3), RP Max Birstall (0.3), SP/RP Guruvayur Vashisth (0.5), RP Rodney Keeley (0.7), SP Rafael López (-0.5), RP Saku Hakkila (0.2), RP Pablo Alcantara (0.6), RP Tye Whitford (1.4)

Star power: Right fielder **Michael Buckley** joined Tokyo last year and did his job perfectly, which was to hit dingers. He managed a career high 33 home runs in just 113 games, a product of GBC's lower level of competition and Tokyo's hitter-friendly ballpark. This season, the mission is simple: more dingers. Can he manage 40?

Sneaky-good player: Tokyo's first-round draft pick from last year has already broken into the bigs and started turning some heads. That's starting pitcher **Yue-jiu Lai**, who should find himself this season with a permanent spot in Tokyo's rotation. The 21-year-old possesses five quality pitches, most of them already fully developed, along with plus movement to keep the ball in the park. If he can establish himself, he'll become a valuable asset for the Pearls.

Weakness: Middle infield. Tokyo lost its starting double-play tandem from last season, and replaced them internally with prospects from their system. There is nothing necessarily wrong with that, and the replacements are actually quite worthy of the jobs: shortstop José Espinoza is a defensive whiz, while second baseman Nelson Caraballo is more of a utility man-type who can play in the

outfield, and even fill in at short if needed. It's just that if they don't work out, it doesn't leave the Pearls with a lot of options.

2063 prediction: 95-67. The Pearls are good, they know how to win, and they're thirsting for a shot at the Denny's Cup, after coming so close last season. But the road to the crown will be tougher in this division, with good, emerging teams in Moscow, Jerusalem and London. I'm predicting a close battle resulting in a Wildcard spot for Tokyo — but anything could happen in the playoffs.

GBC AFSAMOC Division

	W	L
Cairo Pharaohs	94	68
Sydney Sharks	83	79
Johannesburg Gold	73	89
Sao Paulo Pilots	69	93
Buenos Area Brisas	61	101



Buenos Aires Brisas

2062 record: 74-88, 4th place in AFSAMOC

Notable additions: 1B Ira Patterson

Losses (and 2062 WAR): CF Amin Abdul-Halim (3.7), C Will Bennett (1.8), C Ben Bryant (0.2), 3B Jin-hwan Kim (1.7), SP Millard MacIndeor (2.8), 1B Tony Horton (0.4),

Star power: Buenos Aires went out and made **Ira Patterson** the highest-paid player in the GBC, getting their lineup anchor in a guy who has consistently been one of the Consortium's top hitters. You might think a \$20M salary is a bit high for the hustle-averse, defensively challenged Patterson, but give Buenos Aires credit for identifying a need and going out to fix it. They might have looked at last year's offensive rankings, where the team posted the second-worst batting average in the Consortium, while having the second-most strikeouts. Patterson should help greatly to improve both of those numbers.

Sneaky-good player: Second baseman and leadoff hitter **Yeong-suk Yun** is truly the force that drives the offense, and in a park that rewards right-handed batters so much, he might end up with better offensive numbers than the \$20 million Patterson. His double-play partner, shortstop **Nick Bywaters**, is also one of the top offensive shortstops in the league. At two positions where many teams

struggle for offensive production, the Brisas have locks. (And did I mention they're both still making league minimum?)

Weakness: Buenos Aires had the worst pitching staff in the GBC in terms of ERA last year, and it hasn't improved. After the young sensation Alapai Nalani, it's all the same staff, just a year older. From the two-pitch Ed Curry who they're trying to pass off as a starter, to 38-year-old closer José Núñez, who had a .375 save conversion percentage last year (which isn't good — save percentage is not like batting average), it will be a long and painful year for the Brisas' pitching staff.

2063 prediction: 61-101. Spending 40% of the salary cap on Patterson may have been done at the expense of other areas of the team, including fixing the pitching staff, and replacing the value from several other departed players. While Patterson might end up high on the league leaderboards, the other glaring holes will knock the Brisas down into the cellar of the AFSAMOC division. Maybe they can get some trade value out of Patterson once it becomes obvious that they need to retool.



Cairo Pharaohs

2062 record: 107-55, 1st place in AFSAMOC

Notable additions: SP Nolan Lee*, RF António Bonía, RP Wayne Burr, RP Mike Smith, SS Kang-xi Kong, CF Joo-il Paek

Losses (and 2062 WAR): SP Jason Ramey (0.3), SP Júlio García (0.9), RP Sokollu Karpát (0.4), RP Tabari bin Muhtadi (0.0), LF Patrick Strolz (1.3), SP Dana Pualani (4.6), SP/RP Jaime Mendoza (1.4), 2B Shane Smith (1.8)

Star power: This is the last year of **Blair Peyton's** contract, and Cairo really would like to get him a fourth ring before he decides whether he'll take his talents elsewhere. There are not many accolades he *hasn't* gotten, and he's coming off a 12-WAR season where he set new single-season GBC records for batting average (.393), stolen bases (94), and triples (18). So, of course the entire offense revolves around the game plan, "get Blair on, get Blair in."

Sneaky-good player: Cairo did not sign any big-name free agent pitchers to replace the departed Dana Pualani, and that's because they believe they have a perfectly good in-house option: rookie **Craig Moore** is expected to make his Pharaohs debut on Opening Day, and he's the right type of pitcher for this staff: a sinkerballer who keeps hitters off balance and limits hard contact. The only real concern is whether his control will be in order, as his BB/9 rate was a touch too high in Triple-A last year (3.9).

Weakness: Did you know that Cairo's offense was dead last in the GBC in taking walks last season? Now you do. Several of Cairo's starters had abysmal walk rates last year, including first baseman Kamal bin Isa (2.6%), right fielder Sean Krajancic (2.2%), and second baseman Khoi Dai (1.5%). And while you don't necessarily need walks to win games, just imagine how many more run-scoring opportunities the Pharaohs could have if Peyton had a high-OBP guy batting in front of him. So I would urge Cairo's hitters to heed the hometown wisdom, and learn to walk like an Egyptian.

2063 prediction: 94-68. The Pharaohs are going to be good, but this year's team gives the appearance of a patched-up, aging squad that might have one more championship the front office can squeeze out of it. While they ride on the talents of Peyton, there are a lot of other pieces missing: they don't have a reliable closer, or any real lockdown middle-of-the-order hitters, to name a couple. And maybe last year's early playoff exit was a sign that they need to do a little more to get back on top.



Johannesburg Gold

2062 record: 75-87, 3rd place in AFSAMOC

Notable additions: SP Claudio García, CF Mario Hernández, C Héctor Vidro, SS Luis Rayford, LF Hamza bin Uthman, CF Gilberto Ortíz, RP Edward Johnson, SP Bronson Beaton, 2B Rubén Galló, CF Fareed bin Sa'eed, 3B Joseph

Alexander, 2B Rich Moore, SP Albert Romano, C Héctor Vidro, RP Husam bin Shareef*, 1B Callum Montgomerie*, SP Manny Ortíz*, RP César Torres, C Jesse Holman, SP Max Dawe, RP Gilberto Wiggins, RP Chih Kuang, RF Anurodha Nayar, RP Gunner Patterson

Losses (and 2062 WAR): SP Jorge Sandoval (2.4), RP Rob Anthony (0.1), SS Miguel De La Cruz (-1.2), SP David bin Adnan (2.3), RP Cisco Medrano (1.1)

Star power: Starting pitcher **Max Dawe**, once the poster boy of ridiculous Athens/São Paulo trades, now suits up for the Gold after signing a hefty one-year contract. He gets the job done, keeping the ball in the park and on the ground, relying on the defense behind him to make plays. He'll be as good as his defense is, which in Johannesburg's case is perfectly mediocre. While not flashy, Dawe leads what seems to be a reliable enough rotation to keep the Gold in a lot of games.

Sneaky-good player: Right fielder **Adam MacDonald** is the answer to a trivia question, because no one would believe that this relatively unknown BBA outcast led the GBC in walks last season. But MacDonald might possess the best batting eye in the whole Consortium. He'll bat leadoff for the Gold, and rumors are that the team's been working with him over the offseason on his base-stealing technique, to try to turn him into a more prototypical leadoff batter.

Weakness: I'll use a super-vague term to describe what the lineup is missing, and that's "punch." After MacDonald, Johannesburg's lineup is a regular cast of characters including catcher and team captain Simão Hayagawa, the veteran bat of DH António Román, and some undeniable depth, but they don't have any, you know, *real* impact hitters. The kind that strike fear when a pitcher sees them due up the next inning, so they say to their coach, "You know, the arm's feeling a little stiff, why don't we let the bullpen handle the rest of this one." And for an offense that ranked behind every other team except Athens last year in most statistics, they needed to add a player like that.

2063 prediction: 73-89. Johannesburg has added a lot of talent to the team, and the depth is visible in a lot of areas, including the rotation, the bullpen, and their weird surplus of right fielders. They'll be able to withstand some injuries and phone calls from São Paulo. But they're in a tough division where nearly every team has a bonafide superstar or a young phenom about to break into the majors. It could be a rough road for the Gold.



Sao Paulo Pilots

2062 record: 83-79, 2nd place in AFSAMOC

Notable additions: SP Randolph Marable, LF Kakapa Holakio, SS Chance Wilson

Losses (and 2062 WAR): SP/RP Abdul-Muhaimin Saleem (1.0), RP Mike Rivet (-0.1), SP Fernando Rodríguez (0.4), 1B Zhi-gang Jung (-0.3), SP/RP Morton Gorski (0.0), LF Carlos Campos (-0.3), SP/RP Dae-su Im (0.3), SP George Ward (0.2), SP/RP Chih Kuang (0.8), RP Max Dawe (0.6), LF Du Wu (-0.4), RF Abdul-Ra'uf Yasar (-0.3), SP/RP Slawomir Trzcinski (0.8), RP Alexander King (0.7), RF Anurodha Nayar (1.5), SP/RP Travis Wearne (1.4), SP Troy Torres (0.1)

Star power: It went slightly under the radar that longtime face of the franchise **Katsunan Hashimoto** had the best season of his career last year. (I guess the only time a 9-WAR season can go under the radar is when another guy in the same division puts up 12 WAR.) The slugger hit 43 home runs with a 1.094 OPS, with 37 steals on top. He's already signed to a contract extension for 2064, but last year made it evident that São Paulo needs to build more of a supporting cast around him if they want to go anywhere.

Sneaky-good player: **Brian Chappell** is a pitcher who can do it all: start, close, mop-up — but whatever he does, he does very well. And São Paulo will need him to do all those things and more to make it through this season. On a pitching staff where captain Luca Maundrell and staff ace Jordan Knowles command most of the attention, Chappell is the guy who runs the show behind the scenes.

Weakness: Defense, defense, defense. The Pilots had the worst defense in the GBC last season, with a -64.9 ZR, while the next-worst team was Athens at just -14.4. Simply put, they were atrocious. This year, some of the worst offenders are gone, but their replacements leave a lot to be desired, with literal brick Tadaaki Hasegawa manning right field, while GBC outcast Chance Wilson takes over as the default shortstop.

2063 prediction: 69-93. São Paulo is recently under new management, so it remains to be seen what new GM Rye Cometa's front office will do. But there's still a good deal of work needed to turn the Pilots into a coherent picture. Wouldn't put it past them to make some trades, though — I hear that's kind of their thing.



Sydney Sharks

2062 record: 69-93, 5th place in AFSAMOC

Notable additions: C Enrico Villanueva, CF Ekela Kirila, 3B Guang Li, C Bob McPherson, SP Jaime Mendoza, SP Rowan Tucker*, RF Roger Kidd*, LF Greg Godwin*, 3B Jinhwan Kim, RP Tabari bin Muhtadi, RP Josh Miller, RP Daniel González, RP Slawomir Trzcinski, RP Mike Baker, SP Malcolm Gray, SS Jerry Strelieff, SS Pancho Gutiérrez, RP Mahdi Okeke, RF Miguel Montero

Losses (and 2062 WAR): C Frank McMillan (0.4), RP Ferede Keohi (0.2), 1B Jules Le Gal (2.1), RP Juan Blanco (-0.5), CL Juan Santana (0.8), C Hazdm Danishmend (0.4), RP Kent Jones (0.2), 1B Naoaki Kurioka (-0.6), 2B Isat Kasturirangan (-0.5), SP Cristo Muñoz (2.0)

Star power: Left fielder José Márquez is the Sharks' highest-paid and most valuable player. And with the loss of Jules Le Gal, it becomes ever more important for Márquez to be a force in the middle of Sydney's lineup. The Sharks have some good hitters — third baseman Wattas Hondo, first baseman José Crespo, and right fielder Grigori Perunov are all quality bats — but Márquez' great batting eye is what sets him apart and makes him a critical piece in the offensive picture.

Sneaky-good player: It's time for the arrival of pitching prospect Edgardo Reyes, who should debut in the Sharks' bullpen as soon as they're ready to start his clock. He's a groundballer with strikeout-type stuff, which makes him the perfect type of pitcher for Sydney's lively hitters' ballpark. And what's more, soon he'll be inducing ground balls directly into the glove of defensive whiz shortstop prospect Ilia Arakchaa. These two players arriving together is pretty much perfect timing.

Weakness: Starting rotation. Sydney's starters' ERA was 4.87 last season, over a full run higher than their bullpen ERA, and bringing that number down should have been one of their primary goals for the off-season. But looking through the Spring Training roster, I can't tell who's actually a lock to be in the rotation, as it looks like they've gone for the strategy of "invite everyone to camp and see who emerges." From what I can tell, Jeff Bannon is the only one seemingly guaranteed a spot. Manny Costello is probably in the mix. And prospect Ming Zhang may start in the majors — not because he's necessarily ready, but because they don't have anyone else.

2063 prediction: 83-79. Sydney's lineup really has some impressive depth, with solid hitters 1 through 9. And the bullpen will be one of the best in the league. Once they settle on a few guys who can fill out the rotation, it'll take them pretty far, as long as they can keep the ball in the yard.

YOUR WEIRD-AS-SHIT COMPLETELY NON-OFFICIAL 2063 GBC LEAGUE PREVIEW

(Graham Luna)

In the annals of great predictions, there are two types of people: those who think they can forecast the future with complex algorithms, and those who once swore on a message board that *Garden State* was better than *Pulp Fiction* and now work in private equity. I, proudly, am neither.

This is not your grandfather's league preview. Unless your grandfather was a left-handed second baseman with Zyn addiction and a blog about obscure post-punk bands from Düsseldorf. This preview is odd, loosely factual, and honestly, just happy to be here.

Hold on to your promotional foam hammers...

EURASIA DIVISION

TOKYO PEARLS

Projected Record: 104-58 (94-68 in 2062)

Outlook: The only way Tokyo misses the playoffs is if Mothra mistakes the team plane for her egg, cocoon it in silk, and ascend to the heavens with their entire 40-man roster.

Rolled Out the Red Carpet at Local Airport For: SP [Jonathan Bryant](#) arrives from San Antonio where he made 14 starts (plus 8 more in Valencia before a mid-season trade). The southpaw won 13 games in the BBA as recent as 2060.

Team Spirit Animal: An oyster, obviously. The Pearls sit in the muck that is the GBC, patient and unbothered, until it opens up and reveals something polished and beautiful.

Statcast Metric They'll Lead the League In: Average Time Spent Admiring a

Home Run While Pretending to Jog to First

If They Were a Mid-2000s Indie Band...: Arcade Fire - impossibly stylish, brimming with youthful chaos, and somehow already iconic.

Promotional Night Guaranteed to Sell-Out: Seventh inning stretch oyster-shucking contest

JERUSALEM HEBREW HAMMERS

Projected Record: 82-80 (85-77 in 2062)

Outlook: Their Maccabees' Row of [Ku](#), [Benson](#), and [Yano](#) can carry the team even if the rest of the lineup refuses to play on the Sabbath.

Rolled Out the Red Carpet at Local Airport For: The aforementioned five-time BBA All-Star Tokimasa Yano looks to make a comeback after the former Charm City catcher suffered a broken knee cap in the second game of the season and missed the rest of the year.

Team Spirit Animal: A griffin. Part lion, part eagle, and all business, this team has the claws and the wings to finally reclaim a championship.

Statcast Metric They'll Lead the League In: Hard-Hit Rate, because when the Hebrew Hammers swing, even the ball knows it's in for a rough day.

If They Were a Mid-2000s Indie Band...: The National - brooding, relentless, and somehow managing to sound effortlessly powerful while packing stadiums.

Promotional Night Guaranteed to Sell-Out: "Hammer Time" Foam Hammer that fans bang after every home run.

LONDON MONARCHS

Projected Record: 80-82 (75-87 in 2062)

Outlook: With the highest payroll in the league at time of press, can the swinging Monarchs lean on new faces in the lineup and rotation to improve on last year's seven-win jump?

Rolled Out the Red Carpet at Local Airport For: Dutchman [Rick Clarijs](#) moves from Vancouver to the GBC, where he will look to replicate his solid swing-man performance in '62 (1.91 ERA/0.87 WHIP in 84 IP) as a full-time starter in the London rotation.

Team Spirit Animal: House Cat. Sure, the logo portrays a lion but this tabby is sneaking looking to knock stuff off the table when you're not looking.

Statcast Metric They'll Lead the League In: Time Spent Explaining the Rules of Cricket

If They Were a Mid-2000s Indie Band...: Arctic Monkeys - young, dangerously

self-aware, and ready to hype themselves up as the next great thing to come out of England.

Promotional Night Guaranteed to Sell-Out: “God Save the Swing” t-shirts handed out on Tuesday Tea Nights.

MOSCOW THUNDER BEARS

Projected Record: 79-83 (84-78 in 2062)

Outlook: One of the better stories in recent history, the reigning champ caught lightning in a vodka bottle. This year, prepare for the hangover.

Rolled Out the Red Carpet at Local Airport For: Moscow lost more players from their championship team than they added, but former Atlantic City prospect [Juan Garcia](#) will be given every chance to be an important bat in the middle of their lineup.

Team Spirit Animal: Circus Bear on a Bicycle. It’s not graceful, but they have the crowd’s attention.

Statcast Metric They’ll Lead the League In: 2062 Championship References Per Telecast

If They Were a Mid-2000s Indie Band...: Be Your Own Pet - chaotic and fronted by a supremely talented teenager.

Promotional Night Guaranteed to Sell-Out: Build-a-Bear Night. Fans can stuff their bear with cotton and misguided optimism!

ATHENS FIGHTING CENTAURS

Projected Record: 68-94 (64-98 in 2062)

Outlook: The offense was improved by signing [Matthew Woods](#) from rival Tokyo. Was the task of replacing 445 innings to free agency merely addition by subtraction? We’ll find out...

Rolled Out the Red Carpet at Local Airport For: The front office focused on GBC veterans, signing a trio during the middle of spring training: the aforementioned Woods and starters [Abdul-Muhaimin Saleem](#) and [Travis Wearne](#), both formerly of Sao Paulo.

Team Spirit Animal: A Leopard. Because no matter how many players they swap out, the spots (and the losses) aren’t going anywhere.

Statcast Metric They’ll Lead the League In: Most Consecutive Games Without Scoring in the First Inning

If They Were a Mid-2000s Indie Band...: The Decemberists - loved by loyal fans and oddly ambitious, yet sometimes so caught up in their own narrative they

forget to finish the song.

Promotional Night Guaranteed to Sell-Out: \$2 Half-Man, Half-Horse Pizza Slices (flatbread topped with manouri cheese and a horseradish cream drizzle)

AFRICA/SOUTH AMERICA/OCEANIA DIVISION

CAIRO PHARAOHS

Projected Record: 102-60 (107-55 in 2062)

Outlook: With all-world centerfielder [Blair Peyton](#) leading the charge, they remain the team everyone fears to face, however with some key free agency losses and little additions during the off-season, their throne feels less stable.

Rolled Out the Red Carpet at Local Airport For: Shortstop [Kang-Xi Kong](#), signed to a minor league deal, is hoping to get more playing time with the big club than he did last year in the Cape Fear organization.

Team Spirit Animal: The Nile Crocodile. Patient, powerful, and ready to snap on anyone who underestimates them.

Statcast Metric They'll Lead the League In: Most Pitch Inches Off The Plate thanks to Peyton being pitched around all year.

If They Were a Mid-2000s Indie Band...: The Strokes - once the coolest band in the room (and maybe still are) but you can feel the cracks in the sunglasses.

Promotional Night Guaranteed to Sell-Out: Mummy Wrap Races. In-between innings, fans race across the field wrapped in toilet paper. Winner gets a replica ankh.

JOHANNESBURG GOLD

Projected Record: 79-93 (75-97 in 2062)

Outlook: While the team will yet again struggle to score runs, a revamped set of arms and focus on details expects the club to be in more games this year, albeit likely low-scoring.

Rolled Out the Red Carpet at Local Airport For: The club hopes that newly minted closer [Cesar Torres](#) brings his championship pedigree from Nashville into the Gold clubhouse.

Team Spirit Animal: Armadillo. Because when you can't hit, you better bring armor. Low to the ground, tough to crack, and built for deflections, just like their infield.

Statcast Metric They'll Lead the League In: Outs Made Within a 15-Foot Radius of Shortstop

If They Were a Mid-2000s Indie Band...: Hot Chip – focused on rhythm and vibes and not afraid to use computerized outputs.

Promotional Night Guaranteed to Sell-Out: Bonsai Tree Appreciation Night. First 2,500 fans get a mini bonsai and a pregame tutorial on trimming techniques by the bullpen coach.

BUENOS AIRES BRISAS

Projected Record: 76-86 (74-88 in 2062)

Outlook: The Brisas may still be leaky on the mound, but with a fanbase this loyal and a few bats worth believing in, Buenos Aires is one decent pitching streak away from chaos in the standings.

Rolled Out the Red Carpet at Local Airport For: Buenos Aires ownership ponied up for a private jet to pick up [Ira Patterson](#) from Jerusalem. The Brisas faithful are hoping his reputation as a .300+ hitter matches the big ticket contract he inked this off-season.

Team Spirit Animal: Sleeping Sea Turtle. Not in a rush to get anywhere, making it an easy target when predators come calling.

Statcast Metric They'll Lead the League In: Runs Saved by Fans Willing the Ball Foul. A completely untracked metric but it's real in Buenos Aires.

If They Were a Mid-2000s Indie Band...: Clap Your Hands Say Yeah - it's messy, erratic, but every now and then weirdly transcendent.

Promotional Night Guaranteed to Sell-Out: "Bring Your Own Broom" Night. Any series could result in the Brisas getting swept, or a big offensive outburst from their young bats to take a few in a row from the opposition.

SAO PAULO PILOTS

Projected Record: 75-87 (83-79 in 2062)

Outlook: The Pilots will be flying high again on offense, but without a reliable wings in the rotation, they risk a mid-flight engine failure that could send them spiraling out of playoff range

Rolled Out the Red Carpet at Local Airport For: [Kakapa Holakio](#) is back in the GBC after one year in the Brooklyn organization, where he slashed .283/.356/.453 in AAA.

Team Spirit Animal: Peacock. Able to put on a dazzling display, but unable to take flight when it really counts.

Statcast Metric They'll Lead the League In: Cold-Calls to Agents After Starters Get Pulled in the Second Inning
If They Were a Mid-2000s Indie Band...: Vox trot – youthful and catchy, with flashes of brilliance but a tendency toward inconsistency.
Promotional Night Guaranteed to Sell-Out: “Pitching Coach for a Day” Night. Fans get to throw batting practice at cardboard cutouts of the worst relievers. Helmets required.

SYDNEY SHARKS

Projected Record: 65-97 (69-93 in 2062)
Outlook: The Sharks are circling but struggling to find fresh prey this year. Losing [Jules Le Gal](#)'s consistent OBP without bringing much talent in during free agency likely results in another season without bite.
Rolled Out the Red Carpet at Local Airport For: Two-time BBA All-Star (albeit a decade ago) [Mike Baker](#) looks to bring experience and leadership to the bullpen after a stint in Yellow Spring's AAA last year. Baker recorded 31 saves for Chicago as recently as 2061.
Team Spirit Animal: The goblin shark. Experts really don't know how deep this species can sink.
Statcast Metric They'll Lead the League In: Passed Balls Allowed
If They Were a Mid-2000s Indie Band...: Broken Social Scene – ambitious ensemble but sprawling to a fault.
Promotional Night Guaranteed to Sell-Out: Chum Bucket Hat Night

Remember:
**THIS IS
SUPPOSED TO BE
FUN**
(godammit!)

