

PRE-SEASON PROGNOSIS 1973

AMERICAN LEAGUE

Fairfax Colts

The AL East will probably be one of the closest pennant races in SPB history, with four of the five teams having a decent shot at the brass ring. The Colt's offense is the best in the division, but the pitching is sub-par. Stormin' Norman Cash will share time at first with Jim Hickman. Both know how to get on base, but Hickman has minimal power while Cash can hit a few dingers. Jorge Orta is a decent hitter at second but a lousy fielder. He'll be spelled by Wayne Garrett who has some power but will also need to play short and third. Marty Perez is a banjo hitter with a below average glove at short with Garrett, a much better fielder, filling in as needed. Steve Braun has a good batting eye but a punchless bat and lousy glove. He'll play 100 plus games at third with Eric Soderholm and Garrett filling in the rest. The catching duties will be shared by Ray Fosse and Dave Radar. Both are below average receivers, although Fosse does have a cannon arm. Rick Monday in center has a good batting eye and a 30-homer bat but he is not a good fielder. Pat Kelly, another feeble fielder will man left but his bat is punchless. Steve Brye will get the most starts in right and he'll be spelled by Hickman and Braun. Greg Luzinski has probably the most power on the team and his putrid glove will make him a perfect full time DH. Don Wilson, John Curtis and Clyde Wright are the top three starters, but all have control issues. Sonny Seibert plus swingmen Jim Merritt and Roric Harrison will round out the rotation but Harrison also has trouble finding the plate. Ed Rodriguez and Tom Hall will lead the bullpen.

Evanston Elephants

The Pachyderms might have the best balance of offense and pitching and should be in the pennant fight all year. Boog Powell's power has gone down but he still knows how to take a walk and will share first base with Tommy Davis and Gonzalo Marquez. Davey Johnson at second has some defensive issues but also a 40-homer bat and knows how to take a walk. He will also play some DH to give heralded rookie Frank White some playing time. Shortstop is a grab bag with four guys getting playing time; none can hit very well but all can field. Brooks Robinson and his vacuum cleaner glove will share time at third with Ken Reitz. Brooksy is a better hitter. Carlton Fisk is a solid fielder with good power and will share time behind the plate with Bill Freehan. Dave May and Jose Cardenal will handle center and right; both are solid hitters and below average fielders. Hal McRae and several part timers will play left field. Davis, Johnson and Rick Reichert will handle the DH chores. The pitching staff is deep and talented with Nellie Briles, Al Downing, Fred Norman, Don Gullett and Doyle Alexander forming a solid starting rotation. Dick Tidrow, who could be in the rotation of several other teams will be forced into the bullpen to join Horacio Pina, Ron Diorio and Fred Beene.

Los Angeles Angels

The defending World Series champs should be in the thick of the pennant race all year. The team has very good power, diffused throughout the lineup but the pitching staff has some holes. Al Oliver is a solid first baseman with good power but doesn't walk much. Dave Cash, a solid banjo hitter with a good glove will get the majority of starts at second with several weak hitters as backups. Mark Belanger at short doesn't hit much but his glove is sensational. The hot corner is the domain of Darrell Evans who has a great glove with 40-homer power, and he could lead the league in walks. Dave Duncan and Darrell Porter will share time behind the plate; both have decent power. Outfielder Ken Singleton is one of the best hitters on the squad with excellent power and he could challenge Evans for the league lead in walks. Amos Otis in center also has good power to go with a .300 bat. John Briggs is the third outfielder, and he can get on base with 20-homer potential. Feeble fielding Danny Darwin will get most

of the starts at DH. Rick Reuschel is a great number one starter, but quality falls off pretty quickly after him. If the Holy Ones can get a late lead the deep bullpen led by Pedro Borbon and Al (the Mad Hungarian) Hrabosky will save a lot of games.

South River Gladiators

The Glads won 101 games in 1972 and breezed to the AL East pennant but were upset by the LA Angels in the first round of the playoffs. They won't win 100 games this year but will be in the thick of the pennant race and could just as easily fall to fourth place. The pitching staff is easily the best in the division. Joe Torre has a solid bat and glove at first base, and he'll be backed up by Dan Driessen who doesn't have much power and can't field but can slap the ball around pretty well and will probably get some time at DH. Felix Millan is a solid hitter and fielder at second and can play every day. Ken Harrelson is your typical good field no hit shortstop who will be backed up by Mike Phillips who also plays third. Third base is a bit of a problem as a half dozen guys will move in and out, including Driessen and Torre. The incomparable Johnny Bench, who can do it all both offensively and defensively will be the full-time catcher. Rusty Staub is a fixture in right but might have to sit down against some LHP's. Cesar Geronimo is a good ball hawk in center, but his offense is very poor. Ritchie Scheinblum is a decent banjo hitter who can play about 100 games in left and get on base. The balance of the outfield starts will go to several part-timers including an ageing Willie Mays. Veteran Frank Robinson might play a little outfield, but his main position will be a power hitting DH. Tom Seaver, Bert Blyleven and Luis Tiant are a sensational starting trio with the balance of the starts going to some decent but not outstanding hurlers. They have a four-man bullpen of John Hiller, Cy Acosta, Ramon Hernandez and Jim Brewer which is the class of the division if not all of SPBII.

Missouri Barons

The former Nanoose Bay Sox underwent an ownership change and come back with a new moniker. The franchise was last in the AL East in 1972 and could very well repeat this season. Mike Jorgenson, a fine fielder and weak hitter will share time at first with Bob Robertson who has modest power but not much else with the bat and is just an average fielder. Bobby Grich at second can play every day, should draw 100 plus walks, has decent power for a middle infielder and fields his position very well. Eddie Brinkman is an offensive cypher with just an average glove, but he'll keep the shortstop position warm while hot shot rookie Bucky Dent learns the ropes. Third baseman Aurelio Rodriguez is almost a clone of Brinkman, but he has no one waiting in the wings. Jerry Terrell is available to fill in at second, short and third. Catcher Joe Ferguson has more power than anyone else on the team and is also a good receiver; he'll share time with Ellie Rodriguez who has no power and a poor glove but does know how to get on base. Larry Hisle is a fine ballhawk in center and has some offensive ability as well. Steve Hovley can give you 100 or so games in the outfield where his glove is decent, but his bat is punchless. Don Baylor is another outfielder who has a decent bat and glove. Management is patiently waiting until their three outfield stars of the future, Dave Parker, George Foster and Dwight Evans develop. Whomever isn't starting in the outfield or first base will play DH. Bill Spaceman Lee and Dave Roberts are the leaders of the staff, and they could crack the starting rotation of just about any other team in the league. Below them are Joe Decker, Ken Forsch and Dick Drago, none of whom will embarrass you. Billy Champion, Tom Griffin, Jackie Brown and Leron LeGrow form a lackluster bullpen.

American League West

Route 66 Hot Rods

Unlike the East the Rods, who won an astonishing 117 regular season games in 1972 before falling to the Angels in a shocking playoff upset, look to be the class of the division again in 1973. George (Great) Scott doesn't run very well but other than that he has all the tools you need, great defense at first, can hit for average and power and knows the strike zone. Rod Carew at second could easily challenge for the batting title and he has decent extra base, if not home run power and can field adequately. At short, they have Bert Campaneris who is a great fielder and can hit enough to not be an embarrassment plus he can steal a base when needed. Beltin' Bill Melton will see his power go down a bit from a great 1972 but he can still hit it out and has a decent glove at third. Canton Ohio native Thurman Munson is one of the best catchers in the league with a good bat, including home run power and is an excellent receiver with a cannon arm. Reggie (Mr. October) Jackson holds down right field where he can do it all both offensively and with the glove. Bobby Murcer is another fine hitter and can play every day; he may need to move to DH to make room for Billy North who is a great ball hawk in center, knows how to take a walk and steal a base. Pete Rose is a fixture in left where he has a .330 bat with doubles and triples power to go with a very good glove. Slap hitting Matty Alou will alternate with Murcer at DH. Overall, the Route 66 offense is clearly the class of the AL (not just the AL West) and might be the best in all of SPBII. The pitching staff has a five-man rotation of Jim Palmer, Alan Foster, Vida Blue, Catfish Hunter and Steve Carlton which is clearly the best in SPBII. Rollie Fingers, Mike Marshall and Sparky Lyle form a sensational bullpen. The 'Rods will be hard to beat and are aching to make up for their failure in the 1972 playoffs.

Dayton Dragons

The Fire Breathers won 95 games last year but don't have the horses to realistically compete with the Hot Rods for the pennant in 1973. Their offense has some on-base issues but otherwise the attack is solid and the pitching staff not bad. Lee May at first doesn't know how to talk a walk and is a horrible fielder but he can hit the ball out of the park. Denny Doyle at second has a good glove to go with a punch and judy bat and he'll be spelled by Rennie Stennett who has a little power but thinks the base on balls is a foreign conspiracy. Chris Speir at short is an OK hitter with a below average glove. Dave Roberts, who is a better second baseman will be forced to play third where he has good power. Several no-name spear carriers will fill in as needed. Joe Rudi, a solid fielder will get most of the starts in left where he also has an aversion to the walk. Bob Oliver who has some power to go with a decent glove will play right. Greg Maddux, one of the better all-around hitters on the team will patrol center where his glove is very good. Time will have to be found for Jimmy (Toy Cannon) Wynn who won't have a great BA but can take a walk and hit the ball out of the park. By default, speedster Lou Brock will probably end up at DH where he can slap the ball around pretty well, knows the strike zone and might lead the league in stolen bases. Nolan Ryan and Jim Colburn are the top two pitchers and could end up starting almost half the team's games. Ryan won't allow too many base hits but will issue a lot of walks. Paul Splittorf is another solid starter, and several swingmen will fill in the balance of the starts. Terry Forster, Bill Hands and Frank Linzy are a solid bullpen trio.

West Warwick Monarchs

West Warwick has a decent team, but they have some on base issues and just can't compete with the Rods but could rise to second place. Willie Montanez doesn't have quite as much power as you'd like from first base and his fielding is suspect, but the team doesn't have any real alternatives. Doug Griffin has a punchless bat and a below average glove but he's the best alternative at second base as all others are even worse. Roger Metzger at short can hit a few triples but his OBA should be below .300 and his

fielding is below par. Doug Rader at third has some power and is the best infield defender but he won't set the world on fire. Center fielder Cesar Cedeno is a true five tool player and clearly the best player on the team. Nine finger Carlos May (my old neighbor) has some decent power to go with a suspect glove and will patrol left field. Dusty Baker is another good hitting feeble fielder and will probably play right field. That leaves high average hitter Al Bumbry to share DH duties with whomever isn't playing elsewhere. Jeff Torborg and Fran Healey will share time behind the plate with Healy the much better hitter. Don Sutton, Dock Ellis and Ron Bryant are the leaders of a decent pitching staff but nothing close to the Hot Rods. The quality in the bottom half of the rotation falls off sharply. Dave Guisti is a knockout closer and he'll get bullpen help from several capable mates.

East Kenosha Lions

The Lions might contend for third place, but a below average pitching staff will probably hold them back, and with a few missteps and they might fall all the way to the cellar. Chris Chambliss is a decent hitter at first although you'd like a little more power from this position. Cookie Rojas, a mediocre fielder and average hitter will get the most starts at second; his backup is Tom Ragland who has no concept of the strike zone. Pint size Freddy Patek has a good glove and will hold down the shortstop position. Buddy Bell possesses a great glove at third and has some power. Ralph Garr is allergic to the base on balls, but he does have a .300 bat and can field; he is a fixture in fight field. Charlie Spikes has some power but will have a below .240 BA and can't field very well; he'll get the majority of starts in left. Jose Cruz is a nice ballhawk in center but a well below average hitter. Bernie Carbo, who has a good appreciation of the strike zone will get spot play in right and left and Bobby Coluccio, who has some power is also available. Doc Edwards and Milt May, both fine receivers will share time behind the plate. Gates Brown, Paul Schaal and Mike Hegan will split time at DH but none of this trio is what you would want from this offensive only position. Joe Colman and Stan Bahnsen are the pillars of the rotation and could start half of the teams' game between them. Bill Grief is a capable number three but after that the pickings are slim. Tom Hilgendorf, Elias Sosa and Paul Lindblad are three decent bull penners.

New York Mets

The Mets won only 65 games last year and should improve on that total in 1973. With a few breaks they have an outside shot at moving up but could fall to the cellar just as easily. Steve Garvey will share time at first with George Theodore. Garvey is a much better hitter and fielder. At second, Ted Sizemore has a decent if punchless bat and a peerless glove. Veteran Luis Aparicio returns at short. He still has some base stealing ability but is a shade of his former self. His defense is good and offense decent but punchless. Tim Johnson, a well below average hitter will back him up. Future star Mike Schmidt won't have much of a BA, but he can take a walk and hit a few homers; he'll share time with Don Money at third. Catching duties will be shared by Ed Hermann and Ken Suarez; neither will set the world on fire. Vic Harris and Rick Miller will get the most playing time in the outfield, but neither is much with the bat. Gene Clines, Ben Ogilvie and Gorman Thomas are also available for outfield play and they will share DH duties with Terry Crowley and several no-talent spear carriers. The Mets do have some decent pitching. George Stone, Jerry Koosman, Reggie Cleveland, Phil Niekro and Bob Moose along with hot shot rookie Steve Rogers form a solid starting corps. Harry Parker and Mike Caldwell are the best of a mediocre bullpen.

NATIONAL LEAGUE

National League East

Seattle Totems

The Totems are far and away the best team in the NL East or West and probably just a shade below the Hot Rods in all of SPBII. They won 109 game last year and represented the NL in the World series but lost out to the underdog Angels. John Mayberry a fine hitter with good power will share time at first with Dick Allen who has great hitting numbers, but injuries will limit him to about 80 games. Mayberry may moonlight at DH when Allen is playing first base. Joe Morgan is an All-Star quality second basemen who can hit, hit with power, get on base, steal bases and is a good fielder; can't ask for more. Bill Russell at short can play every day, fields his position well and hits just enough to earn his pay. At the hot corner, Sal Bando has a powerful bat and knows how to take a walk. Ted Simmons, the incumbent catcher can hit well and has decent power. Willie Crawford will play every day (at least against RHP's) at one of the corner outfield positions and he has good power and on base potential. Reggie Smith is a good hitter with power and can field very well; he'll be the center fielder for 120 or so games. Roy White is a great fielder in left with some power but not an outstanding BA. Bobby Tolan is also available for garden duty, but his stats will fall off dramatically from prior seasons. A revolving door will be the case at DH where guys not playing other positions will move in and out. The team has an iron man rotation with Mike Cueller, Gaylord Perry, Wilbur Wood and Mickey Lolich. It looks like Jim Busby will be on the outside looking in. Diego Segui, veteran Lindy McDaniel and Ray Sadecki anchor a great bullpen.

Montreal Royals

The Royals are behind the Totems in almost all categories so contending for the pennant will be a real challenge, but they should be able to hold onto second place. Ron Fairly and Jim Holt will share time at first with both getting some starts at DH and Fairly also plays the outfield. Both are decent hitters with modest power. Davey Lopes is a solid second baseman with a good glove and a decent, if punchless bat. Darrell Chaney, a decent fielder but horrible hitter will get more starts at short than the manager might like as future star Dave Concepcion will be limited to less than 100 games. The Penguin Ron Cey will keep the hot corner warm while highly touted rookie George Brett waits in the wings. Gene Tenace can start almost every game at catcher, and he brings a solid bat with power plus a good knowledge of the strike zone which should offset his defensive issues. The team lacks any full-time outfielders but there are plenty of part-timers such as Jim Holt, Jerry Morales, Jerry Hairston, Elliot Maddox, Joe LaHoud, Eddie Milner and Bake McBride. When they aren't playing the outfield, this crew will alternate with down-town Ollie Brown at DH. Steve Renko, John Matlack and Burt Hooton are the top three starters, and a raft of swingmen will fill out the rotation. Bill Campbell, Jack Aker and Phil Niekro along with the non-starting swingmen will form the bullpen.

Winter Harbor Seals

The Seals won 87 games last year, still 22 games out of first, but they will be hard pressed to match that total in 1973. The team is middle of the road on both offense and pitching. Bob Watson doesn't have a good glove at first, but his offense is very good. He can hit over .300, knows how to take a walk and has decent power. Ron Hunt, the human clay pigeon has a punch and judy bat, but he can slap the ball around pretty well and knows the strike zone. He'll be backed up by several no-names as management waits for hot shot rookie Manny Trillo to develop. Larry Bowa can field but not hit and his backup is veteran Jim Fregosi who can hit a little but is horrible in the field. Third baseman Ritchie Hebner isn't much in the field, but he is a very good hitter, as long as the pitcher is right-handed. He'll need some help against LHP from Carmin Fanzone, but he is an even worse fielder. Several no-names will shuttle in

and out at catcher but all have defensive issues. Carl Yastremski is the number one outfielder; his defense is good, he can hit .300, draw 100 walks and has decent power. Del Unser isn't a bad centerfielder and can play almost every day. The third outfield position will see several players shuttling in and out without distinction; Watson may even get some time in the garden. Oscar Gamble, who has some nice power will get the most starts at DH with the balance going to a variety of no-names. Tommy John, Ken Brett and Milt Pappas are the three top starters but only John is outstanding. Several swingmen, including Sudden Sam McDowell who has major control issues (both with his pitching arm and the bottle) will round out the rotation. Promising youngster J R Richard is waiting in the wings. Ray Corbin is the only reliable reliever.

Data City Schema Busters

This team gets an award for the most colorful team name and is thirsting to improve on 1972's horrible 46-116 record. They could rise to third with a few breaks but can probably escape the cellar. Young Dave Kingman whose motto is home run or strikeout with little in between, will share time at first with aging ex-sluggger Harmon Killebrew whose skills have seriously deteriorated. Timothy Hutton is also available to play first. Tito Fuentes is a solid second baseman who can play every day and won't embarrass you with the glove or bat. Frank Duffy is the primary shortstop; his defense is OK and his bat right around average and he'll be backed up by all around utilityman Ted Martinez who can play most positions, all badly. Jim Ray Hart has a pitiful glove and would be a natural DH, but he will have to log in many games at the hot corner for lack of any alternative. Kingman and the aforementioned Martinez will need to fill in as needed. If the game was all defense, Tommy Agee would be an All-Star as his glove in center is impeccable but when he goes to the plate, don't expect much. Gary Mathews is a solid hitter and decent fielder in left and he can play almost every day. Rich Coggins is a fine fielder and well above average hitter for 120 or so games in right. Hot shot rookie Dave Winfield and youngster Mickey Rivers are waiting in the wings. The DH position will be a grab bag of whomever isn't playing elsewhere. Bill Singer, Claude Osteen and Carl Morton are a good 1-2-3 at the top of the rotation but quality falls off very fast after those three. Billy Jean King's little brother Randy Moffitt is a top-notch reliever and he'll get some help from Ray Burris, Vincente Romo and veteran Steve Barber,

Salzburg Bishops

The Bishops won 85 games last year but that was a long time ago and they will have a tough time escaping the cellar in 1973. Bill Buckner, who also plays the outfield will be the primary first baseman; he doesn't have much power and a poor grasp of the strike zone, but he is a warm body to throw into the breach. Tim McGraw a good fielder with a punchless bat is also available for play at first. Since Buckner and McGraw both play the outfield, Dick Dietz can also fill in at first. Tommy Helms is a solid contributor and a full-timer at second base. Steady Don Kessinger and his punchless bat returns at shortstop. Rico Petrocelli and Danny Cater will share time at third. Rico has a little bit of power while Danny is a better hitter for average. Bob Boone is a steady influence behind the plate; his bat is decent and his defense good. Tommy Harper could lead the team in homers, although that's not saying much on this team, and will be a fixture in left field; Tommy is also a great base stealer. Ron Wood is a fine defender in center, and he knows the strike zone, but his batting average will be low, and he has little power. A bevy of part-timers along with Buckner and McGraw will fill out the garden slots. Cito Gaston, whose glove is suspect will probably get the majority of starts at DH with others filling in as needed. Ross Grimsley and Rick Wise are the leaders of the starting staff but there isn't a lot of quality behind these two. Veteran Bob Veale and Charley Hough are the leaders of a lackluster bullpen.

National League West

Frankfort Fortress

The Forts have a modest edge on the rest of the division due to a better balance of offense and pitching. Stretch McCovey returns at first base with good power and a knack for getting on base; he will be spelled by Hal Breeden who has a good glove, unlike McCovey. Horace Clarke a decent hitter with a questionable glove will share second base with Sandy Alomar who has a top-flight glove and weak bat. Danny Thompson will play 100 or so games at short where he has a decent glove but isn't much on offense. Several no-names will fill in as needed. Ed Goodson, a fine hitter with an adequate glove will share time at third with Bob Bailey who will also get some starts at DH. John Bocabella can give you 120 or so games at catcher where his defense is good, but his bat is not; his backups aren't much. Ritchie Zisk, Bill Northrup and Bill Robinson are all fine outfielders, but none can play every day. Tom Paciorek and a fading Vada Pinson are also available. Management is patently waiting for highly touted rookie Ken Griffey to develop. McCovey and Bailey plus a few others not playing elsewhere will constitute the DH brigade. Frankfort has three good starters in Paul Twitchell, Andy Messersmith and Dave McNally. The balance of the rotation is OK but nothing special. Bob Reynolds, Clay Carroll and the non-starting swingmen are pretty much all that's available in the bullpen.

Portland Beavers

Portland has the best offense in the division, but the pitching staff has some control issues that will hurt as the season progresses. Tony Perez is one of the team anchors at first base. He will have a .300 BA, knows how to get on base, hits with power and is adequate in the field. Glenn Beckert brings a nondescript punchless bat to go with a below average glove to second base, but the team has no real alternatives; this is clearly a weak spot. Gene Michael is a little better fielder than Beckert but his bat is even worse; his backups are pitiful. Ed Goodson has a decent bat and glove; he and several no-names will keep the hot corner warm while highly touted rookie Bill Madlock develops. Earl Williams who has some power will share time at catcher with Tim McCarver; both receivers are lousy on defense. Billy Williams is back to play left field; he has some power and can draw a walk when needed. Bobby Bonds has 40-homer power, can walk and steal a base plus he is an excellent flyhawk. Willie Horton has some serious defensive issues but, he'll have to play the majority of his games in left as Orlando Cepeda, a fine hitter, has nowhere to play but DH. Bill Sharp and Felipe Alou are available for spot play in the outfield. Bob Gibson is down a little from his glory days, but still a fierce competitor. Mike Slaton will get a lot of starts but he has some control issues. Juan Marichal is also off from his prior stats but still a valuable member of the rotation. The balance of starts will go to a grab bag of swingmen. However, the strength of this staff is the bullpen. Grant Jackson and Darrell Knowles are two great relievers and the depth in the pen is very good.

Speedway Sparkplugs

The Plugs won 93 games and the NL West pennant in 1972 but couldn't make it to the Fall Classic. They return a good team this season but will have to battle the Fortress and Beavers to return to post season action. The team will be forced to play Jim Spencer at first; both his offense and defense are suspect, and he'll be spelled for 75 or so games by Frank Tepedino who can spray the ball around but not hit for much power. Rookie Andre Thornton isn't quite ready. Dick McAuliffe, a fine hitter and fielder will share time at second with ancient Tony Taylor, whose best years are now behind him. Toby Harrah has a slick glove and fine bat at short and will share time with Bobby Valentine, a fine hitter and Rudy Meoli who doesn't offer much of anything. Steady veteran Ron Santo will provide an anchor at third. Jerry Grote and Johnny Oates will share time at catcher; both are serviceable but that's about it. Hammerin' Hank Aaron and Jeff Burroughs are two outfielders with good power and decent defense. Ken Berry will

provide a great glove and so-so bat in center field. Willie (Pops) Stargell is a natural DH who could challenge for the home run crown and knows how to get on base. Cesar Tovar can play the infield and outfield and is a valuable spare. Lefty Kenny Holtzman is the anchor of the rotation and quite a workhorse. Most of the remaining starts will go to Jerry Reuss, Fergie Jenkins and Jim Kitty Kaat. Orlando Pena and Bob Miller are the leaders of the bullpen.

Hampton Road Cruisers

This team has some serious issues on offense and will probably have the worst team OBA in all of SPBII, but the pitching staff is first rate. However, this might not be enough for them to rise higher than fourth, although it's unlikely they will fall to the cellar. Mike Lum has a good bat and acceptable glove and in a perfect world should be the more or less full time first baseman. However, he might have to log time in the outfield so that natural DH types such as Ron Blomberg and Deron Johnson can get more at bats. Future star Cecil Cooper is waiting in the wings. Dick Green is a middling second baseman who doesn't hit much but can field; he'll be spelled by Dale Maxvil who also plays SS. Mike Tyson (not the boxer) will split time at short with Maxvil. Tyson is a lousy hitter but much better than Maxvil, who can field. Third baseman Craig Nettles will have low BA but he can take a walk, hit a homer and fields very well. Randy Hundley who doesn't hit much can handle the catching duties fairly well and he'll be spelled by Don Rudolph who can field but not hit a lick. Mickey Stanley is a first-rate centerfielder, with the glove but not the bat. Paul Blair is a much better hitter and just as good with the glove as Stanley but one of them will have to move to a corner outfield position. Lou Pinella is a terrible fielder and doesn't hit much but on this team he'll be pressed into service as a more or less full time outfielder. Several no-name part timers will fill in the outfield starts. As mentioned, Blomberg, an excellent hitter will split time at DH with Johnson. Then we get to the pitching staff which has the exact opposite story as the sorry offense. Doc Medich, Jack Billingham and Mel Stottemyre could crack the rotation of any team in the league, but the balance of the rotation is a little thin. Bob Locker is a solid reliever and he'll get a lot of help from Wayne Granger.

Ocean Lake Seagulls

The Gulls have major issues all up and down the roster and it will be a major accomplishment if they can escape the cellar. Nate Colbert at first is a strikeout machine but when he does connect, they sometimes go out. Davey Nelson isn't much of a fielder at second, but he can hit a little and play just about every day. Tim Foli wrote the book on being a good field no hit shortstop and he'll be backed up by several no-names. Paul Popovich is the "best" of several no field no hit third basemen. At catcher George Mitterwald has a bit of power and won't kill you on defense. Ron Hodges and his punchless bat is the primary backup. Willie Davis in center can field and hit enough to be a net plus on offense. Walt No Neck Williams can do the job on defense in left field and will be a decent hitter for 100 or so games. Merv Rettenmund knows how to get on base and is another 100-game good defensive outfielder. Veteran Al Kaline is also available for garden play, but his skills have deteriorated over time. Boots Day, despite a punchless bat will be the primary DH with several others filling in as needed. Hot Shot rookie Randy Jones has a lot of potential but won't be able to pitch enough in 1973 to be a major factor. Fritz Peterson (he of the infamous wife swapping duo) is probably the top starter and that says a lot about the quality of the staff. The rest of the rotation is too grim to mention. Bobby Bolin and George Culver are the best of the bullpen but there isn't much behind them. Should be a tough year for the Seagulls.