

PRE-SEASON PROGNOSIS 1950

American League

Brooklyn Royal Giants

The Giants romped to a runaway AL pennant in 1949, winning 106 games and then swept the Chicago Stammers in the World Series. This year should be more of the same as they are loaded on both sides of the diamond and prohibitive favorites. They could easily threaten 200 team homers and should have the best team OBA and SLG in both the AL and maybe all of SPBII. The team has four sensational outfielders including the DiMaggio brothers (Joe and Dom), Ritchie Ashburn and Sid Gordon which will force Sid to spend most of his time at third base where his defense is suspect. Johnny Hopp and Phil Cavaretta will share time at first base and both are highly capable. Don Kolloway who is a better defensively at first than the two incumbents will be forced to play second for lack of any real alternatives. Vern Stephens at short carries a 30-homer bat along with a good BA and OBA to go with a decent glove. Phil Masi and Clyde McCullough will share time behind the plate and both are well above the norm for the league. The starting rotation has four horses (Ewell Blackwell, Larry Jansen, Vic Raschi and Fred Hutchinson) all of whom have 15-20 win potential. Harry the Hat Brecheen is a more than capable fifth starter. The bullpen will be ably manned by Tom Ferrick and swingman Al Brazle. However, with this offense and starting corps a bullpen isn't that critical.

River City Rugrats

The Rats only won 70 games last year and should definitely improve on that total in 1950 but a serious pennant run seems out of the question although they will be pushed for second by the Carp and Thunderbolts. River City has some decent team power and it is diffused throughout the lineup. Walt Dropo at first has some defensive issues but his bat is right up there with the best in the league as he can hit for average with a decent OBA and has 30-plus home run potential. Second base will be shared between Bobby Adams and Mike Goliat, both of whom can field very well but Adams is the better hitter. Sam Dente is a serviceable shortstop but his bat lacks pop. Bob Dillinger holds down the hot corner but it would be nice if he had a little more power. Yogi Barra is one of the best catchers in the league and has a cannon arm. Military service will keep outfielder Ted Williams under 100 games but when he is in there he'll put up his usual superlative numbers. Hank Bauer is another solid part-timer in the garden while Johnny Groth will play every day in center and acquit himself very well. The balance of the outfield starts will be in the hands of several decent part-timers. The pitching staff has three solid starters in Early Wynn, Preacher Roe and Bullet Bob Feller although Wynn and Feller do have some control issues. Several decent swingmen will fill out the rotation. Dutch Leonard is the closest thing to a bullpen "ace" but this is not a team strongpoint.

Maumee Carp

You can flip a coin between the Carp and Thunderbolts as they are close in my complicated rating system but the Maumee crew gets a slight nod due to a better pitching staff. Don Lenhardt is a solid first baseman with good power and an excellent batting eye. Billy Goodman can play almost anywhere and brings a solid batting average and decent OBA but minimal home run power; he'll spend most of his time at third or the outfield. Snuffy Sternwiess and Wayne Terwilliger will share time at second and both are acceptable defensively; Snuffy won't hit for much of an average but can take a walk while Wayne will hit for a higher average but is somewhat averse to the base on balls. Phil (Scooter) Rizzuto can do it almost all at short, great BA & OB and a vacuum cleaner for a glove but can't hit the ball out of the park too well. Grady Hatton brings a decent bat and glove to third where he'll play when Goodman is in the outfield. The rest of the outfield starts will be shared by several decent part-timers while

budding star Jackie Jensen waits in the wings. They don't have anything close to a full-time catcher and this will be a full-time problem for the manager. On the mound, they have four good starters in Bob Rush, Bob Lemon, Lou Brissie and Joe Dobson but the fifth slot will be a problem. The bullpen is headed by the incomparable Jim Konstanty who has a rubber arm and will shut down a lot of late inning rallies. He'll get top notch support from Al Benton but the quality behind these two is weak. Any success the Carp have in 1950 will be due to the efforts of the mound staff

Hoosier Thunderbolts

As mentioned above, the Bolts' and Carp are very closely matched and they could easily rise to third and maybe even second but competing for the pennant seems out of reach. The Hoosiers have very good team power and it is spread around. First sacker Luke Easter has 30-homer potential and knows how to take a walk. Jerry Priddy at second is a sensational fielder and also has a good OBA. Eddie Joost at short has probably the best batting eye on the team, but his defense is only so-so and his batting average weak but he has more HR power than the "normal" middle infielder. Bob Elliot at third also possesses good power and won't kill you in the field. Aaron Robinson and Les Moss are good defensive catchers but won't contribute a lot with the bat. Enos Country Slaughter and Irv Noren will ably fill two outfield positions with the third being shared by several part-timers. Easter may even play a few games in the garden despite an atrocious glove to give Tommy Henrich a chance to get some first base plate appearances. On the mound Eddie Lopat is a solid number one and swingman Dave Koslo not far behind but the balance of the starts will go to Hal Newhouser and Sheldon Jones, both of whom have control issues, and several other mediocrities. Jesse Flores and Ken Johnson are decent relievers but neither can pitch enough to be a real factor. The balance of the relief appearances will be shared by several hurlers, none of whom will excite you.

Goshen Aces

Goshen is a notch below the Carp and Thunderbolts and will be pushed by the Muck Dogs to hold onto fifth place. The offense is not bad but the pitching staff is terrible. The top offensive performer without a doubt is Stan the Man Musial. He can do it all and might challenge for the batting title plus hitting around 30 homers and 40 doubles. He'll switch between first and the outfield in order to give Johnny Mize, another fine hitter with good power some games at first. Eddy Stanky has a fantastic batting eye to go with a fine BA and good glove at second. Chico Carresquel is great on both side of the diamond at short. Bob Johnson will get most of the starts at third but his bat is punchless and his backups are nothing to write home about. Walker Cooper and Birdie Tebbetts will share time at catcher and both are fine hitters but neither is strong on defense. Del Ennis will anchor one outfield slot and his bat is second on the team only to Musial. Dave Philley is a decent fielder but his bat is so-so at best. Whitey Lockman will fill in the missing games when Musial is at first and he is more than adequate. Then we get to the pitching staff. Johnny Sain is a workhorse and the clear leader of the staff but in the days he isn't pitching it will be bombs away and the manager will struggle to get through the season with an assortment of starters, few of whom would ever start a game for any of the better teams. Swingman Johnny Vander Meer and Luis Aloma are decent relievers but there isn't much else. The Aces could bludgeon their way to a .500 record but could also fall to sixth place if the offense falters.

South River Muck Dogs

The 'Dogs have a good chance at moving into fifth and maybe even fourth and with a few breaks could even contend for second but the offense is too weak to have any hope for the pennant although the pitching staff is not bad. Ted (Big Klu) Kluszewski holds down first base and is a solid power hitter. Roy Hartsfield who has a decent if punchless bat and a below average glove will share second base with Pete Suder who has a better glove but an inferior bat. Buddy Kerr is your classic good field no-hit shortstop.

Hank Majewski has a decent if punch and judy bat and a great glove at third and he'll be spelled by Billy Cox, who can also play second. Wes Westrum has a good batting eye with some power and is a very good receiver behind the plate. Dale Mitchell holds down left field where he'll sport a decent BA and good on base but little power. The balance of the outfield starts will go to a group of part-timers, the best of whom is Tommy Holmes. Two stars of the future, Charlie (Paw Paw) Maxwell and Jimmy (I'm not crazy and I have a paper to prove it) Piersall are waiting in the wings. Ronin Roberts and Don Newcombe lead the pitching staff but they'll get a lot of help from the likes of Bob Kuzava , Cliff Chambers and swingman Bob Miller. The non-starting starters will have to handle most of the bullpen work as there is no one else.

East Kenosha Larks

The Larks offense is very poor and the pitching staff exceeds only the Aces so they seemed doomed to a last place finish. Ray Waitkus has a decent bat at first but with far less power than you'd like from the position. Cass Michaels is a serviceable second sacker but he won't get too many All-Star votes. Connie Ryan will also get some time at the keystone. Roy Smalley has some power and a good glove at short but his BA and OBA are poor. Third base is a problem with no full time incumbent so Roy Sievers and Peanuts Lowery who are better outfielders will probably have to spend some time at the hot corner. Bobby Thompson in center is a decent hitter and good fielder but the rest of the outfield will be a grab bag of the guys not playing third and several other non-entities. The team lacks a full-time catcher and will need a cast of thousands to get through the season. Ned Garver and Curt Simmons lead the mound staff which also contains swingmen Dizzy Trout and Roger Werle and hot shot rookie Whitey Ford. The bullpen is practically non-existent and it will be tough to hold onto late inning leads, if the team has many to begin with.

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Worchester Grays

As was the case in 1949, the AL is a much stronger league than the NL but the Grays, who only won 75 games in that year are far and away the best team in the NL and their pitching staff is arguably the best in all of SPBIII. They have very good team power and it starts with slugging first baseman Gil Hodges who can do it all. Bobby Doerr at second has a 25-plus homer bat and is a good fielder. Danny O'Connell who is a better hitter will share time at short with Marty Marion, a better fielder. The walking man, Eddie Yost, holds down third and is superb. The team lacks a full-time catcher but will alternate several part-timers who can do the job, especially on defense. Sam Chapman and Al Zarilla will man two outfield slots with Zarilla the best hitter for average although he is weak on defense while Chapman has more power and plays a good center field. Hot shot rookie Gus Bell will share the third spot with several capable part-timers. But the heart of the team is the pitching staff. Vern Bickford is the number one starter but he'll get great support from Jim Hearn, Max Lanier and Mike Garcia with swingmen Frank Hiller and Steve Gromek filling out the rotation. Frank Smith is the best pure reliever but the non-starting starters will fill in as needed. Unlike most of the rest of SPBIII, the Gray's pitchers are not cursed with control problems which will be a great asset as the season progresses.

Chicago Stammers

The 1949 NL champs seem a safe pick for second as they lack the horses to overtake the Grays but look equal to the task of holding off the rest of the league. Johnny Wyrostek will share time at first with Ripper Collins but this is not a team strength. The incomparable Jackie Robinson returns at second where he can do it all with the bat and has a good glove on defense. His sidekick at short is Pee Wee Reese who isn't quite up to the standards of Robinson with the bat but still more than adequate and he can also field his position well. Bill Serena has some power but a weak bat over all and will share time at third with Kermit Wahl who can hit for a higher average but has no power. Sherm Lollar and Del Rice will share time behind the plate and both are serviceable. The Reading Rifle Carl Furillo will play right field and has a decent bat with power to go with his cannon throwing arm. Sam Jethroe is an above average hitter in center who can also steal a base. Gene Woodling will get most of the starts in left and he is a solid hitter with a good batting eye and can field his position well. The balance of the OF starts will go to several capable part-timers. On the mound the staff leader is lefty Warren Spahn who could easily win 20 plus games. Bob Cain, Paul Minner and Howie Fox will fill out most of the balance of the rotation but swingman Sal (the barber) Maglie will also be a big contributor. Other than when Maglie isn't starting the bulk of the bullpen effort will have to come from the swingmen as the staff lacks a good pure reliever.

Kansas City Blues

The Blues seem pretty set in third place; it would take a major effort on their part to rise to second and the Hawks or Arsenal would have to seriously overachieve for them to fall to fourth. They have a decent offense and so-so pitching staff. Rookie Joe Adcock should break in with a bang at first base but he'll need to share time with Rocky Nelson. Joe Gordon, who has some power, will share second base with Gene Mauch who is a better fielder. Injuries will limit Lou Boudreau to less than 100 games and will force Johnny Pesky who is better third baseman, to play a lot of games at short. Pesky has a good, if non-power bat and great batting eye. Bobby Brown, who is a lousy fielder and no more than an OK hitter will also play third. Slugging Roy Campanella who also has a cannon arm will get most of the catcher starts with Al Evans filling in as needed. Hoot Evers in left is a solid hitter and a great defensive outfielder. Dick Sisler is a fine outfielder with a good batting eye while Don Mueller can slap the ball around pretty well but seems to have an allergy to the base on balls. Wally Westlake is a good defensive CF and has some pop in his bat. Room will also have to be found for Vic Wertz who has 30-homer potential and a good batting eye. Ken Raffensberger is the closest thing to a staff ace but he would be hard pressed to make the top three or four on most other teams. Sandy Consuegra isn't bad but the rest of the rotation will be filled out by a succession of swingmen with the best being Willie Ramsdell and Ellis Kinder. Jack Kramer is a decent reliever but there isn't much after him.

Schaumburg Hawks

The Hawks won 85 games last year and were in the tight NL pennant race until they suffered a September swoon but it's unlikely they'll reach those heights in 1950. The team has good overall power with five players having 25-plus homer potential but a poor team OBA will mean that a lot of those dingers will come with the bases empty. Eddie Robinson at first and Puddin Head Jones at third are cannons at the corners of the infield. Both have good power and know how to get on base and Jones is a great fielder. The double play combo of Red Schoendienst at second and Granny Hamner at short are by far the best defensive duo in the league but it would be nice if both hit a little more. Billy Hitchcock, not a bad fielder himself, will spell Schoendienst, especially against LHP's, whom he hits very well. Catcher is a grab bag, with four different players sharing playing time. The outfield of Duke Snider, Gus Zernial and Hank Sauer is superb with all three capable of 30-plus homers. Connie Diering, a good ball hawk, will fill in as needed. The mound staff is OK but lacks depth. Allie Reynolds is the staff "ace" but

he has some control issues. A quartet of swingmen (Cloyd Boyer, Irv Palica, Murray Dickson, Bill MacDonald and Fred Sanford) will flesh out the rotation but each has his own problems. These swingmen will also have to man the bullpen as there is no one else. Promising rookies Clem Labine and Bill Loes have bright futures but the key word is future. Veteran Bud Byerly had some off-season arm issues and will be severely limited in 1950 but hopes to bounce back in 1951. Russ (not the porno king) Meyer also had off-season problems and will be a total washout this year.

Rock Island Arsenal

Not a lot of distance between the Hawks and Arsenal and they could easily flip-flop positions but neither seems to have what it takes to move up and moving down would represent a total collapse. The team has some decent power and a good OBA but the pitching staff has issues. Earl Torgenson at first and Al Rosen at third both have good power and know how to take a walk. Jerry Coleman at second can do the job with both the bat and glove while Tommy Upton is below average at short. Nellie Fox will also get some starts at second and to maximize offense, Coleman may replace Upton but Jerry's defense at short is very poor. Al Rosen provides a top-flight home run bat at the hot corner and is adequate on defense. The manager will need to use three different catchers to cover behind the plate while budding star Smokey Burgess spends a year of seasoning in the minors. Larry Doby and Bob Kennedy will be two of the starting outfielders while Hank Thompson who is a good third baseman will be forced to the outfield due to the presence of Rosen. Ron Northey is the top outfield spare. Art Houttemann and Billy Pierce are a good R/L combo to lead the rotation and they'll get some decent help from Sid Hudson and swingman Bubba Church. Tommy Byrne is also available but he has severe control issues and rookie Vern Law looks promising but his value is still in the future. Howie Judson is the top man in the bullpen and swingman Walt Dubiel is also available. Not a lot of quality on the rest of the staff.

DeVillbiss Tigers

The Tigers won 83 games last year and were in the pennant race right into September but this year they seem to be firmly in sixth place as a move up would be a major accomplishment and a move to the cellar would mean a total collapse. Andy Pafko is a solid power hitter with a good batting eye and is a serviceable centerfielder. The balance of the outfield starts will be covered by a parade of part-timers, the best of which is probably Bud Stewart who is a good defender but his bat is pretty punchless. Ferris Fain at first has a great glove, decent bat and very good OBA. Tommy Glaviano and Bobby Avila will share time at second and both are well above average. Al Dark at short is a good defender and his bat is closer to that of an outfielder than a middle infielder. Third is a major problem as the team has no full-timer and will have to run out a succession of well below average part-timers in order to get through the season. Glaviano is the best 3B on the roster but playing him there will create a gaping hole at second. Jim Hegan is great as a defender behind the plate but his offense is very poor. His backup, Mickey Owen, can hit a little but is nothing special. The mound staff has three solid starters in Howie Pollett, Bill Parnell and Bill Wight but the quality drops way off after that trio and the bullpen "ace" by default will be Hal White who is no great shakes and has some serious control issues. The Tiger's pitching staff will be a major headache when the top three are not starting and when late-inning relief is needed.

Indianapolis Clowns

The Clowns won 79 games last year but escaping the cellar this year would seem to be an unattainable goal. The offensive leader, by far, is third baseman George Kell who combines a very good BA with excellent doubles, if not home run power and is a good defender. Mickey Vernon and Jack Phillips will share time at first and both are serviceable but lack the kind of power you'd like from the position. Danny Murtaugh is a nice second baseman with a good batting eye but no power. He will be restricted to about 120 games and his backups are grim. Johnny Lipon at short is a flashy fielder who can slap the

ball around pretty well and will always find a way to get on base. Del Crandall, a budding star, will share time at catcher with Matt Batts and Joe Astroth. Joe is the best hitter of the three, by far, but he won't be able to play very many games. Sam Mele is a decent outfielder but even he will only be able to play about 125 games and there is no one else on the roster who can start even 100 so the manager will be forced to run out a relay of lousy part timers. This is a serious team weakness. The pitching staff is horrid, easily the worst in all of SPBIII. Two swingmen, Gerry Staley and Bob Hooper, have the best stats on the staff but neither would be able to crack the rotation of almost any other team. After them it's bombs away with the likes of Alex Kellner and Herb Wehmeier, both of whom have severe control issues in addition to giving up a lot of basehits. Max Surkont and Jack Banta have some ability but neither can pitch enough to be a real factor. Bullpen? What is that, they should probably be renamed the arson squad!