

PRE-SEASON PROGNOSIS 1951

American League

Brooklyn Royal Giants

The Giants won 99 games last year and would have easily won the NL flag but in the powerful AL it was only good for third. However, they are loaded in 51 and the odds-on favorite. Leftfielder Ralph Kiner leads a powerful attack but he'll have lots of help. Ritchie Ashburn is a great lead-off man and could challenge for the batting title. He is a great flyhawk with his only weakness a below average arm. The DiMaggio brothers, Dom and Joe, will fill out the third OF slot. Both are veterans and slowing down a little but they both know how to take a walk and have decent power. Kiner will spell Phil Cavaretta at first while they wait for hot shot rookie Dale Long to develop. Solly Hemus who has a good batting eye but not a lot of power will get the lion's share of starts at second with several decent spear carriers filling in. Ray Boone brings a good glove and an OK bat to short while Sid Gordon has a 30- homer bat, a great glove and good batting eye at third base. Clyde McCullough, Phil Masi and Ebba St. Claire will share time behind the plate and all are more than decent. Larry Jansen and Vic Raschi lead the pitching staff but they'll get great support from the likes of Saul Rogovon and Ewell the Whip Blackwell along with swingman Harry the Cat Brecheen. Al Brazle is a good reliever but there isn't a whole lot behind him. However, the starters will finish a lot of games, making a bullpen less important.

Hoosier Thunderbolts

The Bolts won 101 games last year but fell one game short of the pennant. They will be hard pressed to beat out the Giants this year but stranger things have happened. The team has good power and the pitching staff is fine but not up to the standards of Brooklyn. Luke Ester and Mont Irvin (who also plays the outfield) will share time at first and both can hit the ball out of the park. Easter has a poor glove but Irvin is golden glove material. Jerry Priddy brings a good glove and solid bat to second base. Eddie Joost at short can field his position well, take a walk and also has 20-homer potential, not bad for a middle infielder. Bob Elliot and Hank Majewski will share time at third; both can field and contribute at the plate. Three players will share time at catcher but none are world beaters. When Irvin isn't playing first, he'll be a fixture in the outfield with Cliff Mapes the best of the rest. Several part timers such as Ken Wood and Steve Souchock will fill out the balance of outfield starts. Eddie Lopat is the unquestioned leader of the pitching staff but the team lacks any solid full-time number two. Swingmen Dave Koslo and Fred Hutchinson are decent but can't start as many games as you would like. The bottom of the starting rotation is thin with former ace Hal Newhouser severely limited in how much he can pitch. They don't have any knockout relievers in the bullpen and this could be a problem as the season progresses.

Maumee River Carp

The defending WS champs will have a harder time hanging on to the third place than contending for the pennant as the Aces and Rugrats will be on their tail all season long. George Arft and Hank Metkovich will share time at first but neither has much power, a problem that is endemic with the Carp offense. Billy Goodman will play second and he has a good glove with an ability to hit a few doubles but no home run power. The Scooter, Phil Rizzuto still has an All-Star glove at short and his bat, though punchless, is productive. George Kell at third is probably the best hitter on the team and can field but the home run is missing. Catcher is a grab bag with no one able to start more than 85 games or so and the manager will have to constantly shuttle players in and out behind the plate. Gil Coan and Roy Coleman are the only full-time outfielders and although both have good gloves and can hit for a decent average, they also possess the Carp curse of little home run power. Don Lenhardt will only be able to play about 100 games in the outfield but could lead the team in homers. Metkovich will also get some time on the

outfield along with rising star Jackie Jensen. Bob Lemon is the number one starter with Bob Rush as a decent number two but the pickings are slim after that duo with swingmen Joe Dobson and Marlin Stuart occupying the next two slots. The balance of the starts will go to Al Widmar and Cloyd Boyer both of whom are very grim. Last year's relief ace, Jim Konstanty, will be a shadow of his 1950 self with his only help coming from Lou Brissie.

Goshen Aces

As stated above, Goshen will be battling for third place all year. Their offense is superior to the Carp, but the pitching staff is well below par. They have some power and it starts with one of the best players in the league, Stan the Man Musial. Del Ennis, a fine hitter and Minnie Minoso, a very good hitter. will be the other two outfielders although Minnie may be forced to play some 3B for lack of any alternatives. Whitey Lockman holds down first base and the best you can say about him is that he won't be an embarrassment. Second sacker Eddie Stanky is a great lead-off man with an excellent batting eye and a good fielder to boot. Shortstop Chico Carresquel doesn't hit for much power but he can get on base and is a great fielder. Hank Thompson has a bit of power at third but will be limited to 90 games or so with Snuffy Strnweiss and Minoso filling in the rest of the time. Walker Cooper is very good catcher, both offensively and defensive for about 110 games with Johnny Prasema filling in the rest. Vern Bickford, Johnny Sain and part timer Joe Presko are the best starters but the balance of the rotation will be filled in by some pretty poor hurlers. Luis Aloma would be a spectacular closer if he could pitch more but will probably be limited to 30 or so games. The balance of the bullpen will be bombs away.

River City Rugrats

The Rate won only 56 games last year and with luck could finish above .500 and challenge for third place this year but asking for anything more would be a stretch. Walt Drogo and Lou Limmer will share time at first. Drogo is a poor hitter with some power but Limmer is a disaster with his only saving grace being a decent glove. Bobby Young is a decent fielder at second with a punch and Judy bat. Half a dozen utilitymen will shuttle in and out of short and third with none of them contributing much with the bat although a few can field. Catcher Yogi Berra is arguably the best in all of SPBII. He can hit for average with power and is a spectacular defender with a cannon arm. The outfield is actually pretty good and it starts with Ted Williams who can do it all, good BA, fabulous OBA and very good power. This year his defense could also be more than adequate. His main help will come from Hank Bauer, Johnny Groth and Elmer Valo. The team has a decent rotation with Early Wynn, Ralph Branca, Preacher Rowe and Bullet Bob Feller although all but Rowe have some control issues. Dutch Leonard and Andy Hansen are two good relievers and they have several other bullpeners who won't kill you.

South River Much Dogs

A big falloff after the first five but the 'Dogs seem to fit comfortably into sixth place as they are unlikely to fall to the cellar and just as unlikely to rise to fifth. Their offensive attack is not that strong but the pitching staff is decent, if thin. Hulking Ted (Big Klu) Kluszewski holds down first base but he doesn't seem to know how to take a walk and his home run power is a lot less than you'd expect from someone so strong. Roy Hartsfield will play 120 games or so at second and he is a decent fielder with an acceptable, if punchless bat but his backup Buddy Kerr, who will also need to fill in at short, has no saving graces. Pete Suder at short has a good glove but won't contribute much at the plate. Billy Cox at the hot corner has a good glove and can slap the ball around pretty well but few of his hits will go out of the park. Wes Westrum at catcher has a good batting eye and decent power plus a cannon arm but an anemic BA. He'll be backed up by Bruce Edwards and Joe Garagiola. Hot shot rookie Willie Mays is clearly a rising star in centerfield. Harry Suitcase Simpson is the only other semi-full-time outfielder and the rest of the starts will have to be filled by a parade of mediocrities. On the mound you start with

Robin Roberts and Don Newcombe, two of the best pitchers in the league and they both have 20-game potential but it will be tough with this offense. The balance of the rotation is shaky with swingmen Bob Kuzava and Virgil Trucks the best of a bad lot. Bud Byerly is a decent reliever but he won't get much help from the rest of a weak bullpen.

East Kenosha Larks

The Larks' offense is marginally better than the Muck Dogs but the pitching staff is the worst in the AL and maybe in all of SPBII. Eddie Waitkus is a decent hitter for a middle infielder but his punchless bat is way out of character for a first baseman. Cass Michaels is OK if nothing special at second. All around utility man Connie Ryan will also get some time at second in addition to first and third. Roy Smalley can't start enough games at short which will force the manager to play Pete Castogione there more than he would like as Pete is a weak fielding SS but an excellent third baseman. Fred Marsh, a poor hitter but decent fielder will play third when Castogione is at short. A parade of nonentities will share time at catcher. Bobby (the Giants win the Pennant) Thompson is the team's top power guy and will anchor one outfield position. Hot shot rookie Mickey Mantle will get some starts; he is a good hitter but terrible fielder, although he promises to improve as he learns the position. Peanuts Lowrey, a decent hitter with minimal power but a good glove will also contribute as the team waits for young Roy Sievers to develop. Bobby Usher, a poor hitter is also available. The pitching staff has a lot of bodies but not much in the way of quality. Ned Garver and swingmen Dizzy Trout and Bob Hooper aren't bad but they would struggle to break into the rotation of the better teams in the league. After them it's pretty bleak and a viable bullpen is nowhere to be found.

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Chicago Stammers

Chicago is clearly the team to beat in the NL with a topnotch attack and stellar pitching staff. Dick Kryoski, a decent hitter and fine fielder will share time at first with Don Kolloway a good fielder but his bat is distinctly punchless. Second base is the domain of the sensational Jackie Robinson who is the epitome of the complete player, he can hit for average with good power, get on base, steal a base and is a sensational fielder; a clear MVP candidate. His mate will be Pee Wee Reese, who isn't quite up to Jackie's standards but far better than most other shortstops in the league. Billy Johnson is more than acceptable at the hot corner. Del Rice and Sherm Lollar will share time behind the plate and both are decent. Joe Collins is a better first baseman and a poor outfielder but he may be forced to the garden because of the numbers game. Sam Jethroe is one of the best base stealers in the league and a fabulous defensive OF. Johnny Wyrostek and Gene Woodling will ably fill out most of the remaining OF starts. Warren Spahn and Sal Maglie are the workhorses of the staff and could easily win 45 games between them. Paul Minner, Bobby Shantz and Leo Kiely will fill out the balance of the rotation but the team has several others who could start for almost any other team in the league and will serve as valuable members of the bullpen on this loaded staff. Harry Perkowski and the abovementioned swingmen will form a cracker jack bullpen.

Schaumburg Hawks

Schaumburg moved their home park to Fenway in the off season in an attempt to capitalize on the "monster" in left field and exploit their two big RH sluggers in Gus Zernail and Hank Sauer. The question is whether or not the home team can hit more homers to LF than the pitching staff gives up? First base will be crowded with incumbent slugger Eddie Robinson having to share time with off season acquisition Mickey Vernon. Red Schoendienst returns at second base where he combines a good glove with an

acceptable bat. He'll be spelled by Billy Hitchcock who also plays third. Granny Hamner at short has some OB issues but otherwise he's a decent hitter with a good glove. Puddin Head Jones brings good power and a nice glove to third. Joe Ginsberg and Dixie Howell will share time behind the plate and they are acceptable although Howell has a poor arm. In addition to Zernial and Sauer, Duke Snider will patrol CF where he has 30-homer power and a good glove. Bob Addis and Connie Diering are available for spot play in the garden. Murray Dickson, who has some control issues, is the only full-time rotation starter but Russ (not the porno king) Meyer and a raft of swingmen such as Chet Nichols, Allie Reynolds, Jocko Thompson and Randy Gumpert will fill out the rotation. The swingmen plus Clyde King and promising youngster Clem Labine will man the bullpen. The Hawks could bludgeon their way to contention if the pitching holds up, but don't bet on it.

Worcester Grays

The Grays could challenge for second but the pennant would be a stretch. However, they seem safe in third. Slugger Gil Hodges, in addition to having a flashy glove at first is poised for a breakout year at the plate. Bobby Doer brings a great glove and bat to second for 100 or so games and will be spelled by Neil Berry who is no where near as accomplished. George Stickland can do the job in the field at short but isn't much of a hitter. The Walking Man Eddie Yost is a sensational leadoff man but his defense is suspect at third. Andy Seminick who knows how to take a walk even though his BA will be low will share time at catcher with Birdie Tebbetts and Joe Tipton. Gus Bell and Jim Desling will be more or less regulars at two outfield slots with Bill Howerton, Don Thompson and Al Zarilla picking up the slack. Jim Hearn and swingman Mike (the Bear) Garcia are the two top starters with Max Lanier, Stu Holcombe and Ted Gray filling out the rotation. Frank Smith, Steve Gromek and Mickey Harris are the guts of a decent bullpen.

Kansas City Blues

The Blues could challenge for third but they will definitely be involved in a four-way race to avoid the cellar as the bottom four teams in the NL are tightly bunched. First base is a grab bag with no one able to play much more than 80 games. The fellows who will play are nothing to write home about. Johnny Pesky's glove at second is suspect and he has little power but he can slap the ball around pretty well and knows how to take a walk. Lou Boudreau will be limited to about 80 games at short with the balance taken up by Rocky Bridges and Pesky having to play there for a handful of games. Bobby Brown will play 100 or so games at third and he isn't bad but the slack will have to be taken up by several no-talent part timers and outfielder Wally Westlake may even have to fill in at the hot corner. Dick Sisler and Vic Wertz are more or less full timers in the outfield with Westlake filling in when he isn't at third. Hoot Evers and Mike McCormick will fill in the blanks as the team waits for hot shot rookie Wally Post to develop. The team has 21 pitchers on the roster but with the exception of Willie Ramsdell and swingmen Ken Rathensberger and Sam Zoldak there isn't a lot of depth in the starting rotation. The balance of the starts will come from little used swingmen and little talent slugs. Ellis Kinder is a great reliever who would be a big star on a contender but on this team, he might not have a lot of leads to protect. He has a few decent helpers such as Phil Paine plus Connie Consuegra and Morrie Martin when they aren't in the rotation.

Rock Island Arsenal

Rock Island won 87 games last year and ended the season only three games out of first place but replicating that in 1951 will be a major challenge. They have cannons at the corners with first baseman Earl Torgenson and third sacker Al Rosen. Both know how to take a walk and have 25-plus homer potential. Pepper pot second sacker Nellie Fox fields his position very well and can slap the ball around with the best of them. Jerry Coleman is a decent shortstop and he'll be spelled by rookie Roy McMillan

who has the talent for down the road but won't contribute much in 1951. Larry Doby is the best of the outfield crew as he has a very good batting eye and decent power. Next best is Dave Philley, although he lacks the kind of power you'd like in the garden. A host of part-timers will shuttle in and out to cover the rest of the outfield starts but none are of much consequence. Gus Niarhos and Smokey Burgess will split time at catcher but don't look for much pop at the plate from either. Billy Pierce and Bubba Church are a nice L/R combo at the top of the rotation but it's a little thin after them and when you get to fifth and sixth slots watch out. Harry Dorish and Dick Bokelman are decent relievers and they'll get some help from the swingmen but the bullpen is not a team strength.

DeVilbuss Tigers

As stated above, the Tigers will be in the thick of the race for fourth place but don't look for much else. A decent offense will be hampered by a weak pitching staff which has serious control issues. Ferris Fain at first will have a very productive 120 or so games with a high BA, great OBA, some power and a good glove but when he sits, Bob Taylor will fill in and even though he isn't bad, the falloff will be significant. Bobby Avila is a solid second baseman who can hit and field. Al Dark at short has a great bat, especially for a middle infielder and his glove is superb. Gil McDougal is another solid performer at third and overall the Tiger infield is one of the best in the league. Mike Hegan is a good defensive catcher who can contribute at the plate but his backup, Mickey Owen is well below par. Andy Pafko has a good power bat in the outfield but his glove is weak. Sam Mele will occupy another outfield slot where he brings modest power, poor on base with a good glove. Hal Jeffcoat is the best of several part-timers who will fill out the third OF slot. DeVilbuss has an amazing 20 pitchers on the roster but several of them won't be able to pitch very much. Mel Parnell is a decent number one starter but like most of the rest of the staff has control problems. Connie Marrero is the default number two but on most other teams he would be a fourth or fifth. Several swingmen will fill out the rotation and most are afflicted with the curse of the base on balls. Walt Dubiel, Tom Ferrick and George Estock, along with the non-starting swingman will fill out the bullpen, which isn't that bad.

Indianapolis Clowns

The funny ones finished last in 1950 and could end up there again but have just as good a chance to wind up in fourth. The offense is weak but they do have a unique ability to get on base and the pitching staff is a shade better than the Tigers. Johnny Mize and Jack Phillips will split time at first and even though neither is a world beater, they won't kill you. Eddie Miksis will get more starts than anyone else at second and he isn't bad but his replacements are weak. Johnny Lipon knows how to take a walk and won't kill you in the field at short, but his bat is punchless. His back up is hot shot rookie Johnny Logan. Randy Jackson is a solid third baseman with decent power. Sibi Sisti will fill in all over the infield and he has a productive bat. Matt Batts, Joe Astroth and Ray Noble will share time behind the plate. None are standouts but neither are they bums. Frankie Baumholtz is a solid outfielder who can play almost every day. Gene Hermanski knows how to take a walk but you'd like a little more power than he possesses. Pat Mullin, Lloyd Merriman and Sam Chapman will fill in the outfield blanks. Mat Surkont and swingmen Jerry Staley and Herm Weimeier will lead the rotation as the manager waits for young Bob Friend to develop. The latter portion of the rotation is weak. The bullpen is decent with Ted Wilks and Bob Masterson plus the swingmen when they aren't starting. The staff will need to overachieve if fourth place is ever to be reached.