

PRE-SEASON PROGNOSIS 1952

American League

Maumee Valley Carp

The Carp and Thunderbolts are very close but Maumee gets a slight edge due to a better pitching staff, although the Hoosier's have a lot more team power, especially homers. George Metkovich, an above average hitter, will get the most starts at first base and he'll be backed up by the two Dons, Kolloway and Lenhardt. Billy Goodman is a solid hitter and excellent defender and will start at second with some help from Kolloway. The Scooter Phil Rizzuto is a fixture at short where he knows how to take a walk, is a great bunter and can turn the double play with the best of them. George Kell, a good hitter but lacking power will share time at the hot corner with Hector Rodriguez who has a punchless bat but a great glove. Jackie Jensen, who has some power is the only full-time outfielder as the manager will need to run in a string of part-timers with Lenhardt and Metkovich needing to put in some time in the garden. Behind the plate we'll see Sammy White who has a cannon arm plus Del Wilbur and Rube Walker. Bob Lemon is the ace of the staff and a real workhorse but Bob Rush and Joe Dobson aren't far behind. Hot shot rookie Stu Miller and several swingmen will fill in the rotation. Al Benton and Lou Brissie are the mainstays of the 'pen as Jim Konstanty seems to have deteriorated from his glory years but will still contribute.

Hoosier Thunderbolts

The Bolts have a power packed lineup and could come close to leading the league in homers. Hulking Luke Easter is back at first and he has 30-homer potential. Ed Glynn is a decent backup but his bat is punchless. Billy Martin, a good fielder will be the main second baseman with help from Bobby Hoffman and Ed Majewski. Eddie Joost is a base on balls machine at short who also has good power for a middle infielder; his defense is adequate. Third base is a bit of a problem with Bob Elliot and Steve Souchock sharing time. Enos Country Slaughter, Bob Nieman and Bob Borkowski are the main outfielders with Slaughter clearly the best of the trio. Hank Edwards and Monte Irvin will also contribute in the garden. Toby Atwell, a fine hitter but below average receiver will share time behind the plate with Ed Fitzgerald. The Bolts lack a solid number one starter but Eddie Lopat, Carl Erskine and Spec Shea can each give you 20-25 solid starts with the balance coming from a decent group of swingmen. Joe Black is a knockout reliever, one of the best in the league and he'll get help from the non-starting swingmen.

Goshen Aces

With some luck the Aces could contend and they really aren't that far behind the top two. The attack isn't quite as power-laden as the Thunderbolts but it is more balanced although the pitching staff is well below the two teams above. Whitey Lockman at first has a near .300 bat with decent on base and is a great fielder but you'd like a little more home run power from this position. Bill Serena will get the most starts at second and he has some decent power with an adequate glove. Jerry Priddy will fill in as needed. Chico Carresquel and Johnny Lipon will share time at short; neither has any power and are only average in the field; this is not a team strength. Hank Thompson will man the hot corner with help from Serena and Lipon. Hank has decent power and can field pretty well. Stan the man Musial has some fielding issues in the outfield but you can't ask for a better hitter. He combines a .330 BA with great on base and superior power plus he can play just about every day. Minnie Minoso is a well above average hitter with a good batting eye. Del Ennis is a solid third OF and between the three this is an excellent group. Walker Cooper will start about 100 games behind the plate with the balance going to several no-names. Like the Bolts, Goshen lacks a workhorse number one starter, but in their case the top guys are no-where near as good. Duane Pillette isn't bad but his main helpers are Vern Bickford and Joe Presko

who are average at best. Former ace Johnny Sain is now a swingman, not bad but hardly a world beater. Spectacular rookie knuckleballer Hoyt Wilhelm could be a sensational closer if the Aces give him enough leads to protect.

River City Rugrats

The Rats and Giants will battle for fourth place all year and with some luck they might advance but contending for the pennant seems a reach. The Rats offense is well below the Giants but the pitching staff is much better. Walt Dropo is a solid hitter with good power and holds down first base. Bobby Young is a good fielder at second and hits just enough to not be an embarrassment. Freddie Marsh and Willy Miranda will share time at short; neither is a standout. Highly rated rookie Eddie Mathews should break in with a bang at third; he is a superstar in waiting. The war in Korea will keep Ted Williams out of the lineup all year and this is a devastating blow to the franchise. Elmer Valo has a great batting eye and will hold down one OF slot. Johnny Groth has a decent if punchless bat and will man another garden position. The third slot will go to Hank Bauer who can also hit the ball and has adequate defense. Faye Throneberry will fill in as needed. Yogi Berra is one of the best catchers in all of SPBIII and in addition to 30-home run power he is also an excellent receiver. Karl Drews, Early Wynn, and Preacher Rowe are a great 1-2-3 starting rotation with the balance of starts coming from several decent swingmen. Dutch Leonard and Andy Hansen are very capable relievers.

Brooklyn Royal Giants

In 1951 the Giants breezed to the AL pennant with 109 wins and a 24-game spread over the second place Thunderbolts before losing the World Series in six games to the Chicago Stammers. However, that was then and this is now and as stated above they will probably be fighting for fourth place. They still possess a more than adequate offense but the pitching staff has seriously deteriorated and could easily be considered the worst in all of SPBIII. Earl Torgenson and Phil Cavaretta will share time at first and neither will be confused with an All-Star. Connie Ryan is a workmanlike second baseman who can do the job on defense and has some pop in his bat. Solly Hemus at short has a good batting eye and decent power for a middle infielder plus he can field his position very well. Jimmy Dyck is similar to Hemus at third and he'll be backed up by Vern Stephens who will see a major comedown from his 1951 stats. A parade of no-names and no talents will shuttle in behind the plate. Although his stats will still be well above average, CF Ritchie Ashburn should fall off quite a bit from his fabulous performance in 1951. Gene Woodling is another solid performer in the garden and Ralph Kiner provides 40-homer potential and a great propensity for the base on balls in the third OF slot. Dom DiMaggio is also available for spot play but his power is way down from 1951. Then we unfortunately come to the pitching staff. They lack a real staff ace and the best (Harry Perkowski and Saul Rogovin) would be hard pressed to make the fourth or fifth slot on any of the good teams. A lot of sad sack pitchers will have to be trotted out to fill out the rotation and no discernable bullpen exists.

South River Muck Dogs

Another fight between the Muck Dogs and Larks but this will be to see who can stay out of the cellar. The 'Dogs have the worst power in the league and will be hard pressed to reach 80 team homers. The big Klu Ted Kluzewski is an anchor at first base where he should combine a hot bat with the best power on the team, although for South River that isn't saying much. Pete Suder who has a great glove and so-so bat will share time at second with Sibby Sisti who is below par as a fielder and well below par as a hitter. Hot shot rookie Dick Groat will share time at short with several no-names. The Billys (Cox and Johnson) will man the hot corner; Cox can field and has a mediocre bat while Johnson is a lousy fielder but an acceptable hitter though neither has any power. Wes Westrum has a cannon arm and some power with a good OBA but a low BA and will be the main catcher, backed up by Joe Garaglola who is a

much better overall hitter but with minimal power. Robin Roberts is a stud and one of the best pitchers in the league but quality falls off very fast after him. The next best is Virgil Trucks who has some control issues. After that it's catch as catch can with a legion of swing men. There is nothing even close to a bullpen ace and the manager will have to be creative to move the swing men in and out of the rotation into the pen.

East Kenosha Larks

The Larks won only 54 games in 1951 and might not do any better in 1952 but they could move out of the cellar with a few breaks. Eddie Waitkus at first is a solid player in all aspects except home run power. Hot prospect Roy Sievers waits in the wings. Davey Williams is a decent 2B with some power who can also turn the double play. Roy Smalley and Clem Koshorek will keep the shortstop position warm while management waits for hot shot rookie Harvey Kuenn to develop. Third base will feature Cass Michaels and Fred Hatfield sharing time and neither is too bad. Jim Busby is a great defensive CF but no one will confuse him with a good hitter. The star in the garden is second year stud Mickey Mantle who has good power, knows how to take a walk and runs like a deer. Peanuts Lowry and Bobby (the Giants win the pennant!) will share time in the third slot. A parade of nonentities will share time behind the plate. The pitching staff has some control issues but overall, they are superior to the Muck Dogs. The staff leader is Curt Simmons but they also have Ned Garver and Walt Masterson plus swingmen Chuck Stobbs, Bob Kelly and Dizzy Trout. By default, Bud Podbelain is the leader of the bullpen but his only real help will come from the non-starting swingmen. Lark management is waiting for young stud Whitey Ford to finish his military commitment.

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Chicago Stammers

The defending World Series champs are poised for another run in 1951 and it would represent a major upset if they are unable to win the NL flag. The attack is clearly the class of the Senior Circuit and the pitching staff rivals the Carp as the best in all of SPBIII. Joe Collins and Dick Gernert will platoon at first base and both have good power. The incomparable Jackie Robinson returns at second base where he does it all; good BA, great OBA, power, base stealing and wonderful defense; who can ask for more? His shortstop partner will be Pee Wee Reese who also knows how to take a walk and runs the bases very well plus is no slouch in the field. Sid Gordon is at third and his only downside is a less than stellar glove but he does have 25 plus home run power. Ray Boone can fill in admirably at short and third. Frankie Baumholtz, Sam Jethroe and Johnnie Wyrostek are the three top outfielders but the Polish Rifle, Carl Furillo will get plenty of playing time. Del Rice, he of the cannon arm will share time at catcher with Sherm Lollar. Warren Spahn, Sal Maglie, Bobby Shantz and Bob Portfield are an excellent starting rotation and we haven't even mentioned swingmen Warren Hacker and Harry the Cat Breechen. Bill Kennedy is a top-notch reliever and he has plenty of bullpen support. A tough team to beat.

Rock Island Arsenal

The Arsenal will need a lot of breaks to compete for the pennant but on the strength of a strong pitching staff and good offense they seem to be pretty firmly in second place. Eddie Robinson is solid at first base where he has a good batting eye and 25-homer potential. Pepper pot Nellie Fox holds down second base and he will always find a way to beat you with both his glove and bat. Roy McMillan has a top flight glove and OK bat at short. Al Rosen at third is another top hitter with good power and on base. Smokey Burgess isn't the best receiver behind the plate but he can hit and will get good support from Stan Lopata and Birdie Tebbetts. Larry Doby is a good defensive OF and has probably the best HR

power on the team to go with a great batting eye. Dave Philley can play every day, is a fine ballhawk and his bat is decent but not great. George Suba and Cal Abrams will share the third OF slot. Billy Pierce and Vic Raschi are a good L/R duo at the top of the staff although Vic has some control issues. Sid Hudson and Art Houtemann plus several decent swingmen will fill out her rotation. Harry Dorish, Al Brazle and Monte Kennedy form a solid bullpen trio.

Kansas City Blues

The Blues will battle the Hawks and Tigers for third place but a pitching staff with serious control issues will probably prevent them from moving up in the standings. Joe Adcock will share time at first with Dick Sisler; both are decent and also play the outfield. Ted Lepcio and Johnny Pesky will split time at second where both are good fielders but while Lepcio is a better hitter for average, Pesky knows how to take a walk. Both can fill in at other infield positions. Pete Runnels at short is a fine hitter although he lacks power and he can do the job in the field. Third base will be a revolving door with four different players moving in and out including Lepcio and Pesky when they are not at second base. Roy Campanella is a very good catcher on both offense and defense and when he sits down, Clint Courtney is a more than adequate replacement. Vic Wertz and Hoot Evers are both fine outfielders but can't play every day and will need to be spelled by Adcock and Evers. Wally Westlake, a poor hitter will need to play more games than the manager would like. Young Wally Post is still developing and though he has a great future, will be very limited in 1952. Ken Raffensberger is the staff ace and one of the few hurlers not cursed by control problems. More representative are Vinegar Bend Mizell and Ewell the Whip Blackwell. Julio Moreno and several swingmen also will fit into the rotation. Eddie Yuhas is a fine reliever and he'll get good support from Ellis Kinder and Sandy Consuegra.

Schaumburg Hawks

As stated above the Hawks will be in the hunt for third place but it will take a lot of breaks for them to move any higher. The attack has some power but not near as much as last year when they won 91 games and were in the pennant race into September. The pitching staff is much better than the Blues. An off-season trade of long time first sacker Eddie Robinson will leave the field open for Mickey Vernon who has a very bright future. Red Schoendienst at second and Granny Hamner at short are fixtures; Red is a better hitter and fielder but Granny is no slouch in either category. Puddin Head Jones has some power and a decent glove at third and he'll be spelled by Billy Hitchcock who also plays first. Catcher is a bit of a problem with Mickey Grasso and Joe Ginsberg both having below average bats although Grasso is a better fielder and has a cannon arm. The outfield of Duke Snider, Hank Sauer and Gus Zernial all possess good power and decent on base and won't kill you in the field. Bobby Del Greco and Bill Addis will fill in as needed. Allie Reynolds and Russ Meyer are top of the line starting pitchers with Murray Dickson and swingman Billy Loes not far behind. Ageless Satchel Paige is a very good reliever and he'll get help from several decent bullpen mates.

DeVilbuss Tigers

The Tiger offense is good but the pitching staff will probably hold them back. Ferris Fain has everything you would want in a first baseman except home run power but he could easily reach 45 doubles for the year and has a great propensity for drawing walks. Bobby Avila is solid at second both with the bat and the glove as is Al Dark at short who also has some decent power. Gil McDougal at third has a great glove and his bat won't embarrass you. Mike Hegan and Mickey Kiltutz both have cannon arms behind the plate but neither can hit much. Andy Pafko will man one OF slot every day and he is a solid all-around player but Sam Mele, a terrible fielder will be his only full-time help. Hal Jeffcoat, Bud Stewart and Al Wright will fill in the balance of outfield starts. Harry Byrd, Mel Parnell, Bill Wright and Marv Grissom are the guts of the starting rotation but all have control issues. Second year man Tom Morgan, pint size

rookie Harvey Haddix and Lou Kretlow who also has serious control issues will contribute in limited roles. Al Corwin, Tom Ferrick and Virgil Jester are a decent bullpen but none have the ability to pitch a lot of games.

Worcester Grays

The Grays seem solidly in sixth place. The offense is too weak for them to have a realistic chance to move higher and it would take a monumental failure or a sensational performance by the Clowns for them to fall to the cellar. Gil Hodges at first is the rock of the attack as he possesses 30 plus homer potential and is a flashy fielder. George Strickland and Jack Dittmer will switch off at second base but I think it would be safe to say their offensive contributions are just about the worst of any position of any team in SPBIII. Marty Marion is back from the service but his skills have faded badly and he'll need to share time at short with Neil Berry and Strickland. The walking man, third baseman Eddie Yost will resume his usual pace of a weak BA but an uncanny ability to get on base; he also has some decent power. Andy Seminick and Joe Tipton will share time behind the plate; neither are terrible but Andy does have some power. Jim Delsing is an above average defensive OF but his bat is punchless. Gus Bell in right has some decent power but part timers Clyde Vollmer and Al Zarilla are the only other garden residents who can hit or play very much and Al's bat is much weaker than Clyde's. Mike the Bear Garcia is a great number one starter and could easily win 20 plus games but it's unlikely he'll get enough support on this team to accomplish that feat. After Mike we are talking about Jim Hearn and Ted Gray both of whom have control issues. Several swingmen will fill out the rotation. Joe Nuxhall and Frank Smith are the top men in the bullpen.

Indianapolis Clowns

The Clowns will probably have the worst OBA and SLG averages in the entire league and while you could argue the Giants and Larks pitching staffs are worse, it isn't by much so a last place finish seem assured. Dee Fondy, probably the best hitter on the team holds down first base and is one of the few Clowns with double figure homer potential. Johnny Mize may also get a few 1B at bats. Grady Hatton and Eddie Miksis will share time at second; neither can hit or field very well but they will keep the position warm while management waits for rookie Johnny Temple to develop. Johnny Logan is a solid hitter and fielder at short but will only be able to play 120 games or so; when he is out of the lineup the situation will be pretty grim. Randy Jackson who doesn't have much power will be the primary third baseman backed up by Tom Glaviano who does know how to take a walk. Joe Astroth, Harry Chiti and Les Fusselman will share time behind the plate as hot shot prospect Del Crandall is putting in his military service. Rookie outfielder Jungle Jim Rivera has some hitting ability and is a good defender. Willard Marshall has modest power, especially in the context of this team while Irv Noren and a flock of part timers will fill out the garden slots. Jerry Staley is a fine workhorse at the top of the rotation but he won't get a lot of quality help. Second year man Bob Friend has a lot of potential but will be only a modest contributor in 1952. The rest of the rotation, except for swingman Mickey McDermott are grim. Steve Ridzik and Paul LaPalme, who has major control issues are the best guys in the pen.