

PRE-SEASON PROGNOSIS 1953

American League

Goshen Aces

The Aces' attack is the best in the AL while the pitching staff is middle of the road but that could be enough to get them into the World Series. Whitey Lockman has a decent bat and glove at first although it would be nice if he had a little more power. Eddie Miksis doesn't walk much, and his bat doesn't have a lot of power, but he won't kill you in the field and will play second base. At short Chico Carresquel has a decent bat and glove; he can hit doubles but not homers. Ray Jablonski has some nice power at third and has a fine glove, but it would be nice if he walked a little more. The team lacks a natural centerfielder but in Stan the Man Musial, Minny Minoso and Del Ennis they have three outfielders who can play every day with good power and on base. The team lacks anything close to a full-time catcher but will shuttle in and out three no-names. The manager will be hard pressed to get through the season with the existing cast of characters on the mound as a slew of what should be relievers will be forced to start a lot of games; the best of the lot is probably Johnny Sain. The key to the season might be rubber armed knuckleballer Hoyt Wilhelm who will pitch in a lot of games, often two or three innings at a stretch, in order to help the hard-pressed starters.

Hoosier Thunderbolts

The 'Bolts pitching staff is better than the Aces, but the attack falls a little short. However, with a few breaks they could contend but just as easily fall to third or fourth. Hulking Steve Bilko has nice power, good on base and a decent glove at first base. Luke Easter, an even bigger man will get some playing time at first and also serve as a clutch pinch hitter. Billy Martin, at second has a good glove and nice power for a middle infielder but keep him away from marsh mellow salesmen! Joe Demaestri has a so-so glove and average bat; he will share time at short with veteran Eddie Joost who can field and get on base but will be limited in his playing time. Bob Elliott who can take a walk and knows how to field will share time at third with Bobby Hofman who has some power. Monty Irvin will be pressed into playing centerfield, not his natural position but he is a great hitter with nice power; he'll be spelled by Steve Souchack. Enos Country Slaughter and Bob Nieman will man the two corner outfield slots. Slaughter has a nice batting eye and near .300 bat, but his defense is weak, and he doesn't hit many home runs. Nieman is close to Slaughter in most offensive categories. but he has more power and is a better fielder. Matt Batts and Joe Garagiola will share time behind the plate; both are adequate but not outstanding. Carl Erskine and Eddie Lopat lead the pitching staff with help from Spec Shea and Max Surkont. Dave Jolly and Ben Wade are the best of a mediocre bullpen.

East Kenosha Larks

The normally downtrodden Larks will be in a season long fight for second place and could even rise to contention with a few breaks but could also fall to fourth. Bill Glynn, he of the punch and judy bat and slick glove, will get the majority of starts at first but he also plays the outfield. Roy Sievers, who has some power will also get work at first. Davey Williams is a fine hitter at second though he lacks power. He'll share time with Fred Hatfield and Cass Michaels. At short, Harvey Kuenn has a below average glove, but his bat is first rate. Bobby Adams is a serviceable third baseman, but it would be nice if he had a little more pop in his bat. Billy Cox is a nice infield spare and pinch hitter. Jim Busby in center is a great ball hawk with a .300 plus BA but not a lot of power. Bobby Thompson (the Giants win the pennant!) is a very good right fielder with 30 homer potential. That leaves 21-year-old Mickey Mantle, for whom the sky is the limit to complete a great outfield which is the strength of the team. Ray Murray and Les Moss are two fine catchers and will share time behind the plate. Lefties Whitey Ford and Curt

Summons lead the mound staff and they'll get a lot of help from swingmen Bob Buhl, Chuck Stobbs and Walt Masterson. Bob Hooper is the leader of the bullpen, but this is not a team strength.

South River Muck Dogs

What a difference a year makes! The Dogs were a putrid 42-112 in 1952 but they will battle the Larks for third this year and could rise even higher with a lot of breaks. The pitching staff is on a par with the Thunderbolts and Larks as the best in the division. The Big Klu Ted Kluszewski has a leaky glove at first but a powerful bat and could easily top 40 homers. First round pick Jim Gilliam looks to be a long-time star at second base as he can do just about everything except hit home runs. Shortstop is a problem as the manager will have to shuttle in several players, none of whom can hit much. At third Pete Suder has a great glove and can hit for a decent average but doesn't walk much and has little power. The shortstop trio will fill in for him as needed. Jimmy Piersall has a great glove and arm in right field; his bat is Ok but not much power. Hal Rice will be limited to less than 100 games, but he has a decent, if punchless bat. Peanuts Lowrey is the best of a bad lot of part-timers that will need to fill in the rest of the garden slots. The catching chores will be shared by Wes Westrum and Ed Fitzgerald; Wes is the better of the two. Robin Roberts and Virgil Trucks are both workhorses with 20-win potential and the undoubted leaders of the pitching staff. Several decent swingmen will complement them, and Bob Kuzava is a fine reliever.

Maumee River Carp

The defending champs are the exact opposite of the Muck Dogs as they won 96 regular season games and beat the Arsenal in five games in the fall classic but might not break .500 this year. Dick Kryhoski who has a little power will share time at first with Paul Smith who has very little. Billy Goodman who also plays first will share time at second with Wayne Terwilliger. Goodman is a much better hitter, but Wayne isn't bad. The Scooter, Phil Rizzuto who knows how to take a walk and field his position is the incumbent shortstop. George Kell at third has a good bat and won't kill you in the field. Sammy White is a serviceable catcher and will be backed up by Del Wilbur. Jackie Jensen is the only full-time outfielder on the roster; he has some decent power and knows how to take a walk. Don Lenhardt will be great for about 100 games, but the rest of the garden starts will go to several part-timers the best of whom is Mel Clark. Then we get to the pitching staff where the biggest fall off from 1952 will take place. Jim Lemon is still the ace of the staff, and he might repeat his 20 plus wins of last year with the proper support but Bob Rush who won 20 games last year will be an also ran. Lemon's only solid help in the rotation will come from swingmen Mike Fornieles and Joe Dobson but neither will be able start much more than 20 games. Rubber armed relievers Marlin Stuart and Johnny Hetki will provide some quality in the bullpen, but former ace Jim Konstanty is a shell of his former self.

River City Rugrats

Big falloff after the top five and the only thing that will keep the Rats out of the cellar is the putrid pitching staff of the Giants. Walt Dropo at first is allergic to the base on balls and has minimal power although he can field his position well. Bobby Young is a decent second baseman with a punchless bat. Shortstop is a grab bag with four men shuttling in and out. Ted Marsh and Willie Miranda can field OK but none of the quartet can hit. A completely different story at third where Eddie Mathews holds court. He can do it all and it wouldn't surprise if he flirted with 50 homers. Yogi Berra is the incumbent catcher and one of the best in all of SPBIII. He can hit, field and knows the strike zone. Hank Bauer in right is the best of the outfielders although it would be nice if he hit a few more home runs. Frank Thomas, who has good power and Johnny Groth will get most of the rest of the outfield starts. Ted Williams will be severely restricted in his playing time due to the Korean War but when he is in there, watch out. Burly Early Wynn and Bullet Bob Feller will lead the starting staff, but they'll get some quality help from

swingman Lew Burdette. Rookie Johnny Podres has a bright future, but it might be asking a lot to get much from him this year. The rest of the staff is shaky and only Andy Hansen could be considered a reliable reliever.

Brooklyn Royal Giants

The Giants seem anchored in last place unless their pitching staff seriously overachieves. Earl Torgenson is a decent first baseman and he'll split time with Tookie Gilbert who can field but definitely not hit. Solly Hemus, a great hitter, especially for a middle infielder is a much better shortstop but he'll be forced to play second, where he stinks to make room for Billy Hunter who only plays short. Hunter wrote the book on good field, no-hit shortstops. Vern Stephens and Jimmy Dyck will share time at third. Stephens is a much better hitter. Cracker jack utility man Connie Ryan will get starts at first, second and third all of which he plays well in the field, and he has a good bat. Hot shot rookie Ernie Banks is waiting in the wings. trio of catchers will share time behind the plate; none are exceptional, but they won't kill you either. Ritchie Ashburn in center can't hit home runs and has a weak arm but otherwise he is sensational as he can hit well over .300 and knows the strike zone. Gene Woodling is even better than Ashburn in drawing walks and will be another regular in the garden. Rip Repulski is the third outfielder and is well above average. As stated above, the pitching staff is a shambles as the team lacks anything even close to a leader and will have to go with some very sorry pitchers for the vast majority of starts. A bullpen, what is that! They do seem to be poised to get a solid shot at Hank Aaron, who is burning up the Negro Leagues and will be available in the 1954 draft.

National League

Chicago Stammers

Chicago has the best pitching staff in the league and the offense isn't far off. The Hawks may make some noise if their pitching holds up but right now the Stammers are solid favorites in the NL. Joe Collins will share time at first with Dick Gernert. Collins has some power, but Gernert really knows the strike zone. Spectacular Jackie Robinson is one of the best players in the league. He can hit for average, take a walk, has nice power, can steal a base and is a decent fielder at second and several other positions. Pee Wee Reese at short has a good sense of the strike zone, decent power for a middle infielder and is an adequate fielder. Ray Boone at third has very good power, can take a walk and is a good fielder. Sherm Lollar and Del Rice will share time at catcher, and both are well above average. Ralph Kiner, Frankie Baumholtz and Dale Mitchell are three solid outfielders but playing time will need to be found for Sid Gordon and Johnny Wyrostek. Southpaw Warren Spahn is one of the best pitchers in the league, but Bob Porterfield isn't far behind. The balance of the team starts will go to several solid swingmen. Hal White is a great reliever and will get a lot of help from a wide cast of characters.

Schaumburg Hawks

The Hawks will have an ironman lineup with seven of the regulars playing together for at least 145 games. The only exceptions are right field where Hank Sauer will be limited to 110 or so games and catcher which consists of a cast of thousands. First base belongs to Mickey Vernon who could challenge for the batting title, has good power and solid defense. Red Schoendienst at second is another batting champion challenger who has very good power for a middle infielder and is a great fielder. Granny Hamner at short has 20-homer potential and is also a sensational fielder. Puddin Head Jones anchors the infield at third and even though his BA won't be that great he can hit a homer and knows how to draw a walk. Joe Ginsberg is the best of the five headed catching hydra. Duke Snider in center and Gus Zernial in left both have 40-homer bats, know how to draw a walk and can field their positions. Sauer in

right will be limited in his playing time but when he is in the lineup look for decent power, good OB and a solid glove. Gene Stephens will fill in when Gus is on the bench; his bat isn't much, but he can field. Ruben Gomez and Larry Jansen are the top starters and swingmen Allie Reynolds and Bill Henry are also solid. The key to the season will be the bottom of the rotation as Billy Loes and Russ Meyer (not the porno king) need to come through. Ageless Satchell Paige, Tom Gorman and Clem Labine form a very good bullpen. The pitching staff is clearly the key to the Hawks' chances to compete in 1953

Rock Island Arsenal

Rock Island breezed to the 1952 pennant with 110 wins and a seventeen-game lead over their closest competitors before losing the World Series, but this is another year. They might challenge the Hawks for second but will also need to hold off the Grays and Blues to hang onto third. Eddie Robinson at first has decent power but a putrid glove. At second Nellie Fox has some issues with LHP but otherwise he is a solid hitter with a great glove. Roy McMillan at short is a solid fielder but doesn't have much of a bat. The star of the show is third baseman Al Rosen who could easily challenge for MVP. He has a great BA, knows the strike zone, can hit 40 homers and is a good fielder; can't ask for much more. Grady Hatton is a solid utilityman. Hatton has a decent batting eye but that's about all you can say positive about the duo. Smokey Burgess and Stan Lopata will share time behind the plate. Neither is much of a fielder, but Smokey is a much better hitter. Larry Doby in center has 30-homer power and a feel for the strike zone; his defense is acceptable. Dave Philley can play every day in right and his bat is solid, but with minimal power. Cal Abrams and Bob Kennedy will share the third outfield slot; Abrams has modest power, but Kennedy is punchless. Billy Pierce and Vic Raschi are a solid L/R duo at the top of the rotation and the balance of the starts will go to decent if unspectacular hurlers. Ernie Johnson, Harry Dorish and Al Brazle form a decent bullpen.

Worcester Grays

The Grays have some hope for third but could just as easily fall to fifth. Gil Hodges at first is a solid hitter with good power, great OB and a flashy glove. Jack Dittmer at second doesn't walk much but otherwise his bat is acceptable and he can make the routine plays in the field. George Strickland is a great defensive shortstop, and his bat is well above average. Third baseman Danny O'Connell will hit close to .300, knows the strike zone and can do the job in the field. The catching chores will be shared by Andy Seminick and Joe Tipton. Seminick has some power and is a decent fielder while Tipton knows the strike zone. Gus Bell is solid in center field. He can hit .300 has good power and is a fine defender. Jim Delsing is also a natural CF but he'll play a corner position where he has a good knowledge of the strike zone and modest power. Ed McGhee and Al Vollmer will split time at the third OF slot; Vollmer has some power while McGhee has none. Don Thompson and Al Smith are also available for outfield play. The Bear Mike Garcia is the undisputed leader of the pitching staff. He is a workhorse with 20-game potential. It's a little thin after him with several swingmen but the likes of Jim Hearn and Ted Gray will have to start a lot more games than the manager would like. Bob Milliken is the best reliever on the squad, but he'll be pressed into the starting rotation on occasion.

Kansas City Blues

The Blues will battle the Grays for fourth place and could move up with a few breaks. Joe Adcock is a nice first baseman with decent power and a msn acceptable glove. Johnny Pesky has a good bat and decent glove at second but his playing time will be limited. Floyd Baker who has a good glove and OK bat will fill in as needed. Pete Runnels at short doesn't have much pop in his bat but will do the job. Rocky Bridges and Ted Lepcio are nice utility infielders. Roy Campanella is one of the best catchers in all of SPBIII as he can hit for average, great power, a good batting eye and is a wizard with the glove. Ray Mueller has some defensive issues in the outfield, but he can hit for a high average but not a lot of

power. Vic Wertz has a great batting eye and nice power in another outfield slot. Bob Boyd and Wally Westlake are two fine hitters who will keep the third slot warm until eighteen year-old phenom Al Kaline is ready. The Kansas City pitching staff is not bad; the top hurlers are Wilmer Vinegar and Nizell and Ken Rafensberger, both lefties. Connie Marrero will provide great support in limited starts along with swingmen Sandy Consuegra, Don Liddle and Jim McDonald. Ellis Kinder is one of the top relievers in the league and has a rubber arm; it will be lights out if the Blues get a late inning lead.

Devilbiss Tigers

The Tigers looked to be locked into sixth place, but they could surprise, in either direction. First baseman Ferris Fain has a great batting eye and a solid glove, but you'd like a little more home run power from this position. Second baseman Bobby Avila has a solid bat, good glove and decent power for a middle infielder. Al Dark doesn't walk much but he has a .300 bat, with 20-homer potential and plays several positions well but will be the full-time shortstop for the Tigers in 1953. Gil McDougal at third is also a solid performer offensively and has a vacuum cleaner glove. Jim Hegan is a decent defender at catcher but doesn't hit much; he'll share time with Vic Janowicz who is an offensive cypher. Jim Greengrass has decent power and can play a good left field. Sam Mele has defensive issues but has an acceptable bat and will patrol another outfield position. Irv Noren and Hal Jeffcoat will share time in the third slot; neither has much to offer with the bat. The Tigers best starters, pint-size Harvey Haddix, Mel Parnell and Johnny Antonelli are all left handers but both Parnell and Antonelli have control issues. The rest of the rotation is OK but nothing special. Al Sima and Joe Coleman are the closest thing they have to a bullpen.

Indianapolis Clowns

The Clowns' attack is probably the worst in the NL while the pitching staff has some talent but also some holes. Dee Fondy at first is probably the best hitter on the team; he'll flirt with a .300 BA and has good power to go with a steady glove. The manager will have to run a quartet of players in to play second base; they are OK on defense but not much in terms of hitting. Johnny Logan is solid with both the glove and bat and will patrol shortstop. Third baseman Randy Jackson has a solid bat with decent power and can do the job with his glove. Del Crandall is a solid catcher and will be backed up by Hobie Landrith. Andy Pafko is a solid performer in right field with decent power and a good glove. Jungle Jim Rivera will patrol left and the best you can say about him is that he is adequate. That leaves Billy Bruton in center who is a good defender but don't look for much offense from him. Jim Pendleton is also available to fill in as needed. Mickey McDermott is number one in the rotation, but he has some serious control issues. Al Keltner and Gerry Staley are next on the list and the rotation will be filled out with some mediocre swing men. Gene Beardon and Jim Hughes are decent relievers.