

## PRE-SEASON PROGNOSIS 1961

### AMERICAN LEAGUE

#### **New York Mets**

The Mets (formerly the Schenectady Patriots from the National League) will battle the Jakes all year long, but come out slightly ahead in my complex formula. Diamond Jim Gentile, with a powerful bat and great batting eye, will hold down first base. Jerry Lumpe at second has a good bat and great glove. Roy McMillan at short doesn't hit much but he and Lumpe will turn a lot of double plays. Ken Boyer at third has a solid power laden bat to go with a great glove. This is one of the best defensive infields in SPB60 history. Johnny Romano will share time at catcher with Earl Averill who also plays the outfield. Hot shot teenager Tim McCarver is waiting in the wings. Wally Moon in left is a solid hitter, especially against RHP's but a poor defender. Center fielder Willie Davis is the exact opposite, a great fielder who won't kill you at the plate but is a marginal hitter at best. Frank Robinson in right might be the best hitter on the team and he is no slouch in the field. The manager will need to find playing time for the two Ron's (Hunt and Fairly) who could start for just about any other team. Whitey Ford and Joey Jay are a fantastic L/R combo at the top of the rotation but they also have Johnny Podres, Dick Donovan, Don Cardwell and Lou Burdette to round out a solid starting cast. Billy Hoelt and Barney Schultz are good relievers and they'll get a lot of help from some solid backups.

#### **Joliet Jakes**

The Jakes' offense is one of the most thunderous in all the history of SPB. The pitching staff is a bit below the Mets but these two teams should pulverize the rest of the league and it will come down to how well they play against each other. Moving to the cozy confines of the LA version of Wrigley Field should magnify the Jakes' power and it will be no surprise if they exceed 300 team homers. Moose Skowron at first would be the top power guy on almost any other SPB-60 team but here he well down the list. Bobby Richardson at second can't hit or field very well, but that's no big problem on this team. Rocky Bridges, a decent hitter but poor fielder will share time at short with Eddie Kasko who is a slightly better fielder and won't kill you at the plate. Don Hoak is a marginal fielder at third but his bat is too good to keep him out of the lineup. Yogi Berra and John Blanchard will share time behind the plate but both can also play the outfield. The M & M boys (Maris and Mantle) will easily combine for well over 100 homers and in Wrigley Field it could be a lot more. Pitching to these two will put the fear of God in opposing pitchers. Jim Landis (one of the few non-Yankees on the team) is a great flyhawk in center and a solid hitter to boot. Jerry Lynch and Bob Nieman are available for spot play in the outfield but their main value will be as dynamite pinch hitters. Bill Stafford, Denny McClain, Don Schwall and Chuck Estrada are the mainstays of the starting rotation but Estrada and Schwall have serious control issues. Luis Arroyo, Tom Morgan and Jim Brosnan form a great bullpen. If the Jakes can keep down the number of bases on balls issued and the pitchers can keep the ball in the park while their hitters pound it out, it could be a great year for Joliet.

#### **Frankfort Frigates**

A major falloff after the top two and it would represent an earthquake of titanic proportions for any of the other AL teams to contend for first or second but it could be a four-way dog fight for third with the Frigates having a very slight edge. Gordie Coleman is solid at first base but Steve Bilko might get some starts against LHP's. Coleman is a great fielder with solid power while Bilko can hit the ball out but also knows how to draw a walk. Frank Bolling at second has good power for a middle infielder and can field his position very well. Woodie Held can hit and field at short while Frank Malzone is more than adequate at third. Utilityman Bobbie Malkmus can file in very well at second short and third. Elston

Howard is sensational with both the bat and glove at catcher and he has several decent backups when he needs to rest. Billy Bruton anchors the outfield in center where he can hit a bit and also defend very well. Gary Geiger is next best in the garden but neither his bat or glove will earn him many All-Star votes. Wally Post is decent but injuries will keep him down to about 100 games with the balance of outfield starts going to several undistinguished spear carriers. The starting staff is not bad with Jim Bunning, Jim Archer, Billy Pierce, Bob Purkey and Ted Bowsfield. Ron Perranoski is a good closer but the rest of the bullpen is sketchy.

### **Massillon Tigers**

The Tigers will live and die by their pitching staff as the attack is clearly the worst in all of SPB-60. First baseman Vic Power can field and hit a few doubles but you'd like a little more home run power from this position. Don Blasingame and Elio Chacon will share time at second. Both are decent fielders but Blasingame is a terrible hitter while better hitter Chacon will be limited in his playing time. Chico Fernandez at short can field but is strictly a punch and Judi hitter. Pumpsie Green knows how to get on base and will get some starts at short. Third sacker Danny O'Connell can field but won't hit the ball out of the park very often. The Walking Man Eddie Yost will get a few starts at third while the manager waits for hot shot rookie Rich Rollins to develop. Tom Haller is the catcher of the future but in 1961 the team will have to rely on a triumvirate of Ed Sadowski, Jerry Zimmerman and Hal Smith, none of whom can hit. Al Kaline is clearly the best hitter on the team and a fixture in right field. Pint-size Albie Pearson is a great lead-off man and can field his position in center very well. Wes Covington, Leo Posada and Lee Maye will fill in as needed. Then we get to the pitching staff. Frank Lary, Don Mossi, Art Mahaffey and Bob Buhl are a solid starting staff with veteran Vern Law and Stacey Stallard filing in as needed. But the real strength of the staff is the bullpen which features, Stu Miller, Bill Henry, Turk Lown and Chet Nichols. These guys must produce if Massillon is to contend for third place.

### **Newark Bears**

The Bears have a decent attack but control issues on the pitching staff could hold them back. The Big Klu (Ted Kluszewski) and Dave Philley will split time at first. Neither can field but Klu has some power which Philley sorely lacks. Billy Martin is a horrible fielder at second and seems to have an allergy to the base on balls but other than Alex Grammas (also needed at short) who can field but not hit, there isn't anyone else. Grammas and Charley Smith are about all the team has to play short. Steve Boros has a little power and will play most of the games at third but don't look for much defense from him. His backup is Bubba Phillips has some power but is also a lousy fielder. Haywood Sullivan and Carl Sawatski will share time behind the plate but this is not a team strength. Hammering Hank Aaron and Sey Hey Willie Mays are the stars of the team and two outfield fixtures. Too bad you can't clone these guys for several of the infield positions. Earl Robinson and veteran Duke Snider along with Lee Walls will fill out the outfield starts. Bill Monbuquette, Ray Sadecki, Paul Foytack, Skinny Brown and pint-size Harvey Haddix are the starting corps but the first two have serious control issues. Terry Fox, Don McMahon and Hank Aguirre are the guts of a good bullpen. Heralded rookie Sudden Sam McDowell is waiting on the wings but will contribute nothing in 1961.

### **Mound City Saints**

The Saints have a better offense than the three teams above but probably the worst pitching staff. However, they should still be in the fight for third. Orlando Cepeda has 50-homer potential at first base with his only drawback being an aversion to the base on balls. Orlando will also move to the outfield on occasion in order to give Roy Sievers playing time. Julian Javier and Don Zimmer will share time at second base. Javier is a better hitter than Zimmer but neither are standouts. Maury Wills at short has the ability to steal a base, can field adequately and is a very good leadoff man. Junior Gilliam has a

good glove at third and knows how to get on base. Gus Triandos, who has some power will share time at catcher with Joe Pignatano who is a decent hitter and receiver. Rocky Colavito in right field will vie with Cepeda for the team home run lead but has much better on base potential. He also is a decent fielder with a cannon arm. Joe Cunningham is a below average fielder without a lot of power but he can get on base. Frank Thomas has good power and will also start in the garden. Cepeda and Gino Cimoli will fill in as needed. Jim O'Toole, Milt Pappas, Steve Barber and Ernie Broglio are the guts of the starting staff but all have control issues with Barber being the worst in this area. Dave Hillman and Bobby Bolin are the top relievers and they'll get help from swingmen Bob Hendley and Wynn Hawkins. As mentioned above, the pitching staff is a problem and they need to produce in order for the Saints to display their haloes.

### **Beard Black Cats**

And the first shall be last! Incredibly the three-time defending champion Black Cats came in a very definitive last in my complex formula. Their offense has some power but nowhere near as much as the other teams in the division, save the Tigers and the pitching staff is clearly the worst. What happened? They did make some trades but it wasn't a wholesale "dump". It's just that several players who excelled in 1960 fell way off in the new year. First baseman Joe Adcock, despite a putrid glove appears to be much better in 1961 with 35 plus homer potential. Johnny Temple at second appears to be the mirror image offensively of the 1960 incumbent Pete Runnels but Johnny is a very poor fielder. Dick Groat isn't bad in the context of other SPB-60 shortstops but he is sure to fall way off from his excellent 1960. Gene Freese has decent power at third but his glove is suspect. Del Crandall was a top performer in 1960 but injuries will keep him out of this year's lineup and he'll be replaced by Ed Bailey and Mike Roarke, neither of whom are world beaters. The outfield will be almost entirely different except for CF Bill Virdon whose main value is defense. Newcomer Floyd Robinson has a good, though punchless bat in right. Leon Daddy Wags Wagner returns and will contribute some good power with a leaky glove. The pitching staff is a story in itself. They went from the second-best staff in all of SPB-60 to the worst in the AL and among the bottom four in the entire league. Curt Simmons looks to have a better year in 1961 but that's about it as Bob Friend and Jack Kralick should fall way off. Off season acquisition Pedro Ramos will fill out the rotation but he is no All-Star. The bullpen's Roy Face was one of the heroes of last year but should fall way off this year and he won't get the kind of excellent help he had in 1960.

## **NATIONAL LEAGUE**

### **Louisiana Lightning**

The Light's won 97 games last year and the AL pennant before falling in the World Series. This year they are in the NL but look to be solid favorites again. Stormin' Norman Cash is an offensive dynamo; a great batting average, an OBA close to .500 and 40 plus home run power; can't ask for much more and he is also a good defender. Bill Mazerowski is still a defensive wizard and has some pop in his bat but doesn't walk much. Shortstop Luis Aparicio can field and may lead the league in steals while his bat is above average. Third sacker Cletis Boyer is a human vacuum cleaner and can hit enough to not be an embarrassment. Catcher Earl Battey is tough with both the bat and glove and his backup Gene Green can hit although he is a poor receiver. Right fielder Roberto Clemente returns with a great bat and cannon arm. Center fielder Vida Pinson has a .340 plus BA, good power and a fine glove. Billy Williams and George Thomas will share time in left. Bob Gibson, Don Drysdale, Stan Williams and Jim Kaat are a fine starting rotation but all have control issues to some extent. They don't have a knockout reliever but the offense will score enough runs so that this shouldn't be a major problem.

### **Riverside Robbers**

The Robbers won only 70 games in the AL last year but this year they seem firmly entrenched in second place and could compete for the pennant if the Lightning falter. Willy (Stretch) McCovey and Dick (Doctor Strange Glove) Stuart will share time at first where both have good power; Stuart better than Stretch but Dick is a defensive liability. Jerry Adair is the second baseman and he won't embarrass you. Tony Kubek at short doesn't walk much but he has a good glove and can hit doubles, if not homers. Harmon Killebrew can't field much at third but he has great home run power and can take a walk. Joe Torre and Russ Nixon will share time behind the plate. They both can hit, while Joe has better power, Russ is a poor fielder. Jackie Brandt is a good fielder in center has good power and knows how to take a walk. Lee Thomas has good power, especially against RHP and will play right field. George Altman in left has a good bat with power but is a below average fielder. Mike Hershberger, Frank Howard and Ritchie Ashburn will fill in as needed. Ralph Terry, Mike McCormick and Bob Shaw are the top starters and will be backed up by swingmen Carl Willey and Bob Anderson. The top relievers are Wes Stock, Bob Allen and Tex Clevenger.

### **New Bedford Ahabs**

New Bedford and East Kenosha will battle it out for third place but it will be tough for either to rise any higher. The Ahabs have a better pitching staff but the attack is not strong. Pete Runnels doesn't have a lot of power but he does know how to get on base and will get the lion's share of starts at first base,; sharing time with veteran Gil Hodges. Charlie Neal isn't much of a hitter or fielder but he'll be the primary starter at second base by default; a host of nonentities will back him up. Ruben Amaro is a decent hitter and fielder and will play short. Defensive whiz extraordinaire Brooks Robinson holds down third and he's an above average hitter, with good doubles if not home run power. John Roseboro and Dick Brown will share time behind the plate and are good defenders with decent bats; both have good power for catchers. Tommy Davis and Felipe Alou are the closest thing to full time outfielders and both are more than adequate. A parade of decent others such as Chuck Hinton, Don Demeter, Russ Snyder and Matty Alou will ably fill out the remainder of the lineup card. Camilio Pascual and Gary Bell are the leaders of the staff but swingmen Dick Hall and Jim Coates will also contribute. Bobby Shantz is the leader of the bullpen but the team has a lot of depth if not a lot of stars.

### **East Kenosha Lakers**

East Kenosha has a decent attack but the pitching staff has some problems especially a lack of depth. Norm Larker, a nice bango hitter will get about 100 starts at first with Tito Francona and Marty Keough, both of whom also play the outfield filling in the rest. Second baseman Nellie Fox has slipped a bit on defense but his hustling style will continue to motivate the rest of the team. Dick Howser at short is the stereotypical led off man but his defense is suspect. Home town hero Eddie Mathews returns at third with a powerful bat and the ability to get on base. Bob Lillis is a fine utilityman at second, short and third. Veteran Sherm Lollar returns behind the plate where he has a decent bat and great glove; his backup is young Cam Carreon. As mentioned above, Francona, a fine hitter, and Keough, a mediocre one, will get a lot of outfield starts. Ancient Stan Musial comes back for another year and even though his skills have deteriorated, he is still a dangerous hitter. Lenny Green, who has a penchant for getting on base will get a lot of outfield starts. Howser will push Jose Pagan out of his natural shortstop position but he will get some outfield starts. The team is patiently waiting for budding stars Lou Brock and Donn Clendenon to develop. Warren Spahn and Juan Pizarro are two great left-handed starters but the balance of the rotation (Larry Jackson, Glen Hobbie, Mudcat Grant and Jack Sanford) are not up to that level and the last two have control issues. The bullpen is very suspect with nothing like an ace. Ryne Duren will have a hard time hitting the side of a barn, let alone the strike zone while Hal Woodeshick,

Dallas Green and Frank Bauman are a disaster waiting to happen. The team will have a hard time holding onto late inning leads.

### **Wabash Six**

The Six and Tarheels will battle it out for sixth place with both having some chance to rise but either could fall to the cellar if the Argonauts overachieve. Norm Siebern at first is a solid hitter with good power, although he does have issues with LHP. Tony Taylor and Ken Aspromonte will share time at second; Taylor is a better hitter while Aspromonte is a better defender. Shortstop will be a grab bag with three players shuttling in and out as the manager waits for top prospect Tom Tresh to develop. Jim Davenport will play the hit corner where he has a decent bat and glove; veteran Andy Carey will back him up. Hal Smith and Sammy Taylor will share time behind the plate although neither will contribute much on either offense or defense. The top outfielders are Bob Allison and Jimmy Piersall. Both are great ball hawks; Bob has good power and on base while "I'm not crazy and I have a paper to prove it" Piersall brings a .320 bat and modest power. Veteran Gene Woodling, who has serious defensive issues will play 100 plus games against RHP's while Bill Tuttle and Bobby Smith will fill in as needed for both Piersall and Woodling. Ken McBride and Mel Daniels are the top two starters but both have control issues. Burly Early Wynn and several swingmen will fill out the rotation. Knuckleballer Hoyt Wilhelm is a top notch closer and he'll get help from Jack Baldschun and the swingmen.

### **Raleigh Tarheels**

The Heels' offense is not bad but they have some pitching issues. Bill White is a solid hitter and fielder and holds down first base. Jerry Kindall and Joey Amalfitano will share time at second. Neither can hit much and defense for both is suspect. Ron Hansen at short is a flashy fielder who has a decent bat with some power. The hot corner is the abode of Ron Santo who has a nice bat with good power but his defense is shaky. Clay Darympyle, an excellent receiver will share time at catcher with Jim Pagliaroni, who is a better hitter with some power. Curt Flood is clearly the best of the outfielders; he can hit singles if not homers and is a great defender. Johnny Callison will patrol right field where he murders RHP's but has some issues with lefties. Bobby Del Greco, Jim King and Whitey Herzog will fill out the balance of the outfield starts; none have much power but they can get on base. If we could roll the clock forward a year or three this would be a pitching staff for the ages with Sandy Koufax, Juan Marichal, Gary Peters, Jim Maloney and Chris Short but they are all still in the development stage although Koufax looks like he might have a breakout year in 1961. Al McBean and Bill Fischer are the closest thing to a bullpen but they also have issues.

### **Asbury Argonauts**

Jason and his buddies could rise from the cellar but a mediocre attack and arguably the worst pitching staff in SPB-60 will probably hold them back. Pancho Herrera and veteran Vic Wertz will share time at first; they both possess some power and decent on base. Chuck Schilling at second has decent defense and a slightly above average bat. Red Schoendienst can also play second but his main value is as a pinch hitter. Ernie Banks has great power for a shortstop and is a good defender. Wayne Causey with help from Al Smith will patrol third. Smokey Burgess, a solid hitter will handle the chores behind the plate with help from Dick Bertel while highly ranked teenage phenom Bill Freehan waits in the wings. Ageless Minnie Minoso who has a solid bat and so-so glove will patrol one outfield spot while Smith, who has 30-homer potential will play another when he's not at third. Tony Gonzales, another shaky fielder will also play semi-regularly. Jim Lemon is also available; he has modest power but is another leaky glove. The pitching staff lacks a solid number one and most of the starters (Dick Ellsworth, Jim Perry, Gene Conley, Jack Fisher and Ike Delock) would be hard pressed to make the fourth or fifth slot on many of

the other clubs. Clem Labine and Jerry Staley are the closest thing to bullpen “aces” but they won’t get a lot of votes for the Roleaids relief man of the year.