

1964 PRESEASON PROGNOSIS

AMERICAN LEAGUE

New York Mets

The Mets have a solid team all the way around, both offense and pitching staff. They made it to the World series last year but lost out to the Tarheels. First base will be shared by Ron Fairly and Fred (Wingy) Whitfield. Both have modest power and Fairly is a slightly better defender, but Fred cannot hit LHP's at all. Jerry Lumpe is a solid everyday performer at second base but nothing special. At short we have Zoilo Versalles who has 20-homer power, rare for middle infielder, and can play every day but it would be nice if he was a little more patient at the plate. Ken Boyer at third is one of the stars of the team as he hits both righties and lefties equally well and has nice power with a decent glove. Frank Robinson in right field has great extra base power and knows how to take a walk; his defense is decent but not outstanding. He can also steal a base. The centerfielder Willie Davis is an excellent ball hawk and will hit close to .300 but can't take a walk if it was handed to him. Leon (Daddy Wags) Wagner has 30-homer power in left but his glove is a little weak. Veteran Bob Skinner is also available for spot play. Jim Ray Hart is a decent third baseman and might be languishing on the bench behind Boyer but with the institution of the DH, he is a natural for that position. He can play every day, hits both righties and lefties and has 30-homer potential. Young Tim McCarver has developed into a fine hitter at catcher, but his defense is not the best. Lefty Whitey Ford is the standout leader of the pitching staff, but he'll get great support from swingmen Rob Herbel, Ken Johnson and Phil Ortega. The balance of the rotation is a bit shaky, but the team has an outstanding bullpen featuring Ron Kline, Eddie Fisher, Barney Schultz and Bob Humpherys.

Newark Bears

The Bears have exposed a flaw in my complicated rating formula. The team WHIP is a big part of the formula and even though Newark has the worst in the AL, it is only a few notches below the Mets who are the best. Since the formula is just a strict comparison without regard to the amount of the difference, the Bears are overall rated lower than the Mets but in reality, they will battle New York all season long. Veteran Joe Adcock and youngster Boog Powell will share time at first where each have powerful bats. Both will also get time at DH. Woodie Held and Bernie Allen will share time at second; both are decent defenders, but Woodie is a much better hitter. Veteran Dick Groat can play every day at short, and his bat is more than adequate with good doubles if not home run power, but his defense is wanting. At third base we have Pete Ward who has nice power and a good glove. As stated above, Adcock and Powell will put in time at DH along with utilityman Charley Smith and several others. The twin anchors of the team, Sey Hey Willie Mays and Hammerin' Hank Aaron return at center and right respectively and each are poised for a sensational season. Both should hit over .300 with great on base and Mays could flirt with 50 homers. Ellis Valentine and several spear carriers will share time in left. Bob Rodgers will get most of the starts at catcher where he has a below average bat but a terrific glove. Mike Brumley is also available for spot play behind the plate. Solid veteran Robin Roberts is the clear leader of the staff. Young phenom fireballer

Sudden Sam McDowell will strike out a lot of batters but also issue a lot of walks. Three lefties, Dave McNally, Ray Sadecki and Hank Aguirre round out the starting staff. Hot shot second year man Denny McClain is waiting in the wings. The bullpen features Don McMahon, Don Lee, Stu Miller and Bobby Shantz.

Frankfort Frigates

Big falloff after the top two and Frankfort will battle the Tourists all year for third place. Rising any higher will be tough. The offense isn't bad, but the pitching staff will hold them back. First sacker Joe Pepitone has good power and a nice glove but doesn't know the strike zone very well. Joey Amalfitano and Chico Salmon will switch off at second; Joey is a decent hitter and defender while Chico is a much better hitter but will be limited in the number of games he can play. Dick Howser is an everyday shortstop and won't embarrass you at the plate or the field. Frank Malzone is still a fine third baseman and the fact that his defense is superior will push Dick Allem, a great all-around hitter to the DH role. Teenage rookie Tony Conigliaro will be limited as to how many games he can start in left field but when he is in there, watch out. Nelson Mathews can play every day in center, but his bat is not very productive. The defensive skills of veteran Billy Bruton have atrophied over the years, but he is still productive, and he will get some time in the outfield. Sam Bowens has decent power and will get a lot of starts in right field. Elston Howard is one of the best catchers in the league both offensively and defensively and can play almost every day. Jim Bunning, Bob Purkey and Bill Monbouquette are all fine starters, but the quality falls off after that trio. Warren Spahn is finally starting to feel the effects of age and won't be a factor in 1964. Billy Pierce is a great reliever, but his availability will be limited. Bill Wakefield and Lindy McDaniel will help out in the pen.

Asheville Tourists

The former Mound City Saints won the regular season AL pennant in 1963 but were upset in the playoffs by the Mets. They will battle the Frigates for third place this year. Orlando Cepeda, a fine hitter with good power will get the majority of starts at first base with help from Marty Keough. Julian Javier, a below average hitter with some power and a decent glove will play second base. Speedster Maury Wills can steal a base and slap the ball around the infield if not out of the park and will be the shortstop. Don Zimmer who has an OK bat and glove will share time at third with veteran Jim Gilliam who is starting to show signs of age. Joe Koppe is a nice infield reserve. Jimmy Hall in center and Carl Yastrzemski in left have decent power, although Hall is better, and both can do the job in the field. Rocky Colavito is a solid power hitter in right with a cannon arm. Jimmy Piersall, a fine hitter and fielder is available for spot play in the garden. The non-starting outfielders and several others will share time at DH. The team doesn't have a regular catcher, but several players will alternate behind the plate. Jim O'Toole, Frank Pappas and Jim Bouton are the top three starters, Several other decent pitchers, including Joe Sparma (a Massillon Ohio native!) will fill out the rotation. Bob Tiefenbauer is a fine closer, but he doesn't have a lot of help in the bullpen.

Joliet Jakes

This team has a nice offense and will battle for fourth place, but a leaky pitching staff will hold them back. Moose Skowron will anchor first base; he has decent power and an average glove. The second baseman Bobby Richardson doesn't walk much and has little power; his glove is decent but not outstanding. Eddie Kasko at short has a punchless bat but a good glove. Ed Charles has some power but a weak glove; he will play third base. Both Phil Linz and Mike de la Hoz are nice utility infielders. Mickey Mantle's defensive skills have seriously declined but he still has a potent bat and will play both left field and DH. Right fielder Roger Maris has declined from his glory days, but he still has decent power and knows how to draw a walk. Flyhawk Billy Cowan will get most of the starts in centerfield where he has some power but doesn't draw many walks. Jerry Lynch has a terrible glove but decent bat but he'll be forced to play some outfield and also DH when Mantle rests. Carl Warwick and George Alusik are also available to play in the outfield. Johnny Romano, who has nice power and Johnny Blanchard will share time behind the plate. The team has three decent starters in Fred Newman, Bo Belinsky and Johnny Buzhardt but not a lot behind them. Rookie Mel Stottlemyre will be tough but only in limited appearances. Wes Stock and Bill Stafford are nice relievers, but the bullpen has no depth.

Beard Black Cats

The Cats could challenge for fourth with a few breaks, but it is asking way too much for them to rise any higher. First baseman Norm Siebern has a great knowledge of the strike zone and some power but might struggle to hit .250. Ron Hunt and Phil Gagliano will share time at second; Hunt is a much better hitter but neither have much of a glove. Dick Tracewski and Andre Rodgers will share time at short; Dick has a good glove, Rogers not so much; neither will wow you at the plate. Jim Davenport, who has a nice glove will share time at third with Gene Freese who can't hit much and is a disaster in the field. Woody Woodward is a useful infield spare. Don Lock in center field has the best power on the team and a nice batting eye. George Altman is a good defender at both corner outfield slots, but he doesn't hit much. Wes Covington has a nice bat, but his glove is so bad he will probably be banished to the DH slot. There are several spear carriers who will move in and out of the other outfield slots. Johnny Edwards has a nice bat and glove and will get most of the starts behind the plate; his backup is veteran Smoky Burgess. The team has four decent starters in Larry Jackson, Bob Friend, Curt Simmons and Tony Cloniger and fifth starter Hank Fischer isn't bad. The lefty/righty duo of Ron Perranoski and Johny Klippstein are the heart of the bullpen, and they will get help from Chi-Chi Olivo, Larry Bearnarth and swingman Jim Owens.

Fairfax Greys

The Greys could move up to sixth and with a few breaks even a little higher, but a weak attack will hold them back although the pitching staff is not bad. A parade of part timers will keep first base warm until hot shot rookie Tony Perez is ready. Second year man Pete (Charley Hustle) Rose will get the majority of starts at second base and his replacement will be Bobby Klaus. Rose is a decent defender who has little power, but his potential is unlimited. Ron Hansen is a very good shortstop with nice power and a great glove. Bob Aspromonte has a below average glove but a good bat and will play third

base. Center fielder Jackie Brandt is the closest thing the team has to a full-time outfielder; he is an average hitter with a good glove. George Thomas has some power and a decent glove and will get 100 or so games in a corner infield slot. Willie Smith is a decent hitter and fielder, but the rest of the outfield slots will be filled by several part timers. The DH slot will be by committee for those who aren't playing first base or the outfield. Gus Triandos and Jose Azcue will share time behind the plate. Azcue is a better hitter and fielder. A parade of starters will share time in the rotation, the best of whom are swingmen Gaylord Perry and Joey Jay. The non starting starters will fill in the bullpen roles.

Massillon Tigers

The Bengals were a decent 85-77 in 1963 but might be hard pressed to avoid 100 losses this year. They have the worst team power in the league and the pitching staff isn't much better. Tommy McCraw and Vic Power will platoon at first base. Neither has much power but they both can play the field. Don Blasingame and Nate Oliver will likewise platoon at second. The same comments as at first, no power but good gloves. Gene Alley and Bobby Wine will switch off at short; both are terrible hitters, but Wine is a better fielder. Cleve Boyer has a great glove at third and can play every day, but his bat is weak. This is a really bad infield. Right fielder Al Kaline along with left fielder Milt Maye are the best hitters on the team; both have good power and Kaline has a nice glove while Maye's glove is below par. Ron Harper and Al Spangler, who also will be needed at DH will switch off in center. Rod Kanehl and Spangler will handle the DH duties. Tom Haller, a nice hitter and Doc Edwards with a below average bat will platoon at catcher. On the mound, the starters are weak, but the bullpen is not bad with Jack Baldschun. Bill Henry and Don Mossi. However, how many late leads will they have to protect?

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Raleigh Tarheels

The Heels won 113 games in 1963 and breezed to the fall classic and then defeated the New York Mets in a thrilling seven game series. This year they will battle the Lightning all season long. Bill White at first base has some issues with LHP's and may need to platoon with Gene Oliver but when he faces a RHP, watch out and his defense is outstanding. Don Buford at second is a solid all-around player on offense and defense but not outstanding. He'll get some help from defensive whiz Jerry Kindall. At short Jim Fregosi can play every day, has nice power, knows the strike zone and is a good defender. You could repeat those attributes for third sacker Ron Santo, except he has more power, and his glove is not quite as good. Dennis Menke could start at second, short or third for many other teams but here he will be a useful utilityman and get some work at DH. Curt Flood in center doesn't have a lot of home run power but he can slap the ball around pretty well, play every day and has a good glove. Bob Allison in left also has 30-homer power and a good batting eye. The only flaw for right fielder Johnny Callison is an aversion to the base on balls but otherwise he is solid. As stated above Menke will get time at DH along with several other part timers. Clay Dalrymple will

platoon at catcher with Jim Pagliaroni. Pags is a better hitter and Clay better with the glove. Last year's quartet of Sandy Koufax, Juan Marichal, Jim Maloney and Gary Peters returns as a sensational starting staff. Could we have four 20-game winners this year; it's possible. Al McBean, Billy McCool, John Wyatt and Jim Duffalo form a great bullpen. This team is formidable, but the Lightning are also loaded, and the pennant race should be a real donnybrook.

Louisiana Lightning

The Lightning won 96 games last year and earned a wild card slot. This year's squad should be even better. They would probably romp in the American League but will have a tough opponent in the Tarheels in the NL. Stormin' Norman Cash and Bob Chance will platoon at first base; both have nice power and know how to get on base; Norm is a better defender. Bill Mazerowski returns at second base with his flashy glove and ability to play every day. He has some power but doesn't walk much. Leo Cardenas at short doesn't have a lot of home run power but he can hit doubles and fields the position adequately. Don Wert is a solid performer at the hot corner where his biggest contribution is a good glove. Roberto Clemente in right and Billy Williams in left are both outstanding performers. Roberto has a cannon arm and great glove while Williams can throw but his glove is not the best. In center they have Vada Pinson who has nice power and a good glove. The newly established DH position is perfect for Rico Carty who has great offensive talent and a weak glove. Earl Battey and Jesse Gonder will share time behind the plate; both can slap the ball around pretty well and hit an occasional homer. The pitching staff isn't quite as flashy as the Tarheels but the quintet of Don Drysdale, teenage sensation Wally Bunker, Bob Veale, Bob Gibson and Jim Kaat are as good as anyone else in the league. Plus they have a great and deep bullpen with Dick Hall, Hoyt Wilhelm, Al Worthington and Hal Woodeshick.

New Bedford Ahabs

This is a solid team, but they can't hope to overcome the two teams above over the length of a season but can try for a wild card slot and then get hot in the playoffs. First baseman Don Demeter doesn't walk much but he has good power and a nice glove. Felix Mantilla, who also plays several other positions will be the main man at second base where he has 30-homer potential but a weak glove. Hal Lanier and his good glove will spell him. At short they have Eddie Bressoud who has a nice bat with good on base, nice power and a decent glove. The hot corner is the domain of Brooks Robinson who has a very productive bat, can play every day and is a good fielder. John Kennedy is a nice infield reserve. Chuck Hinton has a nice bat and will play left field where his glove is adequate. The three Alou brothers, Felipe, Matty and Jesus will fill out most of the rest of the outfield starts. Tommy Davis will get most of the starts at DH. John Roseboro is a top-flight catcher, but he doesn't have a lot of power; his backup will be Dick Brown. Camilio Pascual is clearly the leader of the staff, Earl Wilson and Diego Segui are two and three, but neither is top notch. Part timer Ray Herbert will be part of the mix along with several non-descript swingmen. The bullpen is strong with Dick the Monster Radatz, Don Lee, Ed Roebuck, Sammy Ellis and Bob Miller.

Houston Colt 45's

They might challenge the Ahab's for third place but will have to battle all year with the Argonauts to hold onto fourth. Donn Clendenon will play first base where he has a decent bat and mediocre glove. Defensive whiz Wes Parker will also get some starts at first in addition to playing the outfield. Bobby Knopp has a very good glove and very poor bat and will play pretty much every day at second base. Ruben Amaro and Larry Brown will switch off at shortstop; Amaro is a better hitter and Brown a better fielder. Eddie Mathews returns at third base. He can still hit it over the fence and knows how to take a walk and field his position, but his batting average could be well below .250. Veteran Nellie Fox has been a mainstay at second base for years, but his defense has deteriorated to the point that he will play DH in 1964. He can still slap the ball around pretty well but has no power. Right fielder Tony Oliva is the best hitter on the team. He will hit well over .300 with both doubles and homers and has a good glove but doesn't walk as much as you would like. Speedster Lou Brock, the left fielder has a weak glove, but his bat is very productive with nice power. Vic Davalillo plays center and is tough on defense and slaps the ball around pretty well although few will leave the park, but he also is allergic to the base on balls. Dick Bertell and Don Leppert will share time behind the plate. Dick is an average to below average hitter while Don's bat is terrible. The team has four good starters in Joel Horlen, Juan Pizarro, Bob Bruce and Turk Farrell with Al Downing and Mudcat Grant rounding out the rotation. Claude Raymond, fireballing Ryne Duren and swingman Roger Craig are a fine bullpen. If the 45's make any hay in 1964, the pitching staff will be the main reason.

Asbury Argonauts

As stated above, Jason and his crew will be in solid contention for fourth place and look to improve on last year's 68 wins. Ernie Banks has moved from shortstop to first base, but he is still a solid hitter with nice power, but he doesn't walk much. Wayne Causey at second has a very productive bat and he knows the strike zone; his defense is acceptable. Dick McAuliffe is a nice workmanlike shortstop who can play every day, but hot shot rookie Bert Campaneris is waiting in the wings. Rich Rollins has a decent bat with some power and can do the job defensively at third base. Floyd Robinson in right is probably the best overall hitter on the team although it would be nice if he had a little more home run power. Tony Gonzales in center slaps the ball around pretty well although few will leave the park and he can do the job in the field. Jim Hickman and Mike White will share time in left; Hickman has some power, unlike White and both are adequate in the field. The team lacks a full time DH, but several spear carriers will rotate in and out of the lineup. Bill Freehan is a solid catcher who can hit very well and has a cannon arm. The top four starting pitchers (Jack Kralick, Dennis Bennett, Mickey Lolich and Dick Ellsworth) are all left-handed which could cause some problems (or opportunities) as the season progresses. Righty Jack Fisher is also available. Harvey Haddix, Hal Reniff, Al Ridzik and Jim Perry form the basis of a deep bullpen. Former star Elroy Face is now on the downside of a good career.

Gem City Bombers

The Bombers will have a tough time rising to fifth place but could easily fall to seventh as they and the Bullies are evenly matched. The club has very good team power but because they will draw few walks, a lot of homers will be of the solo variety. Deon Johnson and Willie McCovey will share first base, but both will probably get time in the outfield as the DH position is in the hands of slugger Dick Stuart who has a horrible glove. Dick Green has a great glove at second and modest power but also doesn't walk. Jerry Adair will fill in as needed. Tony Kubek and Roy McMillan will share the shortstop position but neither knows the strike zone very well, but Tony is a much better fielder. Teenage phenom Sonny Jackson is still a few years away. Bob Bailey at third has a nice bat but a terrible glove and might have to be moved to the outfield where he isn't quite as bad a fielder and let Billy Moran and Darrell Griffin play the hot corner. Harmon Killebrew is one of the few Gem City hitters who knows how to take a walk and he could flirt with 50 homers; his outfield defense is abysmal but both he and Stuart can't play DH at the same time. Hulking Frank Howard has a nice home run swing but won't hit many singles and also has a poor glove. As stated above Johnson and McCovey will get some time in the garden along with ancient Duke Snider. Tony Horton has a lot of potential, but he isn't yet ready. The team lacks anyone who can credibly be called a center fielder. Dean Chance is one of the best pitchers in the league and clearly the number one starter. Claude Osteen, Vern Law and Dick Stigman will back him up. Pete Mikkelson, Julio Navarro and Bob Shaw are the guts of a mediocre bullpen.

Boulder Run Bullies

The Bullies look to improve on last year's horrible 48 wins but rising to sixth place is about all they can hope for. Don Mincher hits RHP's very well with nice power but he is hopeless against LHP's. Unfortunately, the only player on the squad who can both play first and hit lefties at all, and even then not that well is Felix Torres but he'll also be needed at third base. Jimmy Stewart is a decent hitter and fielder at second, but he has no power. Highly touted Joe Morgan is still at least a year away. At short they have Jose Pagan and Dick Schofield both of whom are lousy hitters with OK gloves. Rookie Don Kessinger has a lot of potential, but he isn't ready yet. As stated above, Torres will need to play some third base along with Chico Ruiz and possibly Hector (no hands) Lopez who is a much better outfielder. Joe Christopher is a solid hitting outfielder who can play all three positions, none of them very well. A parade of other outfielders will shuffle in and out of the lineup, but none are outstanding. Willie Stargell who has a decent bat with power and a terrible glove will get the most starts at DH but he is averse to the base on balls. Charley Lau and Ed Bailey are the catchers, and both can do a workmanlike job. The team will need to use a parade of swingmen to cover the starting rotation, and none are outstanding although Don Larsen and Luis Tiant can be effective in limited roles. Tom Brewer, Fred Gladding, Steve Hamilton and the non-starting swingmen will handle the bullpen chores.

Toledo Rockets

The Rockets have a lot more team power than the AL's Tigers but a weaker pitching staff; if you add it all up either could be considered the worst team in SPB60. Their ability to escape the cellar will be difficult and they might not even match the pitiful 52 wins they had in 1963. Diamond Jim Gentile who has good power will get the majority of starts at first base and he'll be backed up by Ed Kranepool who also plays the outfield. Tony Taylor has a mediocre bat and below average glove, but he is all the team has at second base. Shortstop Luis Aparicio can still steal a base and field his position and his bat is not bad with modest power. Max Alvis will play most of the games at third; he has some power but a weak glove. Good field, absolutely no-hit Johnny Goryl will spell Max. Lee Thomas has modest power with a weak glove and will play right field. Tom Tresh has decent power and a solid glove but might not hit .250; his defense is good in left. The team will be forced to play Bill Virdon in center even though his bat is weak as there aren't many alternatives. Several part timers will move in and out of the outfield lineup. Walt Bond looks like the more or less full time DH; he has nice power but doesn't walk much. Bob Tillman is a solid hitter with nice power but a poor glove and will get the majority of starts at catcher; his backup is Orlando MacFarlane. Chris Short is a very good number one starter and could win 20 games with better support which he certainly won't get with this club. Dave Wickersham Bennie Daniels, Denny LeMaster and Buster Narum plus several swingmen will round out the rotation. Terry Fox and the swingmen are pretty much all the team has in the bullpen; this is not a good pitching staff.