

## PRE-SEASON PROGNOSIS 1939

### AMERICAN LEAGUE

#### Schenectady Blue Sox

The Blue Sox, Colonels and Mutuals look to fight it out all season long the Sox get a mild push in the forecast this year. They won the AL crown last year going away but fell to the Detroit Titans in the World Series. At first base they have the incomparable Jimmy Foxx who can do it all, he smashes both RHP and LHP, may challenge for the batting crown, can hit home runs and has a good eye for the base on balls plus his glove is decent. His backup, Dick Seibert is no slouch. Bobby Doerr at second is a solid performer who can hit over .300 with modest power and a great glove. Red Kress who is no Bobby Doerr but still decent will need to start about 40 games at second. Charlie Gilbert has a decent bat and glove at short but will need to share time with Skeeter Webb and Tom Carey. At third Harlon Clift has a great glove and batting eye plus some modest power. Hank Majewski is a solid third baseman but will have a tough time getting in the lineup. Bill Dickey is one of the best catchers in the league both offensively and defensively; he has nice power and knows how to take a walk. In the twenty games or so that Dickey will have to sit out his replacement will be Ray Hayworth who is a massive comedown. Deb Garms in right field doesn't have much power but like most of the team he can take a walk. Sam West, Lou Finney, Roy Weatherly and Myril Hoag will move in and out of the lineup at the other outfield slots and none of them will embarrass you. Bullett Bob Feller leads the starting staff; he can strike out a ton of hitters but will also walk quite a few. Harry Gumbert and swingmen Cliff Melton, Bill Lohrman, Rip Sewell and Tom Sunkel will round out the rotation. The bullpen is a little thin with only Fred Frankhouse as a full-time reliever, but the swingmen will pitch in as needed.

#### Louisville Colonels

This team won 79 games last year and were well out of the pennant race, but they should be right in the mix this year as the offense is solid and might be the best in all of SPBX. The pitching staff has some holes and that could be a problem. Elbie Fletcher is a decent defensive first baseman and knows how to take a walk and has decent power; his backup is Jack Bolling who has a better glove but little power. Dario Ladigiani has a nice glove at second and slaps the ball around, but few will leave the park. Del Young will be his replacement for about 25 games and he won't kill you. At short Billy Jurgens has a great glove and a decent bat with modest power at least for doubles and triples if not homers. Don Gutteridge at third doesn't walk much and has minimal power but he can play every day. Harry Danning is a solid catcher both offensively and defensively with some power and his backup Spud Davis has a decent if punchless bat but a below average throwing arm. Joe Medwick in left and Enos Country Slaughter in right are both solid .300 hitters with nice power. Ben Chapman in center has a great eye for the base on balls but doesn't hit a lot of homers. Since there is no DH in 1939 space will have to be found for Mel Ott who has the best home run power on the team and should draw 100 walks. Pepper Martin is also available to play the outfield or third base. The team doesn't have an outstanding number one full time starting pitcher but Lou Fette, Jack Knott and Bob Klinger plus several decent swingmen will fill out the rotation. Milt Shoffner who can start will probably be pressed into more or less full-time relief for lack of an alternative.

#### New York Mutuals

Unlike the Colonels the Mutuals have a so-so offense but a solid pitching staff, maybe the best in all of SPBX. George McQuinn is a solid first baseman with nice power and a good glove, but he has issues with LHP. At second Lonny Frey has a near .300 bat with a good OBA, some power and a very good glove. Benny McCoy is a nice backup. Billy Myers can play every day at short and has a decent bat to go with an

excellent glove. Kenny Keltner at third is another iron man who could hit well over .300 with decent power and a nice glove. Gabby Harnett, Ray Berres and Billy Sullivan will switch off at catcher; Gabby has some power and good throwing arm while Billy has minimal power and a terrible arm. Sullivan will also get some starts in the outfield. Augie Galan in left can hit doubles if not homers and could hit over .300 if he doesn't have to face too many LHP's. Johnny Rizzo who has a decent bat will start against LHP. Johnny Cooney will get most of the starts in center field, but he has minimal power. Joe Grace is his backup. As stated above Sullivan is also available in the garden and he has a good glove unlike his catcher's mitt. Luke Hamlin is a workhorse and the ace of the pitching staff, but he will get a lot of help from Carl Hubbell, Lefty Gomez and several good swingmen. Steve Sundra and Johnny Lanning lead a good bullpen.

### **San Diego Glaziers**

The icemen could move up in the standings but all three of the teams above them will need to underperform for them to have a chance at the pennant. The pitching staff is decent and might catapult them up in the standings but don't bet the house on it. The offense has some holes and will probably be dead last in team homers. Iron Man Lou Gehrig is starting to feel the impact of ALS and will never be the star he has been for the previous decade. His replacement at first is Gus Suhr who can hit .300 with a nice batting eye but virtually no power. Johnny McCarthy who has even less power is his replacement. At second Billy Herman is a solid hitter who can play every day in addition to having a great glove. Shortstop Luke Appling is the early version of "the walking man" although he has no power and just an average glove. Stan Hack at third is another decent punch and judy hitter who can also play every day. Gene Desautelis and Gus Mancuso will share time behind the plate but neither is a standout in any area. Mike Kreevich in center and Paul (Big Poison) Waner in right can both slap the ball around the infield and hit a few doubles but few will leave the park. A parade of journeymen will fill out the garden starts but only Joe Gallagher and Wally Berger have double figure home run potential. The mound staff is solid with Bucky Walters being one of the best pitchers in the league who has the potential to win well over twenty games and complete almost all of his starts. Bobo Newsom is also solid although he does have some mild control issues. Tommy Bridges, Thornton Lee and several good swingmen will fill out the rotation. Bob Bowman has the ability to start games but he will probably be used almost exclusively in relief where he will excel. The 'pen is a little thin after him.

### **New Haven Whiffenpoofs**

It will be a big deal if the 'Poofs rise above fifth but will battle the Frogs to avoid sixth. Falling to the cellar would be a complete catastrophe. Dolph Camilli at first is one of the stars of the team. He combines a good bat with 25-homer power, the ability to draw 100 walks, plays every day and has a great glove; what more can you ask? Heinie Mueller and Don Heffner will platoon at second base. Neither has much power but they are both decent with their gloves. At short Joe Cronin is solid; he can hit over .300 with nice power, knows how to draw a walk and has a good glove. Bill Brubaker, who is a mediocre hitter will share third base with several spear carriers. Rick Ferrell, Birdie Tebbetts and Johnny Peacock will share time behind the plate. All are decent hitters and Ferrell has a cannon arm. Frank Demaree will start in center field and right field; his bat is solid with some power and good on base, but his glove is weak. Dee Miles will get some starts in center plus the corner slots; he has a .300 bat with little power and mediocre on base. Gibby Brack, Lee Gamble and Bob Seeds are also available for play in the garden. The team lacks any solid every fourth or fifth day starting pitcher but when he is out there veteran Ted Lyons will be solid. Several journey men will fill out the rotation the best of whom is Mace Brown but he may be needed more in the bullpen. Jack Russell and Joe Heving are also available for relief duty. After them the quality falls off.

### **Frankfort Frogs**

This club won 77 games last year and might be challenged to repeat that total in 1939 but as stated above they will battle for fifth place with the Whiffenpoofs all year long. The pitching staff is a little shaky and will probably hold them back. First sacker Frank McCorick is clearly the best hitter on the team; he has very nice power and could hit over .330 plus has a very good glove and can play every day. Eric McNair will get a lot of starts at second base but will also be needed at shortstop and his bat is top notch but not a lot of power; he has a solid glove. Tony Cuccinello who has a decent bat and glove will also play second along with Odell Hale who has a good if punchless bat. Billy Rogell and the afore mentioned McNair will share time at shortstop. At third Jim Tabor has a decent bat with some power and good glove plus he can play every day. Rollie Helmsley has a decent glove and arm behind the plate with an OK if punchless bat but when he sits out Ken O'Dea and his hopeless bat will have to suffice. Barney McCoskey who has a decent if home run deficient bat will play center field. Pete Fox is a good right fielder but he also can't hit too many homers. Bruce Campbell knows how to take a walk and has some power but will be moved to left field, not his natural position. A gaggle of mediocrities will switch on and off in the rotation and the bullpen is not terrible but also not overly impressive.

### **West Baden Strudels**

This club has a lousy offense and a pitching staff that isn't much better. Escaping the cellar will be a major accomplishment. Hal Trotsky at first has very nice power and good BA plus a solid glove. When he sits down Rip Radcliff who also plays the outfield will get the call. Stu Martin who can hit few doubles if not homers will get the most starts at second base. Oscar Grimes who plays several infield positions will fill in at second and short and he has a nice feel for the strike zone. Mark Christman who has a lousy bat but good glove will also play some shortstop. Cookie Lavagetto is a solid hitter with a nice on base and some power plus a decent glove at third base. The team pulled off a massive trade last year to secure the first pick in the 1939 draft which resulted in them drafting Ted Williams who promises to have a spectacular career starting right away. There is nothing bad you can say about Teddy Ballgame as he hits for a great average will draw over 100 walks and has fabulous power; he'll play right field. Morrie Arnovich will play left and he can slap the ball around pretty well but lacks power. Several non-entities will share time in center. Catcher Mike Tresh knows how to take a walk but not how to hit anything but singles. His backup is Ray Mueller who is also powerless. Claude Passeau is the leader of the staff and could win twenty games with good support, something who probably won't get from this club. The lack of a good number two means that several swingmen will move in and out of the rotation. These swingmen will double in the bullpen as the team lacks a solid everyday reliever.

## **NATIONAL LEAGUE**

### **Brooklyn Dodgers**

This club is solid in all respects and should breeze to the pennant. The attack is clearly the best in the NL, and maybe the best in all of SPBX. The pitching staff is also right up there. First baseman Johnny Mize can do it all; he might challenge for the batting title plus draw 100 walks and amass 85 extra base hits. The team doesn't have a regular second baseman but will have several journeymen in and out of the lineup. Cecil Travis is a solid spray hitter and will get the majority of starts at shortstop where his glove is decent. Wayne Ambler who doesn't hit much at all will fill in as needed. At third Billy Werbler has a nice eye for the base on balls and can hit doubles if not homers. Frankie Hayes who has nice power will alternate behind the plate with Don Padgett who is a sensational spray hitter. Neither catcher is much with the glove. Doc Cramer, a solid fielder in center should hit .300 but few balls will leave the park. George Selkirk can hit homers and draw 100 walks and play a decent right field. Gee Walker is a

ballhawk in left and has some decent power but doesn't walk much. Earl Averill is also available for outfield play. Paul Derringer is the leader of the pitching staff and one of the better starters in the league. Atley Donald and Bill Rigney and swingman Hugh Casey will get most of the remaining starts. Gene Thompson is the big man in the bullpen and he'll get some help from Van Mungo and Russ Meyers.

### **Detroit Titans**

The reigning World Series champs will have a hard time repeating but should be in a tough fight with the Atlantics for second place. No wild card in 1939 so this will just be a race for recognition and not post season play. Climbing back to the pennant will be a tough job. Joe Kuhel is the main man at first base where he combines decent power and on base with a solid glove. His backup is Roy Cullinbine who also plays the outfield. Joe Gordon is a fixture at second base; he knows how to take a walk and has great power for a middle infielder plus a very good glove. Arky Vaughn at short can play every day and paired with Jordan they will turn a lot of double plays. He has decent double and triple power if not the long ball. At third Pinky Higgins has an above average bat but below average glove. The Snooz Ernie Lombardi is the main man at catcher where he possesses good power and a solid throwing arm. Phil Masi and Tony Gioluni will fill in as needed. Terry Moore has a good glove and decent bat and will get most of the starts in right field but also play some center. Dee Walker can slap the ball around pretty well and will occupy left field. Tommy Hendrich (a Massillon Ohio native!) can start about 100 games in all three of the outfield slots. He knows how to draw a walk but doesn't have much power. Mark Leiber will start a lot games in center and he has good on base with 25-homer power. Bill Lee and Dutch Leonard are the workhorses at the top of the rotation but they will get a lot of help from swingmen Larry French, Al Milnar and Archie McCain. Clyde Shoun is the closest thing they have to a solid closer. The bullpen is not one of the strengths of this team.

### **Fairfield Atlantics**

This club won 92 games last year and only missed the pennant by two games. Repeating that performance in 1939 will be tough but as mentioned above they will battle the Titans all year for second place. Zeke Bonura has a .300 bat with good glove but only modest power. He'll be spelled by Babe Young who has a decent bat but no power. Charlie Gehringer is a very good hitter and fielder with decent power but can only play about 120 games. He'll be spelled by Bill Nagel who is a decent if unspectacular hitter. Dick Bartell and Eddie Miller will share second base; neither can hit much but Miller has a solid glove. Buddy Lewis is the third baseman and he can hit over .300 with nice on base, some power and a good glove. Al Lopez is a very good defensive catcher with a modest bat and he will share time with Rudy York who has very good power and a .300 bat. Ival Goodman will get most of the starts in right field; he has a .320 bat with double and triple if not home run power. Lloyd (Little Poison) Waner has a decent slap hitting bat but his main advantage is his ability to play a real nice centerfield. Max West plays a good left field and has some power. The rest of the outfielders are run of the mill. Red Ruffing is the clear leader of the staff, but he'll get great support from Whitey Moore and several swingmen who will pull double duty in the bullpen as the team lacks a full-time clutch reliever.

### **Brunnerville Bean Brewers**

The team should be involved in what looks to be a three-way race for fourth place with the Gassers and Seals. They have the best pitching staff of the trio, and this might be enough for them to win the race. Rising any higher could be tough. At first base Rip Russell can play just about every day and has an acceptable glove but doesn't walk much and has little power. Burgess Whitehead and Jackie Hayes will share time at second base; they are both decent defenders but don't hit much and have very little power. Ditto for shortstop where Leo the Lip Durocher and Skeeter Newsome will switch off. Rabbit

Warstler, who can also play second and short is the primary third baseman with help from Marv Owen; neither of these guys will light up many scoreboards. This is a very weak offensive infield. Al Todd with help from a couple of no-names will fill in behind the plate. Not much positive to say about this crew. Jolting Joe DiMaggio, acquired in a major pre-draft trade will shine in center field and if he gets enough plate appearances might even win the batting title. He has by far the best power on the team and one of the "problems" the manager will have to deal with is Joe being intentionally walked quite often. Wally Moses is a solid hitter with minimal power but an OK glove in right field. Sam Chapman is a natural centerfielder, but he'll give way to DiMaggio and play left field; he has some power and a good throwing arm. Fern Bell can draw a few walks but has little power and can fill in at all three outfield slots. On the mound Lefty Grove will be limited in the number of starts he can make but when he's in there aren't too many hurlers that are better. Mel Harder, Ken Chase and Dizzy Trout are good backups for Grove; the balance of the starts will be handled by several decent swingmen. The team lacks a top notch pure reliever and the swingmen will need to pull double duty. If the manager can get enough complete games from the starters this might not be a serious problem.

### **Borger Gassers**

The offense isn't bad, but they have some pitching issues especially in terms of control and having to stretch a thin pitching staff which lacks anything close to a full-time starter. Hammerin Hank Greenberg at first is a stellar performer. He has a .300 plus BA with a great sense of the strike zone and 30 plus-homer power. In the few games he can't start, Bob Pritchard who has a nice glove and can take a walk but not hit for power will be the replacement. At second John Gantenbein, who also plays third base has a shaky glove and doesn't draw many walks but can hit close to .300 with minimal power. Buddy Myer is a solid hitter with no power but a decent glove will fill in as needed. Frankie Crosetti at shortstop has some power and a great glove but will struggle to hit .250. Lee Handley will start the most games at third base with help from Gantenbein will handle the hot corner. Handley can spray the ball around the infield but few will leave the park and his glove is suspect. Babe Phelps is a decent catcher on both offense and defense and will get help from Earle Brucker who is a much better hitter but has a suspect glove. After Greenberg Bob Johnson is the best player on the team; he can hit .330 with good on base, nice power and a fine glove in left field with some time in center. Taffy Wright can hit .300 with double and triple power and a decent glove; he'll play right field. Hersh Martin will get the most starts in center where he has a nice glove and bat but with no home run power. Joe Vosmik is a natural left fielder, but he will move around the other outfield slots to take advantage of his decent bat. Larry Rosenthal is also available for garden duty. As stated above the team seriously lacks a full-time regular rotation starter and will scramble with several swingmen, the best of whom are Eddie Smith, Oral Hildebrand, Lee Grissom and Fritz Ostermueller. Johnny Miller will be anointed as the top man in a weak bullpen but he is no trip to Hollywood.

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### **San Francisco Seals**

This club won a woeful 56 games in 1938 and was second in the Ted Williams lottery but ended up third and drafted Charlie King Kong Keller who is no Teddy Ballgame but should have a very productive career. As stated above, the club could move up a few notches in 1939 but is unlikely to fall to the cellar. An off-season trade brought first baseman Buddy Hassett to the Seals. He can play every day and has a nice if powerless bat and a good glove. Second sacker Jimmy Brown has decent non-home run power and a decent glove; he can also play just about every day. Shortstop is a bit of a problem as Johnny Hudson and Lynn Lary will platoon; neither can hit much and both have average gloves. Pinky May is another hitter who can slap the ball around though few will leave the park but he does have a good glove. Rookie Keller will get most of the starts in right field and he is one of the few men on the club with double figure homer potential plus he can hit well over .300 with a very good feel for the strike zone and

his glove is well above average. The team has been waiting for Bill Nicholson to mature for several years and he finally will be able to play a decent amount of games, mostly as Keller's stand in. J J Moore plays left field and has modest power but his overall offensive potential is limited. Harry Craft will be in center field and may lead the team in homers but that might not even amount to fifteen round trippers. Overall the team might be close to the bottom in team home runs. Frenchy Bordagaray doesn't have much of a bat, but he'll need to play a few games in the outfield. A half dozen or so catchers will move in and out of the lineup with Willard Hershberger by far the best of the lot, but he will be limited in his playing time. The team has a few pitchers (Bump Hadley, Mort Cooper and Curt Davis) who aren't bad and all three will pull double duty in the bullpen. The rest of the pitching staff is marginal at best.

### **Montreal Golden Buddhas**

Even though they won a pitiful 47 games in 1938 they lost out on the top draft pick (Ted Williams who else) and settled for future star outfielder Bob Elliott who won't be able to play much in 1939. This year's addition may not lose 107 games as they did in 1938 but might be hard pressed to avoid 100 losses and moving out of the cellar will be a great accomplishment. Babe Dalgren at first has some power but not much of a BA or OBA and his glove is weak. Pep Young and Jim Bloodworth will share time at second; neither have much power but they can hit singles, and both are good defenders. Lou Boudreau had a "cup of coffee" in 1938 and seems to have great potential but he will be limited in the amount of time he can play at shortstop in 1939. Frank Croucher, a mediocre hitter and fielder will get the most time at short. Third baseman Red Rolfe is the best hitter on the team as he can hit well over .300 with good on base, decent power and a fine glove. Mickey Owen will start 130 or so games at catcher and in the context of this team is not a bad hitter; his backup is Jake Early who has an OK bat but a terrible throwing arm. Jeff Heath has probably the best power on the team and can play a decent left field. George Case will play center, and he has a .300 bat but little power. Aging Al Simmons will log about 100 games in the outfield, but his numbers will be nothing like they were in his prime. Gene Moore is also available for outfield play but his offensive and defensive skills are very limited. As mentioned above Bob Elliot will get some outfield time, but it will be limited. Bill Posdel is the closest thing they have to a number one starter. Whit Wyatt will be fine for a limited number of starts, but beyond them the cabinet is pretty bare. The club has nothing approaching a bullpen.