

2018 LAS VEGAS GAMBLERS PLAY GUIDE

OVERVIEW – The 2017 season was one of the best in Gamblers history. 95 wins and a relatively easy sprint to the Aaron division crown. It all ended with a game six loss to a superior Grand Caymen team in the IC finals. The 2018 edition is but a shadow of last year, but still capable of winning some games. The offense is still quite powerful, but the pitching is diminished. All of my divisional opponents are so much better, especially Strong City and Kansas. A shot at a wild card spot is not out of the question.

STARTERS - The quartet of Jose Quintana, C.C. Sabathia, R.A. Dickey and newcomer Hyun-Jin Ryu give Las Vegas 114 acceptable starts where we have a chance to win every game they start. Zach Wheeler was brought in to provide some bulk starts and to, hopefully, return to his former glory days down the road. He'll get 17 chances to toe the rubber in 2018. Finally Gamblers vet Martin Perez, and his GR4, get the final 31 starts. Going into the 2017 season it was a concern that 118 starts were left handed. Well we still won 95 games despite that fact. In 2018 we tried to remedy that problem. Now there is only 114 lefty starts. Problem solved...right. The big four should try to go deep into games when it makes sense, but Wheeler and Perez will constantly need to be rescued from themselves.

RELIEVERS – A diminished group to be sure. Brad Hand earned his promotion to closer and he should be effective. Another lefty, there will be days when the matchups will not be favorable to him, but there really are no other options. Both Craig Stammen and Luis Garcia were brought in to function as set up men for Hand. They are actually middle men but, at least they aren't three raccoons in a reliever suit. Returning vets Koji Uehara and Jeurys Familia, along with the newly acquired Deolis Guerra and Jose Torres will take the mound most days between the failing starter and the better relievers, usually the 5th or 6th innings. The next group of relievers includes Dovydas Neverauskas, Ollie Drake, and Josh Smith. They're all lower grades, here for their bulk relief innings. When active they pitch in blowouts mostly to save the better arms. Dustin McGowen's only job this year is to be Martin Perez's valet. He should be first out of the chute when Marty falls on his face.

Hitting Strategy – Not enough speed nor SBA’s will lead to the “Earl Weaver” approach on offense in 2018. Try to get on base and wait for the 3 run homers to come on down. No H&R and very few steal attempts for the new look Gamblers.

Steals – Xander Bogaerts (SSN35/16 SBA’s) can try for 2nd, 7th or later and the score is -1/+1. Add Kris Bryant, Gorkys Hernandez, Juan Lagares and Travis Shaw here as well, but only from the 8th on and their adjusted SSN is 24 or higher. Never steal 3rd base or Home!

H&R – Just say “NO”. Don’t do it! Please think of the children!

PLAYER USAGE – There will be more platooning and positional sharing in 2018 than last season. Cervelli and Caleb Joseph will share catching duties. Austin Jackson and Lagares will platoon in center. Josh Donaldson will be the primary thirdbaseman and Travis Shaw the main firstbaseman, but both will frequently be rested by the Gambler’s new super utility man – Kris Bryant. There will be a four man bench once again: The back up catcher, back up IF and two back up OF’s. There should be no need to bring up Elias Diaz nor Ryan Rua from Triple A Reno this year

PINCH HITTING – The platoon guys can hit for their counterparts when the pitcher’s arm changes.

PINCH RUNNING – Gorkys Hernandez can run for either catcher.

DEFENSIVE REPLACEMENTS – The Gambler’s defense, a major reason for last year’s success, took a huge blow in 2018. Corey Dickerson is now the full time DH, because of his OF1, Cervelli is now a C7. There are no more 3B5’s and no 1B4’s, let alone any 1B5’s. Worse of all is Xander Bogaerts is now a SS7! He’s staring down the barrel of a 40+ error season. Devin Marrero’s sole reason for being here is to carry Bogey’s glove. He should appear at SS when Las Vegas has a lead after we bat in the 8th or later.

BASERUNNER ADVANCEMENT – Use the Adams Table here please.

SACRIFICES – Oh, Hell no! Don’t even think about it.

GAME VERSION - Las Vegas always uses the Master Game Boards.

In conclusion use your baseball judgement and everything should be fine.
You can email me at pjh5000@hotmail.com with any questions.

Good luck to all in 2018

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