




MILWAUKEE BREWERS

National League Central



x0



x1
NL

4215
FRANCHISE WINS

92-70
2023 SEASON

1st
DIVISION

#3
FARM SYSTEM RANK

Milwaukee, WI - American Family Field (41,900)
 Manager: Pat Murphy (0-0, 1st Season)

2023: Lost in NLWC

Brewers Going Back-to-Back?

The Brewers claimed division titles in 2021 and again in 2023 thanks to superb pitching by both the rotation and the bullpen. The one-two punch of Corbin Burnes and Brandon Woodruff paved the way to 90 or more wins in each of those seasons. Now, the former has been traded to the Baltimore Orioles and the latter will likely miss all of the 2024 season with shoulder surgery. Can the Brewers navigate another run to a division title without their dynamic duo?

Batting

For a team that won 92 games and an NL Central title, the offense was actually quite sluggish. They ranked below average in nearly every category and the back portion of the lineup struggled. **Christian Yelich** suffered through a couple of frustrating seasons following a broken leg injury in 2021 and 2022 but had a resurgence at the plate in 2023 and looked much more like the player who won an MVP in 2018 and finished runner-up in 2019. His power returned a bit in 2023 and included 19 home runs and 34 doubles and he also swiped 28 bases. He's by far the longest-tenured Brewer in a lineup that features a couple of new faces in **Rhys Hoskins** and **Joey Ortiz**. Hoskins missed all of 2023 with a torn ACL suffered in the spring but when healthy, he's a prototypical power hitter that hits plenty of home runs, draws walks, and also strikes out at a high clip. **Joey Ortiz** was one of the major pieces of the Corbin Burnes deal and he played in his first 15 major league games last year for the Orioles. He hit .321 with triple-A Norfolk last season in 88 games and while he's not a huge home run threat at the major league level, he did smack 30 doubles and stretch out four triples.

Ortiz is just one of the young Milwaukee bats who will be featured in the lineup. **Jackson Chourio** is the top prospect in the system and should start Opening Day in center field. **Brice Turang** debuted last season and while he was a bit inconsistent at the plate he is a tremendous defender at second. Fellow 2023 rookie **Sal Frelick** was a little more successful at the plate although in a much smaller sample size. He drew 28 walks in only 223 plate appearances and he too proved he is up to the task on defense. **William Contreras** had a great season at the plate and hit for both power and average and earned a Silver Slugger award at catcher. Also at the top of the lineup is **Garrett Mitchell** who was held to just 19 games last season due to a shoulder injury. **Willy Adames** is also looking for a bounce-back season after a disappointing year at the plate although he did still hit 24 home runs and draw a career-high 71 walks.

Pitching

The duo of Burnes and Woodruff are gone, but that doesn't mean that the pitching staff is devoid of talent. **Freddy Peralta** is the expected Opening Day starter, and, outside of his very last start of the 2023 campaign, he finished the season extremely strong. An ERA that was as high as 4.70 after the All Star break fell to 3.86 by the end of the season. He posted a career-best 7.9% walk rate while striking out 210 batters. The nickname "Fastball Freddy" certainly applies given the high-velocity and even his changeup registers in the high 80s. **Wade Miley** has had some of his best seasons well into his thirties which includes last season where he went 9-4 with an ERA of 3.14, although injuries held him to just 120.1 innings. In what is an extremely odd trend, Miley hasn't pitched more than 80 innings in an "even" season (only 37.0 innings with the Cubs in 2022 and 14.1 innings with the Reds in 2020). Milwaukee signed **Jakob Junis** in free agency. He made 36 of his 40 appearances last year for the San Francisco Giants out of the bullpen but he is traditionally a starter and that's the role he should have with the Brewers. **Colin Rea** pitched a career-high 124.2 innings but he's still yet to produce a season with an above-average ERA+. Former first round draft pick **DL Hall** was also a key piece in the Burnes deal and has a chance to earn the last rotation spot even though he has just one MLB start under his belt.

The bullpen was fantastic in 2023 (3.40 ERA, best in NL) and figures to be a key strength for the Brewers again in 2024. It helps to have arguably the best reliever in the game in **Devin Williams**. His changeup, nicknamed the "Airbender", is one of the most unhittable pitches in baseball. The pitch typically breaks more than 17 inches (the width of the plate) horizontally and moves so much that some have defined it as more of a "screwball". Find an overlay of his mid-90s fastball and his "Airbender" and you begin to understand why he's been so dominant. **Joel Payamps**, **Trevor Megill**, **Hoby Milner**, **Bryse Wilson** and **Abner Uribe** are all quality bullpen arms.

The Bottom Line

In order to find success in 2024, the Brewers simply must find more offense than they did in 2023. Even though the pitching staff should still be a strength, it's unrealistic to expect Brewers pitching to accomplish the MLB-best 3.71 ERA they posted in 2023. Improvement on offense is largely dependent on young hitters taking the next step. That development will now occur without manager Craig Counsell who can be found in a rival dugout on the Northside of the Chicago. There is plenty of young talent on the roster and the long-term success of the team appears to be promising. However, this season might be a step backward in order to take two steps forward

2024 Projection: 82-80, 3rd in NL Central

Christian Yelich

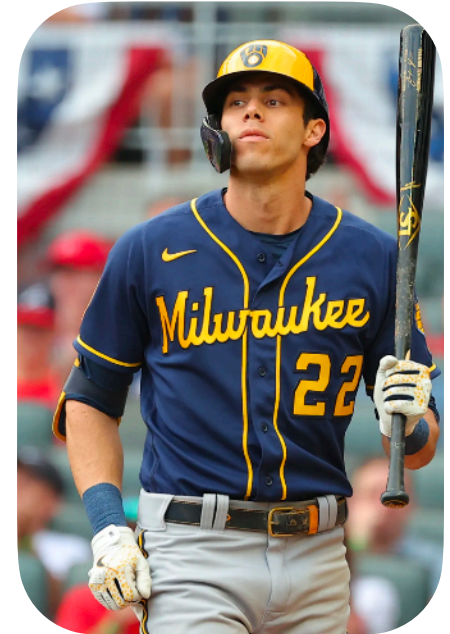



Photo via Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



2023 MLB Ranks
 RPG - 4.49 (17th)
 HITS - 1290 (26th)
 HR - 165 (24th)
 ERA - 3.71 (1st)
 SO - 1425 (14th)
 FD% - .987% (8th)

