



# CHICAGO CUBS

National League Central



**x3**



**x17**  
NL

**11244**  
FRANCHISE WINS

**83-79**  
2023 SEASON

**2nd**  
DIVISION

**#4**  
FARM SYSTEM RANK

Chicago, IL - Wrigley Field (41,649)  
Manager: Craig Counsell (0-0, 1st Season)

## Go Cubs Go (to the Postseason)

The Cubs are looking to end their three-year postseason drought and to claim a playoff victory for the first time since 2017. 2023 showed promise and after a red-hot August that featured an 18-9 record, the Cubs seemed poised for a Wild Card berth. Unfortunately, September did not go nearly as well. In the middle of the month the Cubs lost eight of ten, finished by losing four of five games, and found themselves on the wrong end of two extra-inning walk off games. The Cubs decided to part ways with David Ross and they stole manager Craig Counsell from division opponent Milwaukee. Counsell guided the Brewers to division titles in 2021 and 2023 and the expectation is for him to do the same with the Cubs in 2024 given that he is now the highest paid manager in the sport. Given a couple of key additions to the roster, those expectations may very well become reality.

### Batting

After a remarkable comeback season, the Cubs inked **Cody Bellinger** to a 3-year, \$80 million contract. Whether it was the change of scenery or another year removed from a complicated shoulder injury, in 2023 with the Cubs, Bellinger played much closer to his MVP season of 2019 complete with a slash line of .307/.356/.525, 26 home runs, 97 RBI, and a career-high 20 stolen bases. He's a capable defender at either first base or in the outfield. Speaking of defense, **Ian Happ** has won gold gloves in back-to-back years and he has never had a season below 100 OPS+. His .360 OBP was just a point shy of his career-best thanks to 99 walks and reflective of his development as a hitter. **Seiya Suzuki** committed a painful error that essentially sealed the Cubs' postseasonless-fate. While that memory is probably seared into the minds of then-hopeful Cubs fans, he put together a very solid season in 2023 in his second season in Major League Baseball following a career in Japan. His banged 20 home runs and finished the year with an OPS of .842. Assuming Bellinger is playing first, the centerfield position will go to either **Mike Tauchman** or **Patrick Wisdom**.

**Nico Hoerner** has turned himself into a terrific leadoff hitter with a gold glove at second base. The Cubs added another gold glove at shortstop in **Dansby Swanson** who won the award again in 2023 while being named to his second All Star team. His offense took a step back after playing in all 162 games in 2022 with the Braves, but he increased his walks in 2023 and he has hit 20 or more home runs in each of the last three seasons. **Christopher Morel** played six different positions for the Cubs in 2023 alone while hitting 26 home runs in the DH position is up for grabs but it could go to veteran **Garrett Cooper**, but that's only if he's healthy, which has been a big problem the past two seasons. Fellow veteran **Yan Gomes** returns at catcher with rookie **Miguel Amaya** as the backup backstop. **Michael Busch** has plus power and could factor into the lineup as well.

### Pitching

**Justin Steele** had not only a breakout season but a Cy Young-caliber season in 2023. He pitched 173.1 innings with a very respectable 3.06 ERA and he has an uncanny ability to keep the baseball in the yard. The Cubs found success with the signing of Seiya Suzuki from Japan and the front office is trying their hand again with the addition of **Shota Imanaga**. The lefty was signed to a four-year, \$53 million contract in the offseason and his strength is a nasty splitter that he pairs with a mid-90s fastball. Steele was very complementary of Imanaga this spring and the two could become the Central's best one-two punch at the top of the rotation. After a 14-5 record in 2022 with the Yankees, **Jameson Taillon** couldn't replicate his success with the Cubs and his ERA ballooned out to a career-worst 4.84 and his spring was delayed due to injury. **Kyle Hendricks** was once the Cubs' ace but he did have a bit of a resurgence in 2023 and the Cubs exercised their team option of his contract.

The Bellinger and Imanaga offseason signings received most of the attention, but the free agent signing of **Héctor Neris** could be just as impactful. The seasoned veteran was sensational with the Houston Astros in 2023 and he held batters to just a .174 average over 71 appearances in the 'pen.

### The Bottom Line


The Cubs are the real deal in 2024. Not only is the current roster set up for success, but the farm system features several prospects who could make a positive impact at the major league level as soon as this season. Chicago scored better than five runs a game and the offense should again guide the Cubbies to success in 2024. If there's concern for this team, it's pitching. Jameson Taillon and Kyle Hendricks are older and the Cubs will be potentially relying on rookies **Jordan Wicks** or **Ben Brown** for additional help with the departure of Marcus Stroman. However, Imanaga has the chance to be a star and Justin Steele is a legitimate Cy Young candidate. Craig Counsell hasn't found any postseason success outside of the 2018 team that was a game away from the World Series, but he's been successful in the regular season and could be the perfect hire for the Cubs to get back to October baseball.

**2024 Projection: 90-72, 1st in NL Central**

Dansby Swanson



Photo via Chicago Sun-Times



**2023 MLB Ranks**  
RPG - 5.06 (6th)  
HITS - 1399 (11th)  
HR - 196 (15th)  
ERA - 4.08 (14th)  
SO - 1377 (19th)  
FD% - .984% (19th)

## Seiya Suzuki

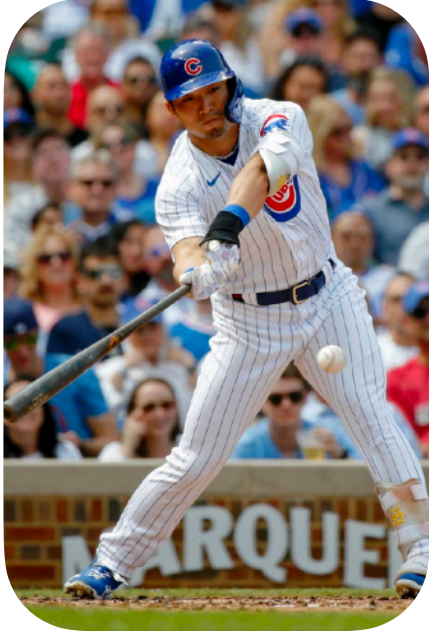
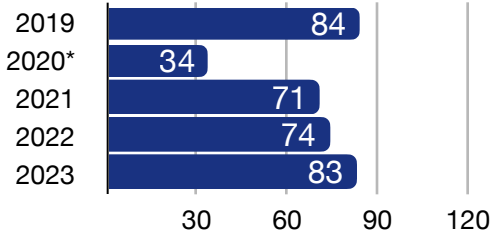


Photo via The Japan Times

### CUBS 5-YEAR WIN TREND



### 22 < Number to Know

In 2023, the Cubs had the seventh-fewest saves of the 30 MLB clubs and blew 22 saves in 57 total opportunities. The bullpen could make or break the season in 2024.

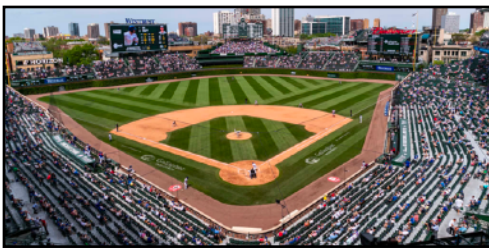


Photo via MLB

### PROSPECT TO WATCH

## Pete Crow-Armstrong - OF

With the re-signing of Cody Bellinger, PCA is scheduled to begin the season with triple-A Iowa. However, he may not be there long, especially if Mike Tauchman or Patrick Wisdom don't provide much offense while playing centerfield. His major league debut was far from that of a Hollywood movie. Instead, he went 0-14 with 7 strikeouts and he was caught stealing on 50% of his attempts. The early part of spring training hasn't gone much better, but it's probably unfair to read too much into those numbers. However, his minor league season in 2023, split between double-A Tennessee and triple-A Iowa, was much better. He hit .283 with 46 extra bases, 37 stolen bases, and an OPS of .876. He is also a great defender and is only now turning 22 years old.

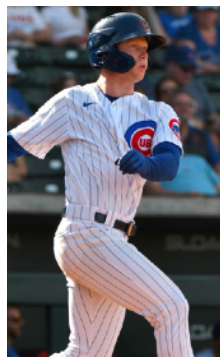


Photo via Bleed Cubbie Blue

### Projected Lineup

|    |                   |    | '23 AVG |
|----|-------------------|----|---------|
| 2  | Nico Hoerner      | 2B | .283    |
| 7  | Dansby Swanson    | SS | .244    |
| 8  | Ian Happ          | LF | .248    |
| 24 | Cody Bellinger    | 1B | .307    |
| 27 | Seiya Suzuki      | RF | .285    |
| 5  | Christopher Morel | 3B | .247    |
| 41 | Garrett Cooper    | DH | .251    |
| 15 | Yan Gomes         | C  | .267    |
| 40 | Mike Tauchman     | CF | .252    |

### Projected Rotation

|    |                 |    | '23 ERA |
|----|-----------------|----|---------|
| 35 | Justin Steele   | SP | 3.06    |
| 50 | Jameson Taillon | SP | 4.84    |
| 18 | Shota Imanaga   | SP | -       |
| 28 | Kyle Hendricks  | SP | 3.74    |
| 36 | Jordan Wicks    | SP | 4.41    |
| 73 | Albert Alozola  | CL | 2.67    |

### PLAYER SPOTLIGHT Justin Steele - SP



#### 2023 Statistics

**APP IP ERA K BB**  
**30 173.1 3.06 176 36**

In 2022, Justin Steele pitched to a 3.18 ERA over 24 starts and 119 innings. As it turns out, his performance was a sign of things to come for a pitcher who had spent six years in the minor leagues before a brief major league debut in 2021. In 2023 he allowed just 0.7 home runs per nine innings, the best mark in the National League. He relies heavily on a two-pitch mix of a fastball and a slider, but he's been very effective. Steele's fastball has deceptive, even random movement which makes it extremely difficult for batters to square up. Steele is aiming for 200 innings in 2024.

### 2024 Schedule

#### March/April 2024

|                |                |                |                |                |                |                |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|                |                |                |                |                | TEX 28<br>7:35 |                |                | TEX 30<br>7:05 |
| TEX 31<br>2:35 | COL 1<br>2:20  | COL 2<br>7:40  | COL 3<br>7:40  |                |                | LAD 5<br>2:20  | LAD 6<br>4:05  |                |
| LAD 7<br>2:20  | SD 8<br>9:40   | SD 9<br>10:15  | SD 10<br>6:40  |                |                | SEA 12<br>9:40 | SEA 13<br>9:40 |                |
| SEA 14<br>4:10 | ARI 15<br>9:40 | ARI 16<br>8:40 | ARI 17<br>3:40 | MIA 18<br>7:40 | MIA 19<br>2:20 | MIA 20<br>2:20 |                |                |
| MIA 21<br>2:20 |                | HOU 23<br>7:40 | HOU 24<br>7:40 | HOU 25<br>2:20 | BOS 26<br>7:10 | BOS 27<br>4:10 |                |                |
| BOS 28<br>7:00 | NYM 29<br>7:10 | NYM 30<br>7:10 |                |                |                |                |                |                |

#### May 2024

|                |                |                |                |                |                |                |                |  |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--|
|                |                |                |                | NYM 1<br>7:10  | NYM 2<br>1:10  | MIL 3<br>2:20  | MIL 4<br>2:20  |  |
| MIL 5<br>2:20  | SD 6<br>7:40   | SD 7<br>7:40   | SD 8<br>2:20   |                |                | PIT 10<br>6:40 | PIT 11<br>4:05 |  |
| PIT 12<br>1:35 | ATL 13<br>7:20 | ATL 14<br>7:20 | ATL 15<br>7:20 | PIT 16<br>7:40 | PIT 17<br>2:20 | PIT 18<br>2:20 |                |  |
| PIT 19<br>2:20 |                | ATL 21<br>7:20 | ATL 22<br>7:20 | ATL 23<br>7:20 | STL 24<br>8:15 | STL 25<br>7:15 |                |  |
| STL 26<br>7:00 | MIL 27<br>4:10 | MIL 28<br>7:40 | MIL 29<br>7:40 | MIL 30<br>1:10 | CIN 31<br>2:20 |                |                |  |

#### June 2024

|                |               |               |               |               |                |                |  |               |
|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|--|---------------|
|                |               |               |               |               |                |                |  | CIN 1<br>7:15 |
| CIN 2<br>2:20  |               | CWS 4<br>8:05 | CWS 5<br>8:05 | CIN 6<br>7:10 | CIN 7<br>7:10  | CIN 8<br>4:10  |  |               |
| CIN 9<br>1:40  |               | TB 11<br>6:50 | TB 12<br>6:50 | TB 13<br>6:50 | STL 14<br>8:15 | STL 15<br>2:20 |  |               |
| STL 16<br>2:20 | SF 17<br>8:05 | SF 18<br>8:05 | SF 19<br>2:20 |               | NYM 21<br>2:20 | NYM 22<br>2:20 |  |               |
| NYM 23<br>2:20 | SF 24<br>9:45 | SF 25<br>9:45 | SF 26<br>9:45 | SF 27<br>3:45 | MIL 28<br>8:10 | MIL 29<br>4:10 |  |               |
| MIL 30<br>2:10 |               |               |               |               |                |                |  |               |

#### July 2024

|                |                                |                |                |                |                |                |  |  |
|----------------|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--|--|
|                |                                | PHI 2<br>8:05  | PHI 3<br>8:05  | PHI 4<br>2:20  | LAA 5<br>2:20  | LAA 6<br>2:20  |  |  |
| LAA 7<br>2:20  |                                | BAL 9<br>6:35  | BAL 10<br>6:35 | BAL 11<br>6:35 | STL 12<br>8:15 | STL 13<br>2:15 |  |  |
| STL 14<br>2:15 | All-Star Break - Arlington, TX |                |                |                | ARI 19<br>2:20 | ARI 20<br>7:15 |  |  |
| ARI 21<br>2:20 | MIL 22<br>8:05                 | MIL 23<br>8:05 | MIL 24<br>2:20 |                | KC 26<br>8:10  | KC 27<br>7:10  |  |  |
| KC 28<br>2:10  | CIN 29<br>7:10                 | CIN 30<br>7:10 | CIN 31<br>7:10 |                |                |                |  |  |

#### August 2024

|                |                |                |                 |                |                |                |  |  |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--|--|
|                |                |                |                 | STL 1<br>8:05  | STL 2<br>2:20  | STL 3<br>2:20  |  |  |
| STL 4<br>2:20  | MIN 5<br>8:05  | MIN 6<br>8:05  | MIN 7<br>2:20   |                | CWS 9<br>8:10  | CWS 10<br>7:15 |  |  |
|                | CLE 12<br>6:40 | CLE 13<br>6:40 | CLE 14<br>6:40  |                | TOR 16<br>2:20 | TOR 17<br>2:20 |  |  |
| TOR 18<br>2:20 |                | DET 20<br>8:05 | DET 21<br>8:05  | DET 22<br>2:20 | MIA 23<br>7:10 | MIA 24<br>4:10 |  |  |
| MIA 25<br>1:40 | PIT 26<br>6:40 | PIT 27<br>6:40 | PIT 28<br>12:35 |                | WSH 30<br>6:45 | WSH 31<br>4:05 |  |  |

#### September 2024

|                |                |                 |                 |                |                |                |  |  |
|----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--|--|
| WSH 1<br>1:35  | PIT 2<br>7:40  | PIT 3<br>7:40   | PIT 4<br>7:40   |                | NYM 6<br>2:20  | NYM 7<br>2:20  |  |  |
| NYM 8<br>2:20  | LAD 9<br>10:10 | LAD 10<br>10:10 | LAD 11<br>10:10 |                | COL 13<br>8:40 | COL 14<br>8:10 |  |  |
| COL 15<br>3:10 | OAK 16<br>7:40 | OAK 17<br>7:40  | OAK 18<br>2:20  | WSH 19<br>7:40 | WSH 20<br>2:20 | WSH 21<br>2:20 |  |  |
| WSH 22<br>2:20 | PHI 23<br>6:40 | PHI 24<br>6:40  | PHI 25<br>6:05  |                | CIN 27<br>2:20 | CIN 28<br>2:20 |  |  |
| CIN 29<br>3:20 |                |                 |                 |                |                |                |  |  |

HOME

AWAY