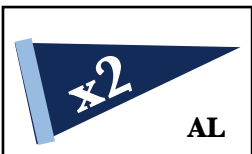




# TAMPA BAY RAYS

American League East



2011  
FRANCHISE WINS

99-63  
2023 SEASON

2nd  
DIVISION

#7  
FARM SYSTEM RANK

St. Petersburg, FL - Tropicana Field (42,735)  
Manager: Kevin Cash (739-617, 10th Season)

2023: Lost in ALWC

## Can Rays Reload Yet Again?

Year after year, the Tampa Bay Rays dramatically overachieve and make the most of a roster that is usually in the bottom five in terms of MLB payroll. Last year was no exception. The Rays started the season red hot with a 13-game win streak that was essentially the best start to an MLB season since the 1884 St. Louis Maroons. They finished April with a 22-6 record, outscoring opponents by a huge margin, 191-92. May and June were also strong months and Tampa Bay built a division lead of 6.5 games as the All-Star Game quickly approached. But the Rays faltered down the stretch and the upstart Orioles raced past them to claim the division title. The only thing quicker than Baltimore passing Tampa Bay in the standings was the postseason exit. Granted, the eventual World Series champs were the team to sweep the Rays out of the Wild Card round, but it didn't dampen the disappointment or lessen the feeling that the historic start to the season and the 99 regular season wins were wasted. Short of the 2020 World Series run, the Rays have posted a lot of regular season wins and have very little to show for it in October. To make matters more difficult this year, several key players have moved on, leaving the Rays with more questions than answers in a very difficult division.

### Batting

The Rays hung runs on the board with the best of them last season. In seasons past they have focused on hitting for average, playing "small ball" when necessary, and relying on strong pitching. That was all true in 2023, but they also broke a franchise record with 230 home runs. The added power helped set a franchise record in runs scored. **Yandy Díaz** won the AL batting title with a noteworthy .330 average and he would have finished higher in MVP voting had he not missed 25 games. **Harold Ramirez** wasn't far behind with a .313 average and he's now posted two very strong seasons with the Rays, although he's a bit of a defensive liability when he's not in the designated hitter role. **Brandon Lowe** has missed nearly a full season's worth of games over the last two years but when he's healthy, he provides a ton of power at second base.

**Randy Arozarena** earned his first All-Star appearance and has contributed 80+ RBI in each of the last two years. One piece of last year's offense that will not return is Wander Franco, who was arrested on criminal charges. While the main concern in this situation is for the victim of the crime, on the field, the Rays need to solve the shortstop position and will likely call on young **José Caballero** to do so with **Taylor Walls** currently injured. **Isaac Paredes** rounds out the infield after bashing 31 home runs and posting a career-best slash line of .250/.352/.488. **Josh Lowe** emerged as a quality hitter in his first full season in the majors, displaying both power and great speed (32 stolen bases). **Jose Siri** had 25 home runs in just 101 games. Both Christian Bethancourt and Francisco Mejia are gone, leaving **René Pinto** as the probable primary catcher with **Alex Jackson** ready to fill in as backup.

### Pitching

The rotation will look very different for the Rays in 2024. Shane McClellan needed Tommy John surgery in August and will miss all of 2024 and Tyler Glasnow is now with the Los Angeles Dodgers. **Zach Eflin** is one of the holdovers from last year and will assume the "ace" role after an AL-best 16 wins and career bests in virtually every category. While he did get hit hard in his one postseason appearance, it's clear that Tampa Bay's pitcher voodoo magic worked for Eflin. It did not work for **Aaron Civale**, who had an ERA of 2.34 in 13 appearances with the Guardians but an ERA of 5.36 with the Rays. **Zack Littell** worked his way out of the bullpen last year and into a starting role and could show improvement in 2024 with a full offseason to prepare as a starter. The Dodgers used **Ryan Pepiot**, who joins the Rays after the Glasnow trade, both as a starter and out of the bullpen last year and he's been extremely effective when healthy. **Taj Bradley** was hit hard in his rookie season but does exhibit high-strikeout stuff. While the pitching staff looks a bit worse on paper than they did in 2023, no team has maximized pitching talent more than the Rays and the bullpen should be a strength with the likes of **Phil Maton**, **Shawn Armstrong**, **Colin Poche**, and **Pete Fairbanks**. Expect starter **Shane Baz**'s to return from Tommy John sometime this year along with **Drew Rasmussen**.

### The Bottom Line

Underestimate the Rays at your own risk. They have finished no worse than third in the division in the last seven years and Kevin Cash, now the longest-tenured MLB manager, has guided his team to the postseason in each of the last five years. That being said, the losses in the offseason will be difficult to overcome. McClellan was a legitimate Cy Young Award candidate prior to his injury and the oft-injured Glasnow had a career-high 120 innings. Franco was the team's WAR leader. Was the offense opportunistic last year or can they be one of the best in the American League yet again? The pitching staff, in particular, will have a hard time recreating last year's success and the offenses in the AL East have somehow only improved. A bit of a step back for the Rays is likely in 2024, but don't be shocked if they prove the "experts" wrong yet again.


2024 Projection: 82-80, 4th in AL East

### Randy Arozarena



Photo via Sports Illustrated

**2023 MLB Ranks**



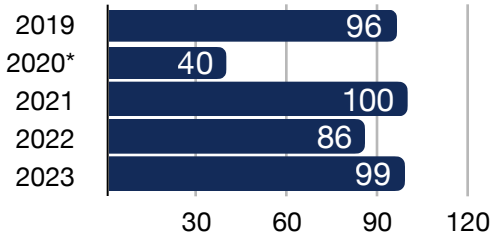
- RPG - 5.31 (4th)
- HITS - 1432 (5th)
- HR - 230 (6th)
- ERA - 3.86 (5th)
- SO - 1507 (4th)
- FD% - .987% (8th)

## Yandy Díaz



Photo via Reuters

### RAYS 5-YEAR WIN TREND



### .330 < Number to Know

Yandy Diaz's batting average in 2023, the best in the American League. He also added career bests in doubles (35), home runs (22), and RBI (78) and he rarely strikes out.

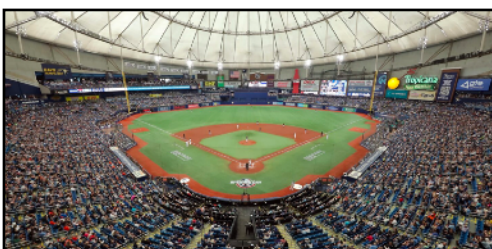


Photo via NBC Sports

### PROSPECT TO WATCH Junior Caminero - 3B

Caminero made the rare journey from single-A baseball all the way to the majors in a single season. At just 20-years-old, he's set to play a more prominent role on this year's Rays team. Despite his relatively small 6'1", 160 pound frame, his bat is electric and his quick hands are one of his greatest traits. He simply crushed minor league pitching to the tune of 31 home runs in just 117 games for 94 RBI and a ridiculous slash line of .324/.384/.591. The trick for Caminero will be to find an opening in the Rays infield. Yandy Diaz, Brandon Lowe, and Isaac Paredes have three of the four positions locked down with Paredes covering Caminero's preferred position at third. Could that mean Caminero assumes shortstop, where he played two games? Tampa might test that theory in triple-A, but it won't be long before Caminero is regularly making his impact felt in the majors.



Photo via Baseball America

Projected Lineup			'23 AVG
2	Yandy Díaz	1B	.330
8	Brandon Lowe	2B	.231
56	Randy Arozarena	LF	.254
15	Josh Lowe	RF	.292
43	Harold Ramirez	DH	.313
17	Isaac Paredes	3B	.250
22	Jose Siri	CF	.222
7	José Caballero	SS	.221
50	René Pinto	C	.252

Projected Rotation			'23 ERA
24	Zach Eflin	SP	3.50
34	Aaron Civale	SP	3.46
52	Zack Littell	SP	4.10
44	Ryan Pepiot	SP	2.14
45	Taj Bradley	SP	5.59
29	Pete Fairbanks	CL	2.58

### PLAYER SPOTLIGHT Ryan Pepiot - SP



#### 2023 Statistics

**APP IP ERA K BB**  
**8 42.0 2.14 38 5**

Pepiot is the key returning piece in the Tyler Glasnow trade with the Los Angeles Dodgers. He's only tallied 78.1 innings pitched in his first two years in the majors, but what he has shown so far has been impressive. An oblique injury cost him most of the 2023 season, but he's now healthy and should be a big part of the Tampa Bay rotation in 2024. Pepiot relies on a mid-90s fastball paired with a good changeup and he'll sneak a slider in every once in awhile too. In a small sample size, he avoided hard contact and his walk rate was just 3.1% in 2024, well below the MLB average of 8.4.

## 2024 Schedule

March/April 2024											
									TOR 28 4:10	TOR 29 6:50	TOR 30 4:10
TOR 31 1:40	TEX 1 6:50	TEX 2 6:50	TEX 3 1:10						COL 5 4:10	COL 6 8:10	
COL 7 3:10	LAA 8 9:38	LAA 9 9:38	LAA 10 4:07						SF 12 6:50	SF 13 4:10	
SF 14 1:40	LAA 15 6:50	LAA 16 6:50	LAA 17 6:50	LAA 18 1:10					NYN 19 7:05	NYN 20 1:05	
NYN 21 1:35	DET 22 6:50	DET 23 6:50	DET 24 6:50						CWS 26 7:40	CWS 27 7:10	
CWS 28 2:10	MIL 29 7:40	MIL 30 7:40									

May 2024											
				MIL 1 1:10					NYM 3 6:50	NYM 4 7:15	
NYM 5 1:40	CWS 6 6:50	CWS 7 6:50	CWS 8 6:50						NYN 10 6:50	NYN 11 4:10	
NYN 12 1:40	BOS 13 7:10	BOS 14 7:10	BOS 15 7:10	BOS 16 7:10					TOR 17 7:07	TOR 18 3:07	
TOR 19 1:37	BOS 20 6:50	BOS 21 6:50	BOS 22 6:50						KC 24 6:50	KC 25 4:10	
KC 26 1:40		OAK 28 6:50	OAK 29 6:50	OAK 30 1:10					BAL 31 7:05		

June 2024											
											BAL 1 4:05
BAL 2 1:35		MIA 4 6:40	MIA 5 6:40						BAL 7 6:50	BAL 8 4:10	
BAL 9 1:40	BAL 10 6:50	CHC 11 6:50	CHC 12 6:50	CHC 13 6:50					ATL 14 7:20	ATL 15 4:10	
ATL 16 1:35		MIN 18 7:40	MIN 19 7:40	MIN 20 1:10					PIT 21 6:40	PIT 22 4:05	
PIT 23 1:35	SEA 24 6:50	SEA 25 6:50	SEA 26 12:10						WSH 28 6:50	WSH 29 4:10	
WSH 30 1:40											

July 2024											
		KC 2 8:10	KC 3 8:10	KC 4 8:10	TEX 5 8:05	TEX 6 4:05					
TEX 7 2:35		NYN 9 6:50	NYN 10 6:50	NYN 11 6:50	CLE 12 6:50	CLE 13 4:10					
CLE 14 1:40	All-Star Break - Arlington, TX								NYN 19 7:05	NYN 20 1:05	
NYN 21 1:35	NYN 22 1:05	TOR 23 7:07	TOR 24 7:07	TOR 25 3:07					CIN 26 6:50	CIN 27 4:10	
CIN 28 1:40		MIA 30 6:50	MIA 31 12:10								

August 2024											
									HOU 2 8:10	HOU 3 7:15	
HOU 4 2:10		STL 6 7:45	STL 7 7:45	STL 8 7:15					BAL 9 6:50	BAL 10 TBD	
BAL 11 1:40	HOU 12 6:50	HOU 13 6:50	HOU 14 6:50						ARI 16 6:50	ARI 17 4:10	
ARI 18 1:40	OAK 19 9:40	OAK 20 9:40	OAK 21 9:40	OAK 22 3:37					LAD 23 10:10	LAD 24 9:10	
LAD 25 4:10	SEA 26 9:40	SEA 27 9:40	SEA 28 4:10						SD 30 6:50	SD 31 4:10	

September 2024											
SD 1 1:40	MIN 2 6:50	MIN 3 6:50	MIN 4 6:50	MIN 5 1:10					BAL 6 7:05	BAL 7 4:05	
BAL 8 1:35	PHI 9 6:40	PHI 10 6:40	PHI 11 6:40	CLE 12 6:40	CLE 13 7:10	CLE 14 6:10					
CLE 15 1:40		BOS 17 6:50	BOS 18 6:50	BOS 19 6:50	TOR 20 6:50	TOR 21 4:10					
TOR 22 1:40		DET 24 6:40	DET 25 6:40	DET 26 1:10	DET 27 7:10	BOS 28 4:10					
BOS 29 3:05											

HOME

AWAY