





KANSAS CITY ROYALS

American League Central



x2



x4
AL

4122
FRANCHISE WINS

56-106
2023 SEASON

5th
DIVISION

#29
FARM SYSTEM RANK

Kansas City, MO - Kauffman Stadium (37,903)
 Manager: Matt Quatraro (56-106, 2nd Season)

Has the Kansas City Future Arrived?

The Kansas City Royals have made the playoffs just twice in the last 38 seasons. Those two instances? A 2014 World Series appearance and a 2015 World Series Championship. Since then, the Royals haven't finished better than third in the division and they've ended up last or second-to-last in each of the last six seasons. In that same 38-year time span, the Royals have suffered through 7 seasons of 100+ losses and have only produced 11 seasons of .500 ball or better, with several of those seasons coming in the late 1980s. In short, Royals fans and players alike have gone through some dark days. However, there's hope that, starting this season, the light at the end of this extremely long and dark tunnel is relevance (and not a train).

Batting

The second overall pick in the 2019 draft has been as advertised in the first two years of his career. **Bobby Witt** finished seventh in AL MVP voting in 2023 and the Royals responded by locking up the future of the franchise with an enormous 11-year, \$288.7 million dollar deal. The contract could keep him in the Royal Blue until 2037 if the club elects to pick up all three team options. Only Fernando Tatis' \$340 million contract surpasses that of Witt's for a non-arbitration-eligible player. The deal not only locks down a budding superstar but it also gives indication that owner John Sherman is willing to spend the big bucks.

Witt is the young gun and **Salvador Pérez** is the savvy veteran who is still eager to play catcher at the age of 34. The now 8-time All Star played some first base last season, but the Royals are hopeful that **Vinnie Pasquantino** will be manning that position. He burst onto the scene as a rookie in 2022, batting .295 with an OPS of .832 in 72 games. However, in 2023, he tore his labrum in early June and missed the remainder of the season. Journeyman **Hunter Renfro** joins the Royals this season and should provide the team with some needed pop. The expected-to-be right fielder has clubbed 177 career home runs in 8 big league seasons including 20 last year. **MJ Melendez** has good power too, but his strikeouts skyrocketed in 2024 and he really struggled on defense. **Nelson Velázquez** flourished after a mid-season trade from the Cubs and slugged 14 home runs in just 40 games for the Royals. **Maikel Garcia** hit .272 as a rookie and stole 23 bases, and he's developing into a plus-defender at the Major League level. **Kyle Isbel** is a terrific defender in center but hasn't offered a lot at the plate to this point. **Freddy Fermin** should see more time behind the dish.

Pitching

If the Royals are to get out of the basement of the AL Central, they simply have to be better on the mound. After a career year in 2022 that featured a 10-5 record, a 3.23 ERA, and two complete games, **Brady Singer** lost his way in 2023. His ERA soared to 5.52 and he struggled in just about every aspect. However, his ERA leaving May was 7.12 so give him credit for righting the ship at least a little bit down the stretch of the season. While he was technically a bit unlucky from an advanced analytics perspective, batters routinely hit him hard, and he'll need to produce a lot more ground balls in 2024 to be successful. The Royals brought in **Cole Ragans** as part of the Aroldis Chapman trade with the Texas Rangers, and it's a good thing they did. The Rangers had utilized his skill set in bullpen, but the Royals, desperate for potential rotation pitchers, put him to work right away as a starter. He thrived in that role, allowing just two earned runs in his first 17.2 innings of work for Kansas City. As a starter he went 5-2 and figures to be the Opening Day starter for the Royals. Kansas City is hoping to squeeze out another good season from veteran **Michael Wacha**, who is actually coming off of one of his best seasons. Remarkably, in the last two years he has a 25-6 record and he's had an ERA+ of 127 in each of those years. Unlike Wacha, **Jordan Lyles** would prefer to forget about his record in 2023 after being credited with an MLB-high 17 losses. He holds an inauspicious career ERA of 5.24, but if you want to look on the bright side, he's pitched 170+ innings in each of the last three seasons. **Seth Lugo** put together a solid season with the Padres as a full time starter for the first time since 2017.

The bullpen has several new faces including **Chris Stratton**, **Nick Anderson**, and **John Schreiber**. **Will Smith**, another newcomer, is the only player in the projected bullpen with more than one save from the 2023 season so he could assume the closer role at the start of 2024.

The Bottom Line

Don't let anybody tell you that this roster isn't improved from the 106-loss nightmare of 2023 in which the Royals tied the franchise record for most losses in a season. Now, it's critically important that this team stays healthy, especially in the rotation where there are several older arms. Don't expect a playoff push, but if the projection below comes true, the Royals will have won 21 more games in 2024 than they did in 2023 which would be a resounding success of a season. However, if the Royals don't make a resurgence in 2024, the light at the end of the proverbial tunnel really will be a train considering the apparent lack of big-league-ready talent in the farm system. Calling 2024 a "now or never" season is probably a bit too dramatic, but this season does have the feeling of "if not now, then when?"

2024 Projection: 75-87, 3rd in AL Central

Bobby Witt Jr.

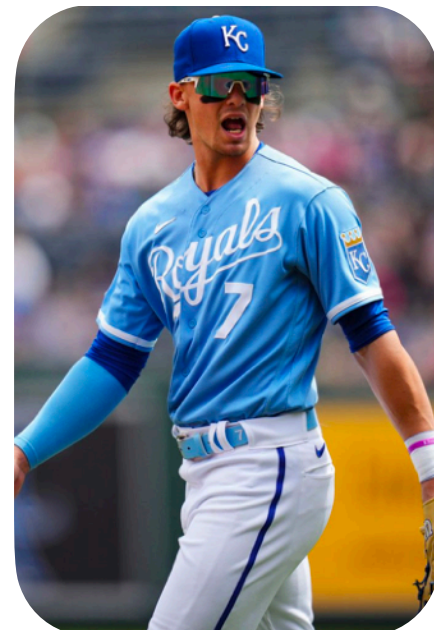



Photo via Royals Review



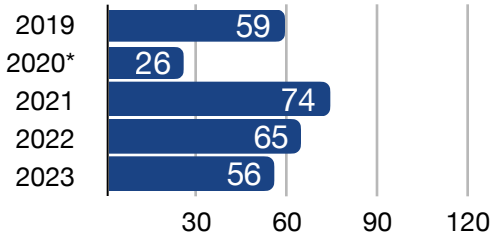
2023 MLB Ranks
 RPG - 4.17 (23rd)
 HITS - 1325 (21st)
 HR - 163 (26th)
 ERA - 5.17 (28th)
 SO - 1270 (27th)
 FD% - .986% (12th)

Cole Ragans



Photo via Royals Review

ROYALS 5-YEAR WIN TREND



4 < Number to Know

Bobby Witt Jr. had 30 home runs and 49 stolen bases in 2023, only four players in MLB history have ever had as many home runs and stolen bases in a season.

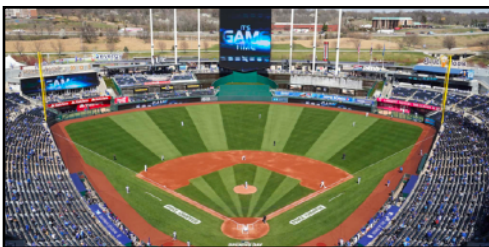


Photo via MLB

PROSPECT TO WATCH Nick Loftin - IF

Why is there no specific position listed for Nick Loftin? It's because he's a talented utility player who can cover first, second, or third base. Even though he only appeared in 19 games for the Royals in 2023, he played all three of those positions. While his versatility is perhaps his most notable attribute as a prospect, he handled the bat very well. He hit .323 through 68 plate appearances and he stole a couple bases and legged out a triple as well. While he has yet to register his first major league home run, the capability is certainly there based on his time in Triple-A. If Loftin can continue to impress at the plate, the Royals won't have a choice but to pencil him somewhere in the lineup.



Photo @NickLoftin02

Projected Lineup			'23 AVG
1	MJ Melendez	LF	.235
7	Bobby Witt Jr.	SS	.276
13	Salvador Perez	C	.255
9	Vinnie Pasquantino	1B	.247
16	Hunter Renfroe	RF	.233
26	Adam Frazier	2B	.240
17	Nelson Velázquez	DH	.235
28	Kyle Isbel	CF	.240
11	Maikel Garcia	3B	.272

Projected Rotation			'23 ERA
55	Cole Ragans	SP	3.47
52	Michael Wacha	SP	3.22
67	Seth Lugo	SP	3.57
51	Brady Singer	SP	5.52
24	Jordan Lyles	SP	6.28
CL	Will Smith	CL	4.40

PLAYER SPOTLIGHT Salvador Pérez - C



2023 Statistics

GP AVG OPS HR RBI
140 .255 .714 23 80

In his many years with this Royals franchise, Perez has seen the good, bad, ugly, and just about everything in between. He'll hit some big milestones in his 14th season including 1,500 hits, 250 home runs, and 1,500 games played (assuming he plays 106 games). Last season, he played a couple dozen games at first base and 29 games as the designated hitter. If the Royals can stay healthy this season, expect to see Perez play more DH this season, especially with three catchers potentially making the Opening Day roster. Salvy will continue to build his case for the Hall of Fame in 2024.

2024 Schedule

March/April 2024											
					MIN 4:10					MIN 4:10	30
MIN 2:10	BAL 6:35	BAL 6:35	BAL 1:05	CWS 7:40	CWS 7:40	CWS 7:10					
CWS 2:10		HOU 7:40	HOU 7:40	HOU 2:10	NYM 7:10	NYM 1:40					
NYM 1:40	CWS 7:40	CWS 7:40	CWS 2:10		BAL 7:40	BAL 7:10					
BAL 2:10	TOR 7:40	TOR 7:40	TOR 7:40	TOR 2:10	DET 1:10	DET 6:10					
DET 1:40	TOR 7:07	TOR 3:07									

May 2024											
				TOR 3:07				TEX 7:40	TEX 4:10		
TEX 2:10	MIL 7:40	MIL 7:40	MIL 2:10	LAA 9:38	LAA 9:38	LAA 9:38					
LAA 4:07	SEA 9:40	SEA 8:40	SEA 4:10		OAK 7:40	OAK 7:10					
OAK 2:10	DET 7:40	DET 2:10	DET 2:10		TB 6:50	TB 4:10					
TB 1:40	MIN 2:10	MIN 7:40	MIN 7:40	MIN 1:10	SD 8:10						

June 2024											
										SD 4:10	1
SD 2:10		CLE 6:40	CLE 8:40	CLE 1:10	SEA 8:10	SEA 4:10					
SEA 2:10	NYG 8:10	NYG 8:10	NYG 8:10	NYG 2:10	LAD 10:10	LAD 9:10					
LAD 4:10		OAK 9:40	OAK 9:40	OAK 3:37	TEX 8:05	TEX 4:05					
TEX 2:35	MIA 8:10	MIA 8:10	MIA 2:10	CLE 8:10	CLE 8:10	CLE 4:10					
CLE 2:10											

July 2024											
COL 3:10		TB 8:10	TB 8:10	TB 8:10	COL 8:10	COL 9:10					
BOS 1:35		STL 7:45	STL 7:45		BOS 7:10	BOS 4:10					
		All-Star Break - Arlington, TX				CWS 7:10	CWS 7:10				
CWS 2:10	ARI 8:10	ARI 8:10	ARI 8:10		CHC 8:10	CHC 7:10					
CHC 2:10	CWS 8:10	CWS 8:10	CWS 2:10								

August 2024											
DET 1:40	BOS 8:10	BOS 8:10	BOS 8:10		DET 6:40	DET 6:40	DET 6:10				
	MIN 7:40	MIN 7:40	MIN 1:10		STL 8:10	STL 7:10					
CIN 1:40	LAA 8:10	LAA 8:10	LAA 8:10		CIN 6:40	CIN 6:40					
PHI 2:10	CLE 6:40	CLE 6:40	CLE 1:10	HOU 8:10	HOU 8:10	HOU 7:10					

September 2024											
HOU 2:10	CLE 4:10	CLE 7:40	CLE 7:40		MIN 8:10	MIN 7:10					
MIN 2:10	NYG 7:05	NYG 7:05	NYG 7:05		PIT 6:40	PIT 6:40					
PIT 1:35	DET 7:40	DET 7:40	DET 7:40		SF 8:10	SF 7:10					
SF 2:10		WSH 6:45	WSH 6:45	WSH 1:05	ATL 7:20	ATL 7:20					
ATL 3:20											

HOME

AWAY