

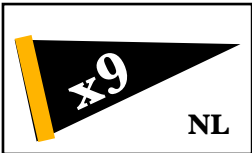


PITTSBURGH PIRATES

National League Central



Pittsburgh, PA - PNC Park (38,000)
Manager: Derek Shelton (218-328, 5th Season)



10763
FRANCHISE WINS

76-86
2023 SEASON

4th
DIVISION

#2
FARM SYSTEM RANK

Hot Start in 2023 - Real or Not Real?

The biggest surprise of the early baseball season was the Pittsburgh Pirates, who started red hot with a 20-9 record and ended the month of April in first place in the NL Central. They actually held first place as late into the season as June 15th but a tough July (8-16 record) ultimately pushed the Bucs' season record below .500 for the eighth consecutive season. Was the torrid start a sign of things to come or was it just a flash in the pan in a relatively weak division? The 2024 season will provide the answer.

Batting

The Pirates were somewhat challenged offensively in 2023, in part because they hit just 159 home runs, the third fewest in the majors. **Bryan Reynolds** paced the Pittsburgh offense with an average of .263, 24 home runs, and 84 RBI. No Pittsburgh hitter had an OPS of .800 better but Reynolds got close with his mark of .790 and **Jack Suwinski** got even closer with his .793 OPS. In Suwinski's first full season in the majors, he hit 26 home runs and drew 75 walks for an on-base percentage of .339, although he did strike out 172 times. He's working on improving his plate appearances against lefties but he's one of the more underrated young hitters in the game. Potential standout **Oneil Cruz** suffered a very unfortunate fractured fibula in a collision at home plate just nine games into the 2023 season. He's played in only 98 career games in the majors, but when healthy he has a power bat and a cannon for an arm at shortstop. **Ke'Bryan Hayes** is entering his fifth year with the Pirates following a small resurgence offensively and he earned his first Gold Glove at third base. One of the best Pirates of all time, **Andrew McCutchen**, is entering his 11th season with Pittsburgh and 16th overall in the majors. He had a solid season in 2023 in his second stint with the Pirates and batted .256 with an OPS+ of 113. His days of playing in the outfield are pretty much done as he played just eight games in right field last year, but he's still a good enough hitter to warrant playing designated hitter and the insight and wisdom he can provide to younger hitters is invaluable. Two new additions in **Rowdy Tellez** and **Edward Olivares** should factor into the back half of the lineup. **Yasmani Grandal** is also a new face on the Pirates and should see some time behind the dish, but he's been a negative WAR player for the White Sox in each of the past two seasons. **Henry Davis** was also a negative WAR player but the 2021 first round pick has only 62 games of experience under his belt so it's still too early for a concrete assessment.

Pitching

After a very forgettable 2021 campaign that featured an ERA above 6.00, **Mitch Keller** has settled in nicely as the ace of the staff and he signed a handsome extension in the offseason. He was an All-Star for the first time in his career and set career bests in just about every category. **Johan Oviedo** was arguably the next most effective pitcher behind Keller but he had Tommy John surgery in December. Likewise, journeyman Rich Hill is gone. That leaves **Martin Pérez** as the next starter behind Keller. Pérez was a member of the World Series winning Texas Rangers and relies on the ground ball for his success. He was an All Star in 2022, but his ERA jumped back to his career average of 4.44 in 2023. **Marco Gonzales** joins Pittsburgh after seven years in Seattle and he's looking to bounce back from a 2023 season that was cut down to just 50 innings due to forearm surgery. **Luiz L. Ortiz** and **Jared Jones** are two arms that figure to play a role in the back portion of the rotation. Similarly, it may only be a matter of time before the first overall pick in the 2023 draft, **Paul Skenes**, makes his highly anticipated major league debut.

The bullpen gets an upgrade with the addition of flamethrower **Aroldis Chapman**. Even at the age of 36, he has somehow reinvented himself and hits triple digits on his fastball on a routine basis. He figures to be a set-up man in the eighth inning before turning it over to last year's closer **David Bednar**, who had a quality 2023 campaign that featured 39 saves and an ERA of just 2.00 across 67.1 innings. **Carmen Mlodzinski**, a 2020 first round draft pick, pitched well in his debut season out of the bullpen with an ERA of 2.25.

The Bottom Line


Will Pittsburgh be able to build on their early success from 2023? In the short term, the answer is probably no. Outside of Mitch Keller, the rotation is unproven and even Keller's ERA was above 4.00. There are a couple of new bats that arrived this offseason but those additions likely won't move the needle much on offense. In fact, the health of Oneil Cruz will prove to be far more impactful. The good news for the long-suffering Pittsburgh fans is that there are numerous prospects in the farm system with high potential, none more so than last year's first overall pick Paul Skenes. Several will make their MLB debut in 2024 and they will ideally become a core that will not only continue to push the Pirates rebuild forward but will eventually keep Pittsburgh in contention for several consecutive seasons.

2024 Projection: 72-90, 5th in NL Central

Andrew McCutchen



Photo via Forbes



2023 MLB Ranks
 RPG - 4.27 (22nd)
 HITS - 1293 (24th)
 HR - 159 (28th)
 ERA - 4.60 (22nd)
 SO - 1363 (21st)
 FD% - .984% (19th)

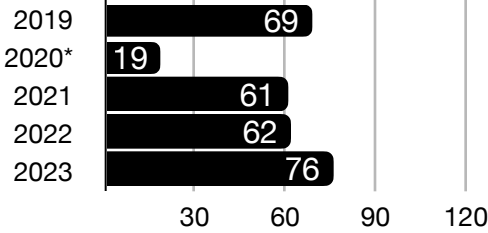
PIRATES

Oneil Cruz



Photo via USA Today

PIRATES 5-YEAR WIN TREND



18 < Number to Know

FanGraphs gives the Pittsburgh Pirates an 18% chance to make the postseason in 2024, their highest preseason playoff odds since 2016.

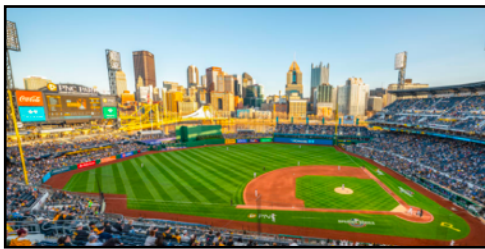


Photo via MLB

PROSPECT TO WATCH Paul Skenes - P

After transferring from Air Force to LSU in 2023, Skenes took college baseball by storm with a ridiculous performance for the eventual national champion Tigers. He pitched to a minuscule 1.69 ERA over 122.2 innings and struck out 209 batters while walking only 20. His fastball routinely touches the upper 90s (and sometimes even triple digits) and his slider is an effective secondary pitch. He'll almost certainly start the season in triple-A Indianapolis since he has an entire 6.2 innings of experience in the minor league system. However, as long as the transition to facing triple-A hitting goes well, he could make his MLB debut as soon as this summer. Considering that the Pittsburgh rotation doesn't appear to be a strength in 2024, there may be added motivation from the front office to move him to The Show.

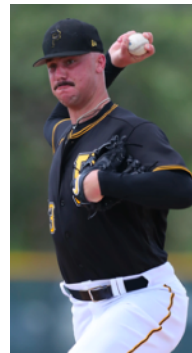


Photo via New York Post

Projected Lineup

			'23 AVG
15	Oneil Cruz	SS	.250
10	Bryan Reynolds	LF	.263
13	Ke'Bryan Hayes	3B	.271
22	Andrew McCutchen	DH	.256
65	Jack Suwinski	CF	.224
32	Henry Davis	C	.213
44	Rowdy Tellez	1B	.215
38	Edward Olivares	RF	.263
31	Liover Peguero	2B	.237

Projected Rotation

			'23 ERA
23	Mitch Keller	SP	4.21
54	Martin Pérez	SP	4.45
27	Marco Gonzales	SP	5.22
48	Luis L. Ortiz	SP	4.78
37	Jared Jones	SP	-
51	David Bednar	CL	2.00

PLAYER SPOTLIGHT Mitch Keller - SP



2023 Statistics

APP IP ERA K BB
32 194.1 4.21 210 55

In recent seasons, the Pirates haven't exactly committed a lot of money to their roster. Their 2023 payroll of \$73.2 million ranked the fourth-lowest in baseball but Mitch Keller's All-Star performance gave the front office enough confidence to sign him to a 5-year, \$77 million extension. He was much better than his 4.21 ERA would otherwise indicate and a rough stretch after the All-Star break was partially to blame. He was otherwise reliable and pitched nearly 200 innings and won 13 games. The pitching staff needs an anchor and Keller will try to be exactly that again in 2024.

2024 Schedule

March/April 2024

				MIA 4:10	MIA 7:10	MIA 4:10			
MIA 1:40	WSH 4:05			WSH 6:45	WSH 4:05	BAL 4:12	BAL 4:05		
BAL 1:35	DET 6:40	DET 12:35			PHI 6:40	PHI 6:40	PHI 4:05		
PHI 1:35	NYM 7:10	NYM 7:10	NYM 1:10			BOS 6:40	BOS 4:05		
BOS 1:35	MIL 6:40	MIL 6:40	MIL 6:40	MIL 12:35	SF 10:15	SF 9:05			
SF 4:05	OAK 9:40	OAK 9:40							

May 2024

			OAK 3:37		COL 6:40	COL 4:05			
COL 1:35	LAA 6:40	LAA 6:40	LAA 12:35		CHC 6:40	CHC 4:05			
CHC 1:35	MIL 7:40	MIL 7:40	MIL 1:10	CHC 7:40	CHC 2:20	CHC 2:20			
CHC 2:20		SF 6:40	SF 6:40	SF 12:35	ATL 6:40	ATL 4:05			
ATL 1:35		DET 6:40	DET 1:10		TOR 7:07				

June 2024

						TOR 3:07			
TOR 1:37		LAD 6:40	LAD 6:40	LAD 6:40	MIN 6:40	MIN 4:05			
MIN 1:35		STL 7:45	STL 7:45	STL 2:15	COL 8:40	COL 9:10			
COL 3:10	CIN 6:40	CIN 6:40	CIN 12:35		TB 6:40	TB 4:05			
TB 1:35	CIN 7:10	CIN 7:10	CIN 7:10		ATL 7:20	ATL 4:10			
ATL 1:35									

July 2024

		STL 6:40	STL 6:40	STL 12:35	NYM 6:40	NYM 4:05			
NYM 1:35	NYM 12:35	MIL 8:10	MIL 8:10	MIL 2:10	CWS 8:10	CWS 2:10			
CWS 2:10	All-Star Break - Arlington, TX					PHI 6:40	PHI 6:40		
PHI 1:35	STL 6:40	STL 6:40	STL 12:35		ARI 9:40	ARI 8:10			
ARI 4:10	HOU 8:10	HOU 8:10	HOU 8:10						

August 2024

					ARI 6:40	ARI 6:40			
ARI 1:35		SD 6:40	SD 6:40	SD 12:35	LAD 10:10	LAD 9:10			
LAD 4:10	SD 9:40	SD 9:40	SD 4:10		SEA 6:40	SEA 1:05			
SEA 1:35	TEX 8:05	TEX 8:05	TEX 8:05	CIN 6:40	CIN 6:40	CIN 6:40			
CIN 1:35	CHC 6:40	CHC 6:40	CHC 12:35		CLE 7:10	CLE 6:10			

September 2024

CLE 1:35	CHC 7:40	CHC 7:40	CHC 7:40	WSH 6:40	WSH 6:40	WSH 6:40			
WSH 1:35	MIA 6:40	MIA 6:40	MIA 12:35		KC 6:40	KC 6:40			
KC 1:35	STL 7:45	STL 7:45	STL 7:45	STL 7:15	CIN 6:40	CIN 6:40			
CIN 1:10		MIL 6:40	MIL 6:40	MIL 12:35	NYL 7:05	NYL 1:05			
NYL 3:05									

HOME

AWAY