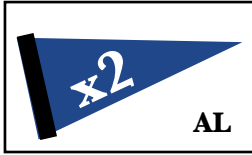




TORONTO BLUE JAYS

American League East



3687
FRANCHISE WINS

89-73
2023 SEASON

3rd
DIVISION

#25
FARM SYSTEM RANK

Toronto, Canada - Rogers Centre (41,500)
Manager: John Schneider (135-101, 2nd Season)

2023: Lost in ALWC

Blue Jays Banking On Resurgence

All in all, the offseason was a disappointing one for the Blue Jays who felt very much in the mix of the Shohei Ohtani sweepstakes. Heck, fans were tracking flights from Los Angeles to Toronto. The Blue Jays couldn't prompt a Juan Soto trade and instead must face him 13 times this season. It's especially frustrating because many Toronto fans feel their team is right on the brink of potential greatness, and they may not be wrong. The Blue Jays had one of the best pitching staffs in the league in 2023 but often couldn't reliably provide run support. Those offensive issues surfaced at exactly the wrong time: the postseason. Toronto scratched across just a single run against Minnesota in the two-game Wild Card series and their postseason losing streak now extends to six games. To this point, Toronto seemingly hasn't added the pieces necessary to get over the hump, especially compared to teams in their own division like the Yankees and Orioles. Instead, they are hoping (with fingers and toes crossed) that the already existing roster will simply outperform the 2023 team, but is that wishful thinking?

Batting

Vladimir Guerrero Jr. is the focal point of the offense and has made three straight All-Star appearances but in the last two seasons his numbers have drifted further and further away from his monstrous 2021 season, a year in which he would have won an MVP if not for the otherworldliness of Shohei Ohtani. While his batting average and slugging dropped in 2023, his on-base percentage improved to .345 and you can virtually guarantee that he will play every day. There aren't many new faces on the roster, but **Justin Turner** is one of them. Now entering his 16th year in the majors, Turner is still an above average hitter and he'll reach the milestones of 1,500 career hits and 200 career home runs this season at his current pace. Matt Chapman departs and his perennial gold glove follows him, leaving an obvious gap on defense. **Isiah Kiner-Falefa** can play just about any position on the field, but he might find a home at third base, primarily, in 2024.

Cavan Biggio has been unable to take the next step at the plate and has now had an OPS+ of 100 or below in three consecutive seasons. Conversely, **Bo Bichette** is simply a hitting machine with a career batting average of .299 in 528 games since his debut in 2019. Last season, he paired a .306/.339/.475 slash line with his best defensive season and he's clubbed 20 or more homers in each of the last three seasons. The Blue Jays have two viable catching options between **Alejandro Kirk** and **Danny Jansen**. You'll be hard pressed to find a better defensive outfield with the likes of **Daulton Varsho** and **Kevin Kiermaier** patrolling left and center, respectively. **George Springer** has hit 20 or more home runs in 8 of his 10 big league seasons although his .732 OPS in 2023 was a career low.

Pitching

Kevin Gausman leads a strong Toronto rotation. He has been superb for the Blue Jays in the last two seasons and has clearly established himself as not only the ace of the staff but as one of the best arms in the game. Add in his All-Star campaign with the Giants in 2021 and you have a ridiculous 669/133 strikeout to walk ratio over the last three years. After a very forgettable 2022, **José Berrios** put together a nice bounce-back season. While he tends to give up hits, he did a much better job of managing baserunners in 2023 and, like Gausman, "The Machine" rarely misses a start. **Chris Bassitt** was also an ironman, facing an AL-high 826 batters and he reached the now-rare plateau of 200 innings. He did tend to give up the long ball last year but that hasn't been a major tendency in the past. **Yusei Kikuchi** put together a career-best 2023 campaign which included career bests in ERA, innings pitched, and strikeouts although his WHIP remained fairly high at 1.270. Despite finishing third in AL Cy Young voting in 2022, **Alek Manoah** struggled so much in 2023 that the Blue Jays actually sent him down to the minors, not once, but twice. The team is optimistic that he will return to form in 2024, and Spring Training could be critical to his confidence heading into the season.

The bullpen wasn't quite as good as the rotation last year, but it was still strong. **Jordan Romano** will again assume the closer role. **Tim Mayza** was lights out, posting a 1.52 ERA across 53.1 innings. **Erik Swanson**, **Yimi Garcia**, and **Trevor Richards** all swallowed up a bunch of innings with Swanson being one of the most effective arms out of the pen.

The Bottom Line

Toronto is essentially counting on another very strong season from the pitching staff and for the hitting to improve in 2024. Both are big assumptions. Will the likes of Guerrero Jr. and Springer really hit peak hitting form? Hopefully, yes, for Toronto's sake. Will the pitching really be as good as it was last year? Maybe, but the starting rotation was exceptionally healthy last year and it seems almost impossible that the Blue Jays would have such good fortune again in 2024. While this offseason was arguably a huge missed opportunity, there is still enough talent on this team to reach the postseason, but it's simultaneously doubtful that Toronto will be able to make much noise in October.

2024 Projection: 86-76, 3rd in AL East

Bo Bichette



Photo via Sports Illustrated



2023 MLB Ranks
RPG - 4.60 (14th)
HITS - 1423 (6th)
HR - 188 (16th)
ERA - 3.78 (4th)
SO - 1528 (2nd)
FD% - .988% (4th)

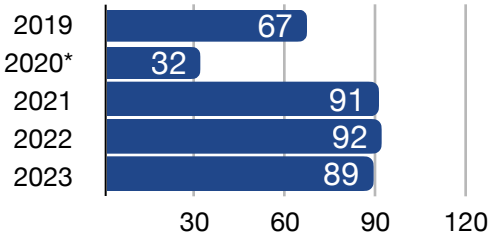
TORONTO BLUE JAYS

Vladimir Guerrero Jr.



Photo via Bluebird Banter

BLUE JAYS 5-YEAR WIN TREND



6 < Number to Know

The current postseason losing streak which includes last year's sweep in the ALWC and 2022's painful 8-1 blown lead against the Mariners.



Photo via Ballparks of Baseball

PROSPECT TO WATCH Orelvis Martinez - 3B

There is a ton of pop in Martinez' bat. At just 21, he hammered 28 home runs in double-A and triple-A in 2023, backing up his 30 homers in double-A ball in 2022. While he has plenty of power to spare, Martinez is still working on his plate discipline and he's never been one to hit for a high average. However, he showed definitive improvement from 2022 to 2023, drawing more walks and striking out less. In 55 games with triple-A Buffalo, he hit for a .263 average and his gap power and 67 walks on the season elevated his OPS to a very respectable .847. Making the leap to the majors will be another big challenge and will offer its own unique challenge, but it's clear that Martinez is trending in the right direction. He's played both third base and shortstop in the minors and that defensive versatility might help him see a big league field even sooner.



Photo via Sportsnet

Projected Lineup		'23 AVG
4	George Springer	RF .258
11	Bo Bichette	SS .306
27	Vladimir Guerrero Jr.	1B .264
2	Justin Turner	DH .276
8	Cavan Biggio	2B .235
30	Alejandro Kirk	C .250
25	Daulton Varsho	LF .220
7	Isiah Kiner-Falefa	3B .242
39	Kevin Kiermaier	CF .265

Projected Rotation		'23 ERA
34	Kevin Gausman	SP 3.16
17	José Berrios	SP 3.65
40	Chris Bassitt	SP 3.60
16	Yusei Kikuchi	SP 3.86
6	Alek Manoah	SP 5.87
68	Jordan Romano	CL 2.90

PLAYER SPOTLIGHT

Kevin Gausman - SP



2023 Statistics

APP 31 **IP** 185.0 **ERA** 3.16 **K** 237 **BB** 55

After being a bit of a journeyman, Gausman has clearly found a home in Toronto. He was masterful in 2023, finishing third in Cy Young voting and nobody in the American League struck out more batters than the 11-year vet. You can count the number of missed starts in the last three years on one hand and hitters have simply been unable to square the ball up in those seasons. His pitch mix of fastball/splitter/slider is incredibly deceptive and he is able to draw swings on pitches located outside the strike zone. The splitter is especially nasty, as hitters batted just .201 against the pitch.

2024 Schedule

March/April 2024

					TB 4:10	TB 6:50	TB 4:10
TB 1:40	HOU 8:10	HOU 8:10	HOU 8:10		NYN 1:05	NYN 7:05	
NYN 1:35	SEA 7:07	SEA 7:07	SEA 7:07		COL 7:07	COL 3:07	
COL 1:37	NYN 7:07	NYN 7:07	NYN 7:07		SD 9:40	SD 8:40	
SD 4:10	KC 7:40	KC 7:40	KC 7:40	KC 2:10	LAD 7:07	LAD 3:07	
LAD 1:37	KC 7:07	KC 7:07					

May 2024

			KC 3:07		WSH 6:45	WSH 4:05	
WSH 1:35		PHI 6:40	PHI 1:05		MIN 7:07	MIN 3:07	
MIN 1:37	BAL 6:35	BAL 6:35	BAL 12:35		TB 7:07	TB 3:07	
TB 1:37	CWS 3:07	CWS 7:07	CWS 7:07	DET 6:40	DET 6:40	DET 1:10	
DET 1:40	CWS 2:10	CWS 7:40	CWS 7:40		PIT 7:07		

June 2024

						PIT 3:07	
PIT 1:37	BAL 7:07	BAL 7:07	BAL 7:07	BAL 1:07	OAK 9:40	OAK 4:07	
OAK 4:07	MIL 8:10	MIL 8:10	MIL 2:10		CLE 7:07	CLE 3:07	
CLE 1:37	BOS 7:07	BOS 7:07	BOS 7:07		CLE 7:10	CLE 4:10	
CLE 2:30	BOS 7:10	BOS 7:10	BOS 7:10	NYN 7:07	NYN 7:07	NYN 3:07	
NYN 1:37							

July 2024

	HOU 3:07	HOU 7:07	HOU 7:07	HOU 1:07	SEA 9:40	SEA 4:10	
SEA 4:10		SF 9:45	SF 9:45	SF 3:45	ARI 9:40	ARI 10:10	
ARI 4:10	All-Star Break - Arlington, TX					DET 7:07	DET 3:07
DET 1:37		TB 7:07	TB 7:07	TB 3:07	TEX 7:07	TEX 3:07	
TEX 1:37	BAL 6:35	BAL 6:35	BAL 12:35				

August 2024

					NYN 7:05	NYN 1:05	
NYN 1:35		BAL 7:07	BAL 7:07	BAL 7:07	OAK 9:40	OAK 3:07	
OAK 1:37	LAA 9:38	LAA 9:38	LAA 9:38		CHC 2:20	CHC 2:20	
CHC 2:20	CIN 7:07	CIN 7:07	CIN 7:07	LAA 7:07	LAA 7:07	LAA 3:07	
LAA 1:37	BOS 7:10	BOS 7:10	BOS 7:10	BOS 7:10	MIN 8:10	MIN 7:10	

September 2024

					ATL 7:20	ATL 7:20	
MIN 2:10		PHI 7:07	PHI 3:07		STL 7:07	STL 3:07	
ATL 1:35	NYM 7:07	NYM 7:07	NYM 3:07		TB 6:50	TB 4:10	
STL 1:37		TEX 8:05	TEX 8:05	TEX 2:35	TB 7:07	TB 3:07	
TB 1:40	BOS 7:07	BOS 7:07	BOS 7:07		MIA 7:07	MIA 3:07	
MIA 3:07							

HOME AWAY