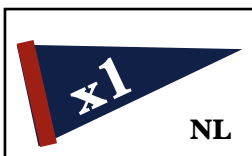




WASHINGTON NATIONALS

National League East



4194
FRANCHISE WINS

71-91
2023 SEASON

5th
DIVISION

#8
FARM SYSTEM RANK

Washington, D.C. - Nationals Park (41,339)
Manager: Dave Martinez (392-478, 7th Season)

From First to Stuck At Worst

Ever since the Nationals claimed their first-ever World Series championship in 2019, Washington has finished dead last in the NL East in each of the last four seasons. A 17-11 August gave the Nationals hope that they might overtake the struggling Mets in the standings (they did for eight days), but an 8-18 September doomed their chances. The story remains the same in 2024: while contention doesn't appear realistic, escaping last place would help bring some hope for the near future, especially with key young players on the rise within the organization.

Batting

The Nationals actually finished in the top 10 in the majors for hits, albeit tenth. However, the number of hits didn't necessarily correspond to the number of runs scored in large part due to an overall lack of power in the lineup; only the Cleveland Guardians hit fewer home runs. In theory, a player with 198 career home runs should help in that category but **Joey Gallo** has struggled at the plate in recent seasons and hasn't topped a .200 batting average since 2019. So, whether he will be a benefit or a hindrance to the offense remains to be seen. The Nats also signed veteran **Eddie Rosario** a couple weeks into Spring Training and are hopeful that there's still some magic left in his NLCS MVP bat from the 2021 World Series championship run with the Braves. Those additions means **Joey Meneses** will retain his designated hitter role. He drew excitement in 2022 when he hit 13 home runs in just 56 games as a rookie but it took him 154 games to hit 13 home runs in 2023. **CJ Abrams** is also a young player who stole 47 bases and was caught only four times and could improve on those numbers if he can hit better than .245 this season.

Lane Thomas is coming off of a career year that included 28 home runs, 86 RBI, and 20 stolen bases. In general, he's made the most of his time in Washington and seems to be just now approaching his prime. **Keibert Ruiz** is a durable catcher with a good bat that showed increased power in 2023 (18 home runs, 67 RBI). The second overall pick of the 2016 draft was injury riddled in his time with Cincinnati and while **Nick Senzel's** offense never lived up to his first round billing, he's capable of playing several positions defensively including third base, where he'll likely start with the Nationals. **Victor Robles** started the season red hot but a back injury ended his season after just 36 games and his career OPS is just .671.

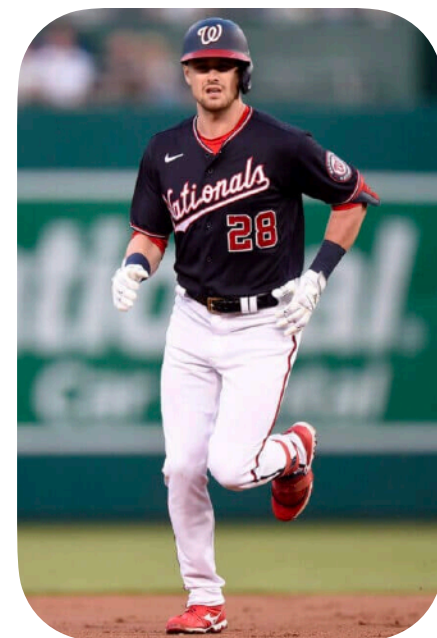


Photo via The Athletic

Pitching

The Nationals have a potential budding star in **Josiah Gray**. His 2022 season was a bit of a disaster, he gave up 38 home runs, the most of any major league pitcher, and he also allowed 66 walks all in just 148.2 innings. He showed significant improvement in 2023 and cut way down on home runs allowed (22) even though he pitched 159.0 innings. He still walks a very high number of batters, leading to a 1.459 WHIP but his ERA fell all the way to 3.91 and he was named an All-Star. **MacKenzie Gore** finally played in his first full season after being the third overall pick of the 2017 draft. An ERA of 4.42 isn't particularly notable, however, he proved that he wields great strikeout stuff featuring a curveball that batters whiffed on at a rate of 37.9%, making it the 12th best curveball in the majors. Although they are both young, the Gray-Gore duo at the top of the rotation could be sneaky good in 2024 and will hopefully be a solid building block for the future of the franchise. **Patrick Corbin** has been hit about as hard as any pitcher in baseball over the last three seasons, but to his credit he almost never misses a start. Unfortunately, his reliability on the mound has also led to a league-leading 49 losses over the past three years. **Jake Irvin** pitched 121 innings as a rookie with mixed results. He had a decent second half but two tough performances at the end of the year put his ERA+ below MLB average on the season. **Trevor Williams** allowed an NL-high 34 home runs but did pitch 100+ innings for the first time since 2019.


The bullpen was one of the worst in baseball behind only the Rockies, Royals, and Athletics. **Hunter Harvey** was a bright spot after pitching to a 2.82 ERA across 60.2 innings. He collected 10 saves while **Kyle Finnegan** claimed 28. **Dylan Floro** is one of the few additions to the pitching staff, but he should prove to be an upgrade.

The Bottom Line

The Nationals weren't expected to compete this season, but it's still surprising how little the Nationals moved in either free agency or trades with other teams. The main concern heading into 2024 is the issue that plagued Washington all of last season: the pitching staff. The Nationals were one of only four teams with a team ERA above 5.00 and there are no additions on the staff that give hope of quick improvement. Instead, the Nationals will be relying on Josiah Gray and MacKenzie Gore to take the next step and holding out hope that Patrick Corbin and Trevor Williams can reverse their downward trend of the past few seasons. The offense may hit a few more home runs this season but it's highly doubtful they'll connect for as many hits and the back portion of the lineup could become a glaring weakness especially if injuries pop up. Unfortunately, it appears that the Nats are again destined for a last place finish.

2024 Projection: 70-92, 5th in NL Central

2023 MLB Ranks



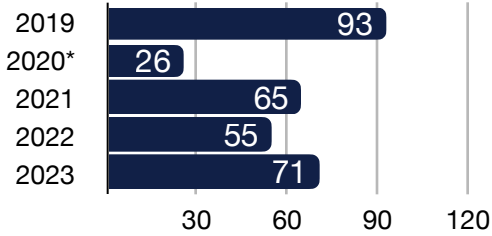
- RPG - 4.32 (21st)
- HITS - 1401 (10th)
- HR - 151 (29th)
- ERA - 5.02 (27th)
- SO - 1225 (28th)
- FD% - .985% (17th)

Josiah Gray



Photo via Washington Post

NATIONALS 5-YEAR WIN TREND



28.2 < Number to Know

The Nationals spent just \$28.2 million this offseason, not a particularly good sign for a team looking to escape last place (and with dollars to spend).



Photo via Ballparks of Baseball

PROSPECT TO WATCH Dylan Crews - OF

Crews was just drafted in June (second overall), but he has so much potential that it's not out of the realm of possibility that he debuts for the Nationals sometime this season. He posted ridiculous numbers for the national championship LSU Tigers in his senior season (no college batter was better than Crews in 2023) and he transitioned seamlessly to single-A Fredericksburg where he hit .355 and smashed 5 home runs in 14 games. He stumbled a bit in 20 games at double-A Harrisburg but chalk that up to fatigue in an extended season that started in mid-February. Whether fair or unfair, he will probably draw comparisons to Bryce Harper given his top prospect status. The Nationals clearly believe in him and give him the second-highest rookie bonus in MLB history.



Photo via MLBfits

Projected Lineup			'23 AVG
5	CJ Abrams	SS	.245
28	Lane Thomas	RF	.268
24	Joey Gallo	1B	.177
45	Joey Meneses	DH	.275
-	Eddie Rosario	LF	.255
20	Keibert Ruiz	C	.260
13	Nick Senzel	3B	.236
2	Luis Garcia Jr.	2B	.266
16	Victor Robles	CF	.299

Projected Rotation			'23 ERA
40	Josiah Gray	SP	3.91
1	MacKenzie Gore	SP	4.42
46	Patrick Corbin	SP	5.20
27	Jake Irvin	SP	4.61
32	Trevor Williams	SP	5.55
67	Kyle Finnegan	CL	3.76

PLAYER SPOTLIGHT Keibert Ruiz - C



2023 Statistics

GP AVG OPS HR RBI
136 .260 .717 18 67

The Nationals clearly believe in Ruiz as their catcher of the future after inking him to an 8-year, \$50 million extension. He came on strong following the 2023 All-Star break and he hit a remarkable .365 with runners in scoring position over the entire season. He tallied a career-best 18 home runs and 24 doubles and while he finished with a below-average OPS+, he's one of the best offensive catchers in the game, making up for his below-average defense. He does need to improve in that category after allowing a whopping 119 runners to steal a base, but he's clearly a focal point of the Nationals rebuild.

2024 Schedule

March/April 2024											
										CIN 28 4:10	CIN 30 4:10
CIN 31 1:40	PIT 1 4:05			PIT 3 6:45	PIT 4 4:05	PHI 5 6:45	PHI 6 4:05				
PHI 7 1:35	SF 8 9:45	SF 9 9:45	SF 10 3:35			OAK 12 9:40	OAK 13 4:07				
OAK 14 4:07	LAD 15 10:10	LAD 16 10:10	LAD 17 3:10			HOU 19 6:45	HOU 20 4:05				
HOU 21 1:35		LAD 23 6:45	LAD 24 6:45	LAD 25 4:05	MIA 26 7:10	MIA 27 4:10					
MIA 28 1:40	MIA 29 6:40	TEX 30 8:05									

May 2024											
										TEX 1 8:05	TEX 2 2:35
						TOR 3 6:45	TOR 4 4:05				
TOR 5 1:35		BAL 7 6:45	BAL 8 6:45			BOS 10 7:10	BOS 11 4:10				
BOS 12 1:35	CWS 13 7:40	CWS 14 7:40	CWS 15 2:10			PHI 17 6:40	PHI 18 6:05				
PHI 19 1:35	MIN 20 6:45	MIN 21 6:45	MIN 22 1:05			SEA 24 6:45	SEA 25 4:05				
SEA 26 1:35	ATL 27 4:10	ATL 28 7:20	ATL 29 7:20	ATL 30 7:20	CLE 31 7:10						

June 2024											
											CLE 1 4:10
CLE 2 1:40	NYM 3 6:45	NYM 4 6:45	NYM 5 4:05	ATL 6 6:45	ATL 7 6:45	ATL 8 4:05					
ATL 9 1:35		DET 11 6:40	DET 12 6:40	DET 13 1:10	MIA 14 6:45	MIA 15 4:05					
MIA 16 1:35		ARI 18 6:45	ARI 19 4:05	ARI 20 1:05	COL 21 8:40	COL 22 9:10					
COL 23 3:10	SD 24 9:40	SD 25 9:40	SD 26 4:10			TB 28 6:50	TB 29 4:10				
TB 30 1:40											

July 2024											
	NYM 6:45	NYM 6:45	NYM 6:45	NYM 11:05a	STL 6:45	STL 4:05					
STL 7 1:35	STL 8 4:05	NYM 9 7:10	NYM 10 7:10	NYM 11 1:10	MIL 12 8:10	MIL 13 4:10					
MIL 14 2:10	All-Star Break - Arlington, TX						CIN 19 6:45	CIN 20 6:45			
CIN 21 1:35		SD 23 6:45	SD 24 6:45	SD 25 12:05	STL 26 8:15	STL 27 7:15					
STL 28 2:15	ARI 29 9:40	ARI 30 9:40	ARI 31 3:40								

August 2024											
										MIL 2 6:45	MIL 3 4:05
MIL 4 1:35	SF 5 6:45	SF 6 6:45	SF 7 6:35	SF 8 4:05	LAA 9 6:45	LAA 10 6:45					
LAA 11 1:35		BAL 13 6:35	BAL 14 6:35	PHI 15 6:40	PHI 16 6:40	PHI 17 6:05					
PHI 18 1:35		COL 20 6:45	COL 21 6:45	COL 22 1:05	ATL 23 7:20	ATL 24 7:20					
ATL 25 1:35	NYG 26 6:45	NYG 27 6:45	NYG 28 6:35			CHC 30 6:45	CHC 31 4:05				

September 2024											
CHC 1 1:35		MIA 3 6:40	MIA 4 6:40	PIT 5 6:40	PIT 6 6:40	PIT 7 6:40					
PIT 8 1:35		ATL 10 6:45	ATL 11 6:45	MIA 12 6:45	MIA 13 6:45	MIA 14 4:05					
MIA 15 1:35	NYM 16 7:10	NYM 17 7:10	NYM 18 7:10	CHC 19 7:40	CHC 20 2:20	CHC 21 2:20					
CHC 22 2:20		KC 24 6:45	KC 25 6:45	KC 26 1:05	PHI 27 6:45	PHI 28 4:05					
PHI 29 3:05											

HOME AWAY