



# SAN DIEGO PADRES

National League West



**4034**  
FRANCHISE WINS

**82-80**  
2023 SEASON

**3rd**  
DIVISION

**#9**  
FARM SYSTEM RANK

San Diego, CA - Petco Park (40,209)  
Manager: Mike Shildt (0-0, 1st Season)

## Caught in the Middle

Give the Padres some credit, they went all in during the 2023 offseason to try and stay ahead of the Los Angeles Dodgers after knocking them out of the postseason in 2022. The Friars signed Xander Bogaerts to an enormous contract and brought in veterans Matt Carpenter, Nelson Cruz, and Michael Wacha. Unfortunately, a slow start doomed San Diego's chances and they were also abysmal in close games in 2023. San Diego saw their best hitter *and* best pitcher depart in the offseason, so will this season shape up to be a rebuilding year or can the Padres reload with existing talent on the roster?

### Batting

The Padres opted to trade Juan Soto to the Yankees prior to Spring Training. At face value, the return they received in the trade is not worth the star power of Soto, but the deal is done which means San Diego will need **Manny Machado** and others to step up. Machado had a down year, but only by his standards. He still hit 30 home runs but his doubles dropped from 37 to 21 and his batting average dropped by 40 points. Just two days after the season he had surgery to help repair a right elbow extensor (a.k.a., tennis elbow) which could have been a contributing factor to his more modest 2023 season. **Fernando Tatis Jr.** played well following his lengthy PED suspension and while he didn't equal his pre-suspension production at the plate, he did win a Gold Glove in right field despite just 20 MLB games of experience at that position prior to 2023. **Ha-Seong Kim's** defense at shortstop is so good that the Padres will move **Xander Bogaerts** over to second base, a position he has yet to play in his 11-year major league career. After back-to-back All Star appearances, **Jake Cronenworth** finished 2023 with an OPS+ of 92 and all three parts of his slash line hit career lows. He also recently switched defensive positions and will stay at first base in 2024.

Since Machado will likely start at DH while he recovers from surgery, third base will need occupied. Utility man **Eguy Rosario** could get the nod although he's played in only 18 career games. Machado will be joined in the outfield by last year's acquisition **Jurickson Profar** who played only 11 games for San Diego after sustaining a knee injury on a catch against the wall. **Jackson Merrill** hasn't even played in triple-A, but he could find himself starting in centerfield due to a lack of outfielder options.

### Pitching

Losing Cy Young winner Blake Snell will hurt, although the Scott Boras client has yet to sign with a team as of the writing of this preview. The Padres helped soften the blow by bringing in **Dylan Cease** from the Chicago White Sox in a trade. He's a Cy Young candidate himself after finishing second in voting in 2022 and he's remarkably similar to Snell in the fact that he will strikeout a ton of hitters while also surrounding plenty of walks. He's made 32 or more starts in each of the last three seasons. **Yu Darvish** gets another "Opening Day" nod, this time a week early as the Padres start the season in South Korea. After signing a surprisingly big contract in 2023 for a player turning 36, he had his worst season as a Padre and his walk rate jumped significantly. However, you won't find anyone with a pitch arsenal like Darvish and he's constantly tinkering with his stuff, so perhaps he can rebound in 2024. **Joe Musgrove** tossed the franchise's first no-hitter back in 2021 and he's been very effective ever since, although he was held to just 97.1 innings last year due to shoulder issues. **Michael King** made nine of his 19 career starts in 2023 and he was effective in that role for the Yankees. Now with the Padres as part of the Soto deal, he looks to remain as a starter. Ignoring his final start that didn't go as planned, he allowed four earned runs in September over 27.2 innings including a seven-inning, 13 K outing against Toronto. The Padres moved **Jhony Brito** to a bullpen role last year, utilizing him as a long reliever. He fared well enough in that role that he should get another shot at the rotation in 2024.

The bullpen will look almost entirely different and not just because lights-out closer Josh Hader is no longer with the team. **Yuki Matsui** and **Woo-Suk Go** join the team from Japan and Korea, respectively. **Tom Cosgrove** will look to build on his impressive rookie season and could even battle for the wide open closer role. **Robert Suarez** *should* be the closer considering the money he is being paid, but an ERA of 4.56 in 2023 doesn't instill much confidence.

### The Bottom Line

The Padres clearly felt like they weren't going to be able to pay for another lucrative contract like the ones they've recently awarded to Machado, Tatis Jr., Bogaerts, Darvish, and others, so trading away Juan Soto in an effort to get prospects and other pieces made "logical" sense. But then, they gave away some prospects and pieces to obtain Dylan Cease. Does that trade really put the Padres in contention in the division? Considering their struggles when Soto and Snell were on the roster, probably not. The Padres seem stuck in the "middle." They are not in a firm rebuild but they are also not a real threat to compete for a division, let alone a playoff spot. The good news is that there are several key prospects waiting in the wings and a couple of them will make the Opening Day roster. If San Diego can reverse their misfortune from last year, they *could* be better than last year, but that seems unlikely.

**2024 Projection: 77-85, 4th in NL West**

**Fernando Tatis Jr.**

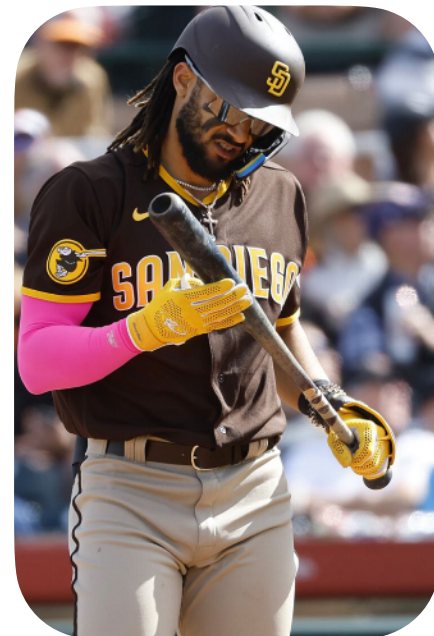



Photo via Palomar



**2023 MLB Ranks**  
 RPG - 4.64 (13th)  
 HITS - 1316 (22nd)  
 HR - 205 (13th)  
 ERA - 3.73 (2nd)  
 SO - 1455 (10th)  
 FD% - .988% (4th)

# PADRES

## Yu Darvish

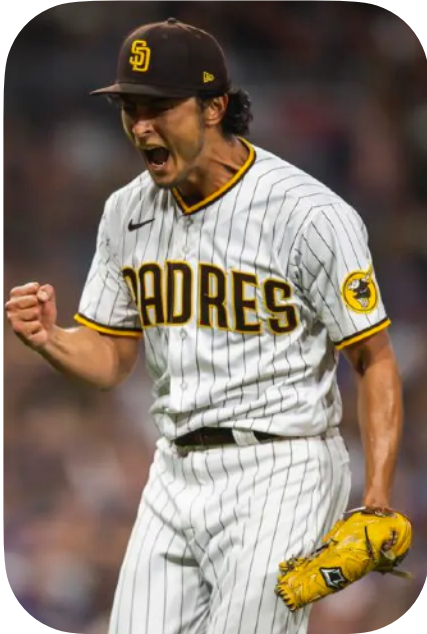
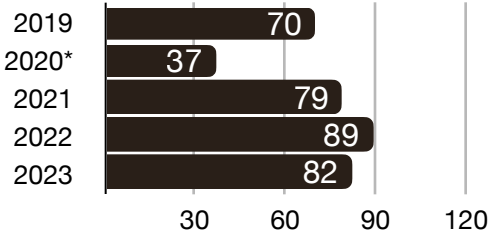


Photo via Forbes

### PADRES 5-YEAR WIN TREND



### 104 < Number to Know

The Padres finished with a run differential of +104, ranking them 8th in MLB. Yet, the Padres finished with only 82 wins due to a 9-23 record in one-score games.



Photo via MLB

### PROSPECT TO WATCH Ethan Salas - C

Want to feel old? The Padres' top prospect was born in 2006. The organization is so high on the soon-to-be-18-year-old catcher that they used almost their entire budget for international signings to ink the Venezuela native to a \$5.6 million deal. He earned an invitation to Spring Training and he will likely resume his path to the majors in double-A San Antonio where he played just nine games last season. At Single-A Lake Elsinore he hit nine home runs in only 48 games, demonstrating that power will be a big part of his game moving forward. Scouts are equally excited for his plus defense as they are for his bat. He's already worked with several of his major league teammates, including Yu Darvish, in bullpen sessions. The Padres firmly believe they have a future superstar on their hands, and he could debut as early as next season.

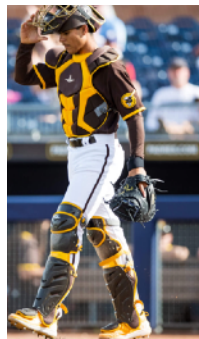


Photo via The Athletic

### Projected Lineup

			'23 AVG
2	Xander Bogaerts	2B	.285
23	Fernando Tatis Jr.	RF	.257
9	Jake Cronenworth	1B	.229
13	Manny Macahado	DH	.258
7	Ha-Seong Kim	SS	.260
5	Eguy Rosario	3B	.250
12	Luis Campusano	C	.319
10	Jurickson Profar	LF	.242
70	Jackson Merrill	CF	-

### Projected Rotation

			'23 ERA
11	Yu Darvish	SP	4.56
44	Joe Musgrove	SP	3.05
84	Dylan Cease	SP	4.58
34	Michael King	SP	2.75
76	Jhony Brito	SP	4.28
75	Robert Suarez	CL	4.23

### PLAYER SPOTLIGHT Dylan Cease - SP



#### 2023 Statistics

**APP** 33 **IP** 177 **ERA** 4.58 **K** 214 **BB** 79

Dylan Cease has some of the nastiest stuff you'll find in the game. His ERA saw a significant jump from 2.20 to 4.58, but if you dig into the advanced metrics you can make an argument that he was unlucky at times. Certainly, the shaky defense in Chicago didn't do him any favors and August proved to be a disaster of a month. He's a high strikeout, high walk kind of pitcher. If he can locate his usually-devastating slider better in 2024, look for him to return to form and better run support from the Padres should only help.

### 2024 Schedule

#### March/April 2024

			LAD 6:05a	LAD 6:05a			
				SF 4:10	SF 9:40	SF 7:15	
SF 4:10	STL 9:40	STL 4:10	STL 4:10		SF 4:35	SF 9:05	
SF 4:05	CHC 9:40	CHC 10:05	CHC 6:40		LAD 10:10	LAD 9:10	
LAD 7:00	MIL 7:40	MIL 16	MIL 17		TOR 19	TOR 20	
TOR 4:10	COL 8:40	COL 8:40	COL 8:40	COL 3:10	PHI 9:40	PHI 8:40	
PHI 4:10	CIN 9:40	CIN 9:40					

#### May 2024

				CIN 4:10		ARI 9:40	ARI 8:10
ARI 4:10	CHC 7:40	CHC 7:40	CHC 2:20		LAD 9:40	LAD 8:40	
LAD 4:10	COL 9:40	COL 8:40	COL 4:10		ATL 7:20	ATL 7:15	
ATL 1:35	ATL 12:20	CIN 21	CIN 22	CIN 1:10	NYG 9:40	NYG 9:40	
NYG 4:10	MIA 6:40	MIA 9:40	MIA 4:10		KC 8:10		

#### June 2024

							KC 4:10
KC 2:10	LAA 9:38	LAA 9:38	LAA 9:38	ARI 9:40	ARI 9:40	ARI 8:40	
ARI 4:10	OAK 9:40	OAK 9:40	OAK 4:10		NYM 7:10	NYM 4:10	
NYM 1:40	PHI 6:40	PHI 6:40	PHI 1:05	MIL 9:40	MIL 9:40	MIL 7:15	
MIL 4:10	WSH 9:40	WSH 9:40	WSH 4:10		BOS 7:10	BOS 4:10	
BOS 1:35							

#### July 2024

		TEX 8:05	TEX 8:05	TEX 2:35	ARI 9:40	ARI 9:40
ARI 4:10		SEA 9:40	SEA 6:40		ATL 9:40	ATL 7:15
ATL 4:10	All-Star Break - Arlington, TX				CLE 7:10	CLE 7:10
CLE 1:40		WSH 6:45	WSH 6:45	WSH 12:05	BAL 7:05	BAL 4:05
BAL 1:35		LAD 9:40	LAD 8:40			

#### August 2024

					COL 9:40	COL 8:40
COL 4:10		PIT 6:40	PIT 6:40	PIT 12:35	MIA 7:10	MIA 4:10
MIA 1:40	PIT 9:40	PIT 9:40	PIT 4:10		COL 8:40	COL 8:10
COL 3:10	MIN 9:40	MIN 9:40	MIN 21	NYM 9:40	NYM 23	NYM 24
NYM 4:10	STL 7:45	STL 7:45	STL 7:45	STL 2:15	TB 6:50	TB 4:10

#### September 2024

TB 1:40	DET 6:40		DET 9:40	DET 8:40	SF 9:40	SF 8:40
SF 4:10		SEA 9:40	SEA 9:40		SF 10:15	SF 9:05
SF 4:05	HOU 9:40	HOU 9:40	HOU 6:40		CWS 9:40	CWS 8:40
CWS 4:10		LAD 10:10	LAD 10:10	LAD 10:10	ARI 9:40	ARI 8:10
ARI 3:10						

**HOME** **AWAY**