



Season Preview 2024

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Introduction

When DiNardo and I made the decision to launch the North Shore Nine in the spring of 2016, it was initially just the blog on a website. I remember hashing out our plan for where North Shore Nine would go and I thought our ceiling would be one podcast. We fired up the microphones and recorded our first pod later that season. But it didn't stop there. DiNardo kept pushing and innovating. He recommended we start doing video. First, it was Facebook live on Friday nights then NS9Live!, YouTube, TikTok, Reels, post-game shows, sponsors and on and on it went. Now we have a team of writers and podcasters and more reels, videos and shows than I could have ever imagined.

Our main goal with starting NS9 was to provide fans with a different type of viewpoint than the usual stale Pirates narrative around Pittsburgh. Our second goal was to outlast everyone else. Well, here we are with this 2024 NS9 Season Preview in what will be our 9th season following this hapless organization.

In this preview, our team will get you ready for the 2024 season. We'll break down the offseason, the team's current roster, what you can expect from the new players, season predictions and more.

Thank you for downloading this preview and continuing to consume NS9 content all year round. This is our 9th season, and we aren't going anywhere.

-Ryan Alexander



Hitters

Henry Davis	R/R	6' 0"	210	9/21/99
Jason Delay	R/R	5' 11"	190	3/7/95
Yasmani Grandal	S/R	6' 2"	225	11/8/88
Endy Rodriguez	S/R	6' 0"	200	5/26/00
Ali Sanchez	R/R	6' 1"	200	1/20/97
Ji Hwan Bae	L/R	5' 11"	185	7/26/99
Tsung-Che Cheng	L/R	5' 7"	173	7/26/01
Oneil Cruz	L/R	6' 7"	215	10/4/98
Yordany De Los Santos	R/R	6' 1"	170	2/17/05
Nick Gonzales	R/R	5' 9"	190	5/27/99
Ke'Bryan Hayes	R/R	5' 11"	195	1/28/97
Liover Peguero	R/R	6' 0"	220	12/31/00
Rowdy Tellez	L/L	6' 4"	270	3/16/95
Jared Triolo	R/R	6' 3"	210	2/8/98
Alika Williams	R/R	6' 1"	180	3/12/99
Connor Joe	R/R	6' 0"	205	8/16/92
Edward Olivares	R/R	6' 2"	190	3/6/96
Joshua Palacios	L/R	6' 1"	200	7/30/95
Bryan Reynolds	S/R	6' 2"	205	1/27/95
Canaan Smith-Njigba	L/R	6' 0"	230	4/30/99
Jack Suwinski	L/L	6' 2"	215	7/29/98
Michael A. Taylor	R/R	6' 4"	215	3/26/91
Andrew McCutchen	R/R	5' 10"	190	10/10/86

Pitchers

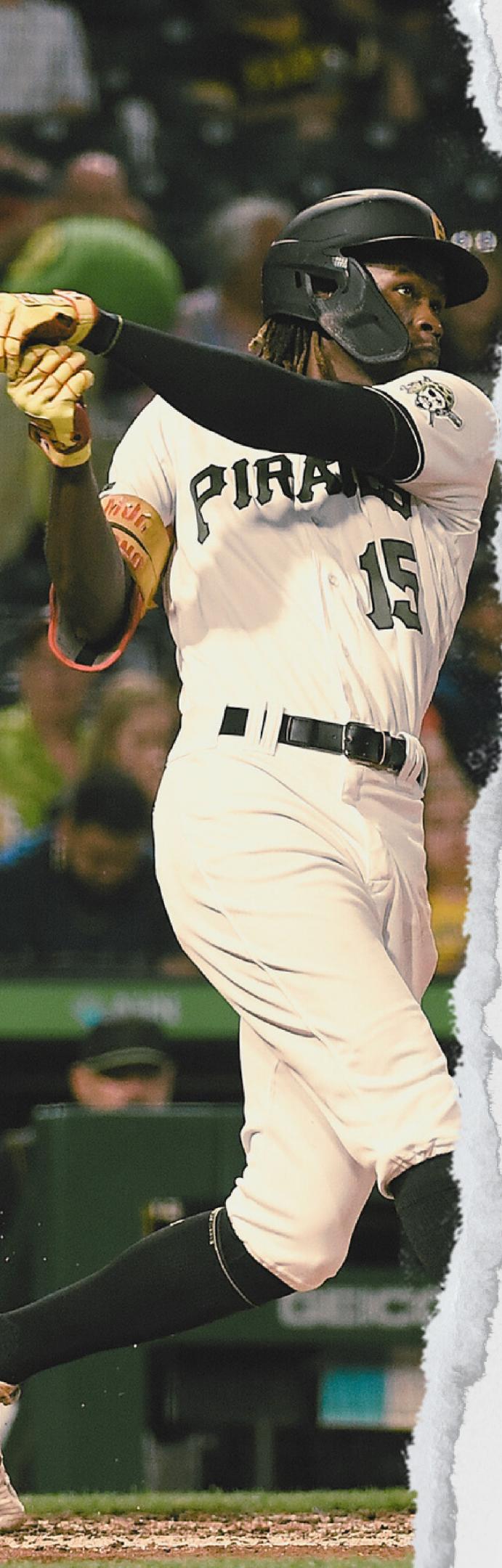
Braxton Ashcraft	L/R	6' 5"	195	10/5/99
David Bednar	L/R	6' 0"	225	10/10/94
Ryan Borucki	L/L	6' 4"	210	3/31/94
JT Brubaker	R/R	6' 3"	180	11/17/93
Mike Burrows	R/R	6' 1"	190	11/8/99
Aroldis Chapman	L/L	6' 4"	235	2/28/88
Roansy Contreras	R/R	6' 1"	205	11/7/99
Bailey Falter	R/L	6' 4"	175	4/24/97
Josh Fleming	L/L	6' 2"	220	5/18/96
Marco Gonzales	L/L	6' 1"	205	2/16/92
Jose Hernandez	L/L	6' 3"	205	12/31/97
Colin Holderman	R/R	6' 4"	230	10/8/95
Mitch Keller	R/R	6' 3"	220	4/4/96
Carmen Mlodzinski	R/R	6' 2"	220	2/19/99
Dauri Moreta	R/R	6' 2"	185	4/15/96
Kyle Nicolas	R/R	6' 4"	223	2/22/99
Luis L. Ortiz	R/R	6' 2"	235	1/27/99
Johan Oviedo 24	R/R	6' 5"	245	3/2/98
Quinn Priester	R/R	6' 3"	210	9/16/00
Martin Perez	L/L	6' 0"	200	4/4/91
Colin Selby	R/R	6' 2"	220	10/24/97
Jackson Wolf	L/L	6' 7"	205	4/22/99

40-Man Roster

***Corresponding Move Needs
To Be Made For These Three**

Jared Jones	L/R	6' 1"	190	8/6/01
Ryder Ryan	R/R	6' 2"	205	5/11/95
Hunter Stratton	R/R	6' 4"	225	11/17/96

60-Day IL



SEASON PREVIEW: CAN POWER BE THE KEY?

By Ryan Alexander

The future is now.

As Pirates fans we are conditioned to always look to the future when it comes to the team being competitive. The front office will trade off some assets for prospects and kick that proverbial can further down the road while the fan base annually states “just think what this team will look like in two to four years.” Well, the time has come, the first time since the 2013-15 winning years, where we can head into the season and not speculate who the next player will be dealt at the deadline. The acquiring of prospects phase of the rebuild should essentially be complete. It’s now time for the Pirates to take the field and work on the next phase: Be competitive and add to the core as needed.

After the Pirates last winning season in 2018, the team has gone 287-421 for just a .405 winning percentage, which included two 100-loss seasons and a COVID-shortened 60-game season that saw the team win just 19 games. Last season was a step in the right direction finishing 76-86, 14 games better than the 2022 record. Another step forward will get them back to competing for playoff berths.

There’s still plenty of work remaining as we head into the 2024 season. After locking up Mitch Keller to a 5-year/\$77M extension in February, the Pirates now have Keller, Ke’Bryan Hayes and Bryan Reynolds locked up till at least 2028. These extensions to the core along with the prospects that are already in the

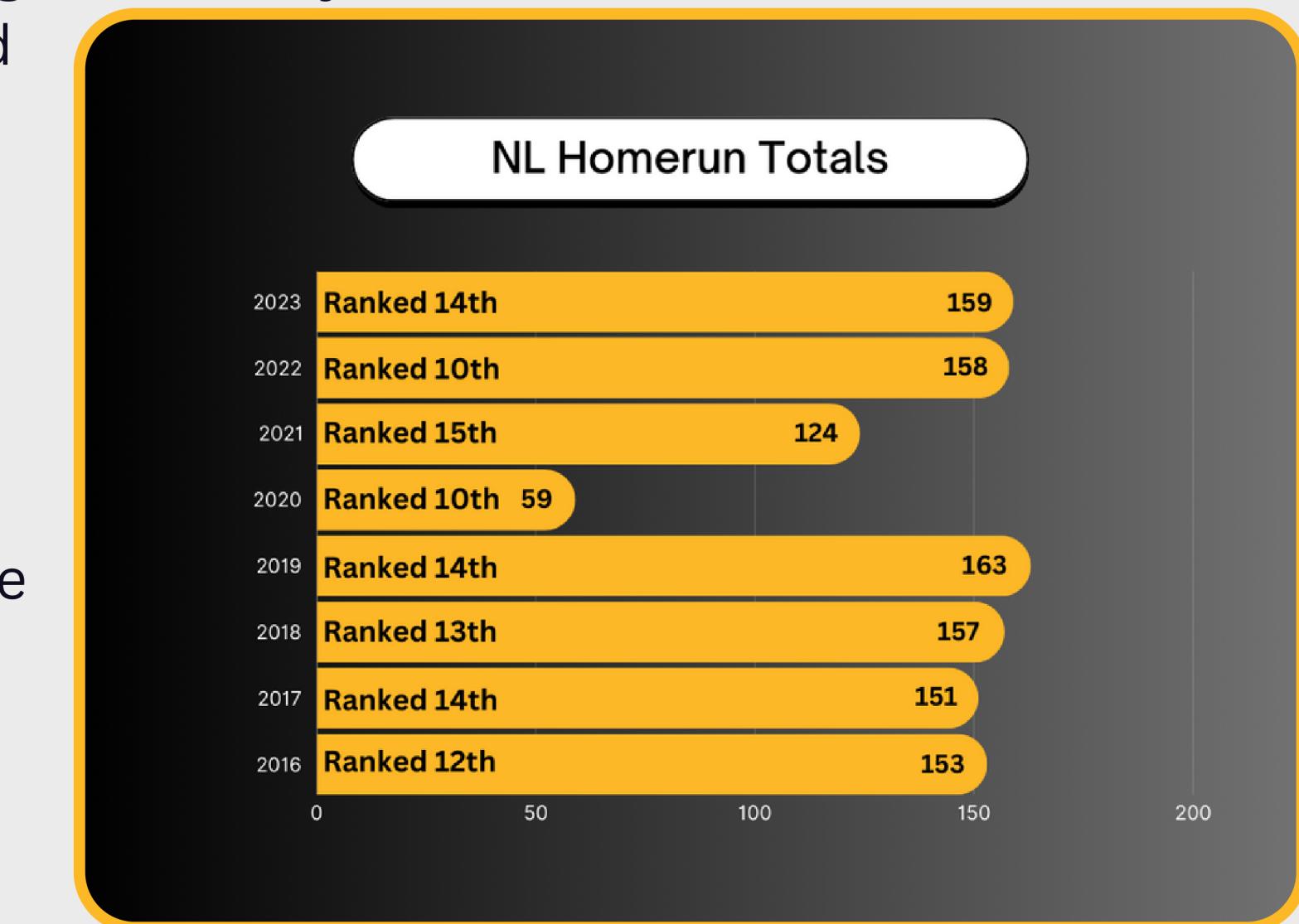


Majors or right on the doorstep show that the window is officially open.

The Buccos lineup could be really entertaining this season. I know...here we go with the could have's and what if's, but if Henry Davis, Oneil Cruz, Jack Suwinski, Ke'Bryan Hayes all take a step forward, the lineup may be really good.

I think one area the Pirates offense can really flip the switch from previous seasons is with the power. Everyone seems to be hitting home runs in MLB except for the Pirates in recent years. The power outage for this franchise is staggering. Last season, the Bucs ranked second to last in the NL with just 159 home runs. They also ranked 13th in the NL in slugging percentage at .392. But it hasn't been just a last year problem. The Pirates have finished in the bottom half in HRs in the NL since their last playoff appearance in 2015 and finished 13th or worse in six of their last eight seasons. Heading into 2024 with a healthy

Cruz and full season of Davis coming up, this team could excel in the power category and have their best power output since 2014 when they were third in the NL in homers.



I think the Pirates lineup features seven or eight players who have 20-home run potential and the ceiling for Suwinski, Cruz and Davis seem to be unlimited at this point. At one point in spring training, Cruz was homering every 4.4 at-bats. It was only spring training,



but Cruz looks healthy and locked in as ever. Turning the power on with this lineup would bring the Pirates into today's game and could be a major turning point for them.

The Pirates will have to score a bunch of runs in 2024 because their rotation as it stands for Opening Day is definitely a weakness. Check out Neil's article on the reworked rotation on page 8 for more details on that.

We know Paul Skenes will be up at some point this season, the rotation just needs to hold on until that happens. The good news with the pitching staff is that when healthy, the bullpen should be a strength for this team. It's getting to the bullpen that might be the problem.

As for the Pirates overall, things are finally moving in the right direction. It's obviously a very young team still and while young teams

can be exciting and win some games, they're going to struggle a lot at times too as they work to figure it out. While I think the team is one year away from being serious playoff contenders, this season should be a much more enjoyable and watchable experience for the fans.





SEASON PREVIEW: CAN REWORKED ROTATION HOLD UP?

By Neil Lucas

Pirates GM Ben Cherington said in the winter that he would like the Pirates to have 12 or so starting options that the team can turn to at any given point of the season. He may have depth in 2024, but here are the five pitchers announced to start in the rotation: Mitch Keller, Martin Perez, Jared Jones, Marco Gonzales and Bailey Falter.

This Pirates team certainly is not short of pitching depth, both on the 40-man roster and in the minor league system; however, after acquiring three starters in the offseason and trading for two others at the 2023 trade deadline, where do the Pirates stand in terms of talent? I have broken down the numerous arms we may see in the rotation at some point this season.

Keller is the only healthy and experienced arm in the rotation who is from the team last year and the only pitcher you truly feel confident about giving the ball to every five days. Keller is also the only pitcher signed to a long-term deal after netting himself a 5-year, \$77M extension in February. He's coming off probably the best year of his career, logging 194 innings (top 10 in MLB), punching 200 strikeouts, and posting a 2.9 bWAR season. He started the year looking like a genuine ace, carrying a 3.25 ERA and a 2.85 FIP through the end of May. Then, he had some summer blues, as he stopped throwing his fastball as frequently because of his staggering seven-pitch mix. Keller ended the year with an ERA north of 4, which just feels disappointing when you watch him



pitch because his stuff is better than that.

Keller will live and die by his fastball, by far his best pitch. If he continues to use his fastball that can have run like a cutter at times, he will take the leap next year from an innings eater with a low 4 ERA to a genuine No. 2 pitcher that you feel good giving playoff starts to.

Going into an offseason with one trusted starting pitcher is rough, especially when your second trusted pitcher has TJS. To address their glaring holes, Cherington acquired Marco Gonzales in a trade from the Braves and signed World Series champion Martin Perez as a free agent. They are hoping to get a bargain of two solid MLB starters for a meager \$10.25M combined. If Gonzales and Perez were signed to anchor the back of the Pirates rotation as their No. 4 and No. 5 guys, most Pirates fans would have very little to complain about; however, as it stands, they would slot in as the No. 2 and No. 3 starters in the rotation.

This simply isn't good enough for a guy (Perez) who was removed from the Rangers rotation and a guy (Gonzales) who is coming back from serious nerve surgery and a 5.22 ERA.

Perez is basically the 2024 version of the Pirates signing Rich Hill—a journeyman veteran pitcher who will never put up impressive numbers but can eat 170 innings and not completely embarrass himself. He simply is not good enough for what the Pirates need him to be, though. The hope is that pitching coach Oscar Marin can pull a Jose Quintana-like resurgence out of his hat and make him more like his shocking 2022 campaign. Gonzales is a much more interesting pitcher, as he has shown continued success with the Mariners for more than a single season, unlike Perez.

He has never lit the world on fire in terms of pure stuff or numbers, but if Gonzales can



even replicate his 2022 numbers that would be a major win for the Pirates. The one thing that gives me pause is his nerve damage. We don't know a lot about pitchers who had this type of surgery because it's so rare, but no one has recovered and been the same pitcher they were before undergoing the surgery. It's hard to imagine you can bank on Gonzales giving you 180-190 innings again when Brandon Morrow was subjected to a reliever's load for the rest of his career after getting the surgery. I hope this isn't the case, but it's yet another uncertainty that the Pirates have not addressed in their rotation needs.

Then there's Bailey Falter, who was acquired at the 2023 trade deadline for Rodolfo Castro. Falter has yet to prove himself as he got hammered in the majors last year and continued that trend this spring. He has struggled to miss bats and has been giving up far too many home runs as a Pirate.

It was speculated that Cherington loves Falter and would like to keep him in the rotation and for now seems to have been how this rotation played out from spring training to start the season.

For the rest of the options, there were few major leaguers who had a worse 2023 season than Quinn Priester, Luis Ortiz, and Roansy Contreras. All three young pitchers hit the majors as top 100 prospects and were highly touted throughout baseball. I was genuinely excited to see these guys help anchor the rotation of the future and give a vision of what is to come for competing baseball. Instead, what we got was more uncertainty as none of the three came close to establishing themselves as MLB-level starters, and seeing Ortiz and Contreras take massive steps back from an extremely promising 2022 season was even harder to see.



Having even one of these guys rebound and become a good rotation arm would be massive to the Pirates future success. If I had to pick one that I think has that chance, it would be Ortiz. Contreras has lost too much stuff on his fastball for me to consider him fixable and his four-seam was one of the worst pitches in the entire league last year (-15 run value in very limited innings). Priester was always extremely limited, with his four-seamer being not very fast and very flat. If he does become an MLB-caliber pitcher, it's hard to imagine he is more than a No. 5 starter on a good team.

Ortiz, however, saw some success last year by moving away from his fastball and embracing the sinker (What's up, Searage?). His fastball was on par with Roansy in terms of being bad (-14 run value) but he saw a nine-run value on his sinker that he developed last season. Hitters slugged only .340 against that pitch

and while he keeps getting hit hard, it has turned him into a somewhat effective groundball pitcher. This would be an amusing development if it works because he was advertised as a flame-throwing strikeout machine with a wicked fastball and slider combination. I believe in him more because he has made the most adjustments so far that make me believe he can be an MLB pitcher; however, it's a long road ahead to gaining the goodwill of the fan base for all three pitchers.

Spring training has presented a new hope in the eyes of many fans for these three. All three struggled with velocity last year and they have picked up velocity back to normal and what is expected of them. Ortiz has shined the most, dominating batters in Florida with the only runs he's given up being unearned, but both Ortiz and Contreras will get a chance to work on things



in the bullpen. Priester has gotten back to 95 mph on his fastball and is sitting 89-90 on his slider, which is also a velocity jump. It's hard to take much of anything from spring training in terms of results, but the stuff is majorly improved.

Any hope of a contending Pirates team is going to be built off the backs of their ability to develop starting pitching. This offseason proved they are unwilling to pay the price for pitching and the farm is devoid of hitting talent outside of one or two players. The two starters that were pounding on the door of the major leagues are the 2023 No. 1 overall draft pick, Paul Skenes, and a 2020 draft pick, Jared Jones.

Skenes is a consensus top 10 prospect on any reputable prospect site, and many consider the LSU product to be the best pitching prospect in the entire sport. His fastball can

hit 103 mph, sitting around 98 on average. He has a 70-grade slider and has now developed a slurve-style pitch to compliment the slider. There are concerns about his fastball shape, which has plagued pitchers like Hunter Greene, despite throwing 100 mph; however, if Skenes can command his fastball consistently, that worry should be put to rest.

Skenes will start the year in Triple-A Indianapolis which makes sense, even if many believe him to be ready right now. But Skenes has never made starts on five-days rest and has yet to pitch more than 10 professional innings, so sending him to the minors is the smart move to start the year.

Meanwhile, Jones was not nearly as hyped or as well regarded after he was drafted in the 2nd round of the 2020 MLB Draft. Jones has taken many by surprise as he allowed



zero earned runs this spring. The expectation was that he would debut sometime in 2024, but no one expected him to be in the Opening Day rotation. Jones is actually the first Pirates top 100 prospect to make the Opening Day roster for his debut since Kris Benson in 1998. His fastball can top out at 101 mph and sits at 98, and his slider is filthy and generates whiff rates near 35%. While his ERA numbers have never been gaudy, the stuff has always been there. Jones' Stuff+ in spring training hit 146. Jones' biggest issue is locating his fastball and



walking people, very similar to Ortiz; however, he has the makings of an MLB starter.

The Pirates made a late signing in Spring Training by bringing in Domingo German on a minor league deal. German was not brought back by the Yankees after he showed up drunk to the clubhouse and caused so much of a stir he was suspended for the rest of the season. German has quality pitching abilities despite a lack of innings. He has not pitched more than 140 innings in a single season since 2019, even if he has shown the ability to be a competent back end starter for the Yankees. However, many questions have to be raised about whether or not he's a presence you want in the clubhouse, and that doesn't even get into his issues with domestic abuse.





Lackluster Offseason Puts Pressure on Core

By Tyler Sweeney

Have you ever wanted to rewind to a different time in your life? I'm sure you have...we all have. There are countless moments of happiness in a lifetime. Few of them come from the baseball team on the North Shore, but they do exist.

Forget about the stretch from 2013-2015. Let's think more recently. The date was January 13th, 2023. Jason Mackey broke that Andrew McCutchen signed a contract to return to the place where he won the 2013 MVP award. The McCutchen signing was the cherry on top of a surprisingly productive offseason, an offseason that saw the acquisitions of Connor Joe, Rich Hill, Ji-Man Choi, and Carlos Santana. Notice I didn't mention a certain catcher.

Were these moves earth shattering? Not

at all, but they signified a beginning. Maybe the Pirates had plans to finally field some semblance of an MLB team for the first time in half a decade. They appeared to start building around some of the young talent arriving and the tear down had finally come to an end.

Naturally as fans, we expected another step forward this offseason. After finishing with 76 wins in 2023, the core of the next contending team had arrived. Like any core though, it needs complimentary pieces.

Knowing the Pirates financial restraints, fans understood that superstar Shohei Ohtani wouldn't be coming through the door.



Although optimism surrounds the upside of the Pirates lineup, question marks remain with the starting rotation. The first attempt to address this came on December 5 when the Pirates traded for LHP Marco Gonzales with the Atlanta Braves.

Gonzales, once a legitimate middle of the rotation starter, is coming off an injury-plagued season that saw him throw 50.0 innings and his highest ERA (5.22) since 2017. The Pirates pitching staff and pitching coach Oscar Marin have found success with veteran starters, but Gonzales has limited upside and saw an increase in walks last season.

Just a few weeks later, Ben Cherington opened the checkbook and signed former Rangers LHP Martin Perez to a 1 year, \$8M deal. Perez presents more upside than Gonzales, evidenced by his 2022 campaign where he posted a 2.89 ERA in 196.1 innings.

Perez appears to be trending in the wrong direction, however. His fastball velocity plummeted nearly 2 mph last year, dropping his strikeout rate from 7.7 K/9 to 5.9 K/9. He finished 2023 with a 4.45 ERA which falls in line with his career numbers.

Are we being too optimistic about the two veterans bouncing back? It's a fair question. For a team desperately in need of quality innings, a lot hinges on two guys on the wrong side of age 30. To be completely blunt, it feels like the upside for both is mediocrity.

The Pirates weren't done yet. Cherington waited until March to add more to the starting rotation by adding beleaguered starter Domingo Germán on a Minor League deal. Germán has been suspended by MLB for domestic violence and just last year was essentially thrown off the team by Yankees manager Aaron Boone.



Cherington has said that Germán will have to earn his way on the Major League roster.

There is certainly talent with Germán, but based on his history, I cannot imagine him as an improvement to the clubhouse. The juice isn't worth the squeeze.

While the pitching staff is full of uncertainty, the bullpen seems like a strength. The return of David Bednar, Colin Holderman, Carmen Mlodzinski, as well as 2023 surprises like Ryan Borucki and Jose Hernandez provides a group to lean on. The pen was also bolstered by the addition of LHP Aroldis Chapman.

The bullpen should help to hide the deficits in the rotation, but one unit on the team could've used some improvement.

Yes, the lineup looks promising. Oneil Cruz should be healthy, Ke'Bryan Hayes is coming off his best season at the plate, Bryan

Reynolds continues to be a steady presence, and Jack Suwinski should be maddeningly fine. Holes still exist on the diamond.

The loss of Endy Rodriguez presents challenges. The Pirates attempted to put a band-aid over this wound with the signing of catcher Yasmani Grandal, but injury concerns as well as recent poor play leaves questions. Former first overall pick Henry Davis is the assumed replacement for Rodriguez, but everyone who is involved in baseball seems to doubt his abilities behind the plate.

This brings us to the longstanding issue—first base. The addition of Carlos Santana in 2023 not only provided some stability at the plate, but also a defensive savant that this team desperately needed. We've seen Cruz play shortstop, and while he is impressive, he is also erratic. As is tradition, Santana was moved at the deadline to the Brewers and



signed with the Twins in the offseason.

To say there aren't any options internally for the position would be an understatement. The Pirates looked outside the organization and signed former Brewers slugger Rowdy Tellez.

Tellez, similar to others mentioned previously, is coming off the worst year of his career with a .215/.291/.376 slash line in 311 at-bats. Yes, he hit 35 home runs in 2022, but he's also awful defensively and cannot hit lefties (thank God for Connor Joe).

If you haven't noticed yet, hope is a theme over the sure thing. Hope that Tellez can recapture his '22 form. Hope that Gonzales can stay healthy. Hope that Perez still has something in the tank.

There were other expensive options available too. The North Shore Nine crew

pounded the table for LHP Eduardo Rodriguez this offseason. Instead, he signed a 4-year, \$80M deal with Arizona. Rhys Hoskins could have filled the longstanding first base issue. Instead, he signed for \$16M per year with the Brewers. Once again, the Pirates went shopping on a budget and therefore the talent acquired was lackluster.

Hope can only do so much. Every signing and trade assume risk of course, but this offseason feels more like a prayer. Let's pray that this core takes another step forward because help isn't coming from the outside.





Five Things I Want to See in 2024

By Jim Rosati

1) Ke'Bryan Hayes Plays a Full Season

I think Hayes has arrived. The bat seems to have finally caught up to what we have been hoping it would become. The glove is obviously elite, and he's finally been recognized for it with his first Gold Glove Award in 2023. Now can he stay on the field long enough for it to really make a difference?

Hayes has yet to play more than 136 games in a season and played just 124 last year. If he really wants to take that next step, he needs to be available. Last season, Hayes played at a 3.9 fWAR/150 pace. If he can get to that point where he is playing 150 games, with the growth we've seen at the plate, we could be looking at a guy with a 5 WAR floor going forward.

2) Oneil Cruz Takes the Leap into Superstardom

Cruz is the one guy on this team that has the physical tools to become that next MVP, franchise-changing player they have been waiting for ever since Andrew McCutchen.

In his rookie season, he had to deal with some rough service time manipulation. Then last season, he was taken from us far too soon with the ankle injury in mid-April. Now is his time to be mentioned in the same breath as guys like Fernando Tatis Jr., Aaron Judge, and Juan Soto.

If he can do this, it raises the ceiling of this team to a level I'm not sure anyone really understands.



3) One OF Prospect Emerges

For having 12 starting slots available between Bradenton and Indianapolis, it sure would be nice if there were one single outfielder coming through the system that you feel good about after this year. Lonnie White Jr. ranks as the organization's top OF prospect (#17 on Baseball America) and the 21-year-old has played just 44 games above Rookie ball. Whether it's White, Edgar Suero, Gregory Polanco, or someone else, this organization needs to develop some homegrown outfield talent.

4) Henry Davis Takes the Reins as the Undisputed Leader of this Team

We've already seen this during the offseason. Davis rented a house in Bradenton and invited pretty much every

young Buc to stay with him throughout the offseason. The guy wants to win, and he wants everyone to buy into building a winner here in Pittsburgh.

The next step for Davis is to show he's a leader on the field, not just off it. That will only happen by him handling this pitching staff like a pro, playing a more than competent catcher behind the plate, and hitting nukes when at the plate.

You can see why the Pirates pointed to Davis' makeup when they made him the first overall pick out of Louisville in 2021. You don't really want to bet against guys who work as hard as he does. Now is the time to show it.

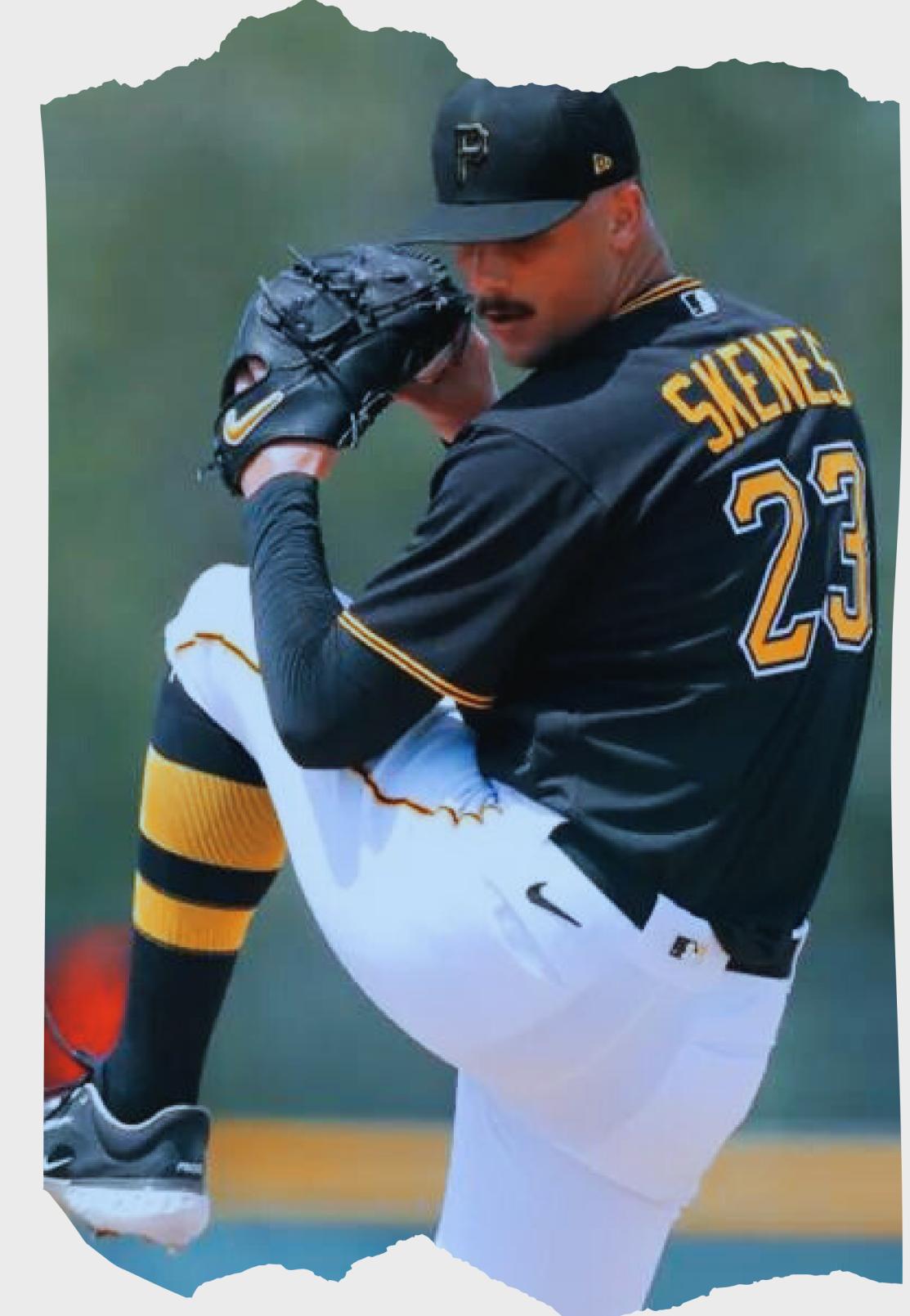


5) Paul Skenes

I mean, this is who we all want to see, right? We want to see Skenes in Pittsburgh throwing 102 mph and striking out the side against divisional opponents as we witness entire fanbases collectively say, “oh shit,” to themselves after seeing him pitch against them for the first time.

The Pirates have been around for more than 140 years. We’ve seen a slew of Hall of Famers during that time, but an absolutely dominant pitcher remains as the missing piece throughout basically every era of Pirates baseball.

Let’s finally have one.





How to Bet the Pirates in 2024

By Ryan Alexander

Sports betting has exploded in popularity in recent years with the legalization across the country. Currently, it's legal to wager on sports in 38 states with more states on its way this year. Long gone are the days of meeting your local bookie at a gas station or risking your money on some offshore sportsbook account. Now we can whip out our phones and fire a bet in on the Blue Jays on a Tuesday night while putting the kids to bed if you want (I don't recommend that FYI).

But with the ease of sports betting today and Pennsylvania and Ohio have numerous sportsbook options, Pirates fans can bet on or against their team all season long. With the season approaching, let's take a look at some of the MLB future bets and see if there's any value on the Buccos this season.

We'll start with World Series future bets because why not? If the unthinkable were to happen, wouldn't you want to win some money on the Pirates? Their current odds to win the World Series is (200-1) per FanDuel. So, if you were to bet \$100 on the Pirates to win it all and it happened, you'd walk away with a cool \$20,000. Could you imagine? Don't get too excited though. The Pirates have the 5th worst odds across MLB for World Series winner. Only the Nationals, White Sox, A's and Rockies have longer odds than the Pirates. I'm not sure what number I would need to legitimately bet the Pirates to win the whole darn thing. Maybe 500-1? The Pirates at their current odds just doesn't seem like good value to me considering the whole impossibility of it all.



To win the National League, the Pirates odds at FanDuel are 100-1 with only the Nationals (120-1) and Rockies (200-1) behind the Bucs.

If you think the Pirates have a decent shot at making the postseason, you could bet them to win the World Series or NL. My thinking there would be if they do make the playoffs even as a wildcard team, you'd have a great chance to hedge your wager or take a cash out if the book offers one.

Last season the over on the Pirates win total was a popular bet among Pirates fans. Their over/under opened at an incredibly low 61.5 and was bet up 5.5 wins to 67. A lot of fans hammered the over anticipating that the Pirates should be improved to where they aren't losing 100 games or anywhere near it. The Pirates didn't disappoint for those over bettors either by finishing with 76 wins.

This season their over/under total sits at 75.5 wins currently at FanDuel. With the Pirates winning 76 games in 2023, believing they should improve even a couple games isn't asking too much but the sportsbooks seem to believe that the Pirates overachieved a bit last season and will regress down with the number that's currently set. There's not much of a margin on this year's number. The sportsbooks weren't going to make the mistake of setting a number in the 60's again. With the return of Oneil Cruz and Skenes waiting in the wings, I would lean over 75.5 with this team but in the back of my mind I'm worried about a bit of regression too with this team.



Here's how the NL Central breaks down for win totals:

NL CENTRAL		
2024 WIN TOTALS		
RANK	TEAMS	WIN TOTAL
1	ST. LOUIS	84.5
2	CHICAGO	83.5
3	CINCINNATI	81.5
4	MILWAUKEE	77.5
5	PITTSBURGH	75.5

Once again, the books are telling us that the NL Central should be a middling division where maybe it's bunched up for a lot of the season with multiple teams in the pennant race. And one where 90 wins should be enough to win the division. These numbers are calling for major regression from the 92-70 Brewers as well as

major improvement from the Cardinals, who were in dead last at 71-91 in 2023.

My rule of thumb always has been whoever you think is the worst team in the division, bet that team's under. Are the Pirates better than the Cubs, Brewers, Cardinals and Reds? That's a tough ask, but hopefully the Pirates can hang with some of these teams in the standings to keep things interesting. Overall if I was betting a side for the Pirates win total, I would bet the over, but it doesn't appear to be the slam dunk that it was last season when it was set so low.

Let's look at the odds to win the NL Central:

Cardinals +150

Cubs +200

Reds +400

Brewers +700

Pirates +1200



These odds don't really inspire much confidence for the season, huh? Out of all the previous bets I've mentioned previously, I think the NL Central odds for the Pirates are the most intriguing to me. The Pirates are clearly projected to be in last from their win total, but they aren't that far away from the Brewers (separated by four wins). Here, the division odds there's a major gap. And like I mentioned before, because the division is so attainable with the lack of a dominant team and 90 wins probably winning the division (maybe even less) anyone...even the Pirates have a shot for the incredible to happen. Maybe Cruz returns and puts together a breakout MVP-caliber campaign and the Pirates threaten in the division. Hey, I can dream right? I don't mind firing a couple bucks on the Buccos' NL Central odds here at 12-1.

Speaking of Cruz, let's get into some future player specials.

Only two Pirates are listed at FanDuel for "Regular Season Home Runs Leader" in 2024. Cruz was 200-1 with Jack Suwinski, but has now jumped up to 60-1. If you're going to tell yourself a story of how the Pirates win the division, maybe throwing a couple bucks on both Cruz to hit the most HRs and the Pirates winning the division isn't the worst idea ever.

"Regular Season Strikeouts Leader" has Mitch Keller as the only Bucco listed at 100-1. Bryan Reynolds and Cruz are both listed for "Regular Season Hits Leader." Reynolds is 100-1 while Cruz sits at 200-1 odds. Both Reynolds and Cruz are listed at 200-1 for "Regular Season RBI Leader." And rounding out the player props on FanDuel is David Bednar who has the 10th best odds (23-1) for "Regular Season Saves Leader."

As for awards, Cruz is listed as 65-1 while Reynolds is 120-1 to win NL MVP. Mitch Keller is 40-1 to win the NL Cy Young award.



Paul Skenes makes an appearance at 40-1 for NL Rookie of the Year. Skenes would have a great shot at it if he's in the Majors for a majority of the season. The problem here is the Pirates and the likelihood that he will be held in the minor leagues until mid-June. Could Skenes get called up in June and still win the award? Sure, but with other players like Yoshinobu Yamamoto (favorite at +250) having a jump start on him, it'll be tough. Plus, I expect Dylan Crews (39-1) up before Skenes as well.

Finally, the last award listed is NL Manager of the Year and Derek Shelton is listed at 12-1. The good news if you bet on Shelton to take home the honors is because of the Pirates perpetual lack of competitiveness, the bar is low. The media always looks for a manager on a team that exceeding their expectations and projections when voting on this award. If the Pirates make a wildcard berth (only took

84 wins last season), Shelton will be on the short list for Manager of the Year. I just don't love it at 12-1 and don't think there's a ton of value on it. The number would need to be at 18-1 and beyond for me to jump in.

There you have it. The 2024 future betting odds doesn't instill much confidence in the team, but that creates opportunity. If you think the Pirates are going to be improved and in the race this year, maybe put a couple bucks on some of their future to have fun and track throughout the season.





NS9 STAFF BEST BETS FOR PIRATES 2024 FUTURES

Tyler: Pirates Regular Season Wins Band 72-77 +260 (DraftKings)

DiNardo: Under 23.5 stolen bases for Oneil Cruz -106 (FanDuel)

Jim: Over 24.5 home runs for Oneil Cruz -110 (FanDuel)

Neil: Derek Shelton to win NL Manager of the Year +1200 (FanDuel)

Cody: Oneil Cruz Comeback Player of the Year +500 (FanDuel)

Doug: Pirates to win the NL Central +1500 (Bovada)

Ryan: Paul Skenes to win NL Rookie of the Year +4000 (FanDuel)



10 Ways the Pirates Could Win the NL Central

By Douglas Ford

The Pirates and the Colorado Rockies are the only two teams to have never won their divisions since the most recent realignment in 1994. The NL Central is wide open this year, and what must occur for the Pirates to win the division finally? I present multiple answers to this question, and will list a few ways the Pirates can end their pathetic streak of ineptitude. Let's have some fun with this.

1. Internal Improvement (Ben Cherington's most earnest desire): If Jack Suwinski, Ke'Bryan Hayes, Mitch Keller, Liover Peguero, Bryan Reynolds, Henry Davis, Oneil Cruz, Roansy Contreras, Luis Ortiz, and Quinn Priester all improve the Pirates could be legitimate contenders for the NL Central. Sadly, this might be

less likely than number one considering nothing ever seems to go the Pirates way when it comes to their development.

2. Breakouts: Suwinski rakes for the month of April and then the slump never comes and he just continues to mash, living up to Jim Rosati's 2024 vision for a Jack breakout. Davis comes into his own behind the plate and becomes the leader this team needs while also hitting bombs all season long. Cruz proves that he's healthy and breaks out with a 40-HR season. And Contreras works his way back into the rotation and starts stringing together quality finishes and puts this sad episode behind him. If these four players finish with a 3-6 WAR each, the Pirates could win the division.



3. Consistency: If Hayes and Reynolds can play as well for the entire season as they did in August and September last season, Suwinski can limit his hitless streaks, Keller pitches all year like he did last May, Cruz stays healthy and has a solid season, Davis comes around and the rotation additions can return to their primes the Buccos could make a run. This is the most likely scenario, and I don't have to tell you it is doubtful.

4. Time Machine: If Cherington could go Doc Brown and get his hands on a time machine, go to the past and collect Andrew McCutchen from 2013, Reynolds from 2021, Hayes from September of 2020, Aroldis Chapman from 2012, Marco Gonzales and Yasmani Grandal from 2019, Martin Perez and Rowdy Tellez from 2022, and then collect Paul Skenes, Davis, Cruz, Bubba Chandler, Anthony Solometo, Termarr Johnson, and Jared Jones all from 2028 the Pirates could be very formidable.

5. Rookies and Youth to the Rescue: If the Pirates go to the young guns early—Skenes, Jones, Solometo, Chandler, Jared Triolo, Davis, Nick Gonzales, Peguero, Contreras, Ortiz, Priester, Mike Burrows, and Termarr all make significant contributions to the season, the Pirates could surprise.

6. Rivals Fail: If the old pitchers the Cardinals added pitch like their prime is well over, and Paul Goldschmidt and Nolan Arenado don't bounce back, the Brewers can't overcome the loss of Corbin Burnes, the Cubs don't make a midnight hour splash, and the Reds regress, the Pirates could steal the division by default.

7. Unlimited Power: If an Edward Olivares/Suwinski platoon produces 35 HRs, Cruz and Davis become a power source in the middle of that order and combine for 70 HRs, the Pirates could host some playoff games.



8. McCutchen Turns Back the Clock:

Andrew McCutchen shows up on Opening Day in the best shape of his life and starts ripping the cover off the ball like it's 2014. Cutch belts 25-30 home runs and posts an OPS north of .850. His play is contagious as the team takes off following Cutch's example. Everyone around Cutch is better because of the season he's having. Someone makes a guarantee in June to beat writer Alex Stumpf that the team will make the playoffs and the Bucs rally around it as the team surges down the stretch and pulls out a three-game sweep of the Yankees to steal the division from the Cubs in the last weekend of the season. Hey, it could happen, right?

9. Get Lucky:

Anyone can get lucky, right? The Pirates could get lucky. Important players avoid serious injury, at least three players have a career year, a couple groundballs a week sneak through the

infield for a hit, the rotation's BABIP stays low, and when the prospects arrive they make an immediate impact.

10. Trust the Process:

Understandably, it is hard to put any faith in Ben Cherington, but it is year five under his leadership. Maybe both Gonzales and Perez produce like Jose Quintana did in the rotation. Perhaps the teachings of Andy Haines and Oscar Marin finally bear fruit. Davis and Skenes live up to their lofty draft positions. 2024 may be the season when everything clicks.

And there you have it: 10 ways the Pirates can win the NL Central. Some are less likely than others, but it isn't unreasonable to think this team could be better than last year and win this wide open division.





NL Central Preview

By Neil Lucas

The NL Central is one of the closest divisions in terms of talent level. The division is also easily one of the worst in MLB. While the current Pirates squad is flawed, if there is a division that they could win, this is the one. Let's take a look at the four divisional teams the Pirates will compete against for the pennant.



Cincinnati Reds

Projected Record: 84-78

Even though the Reds are my current pick for division winners, it's not because I think the Reds are even that impressive of a team; they just have the most upside out of the NL Central teams as currently constructed. The Reds are in a full youth movement, looking to be led offensively by 2023 rookies Matt McLain, Spencer

Steer, Noelvi Marte, Christian Encarnacion-Strand, and of course, their own freak mutant athlete, Elly De La Cruz. Those players are an offensive core a team can build around, as all five showed flashes in 2023 of being very capable MLB-level players. They also added Jeimer Candelario via free agency after his 119 OPS+ season in 2023. While their offense did overperform most metrics—which suggests regression in some capacity next season—they also employ very good depth pieces in TJ Friedl, Jonathan India and Jake Fraley.

Pitching is where it somewhat falls apart for the Reds. They addressed the rotation in free agency, inking both Nick Martinez and Frankie Montas to deals this winter.



There's upside in arms like Montas, Nick Lodolo, Andrew Abbott, and Martinez going into 2024; however, like another NL Central team's pitchers, there is a lot of assumed risk. Hunter Greene has been a mid-4 ERA pitcher his entire career and currently anchors the staff. Lodolo was very good in his rookie campaign but missed almost all of last year with injuries. Montas can be good, but he hasn't shown the ability since his time in Oakland. Abbott is my personal favorite arm in the rotation, but the question marks will remain unless we see changes this season.



Chicago Cubs

Projected Record: 81-81

I always think the Cubs are better than they are until I look at their projected roster. The biggest issue the Cubs face is that they haven't really gotten better since last season. Chicago struck gold with Cody

Bellinger last season—in which he had a career renaissance—and is looking to recreate that same success after bringing him back for three more years.

The Cubs employ some good position players, anchored by Seiya Suzuki and Dansby Swanson; however, they lack any real impact hitting talent throughout the team. Nico Hoerner is a solid baseball player but is a league-average bat. Christopher Morel has fun power but has major contact issues that caps his ceiling. Pete Crowe-Armstrong is a Ke'Bryan Hayes-level defender, but his bat is very shaky, and you would be happy if he ends up with a wRC+ around league average. The lineup is very much like the Pirates' where they have five or so guys you would slot into the lineup but they're not players you would want carrying the team. The Cubs will end up having an average to slightly below-average offense, and with how the pitching staff is assembled, I am



dubious if it's enough to win this division. The main problem I see is that the offense is basically identical to last year which looks to have some regression coming.

The Cubs rotation also has several large question marks heading into 2024. Justin Steele is incredible and is approaching ace territory at the top of the Cubs rotation. After Steele, however, it is not nearly as certain. Former Bucco Jameson Taillon is poised to pitch significant innings for Chicago after an abysmal 2023 campaign. Kyle Hendricks continues to beat father time and has been an effective starter, but the days of pitching more than 140 innings a season seem to be past him. Jordan Wicks is a fun rookie with a nasty changeup that I like, but pitching prospects are so volatile that you cannot pencil him in as a bonafide starter (even though I think he will be). They do have top pitching prospect Cade Horton knocking on the door who should debut in 2024, providing major support to a pitching staff that desperately needs it.



St. Louis Cardinals

Projected Record: 80-82

The Cardinals weren't a good baseball team last year, but it's accurate to say they underperformed in almost every important piece on the roster. The Cards boast the best and deepest lineup in the division, and it isn't particularly close. Even if Nolan Arenado is on the downtrend with age, bats like Paul Goldschmidt, Lars Nootbaar, Nolan Gorman and Jordan Walker are all going to be major threats at the plate. The Cardinals will score lots of runs barring another big injury bug like the one last year that saw many of their hitters go down. It would not be surprising if their offense wills them to a division title in such a weak division, and most projection systems have them winning the NL Central.

The reason I put a team with the best group of hitters in third place is the pitching.



The pitching staff is still a nightmare, even after adding three starting pitchers in the offseason. Sonny Gray is an elite talent, easily a top 15 pitcher in baseball even if he is on the older side; however, he simply slots in as Jordan Montgomery's replacement, leaving the team lacking in sizable improvement. The additions of Kyle Gibson and Lance Lynn would've been terrifying if the year was 2019, but they were some of the worst-qualified MLB pitchers last season.

Combined with the return of Miles Mikolas and Steven Matz to the rotation, you end up only having one pitcher you feel comfortable giving the ball to every five days. The Cardinals took the approach of getting as many inning-eaters as possible, at the expense of getting talented pitching. The Cardinals hope Lynn and Gibson provide more value than 2023's versions of Adam Wainwright and Jack Flaherty.

The bullpen is mediocre, as well, even after trading for Andrew Kittredge and signing Kenyan Middleton—a move I really like—for not a lot of money; however, there is a dearth of impact arms in the bullpen which will not help out the lackluster rotation.



Milwaukee Brewers

Projected Record: 75-87

The Brewers are very similar to the Pirates where their success is entirely dependent on how their army of new pieces perform. The current lineup currently has two players who posted a wRC+ over 100 with Christian Yelich and William Contreras; however, the Brewers are adding multiple new talents to this lineup. Top five prospect Jackson Chourio is all but guaranteed an Opening Day spot after being extended before playing a single MLB game. Infielder Tyler Black also has a good shot of breaking camp on the major league squad.



Milwaukee is hoping that newly acquired Rhys Hoskins can return to pre-ACL tear status. Finally, they're hoping that Joey Ortiz solidifies the infield after being a main piece in the Corbin Burnes trade with Baltimore. There is a path forward to this lineup being good, but it'll take lots of things to go right. Especially when Brice Turang, Sal Frelick, and Garrett Mitchell will get significant ABs with not much to show for it.

The starting pitching for this year looks rather bleak after Freddy Peralta. Losing Burnes to trade and Brandon Woodruff to another major injury was never going to be easily replaced. Peralta is a certified stud, but after him, the rotation falls off. Jakob Junis and DL Hall have good stuff but have found their MLB success as relievers. Wade Miley is competent enough but struggles to get through many innings. The less said about Colin Rea the better.

Like the Pirates, the Brewers will rely on guys who have suffered from injuries that derailed their careers and internal prospects such as Aaron Ashby who is returning from injuries, and Robert Gasser and Jacob Misiorowski who are their top pitching prospects debuting in 2024. The rotation is helped heavily by the bullpen, which is arguably top five in MLB, and will steal them a few wins.



Important Dates to Circle on the Pirates Calendar

By Ryan Alexander

As we prepare for a long season of 162 games, most games will start to run together. We have you covered with some key dates and games to circle on your calendar this year to help follow your Buccos.

March 28 – Opening Day in Miami

Pirates open the season in Miami with a four-game series with the Marlins. First pitch on Thursday is 4:10pm.

April 5 – Home Opener

Bucs come home after a seven-game road trip to open PNC Park against the Orioles. First pitch is slated for 4:12pm in what should be a sold out crowd. All fans will also receive a 2024 magnetic schedule, one of my favorite items.



The image shows the 2024 Pittsburgh Pirates schedule. The title "2024 SCHEDULE" is prominently displayed in large black letters on a yellow background. The schedule is organized into months: March & April, May, June, July, August, and September. Each month grid shows the day of the week (Sunday through Saturday) and the opponent for each game. Game times are listed in the center of each cell. The Pirates logo is used as a placeholder for home games. The schedule includes the All Star Break in July and various road trips. A note at the bottom right states: "HOME AWAY Dates, times and opponents subject to change. PIRATES.COM".

2024 SCHEDULE						
MARCH & APRIL						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
MIA	WSH	WSH	WSH	MIA	MIA	MIA
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1:35 PM	6:40 PM	12:35 PM		4:12 PM	4:05 PM	
PHI	NYM	NYM	NYM	PHI	PHI	PHI
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1:35 PM	6:40 PM	6:40 PM	6:40 PM	6:40 PM	4:05 PM	
B	P	P	P	SF	SF	SF
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
1:35 PM	6:40 PM	6:40 PM	6:40 PM	12:35 PM		
SF	OAK	OAK	OAK			
28	29	30				
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
MIL	MIL	MIL	MIL	MIL	CWS	CWS
8	9	10	11	12	13	
1:35 PM	12:35 PM					
CWS						
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
ALL STAR BREAK						
P	S	S	S	AZ	AZ	AZ
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
1:35 PM	6:40 PM	6:40 PM	12:35 PM			
AZ	HOU	HOU	HOU			
28	29	30	31			
JULY						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
SL	SL	SL	SL	SL	MLB	MLB
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6:40 PM	6:40 PM	12:35 PM	6:40 PM	6:40 PM	4:05 PM	
MLB	MIL	MIL	MIL	MIL	CWS	CWS
8	9	10	11	12	13	
1:35 PM						
CWS						
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
ALL STAR BREAK						
P	S	S	S	AZ	AZ	AZ
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
1:35 PM	6:40 PM	6:40 PM	12:35 PM			
AZ	HOU	HOU	HOU			
28	29	30	31			
AUGUST						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
CR	CR	CR	CR	CR	A	A
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1:35 PM	6:40 PM	6:40 PM	12:35 PM	6:40 PM	4:05 PM	
CR	CR	CHC	CHC	CHC	CHC	CHC
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1:35 PM						
MIL	MIL	MIL	MIL	CHC	CHC	CHC
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
1:35 PM	6:40 PM	6:40 PM	12:35 PM	6:40 PM	4:05 PM	
CHC	CHC	CHC	CHC	CHC	CHC	CHC
26	27	28	29	30	31	
1:35 PM						
DET	DET	DET	DET	DET	DET	
ATL						
29	30	31				
MAY						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
OAK			1	2	3	4
CR	CR	CR	CR	CR	CR	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1:35 PM	6:40 PM	6:40 PM	12:35 PM	6:40 PM	4:05 PM	
CR	CR	CHC	CHC	CHC	CHC	CHC
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1:35 PM						
MIL	MIL	MIL	MIL	CHC	CHC	CHC
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
1:35 PM	6:40 PM	6:40 PM	12:35 PM	6:40 PM	4:05 PM	
CHC	CHC	CHC	CHC	CHC	CHC	CHC
26	27	28	29	30	31	
1:35 PM						
DET	DET	DET	DET	DET	DET	
ATL						
29	30	31				
JUNE						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	
TOR					TOR	
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1:35 PM	6:40 PM	6:40 PM	6:40 PM	6:40 PM	4:05 PM	
TOR	TOR	TOR	TOR	TOR	TOR	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1:35 PM						
STL	STL	STL	STL	STL	STL	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
1:35 PM	6:40 PM	6:40 PM	12:35 PM	6:40 PM	4:05 PM	
COL	COL	COL	COL	COL	COL	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
1:35 PM						
CIN	CIN	CIN	CIN	ATL	ATL	
30						
ATL						
29	30					
SEPTEMBER						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
CLE	CHC	CHC	CHC	CHC	W	W
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1:35 PM	6:40 PM	6:40 PM	12:35 PM	6:40 PM	6:40 PM	
W	W	W	W	W	W	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1:35 PM	6:40 PM	6:40 PM	12:35 PM	6:40 PM	6:40 PM	
KC	STL	STL	STL	STL	CIN	CIN
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
1:35 PM						
STL	STL	STL	STL	STL	STL	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
1:35 PM	6:40 PM	6:40 PM	12:35 PM	6:40 PM	6:40 PM	
CIN	CIN	CIN	CIN	CIN	CIN	
29	30					
NYY						
29	30					
HOME	AWAY	PIRATES.COM				



May 25 – Dave Parker The Cobra Bobblehead

Pirates host the Braves and first 20,000 fans to the ballpark will receive a Dave Parker bobblehead.

June 22 – NS9 Tailgate and Cutch Bobblehead

The NS9 crew will be in attendance for this one with our annual tailgate and live pod. Follow NS9 on X for more details as we get closer to this game. The first 20,000 fans will also receive the McCutchen City Connect bobblehead before the Pirates face the Rays.

July 4 – Fourth of July Afternoon Game

Celebrate the Fourth of July at PNC Park with a holiday 12:35 afternoon start time against the Cardinals. Spend the day watching the Bucs and then hang out in the city till night for Pittsburgh's Fourth of July firework display.

July 16 – All-Star Game

See what Buccos make the All-Star game this year. Could Oneil Cruz be making the trip to Arlington for this special game?

July 20 – Yinzer Themed Bobblehead

It's Yinzerpalooza Weekend and the first 20,000 fans will receive a yinzer themed bobblehead when the Phillies come to town.

September 15 – Roberto Clemente Day

To honor the great one, all fans will receive a collectible Roberto Clemente baseball card.

September 26 – Final Home Game

Fan Appreciation Day at PNC Park as the Pirates wrap up their home schedule against the Milwaukee Brewers.

September 29 – Game #162

The Pirates close out the regular season on a Sunday afternoon in New York to face the Yankees.



PITTSBURGH CLOTHING CO.

2024 UNI TRACKER

PGHCLOTHING.COM

In collaboration with Pittsburgh Clothing Company, NS9 will be tracking the Pirates record for each uniform that will be worn this season. Check out [North Shore Nine's](#) website to follow along once the season is underway.



Heading to the Ballpark: Tips for a Successful Trip to PNC Park

By Cody Kohlman

Watching baseball at PNC Park is one of our favorite things to do at NS9. We may not be able to get to the ballpark often, but we know a thing or two that can help you get the most out of your experience “Dahn the north shore.” Here are some tips and tricks on how to optimize your experience at PNC Park!

Parking

Finding parking for any sporting event can be difficult. Lucky for us Pittsburgh sports fans, parking on the North Shore is plentiful (at least for Pirates Games). The easiest place to park for Pirates games is in any of the parking lots immediately outside of the stadium. These parking lots are extremely convenient and make

coming and going from the ballpark a breeze, and also are optimal for tailgates. This added convenience also comes with a price of course. Any lot outside of the ballpark will likely cost you a between \$20 and \$50. Another option is to park in a parking garage. There are 4 garages with convenient parking on the North Shore: Gold 1 Garage, Red 5 Garage, Blue 10, and the Champions Garage.

There are numerous other parking lots surrounding the ballpark that are just a little out of the way. These lots are: Red Lot 7A-D, Blue Lot 7F,7H,7J, and The Clark Lots. These lots will differ in price, but likely will cost between \$5 and \$15. The last place you can park and the cheapest is



over near the CCAC and the Mexican War Streets. This is street level residential parking that is usually meter free. It is a little bit of a walk, but if you are trying to go to the ballpark on a budget, this is the spot for you to park. Another budget-friendly option is the Rivers Casino parking garage which is free during most games and just a quick walk to the T that will drop you off right across from the home plate entrance. Please note that you have to be 21 years of age to enter even the parking garage at the casino so if you're going with the kiddos, try one of the other lots.

Where To Eat Around The Ballpark

If you're making a whole day of going to the ballpark, you might be inclined to grab a bite to eat before heading to the game. There are a multitude of options for grub and fun on the North Shore. Let's start with all the options leading up to the stadium on North Shore Drive. All the options here are bar and restaurant establishments.

Tequila Cowboy

Tequila Cowboy leans more into the party scene than the dining scene, but could be a great tailgate spot if you aren't trying to be stuck in the hot sun in the middle of a parking lot.

Jason Aldean's Kitchen + Bar

Across the street you have the new Jason Aldean's Kitchen + Bar. A very Nashville-esque bar inside the formerly known Jerome Bettis Bar and Grill, has plenty of seats for dining while also providing catering to the party bar crowd.

The Foundry

Right next door is the Foundry, a slightly upscale pub with an intimate setting. Also provides outdoor access to look over the Allegheny River.

BURN by Rocky Patel Pittsburgh

Make your way back across the street if you are looking for a classier bar scene accompanied by a smooth cigar at BURN by Rocky Patel Pittsburgh.



Burgatory

Next door is Burgatory. Here you can grab a great gourmet burger along with a spiked craft milkshake if you're looking for a delicious pregame meal and frosty cocktail.

Bar Louie

Continuing toward PNC Park, you'll stumble upon the classic, Bar Louie. An American bistro with an upbeat vibe and plenty of cocktails and microbrews.

Shorty's Pins x Pints

Back across the street, Shorty's Pins x Pints provides you with all the fun before the game. From their great selection of local beers to their amazing bar food, Shorty's also keeps you occupied with endless rounds of duck pin bowling, tabletop shuffleboard, corn hole, jumbo Jenga, and arcade games all within a reasonable price to accompany your pre-game dinner.

Voodoo Brewing Company and Southern Tier Brewery

At the halfway point of your journey down North Shore Drive, you'll find Voodoo Brewing Company and Southern Tier Brewery. Two great spots for craft beers and

good eats. Advantage goes to Southern Tier, as they have a very large outdoor area which provides great atmosphere in the middle of the sea of parking lots.

McFadden's

Right in PNC Park's shadow, you'll stumble upon McFadden's. It's a North Shore staple for many years, known for its party atmosphere.

Mike's Beer Bar and North Shore Tavern

If you go around the ballyard to Federal Street, you'll find Mike's Beer Bar and North Shore Tavern. Mike's Beer Bar has by far the largest selection of beers and seltzers on



the North Shore, and North Shore Tavern right next door will provide you with one of the more unique dining options around the park with their patented “Steak on a Stone,” which allows you to enjoy your entrée directly off the heat it was prepared on.

Where To Sit Inside PNC Park

PNC Park has been named America's most beautiful ballpark for a multitude of years. It truly is the best place to take in an MLB game. There isn't a bad seat in the house, but we will provide you with some of the best spots that we prefer. Home Plate Box Seats (Section 114-119) are some of the premier seats at the ballpark. With the best view of the field of play from the catcher's POV you won't miss a single out made. These seats also give you one of the best views of Pittsburgh's skyline that the park is known for. These seats are also generally reasonably priced as well starting at \$40 a ticket at Pirates.com.

Want the same experience for a cheaper price? Look at seats in the Home Plate Grandstand Area (Sections 313-319). A ticket in this area will give you a bird's eye view of the playing field and give you an even larger look at the city's skyline with ticket prices starting at \$23.

Looking for a more communal experience at PNC Park? The left field Bleacher Reserve Sections (133-138) will get you an experience with many diehard fans looking to snag a homerun ball or interact with the players between, or during if they play for the opposition, innings. Not as interested in the fanfare, and looking more to have a drink at a moment's notice? Buy a standing room ticket or the cheapest ticket you can find on a ticketing app and grab some tall boys in the centerfield Miller Lite Bar area of the park and make new friends and memories. The NS9 Crew has certainly enjoyed this area of the park. If you get the



chance, ask Jim (@northsidenotch) how his last experience was out in this area last season. You'll be sure to be entertained by his answer.

Inside the Park

If you are more of a ballpark foodie, then you'll find some great options inside PNC Park. Let's start with your name brand spots inside the park. New NS9 post-game sponsor Primanti Bros. is always a great place to grab a Pittsburgh-er and a beer on the first base line on the main concourse. Unfortunately, the Pittsburgh-er is the only option at this location inside the ballpark. We also have Chickie's & Pete's located in Pop's Plaza on the main concourse on the third base line. Here you can grab the classic Crab Fries and a Chopped Chicken Hoagie with cheese. Moving on to some PNC Park exclusives, out in centerfield you can find Manny's BBQ. Here you'll find smoked chicken and pork, as

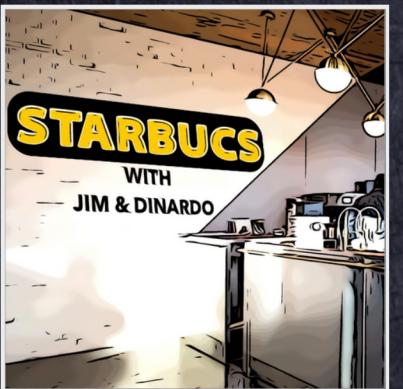
well as mac n cheese and mini Mrs. T's pierogies.

The Pirates will also be adding new concession items this season that include two local restaurant partnerships. LowKey Taco will offer roasted corn on the cob, birria beef nachos, and caramel-stuffed churros at Nachorita near Section 138. And Chicken on the Hill near Section 144 will be adding chicken biscuits with house pickles thanks to Coop de Ville.

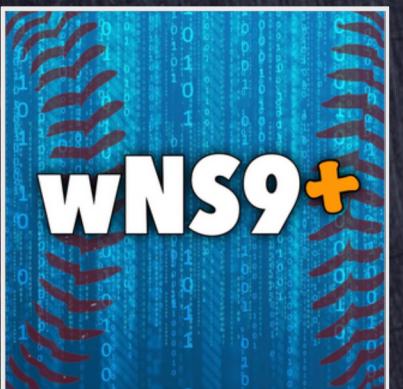
PNC Park near Section 133 will also be adding the Renegade Hot Dog—a foot-long hot dog, pot roast, mini pierogis, caramelized onions, and pickle slices on a hot dog bun.

In other words, bring your appetite to the ballpark.

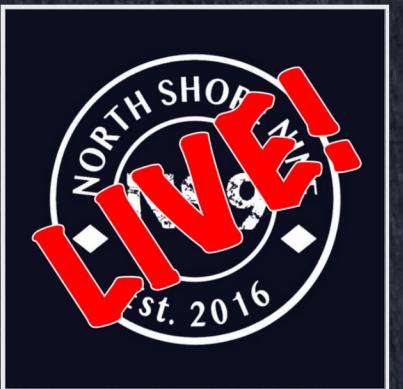




Start your Monday mornings off right with NS9 and a cup of coffee! Starbucs features NS9 members Jim & DiNardo as they live-stream and discuss the latest Pirates news, preview the upcoming series, dive into the Pirates farm system, and other topics.



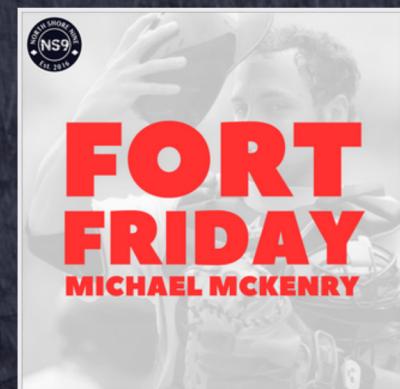
This show is more sporadic but is utilized when we feature a prominent guest. Past guests include Neil Walker, Dallas Braden, Jim Callis, Travis Sawchik, LSU Head Coach Jay Johnson, & more.



Live show every Wednesday night during the offseason or Thursday nights in-season (unless there's a game) Tyler, Jim, & DiNardo discuss the current topics—and probably rant - about the Pirates.



The NS9 Post-Game Show Powered by Primanti Bros. Two of our NS9 members live-stream a postgame show breaking down the game that just happened. This is your chance to join in our nightly group therapy sessions.



DiNardo is joined by Michael "The Fort" McKenry on Fridays to chop it up talking baseball while answering your questions for The Fort. To ask your question, call the NS9 Voicemail at 412-626-7479.



Thank You for Supporting NS9!