

A photograph of two Pittsburgh Pirates players on a baseball field. The player on the left is wearing a white uniform with "McCLUTCHEN" and the number "22" on the back. The player on the right is wearing a white uniform with "TABATA" and the number "31" on the back. Both are wearing black helmets and holding baseball bats. The background shows a red dirt field and a black safety net.

PIRATES PROSPECTS ANNUAL

2011

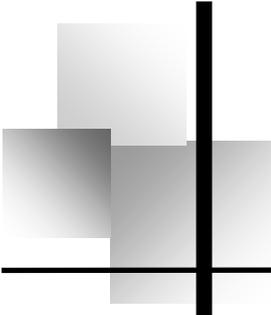
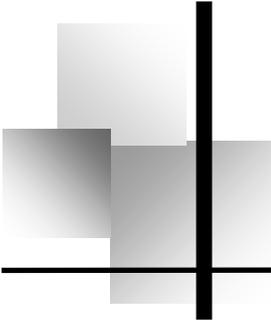


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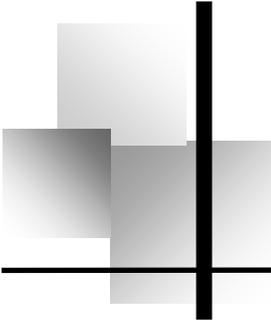


Introduction

On the evening of April 21, 2010, I made my way to PNC Park. My purpose that night was to gather some information for a future article, so I attended the game alone. The Milwaukee Brewers were in town for the second night of a three-game series. The game itself was far from memorable, just your standard 8-0 Pirates loss. The Brewers led 7-0 after six innings, holding the Bucs to just four hits. Those final three innings were almost unbearable to watch, as the Pirates hopelessly withered into the ground. The box score will claim there were 12,192 people at the park that night, but there were only a few hundred listless fans sitting in the stands as the game painfully arrived at its conclusion. The hometown fans heckled the hometown team. It was a depressing scene. As I filed silently out of the park, I mulled over what I had just witnessed. I wondered to myself if it had been the worst Pirates game I had ever witnessed. And I had seen my fair share of awful baseball over the years.

The next afternoon, the baseball became infinitely worse. The Brewers and Pirates were finishing the three-game series with a 12:35 game. I intentionally took a late lunch that day, and plopped down in front of the office television with my food. Both teams went scoreless in the first inning. Prince Fielder led off the second with a solo home run. By this time, my lunch was finished and I made my way back to my desk. As I worked, I periodically checked in on the score. Ryan Braun hit a three-run home run in the third. The Brewers pushed three more runs across in the fourth, and another three in the fifth. The score was 16-0 after seven innings. A few minutes before I packed up to leave for the day, Carlos Gomez anticlimactically gloved an Argenis Diaz fly ball for the final out. Final score: 20-0. It was the worst loss in franchise history. The Brewers outscored the Pirates by an absurd 36-1 margin in the three-game series. Once again, the organization was a punch line.

On August 7, 2010, the Pirates hosted the Colorado Rockies at PNC Park in front of a sell-out crowd of 38,147. I was at a concert that night, but I managed to keep tabs on the game with my phone. As we began walking back to the car, I saw that the Pirates were taking a 5-2 lead into the ninth inning. By the time we had tuned in on the car radio, it was tied. During the drive home, the game began melting down into a typical Pirates collapse. In the top of the tenth, Todd Helton lifted a two-run home run into the right field seats to give the Rockies an improbable 7-5 lead. The Bucs tried to mount a last-ditch rally in the bottom of the inning as I walked through my front door and switched on the television. Andrew McCutchen led off the inning by driving a ball off the top

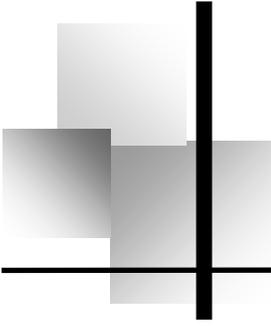


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of the right-center field wall for a double. However, he was still standing on second base two outs later. Garrett Jones strode to the plate, as Pedro Alvarez watched anxiously from the on-deck circle. Jones battled through an eight-pitch at-bat, laying off pitches just out of the strike zone and fouling off several tough pitches. He eventually drew a walk, bringing Alvarez to the plate. There was a buzz in the crowd as the rookie slugger stepped in, representing the winning run. He took a vicious cut at Huston Street's first offering, fouling it away. The second pitch was an 83 MPH change-up that tailed away from Alvarez. He got his arms extended and launched the baseball into the night.

The 2010 season was a bittersweet one for the Pirates. They were a truly awful team, one that was probably fortunate to scratch out a measly 57 wins. No moment was a more appropriate representation of their ineptitude than that afternoon in April, when the Brewers came into the Pirates' backyard and treated them like children. The disastrous season cost manager John Russell his job, and it has likely shortened the leash on general manager Neal Huntington. That being said, for the first time in years, a glimmer of hope appeared in Pittsburgh. By season's end, a group of legitimate young talent was having success at the major league level. The 2010 team boasted an electrifying 23-year-old leadoff hitter who is already among the top center fielders in the game. A 21-year-old left fielder producing at an above average level, despite being one of the youngest players in baseball. A 24-year-old second baseman enjoying a breakout season at the plate. And finally, the team's top prospect and Huntington's first draft pick in 2008, a 23-year-old slugging third baseman. These four young players made it bearable to watch as an incredibly awful season stumbled to a close.

The progress of the organization's minor league system similarly had a weird mix of positive and negative news. There were encouraging performances when players were healthy, but an eruption of injuries cost numerous prospects significant development time. Catcher Tony Sanchez, the organization's first round pick in 2009, continued to have impressive success at the plate. He was hitting .314/.416/.454 in late June, when his season came to an abrupt end with a fastball to the jaw. Starling Marte had another strong season, but he missed about two months to a hand injury. Shortstop Brock Holt was hitting .347/.407/.435 in early June, when a collision led to season-ending knee surgery. Jeremy Farrell was having a surprisingly productive year when he fouled a ball off his knee in June. He developed a staph infection, underwent surgery, and was out of the lineup for seven weeks. Several pitchers in the low minors, such as Quinton Miller, Brett Lorin, Victor Black and Jeffrey Inman, struggled to stay on the mound. Conversely, teenage pitchers Colton Cain and Zach Von Rosenberg had encouraging professional debuts in short-season ball. Brad Lincoln pitched well in Triple-A, but was shelled when he arrived in the

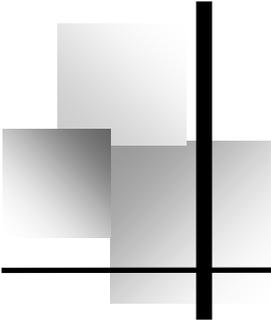


Introduction

big leagues. A strong quartet of starting pitchers came together in the Double-A rotation, as Rudy Owens, Bryan Morris, Jeff Locke and Justin Wilson had impressive seasons.

It was an up-and-down season throughout the organization. Because of that, I have really struggled to accurately assess how much progress the franchise has made. I hope this becomes somewhat clearer in the following pages.

Matt Bandi
Pirates Prospects



The Five-Year Plan

By Matt Bandi

“This is a growing process for us. We’re not going to turn this thing around in one year. We have a five-year plan that will probably get us to the playoffs in two years.”

-Kevin McClatchy, 3/24/1996

During my teenage years, I sporadically collected newspapers that would end up in a haphazard stack in my bedroom. This collection, which now resides somewhere in my parents’ attic, is made up of about 98% sports-related publications. There is an issue of the Post-Gazette from September 12, 2001. I have a paper reporting the recovery of John F. Kennedy Jr.’s body, but only because David Cone pitched a perfect game the same day. Every post-game issue from the Steelers’ 2005 Super Bowl run is there. There are several installments from Mario Lemieux’s first retirement. And buried somewhere in that collection is the sports page from the December 14, 1996 issue of the Post-Gazette. The headline simply reads, “Final shoe drops.”

One day prior, the Pirates finished cleaning house by dealing Jeff King and Jay Bell to the Kansas City Royals. This followed trades of veteran players Danny Darwin, Denny Neagle, Orlando Merced, Carlos Garcia and Dan Plesac. Contrary to popular belief, this was the only attempt at truly rebuilding the team before Frank Coonelly and Neal Huntington arrived in late 2007. It was also the first time that my young heart was broken by a Pirates trade. The Bucs had a disastrous 1996 season, and Kevin McClatchy ordered that payroll be slashed to the bone. Cam Bonifay sent players packing left and right, and the Pirates entered 1997 with a \$9.1 million payroll and Baseball America’s top farm system. The rebuild was fully underway.

As we all know, things never worked out. Seeing as the Pirates are currently about halfway through their first significant rebuild since the 1996 dismantling, it is important to look back and determine what went wrong. Over the next few chapters, I am going to break down the different aspects of the attempted rebuild and try to determine how things fell apart.

The first five-year plan was an obvious failure, resulting in more than a decade of public mockery. It remains to be seen if the next attempt is any more successful.

Ryan Doumit

Position: C/OF

Bats: Switch

Throws: Right

Height: 6'1"

Weight: 210 lbs.

DOB: 4/30/1981



© Matt Bandi, Pirates Prospects

Acquired

Drafted
2nd Round
1999

2011 Salary

\$5,100,000

Service Time

5 Years
120 Days

Year	PA	BB%	K%	ISO	AVG	OBP	SLG	wOBA	WAR
2008	465	4.9%	11.8%	.183	.318	.357	.501	.367	3.6
2009	304	6.6%	16.1%	.164	.250	.299	.414	.306	0.9
2010	456	9.0%	19.1%	.155	.251	.331	.406	.326	0.8
2011	307	7.0%	16.7%	.160	.265	.326	.425	.331	1.0

2011 Outlook

Doumit's offense rebounded a bit last year, but the most concerning aspect of his 2010 season was his complete defensive collapse. It was an issue that led to him being replaced by Chris Snyder, and Neal Huntington will try to trade him before the season. If Doumit stays with the team, he should be a solid option at backup catcher and as a bat off the bench.

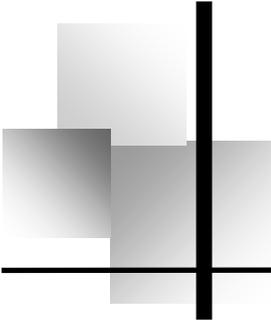
Non-Roster Spring Training Invites

Garrett Atkins

Position: 3B					Date of Birth: 12/12/1979				
Bats: Right					Throws: Right				
Height: 6'3"					Weight: 215				
Year	PA	BB%	K%	ISO	AVG	OBP	SLG	wOBA	WAR
2008	664	6.0%	15.1%	.165	.286	.328	.452	.337	0.3
2009	399	10.3%	14.5%	.116	.226	.308	.342	.291	-0.4
2010	152	7.9%	19.7%	.071	.214	.276	.286	.256	-1.1
2011	0	7.8%	15.8%	.128	.265	.326	.394	.319	—

Joe Beimel

Position: RP					Date of Birth: 4/19/1977				
Bats: Left					Throws: Left				
Height: 6'3"					Weight: 215				
Year	IP	K/9	BB/9	K/BB	HR/9	GB%	ERA	FIP	WAR
2008	49.0	5.88	3.86	1.52	0.00	47.4%	2.02	3.30	0.7
2009	55.1	5.69	3.09	1.84	0.81	39.3%	3.58	4.09	0.3
2010	45.0	4.20	3.00	1.40	1.00	43.2%	3.40	4.59	0.1
2011	49	5.04	2.87	1.76	1.13	40.7%	5.00	4.64	0.0



2011 Projections

The following three pages contain these projections for the 2011 season.

Basic (page 91)

On this page, you will find standard counting stats, along with the most common rate stats.

WAR (page 92)

Individual Wins Above Replacement (WAR) projections for each player are listed on this page. Total team wins, losses, runs scored and runs allowed can also be found here. Please note that additional adjustments were made to calculate team totals. For example, offensive production of pitchers was considered, although it is not shown.

Platoon (page 93)

One mistake often made is the overreliance on platoon splits that have been produced over a limited sample of plate appearances. A platoon split generally takes much longer to stabilize than most of us realize. According to research conducted by Tom Tango, it takes an average of 2,200 plate appearances against left-handed pitchers for a right-handed hitter's true platoon split to stabilize. Most players do not stay in the league long enough to reach that number, so we must regress our expectations toward the league average platoon split. You will find regressed projections on this page, based on each player's career splits. You may notice that the projected splits for the switch hitters listed are very neutral. This is because the average switch hitter has a nearly non-existent split, and Ryan Doumit is the only switch hitter on the team with any substantial time in the league.

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