MONEYBALL WEEKLY: MEET THE METS

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After the 2024 season, the New York Mets seemed primed for success. Coming off an NLCS loss to the eventual champion Los Angeles Dodgers, followed by signing one of the best bats the game has ever seen in Juan Soto, contention seemed like a guarantee for New York.

The 2025 season ended up being a disaster for New York, finishing 83-79 and just barely missing the playoffs after losing a tiebreaker with the Cincinnati Reds.

After this disappointment, attention turned to closer Edwin Diaz and 1B Pete Alonso, both hitting free agency in the offseason. Diaz's walkout song "Narcos" had become iconic, and Polar Pete is the Mets' all-time home run leader and one of the most beloved players by Mets and baseball fans alike.

New York was unable to retain either, with the two departing for the Dodgers and Baltimore Orioles respectively. The Mets also parted ways with another fan favorite in Brandon Nimmo, sending his long-term deal to the Texas Rangers in exchange for Marcus Semien, a shorter but annually more expensive deal. They'd dump Jeff McNeil to the Athletics, though this was less poorly received.

To make up for the moves, the Mets brought in infielders Jorge Polanco and Bo Bichette in free agency and outfielder Luis Robert via trade. Additionally, they signed relivers Luke Weaver and Devin Williams from the crosstown rival New York Yankees; both players coming off weak years. They also traded for RHP Freddy Peralta to beef up the rotation, paying a premium for this but finally picking up the ace that had been missing since the departure of Jacob DeGrom.

Despite the sudden loss of a core that was steadily grown and became beloved by fans, the Mets still looked somewhat promising coming into the year.

As of Monday, the Mets sit at 9-19, tied for worst in the league with their rival Philadelphia Phillies. For Philly specifically, the issues have been mostly luck-driven according to advanced metrics, and although concerns remain, the likelihood says that they should even out in due time.

That cannot be said for the Mets. They have played about equal to what metrics suggest they should be playing like.

Pitching has been middle-of-the-pack for New York, a disappointment relative to what they intended when bringing in Peralta but not bad as opposed to underwhelming. Their 4.01 ERA ranks 13th and their 3.79 xFIP ranks fourth, meaning that the pitching has been somewhat unlucky and likely should be closer to what they hoped.

The batting has been nothing short of downright awful. The team's overall .625 OPS is last in baseball, .031 behind the 29th-ranked Phillies. Their BA of .226 ranks 27th and their SLG of .337 is also dead last, though the projected versions of these two would slot them 19th and 20th respectively. Their .282 wOBA is dead last and xwOBA of .303 only exceeds that of the San Francisco Giants. A .288 OBP is last in the MLB and a 7.8 BB% is only better than three teams. The list of stats goes on, but the conclusion is that the Mets' offense has been anemic, and it isn't bad luck.

Every starter but Soto and Francisco Alvarez have an OPS south of .700. Even Soto hasn't played up to his normal standard, but the fact that this is the case when he has a .831 OPS is more a testament to his skill than the Mets' struggles. He has missed time with injury, however.

Weaver's ERA sits just below a 5, and Williams's sits at a 9 flat, though the latter has an xFIP of 3.07 and is likely unlucky. Peralta has been solid but not to the level of the ace that the Mets paid for, with an ERA of 3.90.

All of this culminates with the Mets struggling mightily thus far. They suffered a 12-game losing streak that they finally snapped last week, only to get swept by the Rockies this past weekend, a team which has become synonymous with a joke due to their continued struggles year after year.

If it couldn't be any more painful, Brandon Nimmo's .817 OPS and McNeil's .358 OBP would both rank second on the Mets, just behind Juan Soto. Alonso hasn't been himself and Diaz won't return from injury until after the all-star break but losing those two will sting no matter what. McNeil was due to be moved for some time because of age, inconsistency and rumors of locker room issues, though those remain rumors.

The real kicker is with Nimmo. It wouldn't be unfair to argue Nimmo was the true heart of the Mets' core, spending 10 great years with the team and while never the absolute best on the roster he was a beacon of consistency. Trading him was poorly received at the time and looks even worse now.

It is only a month into the year and things can change. It took two weeks for the Mets to fall into a hole like they have, and it could be just as quick that they jump out. But winning 12 is harder than losing 12, and every stat, face value or underlying, suggests their offense to be not unlucky but instead downright bad. A turnaround will need to be imminent if the Mets want to salvage the year.

A series of flags adorn the outside of Citi Field ahead of Opening Day. The New York Mets have played in Citi Field since 2009. PHOTO COURTESY OF @METS ON INSTAGRAM

