Ava's Angle: The spring status of the New York Mets

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Spring has finally sprung as Major League Baseball is back in action. MLB teams started reporting to their camps in Florida and Arizona on Feb. 10 and games kicked off on Feb. 20.

As for the New York Mets, baseball activities are back in full swing in Port St. Lucie, Fla. Some of the same star-studded faces — like shortstop Francisco Lindor and outfielder Juan Soto — return to the field in orange and blue, in addition to many new faces. However, the Mets did not have the postseason that fans were expecting. After almost replacing the entire coaching staff around manager Carlos Mendoza, the franchise's four longest-tenured players and fan favorites Pete Alonso, Edwin Díaz, Brandon Nimmo and Jeff McNeil were on other teams as soon as Christmas time — Alonso and Díaz through unexpected free agent signings, Nimmo and McNeil through trade exchanges.

Through all these unprecedented changes, the Mets did not seem to be making the moves that they desperately needed after an underwhelming 2025 season, where the team missed the playoffs. The starting rotation — the main cause for the 2025 team's agonizing collapse — remained significantly unaddressed by the front office. Some players were added through the Nimmo and McNeil trades, but far from enough of what the Mets needed to be a contender again.

Then, came a week of action from the Mets that fans have been waiting to pull the roster back together after two months of excruciating team news. The Mets landed the top remaining hitter in free agency, Bo Bichette, who signed the day after outfielder Kyle Tucker opted for the Los Angeles Dodgers over Steve Cohen's four-year, $220 million offer in New York. Four days later, the Mets acquired center fielder Luis Robert Jr. from the Chicago White Sox. A day after that, the Mets made another trade to acquire All-Star right-hander Freddy Peralta and relief pitcher Tobias Myers from the Milwaukee Brewers. The same day, veteran-right handed reliever Luis García agreed to a one-year deal with New York.

Before this clustered week, the Mets had only signed veteran infielder Jorge Polanco, relievers Luke Weaver and Devin Williams. Following that transactional blitz, the Mets were suddenly back on the radar and a rush of hope hit the fanbase. The Mets reported to Port St. Lucie with some new faces but the same championship aspirations as before.

"We went into this offseason understanding there was going to be change," Mets General Manager David Stearns said to ESPN. "In my opinion, there needed to be change. We didn't know exactly what change that was going to be: what deals were going to emerge that made sense for us, what the market was going to be on certain players. But we knew we needed to get better defensively. We knew we needed to add to our starting pitching. We wanted to get a little more versatile positionally without position player grouping. And so, those led us down a variety of paths."

Trading Nimmo was not on the Mets bingo card and was a shock to the fanbase. He is the organization's longest-tenured player, picked in the first round of the 2011 draft and Nimmo still had five years remaining on his contract with a no-trade clause. When the Texas Rangers reached out in November and offered Marcus Semien in a one-for-one veteran swap for Nimmo, Stearns decided it was the right move. Semien is four years older than Nimmo at 35, but his contract is three years shorter, which gives the Mets more flexibility in the long-term. He's also a two-time Gold Glove winner (2021, 2025), so the move could be viewed as the Mets' effort to grow stronger defensively.

Aside from the team's new additions and prospect trades, the Mets farm system is still ranked fifth in the league by ESPN's Kiley McDaniel. New York has several rookies, headlined by right-hander Nolan McLean and outfielder Carson Benge, who are expected to contribute numbers in 2026.

Of course, the Mets still have Lindor and Soto as the pillars of their roster. However, there are some uncertainties. Lindor underwent surgery on his left hamate bone on Feb. 11. The shortstop's time-of-return is expected at around six weeks, putting him right against the Opening Day date. Lindor has not been on the injured list since 2021 and the team has reported that they are optimistic he will be ready for March 26. However, the procedure has the risk to sap a hitter's full power for months after recovery so the Mets will watch Lindor carefully.

As for Soto, he will make the change from right field to left field following the offseason moves, which is a position he has played extensively but is still a transition nonetheless. After having one of the worst defensive outfielders' numbers across the league last season, Soto looks to up his game defensively which will altogether make him a stronger anchor to the Mets.

"I feel like this team is better than last year," said Lindor after the team reported to camp last month.

Overall, for a spring update, New York's 40-man roster includes 13 players who were not with the team when they completed a full collapse from the best record in the majors in mid-June to missing the playoffs in October. Spring training allows time for the Mets to cement and build the next foundation for the organization, developing chemistry and creating the team camaraderie that will hopefully take a team like the Mets all the way to the end of October, for the ultimate goal of winning the World Series.

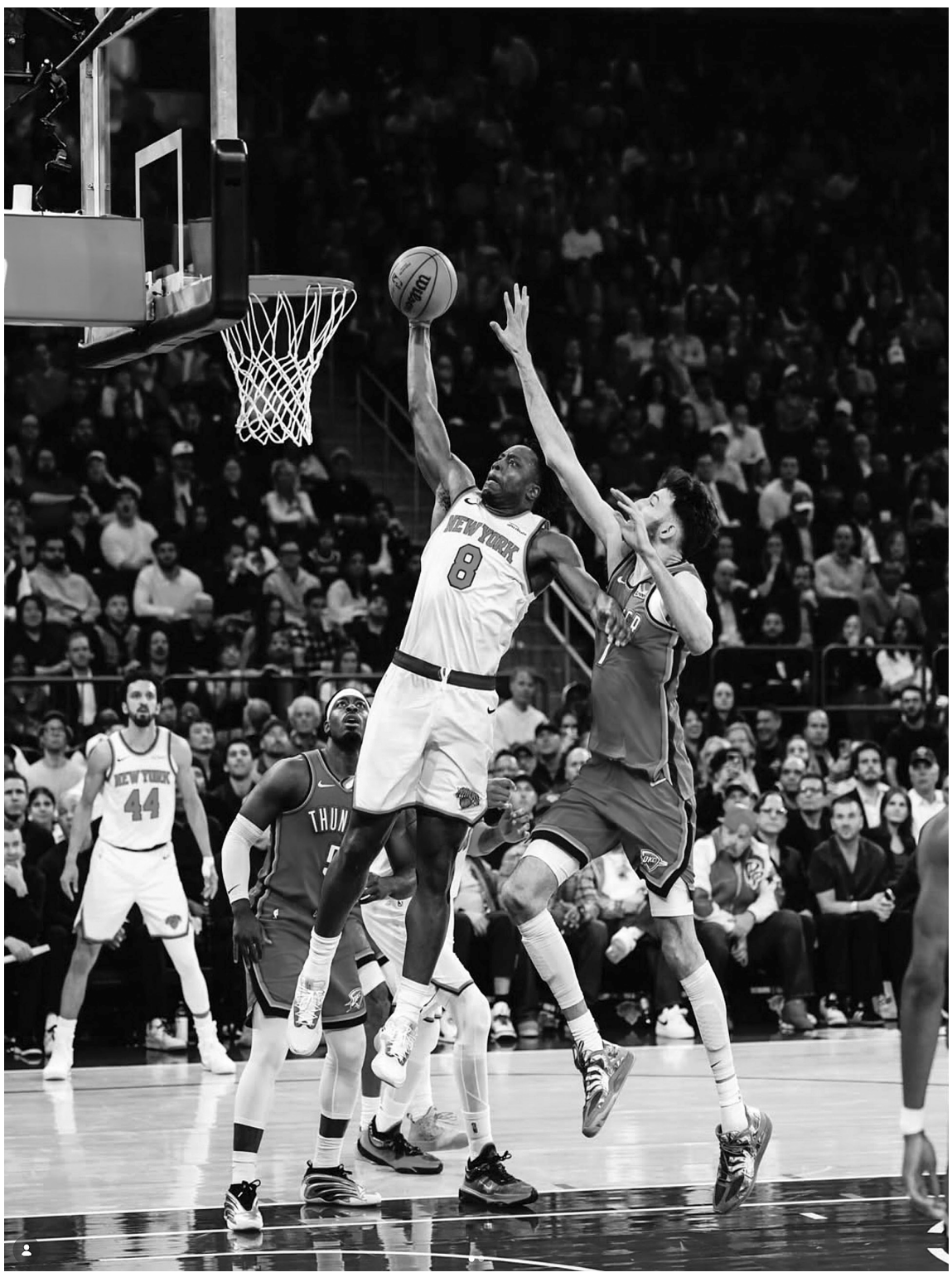
"This is different, obviously, with a lot of new faces from the players' side and from the coaches' side," described Mendoza. "It's going to be a priority of ours, building relationships, earning trust."



Luke Weaver throwing a pitch during a game with Team Nicaragua. The Mets won 6-3 on March 3, 2026. PHOTO COURTESY OF @METS ON INSTAGRAM

THE BIG APPLE: KNICKS DROP HEARTBREAKER TO DEFENDING CHAMPS

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OG Anunoby going for a basket. Anunoby plays for the New York Knicks. PHOTO BYCOURTESY OF @NYKNICKS ON INSTAGRAM

This past week, the New York Knicks went 3-1, with notable wins over Milwaukee, a big victory in Toronto, an impressive home dominance against San Antonio and a disappointing loss to the defending champion Oklahoma City.

The major talking point of Wednesday's loss was the officiating. The Thunder were getting away with fouling New York; meanwhile, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander was launching himself into Knicks' defenders and getting the call. As a fan, it is safe to say that watching Gilgeous-Alexander's style of play is an eyesore. The 27-year-old is second in the league in free throws attempted per game with 9.2. Foul-baiting at 6-foot-6 is unethical, in many people's eyes (Before anyone gets on Jalen Brunson for doing the same, Brunson is outside of the top 30 in free throws attempted per game.).

Late in the first quarter, the reigning MVP had two fouls and couldn't risk picking up his third. However, he went barreling into Brunson, who had his feet set, to pick up his third foul. No whistle was blown, nothing. Everyone in Madison Square Garden knew it was a charge except for the officiating crew. Knicks' head coach Mike Brown was irate, the most upset he's been all reason and rightfully so. Brown voiced his opinion on SGA.

"He does a great job of convincing the referees better than anybody in the league that he's getting hit," Brown said, acknowledging the craft involved, even if not everyone agrees.

Fast forward to the final minutes of the game, OG Anunoby knocked over Kenrich Williams on a similar play, yet that was called a charge. Anunoby initially scored on the play, but it was called back. These calls cost the Knicks the game, as they ended up losing by three points.

The discussions around Thunder and Gilgeous-Alexander fouls have persisted throughout the season. For instance, Minnesota Timberwolves' head coach Chris Finch was ejected early in a game against Oklahoma City following a non-call on a play he strongly disagreed with. He voiced his frustration with officials and was later fined $35,000. Some argue the Thunder are simply using the rules to their advantage, while others question the fairness of the calls.

Aside from the officiating, the Knicks easily could have won this game; Brunson was not his normal self, scoring just 16 points on 5-18 shooting. Mitchell Robinson was out due to the game being a back-to-back, and New York could not make key free throws, shooting 16-22.

Yes, this loss was frustrating, but there are a lot of positives we can take from the game. Taking the defending champions to the final possession of the game means they can compete with the best.

Next week sees the Big East Tournament hosted at Madison Square Garden, which means the Knicks will head out west to face the Nuggets, Lakers, Clippers, Jazz and wrap up the road trip in Indiana.

It's been a tough stretch of games as of late, but facing tough teams late in the season can shape up the Knicks for the playoffs. It'll be interesting to see Robinson's matchup against Nikola Jokic, as in the last matchup, Robinson scored 10 points on a perfect 5-5 shooting. The Joker will be out for revenge after having a game to forget, shooting 1-13 from downtown back on Feb. 4.

We are just about a month out of the playoffs, and the Knicks need to start clicking. With Celtics forward Jayson Tatum set to return Friday night, the Eastern Conference has just become far more competitive.