

1. Brewers



For Starters...

♦ The "Brew Crew" enter the 2014 SWBL season as arguably the deepest and most consistent team in the league. Led by captain Peter Leicht, the Brewers steam rolled through their 2013 campaign, posting an impressive 9-1 record. Peter and teammate Kyle Cornell helped limit opposing teams to 114 runs scored, fewest allowed in 2013.

Player To Watch...

♦ Entering his third year in the SWBL, Patrick Gatti looks to evolve into one of the upper tier players in the league. Gatti posted strong offensive numbers across the board in 2013, finishing with a .693 / 29 / 57 stat line. His 29 home runs ranked 9th overall in the SWBL a year ago, as he will enter this season as a candidate for the 2014 HR crown.

Patrick Gatti



Peter Leicht



Key To Success...

♦ Can captain Peter Leicht FINALLY get the Brewers over the hump? Leicht enters his 10th season in the SWBL and will hope to lead his team to their first ever World Series championship. The Brewers are consistently one of the top teams in this league, but still aren't regarded as "elite" due to their lack of championships. Is this the year?

Bold Predictions...

♦ The Brewers will lead both the SWBL in runs scored AND fewest runs allowed. This might not be TOO bold, as the team was only three additional runs scored away last year from accomplishing the feat. The signing of Danny Bell might be the last piece of the puzzle for the 2014 Brewers, as I expect them to hoist the 2014 SWBL trophy.

Kyle Cornell



Projected 2014 Finish: 10-0, 1st NL

2. Yankees



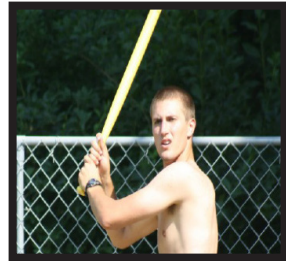
For Starters...

◆ After finishing second in the American League last season, the Yankees look to take advantage of the Rays roster loss in Derek Thompson. The “Manchester Bombers” (see what I did there) are known for their offensive firepower, but their pitching staff wasn’t half bad last year. Pohle, Bakula and Calloway lead the Yanks into 2014.

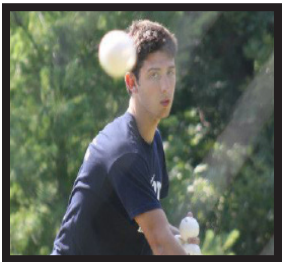
Player To Watch...

◆ Yankees captain Scott Pohle, is a three-time SWBL Champion and looks for his first league title since the 2011 campaign. Last year, Pohle’s offensive numbers took a dip, despite still posting solid stats across the board. The captain will be looked upon for a slight boost in offensive production, as well as delivering on the bump for the Yanks.

Scott Pohle



Sam Bakula



Key To Success...

◆ With the formidable offensive trio of Scott Pohle, Sam Bakula and John Calloway, the Yankees are loaded at the plate. The trio all finished with 30+ home runs last season, and there’s no reason to think they won’t repeat that effort in 2014. However, will the Yankees performance on the mound hinder their championship aspirations?

Bold Predictions...

◆ Behind captain Scott Pohle re-gaining his 2011 Cy-Young form, the Yankees pitching staff will help lead the team to the top AL regular season record in 2014. At the end of the day however, it will be the team’s incredible offensive firepower that will lead the Yankees back to the World Series. A Yankees / Brewers Championship game will bring excitement galore to the Skibbe backyard.

John Calloway



Projected 2014 Finish: 9-1, 1st AL

3. Rays



For Starters...

♦ The Rays have taken home back-to-back SWBL Championships, and are led by Paul Castellano and Chris Meador. Castellano ("The Godfather") has evolved into a premier SWBL hitter, while Meador continues to dazzle on the field defensively. The departure of teammate Derek Thompson hurts considerably, but still expect the Rays towards the top of the standings in 2014.

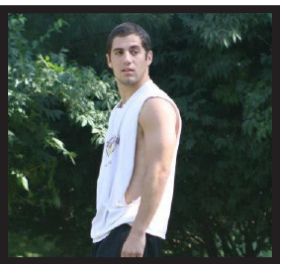
Player To Watch...

♦ Chris Meador has not only won back-to-back SWBL Championships, but the slick fielder has also picked up back-to-back Gold Glove Awards. While his fielding prowess has brought home the most accolades, his offensive stats have fallen into the middle of the pack. With the loss of Thompson, Meador will be asked for better production at the plate.

Chris Meador



Paul Castellano



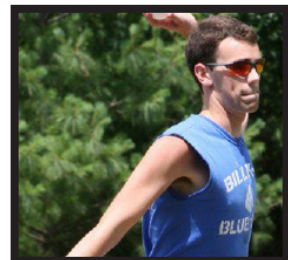
Key To Success...

♦ It's pretty simple for the Rays. How will they replace Derek Thompson? All signs point to newly signed lefty Will Rath as the answer. One of the few LHP in the SWBL, Rath has proven to be an effective pitcher. If he takes his game on the bump to the next level, in addition to supplying some average to above average offense, than the Rays will be right there at the end once again.

Bold Predictions...

♦ Captain Paul Castellano will have a chance for the batting triple crown entering his team's final game of 2014. In a neck-to-neck race with SWBL Cardinals' Sam Skibbe, Castellano will fall just short in the home run department, as Skibbe launches seven home runs in his final regular season game against the dreadful SWBL Pirates pitching.

Will Rath



Projected 2014 Finish: 7-3, 2nd AL

4. Cardinals



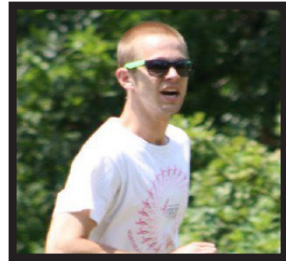
For Starters...

♦ Year in and year out, the Cardinals seem to have the top collection of talent on their squad. However, Hall of Famers Sam Skibbe and Brett Spencer have failed to claim a SWBL Championship since 2010 and 2008 respectively. The Cardinals have arguably the top hitter in Sam and top pitcher in Brett, but can't put it all together throughout the season. Will my lowered expectations on them provide a stellar 2014 season?

Player To Watch...

♦ Captain and SWBL league founder, Sam Skibbe, is perhaps one of the greatest wiffle ball players in the country. Last year, the veteran put up absurd numbers as he claimed both the HR and RBI crowns. However, Skibbe's pitching has taken a tumble for God knows what reason as of late. If he can be a solid No. 2 man in the rotation behind back-to-back Cy Young Winner Brett Spencer, the Cardinals could rise to the top.

Sam Skibbe



Brett Spencer



Key To Success...

♦ Similar to the blurb above concerning his teammate Sam Skibbe, Brett Spencer must find a way to once again become a two-way player this season. Spencer finished in the middle of the pack in last year's HR and RBI rankings, despite holding an impressive .733 batting average. The Cardinals need both Skibbe and Spencer performing on all cylinders, both on the bump and at the plate.

Bold Predictions...

♦ The Cardinals slip into the playoffs, despite their .500 record and give the NL leading and undefeated Brewers all they can handle in the semifinals. Brett Spencer will pick up an incredible third consecutive Cy Young Award, as he rides the "Top Gun" over the course of Memorial Day Weekend.

Nick Lape



Projected 2014 Finish: 5-5, 2nd NL

5. Rockies



For Starters...

♦ When you mention the SWBL Rockies, the first thing that comes to mind has to be back-to-back MVP winner, Blake Spencer. When the season concluded last summer, Spencer finished with an outstanding batting line of .772 / 34 / 63. Despite possessing the league's MVP, the Rockies only came away with a 6-4 record in 2013. Teammates Grant Boyd and Brian Kenney will be looked upon in order for improvement in 2014.

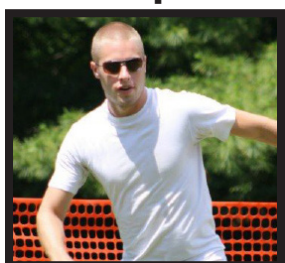
Player To Watch...

♦ While Spencer is a lock for big numbers and Brian Kenney posted a sneaky solid season in 2013, Grant Boyd will be asked to pick up his production at the plate in order for the Rockies to have a big year. Boyd is a rare left-handed hitter in the SWBL, which should mean a bevy of home runs to the short porch in right field. However, the lefty only managed 18 HR and 39 RBI at the dish. If Boyd can produce 20-25 HR, expect an additional win or two for the Rockies.

Grant Boyd



Blake Spencer



Key To Success...

♦ Captain Blake Spencer without a doubt has to have another MVP caliber type season at the plate. If he even falls to the edge of the top-10 in the major hitting categories, the Rockies could be in severe trouble. The team's pitching gave up the 4th most runs last season, so a slight improvement in that category could also help their fortunes this summer.

Bold Predictions...

♦ Spencer finally has to give up his MVP trophy, after falling in the rankings of every major hitting category. Despite the "off year" Spencer will still finish among the league leaders in the before mentioned statistics. At the end of the day, Spencer will be too hindered by his mass array of "mysterious injuries" and bugs attacking him in the field.

Brian Kenney



Projected 2014 Finish: 4-6, 3rd NL

SWBL

est.2003

6. Pirates



For Starters...

♦ Captain Andy Oldenburg is making his return to the league, after missing out last summer due to being stuck in Reno, Nevada. Oldenburg will be joined by teammates Grant Steward and newcomer John Marcanik. The last time Oldenburg and his crew got together in Skibbe's backyard, they proved to be the "Worst Wiffle Ball Team in America"

Player To Watch...

♦ Rookie John Marcanik joins the Pirates, as the temptation of beer and wiffle ball for an entire weekend was too hard to pass up. Marcanik brings a solid all-around set of skills to the Pirates, as God knows this team needs anything they can get. The first-year SWBL player will be mainly needed for his pitching abilities, as the Pirates continue to struggle on the mound each and every season.

John Marcanik



Andy Oldenburg



Key To Success...

♦ Savvy veterans Andy Oldenburg and Grant Steward must carry the load in order for the Pirates to pick up some wins in 2014. Both players are capable of being in the middle to upper tier of each major hitting category, but their age and likely day long drinking habits might get the best of them. If even one of the two can become an upper echelon hitter, the Pirates could steal a win by out-slugging their opponent.

Bold Predictions...

♦ While most predict another 0-10 season for the Pirates, the team surprises with the franchise's first two wins which includes W's over the Royals and Athletics. After a celebratory dogpile on the pitchers mound concluding their first win, the team will hop in a car and celebrate even further at the French Quarter.

Grant Steward



Projected 2014 Finish: 2-8, 4th NL

****Head-to-head tie-breaker over the Royals****

7. Royals



For Starters...

♦ Captain Gus Skibbe, perhaps the most underrated player in league history, looks for a rebound year with the Royals after a disappointing 4-6 record in 2013. The Royals put up a solid 147 runs last summer, but also gave up the exact number of runs while on the mound. Skibbe will need teammate Edloe Donnan to become a better run producer if the Royals want to contend for a playoff spot this upcoming Memorial Day weekend.

Player To Watch...

♦ After a 2012 AL All-Star campaign, Edloe Donnan took a dive in all three major batting categories in 2013. No one knows what caused the dropoff, but if the Royals want to return to glory, they must get another All-Star caliber year from Donnan. If the lanky righty can post 25-30 HR with a .700 or better AVG., the Royals could be in business.

Edloe Donnan



Gus Skibbe



Key To Success...

♦ Skibbe and Donnan should once again lead the offensive firepower for the Royals, but the question is if they can find a third party for their attack. Spencer Bogad joins the team after missing out in last summer's action, and he is a safe pick to fill the current void on the Royals roster. Skibbe will also need a counterpart on the bump, as a one man pitching show won't cut it in this league. Who steps up on the hill for the Royals?

Bold Predictions...

♦ Skibbe joins his brother, Sam, in talks for the 2014 MVP Award after delivering a big year at the plate. Despite the stellar year from Gus, his teammates will ultimately let him down as they suffer a disappointing 2-8 season. A ugly feud between the team results in the ultimate break-up of the Royals, as Gus becomes the most sought after free agent in league history.

Spencer Bogad



Projected 2014 Finish: 2-8, 3rd AL

8. Athletics



For Starters...

♦ The Athletics franchise joined the SWBL last summer for the first time, and finished in last place in the American League. Scoring runs proved to be difficult for the A's, as their mark of 113 ranked last in the AL and 7th out of 8th in the entire league. Captain Alex Heck will look to gather the troops in hopes for a nice bounceback year in the SWBL.

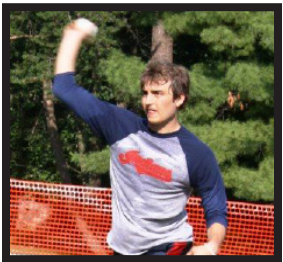
Player To Watch...

♦ Despite the frustrating start to the team's SWBL history, Luke Bakula provided a bright spot after finishing with a .625 / 28 / 51 batting line. The Athletics will need Bakula to serve as the team's power hitter once again in 2014. If teammates Alex Heck and Raymond McGrew can get on base in front of him, the RBI total could skyrocket for Bakula and help give the team a couple unexpected wins.

Luke Bakula



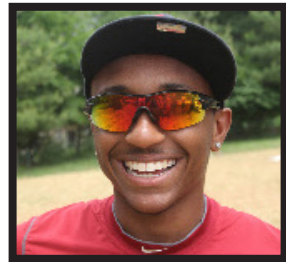
Alex Heck



Key To Success...

♦ Captain Alex Heck makes his return to the SWBL this summer, similar to the Pirates' Andy Oldenburg and Royals' Spencer Bogad. All three players will be looked upon for key contributions to their respective teams. In Heck's last season (2012), he ranked towards the bottom in every major hitting category. If he can move his way up towards the middle of the pack in .AVG, HR and RBI, then the A's could have something in 2014.

Ray McGrew



Bold Predictions...

♦ Alex Heck, Luke Bakula and Raymond McGrew will serve as the team's "Big 3" all weekend long and each produce surprisingly strong numbers at the plate. At the end of the day however, their subpar pitching will prove costly as they will drop numerous late-inning heartbreakers to their AL rivals.

Projected 2014 Finish: 1-9, 4th AL