

2017 Preseason Power Rankings:

Overall Rank. Team (League Rank)

1. Royals (Sandbar 1) – The SWBL #1 preseason curse this year is on the Royals. Many have said that if there was any team that could break that curse, this roster could be it. The Royals had a headlining offseason with the acquisition of Tyler Flakne from the 2016 Champion, Phillies (now the Twins), in a three-team trade that sent their #4 hitter, Paul Castellano to the Athletics. Paul's power will be missed, but Tyler looks to fill that void in his second season in the SWBL after winning the Rookie of the Year in Season 14. Sam is the reigning CY Wiffle winner and he and Gus will hold down the rotation again, with Ty Butler and Flakne both waiting in the wings for relief if needed, to create probably the most pitching depth we have seen from top to bottom. For this team to stay at #1 and break the curse, Ty Butler needs to bounce back from a down year in 2016, Flakne needs to avoid the proverbial "Sophomore Slump", and the Skibbe's just need to stay consistent. If all of that happens the Royals might finally win their first playoff game in franchise history.

2. Twins (Glendale 1) – The Twins, formerly the Phillies, are the reigning SWBL Champs. They traded away 2016 Rookie of the Year Tyler Flakne, who was clutch for them in the playoffs, but bring back Derek Thompson who is arguably one of the most clutch playoff hitters in SWBL history. Reigning MVP, Spencer Bogad is coming off a historic season and Chris Meador continues to dominate at the top of the order and in left. Edloe had yet another great even-year season, but looks to have a down year in 2017, per his career pattern. The Twins biggest issue in 2016 was pitching and they went out and got Derek from Free Agency and Will Rath from the Yankees to fill the void. They are poised to strike big again in Season 15 with perennial playoff winner, Chris Meador, along with Spencer Bogad, who is becoming one of the best two-way players in the country.

3. Rockies (Sportsbarn 1) – As the most successful regular season team in SWBL history, the Rockies are always contenders for a Championship run. Blake and crew continue to stay consistently successful in every aspect of the game. They are one of the few teams that bats five, and just when you think there is a hole in their lineup, that person will beat you with five home runs in a game. Brian Kenney is one of the best leadoff hitters and left fielders in the league, and Breda/Boyd can change the game at any time on either side of the ball. The Spencers are, and always will be top players in this league, and with the new pitching rules, this team looks to capitalize the most on the patience of some opposing players. Expect this team to be in the top three of the power rankings all weekend long and don't be surprised when BK makes the last out in the Championship game as the Rockies celebrate their second championship in the Franchise Era.

4. Brewers (Sportsbarn 2) – The only thing standing in the Rockies way of winning yet another regular season division title, is the Brew Crew. The Brewers are one of the two most up and down teams in SWBL history. They can beat the best team in the morning, then turn around and lose to a mediocre team in the afternoon. Captain Peter Leicht, who has always been known for his consistent big numbers at the plate, had an unusual down year in 2016, which he is not expected to repeat. Kyle had one of the best years of his career and PG continues to stay in great form. The fourth spot on this team is always the trouble spot. Between Stout, Olderman, Doerries, and rookie, Curran Collins, hopefully the Brewers can find some much needed production from the fourth spot in their lineup. For this team to pull off a deep playoff run and capture all of their first SWBL titles in their careers, Peter has to return to form and Kyle has to repeat his MVP numbers from last season. If that happens, this team will be hard to stop.

5. Yankees (Glendale 2) – The other up and down team in the SWBL, and the team that probably takes the cake, has to be the Yankees. Talk about inconsistent...this team has one of the league's best offenses on one day, then the worst offense on the next. They missed the playoffs in 2016 due to the A's magical run, but look to return full force to their Season 9 Championship form. Scott Pohle is one of the league's best players, with more power potential than anyone. John Calloway and Sam Bakula might be two of the streakiest players in the SWBL, but when on, can destroy teams with unrelenting power-pounding offense. Kevin Pohle had a lackluster return in 2016, but can only get better in Season 15. But the success of this team might ultimately fall on the shoulders of preseason CY Wiffle favorite, Jackson Crosley. Jackson is coming off of an incredible appearance at the NWLA Tournament and has more confidence on the mound than anyone. His arm could be the reason, the Yankees' recent woes come to an abrupt and glorious end.

6. Athletics (Sandbar 2) – Well they finally did it, in 2016 the A's #shockedtheworld. This team was broken-hearted with how close they were to the SWBL title and a Sam Bakula butt tattoo. Alex continues to get better every year, and is one of the best captains in the league, leading the Athletics to a Franchise of the Year title in Season 14. Steve Hays is a monster on both sides of the ball and is becoming a superstar in the SWBL. Mike Karl has been a strong addition as well, but the big news in A's camp this offseason is the loss of big bat, Luke Bakula. But what does Alex do? He goes out and trades for former Royal's slugger, Paul Castellano. Stealing him from a division rival will be huge for the A's in 2017. Paul is always atop the Home Run Leaders and will provide some pop to this lineup with Luke gone from the roster. Rookie, Braden Sikes could be a sleeper if Alex has plans for him, but if not, this team should still be in the hunt come Monday as the A's look to get back to the playoffs for the second year in a row.

7. Astros (Sandbar 3) – Bryan Benware was busy this offseason and got a little creative with his roster. Eight Astros will grace the SWBL field this Memorial Day as Bryan looks to move quickly through the rebuilding phase and sign some experience. Bryan returns Matt Rosener, Cam Branson, and fan-favorite, Rob Walters to keep the core in tact for the Astros, but drafts four rookies to hopefully make an impact on the future of this franchise. Jeremy Worrell, son of St. Louis Cardinals pitcher, Todd Worrell, joins the Astros and reminds the league of Nick Lape; a monster who can hit the ball a mile. The other three rookies all hail from Pennsylvania and with more experience than the rest of their team, are anything but wiffleball rookies. Zach Artim, Mark Belles, and Justin Gober will get their chances to help this franchise, and will be great personalities to have during the weekend. Ultimately, this team might be a season or two away from a playoff run, but could play spoiler to many teams that overlook, and take them lightly.

8. Diamondbax (Glendale 3) – The D-Bax are the newest expansion franchise to the SWBL. National wiffle-treasure, Trent Steffes has quickly become a great friend to the league and was an easy fit to take over the newest team for Season 15's expansion to nine teams. This is the most unknown team headed into 2017. While many have seen them at the NWLA Tournament, in this league they could either live up to the #8 preseason ranking, or surprise some teams and easily make the playoffs in their first season in the league. Alongside Trent will be Minnesota rookies: "Handsome" Mat, Devin Nelson, Andrew Lindor, and brother Auston Steffes. The biggest get though, has to be, Rookie of the Year favorite, Jimmy Cole. Cole is known as one of the most diehard wiffers in the country; up there with fellow rookie Zach Artim and SWBL MVP, Spencer Bogad. Cole can hit the snot out of the ball and is a good pitcher too, but with his recent Tommy-John surgery, who knows how much time he will get on the mound. We welcome the D-Bax to the SWBL in Season 15!

9. Expos (Sportsbarn 3) – Last and certainly least is the SWBL Expos franchise. Not sure there is much they have done or can do, although the rumor is they have some sweet bucket hats for Season 15. The only semi-offseason move that they made was making sure to keep Evan Close, who will indeed help them, but it will still not be enough. John Leicht had a down year after winning Comeback Player of the Year in 2015, but if he returns back to form, this team will have a better chance. Kevin continues to get better on the mound, throwing a shutout last season and even hit his first home run in many seasons. Jimmy Nelson also provides a workhorse on the mound and has become a cornerstone for the franchise. They drafted Dylan Bannecke who has some SWBL experience, playing in one game with the Rockies in 2015. Even if everything goes right for the Expos, the league thinks their ceiling is still just one win, in the annual toilet bowl. While we hope no team goes 0-10 during Season 15, this team is the preseason favorite to do just that.

Good luck to all teams in Season 15.

Happy Wifflin'!