



Former Vegas Star Shining for Mets

By Dave Lukow

Jeff McNeil is making the most of his shot.

The second baseman for the New York Mets, McNeil has played in 44 games since being recalled from Las Vegas of the Pacific Coast League (PCL). He's batting .340 with 23 runs, eight doubles, four triples, two home runs and 14 RBIs. Born in Santa Barbara, Calif., McNeil has walked 10 times and has four stolen bases.

In 31 games with the 51s, he hit .368 with 23 runs, 10 doubles, five homers, 28 RBIs and 14 walks. He began the season with Binghamton of the Eastern League (Double-A).

The Mets (65-77) won't be going to the playoffs, but the team has impressed lately. New York, managed by Mickey Callaway, is 7-3 in its last 10 games. In his first season guiding the Mets, Callaway was pitching coach for the Cleveland Indians from 2013 to 2017.

Pitcher Drew Smith, who also spent part of this season with the 51s, has been a reliable reliever for New York. In 19 games, he's 1-0 with a 2.11 ERA. He has 14 strikeouts in 21.1 innings.

Smith made 23 appearances for Las Vegas, finishing 5-1 with two saves. The Texas native fanned 30 batters in 32.2 innings. Like McNeil, he started the year in Binghamton.

Corey Oswalt, a 6-foot-5 pitcher, has started nine games for the Mets. He's 3-2 with 34 strikeouts in 53 innings.

Oswalt was 4-4 with 52 strikeouts in 11 starts for the 51s. From San Diego, he was drafted in the seventh round in 2012.

The 51s went 71-69 in 2018, which was good for third in the Pacific Southern. Las Vegas was 38-32 at home. Salt Lake (71-68) was second in the division, while El Paso (82-57) took first. Albuquerque, an affiliate of the Colorado Rockies, finished 63-77.

Memphis, the top farm club of the St. Louis Cardinals, had the best record in the PCL, going 83-57 during the regular season.