

UTAH PIONEERS



2024 Instructions

Introduction

Welcome to playing against the 2024 **Utah Pioneers**. Last year, Utah fell short of its goal to be a .500 ballclub, finishing 40-50. This year, Utah tried to rebuild its offense in the new draft format, and is projected to be on the bubble as to whether it will make the playoffs with one of the top 5 records in the PCL. Hitting has improved compared to the 2023 roster, and Utah pitching is heavily focused on keeping the ball in the park, with numerous arms capable of inducing the groundball. Lots of LH arms on the pitching staff, with three very average LH starters, and two LH bullpen relievers with WHIPs less than 1.0. Utah 2024 is one of my best fielding teams ever, with “1” fielders starting at C, 2B, 3B, CF, and RF.

Path to the Playoffs

The Pioneers seek to win by outscoring opponents. I believe Utah will be in the top 3 in PCL hitting average, OBP, and runs scored. I think we will be amongst the leaders in DPs made, and least errors made. Pitching ERA will be in the lower worst third of the league, although I do think our HRs allowed will be somewhere around the league average. Utah ball produces victories in the form of a 7-5 win, and likely will average more runs scored when playing home games at the hitter friendly bandbox called the **Sandy Sandlot**. I think we have enough talent to get close to 47-49 wins.

2024 Active Roster

Hitters (N=14)			Pitchers (N=11)		
2024	Brandon Belt*	1B Starter vs. RH		ROTATION	
2026	Alex Bregman	3B Starter vs. RH	2026	Bryce Elder	20 Starts
2027	Travis d’Arnaud	C Back-up; PH vs. LH	2025	Jesus Luzardo*	20 Starts
2026	Michael Harris*	RF Starter	2026	Nick Martinez	16 Starts (7 inn max)
2024	Nico Hoerner	2B Starter	2027	Andrew Abbott*	18 Starts (6 inn max)
2026	J-Rod (Rodriguez)	CF Starter	2027	Jose Quintana*	12 Starts (6 inn max)
2027	Matt McLain	SS Starter		BULLPEN	
2025	Joey Meneses	1B Starter vs. LH; Ω PH	2027	Jake Junis	4 Starts (6 inn max); Early/Middle Relief
2027	Mickey Moniak*	LF Starter vs. RH	2027	Tom Cosgrove*	Closer Committee Member
2027	Sean Murphy	C Starter	2027	Hoby Milner*	Closer Committee; Specialist vs. LH
2027	Johan Rojas	Ω PH; PR; Defense in LF	2027	Bryse Wilson	Closer Committee; Specialist vs. RH
2027	Corey Seager*	DH Starter; Back-up SS	2027	Raisel Iglesias	Set-up role in 7 th -8 th inning vs. LH/RH
2027	Austin Slater	LF Starter vs. LH	2027	George Soriano	Set-up role in 7 th -8 th inning vs. RH
2025	Donovan Solano	3B Starter vs. LH; PH			

Minors

Alex Vesia	2025	Joey Bart	2027
Cristian Pache	2027	Miguel Amaya	2027
Jose Azocar	2027	AJ Minter	Wish I coulda woulda

Overview

The OF is talented with **J-Rod (CF)**, **Harris (RF)**, and a **(LF)** platoon of **Moniak (vs. RH)** and **Slater (vs. LH)**. **Johan Rojas** is a great clutch PH, can be slotted in to pinch hit (ideally with two outs, and a runner in scoring position) and can stay in late for defense. **Sorry, this year I only have 5 OFs** ☹️. Pioneers are solid defensively up the middle with **McLain (SS)** and **Hoerner (2B)**. Utah Pioneer starting pitching is below average, but they keep the ball in the park (aggregate card values are: 1 HR per 8.8 innings). The Pioneer bullpen is better with **Milner** and **Cosgrove** having WHIPs below 1.0; the entire bullpen WHIP average is 1.14, with aggregate 1 HR per 9.2 innings. As a team, Utah pitching cards have the highest DP percentages in the PCL. Your team will get base runners on, but with high DP loadings and excellent infield defense (“1’s” at C; 2B; 3B;&”2”: at 2B), I'm hopeful Utah turns 2-3 DPs per game.



Starting Line-ups

Lineup 1 vs. LH (want to bat LH)		Lineup 2 vs. LH (Standard Lineup)		Lineup 3 vs. RH (want to bat LH)		Lineup 4 vs. RH (Standard Lineup)		Lineup 5, vs. R N/A	
RF	Harris	SS	McLain	LF/RF	Moniak (1) /Harris	2B	Hoerner		
SS	McLain	RF	Harris*	DH	Seager	DH	Seager		
CF	J-Rod	CF	J-Rod	LF/RF	Moniak (1) /Harris	2B	McLain		
DH	Seager	DH	Seager	2B	McLain	LF	Moniak		
2B	Hoerner	2B	Hoerner	CF	J-Rod	CF	J-Rod		
1B	Meneses	1B	Meneses	1B	Belt	RF	Harris		
3B	Solano	3B	Solano	2B	Hoerner	3B	Bregman		
LF	Slater	LF	Slater	3B	Bregman	1B	Belt		
C	Murphy	C	Murphy	C	Murphy	C	Murphy		
Use this line-up vs. any starter with a $\geq 2R$ rating.		Use this line-up vs. any starter with a 1R, E, or any $\geq 1L$ rating.		Use this line-up vs. any starter with a $\geq 2R$ rating. Moniak leads off vs: any starting pitcher & catcher hold rating of +2		Use this line-up vs. any starting pitcher with a $\leq 1R$, E or any $\geq 1L$ rating			

Key: (1) Moniak leads off when your pitcher/catcher hold rating has a net addition of +2 or higher (i.e., a starter with a +4 hold pitching to a catcher with a 0 arm rating, will net +2 when holding the runner on). Otherwise, it's Harris batting first.

Additional Notes on Lineups & Guidelines on Positions

- **Catcher: Murphy** is the workhorse and plays every inning unless injured. In a close game where Utah is tied, or down a run, I can see using a PR (**Rojas**) for him to get a runner in scoring position, inserting **d'Arnaud** late.
- **First Base:** A platoon. **Belt** starts vs. RH (never bats vs LH pitching), and **Meneses** vs. LH, with **Solano** vs. RH/LH late if needed (use compare feature)
- **Second Base: Hoerner** starts and stays in the entire game, with **McLain** as back-up, or **Solano** in a pinch
- **Shortstop: McLain** starts and stays in the entire game, with **Seager** as back-up; and **Hoerner** can swing over if there's an injury to either of the top two
- **Third Base:** A platoon. **Bregman** starts vs. RH (try to avoid batting vs LH pitching unless we are winning late, and his defense is needed). **Solano** vs. LH pitching. Insert **Bregman** late for defense if available.
- **Right Field: Harris** is the workhorse and plays almost every inning unless injured. Note, that he is an awful clutch hitter, so consider PH for him with **Meneses** (+12 clutch) or **Rojas** (+6 clutch) in a close game late.
- **Center Field: J-Rod** is the workhorse and plays every inning unless injured.
- **Left Field:** A platoon. **Moniak** starts vs. RH pitching (never bats vs. LH pitching). **Slater** starts vs. LH pitching (never bats vs. RH pitching). **Rojas** (clutch hitter) can be inserted if there's a pitching change and/or late for defense, or consider using him for a PR, or as a PH for other position players late and double switch...insert to get his glove into the game late
- **DH: Seager** is the DH always. **Solano** is used if **Seager** or **McLain** gets hurt (where **Seager** is the SS)

WHEN YOUR LEFTY STARTER EXITS THE GAME REPLACED BY A RIGHTY

Use **compare feature** with all platoon players (i.e., **Meneses** (1B); **Solano** (3B); **Slater** (LF)) when a RH pitcher enters the game. **Belt** can PH for **Meneses**, **Bregman** for **Solano**, and **Moniak** for **Slater**. I like to stay aggressive with match-ups, knowing that late in the game my aggressiveness may result in a less desirable match up (i.e., **Belt** vs. a LH pitcher). Go with the best match-ups starting early, and continue this approach for the remainder of the game. Utah wins by trying to outscore its opponents...offense pedal to the metal mantra.

WHEN YOUR RIGHTY STARTER EXITS THE GAME REPLACED BY A LEFTY

Use **compare feature** with all platoon players: 1) **Moniak** (LF), replace with either **Slater** (early ≤ 6th inning) or **Rojas** (late ≥ 7th inning); 2) **Belt** (1B) replace with **Meneses**, and he can finish the game; and 3) **Bregman** (3B) with **Solano** if we are losing...but, keep him in for his defense should we be winning. I realize that if you flip LH & RH pitching back and forth, that may put UTP at a disadvantage later in the game. So be it. Start and Stay Aggressive.

IF UTP IS WINNING GOING INTO THE 8TH or 9TH: Bring in the best defense available for those position players not likely to bat in the 8th or 9th inning and then assess again in the 9th.

Double-Switching

I like the double-switch. Situations include when bringing new players in for defense in the 8th or 9th. If in a close game (+/- 3 runs), and **Harris** (very anti-(Ω)) is at bat with 2 out with a runner in scoring position, **Meneses** or **Rojas** could pinch hit for him, with **Meneses** finishing out the game at 1B, and **Rojas** in LF, or replacing **Harris** in RF, with **Slater** coming in at LF. I like to see box scores where most of my bench players got involved... would be nice to know most earned that post-game ice cream cone.

Defense Matrix – Best Defense in Bold – Look to use in the 8th inning onward with a lead

C	1B	2B	SS	3B	LF	CF	RF
Murphy	Meneses	Hoerner	McLain	Bregman	Rojas	J-Rod	Harris
D’Arnaud	Belt	McLain	Hoerner	Solano	Slater	Harris	J-Rod
	Solano	Solano	Seager		Moniak	Rojas/Slater	Rojas/Slater

1B	Belt starts vs. RH, and does NOT face LH pitching; Meneses starts vs. LH, slightly better defensively; Solano is next up
2B	Hoerner starts both ways; McLain slides over to 2B if Hoerner is hurt; Solano is 3 rd on depth chart
SS	McLain starts both ways, with Seager moving from DH to SS should McLain get hurt; Hoerner is option #3 at SS
3B	Bregman starts vs. RH, and Solano starts vs LH pitching; Bregman stays in if Utah is winning late (≥ 8 th inning)
RF	Harris always starts in RF with his -3 arm, and starts both ways; J-Rod slides over should Harris get injured
CF	J-Rod always starts in CF, with Slater/Rojas as back-up
LF	Moniak starts vs. RH, and Slater starts vs LH pitching, with Rojas typically as PH/PR and finishing each game late
C	Murphy is the workhorse, with d’Arnaud as back-up (and mostly used as a PH vs. LH pitching)
DH	Seager is the workhorse, with Solano as the back-up DH, followed by Rojas if there’s multiple injuries to starters.

MISCELLANEOUS

Pinch hitting / Pinch running

Pinch Hit Guidelines: Use **compare feature**. PHs better in the clutch include: **Meneses; Rojas** (Ω)

Pinch Run: Many of the 2024 Utah starters can run. **Rojas** (1-16) and **Slater** (1-13) can PR. **Rojas** (if available) can PR in extra innings (insert as PR at 2B) for anyone who’s speed is less than 1-16.

Game Strategies

Typical stealing decisions: Steal 2nd at 70%; and then at 65% at the bottom 1/3 of the order, and 60% if there are 2 outs and a clutch hitter (Ω) is batting. **Harris, Hoerner, McLain, Moniak, J-Rod, and Rojas** all have the **green light** to steal...**even when I am behind**. Be aggressive, like Bob or Ken at a bar during their college days. For all the above, try to get the lead and steal 3rd at 75%. **Slater** gets the lead about 30% of the time, and gets picked off 8%. As Eastwood would ask, “Do you feel lucky, eh punk?” Maybe try to steal second with **Slater** if the man at bat has lots of S** on his card, or is better in the clutch (two outs), and the game is tied late.

Who to H&R and when: Nope, never with the 2024 Pioneers.

Sacrifice: Like land-lines, this isn’t used anymore. Only **Rojas** is an “A” bunter. Maybe an option late or in extra innings when your closer ace is on the mound and the winning runner can be advanced to 2nd or 3rd base.

Squeeze Plays: Like the paper version of the road atlas, this isn’t used much anymore. You could try with **Rojas** vs. your stud closer, and the tying or winning run is on 3rd? Your judgement call.

Scoring: Run home at 65% with one out or less; 45% with two outs; 30% with two outs and a weak hitter is batting next. If UTP is trailing by more than three runs after the 5th, take a more conservative approach (add +5%) in running to home with less than two outs.

Runners / Trailers: To second at 50%+, but to third at 70%+. Otherwise, send a lower percentage trailer only when we are down by a run or tied, from the 7th inning on.

Throwing Guidelines: Cut the throw off from the outfield early in the game unless runner is heading home with a safe chance at 55% or less. Let the throw through even if the runner is as high as 65% with two outs and the 8th or 9th hitter is due up.

Defense: Always get the sure out on Defense Option plays, unless runner represents the go-ahead run and his safe chance is less than 35%. Same with the trailing runners.

Intentional Walks: Use your best judgment. I do not like being too aggressive with this – but there are guys/situations...(i.e., **Ohtani**) ...or similar stud-types (OPS > 1.0) up to bat, and the winning run is presently on 2nd, I'd walk him. With the winning run on 2nd, and two outs, I'd rather pitch to the weakest clutch hitter (i.e., walk the current batter, who, in the clutch hits .270, to get to the next batter with a clutch average of .250).

Utah's Fielding Late in Game: If Utah has the lead, heading into the 8th or 9th, cross-check to see if any remaining players on the bench can be inserted. I like to always PH/PR **Rojas** (good (Ω)) and get him into the game in LF late. **Slater** is also solid in the OF. **Bregman** can replace **Solano** at 3B... **Meneses** is slightly better than **Belt** at 1B.



Starts: Elder (20 starts); Luzardo (20 starts); Martinez (16 starts); Abbott (18 starts); Quintana (12 starts); Junis (4 starts)

On the Road Pitching Rotation Road Games in the WEST LOOK HERE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Team	Game 1	Game 2	Game 3
Bay Area	Quintana (1)	Elder (1)	Martinez (1)
Pebble Beach	Martinez (2)	Elder (2)	Luzardo (1)
Santa Barbara	Junis (1)	Elder (3)	Martinez (3)
Southern Cal	Luzardo (2)	Quintana (2)	Abbott (1)

On the Road Pitching Rotation Road Games in the CENTRAL LOOK HERE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Team	Game 1	Game 2	Game 3
Cabo Del Sol	Martinez (4)	Elder (4)	Luzardo (3)
Oxnard BBs	Martinez (5)	Luzardo (4)	Abbott (2)
Las Vegas	Junis (2)	Elder (5)	Abbott (3)

On the Road Pitching Rotation Road Games in the EAST LOOK HERE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Team	Game 1	Game 2	Game 3
Augusta	Abbott (4)	Luzardo (5)	Elder (6)
Chicago	Martinez (6)	Elder (7)	Luzardo (6)
St. Louis	Junis (3)	Elder (8)	Martinez (7)
Virginia Beach	Junis (4)	Luzardo (7)	Abbott (5)

On the Road Pitching Rotation Road Games in the CENTRAL LOOK HERE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Team	Game 1	Game 2	Game 3	Game 4
Cabo Del Sol	Luzardo (8)	Elder (9)	Abbott (6)	Martinez (8)
Oxnard BBs	Martinez (9)	Luzardo (9)	Elder (10)	Abbott (7)
Las Vegas	Quintana (3)	Luzardo (10)	Martinez (10)	Abbott (8)



HOME GAMES Pitching Rotation

HOME Games vs. the WEST

Team	Game 1	Game 2	Game 3
Bay Area	Quintana (4)	Martinez (11)	Abbott (9)
Pebble Beach	Luzardo (11)	Elder (11)	Martinez (11)
Santa Barbara	Quintana (5)	Luzardo (1)	Martinez (13)
Southern Cal	Quintana (6)	Luzardo (1)	Abbott (10)

HOME GAMES Pitching Rotation

HOME Games vs. the CENTRAL

Team	Game 1	Game 2	Game 3
Cabo Del Sol	Luzardo (14)	Elder (12)	Abbott (11)
Oxnard BBS	Quintana (7)	Luzardo (15)	Abbott (12)
Las Vegas	Abbott (13)	Elder (13)	Martinez (14)

HOME GAMES Pitching Rotation

HOME Games vs. the EAST

Team	Game 1	Game 2	Game 3
Augusta	Quintana (8)	Elder (4)	Martinez (15)
Chicago	Quintana (9)	Elder (15)	Luzardo (16)
St. Louis	Luzardo (17)	Elder (16)	Abbott (14)
Virginia Beach	Quintana (10)	Elder (17)	Abbott (15)

HOME GAMES Pitching Rotation

HOME Games vs. the CENTRAL

Team	Game 1	Game 2	Game 3	Game 4
Cabo Del Sol	Martinez (16)	Luzardo (18)	Elder (18)	Abbott (16)
Oxnard BBS	Quintana (11)	Elder (19)	Luzardo (19)	Abbott (17)
Las Vegas	Quintana(12)	Elder (20)	Luzardo (20)	Abbott (18)

Managing the Starters

This year, I have three starters in **Elder**, **Luzardo***, and **Martinez** all of who would likely be the 3rd best starter on most teams. **Abbott*** is not so good, and **Quintana****'s best attributes are low HR probabilities, and high DP percentages. The hope for most of Utah's starters is they will keep the ball in the park, induce the DP, and hand the ball over to a better bullpen.

Starting Pitcher Overview

Bryce Elder 175 IP 20 Starts	Pretty balanced card, and very capable of getting the DP. For most clubs, he's a #3 quality starter. For Utah, he's my best starter. He should pitch until he gets into dots; and can be lifted in the 7 th or 8 th inning for a better relief pitcher.
Jesus Luzardo* 179 IP 20 Starts	Strong vs. LH, and decent vs. RH hitting. Also able to induce the GB with high DP probabilities. For most clubs, he's a #3 quality starter, and falls into my #2 starter slot. He should pitch until he gets into dots, and can be lifted in the 7 th or 8 th inning for a better relief pitcher.
Nick Martinez 110 IP 16 Starts MAX of 7 Innings	Like most righties, he's better against RH hitting, but not terrible vs. LH hitting. I have him starting 16 times, which will allow him to go a maximum of 7 innings per start. He should pitch until he gets into dots, and/or can be replaced after the 7 th .
Andrew Abbott* 109 IP 18 Starts MAX of 6 Innings	Lights out vs. LH hitting, but a bit wild vs. RH hitting. He should be sent to the showers after giving up 4 runs, or when he goes into dots.... whichever comes first. Junis can come in early if he doesn't last until the 6 th . Never pitches in the 7 th . He's my worst pitcher, and would not be on most PCL squads.
Jose Quintana* 76 IP 12 Starts MAX of 6 Innings	Yep, another lefty starter. Better vs. LH hitting. Keeps the ball in the park, and has a high DP rating. I suspect there will be baserunners, but hopeful he'll get out of jams. Pulled when he gets into dots, or gives up 4 runs...whichever comes first. Pitches a maximum of 6 innings.
Jake Junis 86 IP	Spot starter in a few 3-game series. Pretty balanced card, perhaps slightly better vs. LH hitting. Will try to start him in the bigger parks in the league. Pulled when he gets into

4 Starts MAX of 6 Innings	dots, or gives up 4 runs...whichever comes first. Pitches a maximum of 6 innings.
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Managing the Bullpen (Close Game = +/- 3 runs)

Three Batter Minimum Rule: This year, UTP's bullpen is decent. When reviewing who the next three batters are... Early in the game (innings 5-6 or sooner), **Junis** is the first to come out of the bullpen when Utah is getting smoked, and can stay in to mop up should Utah be down 5+ runs. Starting in the 6th and into the 8th inning, **Wilson** vs. $\geq 50\%$ RH; **Soriano** vs. $\geq 50\%$ RH; or **Milner*** vs. $\geq 50\%$ LH. **Iglesias** is the primary set-up guy pitching in the 7th and 8th inning. Late in the game (innings 8-9) I like **Cosgrove*** as the closer vs both RH and LH, with **Milner*** if $> 50\%$ LH or **Wilson** if $> 50\%$ RH as back up closers.

Relief Pitchers' Roles

Closers (8th and 9th innings)	Cosgrove* (51 IP) is the primary closer, with the following pitchers as my back-up closers: Milner* (64 IP) if the first three batters are $> 50\%$ LH or Wilson (77 IP) if the first three batters are $> 50\%$ RH.
High Leverage Situations in Close Games (to get one to three outs with you having runners in scoring positions in a tight game).	Wilson (77 IP) is best if you have a couple of RH batters, and Milner* (64 IP) is best when there's a couple LH batters.
Primary Set-up Pitchers (as early as the 6 th but mostly the 7 th & 8 th innings)	Use compare feature to select Iglesias (56 IP), Wilson (77 IP) or Milner (64 IP) in the tight games. Soriano (52 IP) can pitch an inning as a 3 rd option, when we are up or down 5 runs.
Specialist vs. LH Hitters	Late in the game (7 th -9 th), it's Milner (64 IP).
Specialist vs. RH Hitters	Use compare feature for Wilson (77 IP) or Soriano (52 IP) when your line-up is $\geq 50\%$ RH. Iglesia (56 IP) is also useful for a RH dominant line-up.
Long or Early Relief (mop-up)	This job falls on Junis (86 IP) who can pitch multiple innings in a blow-out ($> +/- 5$ runs); Note that he starts 4 games, so don't double dip.
Very Rare Events	Too rare to think of anything here.

Usage Concerns: None

