

Nationals Spring Training

By Barry Svrluga



KEY DATES

First pitchers/catchers workout: Thursday
First full-squad workout: Feb. 20
Home opener: April 2 vs. Florida

SPRING TRAINING SCHEDULE

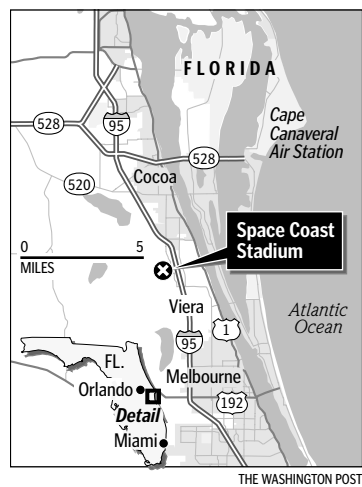
(All dates in March, all sites Florida unless otherwise noted; all times p.m. Asterisk indicates games on MASN.)

Day	Opponent	Site	Time
2	L.A. Dodgers	Vero Beach	1:05
3*	Baltimore	Viera	1:05
4	L.A. Dodgers	Viera	1:05
	Houston	Kissimmee	1:05
5	Atlanta	Disney	1:05
6	Atlanta	Viera	1:05
7	Houston	Kissimmee	1:05
8*	Houston	Viera	1:05
9*	Baltimore	Ft. Lauderdale	1:05
10	N.Y. Mets	Viera	1:05
11	L.A. Dodgers	Vero Beach	1:05
12*	N.Y. Mets	Viera	1:05
13	Off		
14	St. Louis	Jupiter	1:05
15	Detroit	Viera	7:05
15	L.A. Dodgers	Vero Beach	7:05
16	Cleveland	Winter Haven	12:35
17	N.Y. Mets	Port St. Lucie	1:05
18	Florida	Viera	1:05
19	L.A. Dodgers	Viera	1:05
20	Florida	Jupiter	1:05
21*	Atlanta	Viera	7:05
22	Houston	Kissimmee	7:05
23	Detroit	Viera	1:05
24	St. Louis	Viera	1:05
25	Atlanta	Disney	1:05
26	Detroit	Lakeland	1:05
27*	N.Y. Mets	Viera	7:05
28	Baltimore	Viera	1:05
	Florida	Jupiter	1:05
29	Baltimore	Columbus, OH	4:05
30*	Baltimore	Norfolk	2:05
31*	Baltimore	RFK Stadium	1:05

TEAM FACTS

COACHES
 Manny Acta, manager; Pat Corrales, bench coach; Jerry Morales, first base; Tim Tolman, third base; Mitchell Page, hitting; Randy St. Claire, pitching; Rick Aponte, bullpen.

SPACE COAST STADIUM
Opened: 1994.
Seating capacity: 8,100.
Dimensions: 340 feet to the left and right field fences, and 404 feet to center.
Address: 5800 Stadium Pkwy., Viera, Fla., 32940.



TICKET PRICES
 Batter's Box, \$22; Box, \$18; Reserved, \$15; Bleacher, \$10; Berm, \$8.

HOW TO GET TICKETS
On the Internet: www.nationals.com.
By telephone: 888-632-6287.
Groups of 25 or more: 321-633-9200.

FIVE STORY LINES

Pressure on Patterson

Here is the Nationals' current idea of stability among starting pitchers: John Patterson. Here are Patterson's totals from last season: 8 starts, 1 win, 40% innings. The candidates for the remaining four spots range from has-beens to never-weres. Given Patterson's age (29), his superior stuff and the lack of any other potential leaders, it would behoove him to make a statement this year, pitching at least 200 innings, grinding it out when he has to, developing into someone worthy of the term "ace."

Muddle in the Middle

Cristian Guzman comes back from a disastrous '05 (.219 average, .260 on-base percentage) and an '06 lost to shoulder surgery. He takes his old spot at shortstop, moving Felipe Lopez to second, where he has played in just 12 major league games. Given that the Nationals were the worst defensive team in baseball last year, it might be difficult to ask for major improvements given such instability up the middle. But keep in mind: It could have been more unsettled had the Nationals been unable to trade Jose Vidro.

New manager Manny Acta says he "won't accept" predictions that the Nationals are going to finish in last place.

BY TED S. WARREN — ASSOCIATED PRESS

Leading Question, Part III

In 2005, it was supposed to be Andy Chavez. In 2006, it was supposed to be Brandon Watson. Neither remains a National. Next up: Lopez. Though he has spent more time in the second spot, he has batted first in 137 games in his career, posting a higher average (.270) and a similar on-base percentage (.332) compared with his career numbers (.262 and .333, respectively). What the Nationals would like to see is the .362 on-base percentage he posted after his trade from the Reds last year.

Zimmerman 2.0

Much was made of an impressive rookie campaign in which Ryan Zimmerman drove in 110 runs. Since 1953 in the National League, only Albert Pujols and Mike Piazza had more RBI in their first seasons. But Zimmerman also led all of baseball in at-bats with runners in scoring position (198). He can't drive in runs if nobody's on base. He also would like to shore up his defense. "It's not like I was a bad fielder," he said. "But I can get rid of a few stupid errors. I think I'm ready for a better season all-around."

Acta-vate?

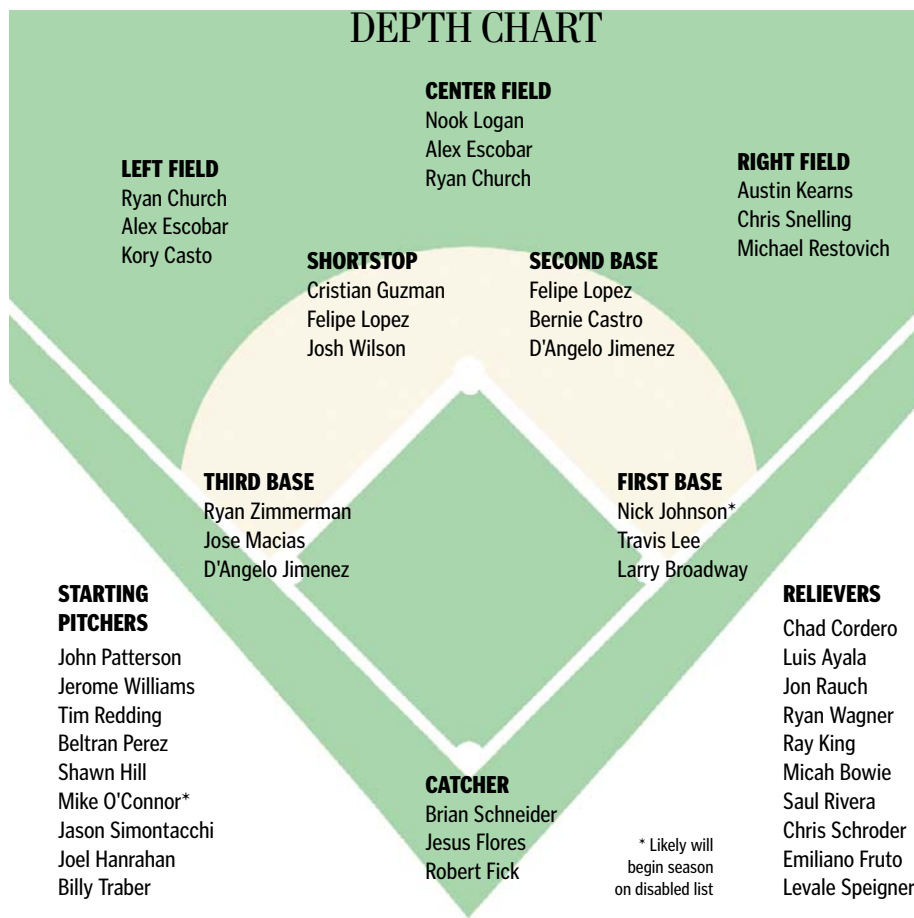
New manager Manny Acta is just more than half the age of former skipper Frank Robinson and has none of the Hall of Fame background. But he spent the offseason saying all the right things, arguing that he's still humble, that he's honored for the opportunity and that — despite prognosticators' predictions — he's conceding nothing. "You can't tell me we're going to finish in last place before October," he said. "I won't accept it." One big question: How will he handle those seven-game losing streaks?

40-MAN ROSTER

Pitchers	B/T	Age	*2006 W-L, ERA, SO
56 Luis Ayala	R/R	29	Did not play <i>How quickly can he rebound from elbow surgery?</i>
57 Jason Bergmann	R/R	25	0-2, 6.68, 54 <i>A starter? A reliever? A minor leaguer?</i>
30 Chris Booker	R/R	30	0-0, 9.72, 7 (K.C., Was.) <i>Throwing forkball in minors since 1995</i>
59 Micah Bowie	L/L	32	0-1, 1.37, 11 <i>Only 91 major league innings since '99</i>
58 Brett Campbell	R/R	25	0-0, 10.38, 4 <i>Class A to majors in '06. Back again in '07?</i>
47 Matt Chico	L/L	23	<i>Key piece in Livan Hernandez trade</i>
32 Chad Cordero	R/R	24	7-4, 3.19, 69 <i>Will he have even 30 save opportunities?</i>
53 Emiliano Fruto	R/R	22	2-2, 5.50, 34 (Sea.) <i>Piece of Vidro trade will compete for spot</i>
38 Joel Hanrahan	R/R	25	<i>Dodgers farmhand gets shot at bigs</i>
41 Shawn Hill	R/R	25	1-3, 4.66, 16 <i>He's over elbow problems that cut short '06</i>
60 Mike Hinckley	R/L	24	<i>Put-up-or-shut-up time</i>
48 Mike O'Connor	L/L	26	3-8, 4.80, 59 <i>Won't be ready for Opening Day</i>
22 John Patterson	R/R	29	1-2, 4.43, 42 <i>Lifetime record: 17-20. Ten-win seasons: 0</i>
54 Beltran Perez	R/R	25	2-1, 3.86, 9 <i>Showed poise in three '06 starts</i>
51 Jon Rauch	R/R	28	4-5, 3.35, 86 <i>Must repeat breakthrough '06</i>
17 Tim Redding	R/R	28	<i>Potential No. 2 starter? Sadly, yes</i>
52 Saul Rivera	S/R	29	3-0, 3.43, 41 <i>ERA of 2.04 after all-star break</i>
45 Chris Schroder	R/R	28	0-2, 6.35, 39 <i>Right-handers hit .193 against him</i>
68 Levale Speigner	R/R	26	<i>Rule 5 pick from deep Minnesota system</i>
40 Billy Traber	L/L	27	4-3, 6.44, 25 <i>Right-handers slugged .514 against him</i>
37 Jermaine Van Buren	R/R	26	1-0, 11.77, 8 (Bos.) <i>ERA of 2.22 as reliever in minors</i>
35 Ryan Wagner	R/R	24	3-3, 4.70, 20 <i>Could end up as steal in trade with Reds</i>
26 Jerome Williams	R/R	25	0-2, 7.30, 5 (ChC) <i>Won 10 games for Giants in 2004</i>

Catchers	B/T	Age	2006 Avg., OBP, RBI
3 Jesus Flores	R/R	22	
23 Brian Schneider	L/R	30	.256, .320, 55 <i>Can he be better than a .256 hitter?</i>

Infielders	B/T	Age	2006 Avg., OBP, RBI
33 Larry Broadway	L/L	26	
9 Bernie Castro	S/R	27	.227, .286, 10 <i>Speedy slap hitter is fun — when he runs</i>



Infielders cont.	B/T	Age	2006 Avg., OBP, RBI
15 Cristian Guzman	S/R	28	Did not play <i>What's worse: .219 in '05 or 0 games in '06?</i>
24 Nick Johnson	L/L	28	.290, .428, 77 <i>Somehow, offense must get by in his absence</i>
2 Felipe Lopez	S/R	26	.274, .358, 52 (Cin., Was.) <i>Can defense be better with him at second?</i>
12 Josh Wilson	R/R	25	<i>Grand total of 10 major league at-bats</i>
11 Ryan Zimmerman	R/R	22	.287, .351, 110 <i>For an encore, a Gold Glove?</i>

Outfielders	B/T	Age	2006 Avg., OBP, RBI
5 Kory Casto	L/R	25	
19 Ryan Church	L/L	28	.276, .366, 35 <i>Still a Nat on Opening Day?</i>
74 Frank Diaz	R/R	23	<i>Decent hitting prospect; not yet ready</i>
44 Alex Escobar	R/R	28	.356, .394, 18 <i>If he could only stay healthy</i>
25 Austin Kearns	R/R	26	.264, .363, 86 (Cin., Was.) <i>Must prove he can be a building block</i>

Outfielders cont.	B/T	Age	2006 Avg., OBP, RBI
7 Nook Logan	S/R	27	.300, .337, 8 <i>Can catch it. Can he hit it?</i>
29 Michael Restovich	R/R	28	.167, .231, 1 (ChC) <i>Over five major league seasons, just 240 at-bats</i>
8 Chris Snelling	L/L	25	.250, .360, 8 (Sea.) <i>See Escobar, Alex — Australian version</i>

NON-ROSTER INVITEES	B/T	Age	2006 W-L, ERA, SO
63 Winston Abreu	R/R	29	0-0, 10.13, 6 (Bal.) <i>No relation to Yankees OF Bobby</i>
75 Mike Bacsik	L/L	29	<i>11-0, 2.79 ERA for Arizona Class AAA in '06</i>
55 Brandon Clausen	R/L	27	3-8, 6.19, 57 (Cin.) <i>After shoulder surgery, won't pitch till midseason</i>
43 Jesus Colome	R/R	29	0-0, 27.00, 0 (TB) <i>Devil Rays reject. Enough said.</i>
79 Felix Diaz	R/R	26	<i>4.91 ERA in Japan last year</i>
71 Josh Hall	R/R	26	<i>Lynchburg native pitched for Reds in '03</i>

NON-ROSTER INVITEES

Pitchers cont.	B/T	Age	2006 W-L, ERA, SO
34 Ray King	L/L	33	1-4, 4.43, 23 (Colo.) <i>Career ERA: 3.28. Nickname: Burger.</i>
36 Colby Lewis	R/R	27	0-0, 3.00, 5 (Det.) <i>26 big league appearances in '03; five since</i>
65 Anastacio Martinez	R/R	28	<i>Pitched for Boston in '04; first name not Pedro</i>
76 Luis Martinez	L/L	27	Did not play <i>Qualifications: 6-6, left-handed, can breathe</i>
31 Chris Michalak	L/L	26	2-4, 4.89, 10 (Cin.) <i>518 appearances over 14 seasons; 61 in majors</i>
67 Arnie Muñoz	L/L	24	<i>Pitched for Dominicans in Caribbean Series</i>
50 Jason Simontacchi	R/R	33	<i>Pitched for Italy in 2000 Olympics</i>
64 Eduardo Valdez	R/R	27	<i>ERA of 0.96 in five Dominican Winter League games</i>
70 Bill White	L/L	28	<i>12 saves for Arizona Class AAA in '06</i>

Catchers	B/T	Age	2006 Avg., OBP, RBI
78 Danny Ardoin	R/R	32	.180, .254, 3 (Bal., Colo.) <i>Eighth — and final? — organization</i>
61 Juan Brito	R/R	27	<i>Caught Bacsik, White last year in Arizona system</i>
13 Robert Fick	L/R	32	.266, .324, 9 <i>Could become left-handed bat off bench</i>
10 Brandon Harper	R/R	30	.293, .362, 6 <i>Solid play in '06 may not be enough in '07</i>

Infielders	B/T	Age	2006 Avg., OBP, RBI
73 Melvin Dorta	R/R	25	.211, .250, 0 <i>In mix for backup infielder spot</i>
4 D'Angelo Jimenez	S/R	29	.183, .333, 8 (Tex., Oak.) <i>If he makes roster, seventh team in eight seasons</i>
16 Travis Lee	L/L	31	.224, .312, 31 (T.B.) <i>Johnson hurt? Broadway unimpressive? Here's the 1B</i>
1 Jose Macias	R/R	35	Did not play <i>Ex-Expo played in Japan last year</i>
6 Joe Thurston	L/R	27	.222, .300, 0 (Phi.) <i>Played for Phillies in '06? Who knew?</i>
72 Jorge Toca	R/R	32	<i>Former Met hit .355 — for Tasbasco of Mexican League</i>
00 Tony Womack	L/R	37	.265, .342, 5 (Cin., ChC) <i>Fourth team since starting in 2004 World Series</i>

Outfielders	B/T	Age	2006 Avg., OBP, RBI
80 Tony Blanco	R/R	25	<i>Rule 5 pick in '05, has since fallen off face of earth</i>
21 George Lombard	L/R	31	.143, .308, 1 <i>23 steals in 25 major league attempts</i>
62 Wayne Lydon	R/R	25	<i>Born in Fairfax. Career minor leaguer</i>
81 Darnell McDonald	R/R	28	<i>Former Orioles first-rounder hasn't panned out</i>
77 Abraham Nuñez	S/R	30	<i>Not to be confused with infielder of same name</i>

*No statistics indicates the player spent '06 in the minors