

Game Preview

Aces vs. Chihuahuas

Aces Ballpark, April 7, 2016, 6:35 PM

The **Reno Aces** are set to begin the 2016 campaign with an eight game home stand beginning against the **El Paso Chihuahuas** on April 7 at Aces Ballpark. The Aces are looking to start the season off strong after a disappointing 70-74 season in 2015 in which the Aces finished third in the Pacific Northern Division and failed to make the playoffs.

The Aces were involved in many high scoring games last season as they had a great offense but struggled with pitching. Offensively, the Aces led the Pacific Coast League in average, on base percentage, total bases, OPS, and doubles. They were second in hits and RBIs, third in runs scored, and fourth in home runs.

Their pitching was not as impressive as they had the second highest team ERA in the league, gave up the second most amounts of hits and earned runs, and led the league in walked batters. This was the biggest reason for the 70-74 finish a year ago.

The Aces return most of their top offensive weapons from last season. **Jamie Romak** and **Peter O'Brien** led the team in several categories. Romak was the team leader in home runs with 27 and O'Brien was right behind him with 26. They were also the only two players on the team with 100 or more RBIs. Both were Pacific Coast League representatives in last year's AAA All Star Game. **Nick Evans**, who led the team in base hits and was second in doubles behind Romak, is also returning.

Aaron Blair will get the start for the Aces for the opener. He was 7-2 with a 3.16 ERA in 13 appearances with the Aces. He made an additional 13 appearances with AA Mobile where he was 6-3 with a 2.70 ERA before being called up to Reno and made his Aces debut on June 17.

For the Chihuahuas, **Chris Smith** will get the ball. Smith posted a 5-7 record last season with a 3.60 ERA with the Chihuahuas. He also made a pair of starts with AA San Antonio where he allowed 1 run off 5 hits in a combined 10 innings of work in those two starts. He posted a 5.61 ERA for El Paso in 2014.

Looking Ahead

Tomorrow we will see **Justin Marks** on the mound for the Aces. He will be facing **Daniel McCutchen** for the Chihuahuas. Marks led the Aces in strikeouts a year ago with 84 (18 more than any other team member). He was 5-9 with a 5.63 ERA in 28 appearances. He lasted two innings in his one big league appearance with the Royals in 2014 and gave up 3 runs.

McCutchen was sixth in the Pacific Coast League with a 3.60 ERA going 9-8 for the Chihuahuas in 32 appearances. He was third on the team with 86 strikeouts. He also made a 2014 big league appearance in which he allowed three runs off four hits in 2.1 innings for the Rangers.

First pitch for tomorrow is set for 6:35 PM.