

# '61 Islanders: Strangers in Paradise

## Misfits, Castoffs Manned First Hawaii Team

By Rod Ohira  
Assistant Sports Editor

Nick Morgan Jr., a Salt Lake City businessman, pulled off one of baseball's most daring moves by purchasing the Sacramento franchise from the Pacific Coast League for \$50,000 and moving it to Hawaii.

The Islanders would play their first PCL game at Honolulu

### Fifth in a Series

Stadium on April 20, 1961. On April 19, 1985, Hawaii meets Albuquerque at Aloha Stadium in its 25th season opener.

The first of 1,770 wins came on opening night of '61 when pinch-hitter Chuck Harmon singled off Fred Baczewski in the bottom of the ninth to drive in pinch-runner Chuck Bennett as Hawaii edged the Vancouver Mounties, 4-3, before 6,041 fans.

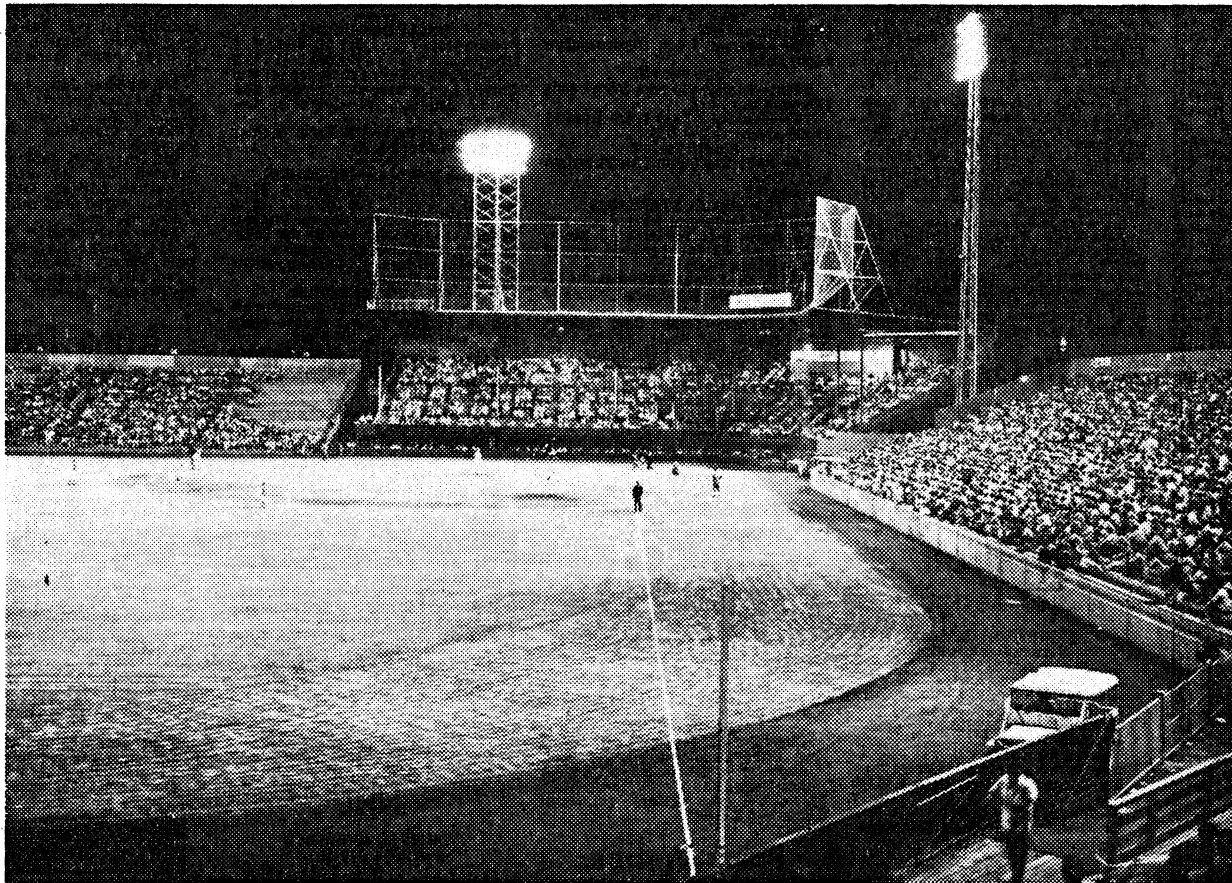
MANAGER TOMMY Heath's batting order had Rac Slider at short, Milt Smith at second, Jim Small in center field, Ray "Jabbo" Jablonski at third, Bart Dupon in right, Bobby Prescott in left, Jim McManus at first, Len Neal catching and Dave Thies pitching.

Jablonski hit the first Islander homer in the sixth inning.

The Islander uniforms that season—cut-sleeved whites at home and green on the road—were designed by Charlie O. Finley, whose Kansas City A's had a partial working agreement with Hawaii.

Under the agreement, the A's would provide 15 players for the Hawaii roster.

The stars of the first Islander team were center-fielder Carlos Bernier, who won the PCL batting title with a .351 average;



**FIRST FLING**—Honolulu Stadium was the setting for the Hawaii Islanders' first PCL game, which drew a crowd of 6,041. The Islanders sent their new fans home happy with a 4-3 victory over the Vancouver Mounties.—Star-Bulletin Photo.

Prescott, who batted .310 with 32 homers and 100 runs batted in; Slider, who hit .300, and Thies, a 15-game winner.

"WHAT WE HAD that year was a combination of misfits and castoffs," said Stockton, Calif., insurance executive Bud Watkins, who was a relief pitcher on the first Hawaii team. "We played like nine strangers."

Pitcher Bob Leopold was one of the strangest characters on the '61 team.

"I don't think his elevator went all the way to the top," Watkins said. "That guy never rented a room all the time we were here. He slept on different

hotel lawn chairs in Waikiki every night."

And then there was Smith, whom Watkins says "was never known to sleep until the last neon went off." The way the story goes, Smith was parked on the bank of the Sacramento River with a woman early one morning when his car rolled into the water. After Smith and the woman swam to shore, the story goes that the Islander infielder dived back in to make sure the car lights were off.

WHEN WATKINS joined the club, the pitcher he replaced was a guy named Blackie Schwamb. "He told me he had

taken a vacation at the Big U and I didn't find out until later that he had spent 10 years in prison for killing somebody," Watkins said.

It didn't take much to clear the right-field porch at the old stadium, which was about 310 feet from home plate with a short fence.

"There were 13 home runs in a game one Sunday against Vancouver," recalled Watkins. "There was a play at second I remember well. Smith hollared for a pop up and it ended up going over the fence."

The '61 team finished with a 68-86 record, 29 games behind PCL champion Tacoma.

## Hawaii Islanders Player Directory

### The Beginning: 1961-1964

1964

**PRESIDENT**—Francis H. li Brown. **VICE PRESIDENTS**—Chinn Ho, Sakae Takahashi, Bishop Harry Kennedy, Le Roy Bush. **GENERAL MANAGER**—Lew Matlin. **FIELD MANAGER**—Bob Lemon. **PARENT CLUB**—Los Angeles Angels.

**REGULARS**—First Base: Cal Emery (125 games). Second Base: Paul Schaal (80). Herbie Plews (80). Third Base: Tim Foli (95), Schaal (44). Shortstop: J.C. Hartman (80), Foli (40). **Outfielders**: Carlos Bernier (122), Dick Simpson (101), Jack Hiatt (58). **Catcher**: Ed Sadowski (86), Hiatt (66).

**OTHER POSITION PLAYERS**—Winston Llenas, Bobby Lucas, Bob Perry, Rick Reichardt, Chuck Vinson, John Warner, Frank Kostro, Michael Lee, Dave Marshall, Mickey McDermott, Jim McGlothlin, Cotton Nash, Tim Faris, Hank Foiles, Don Fumald, Clyde Girrens, Hal Green, Len Green, Raynor Youngdahl.

**PITCHERS**—Tom Egan, Aubrey Gatewood, Ed Sukla, Ed Thomas, Bill Kelso, Chris Maneff, Danilo Rivas, Jack Spring, Bob Sprout, Dick Wantz, Larry Williams, George Sherrod, Tom Baker, Mel Nelson, John Papa, Anselmo Gordon, Tom Timmerman, Ken Turner.

**RECORD**: 60-98. **ATTENDANCE**: 154,827.

**PCL STATISTICAL LEADERS**—Bases on Balls: Hawaii 565. Most Strikeouts (Batting): Hawaii 1,087. Left on Base: Hawaii 1,099.

1963

**PRESIDENT**—Francis H. li Brown. **VICE PRESIDENTS**—Chinn Ho, Sakae Takahashi, Ben Dillingham, Le Roy Bush. **GENERAL MANAGER**—Lew Matlin. **FIELD MANAGER**—Irv Noren. **PARENT CLUB**—Los Angeles Angels.

**REGULARS**—First Base: Chuck Dees (83). Second Base: Bobby Knoop (145). Third Base: Herbie Plews (120). Shortstop: John Kennedy (67), Tom Satriano (45). **Outfielders**: Carlos Bernier (149), Stan Palys (131), Dick Simpson (83). **Catcher**: Bob Roselli (81), Charlie White (53).

**OTHER POSITION PLAYERS**—Duncan Campbell, Bob Farley, Joe Hannah, Mike Harrington, Gordy Windhorn, Leo Posada, Ron Samford, Ken Hunt, Ed Kirkpatrick, Frank Kostro, Bob Perry, Brown Taylor.

**PITCHERS**—Ed Thomas, Dick Sovde, Eli Grba, John Anderson, James Archer, Bob Duliba, Hal Griggs, Jim McGlothlin, Ron Moeller, Tom Morgan, Mel Nelson, Fred Newman, Hugh Pepper.

**NO-HIT GAME**—Bob Radovich, Spokane, beat Hawaii, 18-0, on July 6.

**RECORD**: 81-77 (second in North). **ATTENDANCE**: 236,848.

**PCL STATISTICAL LEADERS**—Bases on Balls: Bernier 98. Strikeouts (Batting): Hawaii 1,013 (tied with Oklahoma City). Grounded into Double Plays: Hawaii 142. Innings Pitched: Thomas 236. Home Runs Allowed: Sovde 31.

1962

**OWNER-PRESIDENT**—Nick Morgan Jr. **EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT**—Bob Hatfield. **GENERAL MANAGER**—Hub Kittle. **FIELD MANAGER**—Irv Noren. **PARENT CLUB**—Los Angeles Angels.

**REGULARS**—First Base: Hap Richie (149). Second Base: Bobby Knoop (94). Third Base: Tom Satriano (82), Plews (72). Shortstop: Dick Barone (94). **Outfielders**: Stan Palys (147), Carlos Bernier (120), Lou Jackson (66), Eddie Haas (66). **Catcher**: Joe Hannah (92), Charlie White (72).

**OTHER POSITION PLAYERS**—Irv Noren (76), Ray Webster, Joe Taylor, Faye Throneberry, Ken Toothman, Rafael Alomar.

**PITCHERS**—Dick Egan, Julious "Swampfire" Grant, Ben Johnson, George Brunet, Winston Brown, Harold Griggs, John James, Roger Clapp, R.G. "Bob" Smith, Aubrey Gatewood, Ron Negray, Erv Palica, Gene Bacque, Bill Davidson, Gerald Kettle, Hank Mason, David Reed, Bill Nishita.

**RECORD**: 77-76 (fifth). **ATTENDANCE**: 149,737.

**PCL STATISTICAL LEADERS**—Total Bases: Palys 321 (tied with two others). Home Runs: Palys 33. Most Grounded into Double Plays: Satriano 24; Hawaii 158. Games Won: Egan 17. Innings Pitched: Egan 253. Hits Allowed: Egan 239. Strikeouts (Pitching): Egan 201.

1961

**OWNER-PRESIDENT**—Nick Morgan. **VICE-PRESIDENTS**—Lawrence "Peanuts" Kunihiha, William Kim. **GENERAL MANAGER**—None. **FIELD MANAGER**—Tommy Heath, Bill Werle. **PARENT CLUB**—Kansas City A's.

**REGULARS**—First Base: Jim McManus (129). Second Base: Ray Webster (79), Jay Ward (48), Milt Smith (40). Third Base: Ken Toothman (55), Jay Ward (49), Ray Jablonski (48). Shortstop: Rac Slider (124). **Outfielders**: Carlos Bernier (127), Bobby Prescott (124), Stan Johnson (86). **Catcher**: Jack Parks (83).

**OTHER POSITION PLAYERS**—Jim Small, Neil Wilson, Chuck Harmon, Elmo Plaskett, Bobby Balcena, Chuck Bennett, Bart Dupon, Jay Hankins.

**PITCHERS**—Dave Thies, Diego Segui, Bud Watkins, Werle, Julio Navarro, Clarence Podbielan, Bob Giggie, Julious "Swampfire" Grant, Bob Leopold, Hank Mason, Tom Baker, Harry Byrd, Bob Chakales, Ray Blemker, Roger Bowman, C.V. Davis, Chris Mancao, Ralph "Blackie" Schwamb, Glen Stabelfeld.

**NO-HIT GAME**—Al Worthington, San Diego, blanked Hawaii, 5-0, on Aug. 26.

**RECORD**: 68-86 (sixth). **ATTENDANCE**: 165,786.

**PCL STATISTICAL LEADERS**—Batting: Bernier .351. Home Runs: Hawaii 163. Stolen Bases: Hawaii 85. Left on Base: Hawaii 1,246. Home Runs Allowed: Podbielan 22 (tied with two others; 17 for Hawaii, 5 for Portland).