Hi Nats Fans,

Greetings from The Ballpark of the Palm Beaches! I hope you all are doing well as the weather begins to feel more like spring up in the D.C. area.

Down here in Florida we’ve gotten lots of sunshine and I’ve had the chance to see plenty of good baseball. However, nothing has been better than being able to see Nationals fans in the stands again, wearing the Curly W and cheering on our team in West Palm Beach. I got the chance to sit in the stands for a recent game and it was an amazing feeling to be back in the ballpark. We cannot wait to host fans again up at Nationals Park and we are hopeful that it won’t be too long until we are able to do so. You all deserve to properly celebrate the 2019 World Championship team in-person and I know the atmosphere in the ballpark will be electric when our incredible fans are able to return home.

On the field here, I have seen lots of positive signs during the games and while watching workouts at our complex.

Almost all of our starting pitchers have made their 2021 spring debuts and so far they’ve looked good. Max Scherzer and Patrick Corbin pitched for the first time last weekend and both threw the ball well and look poised for a strong season. It was also wonderful to welcome both Joe Ross and Stephen Strasburg back to the mound in recent days. After opting out of last season, Ross looked composed and confident in his stuff against the Mets. Strasburg was someone who we really missed during the 2020 season and it was awesome to see #37 back on the field Tuesday evening against the Astros, who we all remember him matching up against during the 2019 World Series.

Not only am I excited about our current starting rotation, but if any of you were able to watch last week’s game against the Mets, you’ll know why I’m also very excited about our top pitching prospects. Both of our most recent first round draft picks, Cade Cavalli (2020) and Jackson Rutledge (2019), made their first appearances in MLB Spring Training last week and looked ready for the moment. Both of them have lively fastballs and a commanding presence on the mound — Rutledge even showed off a nice pick-off move! Both Cavalli and Rutledge and some of our other young pitchers also pitched in a B-game against the Cardinals on Wednesday morning, and they impressed us all yet again. We are looking forward to having them in our future rotation for years to come.

Even though our team is built on starting pitching, I am also confident in our bullpen heading into the season. Mike Rizzo has given Davey lots of options for the late innings this year. Brad Hand has been one of the best relievers in baseball over the past few years. Will Harris and Daniel Hudson have played crucial roles on championship teams. Tanner Rainey burst onto the scene last year with his incredible arsenal. And lastly, I have also been very impressed by Wander Suero this spring and think he has a chance to be really good for us again in 2021.

Last but not least, I’m very encouraged about our offense. Juan Soto and Trea Turner are both coming off incredible years at the plate and should have much more protection in the lineup this season. Kyle Schwarber has demonstrated his hitting skills and incredible power in our spring games and workouts over the past few weeks. I also think our production at first base is going to be a huge asset for us. We really missed Ryan Zimmerman’s leadership last year, and he’s gotten off to a scorching hot start this spring. Josh Bell should also provide a lot of power from both sides of the plate and he has been working hard on refining his defensive skills. I think big things are in store for him this year.

It is hard to believe but we are almost halfway through our Spring Training schedule, and just a few weeks away from returning to D.C. I cannot wait to be back in the nation’s capital watching the national pastime with you all as soon as we can. Thanks for following my Spring Training updates on Curly W Live, and be sure to keep checking for more posts from me over the next couple weeks.

Go Nats!

Sincerely,

Mark D. Lerner, Managing Principal Owner and Vice Chairman