

Title: The Washington Nationals: From Expansion Team to a World Series Champion

This timeline will tell the story of the Washington Nationals, a Major League Baseball team, and how they went from one of the worst teams in the whole league to a perennial contender, eventually winning their first championship trophy in 2019.



(<https://www.federalbaseball.com/2022/4/4/23008885/recalling-washington-nationals-first-game-in-2005>)

2005: The team finished with a respectable 81-81 record in their first full season. Ryan Zimmerman was selected as the team's first ever draft pick and their first ever win as a franchise is highlighted by Brad Wilkerson's 2nd career cycle.



(<https://calltothepen.com/2020/03/13/washington-nationals-remembering-alfonso-soriano/>)

2006: The Nationals finish their season with a measly 71-91 record. Alfonso Soriano makes history with a 40-40 season.



(<https://www.flickr.com/photos/8275777@N02/744421923>)

2007: The Nationals play their final game at RFK stadium on September 23, 2007 as they prepare to relocate to a new ballpark. They finished with a mediocre 79-83 record for this season.



(<https://www.flickr.com/photos/afagen/2377302542>)

2008: The team officially moves to Nationals Park, and wins their first game there against the Braves 3-2 thanks to a walkoff home run by Ryan Zimmerman. There were a lot of lows on the field however, as the team finished the year with a disastrous 59-102 record.



(https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Washington_Nationals_April_13,_2009_%283439620647%29.jpg)

2009: The team continues to be borderline unwatchable, as they wrap up the season with just 59 wins for the second season in a row. Stephen Strasburg is drafted as the #1 pick in the first round and Mike Rizzo is promoted to the GM position.



(<https://www.federalbaseball.com/2010/6/9/1508718/a-star-is-born-strasburg-ks-14-in>)

2010: The Nationals continue to sit at the bottom of their division, finishing the year with a 69-93 record overall. However, exciting things are happening behind the scenes as Bryce Harper is selected as the #1 draft pick and Jayson Werth is signed to the largest contract in franchise history (up to this point). Stephen Strasburg makes his electrifying debut, striking out 14 against the Pittsburgh Pirates.



(<https://www.federalbaseball.com/2011/10/29/2523623/wire-taps-washington-nationals-2011-2012-hot-stove-season-starts>)

2011: The franchise hits a turning point and begins to show promise with a 80-81 record. The team continues to draft quality talent for the future, the most notable being Anthony Rendon, who was drafted 6th overall in the first round.



(<https://www.federalbaseball.com/2012/10/11/3490244/jayson-werths-walk-off-wins-it-washington-nationals-2-1-over-st-louis>)

2012: After 7 years of being in the basement, the Nationals finally finish with a winning record, finishing at the top of the NL East with a 98-64 record en route to their first ever Postseason appearance. Bryce Harper shines in his rookie season, taking home the NL Rookie Of the Year award. Unfortunately, the Nationals failed to advance in the postseason, dropping their last game against the Cardinals in a heartbreaking 9-7 Game 5 loss in the NLDS.



(<https://www.cbssports.com/mlb/news/rip-2013-washington-nationals/>)

2013: The Nationals fall just short of returning to the postseason, finishing 2nd in the NL East with a decent, but not good enough 86-76 record. Some notable moments from the season include Denard Span's 29 game hitting streak and Bryce Harper becoming the youngest player to start in the MLB All Star Game at the age of 20.



(<https://www.federalbaseball.com/2014/9/28/6859971/nationals-jordan-zimmermann-no-hitter-vs-marlins>)

2014: Backed by an MVP caliber season by Anthony Rendon, a strong pitching staff, and a well rounded lineup, the team returns to the postseason with another 1st place finish and a record of 96-66. Jordan Zimmermann tosses the first no-hitter in franchise history on September 28th, the very last day of the season. The Nationals crumble in the NLDS again, losing to the eventual World Series champion Giants in 4 games.



(<https://www.federalbaseball.com/2020/4/16/21215401/2015-washington-nationals-best-in-team-history-not-win-a-world-series>)

2015: Despite having a bunch of stellar seasons from individual players, the Nationals finish the year with a surprisingly mediocre 83-79 record. Newly signed free agent Max Scherzer dominates in his first year in D.C., highlighted with 2 no-hitters. Bryce Harper takes home the MVP award, becoming the first player in the franchise to do so.



(<https://wtop.com/washington-nationals/2016/10/photos-washington-nationals-2016-mlb-postseason-playoffs/>)

2016: The Nationals rebound strongly after a rough season, winning the NL East with a 95-67 record. Max Scherzer pulled off one of the rarest feats in MLB history by striking out 20 opposing batters in a single game on May 11th. He also took home the first Cy Young award in Nationals history. The offense featured a lot of star talent, newly signed free agent Daniel Murphy leading the way with a 2nd place MVP finish. Rookie Trea Turner also makes his debut and shows flashes of being a potential superstar in the final months of the season. The Nationals fail to advance in the postseason once again, this time falling to the Los Angeles Dodgers in 5 games.



(<https://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/mlb/2017/04/30/rendon-drives-in-10-hits-3-hrs-as-nationals-rout-mets-23-5/101134722/>)

2017: Arguably the most well rounded team in franchise history. Max Scherzer once again leads the pitching staff with his second straight NL Cy Young Award. Stephen Strasburg shines alongside him, managing to put up a scoreless inning streak of 35 innings over a 3 week span. Their bats dominate throughout the entirety of the season, featuring many highlights such as Anthony Rendon putting up a historic 6-for-6 game with 3 home runs and 10 RBI against the New York Mets on April 28th. Despite everything going for them, the Nationals choke in the playoffs AGAIN with a disappointing NLDS loss against the Chicago Cubs.



(<https://www.si.com/mlb/2018/08/13/washington-nationals-bryce-harper-future>)

2018: The pressure of Bryce Harper's impending free agency proved to be too much for the Nationals as they finished 2nd in the division with a measly 82-80 record. A lot of players regressed from the previous year and ended up being traded away at the deadline. Scherzer put up another fantastic season and Anthony Rendon continued his 2017 success. This year also saw the emergence of Juan Soto, a new young superstar for the Nationals who finished 2nd in NL Rookie Of the Year voting.



(<https://www.nbcwashington.com/news/sports/nbcsports/the-nationals-2019-world-series-stars-where-are-they-now/3018038/>)

2019: With Anthony Rendon and Stephen Strasburg set to become free agents by the end of the year, this would potentially be the last season the Nationals have to make a deep postseason run before looking at a potential rebuild. The season could not have gotten off with a worse start as, 50 games in, the Nationals were at the bottom of their division with a 19-31 record. Rumors of a fire sale began to emerge and fans were calling for the manager to be fired. Just when the team hit rock bottom, they managed to right the ship, going 74-38 the rest of the way and managing to squeeze their way into the playoffs with a 93-69 record. Anthony Rendon and Juan Soto were the dominant bats that led the way, backed by a strong supporting cast that refused to quit no matter how dire the situation looked. Max Scherzer, Stephen Strasburg, and newly signed free agents Patrick Corbin and Anibal Sanchez came together to form one of the best starting rotations in the league. When the playoffs came around, the Nationals found themselves in a familiar situation: a win or go home game in which they were the Home team. Despite falling behind 3-0 against the Milwaukee Brewers, they managed to score 4 runs capped by a clutch 2 out hit by Juan Soto in the bottom of the 8th inning. The Nationals rode this momentum throughout the rest of the postseason, taking out juggernaut team after juggernaut team, en route to their 1st ever World Series victory in which they prevailed over a dominant

Houston Astros team in 7 games. All without their former superstar, Bryce Harper, who had left the previous offseason.