

Sports

BOXING Saturday

7:00 p.m. ESPN Artur Beterbiev vs. Fanlong Meng. Beterbiev (15-0, 15 KOs) takes on Meng (16-0, 10 KOs) in a 12-round light heavy-weight title bout. (Live)
SHOW Luis Nery vs. Aaron Alameda. Luis Nery (30-2, 24 KOs) vs. Aaron Alameda (25-0, 13KOs), WBC junior featherweight eliminator. (Live)

EQUESTRIAN Sunday

10:30 a.m. FS1 America's Day at the Races. (Live)
1:00 p.m. NBCSN Trackside Live! Racing action from the best race-tracks across America; expert analysis. (Live)

Saturday

3:00 p.m. NBCSN Florida Derby. (Live)

MIXED MARTIAL ARTS Saturday

1:00 p.m. ESPN UFC Fight Night: Ngannou vs. Rozenstruik - Prelims Cody Stamann vs. Raoni Barcelos, bantamweight bout. From Nationwide Arena in Columbus, Ohio. (Live)
4:00 p.m. ESPN UFC Fight Night: Ngannou vs. Rozenstruik Francis Ngannou vs. Jairzinho Rozenstruik, heavyweight bout. From Columbus, Ohio. (Live)

RUGBY Saturday

10:30 a.m. NBCSN Premiership Rugby Gloucester Rugby vs Bristol Rugby. From Kingsholm Stadium in Gloucester, England. (Live)

playerprofile

BY GEORGE DICKIE

McNeil a rising star for resurgent Mets



On a Mets team full of intriguing young hitters, arguably the most intriguing is Jeff McNeil. Indeed, in its 27-year-old super utilityman, the Amazin's have a throwback to another era, a hustler who plays multiple positions well and a master of bat control who uses the whole field, frustrates shifts and doesn't feel that choking up is beneath him. Scouts liken him to a young Pete Rose and say a batting title is in his future.

But in 2019, his first full season in the bigs, he experienced something of a split year. Prior to the All-Star break, he led the league in hitting, batting .349 with seven home runs; after it, .276 but with a huge power surge of 16 homers. In both halves, however, his OPS (a total of on-base and slugging percentage) was roughly the same: .917 followed by .915. He just took two different routes to the same level of production.

It all added up to an All-Star year for the third year player: a .318 average with 23 homers, 75 RBIs, with on-base and slugging percentages of .384 and .532 for an OPS of .916.

Likely the Mets' third baseman this year, he'll be part of a promising batting order whose big boppers – Pete Alonso, J.D. Davis, Michael Conforto and McNeil – all seemed to blossom at once in 2019, leading the team on a second-half tear that saw it narrowly miss the postseason. And this year, that youthful squad is hungry for more as they vie with the Atlanta Braves, Philadelphia Phillies and world champion Washington Nationals in a packed National League East.

McNeil and the Mets can be seen in action Thursday, March 26, when they open their 2020 regular season at home against the Nationals in a game airing on ESPN.

NAME: Jeff McNeil	HEIGHT/WEIGHT: 6 feet 1 inch/195 pounds	POSITION: Third base/second base/outfield
BIRTH DATE: April 8, 1992	BIRTHPLACE: Santa Barbara, Calif.	BATS/THROWS: Left/right
TEAMS: New York Mets (2018-present)	NO.: 6	NICKNAME: Flying squirrel

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