



MEDIA ADVISORY

SIoux CITY EXPLORERS BASEBALL
CLUB | LEWIS AND CLARK PARK | 3400
LINE DR 712-277-WINS (9467) |
WWW.XSBASEBALL.COM

SIoux CITY EXPLORERS PRESS RELEASE

Phone: 817.739.3693
Website: xsbaseball.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 21, 2023

GIMENEZ AND OTA SIGNED KEY PIECES ADDED THANKSGIVING WEEK

SIoux CITY, Iowa – The Sioux City Explorers have announced that the team has signed **C Wilfredo Gimenez** and **OF Scott Ota** for the 2024 season. The pair—added the week of Thanksgiving—gave the Explorers plenty of thankful moments in 2023.

C Wilfredo Gimenez returns for a second season with the X's after spending the 2023 playing in 63 games while catching 53 for Sioux City. Last season Gimenez blasted seven home runs and drove in 39 runs. His 39 RBI were good for third on the team while he slashed a .277/.335/.427 line during the 2023 season. The catcher's seven home runs and 39 RBI were his second highest single-season totals while his .277 clip was his full-season professional high. While Gimenez battled injuries during the latter part of the season, his bat was on fire during the post season for the X's. He would go 10-for-19 over five games with one homer and three RBI while scoring three runs. Gimenez went 4-for-5 with two RBI in the X's 8-1 win over Kansas City on September 11 in game one of the American Association West Division Championship Series.

Despite battling injuries during the second half of the season, Gimenez was a difference maker when in the lineup. He would hit .283 in August with four home runs and 19 RBI during the final full month of the season. The RBI total would lead the Explorers for the month of August. On August 27, the native of Venezuela would provide the key offensive punch for the Explorers in a 3-2 win over Fargo-Moorhead, going 2-for-4 with a home run and two RBI. The win was also the 500th win for Manager Steve Montgomery.

Gimenez had seven multi-RBI games and led the Explorers with five games that included three RBI in the box score. In a three-game stretch from August 19 to 23, he would drive in seven runs in three games with a three-RBI game on August 19 in an 11-3 win at Sioux Falls. Two nights later, he added three more RBI in a 3-for-4 night in a 9-4 win over Milwaukee at Lewis and Clark Park. Behind the plate, Gimenez would throw out 14 base runners in 80 stolen base attempts at a 17.5 percentage while the X's pitching staff would post a 3.68 combined ERA with him behind the plate and a 35-18 record as a team in his starts.

Gimenez came to Sioux City, signing with the X's on May 13, 2023 after spending the 2022 season with the Lake Country DockHounds. With Lake Country, he played in 79 games, stepping up to the plate 300 times and earning a .292 OBP. The 2022 season marked his return to full-season

professional baseball stateside since 2019. Gimenez has been a mainstay in his native Venezuela, having spent parts of seven winter ball seasons in the Venezuelan Winter League. From 2019-22, he signed with Aragua, playing in 72 games. He had 233 combined plate appearances, batting a slash line of .296/.369/.796. Gimenez was traded from Aragua to Caracas in April of 2022 where he hit .342 last winter for the ball club. Gimenez returns this winter to Caracas for his second season in the nation's capital. Gimenez has been one of the top offensive catchers in Venezuela in the past four seasons, never hitting below .270 in a season.

Gimenez first joined the American Association when he spent 2017-2019 with the Gary SouthShore RailCats. In his three seasons with the RailCats, he played in 117 games, hitting a combined .242 with seven home runs and 74 RBI. A late season trade would send Gimenez to Fargo-Moorhead in 2019 where he would finish as part of the RedHawks playoff run. Prior to joining Gary in 2017, Gimenez took two years away from baseball after his stint in the minor leagues with the Marlins organization. Gimenez, 32, was signed by the Florida Marlins in 2008, reaching double A in 2014. He was born in Maracay, Venezuela.

OF Scott Ota returns for a second season with the X's in 2024. Ota originally joined the Explorers on July 20, 2023, as a free agent after his release from the New York Mets organization. The California native hit .265 over his first 10 games then became one of the American Association's best hitters the rest of the season. Over the final 28 games of the season, Ota hit .325 (37-for-114) with five home runs and 20 RBI. He would lead the X's in home runs the final two months (5) and the 20 RBI over the same stretch tied him with Matt Lloyd and Vince Fernandez.

For the season, Ota would play in 38 games while slashing a line of .311/.371/.520 with the Explorers. His .520 slugging percentage placed him second on the club for the season. He would have 15 multi-hit games out of his 38 games with the X's, including his last three regular season games from August 31 to September 2 where he went 6-for-12. Ota had a four-game stretch of multi-hit games on August 19 to 23, going 9-for-20 for Sioux City. He would add a 12-game hitting streak from July 30 to August 17 with 16 hits in 43 at bats, hitting .372 in that span.

Ota joined Sioux City from the New York Mets organization where he hit .242 in 23 games at A level St. Lucie and seven games at high A Brooklyn in 2023 with one home run and eight RBI. He would put up a slash line of .242/.304/.352 in 30 games. In 2022 Ota would be limited to four games due to an elbow injury while at the Mets rookie-level club, Florida Complex League, hitting .143 with one RBI. His 2021 season was also limited to a handful of games after initially injuring his elbow. Ota would play in three games at Brooklyn with one RBI going 3-for-11. The 2020 season was cancelled due to the worldwide pandemic, but he played 51 games at rookie level while at Kingsport in 2019.

A native of Foster City, California, Ota was drafted in the 10th round in the 2019 MLB June Amateur Draft out of the University of Illinois at Chicago. In four collegiate seasons, Ota played in 206 games, hitting .301 (.301/.374/.530) with 33 home runs and 163 RBI. In his final season on campus, Ota was named to the All-Horizon League Second Team, Horizon League All-Tournament Team and Horizon League All-Academic Team. He was named Horizon League Player-of-the-Week three times during his senior season and set the conference's record for most career weekly awards for a hitter at seven. Ota set UIC single-season home run record with 20 and ranked 15th nationally in that category in 2019. His 20 home runs and 64 RBI led the Flames in 2019, while he finished second on the team in RBI in 2018 with 34 and 42 in 2017. Ota graduated from the University of Illinois Chicago with a Bachelor of Science degree in Marketing.

Ota, 26, was born in Burlingame, California and was named MVP of Serra High School where he played infield/outfield and pitcher. He was named a Max Preps California large school All-State

Second Team selection his senior season, leading the team and league in average (.489), hits (46), on base percentage (.528) and slugging percentage (.680).

The Explorers are set to open their **31st season** in the Siouland at home Friday night, May 10th at 7:05 p.m. against the Kansas City Monarchs. Ticket packages for the 2024 season are on-sale now, including Full and Half-Season Tickets as well as 10, 15 and 25 game Flex Packs. More information is available by calling the Explorers front office at 712-277-WINS. Stay tuned to the Explorers social media channels and the club's website xsbaseball.com for off-season news and updates.

