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JUDGE JOINS THE 400 CLUB

No. 99 goes deep for career homer No. 400 in a 2-1 win over Toronto — the signature moment of a last-place team's best month of the season

By Nick Ferraro | Pinstripe Dispatch Staff Writer

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A MILESTONE WORTH THE TRIP

There isn't much left to play for in the Bronx this year, but on August 21, Aaron Judge gave a half-empty Yankee Stadium a reason to stand up anyway. Judge turned on a fastball for career home run No. 400, part of a 1-for-4 night with two RBI and a run scored in a 2-1 win over the division-rival Blue Jays. It's a milestone only a small handful of players in the sport's history ever reach, and it arrived exactly the way most of Judge's biggest nights have — without much fuss. "It's always good to get another home run," Judge told reporters afterward, "and even better to get another win."

The number now attached to his name: a .294 career average, 1,312 hits, 400 home runs, and 888 RBI. He's not slowing down to get there, either — Judge hit .321/.480/.654 with six homers in August alone, the best month of any bat in the organization, MLB or minors, and a reminder of exactly why this roster is still worth watching even with the standings long since decided.

SEVENTEEN AND TEN

Buried in last place and 17.5 games back doesn't usually come with a winning month, but the Yankees posted one anyway: 17-10 in August, their best 27-game stretch of the year, run almost entirely on the arms and bats the front office kept at the trade deadline rather than the ones it sold. A 3-0 sweep of Toronto around Judge's milestone, a 10-0 laughter over Seattle, and a strong final week against Houston and Boston (split 3-3, capped by a 6-2 and 6-1 pair of wins over the Red Sox) did most of the heavy lifting. The kids get real credit here: Spencer Jones kept climbing (.250/.342/.559, six homers, five steals in the month), Kristian Campbell — two weeks removed from the Bellinger trade — hit .349 in his first real look, and Dylan Crews, still digging out of his rough welcome to New York, at least started putting together quality at-bats even while the average (.073) hasn't caught up yet. Not everyone trended up: Anthony Volpe (.163), Ryan McMahon (.161), and Paul Goldschmidt (.150) all posted a cold August, the kind of stretch that's easy to write off on a last-place club but worth watching into September regardless.

FRIED AND SCHLITTLER CARRY A ROTATION STILL FINDING ITS SHAPE

Max Fried (1.70 ERA over six August starts) and Cam Schlittler (2.25 ERA, a career-best strikeout rate) were the two best pitchers on the staff this month, full stop, and gave a patchwork rotation something to build a back half of the season around. The bigger story might be Clarke Schmidt, back from Tommy John surgery and holding a respectable 4.85 ERA across five starts — a real return, not just an appearance on the roster page. Cade Smith's audition in the rotation has been rockier (4.50 ERA, still searching for consistency), and Merrill Kelly, the deadline pickup, had the toughest month of anyone in the rotation: 1-2, 5.57 ERA across three starts, a reminder that a 37-year-old on a short-term deal doesn't always settle in right away. With his rental contract up after the season, how August's bumpy welcome factors into a

possible extension is a conversation for the winter — not yet, but soon.

THE KID IS BACK

Jasson Dominguez spent time at Scranton on a rehab assignment, but he was back in the Bronx on August 18 and has barely left the lineup since — an everyday presence for the final two weeks of the month, hitting .303/.425/.333 with four stolen bases in his first 12 games back. The power hasn't shown up yet (zero home runs since his return), but the on-base skills and the speed have, and for a last-place team looking for something to feel good about heading into 2027, a healthy, productive Dominguez in the everyday lineup is exactly that.

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ON THE FARM

The 2026 draft class is still finding its footing. Trent Caraway, the club's second-round pick, is hitting .237 with 3 home runs and 14 RBI in 131 professional at-bats, split between Low-A Tampa and High-A Hudson Valley, where he is at .247 with 12 RBI since the promotion. Fourth-rounder Kolby Branch made the same jump and sits at .234 with 3 home runs and 7 RBI in 107 at-bats. Fifth-round pick Pablo Torres has taken over the closer's job at Hudson Valley and has 11 saves, though a 6.00 ERA and 18 walks in 24 innings say there is work left to do. These are first pro summers and small samples, so the real read on all three comes next year.

INJURIES

Gerrit Cole's season remains on hold — his last outing came July 17, and August came and went without a return, extending a lost year that started with a spring Tommy John recovery and never really got on track. Carlos Rodón and Giancarlo Stanton are both still working through their own 60-day stints with no August update worth reporting, which, on a team playing out the string, is itself the update.

WHAT'S AHEAD

September opened with the league's standard active-roster expansion, and with a month left on the schedule and nothing but pride and evaluation time on the line, expect more of what August already showed: a longer look at the kids, innings for arms the front office wants read on before the winter, and not much concern for the record itself. The Merrill Kelly decision, the state of the rotation once Cole and Rodón are healthy, and the shape of a Winter Meetings shopping list are all still a few weeks away — for now, this is still a team finding out what it has.

BY THE NUMBERS — ORGANIZATION AT A GLANCE

AFFILIATE	LEVEL	RECORD	PCT
New York Yankees	MLB (AL East)	61-78	.439 — 5th, 17.5 GB
Scranton/Wilkes-Barre RailRiders	AAA	60-72	.455
Somerset Patriots	AA	57-67	.460
Hudson Valley Renegades	High-A	49-74	.398
Tampa Tarpons	Low-A	62-62	.500
FCL Yankees	Rookie	27-25	.519
DSL Yankees (Blue)	Rookie	32-28	.533
DSL Yankees (Orange)	Rookie	17-43	.283

AUGUST BATTING — NEW YORK YANKEES

Player	AB	H	HR	RBI	BB	K	SB	AVG	OBP	SLG
Aaron Judge	78	25	6	12	24	24	5	.321	.480	.654
Ben Rice	96	18	5	11	10	19	1	.188	.262	.354
Paul Goldschmidt	100	15	3	13	10	28	4	.150	.227	.280
Anthony Volpe	80	13	2	7	2	23	4	.163	.212	.250
Marco Luciano	72	15	4	13	12	32	6	.208	.321	.403
Austin Wells	75	17	3	9	8	22	1	.227	.310	.373
Spencer Jones	68	17	6	16	7	23	6	.250	.342	.559
Trent Grisham	60	15	3	9	10	21	0	.250	.375	.483
Ryan McMahon	87	14	2	7	6	37	0	.161	.213	.276
Kristian Campbell	43	15	2	8	9	13	3	.349	.473	.605
Dylan Crews	41	3	0	0	6	14	2	.073	.208	.098
Jasson Dominguez	33	10	0	2	7	8	4	.303	.425	.333
Kyle Higashioka	24	5	2	7	0	4	0	.208	.200	.458
Orelvis Martinez	16	4	0	1	2	6	0	.250	.333	.312

AUGUST PITCHING — NEW YORK YANKEES

Pitcher	G	GS	W	L	SV	IP	H	BB	K	ERA	WHIP
Max Fried	6	6	2	1	0	37.0	26	8	34	1.70	0.92
Cam Schlichtler	5	5	2	0	0	32.0	20	11	35	2.25	0.97
Clarke Schmidt	5	5	2	2	0	29.2	28	6	28	4.85	1.15
Cade Smith	4	4	2	1	0	24.0	18	9	14	4.50	1.12
Merrill Kelly	4	3	1	2	0	21.0	22	6	20	5.57	1.33
Fernando Cruz	15	0	1	1	1	18.0	14	8	30	5.50	1.22
Elmer Rodriguez	5	3	1	2	0	17.1	18	9	20	4.67	1.56
Will Warren	6	1	2	0	0	15.2	12	1	17	2.87	0.83
Bennett Sousa	11	0	2	0	2	12.2	13	5	14	2.84	1.42
Brent Headrick	11	0	1	0	8	10.1	9	5	11	4.35	1.35
Cade Winquest	7	0	1	0	0	10.1	12	1	10	2.61	1.26
Ryan Burr	6	0	0	1	0	6.1	5	4	3	5.68	1.42
Jakob Junis	7	0	0	0	0	6.1	11	5	7	8.53	2.53
Jack Ceibert	2	0	0	0	1	3.1	3	4	1	13.50	2.10
Carson Coleman	1	0	0	0	1	1.0	1	1	1	0.00	2.00