



# International League News & Notes



August 9, 2007

## BUFFALO BISON

UN-COOPED: Outfielder **Jason Cooper** didn't stop hitting when he was named IL Batter-of-the-Week on Monday. Cooper collected four more hits in the two games since Monday and has now averaged .475 (19-40) in his last 11 contests. The stretch has raised his average 35 points to .273. It's been a powerful streak too, with 11 extra-base hits (6 2B, 3 3B, 2 HR). Cooper now has 37 extra-base hits, second most on the Bisons roster. A long-time Bison, Cooper now ranks T-10<sup>th</sup> in the Modern Era with 287 games played in Buffalo.

COMEBACK TRAILS: A couple of Bisons players took significant steps in returning to the field. Pitcher **Adam Miller** threw 25 pitches in a bullpen session at Double-A Akron on Tuesday. He was shutdown for 10 days on July 29 with right elbow inflammation. Outfielder **Shin-Soo Choo**, on the disabled list since June 10, threw from 150 feet. He's been out with a strained ligament in his left elbow, but could return with DH-ing duties with the Bisons soon.

HURTIN' HERD: Including Miller and Choo, the Bisons now have six players on the disabled list. **Brad Snyder** broke his left thumb trying to break up a double play and was placed on the DL last week. All-Star infielder **Luis Rivas** found himself on the DL on Sunday with a hamstring injury. Pitchers **Brian Slocum** and **Tony Sipp** have also been on the DL for most of the 2007 season.

## CHARLOTTE KNIGHTS

THE NEW GUY LOOKS GOOD: Outfielder **Thomas Collaro** had a nice Knights Stadium debut. Collaro went 3-3 at the plate with an RBI double and 2 walks. Collaro had been one of the top power hitters in the Southern League before being sent to Charlotte. Collaro is hitting .500 through his first three games with the Knights. He is also 2-2 at the plate with runners in scoring position.

ROTATION FINALLY SETTLED: Over the last few weeks, Knights manager **Marc Bombard** has been forced to list the always reliable TBA as his starting pitcher several times. This has been due to both promotions and injuries. Now Bombard can list his rotation in full as it has finally been settled. The Knights continue to use 2006 IL Pitcher of the Year **Heath Phillips**, knuckleballer **Charlie Haeger**, top pitching prospect **Lance Broadway**, hard throwing 6'10" lefty **Andrew Sisco**, and sinker-slider pitcher **Nick Masset**. Haeger, Masset, and Sisco have all seen time with the White Sox this season.

SANCHES JOINS TEAM: Outfielder **Alex Sanchez** signed a minor league contract with the White Sox and was assigned to Charlotte. Sanchez was selected by the Tampa Bay Devil Rays in the 5<sup>th</sup> round of 1996 draft. He has had stints with the Devil Rays, Milwaukee Brewers, Detroit Tigers, San Francisco Giants, Cincinnati Reds and now the White Sox. His lifetime batting average is .296 in the big leagues, while his lifetime average in the minors is .290 with 9 HR and 216 RBI.

TIDBITS: The Knights have placed outfielder **Ryan Sweeney**, catcher **Wiki Gonzalez** and pitcher **Paulino Reynoso** on the DL. Pitcher **Vladimir Nunez** has been placed on the temporarily inactive list...On the afternoon of Tuesday, August 7, Knights head groundskeeper **Eddie Busque** and his grounds crew helped capture an escaped convict that was hiding from police near Knights Stadium.

## COLUMBUS CLIPPERS

BROADWAY LIGHTS OUT: **Larry Broadway** has increased his batting average 63 points since July 1. He has hit .314 (37-118) with 4 HR, 18 RBI, and 23 runs scored for the Clippers during that stretch.

MOVIN' ON UP: Tuesday night **Chris Booker** notched his 25<sup>th</sup> save, the 5<sup>th</sup> -highest single season total in Clippers history. He is tied with **Kurt Kauffman**, who had 25 saves in 1983. Booker's 25 saves also tied for 7<sup>th</sup> all-time in Clippers history with **Jim Lewis**. Columbus has now had a closer with at least 20 saves for the second year in a row after having a five year drought from 2001-05. Booker is one save behind **Rich Monteleone** for 6<sup>th</sup> all-time and his next save will also tie him with **Dave Pavlas** for 4<sup>th</sup> most saves in a season.

HILL TO MAKE REHAB START: This season the Clippers have received five players on rehab assignments from Washington, with tonight's starter **Shawn Hill** being the fifth (**Luis Ayala**, **Jason Bergmann**, **Alex Escobar** and **Jerome Williams**). He injured his shoulder while running the bases on April 20 at Florida and then tweaked it again on May 1 in San Diego making a play at first base. Hill then tinkered with his mechanics to overcompensate for his left shoulder and that led to a sore right elbow. The 6'2" right hander has been on the DL since May 12 and has already made two rehab starts in Class-A Potomac. Last season, four players (**Aaron Small**, **Bubba Crosby**, **Octavio Dotel** and **Carl Pavano**) were assigned to Columbus for rehab a total of five times (Dotel was with the Clippers twice).

## DURHAM BULLS

PLAYOFF RACE: With last night's 4-3 at Columbus win, the Bulls remain 3.5 games behind Richmond in the South Division. The Braves have won five straight. The Bulls had been 1.5 games back as recently as Sunday, the closest Durham had been to first since April 15. Durham is 0.5 games behind the idle Red Wings in the Wild Card hunt, and can pull ahead by percentage points with a win tonight.

THE REMAINING SCHEDULE: Including tonight, the Bulls have 26 games left, 13 on the road, 13 at home. The Bulls will play at most 143 games because of a rainout at Pawtucket. The 13 home games include the completion of a suspended game against Norfolk, which will be finished at Norfolk on August 25, with the Bulls trailing 6-1 after three innings. Of the 26 left, 10 are against clubs currently with winning records (two vs. Indianapolis, two vs. Toledo, six vs. Richmond).

GOING DEEP: Durham now has hit a League-high 118 homers with two yesterday. Three Bulls, **Joel Guzman**, **Justin Ruggiano** and **Chris Richard**, have hit at least 10. Guzman's 16 is tops on the team. **Jason Pridie's** two-homer game last night in a 4-3 win over Columbus was the third by a Bull this year, joining two other outfielders, **Jeremy Owens** and **Dustan Mohr**.

CHANGES: RHP **Dale Thayer** joins Durham today. The Montgomery closer was 9-0 with 21 saves and a 2.26 ERA in 47 appearances. He replaces **Jon Switzer**, who was recalled by Tampa Bay when LHP **Casey Fossum** was outrighted to Durham. Fossum has until Saturday to report to Durham or become a free agent.

EVAN ALMIGHTY: Third baseman **Evan Longoria** doubled in a run yesterday, and now is 6-19 in six Triple-A games, with a homer, double and five RBI. Longoria was picked 3<sup>rd</sup> overall in last year's draft out of Long Beach State. Longoria had a Montgomery record 21 homers, drove in 76 runs, and scored 78 times. He was hitting .307.

### INDIANAPOLIS INDIANS

STAYING ABOVE .500: Indianapolis is four games above the .500 mark at 60-56. In three seasons as a Pittsburgh Pirates affiliate, the Tribe has spent 421 of 428 days (98%) at .500 or better.

NO. 2 IN THE WEST: Toledo (68-50) paces the International League's West Division, while Indianapolis (60-56, 7.0 GB), Louisville (57-61, 11.0 GB) and Columbus (53-64, 14.5 GB) trail the leader. Rochester (65-55) leads the International League's Wild Card race over Durham (63-54, 1.5 GB), Buffalo (61-55, 2.0 GB) and Indianapolis (60-56, 3.0 GB).

ORDAZ IS ON A ROLL: Indians INF **Luis Ordaz** enters Thursday evening's game with an eight-game hitting streak (.483 BA, 14-29, 5 R, 3 RBI). The 31-year-old is batting .309 with two long balls and 32 RBI in 91 contests this season.

YOU BETTER LEARN THE NAME: Indianapolis INF **Steven Pearce** ranks as one of the top power hitters in all of Minor League Baseball. The 24-year-old is tied for 1<sup>st</sup> in RBI (102), ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> in slugging percentage (.646), places 4<sup>th</sup> in total bases (257), ties for 4<sup>th</sup> in home runs (28) and ranks 5<sup>th</sup> in extra-base hits (63). Before his Triple-A promotion on July 30, Pearce batted .347 with 11 HR and 24 RBI in 19 contests for Class-A Lynchburg and .334 with 14 HR and 72 RBI in 81 affairs for Double-A Altoona.

TALKIN' QUALITY STARTS: Indians RHP **John Van Benschoten** (8-4, 2.28 ERA, 6 QS) and LHP **Michael Tejera** (7-2, 3.65 ERA, 6 QS) have combined for 12 quality starts (6+ IP; less than 3 ER) in 2007. The two are currently throwing back-to-back in the Tribe's starting rotation.

### LOUISVILLE BATS

HOME SWEET HOME?: For the first time since the team was 10-11 on May 18, 2006, the Bats are under the .500 mark at home with a 30-31 record. Louisville has not finished a season with a losing home record since the 2005 season when they were 35-37 at Louisville Slugger Field. The 2004 (35-37) and 2005 seasons are the only years in LSF's history that a Louisville team finished below .500.

HAMILTON ON REHAB: OF **Josh Hamilton** joined Louisville Tuesday for his second rehab assignment with the Bats this season. Hamilton, on the Reds' 15-day disabled list since July 12 with a sprained right wrist, is batting .279 with 14 home runs and 30 RBI in 64 games with Cincinnati. He was with Louisville May 29-June 4 while recovering from gastroenteritis and hit .333 (8-24) with four home runs, six RBI and six runs scored in six games.

LOTS OF TURNOVER: Of the 12 pitchers the Bats started the season with, only four are currently on the team's active roster and none have been with the Bats the entire year. **Steve Kelly**, **Brad Salmon**, **Tom Shearn** and **Ricky Stone** are the pitchers who are active; Shearn is the only starter of the group. **Homer Bailey** (DL since July 18), **Jason Kershner** (released August 7), **Brian Shackelford** (traded to Tampa July 28) and **Wes Wilkerson** (released June 22) are not with the Bats. **Phil Dumatrait**, **Mike Gosling**, **Bobby Livingston** and **Gary Majewski** are currently with the Reds; Dumatrait and Livingston are in Cincinnati's rotation while Gosling and Majewski are pitching out of the bullpen. Of Louisville's three listed outfielders on Opening Day, none are active. **Bubba Crosby** had season-ending shoulder surgery and has been on the DL since April 23, **Dewayne Wise** is on the DL (since July 24) with a right hamstring strain and **Tyrell Godwin** was transferred to Double-A Chattanooga May 7.

### NORFOLK TIDES

WHAT A RELIEF: Tides reliever **Jim Hoey** has allowed just one earned run while striking out 32 in his last 22.1 innings, which translates to a 0.40 ERA. Opponents are hitting just .161 (15-93) against Hoey with the Tides, meaning the 24-year-old has recorded 78 outs since being promoted to Norfolk on June 1. Of those 78 outs, 41 have come by way of a strikeout (52.6%).

HOMER HAPPY: Norfolk's next home run will give the Tides 77 home runs, which will surpass their number hit from a season ago. Last year, the Tides only had one player hit more than eight home runs (**Sandy Martinez**, 11), but Norfolk already has four players who have hit more than eight long balls. **Mike Cervenak** leads the way with 13 home runs, while **J.R. House** and **Jason Dubois** have slugged 10 homers and **Terry Tiffee** has clubbed nine. **Jon Knott** is 5<sup>th</sup> on the Tides this year with 8 homers.

THROWIN' STRIKES: Tides pitchers have struck out 860 batters in 116 games (7.41 a game) and Norfolk's hurlers are on pace to strike out 1,067 batters this year, which would surpass the franchise mark of 1,043 set in 1998.

### OTTAWA LYNX

YOU KNOW THEY CALL HIM THE STREAK: 1B **Gary Burnham** is currently riding a 12-game hit streak, which started July 27, the second-longest hit streak by a Lynx player this season. This is his second extended streak of the season. He also hit in 11 straight games from April 11-24. Recently promoted OF **Chris Roberson** hit in 15 straight games from July 2-18. Burnham pulled into a tie for the team lead with his 10<sup>th</sup> home run last night in Buffalo and he leads the Lynx with 68 runs batted in.

AUGUST POWER SURGE: The Lynx have already hit six home runs in seven games this month. That is more than they hit in all of April (1 HR in 20 games) and only two behind the eight home runs the team hit in May (31 games). **Gary Burnham** has three of those home runs, while co-home-run leader **Brennan King** has two of his own. OF **Matt Padgett** has the other. The Lynx are averaging 4.71 runs per game in August, leading to a 4-3 record.

**LIGHTS, CAMERA, TRANSACTION:** 2B **Joe Thurston** returned to the Lynx roster August 2 after having been designated for assignment. The Lynx also added INF **Gookie Dawkins** to complete a trade between the Phillies and Mariners. INF **Joey Hammond** was assigned to Double-A Reading and RHP **Clay Condrey's** contract was purchased by Philadelphia.

### **PAWTUCKET RED SOX**

**BRING BACK THE RED BARONS:** The PawSox – who had dominated the former Scranton/WB Red Barons over parts of the last three seasons (going 23-4 in their last 27 meetings while SWB was a Phillies' affiliate) – are now 1-8 vs. the new-look Scranton/WB Yankees this season. The teams played a doubleheader last night in Moosic, PA with the Yankees taking both games, 4-0 and then 3-2 by rallying for two runs in the bottom of the 7<sup>th</sup> inning. The rivals will play another make-up twinbill tonight at Lackawanna County Stadium. The PawSox are currently 13.0 GB of front-running Scranton/Wilkes-Barre marking the furthest they had been out since they ended last year 16.0 games out.

**TIEBREAKERS:** The PawSox have gone into the late-innings tied in a game 20 times this season. The Sox are 3-17 when they are tied after 6 innings of a game including four such losses in their last nine games (most recently they were 1-1 with Rochester after 6 innings on Monday only to eventually fall, 6-1). Pawtucket is a fine 45-6 when they lead after 6 innings but just 5-40 when they trail after 6 innings. It is the tie games that have been troublesome (3-17 in those). Furthermore, the PawSox have lost a game in the opponents' final at-bat 20 times this season compared to 12 Pawtucket victories during their final at-bat of a game.

**FAMILIAR FACES IN NEW PLACES:** In the past few days the PawSox have added some familiar names to their roster. On August 4 the club signed former Major League infielder **Junior Spivey** as a free agent. Spivey, 32, had been playing for Bridgeport of the Independent Atlantic League this season batting .333 in 65 games. A veteran of five seasons in the Major Leagues with Arizona (2001-03), Milwaukee (2004-05), and Washington (2005) he has a big league career average of .270 in 457 games and in 2002 he was a National League All-Star with the Diamondbacks when he hit .301 with career-highs of 16 HR & 78 RBI. On Wednesday, lefty reliever **Javier Lopez** was optioned from Boston and the PawSox also added OF **Bobby Kielty** who was signed as a free agent. Lopez was 2-1 with a 2.87 ERA in 44 appearances for the Red Sox this season. He was with the PawSox from April 13 to May 11 and went 1-0 with a 3.75 ERA in 9 RA. Kielty, who just turned 31 last Sunday, was designated for assignment by Oakland on July 21 and subsequently released on July 31. He played in just 13 games with Oakland this season hitting .200. He went on the DL on May 1 with a strained left calf and returned to the A's on July 8 after a 9-game rehab stint with Triple-A Sacramento (going 13-33, .394). The switch-hitter has a career Major League average of .255 with 52 HR & 244 RBI in 579 games with Minnesota (2001-03), Toronto (2003), and Oakland (2004-07). One other veteran was not so lucky as OF **Michael Tucker** was released on Tuesday after hitting just .224 in 72 games for Pawtucket. The PawSox have been involved in 21 player moves in less than two weeks (July 27 – August 8).

### **RICHMOND BRAVES**

**JONATHAN SCHUERHOLZ WEEK:** For the second straight year **Jonathan Schuerholz** has started August sizzling at the plate. In seven games from July 30 to August 8 Schuerholz is 6-17 (.353) with his first two home runs of the season and five RBI. He has hits in all five games he has started in over the stretch. Last year in seven games from July 31-August 6 he was 12-27 (.444) with his first two home runs of the season and 10 RBI.

**CANIZARES CRUSHING BASEBALLS:** Cuban defector **Barbaro Canizares** was hitting .304 on May 4 when his season was interrupted due to a work visa problem. He missed nearly three months and did not return to the Braves until August 1. Since his return Canizares is 16-27 (.593) with six RBI in seven games. He has raised his season average to .398.

**BRAVES ON A ROLL:** Richmond has won five straight games. That streak is the Braves' third longest of the season. Richmond won six straight games from July 23-27 and won a season-high eight straight from April 25-May 3. The Braves have equaled a season high at 16 games over .500 (they were also 16 games over .500 on May 18 and July 27. The last time the Braves were 17 games over .500 was the last day of the 2004 season when they finished at 79-62. The Braves are hitting .353 in their last five games and have scored 39 runs over that span.

### **ROCHESTER RED WINGS**

**KINGS OF THE HILL:** Catcher **Jose Morales** leads the International League with a .334 batting average while RHP **Kevin Slowey** leads the IL with a 1.83 ERA. If Morales and Slowey should finish the season leading both categories it would be the first time since 1976 that Rochester has had a batting champion and ERA champion in the same year. In 1976 RHP **Dennis Martinez** led the IL with a 2.50 ERA while infielder **Rich Dauer** won the batting title with a .336 batting average.

**FOUR SCORE AND 30 YEARS AGO:** RHP **Julio DePaula** leads Rochester with 10 wins this season (10-5, 44 appearances). DePaula is only the 3<sup>rd</sup> Red Wings relief pitcher to win 10 games in a season since 1976 (RHP **Willie Eyre**: 10-3 in 2005 and RHP **Dave Johnson**: 11-5 in 1976). If DePaula remains the team leader in wins it would be the first time a Red Wings reliever led the team in wins since 1960 when knuckleball reliever RHP **Bob Tiefenauer** shared the team lead in wins (11) with RHP **Willard Schmidt**.

**LEADERS IN THE CLUBHOUSE:** RHP **Julio DePaula** (10) and LHP **Brian Duensing** (10) currently lead Rochester in wins. If IL rookie RHP **Kevin Slowey** (8) can get to 10 wins this season it would be the first time since 1997 that Rochester has three pitchers with 10 or more wins. In 1997 LHP **Rick Krivda** (14-2, 3.39), RHP **Nerio Rodriguez** (11-10, 3.90), and RHP **Esteban Yan** (11-5, 3.10) each had 10 or more victories.

### **SCRANTON/WILKES-BARRE YANKEES**

**BONDS NOT THE ONLY ONE TO GET BACSIK:** While LHP **Mike Bacsik** has now joined RHP **Ralph Branca** and LHP **Al Downing** as pitchers forever linked to one gopher ball, Bacsik's proclivity for giving up the long one was evident in his two starts against SWB this season, which came on April 29 and May 14 while pitching for Columbus. 1B **Eric Duncan** and OF **Bronson Sardinha** took Bacsik deep in his April 29 start, while OF/1B **Shelley Duncan**, C **Omír Santos** and Sardinha each teed off on the southpaw on May 14.

**WHO NEEDS HITS?:** On the current homestand, the Yankees have played extremely well winning six of the first seven games. The unusual stat about this streak is that they have been out hit by their opponents 44-43. Fortunately they have been able to outscore the opponent 27-18. Since August 3, the Yankees have recorded more than seven hits in a game just one time (9 on August 4 vs. Buffalo). During the same time span the pitchers have posted a fine 2.73 ERA to help the Yanks win all six games by two runs or less.

YANKEE DOODLES: From 2003 through 2006 the Pawtucket Red Sox had their way with the former Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Red Barons winning 43 of the 62 contests. Through nine games this season the Yankees have been getting a little payback winning eight times in just nine meetings. The eight wins equal the total the Red Barons had in 2003 and 2004 combined...The Yankees attendance is now at 482,846 and tonight's figure should push them over the 490K figure for the first time since 1993.

### SYRACUSE CHIEFS

ANOTHER WEEK, ANOTHER CHIEFS MILESTONE: Last week RHP **Josh Banks** became the first pitcher since **Doug Linton** (1990-1992) to win double-digit games for the Chiefs in consecutive seasons. This week Banks became the first Chiefs pitcher to toss three complete games in a season since 2000 when a trio of Chiefs hurlers did it. **Roy Halladay** (3), **Leo Estrella** (3) and **Kerry Taylor** (4) all accomplished the feat that season. Plus, Banks has outdone the Chiefs entire pitching staff from last season that only completed two games all year long.

GOING, GOING, GRIFFIN: With three home runs in the past five games OF **John-Ford Griffin** is on the verge of Chiefs history. Griffin has 24 home runs this season, one short of the quarter century mark. When Griffin belts his 25<sup>th</sup> four-bagger of the year he'll be the first Chief ever to have two seasons of 25 or more homers. Griffin had 30 long balls for Syracuse in 2005.

STEALING YOUR WAY INTO GREATNESS: OF **Wayne Lydon** has been on the loose as of late, stealing four bases in the past five games. Lydon has run his stolen base total up to 20 on the season making it back-to-back years in which he has pilfered at least 20 bags. Last season the leadoff hitter swiped 26 bags. Lydon is the first Chief since **Cesar Izturis** and **Ryan Freel** in 2000 and 2001 to take at least 20 bags in back-to-back seasons.

WALKING OFF A WINNER: **Ryan Roberts** made sure the Chiefs headed into their off day today with smiles on their faces. Roberts drilled a two-run walk-off home run in the bottom of the 12<sup>th</sup> inning last night versus Rochester to win 4-2. Roberts didn't enter the game until the 10<sup>th</sup> frame when he came in for **John Hattig** as a pinch-runner. In Roberts' first plate appearance of the game he drove in himself and **Sergio Santos** with his eighth jack of the year.

HONORING THE PAST: Before Saturday night's contest with Pawtucket the Chiefs will add six new members to the Syracuse Baseball Wall of Fame. **Fred McGriff** and **Ron Guidry** highlight the class which also includes **Dick Rockwell**, **Dutch Dotterer**, **Specs Toporcer** and **Otto Velez**.

### TOLEDO MUD HENS

SOLID STARTERS: Three of the Hens starters, RHP **Anastacio Martinez**, RHP **Yorman Bazardo** and RHP **Virgil Vasquez**, have been outstanding of late. Although the Hens' rotation has been solid all year, of late these three starters have been very stingy when it comes to giving up runs to opponents. In Martinez's last two starts for the Hens on August 1 and August 7, he has pitched 6.0 innings, giving up just two hits and zero earned runs in each start. He has a combined 12 strikeouts and just three walks in those two games. In Martinez's four starts with the Hens this year, he is 3-0. Bazardo has been equally baffling for opponent hitters, giving up just three earned runs in his last three starts. Each of his past three starts have been quality starts and on July 28 versus Richmond, he pitched a complete-game shutout. Each of Vasquez's last six starts has been a quality start, which includes a complete game shutout on July 17 at Norfolk.

THAMES JOINS HENS: Detroit Tigers' **Marcus Thames** suited up in a Hens' uniform and joined the team for the two-game series against the Norfolk Tides at Fifth Third Field on Tuesday, August 7 and Wednesday, August 8. The outfielder was on a rehabilitation assignment with the Hens and is nursing a strained left hamstring. Thames went a combined 3-8 (.375), with a HR and 2 RBI while in Toledo.

HENS FILLING THE STANDS: The Mud Hens all-time single-season attendance record at Fifth Third Field was 569,380 which was set last season. This season, the Mud Hens have had an attendance figure of 473,671 through 59 games in 2007. Toledo is on pace for an attendance figure of 579,857 for the regular season at Fifth Third Field in 2007.