



International League News & Notes



August 30, 2007

BUFFALO BISON

THE FRANCHISE GIVEN ALL-STAR HONORS: Outfielder **Ben Francisco** was named a postseason International League All-Star on Tuesday. He currently leads the entire IL with his .321 batting average as he looks to become the first Bisons player to win a batting championship since **Mark Ryal** in 1990 (.334 in the American Association). Francisco already has won a batting championship as he hit .349 in 2002 with the Mahoning Valley Scrappers of the New York-Penn League. The outfielder also leads the Bisons in stolen bases (22), on-base percentage (.383) and slugging percentage (.501).

MULHERN NAMED TEAM MVP: The Bisons handed out their end of the season awards on Tuesday and infielder **Ryan Mulhern** was named team MVP. Mulhern leads the Herd in games (127), hits (137), doubles (35), home runs (16) and RBI (75). LHP **Aaron Laffey** (9-3, 3.08) was named the Most Valuable Pitcher while **Luis Rivas** (.261, 10 HR, 42 RBI) was given the Comeback Player of the Year award. RHP **Jeff Harris** (6-8, 4.74) was voted by his teammates as the Most Inspirational Player.

MARTE EARNS SECOND WEEKLY AWARD: For the second time this year, infielder **Andy Marte** was named IL Batter-of-the-Week. Marte hit .409 with three homers and 10 RBI last week, but that has just been a part of his resurgence. Marte has hit in 23 of his last 27 games with a .320 (32-100) average. In that span, the third baseman has also hit five doubles, five homers and driven in 17 runs.

CHARLOTTE KNIGHTS

WE'RE TALKING ABOUT PRACTICE: You wouldn't know it by watching him play, but before signing with the White Sox on August 7 and being sent to Charlotte, outfielder **Alex Sanchez** hadn't played in a game since spring training. Sanchez had been practicing and working out on his own since the end of spring training. It looks like the practice is paying off. Sanchez went 3-5 last night and raised his batting average to .364 through 18 games. The left-handed hitting Sanchez is also gaining the confidence of manager **Marc Bombard** who usually will sit left-handed hitters against left-handed starting pitchers. Sanchez has started against the last two left handed starters.

DEFENSIVE LEADERS: With less than a week left in the 2007 season, a couple of Knights players will likely lead the International League in fielding percentage at their position when it's all said and done. First baseman **Casey Rogowski** has made just 3 errors in 117 games at first base, good for a fielding percentage of .997. Outfielder **Ryan Sweeney** has had an even better year with the glove. Sweeney has been flawless through 110 games in the outfield. He has not made a single error on the year and has a fielding percentage of 1.000. He also has 13 outfield assists.

KNIGHTS SET SEASON HIGH WIN STREAK: The Knights won five straight games from August 23 vs. Norfolk to August 27 at Richmond. The team has certainly done everything possible to make it interesting. There has been a 1-0 shutout that included a nail biting 9th inning. Also, there were back-to-back walk-off wins against Norfolk. The first win came courtesy of a game tying two run double in the 9th by **Casey Rogowski**. Rogowski was then driven in for the win by **Kenny Perez**. The next night the Knights won thanks to a wild pitch that allowed the winning run to score in the bottom of the 9th. The fifth win was no different as the Knights rallied to score 3 runs in the 8th inning to tie the game and then won it extra innings.

TIDBITS: After allowing 5 runs in a third of an inning on August 15 at Durham, **Shaun Babula** has now pitched 7.1 scoreless innings...**Earl Snyder** has played in 60 consecutive games, and everyday a game was scheduled since joining the team.

COLUMBUS CLIPPERS

CASTRO RUNNING TO THE TOP: **Bernie Castro's** steal of second base last night, his 33rd of the season and 10th in the last 12 games, has tied him with Pawtucket's **Jacoby Ellsbury** and Rochester's **Darnell McDonald** for the League lead. **Scott Pose** was the last Clipper to lead the IL in stolen bases when he stole 47 in 1998. Castro has been successful on 17 of his 20 attempts since the All-Star break, including swiping four bases on August 23 vs. Louisville. He is the first Clipper to steal 30 bases in a season since **Kerry Robinson** nabbed 37 in 2000. Castro needs three more steals to crack the top 10 of most steals by a Clipper in a season and 10 more to break into the top 10 all-time.

QUITE A FIRST IMPRESSION: **Beltran Perez** picked up the win in Tuesday night's game, his first as a Clipper. Perez was the 37th pitcher Columbus has used this season and the 23rd different starter. He became the 7th Columbus player to win in his Clippers debut this season, following **Billy Traber** (April 8 at Indianapolis), **Anastacio Martinez** (May 8 at Buffalo), **John Lannan** (June 22 vs. Ottawa), **Jonathan Albaladejo** (July 24 vs. Indianapolis), **Josh Hall** (July 28 vs. Pawtucket) and **Matt Chico** (August 22 vs. Louisville).

ALL BY MYSELF: With five games to go, **Brandon Harper** has a chance to be the only Clipper this year to be on the active roster every day of the season. Five other players join him in being on the Clippers roster all season (**Juan Brito**, **Larry Broadway**, **Bernie Castro**, **Chris Michalak** and **Abraham Nunez**). However, Brito, Broadway, Michalak and Nunez spent time on the DL and Castro started the year on the temporarily inactive list.

DURHAM BULLS

DIVISION PLAYOFF RACE: The Bulls are now 1.0 game ahead of Richmond in the South Division with five games left. Until August 21, the Bulls had not led in the South since April 10. If Richmond wins tonight against the Bulls though (the last meeting this season between the two clubs), the Braves will take over 1st by less than a percentage point, and will control their own destiny with one series remaining for both teams (Durham vs. Charlotte, Richmond vs. Norfolk). The Bulls will play, at most, 143 games because of a rainout at Pawtucket in May. Richmond will play, at most, 141 games, which is why the Braves win by less than a percentage point in the case of a virtual tie. Durham is trying to win the division for the first time since 2003. Richmond, Charlotte and Norfolk have each won the division in the last three years. The year 2004 was the last time the Bulls made the playoffs (as the Wild Card).

RECORD SAFE: Current Scranton/Wilkes-Barre pitching coach **Dave Eiland** won 13 games in the first season of Bulls Triple-A baseball in 1998, and it still is Durham's Triple-A record. **Mitch Talbot**, last night's starter, and **Jeff Niemann** each have a chance to tie that mark with one start apiece in the last series against Charlotte. Talbot had a chance to break the record before yesterday's 2-1 defeat at Richmond.

RECORD SHATTERED: LHP **J.P. Howell** will have a chance to add to his record tomorrow. He has struck out 135 batters with the Bulls. The previous single-season Triple-A record was 125 set in 1998 by **Brad Pennington**. Howell's total also leads the International League, even though he's also made eight starts for Tampa Bay.

GOING DEEP: Durham has 142 homers but just one on their current six-game road trip through the state of Virginia. Five Bulls, **Wes Bankston**, **Joel Guzman**, **Elliott Johnson**, **Justin Ruggiano**, and **Chris Richard**, have gone into double figures, and **Jason Pridie** now has nine. Ruggiano has 19 to lead the club.

ALL-STAR HONORS: Outfielder **Justin Ruggiano** was named to the IL Postseason All-Star team this week. Ruggiano is in the top five in the League in hits, batting average, runs scored, stolen bases, slugging percentage and on-base percentage. He's also one homer shy of becoming the first Triple-A Bull to hit 20 homers and steal 20 bases in a season. The last Bull to hit 20 homers and steal 20 bases in a season was in 1986 when **Ron Gant** hit 26 homers and stole 35 bases in the Carolina League.

INDIANAPOLIS INDIANS

ZACH DUKE COMING ON REHAB: Pirates left-hander **Zach Duke** will make a Major League rehabilitation start for Indianapolis on Saturday night at Victory Field. Duke posted a 3-7 record and 5.79 ERA in 17 big league starts from April 2-June 28. The 24-year-old was placed on the disabled list July 1 with tendonitis in his left elbow. Duke was named the International League's Most Valuable Pitcher in 2005 after turning in a 12-3 record and 2.92 ERA in 14 starts for the Indians. He was invited to both the Triple-A All-Star Game and All-Star Futures Game that season.

A GREAT RUN ABOVE .500: Indianapolis heads into Thursday night's affair with a 69-69 overall record. In three seasons as a Pittsburgh Pirates affiliate, the Tribe has spent 440 of 448 days (98%) at .500 or better. The streak includes 281 consecutive in-season days from April 22, 2006 to Aug. 28, 2007.

BIG GAMES, BIG CROWDS: The Indians have averaged 9,752 fans per game over their last 31 home dates. The Tribe ranks 6th in the 14-team International League with an attendance average of 8,244 through 67 openings this season.

A TALENTED ROOKIE: Tribe 1B/RF **Steven Pearce** ranks among the Minor League leaders in total bases (2nd - 303), slugging percentage (T-2nd - .634), RBI (3rd - 113), extra-base hits (T-3rd - 75) and home runs (T-5th - 31). Before his first Triple-A promotion on July 30, the 24-year-old 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.

3-FOR-3, THAT'S ME: Indians 2B **Yurendell de Caster** and RF **Brad Eldred** both went 3-3 with two runs and a pair of RBI in the opener of Monday night's doubleheader. It was de Caster's eighth three-hit performance of the season and Eldred's sixth.

LOUISVILLE BATS

PRETTY IN PINK: The Louisville Bats players and coaches wore special pink jerseys Tuesday night that were signed and are currently being auctioned off on the Bats website, www.batsbaseball.com, for one week. The proceeds from the auction, which ends September 3 at midnight, will benefit The Louisville Affiliate of the Susan G. Komen for the Cure.

IL POSTSEASON AWARDS: With 1B/OF **Joey Votto** (Rookie-of-the-Year, first base) and INF **Aaron Herr** (top utility player) selected to the International League's Postseason All-Star Team, Louisville has multiple representatives for the first time since 2002 when **Raul Gonzalez** (IL MVP) and **Kevin Witt** were named to the postseason team. Votto's 90 RBI are 2nd in the League to MVP **Mike Hessman's** 100, and he is approaching his career high of 92 set in 2004 between Class-A Dayton and Potomac; he has already matched his single-season high of 22 home runs. Votto is the third Louisville player in franchise history to win a League Rookie-of-the-Year Award. He joins **Lance Johnson** (1987) and **Todd Zeile** (1989) who won the American Association's ROY. Herr split time between second and third base this season and has driven in a career-high 82 runs, trailing only Hessman and Votto in RBI. This is Herr's first full season in Triple-A as he played in just 19 games with the Bats in 2006.

ODDS & ENDS: With a current record of 16-13, the Bats are guaranteed a winning August for the first time since 2001 (16-13)...With last night's 4-2 win in 11 innings, the Bats have now played in a League-leading 23 extra-inning games (9-14)...Bats Manager **Rick Sweet** (211-215, .495 winning percentage, 2005-present) moved past **Joe Pettini** (208-222 record, 1994-96 seasons) and into 4th place on Louisville's all-time managerial wins list with 211 victories. He is one win shy of tying **Mike Jorgensen's** 212-215 mark set during the 1987-89 seasons. **Dave Miley**, the newly named IL Manager-of-the-Year for Scranton/Wilkes-Barre, is the franchise leader with 296 victories.

NORFOLK TIDES

HIT MAN: Tides infielder **Mike Cervenak** has an International League leading 153 hits this season. Cervenak is just one hit shy of his career-high of 154 hits (set in 2005 with Triple-A Fresno), and 2007 is the sixth time in the last seven seasons that he has accumulated at least 125 hits in a season. If Cervenak continues his hold on the IL lead, he would be the first Tide to lead the IL in hits in a season since **Matt Franco** led the League with 164 in 1996. Norfolk's franchise record for hits in a year is 170, set by **Kevin Elster** in 1987.

HIT MEN: The Tides have had four players pick up at least 100 hits this season: **Mike Cervenak** - 153, **Terry Tiffie** - 126, **J.R. House** - 125, and **Eider Torres** - 105. All four of those batters have collected more hits than Norfolk's team leader from a year ago, when **Anderson Hernandez** led the team with 103 base hits. As a team, the Tides have connected for 1,201 hits this season (in 139 games), which is already 117 more hits than the 2006 club registered in 141 games.

NO PLACE LIKE HOME: Tides' catcher **Alberto Castillo** has reached base safely in 28 consecutive home games, a streak that started on May 18 and is the 5th-longest streak of reaching base at home in the IL this year. Castillo has also hit safely in each of his last 15 home games, hitting .354 (17-48) with an on-base percentage of .426 over that stretch. The 15-game hit streak is tied for the 5th-longest home hitting streak in the IL this year.

OTTAWA LYNX

CHASE FOR 1,000 WINS HEATS UP: With 53 wins this season, the Lynx stand at 999 regular season wins in team history. Ottawa has played 137 games this season, which means the club needs one win in their last six games to reach the 1,000-win plateau. The Lynx finish off the regular season with six games at home: tonight's doubleheader against Rochester and four games against Syracuse August 31 to September 3.

BURNHAM'S BAT LEADS LYNX: Lynx slugger **Gary Burnham** currently sits at 82 runs batted in for the season. That leaves him only 3 RBI short of tying the club record, set by **Shane Andrews** in 1994. Burnham can break the record with four runs batted in over the last six games. Burnham has already driven in 25 runs in August and he carries a .307 average this month. The Lynx cleanup hitter is also only one double short of the team record, set by **Derek Lee** in 1994 and can tie the team record for games played in one season if he plays in each of the final six games.

AUGUST POWER SURGE: The Lynx have hit 13 home runs in 27 games this month. That is more than they hit in all of April (1 HR in 20 games) and in May (8 HR in 31 games) combined. **Gary Burnham** has five of those home runs, while **Brennan King** and **Matt Padgett** have two of their own. **Jim Rushford**, **Joe Thurston**, **Gookie Dawkins** and **Danny Sandoval's** home runs account for the rest.

LIGHTS, CAMERA, TRANSACTIONS: There was another flurry of activity on the Lynx roster in advance of September promotions. RHP **Brian Sanches** and RHP **John Ennis** were both recalled by the Phillies, with LHP **Fabio Castro** coming back from Philly. OF **Pedro Swann** and INF **Carlos Leon** were transferred to Double-A Reading, with RHP **Bubba Nelson** and RHP **Jason Anderson** coming to Ottawa before Swann's return from Reading a day later and Nelson's transfer back to Reading.

PAWTUCKET RED SOX

THESE ARE A FEW OF MY FAVORITE THINGS: Although the PawSox will most likely finish with a losing record this season (unless they go 6-0 in their final 6 games to reach the .500 mark), they are as popular as ever off of the field as a capacity crowd jammed McCoy Stadium the other night to get a coveted PawSox Team Card Set. All fans on hand received this collector's edition PawSox Baseball Card Set. Always one of the most popular items of the season, the limited edition 2007 PawSox Card Set featured full color action photos of favorites such as **Jacoby Ellsbury**, **Brandon Moss**, **Clay Buchholz**, **Manny Delcarmen**, and **Jon Lester** just to name a few. As always, each player listed their "favorites" on the back of their card and we are pleased to share some of our favorites with you. Manager **Ron Johnson** says his Favorite Hobby is "riding his horse" (poor horse!). Pitching Coach **Mike Griffin** and Hitting Coach **Mark Budaska** both list their Best Friend in Baseball as "Ron Johnson" (way to suck up Griff and Buda!). Several PawSox players had some interesting answers as well. Pitcher **Abe Alvarez** and 1B **Jeff Bailey** both answered "Jessica Alba" as their Favorite Celebrity while pitchers **Clay Buchholz**, **Mike Burns**, and **Charlie Zink** referred to another Jessica ("Jessica Biel") as their Favorite Celebrity. Pitchers **Craig Breslow** and **Bryan Corey** like a pair of famous voices as they placed "Vin Scully" and "Keith Jackson" as their Favorite Sportscasters respectively while closer **Travis Hughes** went with a more infamous (?) mouth in "Dick Vitale" as his Favorite Sportscaster. Catcher **George Kottaras**, a Canadian native, went outside the country (and North America for that matter) with his Favorite City of "Athens, Greece" (George played on the Greek Olympic baseball team a few years back). The Favorite Food of LHP **Jon Lester** is "Sushi" and appropriately enough his Favorite Hobby is "Fishing". INF **Jed Lowrie** lists his Favorite Athlete as fellow Stanford University alum "Tiger Woods" while veteran INF **Joe McEwing** lists his Favorite Movie as "The Godfather" and his Favorite Musical Artist as "Frank Sinatra". OF **Brandon Moss** and RHP **David Pauley** both gave a popular choice for Favorite Video Game: "Guitar Hero". INF/OFF **Bobby Scales** remained true to his school (the University of Michigan) by responding to his Favorite Sports Moment as "The 1997 Rose Bowl when Michigan defeated Washington State".

PAW PRINTS: **Jacoby Ellsbury**, Pawtucket's terrific young (23) outfield prospect, extended his franchise-record hitting streak to 24 straight games on Wednesday night – the second-longest in the International League this season behind **Brandon Watson's** 43-game hitting streak earlier this year...A pair of newcomers joined the PawSox last week – one an unfamiliar name who may be on the verge of making his Major League debut while the other is quite familiar with virtually every organization in the big leagues. **Chris Carter**, 24, is a slugging first baseman who was acquired from Washington (via Tucson) in a trade for Red Sox OF **Wily Mo Pena** on August 21. The left-handed-hitting Carter had spent the entire season at Arizona's Triple-A Tucson club, batting .324 with 18 homers and 84 RBI in 126 games. He led the Pacific Coast League in hits (163), was tied for 2nd in doubles (39), ranked 5th in batting, and 9th in RBI. Chris had a fine season in 2006 as well when he hit .301 with 19 homers and 87 RBI in 136 games at Tucson. **Royce Clayton**, 37, has already played for 10 different Major League clubs (an all-time record for a shortstop) with more than 2,000 Major League games under his belt. He was signed by the Red Sox as a free agent last week after being released by Toronto in early August. If he is promoted to Boston this September it would be his 11th Major League stop leaving him one behind former pitcher **Mike Morgan** for most teams played for in the big leagues. Clayton has played for San Francisco (1991-95), St. Louis (1996-98), Texas (1998-2000), the White Sox (2001-02), Milwaukee (2003), Colorado (2004), Arizona (2005), Washington (2006), Cincinnati (2006), and Toronto (2007) and has a career batting average of .258 in 2,100 big league games.

RICHMOND BRAVES

SIX DEGREES OF JULIO FRANCO: **Julio Franco** is six players removed by teammates from the player who had the first hit in the history of professional baseball (**Deacon White** of the Cleveland Forest Cities doubled in the 1st inning against Ft. Wayne in the opening game of the first professional baseball league, the National Association, May 4, 1871). White played with **Sam Thompson** from 1886-1888 with the Detroit Wolverines. Thompson played with **Charlie O'Leary** in 1906 with the Detroit Tigers. O'Leary played with **Bobo Newsom** on the 1934 St. Louis Browns. Newsom and **Yogi Berra** were teammates in 1947 with the New York Yankees. Berra and **Tug McGraw** played together in 1965 with the New York Mets. McGraw played with Franco on the 1982 Philadelphia Phillies.

HIT ME ONE TIME: INF **Wes Timmons** set a Braves club record Sunday when he was hit by a pitched ball for the 18th time this season. He broke the record of 17 set by **Ed Miller** in 1979. Miller led the IL in hit by pitched balls three times as a member of the R-Braves. Timmons now has 19. The Braves have been hit with a club record 71 pitches this season.

FATHER TIME: INF **Julio Franco** joined Richmond from Class-A Rome Tuesday. Franco, who opened the season with the Mets and Atlanta, is the oldest regular position player in Major League Baseball history. He turned 49 last week. Franco is playing Minor League ball for the first time since a playoff stint with Durham in 1999. He is in his 30th season of professional baseball. Six members of the R-Braves were born after Franco made his MLB debut April 22, 1982 (**Zach Schreiber**, **Brent Lillibridge**, **Martin Prado**, **Brandon Jones**, **Gregor Blanco**, and **Dan Smith**). Only four current R-Braves were born before Franco made his pro ball debut with Butte (MT) of the Pioneer League in 1978 (**Doug Clark**, **Larry Bigbie**, **Chad Paronto**, and **Carlos Mendez**).

BRIGHT STARTS: Braves starters have worked five-plus innings in four straight games for the first time since the rotation worked five-plus innings in eight straight games from July 8-17. Richmond starters have an ERA of 2.28 in the last four games (six ER in 23.2 IP).

ROCHESTER RED WINGS

TURNSTILE TANGO: Monday night's attendance of 11,553 brought the Red Wings attendance total for 2007 to 436,075. If Rochester can average 7,000 fans their last four home games the Red Wings would draw 464,075 (with five rainouts) which would be the highest regular season attendance total since 1999 when the Wings drew 481,037 fans to Frontier Field.

KING OF THE SAVES HILL: Red Wings closer **Bobby Korecky** has 35 saves which is a new Red Wings all-time saves record for saves in a season. Korecky is on pace to record 37 saves which would be one shy of the International League record for saves in a season (current record is 38 set by Richmond Braves RHP **Matt Whiteside** in 2004). Korecky's 35th save on Monday was the Red Wings 44th save this season which sets a new franchise record for saves in a season (surpasses the 1997 Red Wings bullpen which had 43 saves). This is only the second time the Red Wings have had more than 40 saves in a season (1997 & 2007). Saves became an official stat in the International League in 1969.

HOME IS WHERE THE WINS ARE: The Red Wings home record this season is 40-28. This is only the fourth time Rochester has reached the 40-win mark at Frontier Field since the stadium opened in 1997 (1997: 49-22, 2005: 41-31, and 2006: 42-29). Rochester needs three more home wins (four games remaining) to have their best home record since 1997 (49-22 record).

SCRANTON/WILKES-BARRE YANKEES

MAGIC NUMBER ONE: The magic number for the Yankees to clinch the division over Rochester is one thanks to the Yankees win last night and the rainout of the Rochester vs. Ottawa game. Buffalo was eliminated from the division race after their 7-6 loss to Pawtucket. Under normal circumstances, a magic number of one would guarantee a team no worse than a tie for the division title, but because the Yankees lost a game on the schedule due to rain, they need the magic number to be zero to ensure they finish the season ½ game ahead of Rochester. Six Yankees losses and six Red Wings wins would give the title to Rochester by ½ game.

CRUZ CONTROL: After a nearly one-month layoff, **Jose Cruz's** swing was a little rusty when he first signed with the Yankees but it is quickly becoming obvious why he spent so many seasons in the big leagues. The veteran slugger has now hit safely in eight of his last nine games going 14-35 (.400) with four doubles, 1 HR and 5 RBI.

WHAT A MONTH: What a month August has been. The Yankees win last night improved their record to 20-10 in August. This includes an amazing 16-3 at PNC Field. Not only are the 16 wins a new franchise mark for home wins in one month it is also as many or more wins than 83 other months combining home and road totals. If the Yankees can win tonight, it will give them 21 wins in a month establishing a new franchise record. They reached 20 wins on eight previous occasions. The other 20-win months were: August 1992 (20-8), June 1995 (20-10), July 2001 (20-8), June 2002 (20-9), August 2002 (20-11), June 2004 (20-8) and July 2006 (20-9).

SYRACUSE CHIEFS

A NIGHT TO FORGET: The Chiefs finished out a six-games-in-four-days stretch with a record night of sloppiness on the defensive side of the ball. Syracuse committed 10 errors, setting a modern franchise record for most errors in one game. The Chiefs' 10 miscues were the most in 42 years in the International League, dating back to May 11, 1965 when Rochester had 10 errors. Despite all the E's, the Chiefs still had a chance to win the ballgame that they eventually lost in 10 innings 12-10 to Ottawa.

MAKING UP FOR THE MISCUES: After committing 10 errors Sunday against Ottawa the Chiefs left the scene of the crime for two days to play in Buffalo, but the Chiefs returned to Alliance Bank Stadium last night with an "Error Free Guarantee." The Chiefs did not commit an error against Scranton/Wilkes-Barre, meaning every fan in attendance for last night's game could redeem their ticket stub for a free ticket to tonight's home finale versus the Yankees.

LUNA LANDING: SS **Hector Luna** has played 14 games with the Chiefs, including last night's tilt with the Yankees. Luna went hitless in his Chiefs debut but responded by picking up a base hit in 12 straight games (to tie a season-high for the Chiefs). Luna tied former Chief **Jeff Duncan** for the longest Chiefs hitting streak in 2007. Luna batted .444 (20-45) during the streak which included seven multi-hit games. Unfortunately the streak came to an end last night with a 0-for-4 night at the dish.

END OF THE ROAD: Tonight the Chiefs finish off the home portion of their 2007 schedule when they face off against Scranton/Wilkes-Barre. Syracuse has put together a better than .500 record at Alliance Bank Stadium, going 37-34 heading into the final home game tonight. The Chiefs finish off the year with four games in Ottawa.

GOODBYE ARTIFICIAL TURF: The last entire artificial turf field in professional baseball will see its final game tonight. Starting Tuesday the AstroTurf at Alliance Bank Stadium is scheduled to begin to be ripped out. The entire process is expected to take roughly two months to remove the turf and what is underneath it before replacing it with natural grass.

TOLEDO MUD HENS

MIKE HESSMAN – MOST VALUABLE PLAYER: The 29-year-old Hessman was a major contributor on Toledo's Governors' Cup Champion teams of 2005 and 2006, but his effort this season may be the best of his 12-year professional career. Hessman has already achieved personal highs in home runs and RBI, and his batting average is nearly 90 points better than a year ago. His 16th homer this year, hit back on June 1 at Buffalo, made him the all-time home run king in Toledo baseball history, now with 83 home runs as a Mud Hen. He leads the League in home runs (31), and RBI (100), despite a promotion to Detroit that lasted nearly three weeks in July and early August. 2007 is Hessman's third season with the Hens, and his sixth in the International League. He played for the Richmond Braves from 2002 to 2004. Hessman was a member of the Atlanta organization for the first nine years of his career before signing with Detroit as a free agent following the 2004 season. Hessman has played 57 games in the Major Leagues, including nine with the Tigers this season. In addition, the slugger was selected to the International League mid-season All-Star team for the Triple-A All-Star Game. Hessman was 1-2 in the game with a home run and 2 RBI, helping pace the IL to a 7-5 victory.

PEREZ NAMED TO THE IL POSTSEASON ALL-STAR TEAM: Mud Hens OF/DH **Timo Perez** shares the outfield spots with **Ben Francisco** of Buffalo and **Justin Ruggiano** of Durham. The 32-year-old Perez has been one of the IL's top offensive threats all season. He also stole the show at the Triple-A All-Star Game in Albuquerque, going 3-4 with a double and 2 RBI and was named the IL's "Top Star".

PEREZ BREAKS DOUBLES RECORD: With a 4th-inning double August 21 versus Indianapolis, **Timo Perez** broke the record for most doubles in a single season in modern-era history with 39 (1965-present). Current Buffalo Bisons manager **Torey Lovullo** socked 38 for the Mud Hens in 1990. The leader in all of Toledo baseball history is **Erve Beck**, who smacked 73 doubles in 1900. It was Beck who formerly held the all-time home run record for Toledo at 67, until **Mike Hessman** surpassed that mark June 1 at Buffalo.

GIMME TEN: The Mud Hens are currently the only IL team with four ten-game winners on their active roster. Right-handers **Ron Chiavacci** (12-6, 3.39), **Virgil Vasquez** (12-5, 3.48), **Yorman Bazardo** (10-6, 3.75) and **Dennis Tankersley** (10-7, 4.58) have all achieved double digit victories this season. Chiavacci set his career high in wins this season, his previous high coming with Class-A Jupiter (Montreal Expos) in the Florida State League in 2000 where he went 11-11 in 26 starts. This is Vasquez's first season at the Triple-A level, after he went just 7-12 for Double-A Erie in the Eastern League a season ago. His career high in wins came in 2004, going 14-6 for West Michigan of the Class-A Midwest League. Bazardo, in his first season with the Tigers (has appeared in five games out of the bullpen for Detroit in '07) also set a career high for wins this season, surpassing his previous mark of 9-8 in 21 starts for Greensboro (Florida Marlins) of the Class-A South Atlantic League in 2003. Tankersley is also a ten-game winner for the first time, winning nine or more games in a season for the second time after going 9-8 for Triple-A Omaha (Kansas City Royals) of the Pacific Coast League in 2005. Tankersley is also in his first season with the Tigers.