



International League News & Notes

March 20, 2008



BUFFALO BISONS

SPRING RECAP: The Bisons are 2-2 through the first four games of their 12-game exhibition schedule. The team has split a pair of games with the Pacific Coast League's Round Rock Express while defeating Richmond 11-1 on Monday and falling to Toledo 12-8 over the weekend.

IN MVP FORM: First baseman **Ryan Mulhern** has picked up in spring training right where he left off in 2007. In the team's first four spring games, Mulhern is hitting .700 (7-10) with five doubles and four RBI. In a March 15 exhibition game against Toledo in Winter Haven, FL, Mulhern went 4-4 with three doubles and two RBI. Last season, Mulhern hit .290 while leading the team with 36 doubles and 76 RBI. After the season, he was named the Bisons Stan Baron Most Valuable Player.

HERD ROSTER STARTING TO TAKE SHAPE: The Cleveland Indians have made a series of roster reductions from their camp, filling in spots on the Bisons team. On Saturday the team got their closer as RHP **Edward Mujica** was optioned. Mujica led the staff with 14 saves in 2007. Catcher **Wyatt Toregas** is now with the Bisons for his Triple-A debut. Toregas led the Double-A Eastern League by throwing out 52% of would-be base stealers in 2007. The starting rotation is also being filled as RHP **Adam Miller** and RHP **Brian Slocum** were optioned from the Tribe.

CHARLOTTE KNIGHTS

MORE THAN JUST A NAME: He was previously known for just being a guy with a last name that was hard to pronounce. Soon, **Jason Bourgeois** may be known as a member of the Chicago White Sox. The versatile Bourgeois (pronounced Boo-j-wah) has taken advantage of every opportunity in Tucson this spring. He has played in 16 games this spring going 12-36 (.343) with a .452 on-base percentage. Bourgeois has also been able to show off his speed by going 3-for-4 in stolen base attempts.

ALSO IMPRESSIVE THIS SPRING: Outfielder **Miguel Negron** is showing off his potential, hitting .321 in Cactus League play. The former first round pick has gone 9-28 with 3 RBI in 14 games. Negron still remains in big league camp, and is looking to play himself into contention for a reserve outfield spot. Pitcher **Adam Russell** has been impressive in Arizona the last two springs. Russell will begin the season in Charlotte after being officially optioned to the Knights on March 14. However, he has made a favorable impression and is thought to be one of the top bullpen arms in the organization after striking out 16 batters over 16 innings in the Cactus League the last two seasons.

FIELDS RETURNING?: It is looking more and more as if 2006 IL Rookie of the Year **Josh Fields** will begin the season with the Knights. It will be the third consecutive season that Fields has started with Charlotte. Fields is caught up in a log jam with the White Sox as the third baseman still sits behind former Knight **Joe Crede** on the depth chart. Fields played in 100 games for the White Sox last season, setting a White Sox rookie record with 23 home runs.

COLUMBUS CLIPPERS

IF YOU CAN'T BEAT 'EM, MAKE 'EM JOIN YOU: RHP **Tyler Clippard**, acquired from the New York Yankees in December for RHP **Jonathan Albaladejo**, was optioned to Columbus on March 10. Last season Clippard spent time in Double-A, Triple-A and the Majors, making his Major League debut with the Yankees on May 20. He went 3-1 in six starts for the Yankees. With the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Yankees, Clippard was 2-0 with a 2.53 ERA in two starts against the Clippers last year. In 2006, as a member of the Trenton Thunder, Clippard beat Harrisburg (Washington's Double-A affiliate) twice. The first win was an 8.0-inning, 1-hit, 11-strikeout performance on July 4 with the second win coming on August 17 via a no-hitter. In his career, he is 4-1 with a 1.10 ERA and 34 strikeouts in 32.2 innings against Nationals affiliates. The 23-year old from Lexington, Kentucky has pitched for the Clippers once before when he was with the Yankees organization in 2005. He tossed 1.0 perfect inning and punched out two batters in one appearance.

CATCHING CONDITION CLOUDY: The Nationals reassigned **Humberto Cota** to minor league camp yesterday; however, Cota refused the assignment, allowing him to become a free agent, leaving the catching duties in Columbus up in the air. Washington had previously released **Chad Moeller** back on March 10. **Johnny Estrada** is expected to start the season on the DL, meaning **Wil Nieves** will probably be the backup to **Paul Lo Duca** in Washington. Budding star **Jesus Flores** is expected to spend the season in Double-A Harrisburg under the tutelage of manager **John Stearns**, a former All-Star catcher for the New York Mets.

ESCOBAR ACCEPTS ASSIGNMENT: Outfielder **Alex Escobar** was also reassigned to minor league camp yesterday. Last season Escobar played in seven games for the Clippers, rehabbing from surgery on his right shoulder. Escobar hit .148 (4-27) with a double and an RBI for Columbus.

DURHAM BULLS

GOOD NEWS FOR CHARLIE: Bulls Manager **Charlie Montoyo** is reporting to minor league camp this week, after his son was released from UCLA Medical Center on Friday of last week. Alexander Montoyo had spent the first five months of his life at hospitals in Tucson, Phoenix and Los Angeles because of a rare heart defect called Ebstein's Anomaly, which resulted in two open heart surgeries. Additional procedures are expected later this season. However, until the past month, Alexander Montoyo was unable to breath on his own.

QUITE A TURNAROUND: **Elliot Johnson** had quite an adjustment to Triple-A last year, hitting .207 after he was *Baseball America's* All-Star second baseman in 2006 at the Double-A level. However, this year Johnson has taken off, hitting .469 in spring training with the Rays. He's now in the hunt for a utility job with Tampa Bay.

ON THE MEND: Several injuries in Tampa Bay's major league camp could impact Durham's opening day roster. OF **Rocco Baldelli** is out indefinitely with metabolic and/or mitochondrial abnormalities that led him to be fatigued after only a brief workout. LHP **Scott Kazmir** is expected to start the year on the DL with an elbow injury, and UTIL **Ben Zobrist** also may start the year on the DL because of a hairline fracture of the tip of his left thumb. Meanwhile, LHP **Brian Anderson**, who was with the Rays organization on a minor league contract, is retiring after suffering a serious elbow injury for the third time in three years.

OPTIONED SO FAR: A number of players have been sent to minor league camp that should be with the Bulls come Opening Day at Toledo on April 3. RHP **Jaek Kuk Ryu**, **Mitch Talbot** and **Chris Mason** all are expected to be in the Bulls rotation. Ryu and Talbot were both in Durham's rotation a year ago, while Mason won 16 games for Montgomery. In addition, OF **Justin Ruggiano**, a postseason All-Star last year in the International League, also has been optioned to Durham. The Rays still have 45 players in MLB camp, and that includes the injured Baldelli, Kazmir and Zobrist.

INDIANAPOLIS INDIANS

TIME FOR ROSTER MOVES: The Pittsburgh Pirates have made 11 roster moves in the past week. RHP **Bryan Bullington**, INF **Brian Bixler**, 1B/RF **Steve Pearce** and RHP **Ty Taubenheim** were optioned to Triple-A Indianapolis on Monday. RHP **T.J. Beam**, INF **Luis Cruz**, OF **Andrew McCutchen**, RHP **Brian Rogers**, RHP **Marino Salas** and INF **Neil Walker** were re-assigned to Minor League camp the same day. Then, on Tuesday, RHP **John Van Benschoten** was optioned to the Indians.

TRIPLE-A SPRING TRAINING GAMES: The Indians own a 1-3-1 record through five Triple-A Spring Training games. The Tribe returns to action on Thursday afternoon against Pawtucket.

MAKING THE TRIPLE-A CLUB PROUD: 1B/RF **Steve Pearce** leads all Pirates with four HR and 10 RBI in 16 big league exhibition games, while LHP **Sean Burnett** has posted a 1.13 ERA in six relief appearances. Both players played in Indianapolis during the 2007 campaign.

WHEN DOES THE REGULAR SEASON BEGIN?: Indianapolis opens its regular season on April 3 at Pawtucket. The eight-game road trip includes four games against the Red Sox (April 3-6) and four contests vs. the Syracuse Chiefs (April 7-10).

LEHIGH VALLEY IRONPIGS

EVEN STEVEN: After their first eight Minor League Spring Training games (through March 19), the Triple-A Phillies are an even 3-3 with two ties. The team started by losing its first two games. This was followed by a three-game winning streak and a two-game tie streak.

SOUTHPAW SUCCESS, PART 1: LHP **J.A. Happ**, a member of the Phillies' 40-Man roster and a likely member of the IronPigs Opening Day rotation, has gotten off to a fast start this spring. In his first two appearances, Happ has allowed only two hits and one run in 7.0 innings while walking three and fanning three. Although his numbers weren't spectacular with Ottawa in 2007 (4-6, 5.02 ERA in 24 GS), the 3rd-round pick in 2004 shot up through the organization with a very effective 2006. The former Northwestern Wildcat started that year in Class-A with Clearwater and was a mid-season Florida State League All-Star prior to his promotion (2.81 ERA in 13 GS). His success continued at Double-A, going 6-2 with a 2.65 ERA in 12 GS with the Reading Phillies. He ended his season with one start at Triple-A, earning a win in a six-inning, one-run performance with Scranton/Wilkes-Barre. *Baseball America* ranks Happ as the No. 11 Prospect in the Phillies organization.

SOUTHPAW SUCCESS, PART 2: Another potential member of the IronPigs rotation off to a fast start is LHP **Brian Mazone**. The 31-year-old California native went the first three innings in a four-hit shutout of the Triple-A Blue Jays on March 13 and, like Happ, has only allowed just two hits and one run in 7.0 innings of work. He has issued five walks while striking out four batters. Mazone spent the bulk of 2007 pitching for the Samsung Lions of the Korean League after a strong start with the Ottawa Lynx (3-2, 2.21 ERA in 6 GS).

FAMILIAR FACES: It is quite possible that early in the season the IronPigs could post a starting lineup that features eight starters that have appeared in the International League -- but with different Major League affiliates: C **Pete LaForest** (Durham 2002-05), 1B **Andy Tracy** (Ottawa 2000-01, 2006; Norfolk 2002), 2B **Joey Hammond** (Rochester 2002); SS **Gookie Dawkins** (Louisville 2002; Toledo 2005; Indianapolis 2007), 3B **Mike Cervenak** (Norfolk 2007); OF **Brandon Watson** (Louisville 2006; Columbus 2007); OF **T.J. Bohn** (Richmond 2007) and starting RHP **Ron Chiavacci** (Indianapolis 2005-06; Toledo 2007).

LOUISVILLE BATS

BATS START OFF HOT IN SPRING PLAY: Louisville reeled off four straight victories over the Indians, Tides, Paw Sox and Red Wings to start play in spring training. **Chris Michalak**, **Adam Pettyjohn**, **Dave Gassner** and **Justin James** each recorded a win during the streak.

JOHNNY CUETO SHINES: The 2006 and 2007 Cincinnati Reds Minor League Pitcher of the Year is making a push to start his season at the Major League level. In four games this spring the right-hander has thrown 13.0 innings, allowed three earned runs, eight hits, walked four and struck out 12. The 13.0 innings pitched is tied for the staff lead with RHP **Josh Fogg** and RHP **Edinson Volquez**.

SALMON TRADED TO ROYALS: RHP **Brad Salmon**, who spent his 2007 campaign with Louisville and Cincinnati, was traded to the Kansas City Royals on Wednesday, March 19 in exchange for cash or a player to be named later. Salmon threw 43.0 innings for Louisville in 2007, en route to a 2-2 record, along with four saves and a 3.56 ERA.

NORFOLK TIDES

BABY BIRDS: Norfolk's Opening Day roster may be a very young one this season. The Tides pitching rotation looks like it may include **Garrett Olson** (24), **Radhames Liz** (24), **Hayden Penn** (23), and **Jim Johnson** (24), while the bullpen may consist of **Bob McCrory** (25), **Kam Mickolio** (23), **Fredy Deza** (25) and **Jim Hoey** (25). Position players **Eider Torres** (25), **Mike Costanzo** (24), **Scott Moore** (24), **Luis Hernandez** (23) and **Nolan Reimold** (24) may also start the season in Norfolk. The Orioles will most likely start the season with youngsters **Adam Loewen** (23), **Adam Jones** (22) and **Nick Markakis** (24) on the roster, and southpaw **Troy Patton** (22) would have most likely challenged for a spot had he not been shut down for the season due to a shoulder injury.

TIDES TO BE TELEVISED 20 TIMES IN 2008: WSKY-TV Channel 4 has announced a 20-game Norfolk Tides television package for the 2008 season. The first game of the season will be the Tides home opener on Thursday, April 3 against the Buffalo Bisons, with a broadcast time of 7:00 p.m. After televising eight games in 2007, WSKY-TV Channel 4 increased the 2008 broadcast package to include 20 games. 12 of the broadcasts will be road contests, with the other eight being broadcast from Harbor Park. "We are proud to be working with the Norfolk Tides once again and to have the opportunity to bring an expanded package of live home and road games to fans in Hampton Roads" said Glenn Holterhaus, WSKY-TV President / GM.

PAWTUCKET RED SOX

BASEBALL OVERSEAS: The Pawtucket Red Sox head into this season hoping to find the next **Kevin Youkilis & Jonathan Papelbon** (from 2005), **Dustin Pedroia** (from 2006), **Manny Delcarmen & Jon Lester** (from 2006-07), and **Clay Buchholz & Jacoby Ellsbury** (from 2007) – all of whom helped the Boston Red Sox win the 2007 World Series. Who may be next to join this list? Three position players expected to be key members of the PawSox Opening Day roster will instead first make a detour on their way to Pawtucket – a rather long detour in fact. OF **Brandon Moss**, SS **Jed Lowrie**, and C **Dusty Brown** left big league spring training camp in Ft. Myers, FL yesterday to fly to Japan with the rest of the Boston Red Sox. The trio will play for the Red Sox as part of their 30-player travel roster for the two exhibition games that will take place in Tokyo, Japan on March 22 and 23. Boston will play the Hanshin Tigers on March 22 and the Yomiuri Giants on March 23. The Red Sox will open the regular season in the Ricoh Japan Opening Series 2008 against the Oakland A's on Tuesday and Wednesday, March 25-26 at the Tokyo Dome with both games at 7:07 p.m. local time. For the A's games, the Red Sox will be allowed to have a 28-man opening day roster, with 25 of those players eligible for those two games. Boston will then cut down to the normal 25-man limit when it resumes the regular season on April 1 in Oakland.

RANDY ON THE MENU: The Pawtucket Red Sox, in conjunction with the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce, are pleased to announce that International League President **Randy Mobley** will serve as the featured speaker at the Chamber's Annual Pawtucket Red Sox "Welcome Home" Luncheon that will be held on Wednesday, April 2 at Noon at Kirkbrae Country Club in Lincoln, RI. The entire 2008 PawSox team will be in attendance at the luncheon, which is open to the public, just one day before they open the season with a game vs. Indianapolis on April 3.

RICHMOND BRAVES

FIRST CUTS: Atlanta announced the first group of players assigned from big league camp to Richmond March 13. Pitchers **Charlie Morton**, **Matt DeSalvo**, **Phil Stockman**, and **Zach Schreiber** were optioned to Richmond. Morton enjoyed an impressive stint in the Arizona Fall League with Peoria (4-1, 2.57). DeSalvo was the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Pitcher of the Year last season. Schreiber did not allow a run in 6.0 innings of relief in the Governors' Cup Playoffs last year. Stockman was injured much of last season but held Triple-A hitters to a .132 average in nine outings.

FIGHTING FOR JOBS: Several 2007 R-Braves are making strong spring bids to stick in Atlanta. CF **Gregor Blanco** is hitting .360 in 13 Grapefruit League games. INF **Martin Prado** (a 2007 IL Postseason All-Star) is hitting .333 in 18 games. C **Brayan Pena**, the 2007 Dominican Winter League MVP, is hitting .316 in 12 games. LHP **Francisley Bueno** is 1-0 with a 3.38 ERA in six appearances. RHP **Blaine Boyer** has an ERA of 2.70 in six outings.

HEADING EAST: Two key members of the 2007 R-Braves championship squad moved east to play their ball in 2008, the Far East that is. **Doug Clark**, whose sizzling second half and veteran leadership were instrumental in the Braves championship run, has signed with the Hanwha Eagles of the Korean Baseball Association. **Larry Bigbie**, who finished the year on a playoff tear, inked a deal with the Yokohama Bay Stars of the Japanese Central League. Clark led the R-Braves with 15 home runs and followed up by hitting .309 in the Mexican Pacific League. Bigbie hit .333 for the R-Braves in the playoffs and tied for the club lead in RBI with six.

ROCHESTER RED WINGS

LOOKING GOOD BILLY RAY: The Red Wings have played well so far this spring (4-1-1 record). If Rochester can win six of their last eight spring training games it would be their first 10-win spring training since 1999.

ROSTER TAKING SHAPE: The Red Wings roster is starting to take form. Pitchers **Bobby Korecky**, **Julio DePaula**, **Brian Duensing**, **Carmen Cali** and **Kevin Mulvey**, infielders **Howie Clark**, **Alexi Casilla**, **Matt Macri**, **Chris Basak**, and **Alejandro Machado**, outfielders **Doug Deeds** and **Darnell McDonald** and catcher **Jose Morales** have all been sent to Minor League Camp.

MAJOR LEAGUE FEVER: There are still 40 players in the Minnesota Twins Major League camp and a lot of them will be Red Wings. Some of the players the Red Wings are expecting to get back include **Tommy Watkins**, **Randy Ruiz**, **Jon Knott**, and **Jason Pridie**, with pitchers **Nick Blackburn**, **Brian Bass**, **Randy Keisler**, **Casey Daigle**, **Ricky Barrett**, **Phillip Humber**, **Ryan Mullins** all fighting for a few spots left on the Twins roster.

SCRANTON/WILKES-BARRE YANKEES

SCRANTON/WILKES-BARRE YANKEES SPRING FEST: The Yankees will host their second annual Spring Fest from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, March 22, giving fans a chance to purchase single-game tickets. Former Yankee great **Tommy John** will be on hand to sign autographs and meet with fans from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Fans will also have the unique opportunity to purchase 2007 game worn Scranton/Wilkes-Barre game jerseys. More than 30 Yankees home jerseys worn during the 2007 regular season will be available for purchase. Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Yankees merchandise will also be for sale in the team store as well as other Yankees items.

YANKEES REPORTS FROM SPRING TRAINING: Beginning Monday, March 24 Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Yankees broadcaster **Mike Vander Wood** will be reporting from Yankees spring Training on "The Game" Sports Radio Network, the four station network which is home to the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Yankees broadcasts during the 2008 season. Vander Wood will report on the Yankees spring training games as well as the players who will be a part of the Yankees roster at PNC Field in 2008.

SYRACUSE CHIEFS

ROSTER BEGINS TO TAKE SHAPE: The Toronto Blue Jays sent outfielders **Adam Lind**, **Buck Coats**, **Ryan Patterson** and **Wayne Lydon** to the Chiefs this week. Catchers **Curtis Thigpen** and **Robinson Diaz** were also returned along with infielder **Joe Inglett**. Thigpen and Diaz are expected to split the catching duties this year and each may also spend a little time at another infield position.

FEAST OR FAMINE: The Chiefs are 4-3 so far this spring. They've shut out opponents twice, by scores of 10-0 and 8-0, and have been shut out 5-0. In two other games, the team lost by scores of 11-2 and 9-1.

DANCING THE NIGHT AWAY: The Chiefs announced that the third annual Soap Opera night will take place on Saturday, July 19. This year there's a twist. The special guest will be Cameron Mathison who plays Ryan Lavery on ABC's All My Children. Mathison also appeared on last seasons Dancing With the Stars. One lucky fan will win free dancing lessons and get to perform with Mathison prior to the game.

TOLEDO MUD HENS

OKLAHOMA ROUND-UP: As spring training 2008 carries on, the Toledo Mud Hens roster begins to take shape. This season will bring about three players who were teammates with the 2007 Oklahoma RedHawks of the Pacific Coast League:

OF Freddy Guzman hit .269 (144-535) with 22 2B, eight 3B, 4 HR, 34 RBI and 56 SB in 133 games. He had 40 multi-hit games and hit .304 off of left-handers.

RHP Francisco Cruceta went 3-0 with a 3.02 ERA (22 ER/65.2 IP) in 25 games (5 starts). He struck out a season-high eight batters on April 26 against New Orleans. Opponents managed just a .164 average against him for the season.

RHP Armando Galarraga split the season between Double-A Frisco and Triple-A Oklahoma. In 23 games (22 starts) with Frisco he went 9-6 with a 4.02 ERA (57 ER/127. IP). He struck out season-high 9 batters on three occasions. He went 2-2 with a 4.74 ERA (13 ER/24.2 IP) at Oklahoma.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD: The Toledo Mud Hens welcome **A.J. Sager** as the new pitching coach. The Toledo native is entering his seventh season with the Detroit Tigers organization. He spent the 2007 season as the Double-A Erie SeaWolves pitching coach in the Eastern League after being promoted from the Class-A West Michigan Whitecaps where he spent 2002-06. Sager pitched for 12 professional seasons, including five years at the Major League level. He was originally drafted by the San Diego Padres in the 10th round (240th overall) of the 1988 amateur draft. The right-hander made his Major League debut on April 4, 1994 at Qualcomm Stadium in San Diego as a member of the Padres and struck out **Terry Pendleton** looking to begin his career. Sager's ties with the Mud Hens run all the way back to the 1996 season when he appeared in 18 games and again in 1998 where he appeared in 14. He also pitched his final game on September 26, 1998 at the Skydome in Toronto. The University of Toledo graduate is in the Varsity "T" Hall of Fame for his achievements in baseball and football.

SPRING TRAINING HEATS UP: The Detroit Tigers have a spring record of 11-10 with many potential Mud Hens' players hitting well above the .400 mark. OF **Brent Clevlen** hit .419 in his spring at-bats (he was optioned to Toledo yesterday). **Freddy Guzman** is batting .393 with 6 RBI, and **Timo Perez** is batting .433 with 2 RBI. On the hill, RHP **Aquilino Lopez** (2 ER/10.0 IP/12 K) and RHP **Preston Larrison** (2 ER/8.0 IP) are still battling for the last spot in the Detroit bullpen.