



International League News & Notes

April 24, 2008



BUFFALO BISONS

HAVE YOU HERR'D: Infielder **Aaron Herr** has been red-hot for the Bisons. The third baseman has hit in 10 of his last 11 games, swinging the bat at a .381 clip (16-42). He hit two home runs in a loss on Monday in Pawtucket and hit another blast on Tuesday night at Scranton/Wilkes Barre. Herr has driven in 12 runs in his last nine games and is now tied for 4th in the International League with 15 RBI on the season. Last year, Herr was an IL Postseason All-Star in Louisville after hitting .274 with 19 home runs and 83 RBI.

CLIMBING THE CHARTS: In his fifth consecutive season with the Bisons, fan-favorite **Jason Cooper** is starting to climb the team's Modern Era record books. On Wednesday, the outfielder played in his 323rd game with the team, passing Buffalo Baseball Hall of Famer and now manager **Torey Lovullo** for fifth-most. Cooper also ranks 4th in Bisons Modern Era history in doubles (68), 5th in RBI (187) and tied for 10th in home runs (41). Cooper is one of two players on the team's roster that was in Buffalo for their 2004 Governors' Cup Championship (**Jason Tyner**).

SMITH GOES COLORADO: The Cleveland Indians announced today that they have sent RHP **Sean Smith** to the Colorado Rockies as the player to be named later in the December 8, 2007 deal for INF **Jamey Carroll**. Smith pitched in four games for the Herd this year, going 0-1 with a 4.00 ERA. Last season, Smith led the team with nine wins and 90 strikeouts and finished second with 21 starts and 133.1 innings pitched.

CHARLOTTE KNIGHTS

CHILDERS THROWING WELL: **Jason Childers** has quietly been one of the best players for the Knights this season. Childers threw 2.0 perfect innings of relief in last night's game, allowing no hits, no runs, no walks. Childers has been used as the primary set-up man this season. Childers has 7 strikeouts in 7.0 innings pitched and has allowed only one earned run. His WHIP is a team best 0.43 and his average against of .087 is second only to Knights closer **Ehren Wassermann**.

DYNAMIC PITCHING DUO: Of the Knights 8 wins this season, 5 of them have been credited to **Lance Broadway** (2-1) and **Wes Whisler** (3-0). Due to recent rainouts the Knights rotation now sets up so the left-handed Whisler and the right-handed Broadway will pitch on back-to-back days. The two pitching prospects also are among the top six in ERA in the IL. Broadway has a 0.82 ERA in 3 starts with 11 strikeouts and 6 walks. Whisler has a 1.08 ERA and has won all three of his starts.

ROSTER MOVES: The Chicago White Sox optioned OF **Jerry Owens** to Charlotte following his rehab assignment with the Knights. Owens, 27, was placed on the disabled list on March 29 (retroactive to March 24) with a partial tear of his right adductor. He went 7-25 (.280) with three stolen bases in six games on his rehabilitation assignment. **Jeff DaVannon** has been placed on the DL. RHP **Jack Egbert** rejoined the Knights from Double-A Birmingham. Egbert had been on the Knights DL from April 3-18. Egbert made one start for Birmingham. LHP **Shaun Babula** was transferred to Birmingham.

COLUMBUS CLIPPERS

CLOSING BY COMMITTEE: The Clippers have had three different players record saves this season. **Brian Sanches** (4), **Chris Booker** (2) and **Charlie Manning** (2) have all been perfect in their opportunities. Sanches currently has 45 career saves, Booker is sitting at 83 (32 as a Clipper, 6th most in team history) and Manning has just eight saves in 190 career relief appearances. Columbus' only blown save was registered by recently released **Jason Stanford**.

BELIEVE IT, ORR NOT: **Pete Orr** has 11 RBI in his last 12 games and is currently the Clippers leader with 14 runs driven in. It's the most he has had in a season since 2004 (35) when he was an IL Postseason All-Star with Richmond. His career high is 44, set back in 2002 with Greenville and Myrtle Beach. Orr is tied for 2nd in triples (3). In 2004 he finished 2nd in the IL with 10 triples despite missing over three weeks to play for Team Canada in the Athens Olympics.

DE CASTER DRIVING THEM IN: In four games since joining the Clippers, **Yurendell de Caster** has 5 RBI, recording at least one in each game. He is 3-8 (.375) with runners in scoring position for Columbus. The Curacao native had 16 RBI through 15 games with the Harrisburg Senators prior to his promotion and was hitting .389 (7-18) with runners in scoring position.

DURHAM BULLS

WELCOME ABOARD: **Josh Labandeira's** debut with Durham was a good one, as he scored the winning run on Tuesday after appearing as a pinch-runner for **Joel Guzman** in the 11th inning, a 3-2 Durham victory. Labandeira hit .301 for Albuquerque of the Pacific Coast League last year in 93 games. He was in spring training with the San Francisco Giants.

CHANGES: To make room for Labandeira, RHP **Grant Balfour** was placed on the DL (groin) retroactive to April 19. That gives the Bulls 18 transactions this season with only 19 games played.

ON THE MOVE: The 18 transactions are primarily because Tampa Bay, Durham's parent team, has eight players on the DL. They are outfielders **Rocco Baldelli** and **Cliff Floyd**, infielders **Willie Aybar** and **Ben Zobrist**, and pitchers **Scott Kazmir**, **Matt Garza**, **Chad Orvella** and **Al Reyes**. In addition, pitcher **Juan Salas** is on the restricted list because of visa issues. **Dioner Navarro** was activated on Tuesday, Garza will be tomorrow, and Kazmir is on a rehab assignment that should continue Monday with the Bulls when they face Richmond.

MAKE-UP DATES: The Bulls have two games to make up against Norfolk, thanks to rainouts on Sunday and Monday at Harbor Park. One game will be made up on Memorial Day, May 26 at 12:15 p.m., with the other doubleheader on Friday June 27 in Virginia.

IN-DIVISION: Durham is 2-1 in-division this season. The Bulls have six more games in-division before beginning an eight-game road trip against Scranton/Wilkes-Barre and Pawtucket (North Division).

FIRST IS BEST, MOST OFTEN: In only one game has Durham scored first and didn't win (7-1). Durham is now 1-10 when the opponent scores first.

INDIANAPOLIS INDIANS

OH, SO CLOSE: Four Indians right-handers -- **John Van Benschoten**, **Mike Thompson**, **Romulo Sanchez** and **Jonah Bayliss** -- combined on a one-hit shutout Tuesday evening against Louisville. Van Benschoten (6.2 IP, 0 H, 0 R, 3 BB, 8 SO), who picked up the win, improved to 4-0 with a 1.88 ERA. Thompson (0.1 IP), Sanchez (1.0 IP, 2 SO) and Bayliss (1.0 IP, 1 H, 2 SO) helped nail down the Tribe's third shutout of 2008.

LET'S GO STREAKING: Indianapolis OF **Andrew McCutchen** enters Thursday night's affair with an 11-game hitting streak (.333 BA, 15-45, 9 R, 4 RBI), while OF **Kevin Thompson** has reached base in 17 consecutive tilts (.400 BA, 22-55, 12 R, 8 RBI). Both streaks represent the Tribe's longest in 2008.

CAN WE PLAY ALL 144 AT HOME?: Indians OFs **Kevin Thompson** (.419 BA, 13-31, 8 R, 5 RBI) and OF **Steve Pearce** (.316 BA, 12-38, 5 R, 10 RBI) are hitting over .300 at Victory Field this season.

A POTENT OUTFIELD: Tribe OFs **Kevin Thompson**, **Andrew McCutchen** and **Steve Pearce** have combined to go 25-80 (.313) with five doubles, six homers, 13 runs and 15 RBI over the past seven games. Thompson leads the squad in batting average (.361), while McCutchen owns a club-leading four home runs and Pearce a team-best 14 RBI.

NAILING IT DOWN LATE: Indianapolis is 11-0 when leading after seven innings and 10-0 when holding an advantage after eight frames.

WINNING TIGHT ONES, TOO: The Indians are 6-1 in one-run games this season. The Tribe went 17-21 in one-run contests a year ago.

LEHIGH VALLEY IRONPIGS

PHILLIES PHARM PHAILURES: Going back to last season, the Phillies' Triple-A teams (Ottawa, Lehigh Valley) have gone just 18-50 (.265) since July 20, 2007. In fact, since Ottawa was last above .500 at 22-21 on May 24, 2007, the teams have gone 35-86 (.289) and a combined 41 GB. This season, no team in the Phillies system is above .500. The farm system combined is 27-54 (.333), ranking 29th in the MLB (Arizona is 30th at 26-53).

MISERY (NO LONGER) LOVES COMPANY: At 2-19, the IronPigs have the worst record in Minor League Baseball after Tucson (PCL) improved to 3-17 with a comeback victory over Fresno, 7-6, on Tuesday. The only other two-win team in the land is St. Lucie (Florida State League), now 2-18. In stark contrast, Salt Lake (PCL) is 17-1.

WHO'S HOT: LHP **J.A. Happ** recorded 8 K last night -- one away from tying his season-high -- and continues to lead the IL in strikeouts (32)... C **Jason Jaramillo** is riding an IronPigs franchise-high 9-game hitting streak (10-36, .278)... OF **Valentino Pascucci** has hit safely in 7 of his last 8 G (11-26, .423, 10 BB) with 4 multi-hit games in his last 7 G. He has reached base safely in his last 9 G and in 22 of his last 37 plate appearances (.594)... DH **Mike Cervenak** has reached base safely in 9 straight games... UTL **Joey Hammond** has a 5-game hitting streak (6-20, .300) and has reached safely in his first 9 G as an IronPig (8 hits, 4 BB)...OF **Michael Spidale** also has a 5-game hitting streak (6-22, .273)... Closer **Matt Childers** has a 7.2 scoreless IP streak and has not allowed a run in his last 7 G. He is 2-2 (100%) in his SV opportunities.

NORTHERN EXPOSURE: The IronPigs are 0-13 against their fellow North Division foes (all road games).

FIGHTING OVER INHERITANCE: The IronPigs bullpen has allowed its last 9 inherited runners to score -- and for the season has only stranded 13 of 36 (36.1%). Meanwhile, opponents have stranded 24-28 (85.7%). In fact, they had stranded the first 17 inherited runners of '08. In addition, opponent bullpens have converted 13-13 (100%) save opportunities.

LOUISVILLE BATS

APRIL: Sunday night's victory secured the Bats' 12th win of the season, surpassing Louisville's win total (11) in April each of the past three years (2005-07). The Bats haven't had a winning start to the season since 2003 when they were 15-9.

WILD, WILD WEST: The Bats are in the midst of an 11-game stretch where they will face IL West opponents. In 2007, the Bats finished 29-19 (.604) versus West Division teams and had the best winning percentage within the division. Toledo, at 26-22 (.542), was second.

ALMOST: The Louisville Bats were almost no-hit for the fourth time in franchise history on Monday night. **Chris Dickerson's** two-out triple in the top of the 9th prevented the no-no. The previous three times were July 5, 1991 versus Columbus (**Kevin Mmahat** threw a nine-inning no-no); May 25, 1997 versus Indy (**Pedro Martinez**, **Feliz Rodriquez** and **Scott Service** combined on a no-hitter); and June 6, 2004 (Game 2) at Scranton/Wilkes-Barre (**Robert Ellis** threw a seven-inning no-hitter). The Bats have never been on the giving end of a nine-inning no-hitter. **Larry Luebbers** threw a seven-inning no-hitter for the RiverBats on May 14, 2000 in Game 1 at Charlotte.

HAIRSTON JR.'S CONTRACT PURCHASED BY REDS: On March 3 the Reds signed **Jerry Hairston, Jr.** to a Minor League contract and later assigned him to Louisville on March 29. While with the Bats, he batted .421 (which leads the IL) with three home runs and 15 RBI in 14 games. On the road he hit an astounding .528 (19-36). In his last game with the Bats (April 20) he went 3-5 with a double, home run and five RBI. Cincinnati purchased Hairston's contract on April 21 and in his debut with the Reds he went 4-5 with three RBI from the leadoff spot.

NORFOLK TIDES

LONG NIGHT: Last night's 14-inning marathon (won by Norfolk 7-6) was played in four hours and 52 minutes. That time of game was the Tides' longest since Norfolk and Pawtucket took five hours and 27 minutes to complete a 17-inning contest on May 9, 1994. Last night's game saw 37 different players used, including 15 different pitchers (8 for Richmond, 7 for Norfolk). Those 15 pitchers threw a total of 485 pitches.

LATE ARRIVALS: Last night's victory was the sixth come-from-behind victory of the season for the Tides, and their second comeback win of four runs or more on the young season. Last year, the biggest deficit Norfolk rallied back from was just two runs (done on six different occasions), and the Tides were just 1-58 when trailing after eight innings. The Tides have needed to rally to win games this season because their opponents have scored first in 15 of 18 games, including each of the last ten. Norfolk has been outscored during the first two innings 26-8, but the Tides have outscored their opponents 41-26 from the 6th inning on.

TORRID TORRES: Tides infielder **Eider Torres** continued his hot start to the 2008 season last night, going 4-7 with an RBI to raise his average to .357. Torres' batting average ranks 6th in the IL, and he is tied for 1st in the League with 25 base hits. The 25-year-old has hit .524 (11-21) with runners in scoring position, and he has hit safely in 14 of 17 games he's played in this year. His four hits last night tied Norfolk's season-high, and his six multi-hit games lead the team.

PAWTUCKET RED SOX

ANOTHER BARGAIN MATINEE: The Pawtucket Red Sox and the Syracuse Chiefs play the middle game of their 3-game series today at 12:05 p.m. at McCoy Stadium in the fourth weekday matinee at McCoy this season. The PawSox have won each of the first three weekday afternoon games that have been played at McCoy this season – beating Lehigh Valley on April 8 (4-1) and April 10 (5-2) and Buffalo earlier this week on April 21 (6-5 in 10 innings). Add in an April 16, 4-3 victory in 11-innings at Indianapolis on a Wednesday afternoon and the PawSox record is 4-0 when they play weekday afternoon affairs. The Sox are 6-3 overall in day games thus far.

STAYING CLOSE TO HOME: The Boston Red Sox late Tuesday afternoon recalled RHP **David Pauley** from Pawtucket to make a spot start for **Josh Beckett** who has been suffering from the flu and a stiff neck. Pauley was actually scratched from his scheduled start for the PawSox on Sunday afternoon vs. Buffalo as a precaution in case he was needed in the emergency start for the Red Sox. So, the 24 year-old Colorado native, who was 1-1 with a 1.17 ERA in 3 starts for the PawSox, was put him in a Boston hotel on Monday night to keep him close by if needed. That call did indeed come and although he gave up 5 runs in 4.1 innings vs. the Angels, the Red Sox were able to rally and pull out a 7-6 victory. Pauley was optioned back to Pawtucket after the game.

HANSEN BROTHER: On Wednesday, the Red Sox recalled reliever **Craig Hansen** from Pawtucket. Hansen has been outstanding for the PawSox this season allowing just 3 hits and 1 unearned run in 12.1 innings. He was 1-0, 0.00 in 8 RA – 12.1 IP, 3 H, 1 R, 0 ER, 4 BB, 13 SO and opponents were hitting just .073 against him (3-41). A 1st round pick of the Red Sox from St. John's University in 2005, Hansen's promotion means that Boston's top four draft choices from the 2005 draft are all currently on the Red Sox Major League roster – the others being OF **Jacoby Ellsbury**, RHP **Clay Buchholz**, and INF **Jed Lowrie**.

COREY REPORT: Reliever **Bryan Corey** has been re-signed to a Pawtucket contract by the Red Sox and reported to McCoy on Wednesday. Corey began this season with Boston and had a 14.54 ERA in 6 games before being designated for assignment on April 11. He elected free agency on April 17 rather than accept an outright assignment but instead was re-signed by Boston. Corey spent most of last year with the PawSox going 6-8 with a 3.69 ERA in 58 RA along with 3 saves. He made 9 appearances for the Red Sox last season going 1-0, 1.93.

RICHMOND BRAVES

BONUS FRAMES: The 14 inning, 4:52 game vs. Norfolk Wednesday was the Braves longest in innings since June 18, 2006 when the Braves and Pawtucket played 17 innings. It was the longest in time since a 5:23 marathon vs. Louisville June 6, 2003 (18 innings). The Braves are 0-3 in extra inning games this season.

GRAND LARCENY: Richmond's eight stolen bases Wednesday set a new franchise record. The Braves stole seven bases in a game four times, most recently July 26, 1994 at Charlotte. **Josh Anderson's** three steals last night was the most by a Brave since **Gregor Blanco** pilfered four bags vs. Norfolk May 26 last season. No IL club had stolen more than six bases since August 12, 2005 when Ottawa swiped seven in a game. The League does not list a single game club record for stolen bases.

CLOSE SHAVES: Six of the Braves last seven games have been decided by one run. None of the last seven have been decided by more than two runs. Only one of the Braves seven losses has been by more than two runs (the Braves were beaten 9-5 by Rochester on Opening Day). Each of the Braves last four losses has been by one run. Richmond is 4-4 in one run games.

ROCHESTER RED WINGS

OH WHAT A RELIEF! The Red Wings bullpen has been tremendous the last 13 games, going, 5-2 with five saves and a 1.54 ERA. In 50.0 innings of work, the relievers have allowed just nine earned runs on 31 hits while striking out 41. The bullpen was steady but not spectacular the first seven games of the season, going 1-1 with one save and a 4.07 ERA. The bullpen allowed 14 runs (11 earned) in their first 24.1 innings.

RED WINGS/TWINS EXTEND WORKING AGREEMENT: The Rochester Red Wings and Minnesota Twins will be announcing a two-year extension of their working relationship through the 2010 season this afternoon at a 3:00 p.m. press conference at Frontier Field. Since the Twins arrived in Rochester in 2003, 67 different players have worn both the Rochester and Minnesota uniforms. Rochester has four consecutive winning seasons which is the first time the franchise has accomplished that since 1966-1976 when they had 11 consecutive winning seasons.

NO DIALING LONG DISTANCE: The Red Wings pitching staff has allowed just two home runs in their last 52 innings and only three long balls in their last 72 innings. Rochester and Richmond are tied for the fewest home runs allowed (seven) in the International League this season. Rochester has not led the IL in fewest home runs allowed in a season since 1976 when they allowed a League-low 77 home runs.

SCRANTON/WILKES-BARRE YANKEES

MATCHING HISTORY: At 13-7 through 20 games, the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Yankees matched the best start in franchise history. Both the 1992 and 2006 Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Red Barons also began the season 13-7. The 1992 Red Barons finished the season in 1st place at 84-58 and were knocked out of the playoffs in the Governors Cup Finals by Columbus three games to two. The 2006 Red Barons finished with an identical 84-58 record and were bounced out of the opening round of the playoffs by Rochester three games to one. The '06 team holds the best start in SWB franchise history going 16-7 out of the gate.

JUAN-DER-FUL: Yankees first baseman/DH **Juan Miranda** continues to tear up IL pitching running his SWB Yankees season high hitting streak to nine consecutive with a 2-4, 2 RBI performance vs. Buffalo. After beginning his season 2-19 (.105), Miranda has raised his batting average to .268. During his nine-game tear the slugging left hander is 12-34 (.353) with a HR, 2B, 6 RBI, 5 R, 6 BB, and 4 K. Perhaps even more impressive than that has been Miranda's eye at the plate. In 2007 he struck out a combined 106 times between Class-A Tampa and Double-A Trenton.

WE HOMER WE WIN: The Yankees are 2nd in the International League with 23 home runs heading into Thursday night's game with the Buffalo Bisons. When the Yankees have homered in 2008 the team is 10-2. So far in '08, the long ball has accounted for 32 of the Yankees IL leading 98 runs scored, roughly 33%.

TOLEDO MUD HENS

RBI MILESTONE REACHED: 3B **Mike Hessman** is the Toledo Mud Hens modern-era (1965-present) RBI leader with 238. On April 20, Hessman drove in five runs, far surpassing the 233 mark formerly held by **Scott Ullger** (1982, 1984-86). The all-time Toledo RBI record stands at 388 accomplished by **Bobby Veach** (1926-1929).

HOMERING HESSMAN: Hessman had three home runs in that April 20 game against the Louisville Bats. Only two other players have ever hit three home runs in one game at Fifth Third Field (**Jack Hannahan** in 2005 and **Dane Sardinha** in 2007). Hessman homered in his first at-bat on Tuesday night versus Columbus to make it four straight at-bats with a home run for the slugging third baseman.

A GRAND WEEKEND: April 19 and 20 brought Detroit CF **Curtis Granderson** to Toledo for a rehab assignment (broken finger). Granderson went 3-9 with a double and a run scored. Granderson played in 111 games with Toledo in 2005 and broke the single-season record for triples in the modern-era (1965-present) with 13.

CAN'T RUN ON MY PARADE: Both LHP **Ian Ostlund** and RHP **Blaine Neal** have yet to allow a run to cross the plate this season. Ostlund has appeared in four games and has totaled 6.0 innings pitched. Neal has appeared in seven games totaling 7.0 innings pitched. He also is tied for the League lead in saves with 5.