



International League News & Notes



February 26, 2009

BUFFALO BISONS

NOT SO OFF-SEASON: The Buffalo Bisons organization has been one filled with change this winter. In September, the team signed a two-year player development contract with the New York Mets. It's the first time the team has aligned with the Mets since a three-year stint from 1963-1965. Famous alums from that first time with the Mets include **Ed Kranepool**, **Ron Swoboda** and **Cleon Jones**. The Bisons introduced a new logo and blue and orange color scheme to coincide with their new affiliation. The team's ballpark was also renamed Coca-Cola Field this offseason.

OBERKFELL BACK IN THE IL: Manager **Ken Oberkfell** is back in the International League, taking over as skipper of the Buffalo Bisons. Oberkfell is entering his 13th season as a Minor League manager and his fifth at the helm of the New York Mets' Triple-A team. The first two of those five seasons were spent at Norfolk with the Tides (2005-06). Last year, Oberkfell split the season between New Orleans (PCL) and New York after being named the Mets first base coach on June 17. Oberkfell is 812-803 (.503 winning percentage) in his previous 12 seasons as a manager.

COOPER REMAINS IN ORGANIZATION: With all the change with the Bisons between last season and this upcoming year, one thing might remain consistent. The Mets signed free agent **Jason Cooper** to a minor league deal in January. No one has played more games in a Bisons uniform in the modern era than Cooper's 410. The outfielder has been with the Herd since 2004 and currently ranks in the top-10 in team history in virtually every offensive category, including doubles (81 -2nd), triples (19, T-2nd) and RBI (212, 2nd). Cooper, who also won a Governors' Cup Championship with Buffalo in 2004, hit .247 with 9 HR and 45 RBI in 102 games with the Bisons last season.

CHARLOTTE KNIGHTS

CHAMBLISS AS MANAGER: Charlotte Knights fans will see a new face in 2009, as **Chris Chambliss** replaces **Marc Bombard** as manager of the Knights. Chambliss guided the London Tigers to the Eastern League championship in 1990. That season he was named Minor League Manager of the Year by The Sporting News. He also worked as hitting coach for the New York Yankees on their 1996, 1998, 1999 and 2000 World Series championship teams. Chambliss spent the 2008 season as hitting coach for the Richmond Braves. Throughout his playing career, Chambliss totaled up 17 seasons in the Major Leagues spending time with the Cleveland Indians, New York Yankees and Atlanta Braves.

ARMSTRONG DECLINES WBC INVITE: Catcher **Cole Armstrong** declined an offer to play in 2009 World Baseball Classic for Team Canada. Armstrong, from Surrey, British Columbia, played his first season for the White Sox in 2006 with Class-A Winston-Salem and Double-A Birmingham. Armstrong was acquired by the White Sox from the Atlanta Braves in the 2005 Rule 5 Draft. In 2008 with the Knights, Armstrong hit .275 with two home runs and 17 RBI in 35 games.

CHANGE OF VENUE: Many players from the 2008 Knights team have been invited to spring training with new clubs. These players include **Jason Bourgeois** (Milwaukee Brewers), **Jason Childers** (Tampa Bay Rays), **Brad Eldred** (Washington Nationals), **Charlie Haeger** (Los Angeles Dodgers), **Tomo Ohka** (Cleveland Indians), and **Paul Phillips** (Colorado Rockies).

POSTSEASON PLAY: Many former Knights players finished the 2008 season playing in the American League playoffs with the White Sox. That group included **Brian Anderson**, **D.J. Carrasco**, **Josh Fields**, **Gavin Floyd**, **Paul Konerko**, **Jerry Owens**, **Adam Russell**, **Jim Thome**, **Dewayne Wise** and **Juan Uribe**.

COLUMBUS CLIPPERS

A NEW ERA: By Monday, March 2 the Clippers will be in their new offices at 300 Huntington Park Lane. Huntington Park, the Clippers' new ballpark (10,100 capacity), is set to open with a game against the Toledo Mud Hens on Saturday, April 18. The playing surface of the new park will be in stark contrast to Cooper Stadium, the cavernous home of Columbus baseball since 1932, as the new dimensions will be 325' to the left-field foul pole (as opposed to 355' at the Coop), 400' to dead center (400') and 318' with a 22' wall in the right-field corner (335). The power alleys at Huntington Park will be 365' in left-center (385') and 365' in right-center (365').

LOVULLO SET TO SKIPPER CLIPPERS: **Torey Lovullo** has been tabbed as the 19th manager in team history (and 5th in the last five years). He will be the 4th former Clipper player to manage the team following in the footsteps of **Brian Butterfield** (player in 1982, manager in 2002), **Bucky Dent** (player in 1984, manager from 1987-89 and 2003-05) and **Barry Foote** (player in 1982, manager in 1986). Lovullo was named to the International League All-Star team in 1992 and was a member of the 1991 and '92 Governors' Cup Champion Clippers. He hit .284 with 29 HR and 164 RBI in 237 career games for Columbus. For the past three seasons, he compiled a record of 214-212 as the manager of the Buffalo Bisons.

MORE CHAMPIONSHIPS TO BE DECIDED AT HUNTINGTON PARK: In addition to hosting all four divisions of the OHSAA State Baseball Championships, the Greater Columbus Sports Commission and the Big Ten Conference announced on 12/18/08 that Huntington Park would be the host site of the 2009 Big Ten Baseball Tournament. This season will mark the first time in 14 years that the Tournament is not hosted at one of the member institutions. The Big Ten Tournament consists of the top six finishers in the Big Ten, playing in a double-elimination tournament format to decide the winner of the conference's automatic bid to the NCAA Division I Baseball Tournament. It will take place from 5/20-5/23. The best high school teams in the state of Ohio will battle it out at Huntington Park from 6/4-6/6.

DURHAM BULLS

WELCOME BACK: **Charlie Montoyo** returns for his third season as Durham Bulls manager this spring. Montoyo, who is coaching for Puerto Rico in the World Baseball Classic, will be joined again this season by pitching coach **Xavier Hernandez**. Durham led the IL in ERA in Hernandez's first year (2007) and last season was number one in shutouts (15).

WELCOME BACK AS WELL: Several six-year free agents re-signed with Tampa Bay who could return to Durham this season. Among them are pitchers **Jeremy Cummings** and **Calvin Medlock** as well as position players **Michel Hernandez**, **Chris Richard** and **Jon Weber**. Hernandez, Richard and Weber were with the Bulls during the playoffs the past two years as was Medlock, while Cummings joined the Bulls last year and was part of the postseason roster.

NEW BUT FAMILIAR: Durham has a new hitting coach, but **Dave Myers**, a former third base coach for Seattle, is quite familiar with the International League. He spent the last two seasons with then-Indians affiliate Buffalo. Several six-year free agents who signed with the Rays also have IL experience, including: RHP **Winston Abreu** (Columbus/Richmond/Ottawa), RHP **Julio DePaula** (Rochester), RHP **Dewon Day** (Charlotte), INF **Morgan Ensberg** (Buffalo), and INF **Ray Olmedo** (Columbus/Louisville/Syracuse).

PRICE IS RIGHT?: The first overall pick in the 2007 draft, lefty **David Price**, made a meteoric rise to the majors last season, helping Tampa Bay in the playoffs out of the bullpen. If he opens with the Rays this year, it will be as a starting pitcher. Price made four regular-season starts with Durham last year, and two more in the postseason. He's competing with **Jeff Niemann**, **Mitch Talbot** and **Jason Hammel** for the spot in the Rays rotation. Price and Talbot still have options remaining.

GWINNETT BRAVES

TOP PROSPECTS COMPETE IN LAKE BUENA VISTA: The Braves' top three prospects have reported for spring training and all are receiving strong consideration for Major League jobs. The organization's top prospect, right-hander **Tommy Hanson**, has a nasty slider that Atlanta manager **Bobby Cox** compared to that of **John Smoltz**. Hanson, 22, became the first pitcher to be awarded the MVP of the Arizona Fall League after striking out 49 in 28.2 innings pitched. **Jason Heyward**, 19, boasts a great deal of power at 6-4, 225 pounds. Heyward batted .323 with 44 extra-base hits in 120 games with Class-A Rome in 2008. When he's ready, he could fill in as that extra bat in Atlanta's outfield, but many expect **Jordan Schafer**, 22, to be the next star in center field for Atlanta. Schafer was the team's second-leading outfielder with 164 putouts despite playing in just 82 games with Double-A Mississippi. All three could make their big-league debut in 2009 and all are likely to spend time in Gwinnett.

MAKING IT HOME IN GWINNETT: The Braves' new Triple-A ballpark in Gwinnett County is nearing completion for the G-Braves' home opener April 17. The new park will feature 22 luxury suites as well as many other amenities not usually found in the Minor Leagues. A fan taking a stroll around the whole ballpark will have the opportunity to catch a home run ball on the outfield berm, snack on peanuts, hot dogs or even Mexican food, Italian food or old-fashioned Georgia barbecue. If they miss anything while in line for a treat, fans can catch a replay on a 30-by-40-foot video board in the outfield. Fans in the Home Plate Club will have the unique opportunity to watch players take batting practice through a window in the batting tunnel. As for the players, they will have access to brand-new, state-of-the-art facilities and a playing surface whose dimensions match those of Turner Field.

NEW FIELD STAFF FOR NEW G-BRAVES: Manager **Dave Brundage** will return as skipper of the Atlanta Braves' Triple-A affiliate for a third season but will be joined by two new coaches for the inaugural campaign for the Gwinnett Braves. Hitting coach **Jamie Dismuke** and pitching coach **Derek Botelho** make up the new faces that will guide Gwinnett this year. Dismuke, a veteran of the Cincinnati organization, makes the move to Gwinnett from Chattanooga, where he served as interim manager for the Reds' Double-A affiliate. Botelho will be serving in the same capacity as he has for the last two seasons with Double-A Mississippi, where he worked with top prospects such as **Tommy Hanson**, **Kris Medlen** and **Todd Redmond**.

INDIANAPOLIS INDIANS

A PLAYER RETURNS... TO MANAGE: **Frank Kremblas** enters his inaugural season as the Indians Manager in 2009. The 42-year-old comes from Triple-A Nashville where he spent the last four seasons (299-273). Kremblas led the Sounds to three straight division titles (2005-07), a Pacific Coast League title (2005) and won the Pacific Coast League Manager of the Year Award (2007). He is 3rd on Nashville's all-time win list behind **Rick Renick** (383) and **Trent Jewett** (320), who was the Tribe's manager the past four seasons. A former Indianapolis player, Kremblas spent eight seasons in the Cincinnati Reds farm system (1989-1996) as a catcher/infielder, four of them with the Indians (1993-96).

WHO'S ON THE FIELD STAFF?: Former Indian **Jeff Branson** joins the Tribe field staff as Hitting Coach after managing the Class-A Lynchburg Hillcats for the past two seasons. Branson, who played in 139 games for Indianapolis from 1997-1999, replaces **Hensley Meulens**, who served as the Indians' Hitting Coach the past five seasons. Returning to the Indianapolis 2009 field staff are Pitching Coach **Ray Searage**, Trainer **Jose Ministral** and Strength & Conditioning Coach **Mubarak Malik**.

TIME TO TALK PROSPECTS: Indianapolis could see several top rated Pirates prospects on their roster in 2009, including the possible return of outfielder **Andrew McCutchen**, who is ranked by *Baseball America* as Pittsburgh's 2nd best prospect after holding the top spot the past two seasons. Other *Baseball America* Top-10 prospects who could see time with the Indians in 2009 include: INF **Pedro Alvarez**, (No. 1), OF **Jose Tabata** (No. 3), INF **Neil Walker** (No. 6), RHP **Jeff Sues** (No. 7), INF **Shelby Ford** (No. 8) and RHP **Daniel McCutchen** (No. 9).

A HALL OF FAMER: **Roberto Petagine**, the 1998 International League and Indianapolis Indians Most Valuable Player, is being inducted into the IL Hall of Fame this year. He joins **Don Buford** as former Indians in the IL Hall. The Tribe first baseman led the IL in on-base percentage (.436), while finishing second in batting average (.331), RBI (109) and slugging percentage (.617) during the 1998 season with the Tribe. Petagine also took home the 1997 IL MVP award as a member of Norfolk Tides and is the only player ever to record back-to-back MVP honors in the International League. In four seasons in the IL (400 games), Petagine racked up a .323 lifetime average, 343 RBI and three Triple-A All-Star appearances. The 6'1", 215-pound left-handed hitter, went on to enjoy parts of 12 seasons in the Major Leagues with the Astros, Padres, Mets, Reds, Red Sox and Mariners.

LEHIGH VALLEY IRONPIGS

SWITCHIN' SWINE: After an IL-worst 55-89 season, the Lehigh Valley IronPigs are expecting to have a majority of new faces in the clubhouse. As it stands now, there is a solid chance that only three position players will be returning (**Mike Cervenak**, **Andy Tracy**, **Rich Thompson**) and potentially just three pitchers (**Jason Anderson**, **Carlos Carrasco**, **J.A. Happ**) will appear on the Opening Day roster. That contrasts with the fact that the entire coaching staff returns: Manager **Dave Huppert**, Pitching Coach **Rod Nichols** and Hitting Coach **Greg Gross**. An early stab at the Opening Day lineup looks like this: 1. Rich Thompson, CF; 2. Jason Donald, SS; 3. Lou Marson, C; 4. Andy Tracy, 1B; 5. John Mayberry, LF; 6. Mike Cervenak, DH; 7. Jeremy Sladen, RF; 8. Terry Tiffie, 3B; 9. Jorge Velandia, 2B; SP Carlos Carrasco.

POSSIBLE PIGS, PT I (PITCHERS): RHP **Blaine Neal** – Familiar name to IL fans, as Neal was the reliever elected to the 2008 IL Postseason All-Star team. The 30-year-old was dominant with Toledo, going 1-0, 1.21 with 26 SV in 38 games. He also pitched with Team U.S.A. in the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing. Neal first reached the ML in 2001 with Florida and has also pitched with Boston, San Diego and Colorado. His career Minor League numbers are impressive – 31-22 with a 2.67 ERA and 112 SV in 353 games. . . RHP **Dave Borkowski** – The name should also sound familiar, as Borkowski has appeared in 181 ML games since 1999, suiting up with Detroit, Baltimore and Houston. Last season, the 32-year-old was solid with Triple-A Round Rock, going 2-2 with a 2.43 ERA in 27 G. . . RHP **Gary Majewski** – Majewski thrust himself on the ML scene in his first full year in 2005, where he went 4-4, 2.93 with a SV in 79 games as a Washington National. He split the 2008 campaign with Triple-A Louisville (2-1, 3.76, 3 SV in 22 G) and Cincinnati (1-0, 6.53 in 37 G). In 224 career ML games, Majewski has a 4.61 ERA. . . RHP **Justin Lehr** – With Louisville last season Lehr totaled a 6-2 record with an impressive 2.10 ERA in 16 G, 8 GS – with his IL season split for more than two months (he had his contract sold to the Doosan Bears of the Korean Baseball Organization prior to returning to the Reds system in August). Lehr previously had varying degrees of success in the Majors with Oakland (2004) and Milwaukee (2005-06). . . LHP **Jake Woods** – As a southpaw, Woods could find himself in the running to replace Romero in the Phillies pen. The 27-year-old spent the majority of last season with Tacoma, going 6-1 with a 4.08 ERA and a SV in 32 games. Woods made his ML debut with the Angels in 2005, and with the Mariners in 2006 finished 7-4 with a 4.20 ERA and a SV in 37 G, 8 GS. . . RHP **Yorman Bazardo** . . . – Bazardo started last season as a Detroit Tiger then didn't post impressive numbers as a member of the Toledo Mud Hens (4-13, 6.72 in 25 G, 22 GS). However, the 24-year-old native of Venezuela has a lively arm and plenty of upside. Just a season earlier, he went 10-6, 3.75 in 23 G, 21 GS in Toledo – then posted quality numbers in his stints with the big league club (2-1, 2.28 in 11 G, 2 GS).

POSSIBLE PIGS, PT II (HITTERS): OF **John Mayberry, Jr.** (acquired from Texas in trade for OF Greg Golson) -- Mayberry is expected to start in the outfield and bat either 5th or 6th. Once a mighty power prospect, the son of a two-time AL All-Star (**John Mayberry**) hit 21 HR in his first full season in the minors with Clinton. However, the 6'6", 25-year-old out of Stanford has never batted higher than .268 in a season and has struck out more than 100 times in each of his first three full seasons. . . 3B **Terry Tiffie** (free agent) – His bat rang pitchers to the tune of a Pacific Coast League leading batting average of .378 last season – as he finished .378-6-69 in 93 G last season. The switch-hitting Arkansas native was also a member of Team U.S.A. at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. Tiffie has an extensive IL background, as well. Most recently, he spent the entire 2007 season with Norfolk, batting .272-10-55. A member of the Rochester Red Wings in 2004-06, Tiffie is a .296 career minor league hitter; .279 (371-1328) in the IL. . . Whether or not **Jason Donald** starts in Lehigh Valley (injuries concerns to **Chase Utley**, **Pedro Feliz**), there could be quite a battle for the other middle infield positions between **J.J. Furmaniak**, **Marcus Giles**, **Pablo Ozuna**, **Ozzie Chavez** and **Jorge Valendia** – who appeared with both Syracuse and Buffalo last season. . . OF **Jason Ellison** (free agent) – The 30-year-old was a fairly impressive regular for San Francisco in 2005 (.264 in 352 AB during his first full season). Last season wasn't as impressive, as he spent most of the year with Triple-A Oklahoma going .239-2-45 in 120 G. . . OF **Chris Walker** (free agent) – Another speed merchant, Walker had a promising start to his career in the Cubs organization, but after a sub-par season with Triple-A Iowa in 2007, Walker started 2008 in the independent Atlantic League with Camden (.290-5-20 in 29 G) before finishing out with Triple-A Salt Lake (.257-1-27, 14 SB in 78 G). . . OF **Damon Hollins** (free agent) – a 34-year-old veteran who has flashed above-average power in both the minor and major leagues. Hollins had a standout season with Richmond in 2004 (.301-20-67 in 109 G).

LOUISVILLE BATS

REDS AND BATS EXTEND PLAYER DEVELOPMENT CONTRACT THROUGH 2012: On January 22, 2009 the Bats announced that they extended their PDC with the Reds through 2012. The previous contract was set to expire in 2010. Louisville became the top farm club of Cincinnati in 2000, the same year they moved downtown to Louisville Slugger Field. During their affiliation with the Reds, the Bats have reached the postseason three times (2001, 2003, 2008), including a Governors' Cup championship in 2001.

SWEET IS BACK: Last season, **Rick Sweet** was named the IL's Manager of the Year; it marked the first time a manager from the Louisville franchise has won the award in the IL (**Jim Fregosi** was named American Association Manager of the Year in 1983 and 1985). Sweet won the PCL's Manager of the Year award in 1994, a year after guiding the Tucson Toros to their second PCL Championship. Sweet, 56, also became the all-time winningest manager in Louisville history in 2008. With 88 wins on the season he surpassed both Fregosi and **Dave Miley**. In four seasons with the Bats he has compiled a 303-272 record and has gone 237-194 since 2006. His 1,352 career wins are good for 4th on the all-time active managerial win list.

LOUISVILLE SLUGGER FIELD CELEBRATES TENTH ANNIVERSARY: The 2009 season marks the tenth anniversary for Louisville Slugger Field. On November 13, 1998 the Louisville Bats and the City of Louisville broke ground in front of an estimated crowd of 1,000. 13,242 fans saw the first ever game at Louisville Slugger Field on April 12, 2000. OF **Deion Sanders** scored the first ever run at LSF in the bottom of the 1st inning but the Bats eventually fell 8-5 to the Norfolk Tides. The largest crowd in Louisville Slugger Field history occurred on Opening Day (April 14) in 2006. On that day, 14,123 fans saw the Bats take on the Ottawa Lynx.

ATTENDANCE: The Bats led the IL in regular season attendance average in 2008, with 9,152 fans per game. Through 69 home dates in 2008, a total of 631,457 fans came through the gates. The total attendance was the lowest since moving into LSF in 2000 (643,466 in 2005 was the previous low) and the average was eighth out of nine seasons (9,151/game in 2002). Louisville had three sell outs on the season.

NORFOLK TIDES

HARBOR PARK TO HOST O'S AND NATS: On Friday, April 3 at 3:30 p.m., Harbor Park will once again host the Baltimore Orioles and Washington Nationals in the Bank of the Commonwealth Classic. The exhibition game will be the second meeting at Harbor Park in three years, as Baltimore and Washington previously met prior to the start of the 2007 season, with the Orioles defeating the Nationals 6-5 in front of a sell-out crowd of 12,408 fans. All fans will receive a complimentary souvenir program, complete with full-color pictures of the Orioles and Nationals.

WIETERS NAMED NUMBER 1 PROSPECT BY BASEBALL AMERICA: *Baseball America* recently released their 20th annual Top 100 Prospects list, and Orioles catcher **Matt Wieters** was listed as the number one prospect in all of baseball. Wieters, who will most likely start the upcoming season in Norfolk, hit .355 with 22 doubles, 27 homers and 91 RBI in 130 games between Class-A Frederick and Double-A Bowie in 2008 – his first Minor League season. Three other Orioles pitchers also made the top 100 list, as RHP **Chris Tillman** was ranked #22, LHP **Brian Matusz** was ranked #25, and RHP **Jake Arrieta** was ranked #67.

MORE HOMERS AT HARBOR PARK IN 2009?: This offseason, construction began on what promises to be one of the top spots to catch a game in all of Minor League Baseball – a new right field party deck at Harbor Park. The party deck, which will push the right field fence in 20 feet (from 338' to 318'), will be open to the public and will feature outstanding views of the field and the Elizabeth River. The deck, which will be connected to Hits at the Park Restaurant, will have no fixed seating but will feature dozens of high tables and a wet bar. It will also have a covered roof, which was designed to emulate the current structure of Harbor Park. The new party deck may also increase home runs at Harbor Park, which have often come at a premium in the past. Last season, a total of 60 home runs were hit in 72 games at Harbor Park (0.83 homers a game), the fewest at any park in the League.

PAWTUCKET RED SOX

WELCOME ABOARD: The Boston Red Sox have announced a number of offseason acquisitions, several of whom could impact Pawtucket this season. Here is a profile of some of the top newcomers:

RHP **Fernando Cabrera**, 27, has spent parts of the last five seasons with Cleveland (2004-07) and Baltimore (2007-08) making 125 appearances at the big league level. Overall he has compiled an 8-7 record with a 5.02 ERA and 1 save in his Major League career along with 185 SO in 168.2 IP. Last season he pitched in 22 games for Baltimore (2-1, 5.40) and 11 games for Norfolk (0-0, 0.69).

INF **Angel Chavez**, 27, was with Las Vegas all of last season batting .292 with 10 HR & 68 RBI in 117 games while playing all four infield positions. In 2007 playing for Scranton/WB he hit .291 with 11 HR & 66 RBI in 114 games. He has major league experience with San Francisco (2005).

RHP **Enrique Gonzalez**, 26, was 7-5 with a 4.44 ERA in 35 games (13 starts) for Portland (PCL) and 1-0 with a 10.80 ERA in 4 appearances with San Diego last season. In parts of three years in the majors with Arizona (2006-07) and San Diego (2008) he is 4-7 with a 5.96 ERA in 27 games (18 starts).

INF **Nick Green**, 30, was with Scranton/WB in 2008 seeing time mainly at shortstop (63 games) and second base (33 games) while hitting .233 with 12 HR & 50 RBI in 112 games overall. Originally drafted by the Braves in 1998, Green reached Atlanta in 2004 when he batted .273 in 95 games for the Braves. He was with Tampa Bay for all of 2005 (.239) and part of 2006, with the Yankees for part of 2006, and briefly with Seattle in 2007.

RHP **Wes Littleton**, 26, was acquired in a trade from Texas in November. Wes was with Triple-A Oklahoma for much of last season compiling a 7-1 record along with 6 SV and a 4.01 ERA in 44 relief appearances. He had three different stints with Texas going 0-0, 6.00 in 12 RA with the Rangers. He has made 80 career relief outings with Texas (5-3, 3.69) including a fine 2006 season when he went 2-1 with a 1.73 ERA in 33 games.

OF **Paul McAnulty**, 27, made San Diego's Opening Day roster for the second straight season in 2008 and appeared in 66 games for the Padres hitting .207 with 3 HR & 13 RBI. He finished the year with Portland batting .343 with 13 HR & 50 RBI in 53 games. He has appeared at the major league level for the Padres during each of the last four seasons. His career minor league average is .304 with 90 HR & 444 RBI in 697 games.

RHP **Jared Plummer**, 24, pitched for Northwest Arkansas last year going 4-1 with a 4.19 ERA and 3 SV in 29 appearances. His only Triple-A experience came in 2007 with Omaha. In 2007 he was 5-6 with a 3.08 ERA and 11 SV in 44 RA for Wichita.

RHP **Junichi Tazawa**, 22, joins the Red Sox after a four-year amateur career with the Nippon Oil ENEOS of the Japan Industrial League. This past season he was 13-1 with 5 SV and a 0.80 ERA in 21 games (11 starts) with just 15 BB and 114 SO in his 113 IP.

LHP **Billy Traber**, 29, split last season between the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Yankees where he was 2-1 with 4 SV and a 3.40 ERA in 40 games (38 in relief) and the New York Yankees where he made 19 appearances during four different stints going 0-0 with a 7.02 ERA. In his major league career, the southpaw is 12-14 with a 5.54 ERA in 95 games (28 starts) for Cleveland (2003), Washington (2006-07), and the NY Yankees (2008).

ROCHESTER RED WINGS

PUBLIC TELEVISION SERIES "MINOR LEAGUE" TO FEATURE 2009 ROCHESTER RED WINGS: The Rochester Red Wings and Campbell Media Group in association with WXXI public broadcasting announced Tuesday that a 13-episode (30-minute length) public television series called *MINOR LEAGUE* will feature the 2009 Rochester Red Wings. Taping of the series will be conducted throughout the 2009 season with the world premiere of the series in Rochester, N.Y. in February of 2010. "MINOR LEAGUE" will not only take a historical look at the Red Wings but bring you inside the clubhouse to see what it takes to make it to "the show" from a player's perspective. See the physical and mental challenges players/coaches deal with on a daily basis, promotions to the Major Leagues, life outside the ballpark, and much more.

LATE SIGNINGS: The Minnesota Twins signed a few more free agents just prior to the start of Major League camp. 1B/OF **Justin Huber** split the 2008 season between Triple-A Portland and San Diego. Huber batted .246 with two home runs and eight RBI in 33 games for the Padres. RHP **Ben Hendrickson** also signed a free agent deal after spending last year in Durham, going 10-9 with a 4.58 ERA in 29 games (27 starts).

NEW LOOK WINGS IN 2009: The Red Wings will look different as 10 guys who finished the season with Rochester left via free agency. **Howie Clark, Garrett Jones, Ryan Jorgensen, Darnell McDonald, Randy Ruiz, Sergio Santos, Ricky Barrett, Carmen Cali, Julio DePaula** and **Tom Shearn** have all moved on.

SCRANTON/WILKES-BARRE YANKEES

TAKE YOUR BABY TO WORK DAY: **Brett Gardner** split time between New York and Scranton/Wilkes-Barre in 2008 and was hardly thought of as a home run threat, averaging a home run once in every 176 professional at bats. In the Yankees first spring training game of 2009 however, it was Gardner who launched the first HR of the spring for the Bronx Bombers on the second pitch he saw from Toronto's **Brett Cecil**. In attendance in Dunedin was Gardner's wife and their three month old son Hunter, who got to see Dad go yard for the first time.

OFF SEASON WORK: Several potential Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Yankees kept their games sharp over the offseason playing either in the Arizona Fall League or in winter ball. 1B **Juan Miranda** hit .301 with 5 HR, 7 2B, 2 3B and 20 RBI in 19 games with the Peoria Javelinas in the AFL. RHP **Phil Hughes** made seven starts going 2-0 with a 3.00 ERA and 38 K in 30.0 IP for Peoria and INF **Kevin Russo** played in 30 games for the Javelinas hitting .309 with 3 HR, 8 2B and 16 RBI. The Yankees top minor league prospect according to *Baseball America*, **Austin Jackson**, also saw time with Peoria hitting .248 with 1 HR, 6 2B, 3 3B and 18 RBI in 28 games. RHP **Ian Kennedy** pitched for the Indios de Mayaguez in the Puerto Rican Winter League, posting a 2-2 record in six starts with a 1.56 ERA and 31 K in 34.2 innings of work.

MILEY BACK AT THE HELM: **Dave Miley** returns to the dugout for his third season as manager of the SWB Yankees and his fourth as the Yankees Triple-A skipper. Under Miley, the Yankees have posted the IL's top record in both 2007 and 2008. Miley enters the '09 season fourth among active managers with 1,356 wins. 2009 will be Miley's ninth season in the International League, where he has posted a record of 685-569 (.546). In three seasons as skipper of the Yankees top farm club Miley's record is 241-188 (.562). Miley also spent six seasons in the IL from 1998 through 2003 with Indianapolis and Louisville.

SYRACUSE CHIEFS

CHIEFS AND NATIONALS ANNOUNCE WORKING AGREEMENT FOR 2009-10: The Syracuse Chiefs announced in September of 2008 that they would break ties with the Toronto Blue Jays after 31 years and begin a new association with the Washington Nationals for the 2009 & 2010 seasons. Nationals Principal Owner **Mark Lerner**, Team President **Stan Kasten**, General Manager **Jim Bowden**, Assistant General Manager **Mike Rizzo**, Assistant General Manager Director of Player Development **Bob Boone**, Director of Player Development **Bobby Williams** and Director of Scouting **Dana Brown** were all on hand as the Chiefs welcomed the Washington organization to Syracuse on September 22.

CHIEFS ANNOUNCE ALTERNATE RED JERSEY AND CAP FOR 2009: The Syracuse Chiefs will incorporate Nationals colors into their 2009 jerseys and caps beginning this spring. The red jerseys will be worn on Sundays and holidays during the year.

NATIONALS BRING BRAD ELDRED TO SYRACUSE: Looking to provide a big bat in the middle of the order the Washington Nationals signed 2008 International League All-Star DH **Brad Eldred** this offseason. Eldred led the IL with 35 HR and 100 RBI last season while playing in Charlotte.

CHIEFS NAME BETH JARRETT ATHLETIC TRAINER: The Washington Nationals promoted certified athletic trainer **Beth Jarrett** to Syracuse from Harrisburg in January. Jarrett, 33, becomes the first female trainer in the International League after spending the past seven years in the Nationals organization. The Indiana native graduated from Indiana University with a degree in kinesiology.

TOLEDO MUD HENS

MUD HENS PREVIEW: **Larry Parrish** returns for his sixth full season as Toledo skipper. Hitting coach, **Leon "Bull" Durham** returns for his ninth season with Toledo and **A.J. Sager** returns for his second season as pitching coach. Below is an early look at the Hens roster:

Infield – If he does not make the Detroit roster, 1B **Jeff Larish** will build off of his 21 home run '08 campaign. The slugger could be joined by 2B **Michael Hollimon**. Hollimon will be at the top of the Hens' line-up if healthy. Top prospects **Cale Iorg**, **Scott Sizemore**, **Danny Worth**, and **Wil Rhymes** are expected to fight for the remaining infield roster spots. **Mike Hessman** could return to Toledo to anchor the line-up from third base.

Outfield – **Clete Thomas** and All-Star **Brent Clevlen** are the front-runners. Clevlen had a breakout year in '08 with a team best 82 RBI and career-high 22 home runs. Thomas may start the year on the disabled list. Other possibilities include **Timo Perez**, **Wilkin Ramirez** and **Casper Wells**. Ramirez hit 19 homers for Double-A Erie. Wells also impressed with 27 HR between Class-A West Michigan and Erie.

Catchers – **Dusty Ryan** will likely begin '09 with Toledo to fine tune his game for the big leagues. The catcher hit .253 with 15 HR and 53 RBI in Erie before a September promotion to Detroit. **Dane Sardinha** returns for his third year in the organization.

Pitchers – The rotation will return **Eddie Bonine** and **Chris Lambert**, last year's co-leaders with 12 wins. **Ron Chiavacci** re-joins Toledo after posting 12 wins for the team in '07. Another candidate is Detroit's #1 prospect, **Rick Porcello**. Last year was his first year of professional baseball, but led Single-A Lakeland with a 2.66 ERA. Taiwan native **Fu-Te Ni** could wind up in the rotation. The bullpen could feature three key, late inning hurlers. **Freddy Dolsi** posted a 3.97 ERA with Detroit last year. **Casey Fein** impressed with his hard fastball and sub-3.00 ERA in both Erie and Toledo, collecting 13 saves. Left-handed specialist and set-up man **Clay Rapada** looks to build off a 2.31 ERA last season.

Brotherly Love – Toledo signed outfielder **Bronson Sardinha** early in the offseason. He is the younger brother of catcher Dane. (There is also a third Sardinha brother, Duke, who plays in the Colorado organization).

TOLEDO COMING OFF RECORD YEAR: The Mud Hens will celebrate their eighth season in downtown Toledo in 2009 with Opening Day scheduled for 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 16. Toledo is coming off an historic year in 2008 as they welcomed the four millionth fan to the park on the last game of the season. Toledo had a record 36 sell-outs in 2008 and have now sold-out 211 games since 2002. The Hens have welcomed 4,009,687 fans through the gates during the first seven years of Fifth Third Field. As a comparison, the last seen seasons at Ned Skeldon Stadium saw 2,154,032 fans come to see the team from 1995-2001.

NO JIVE, WE'RE GOING FOR FIVE: The 2008 Toledo Mud Hens finished the season at 75-69. This marked the fourth consecutive season the club has had a winning record. It also marks the first time that a Toledo club has had four straight winning seasons since 1941-1944. The last time that a Toledo team finished with a winning record in five straight seasons was 1896-1901 (six straight years).