



International League News & Notes



April 23, 2009

BUFFALO BISON (www.Bisons.com)

FREDDY READY TO MAKE COMEBACK: The Buffalo Bisons activated RHP **Freddy Garcia** yesterday and the veteran gave them a quality start in his first outing of the season. Garcia allowed three runs on five hits in six innings last night at Scranton/Wilkes-Barre. The starter had spent the first part of the season in extended spring training as he continues the long road to recovery from labrum surgery in his right shoulder in August of 2007. A two-time American League All-Star, Garcia has won 13 or more games in seven different major league seasons.

F-MART CONTINUES TO PRODUCE: Twenty year-old prospect OF **Fernando Martinez** continues to put up hits in a big way. In his first stint at Triple-A, Martinez leads the International League with eight doubles and is tied for the IL lead with 10 extra-base hits. Martinez already has six multi-hit performances on the season and is tied for the Bisons team lead with seven RBI. Overall, Martinez has hit .291 (16-55) with a .527 slugging percentage.

WILY MO IS COMING TO BUFFALO: The New York Mets signed OF **Wily Mo Pena** on Monday to a minor league contract. He will report to extended spring training in Port St. Lucie, FL before he is eventually scheduled to arrive in Buffalo. Last season, Pena batted .205 (40-195) with two home runs and 10 RBI in 64 games with the Washington Nationals.

COOP BACK IN THE LOOP: Long-time Buffalo Bisons OF **Jason Cooper** is back with the team. After signing as a free agent this offseason, Cooper was added to the Bisons roster on Saturday. Already the Bisons Modern Era leader in games played, Cooper added to his record with his 413th game in a Buffalo uniform. He has hit in all three games he's played in this year and collected his 223rd RBI as a Bison on Tuesday, moving him just 22 RBI behind **Bill Selby** for yet another Bisons record.

CHARLOTTE KNIGHTS (www.CharlotteKnights.com)

PHILLIPS ON A HITTING STREAK: After going 2-4 at the plate in yesterday's game, Knights 1B **Andy Phillips** extended his hitting streak to 8 games. During this streak Phillips has gone 13-27 (.481). The first four games of the hitting streak were when Phillips was with the Indianapolis Indians. He has gone 8-17 (.471) with a walk since joining the Knights.

CASSEL MAKES TRIPLE-A DEBUT: RHP **Justin Cassel** made his Triple-A debut on Tuesday night as he worked out of the Knights bullpen. Cassel pitched 2.1 innings and did not allow a hit. He also had 1 strikeout and 1 base on balls. Cassel has worked primarily as a starting pitcher his entire career. He made 28 starts last year with Double-A Birmingham compiling a 10-4 record and a League leading 3.11 ERA. Throwing is a popular thing in the Cassel family. His brother Jack is a pitcher in the Indians organization and his brother Matt is a quarterback with the Kansas City Chiefs.

ROSTER MOVES: Prior to Tuesday night's game at Norfolk, the Chicago White Sox recalled RHP **Jack Egbert**. Egbert went 1-0 with a 6.43 ERA (5 ER/7.0 IP) in five relief appearances with the Knights. The right-hander allowed nine hits, walked two and struck out six while working exclusively out of the bullpen for the first time in his career. Egbert takes the roster spot of former Knights pitcher **Mike MacDougal** who was designated for assignment.

COLUMBUS CLIPPERS (www.ClippersBaseball.com)

RETURN OF THE LONG BALL?: Through the first 14 games of the year, the Clippers have hit 10 HR, putting them well ahead of last year's pace, as it took them the entire month of April (27 games) to reach 10 HR. The Clippers began a new era in Columbus baseball on Saturday in Huntington Park, a ballpark that is 30 feet shorter than Cooper Stadium down the left field line, 20 feet shorter in the left field power alley and 12 feet shorter to the right field foul pole (although the fence in right is 14 feet higher than at the Coop). Cooper Stadium was one of only three stadiums in the IL in which HR per game decreased in each of the last four seasons, joining Coca-Cola Field in Buffalo and Alliance Bank Stadium in Syracuse. Last season's HR per game rate of 1.59 at Cooper Stadium dipped below the League average (1.66) for the first time since 2005. Through five games at the Clippers' new home, there have been 6 HR (Columbus-3, Opponents-3).

GIVING THE BULLPEN A BREAK: Columbus has been carrying 11 pitchers on the roster since **Aaron Laffey** was recalled to Cleveland on April 14. However, the Clippers have actually been operating with only five available arms in relief since April 16 when closer **Greg Aquino** was sidelined after feeling a twinge in his right elbow while warming up. The Clipper starters have picked up the slack by averaging 5.8 IP in the last eight games, notching 6.0 IP in six of them. The newest addition to the Clipper 'pen, **Scott Roehl**, threw 3.0 innings in his debut yesterday.

VALBUENA ES BUENO: Yesterday was the first time all season that an IL team was able to keep **Luis Valbuena** from reaching base. The #10 prospect in the Cleveland organization opened the season by reaching base in 13 straight games, giving him the longest on-base streak in the IL this season. Valbuena drew a walk in each of the last 11 games of the streak, putting him atop the League in walks (11).

DURHAM BULLS (www.DurhamBulls.com)

GOING DEEP: The Bulls won 6-2 yesterday over Gwinnett as **Chris Richard** homered twice. It was the first multi-homer game by a Bull this season. Richard hit a team-high 26 homers last year.

EARLY ANSWER: Durham did not score in the 1st or 2nd inning in the first ten games this year. However, in the just-completed three-game series against Gwinnett, the Bulls scored in the 1st or 2nd inning in each game. Durham scored 10 runs in the first two innings in the series.

LEADING OFF: Leadoff hitter **Jon Weber** has set the tone for Durham during the current 10-game road trip (Bulls are 4-2 so far). Weber is 10-26 with five doubles, a game-winning homer, six runs scored and seven RBI.

PEN IS MIGHTIER: Durham's bullpen worked four scoreless innings yesterday, and now is 6-1 with four saves and a 1.63 ERA (11 ER in 60.2 IP). **Jason Childers** earned victories in four straight appearances before pitching a scoreless 9th yesterday. He leads the IL with four victories.

GWINNETT BRAVES (www.GwinnettBraves.com)

CANIZARES STREAKS TO NINE: **Barbaro Canizares'** nine-game hit streak came to an end Wednesday afternoon in the Gwinnett Braves' 6-2 loss to Durham. Canizares batted .361 (13-36) with three runs, two home runs and four RBI during the streak. The Braves' slugger has hit safely in 12 of 14 games this season, including six multi-hit games.

STRIKEOUT KINGS: Gwinnett still leads the International League in total strikeouts with 116, even though Braves starters no longer possess the top-three individual totals. Braves' right-hander **Tommy Hanson** still sits atop the International League in total strikeouts with 23, but Gwinnett lost its hold on the top three spots this week. Hanson, **Charlie Morton** and **Kris Medlen** led the IL with 23, 17 and 16 strikeouts, respectively, heading into Tuesday's game. Morton now ranks 5th with 18 and Medlen is 7th with 16.

DEFENSE WINS CHAMPIONSHIPS: The Gwinnett Braves are tops in the League in team defense. The team boasts a fielding percentage of .987 (7 E, 523 TC), .002 points higher than 2nd-place Rochester. Gwinnett was working on a streak of 69.2 consecutive innings without an error leading up to the series with Durham.

INDIANAPOLIS INDIANS (www.IndyIndians.com)

TWO GAME TROUNCING: In the Tribe's short two-game series against Toledo (April 21-22) they exploded for 23 runs on 32 hits, including a season high 18 base knocks on Wednesday evening. In this two-game offensive outburst every Indians batter had at least one hit with 10 recording multi-hit games, seven scoring multiple runs and six collecting multiple RBI. Indianapolis also turned in a .414 average (12-29) with runners in scoring position and collected 15 extra-base hits, including eight doubles, four triples and three home runs.

HOT INDIANS HITTERS: Right-fielder **Garrett Jones** is currently riding a 10-game hitting streak in which he has gone 15-42 (.357) with seven runs, one home run, nine RBI and three stolen bases. The 6'4" lefty has now hit safely in 11 of his first 12 games in an Indians' uniform and his current 10-game streak ranks as the second longest in the International League this season. OF **Andrew McCutchen** and INF **Brian Bixler** have batted first and second in every game for the Indians this season and lead all teammates in the International League in runs (27) and triples (7). The dynamic duo also has scored 44% of the Indians' runs (27 of 61) this season and leads the club in eight offensive categories.

TRIPLE TREND: Indianapolis continued a triple trend with their second straight game with multiple three-baggers as OF **Andrew McCutchen** and LF **Jeff Salazar** each recorded a triple against Toledo on Wednesday evening. The Indians have now had four games this season with multiple triples and continue to lead the International League in three-baggers with 10 thus far this season. Last season it took Indianapolis until May 31 (57 games) to reach 10 triples, which means it has taken the Tribe 45 less games to reach that mark this season.

GRAND THEFT: With two more stolen bases against Toledo on Wednesday night, Indianapolis now ranks 2nd in the International League with 17 stolen bases. The Indians have paced the IL in thefts in each of the past four seasons (198 in '08, 163 in '07, 180 in '06 and 163 in '05). LF **Jeff Salazar** currently ranks 1st on the club with four swipes on the season, while RF **Garrett Jones**, CF **Andrew McCutchen** and INF **Shelby Ford** each have three steals.

LEHIGH VALLEY IRONPIGS (www.IronPigsBaseball.com)

THE 'NEW'-HAN: The Phillies have added infielder **David Newhan** to their player development staff as a player/coach for LHV, though he will not be activated as a player at this time. Newhan, 35, batted .260-2-12 in 64 G with Houston last season. A left-handed batter, Newhan also played in 60 games with Triple-A Round Rock in 2008, batting .308-9-36 with 14 2B. A 17th-rounder by Oakland in 1995, Newhan has hit .253-23-120 over his 413-game ML career with San Diego (1999-00), Philadelphia (2000-01), Baltimore (2004-06), New York Mets (2007) and Houston (2008). He was acquired by Philadelphia on 8/7/00 as the player to be named later in a trade with the Padres for SS Desi Relaford (8/4). After appearing in 25 G with Scranton/WB, he made his Phillies debut on 9/16/00 and batted .176 in 10 G over the remainder of the season. In 2001, Newhan battled injuries, appearing in just 7 G with the Phils and 13 with SWB.

KING LEHR! FIRST EVER IRONPIG PITCHER-OF-WEEK: The IL announced that RHP **Justin Lehr** was named Pitcher of the Week for the period from April 13-19. Lehr is the first IronPigs pitcher in franchise history to receive the award. Lehr provided an enormous lift to the IronPigs last Monday in his first start of the year. The 31-year-old tossed 6.1 strong innings, allowing just three hits and one run in a 5-1 victory over Syracuse. Lehr finished off his impressive week with a victory at Pawtucket on Sunday afternoon. In the 6-2 win, he limited the PawSox to one run on three hits. Lehr was signed by the Phillies as a free agent last December. A ten-year veteran of professional baseball, Lehr has made 66 Major League appearances with Oakland and Milwaukee, going 4-3 with a 5.31 ERA. Interestingly, Lehr was the IL's Pitcher of the Week almost exactly one year ago while pitching for the Louisville Bats. 1B **Andy Tracy** won IL Batter of the Week honors twice in 2008.

ODDS & ENDS: Through 12 G, 'Pigs starters have combined to go 4-4, 3.39 (63.1 IP, 64 H, 31 R, 24 ER, 18 BB, 51 K)... In the last 8 G, the 'Pigs bullpen has a 1.52 ERA (0-1, 29.2 IP, 5 ER) -- retiring 23 of the last 26 BF. The corps started 0-3, 13.00 in the first 4 G (18 IP, 28 H, 26 ER, 19 BB) -- allowing the first batter to reach in 14 of 18 IP (78.0%)... The 'Pigs have now scored 46 runs in their first 12 G -- it took them until Game 21 (April 23) to get to 46 R in 2008... The 'Pigs have turned an IL leading 13 double plays.

LOUISVILLE BATS (www.BatsBaseball.com)

ROSALES IS RAKING: 13 games into the season and the only true bright spot for the Bats offensively has been the play of IF **Adam Rosales**. Rosales is batting .409 (18-44) on the season. As a team the Bats are batting .236 (97-411) and that number improved dramatically as they connected on 14 hits in the 14-4 loss at Columbus yesterday. Rosales is also on a six-game hitting streak, his second streak of the season of more than five games. During that six-game hitting streak, he is batting .550 (11-20) with two doubles, two home runs and four runs batted in.

STARTING PITCHERS STRUGGLING: One of the strengths of this Louisville Bats team was supposed to be its starting pitching. Two weeks into the 2009 season and it hasn't turned out that way. In 13 games, the starters have compiled a 5-6 record with a 5.56 ERA. LHP **Matt Maloney** is the only Bats' pitcher with two or more starts who has an ERA under 4.00. In his two starts, he is 2-0 with a 2.03 ERA and has yet to walk a batter.

CLIPPERS PUT UP 14 ON BATS: In Wednesday afternoon's loss, the Bats allowed the Clippers to plate 14 runs in the 14-4 defeat. Making the lopsided defeat interesting was the fact that both teams finished with 14 hits. C **Wyatt Toregas** provided the majority of the offense for the Clippers, with two home runs and four runs batted in. The last time the Bats allowed 14 runs was on April 7, 2007 against the Toledo Mud Hens. Louisville lost to Toledo 14-2 that night at Louisville Slugger Field as RHP **Tom Shearn** took the loss. Last season the most runs the Bats allowed was 13, also against Toledo on June 5.

VIOLA AND MANUEL PICK UP FIRST WIN AND LOSS: In Monday's 7-6 win at Columbus, LHP **Pedro Viola** picked up his first career Triple-A win and RHP **Robert Manuel** picked up his first career Triple-A save. Viola entered the game with two outs in the 8th with the Bats hanging on to a 7-6 lead. He went one inning, allowing no runs, no hits, two walks and he struck out one. Manuel then entered with two outs in the 9th, striking out IF **Wilson Valdez** on a foul bunt to end the game, recording his first save and preserving the win for Viola. Manuel followed his first save by doing it again the next night against Columbus.

NORFOLK TIDES (www.NorfolkTides.com)

HIGH TIDES: With a 4-2 win yesterday, the Tides have now won seven straight games for the first time since they won eight straight from July 4-11 last season. Norfolk has outscored its opponents 40-14 during its current seven-game winning streak, and the Tides have only trailed twice over the stretch. Norfolk was behind 2-1 in the 7th inning of game one of the current streak (an eventual 3-2 win over Charlotte on April 15), and the Tides trailed 2-0 in the top of the 1st inning of yesterday's game vs. Charlotte before knotting the game 2-2 in the bottom half of the inning.

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER: Norfolk's home opener vs. Charlotte Monday night was postponed due to unplayable field conditions after heavy rain battered the Hampton Roads area. The postponement was the first Tides home opener rained out since the Tidewater Tides had their season opener postponed at Frank D. Lawrence Stadium in 1969, the Tides first year at the Triple-A level. After 10 games on the road to start the season, Norfolk was the last IL team to have a home opener and only one other Minor League team opened later at home (the Class-A Winston-Salem Dash are slated to have their home opener this evening).

MAKING THEIR PITCH: Norfolk's pitching staff has posted exceptional numbers in six games vs. Charlotte this season. The Tides are 5-1 against the Knights and have compiled a 1.19 ERA, having allowed just seven earned runs in 53.0 innings of work. Norfolk pitchers have held Knights batters to a .150 batting average and have struck out 36 while yielding just 27 hits. The Tides have also outscored the Knights 30-7 so far, hitting .306 (66-216) as a team.

PAWTUCKET RED SOX (www.PawSox.com)

DAYTIME DRAMA: Wednesday afternoon at McCoy Stadium provided yet another reason why fans should never leave a ballgame. Trailing 7-2 to visiting Rochester heading to the 9th-inning (and with a steady rain continuing to fall) things looked dismal for the hometown PawSox. But in the top of the 9th-inning, PawSox closer **Daniel Bard** entered the game to get some work in and promptly fired 9 straight strikes to strikeout the side and give the remaining fans something to cheer about. Bard's impressive display was a precursor to the excitement that would unfold in the bottom of the 9th-inning. A couple of walks and a couple of hits made the score 7-3 when PawSox CF **Jonathan Van Every**, in his first game on a rehab assignment from Boston, stepped to the plate with 2 outs and the bases loaded. Van Every delivered the dramatic blow everyone hoped for with a towering grand-slam HR to centerfield to tie the game at 7-7. The PawSox pulled out the improbable victory, 8-7 when **Chip Ambres** coaxed a bases-loaded walk with 2 outs in the bottom of the 11th to send the McCoy faithful home happy.

KILLER B'S FLYING: Speaking of Bard, the 23 year-old has been nothing short of sensational in his first Triple-A season. After creating a buzz during big league spring training camp with the Red Sox (10.1 scoreless innings), the former North Carolina standout has been dominating thus far for the PawSox in his first 6 RA allowing just 1 hit in 9-innings (a solo HR) with 16 SO. Bard is one of three highly-touted young pitching prospects on the PawSox staff along with starters **Michael Bowden** and **Clay Buchholz**. Bowden, 22, is currently 3rd in the IL with a 0.64 ERA in his 3 GS (going 1-0 with 1 R in 14 IP). Buchholz, 24, missed a start with a slight hamstring strain, but looked fine in his return to the rotation on Wednesday (5 IP, 3 H, 2 R).

A BIG BANG FOR BAILES: **Jeff Bailey**, the 2008 IL MVP (.301/25/75), hit .356 in 23 spring training games with the Boston Red Sox but was the final position player sent to minor league camp when the Red Sox elected to keep former PawSox (and fellow 2008 IL All-Star) OF **Chris Carter**. So Bailey, 30, returned to Pawtucket without a complaint and quickly picked up where he left off last season with 4 HR to lead the club. Earlier this week, however, justice prevailed as Bailey was promoted to Boston (when OF **Rocco Baldelli** was placed on the DL). "Bailes" made his 2009 debut with the Red Sox on Wednesday night at Fenway Park and in his first at-bat drilled a 3-run HR over the Green Monster to stake the Sox to a 3-0 lead en route to a 7-3 win over Minnesota and a sweep of their day/night doubleheader against the Twins.

ROCHESTER RED WINGS (www.RedWingsBaseball.com)

BAD STARTS: The Red Wings starters have struggled the first 12 games of the season, going 0-6 with a 4.91 ERA. In 55.0 innings of work, the starters have allowed 33 runs (30 earned) on 61 hits while walking 20 and striking out 36. The starters have allowed seven home runs as well.

DEAD WOOD: The Red Wings offense has struggled during this six-game losing streak, batting .177 (35-198) as a team. Rochester has been outscored 37-13 (32-11 in their last four games) and opponents are batting .287 (58-202) with 10 or more hits in three of the six games.

APRIL WINS BRING SEPTEMBER PLAYOFF GAMES.....MOST OF THE TIME: The Red Wings look to get off to a fast start in April. Since 2006, Rochester has a 45-31 record in the month of April. Of the last seven times Rochester has had a winning April record the Red Wings have made the playoffs in four of those years (2006, 1997, 1996, and 1993). The exceptions are 2007, 2002 and 1994.

HOME IS WHERE THE WINS ARE: The Red Wings finished the 2008 season with a 46-26 home record, their best home record since 1997 (49-22 record). Rochester has reached the 40-win mark at Frontier Field four consecutive seasons and holds a 173-119 record (.594) at 1 Morrie Silver Way since 2005. Rochester is 246-188 (.567) at home during the Twins era.

SCRANTON/WILKES-BARRE YANKEES (www.SWB Yankees.com)

WE'RE PRETTY MUCH OFFENSIVE: Through the first 13 games of the season, the Yankees have been on some kind of offensive tear, leading the International League in batting average, runs, hits and homers. Scranton/Wilkes-Barre's team average (.315) is 31 points higher than 2nd place Columbus. The team has 27 more runs (95) than Toledo (2nd with 68), has three more homers (17) than Toledo (2nd with 14) and 19 more hits (151) than Columbus (2nd with 132). To further illustrate just how productive the SWB attack has been early on, the Yankees run total of 95 is higher than the hit total for four IL teams: Buffalo (92), Charlotte (79), Rochester (92) and Syracuse (90).

SHORTENING THE GAME: One of the strengths for the Yankees this season has been their ability to "shorten the game" with outstanding work from the bullpen. Numbers wise, the top two pitchers for SWB have worked in the setup and closer's role in 2009. Set up man **Mark Melancon** has turned in six scoreless appearances covering 10.1 IP. The right hander has allowed only four hits and has struck out 17 while walking three. The IL is hitting just .121 against Melancon who is off to a 2-0 start. Closer **Brett Tomko** is 1-0 with two saves and has thrown 7.1 scoreless innings to open the season. The right hander has 8 K and has walked one with the League hitting .192 against him.

MORE HITS EQUAL WINS: Despite out-hitting the opposition on Tuesday night, the Yankees lost a game, dropping a 7-3 decision to Buffalo. SWB lost the game, despite out-hitting the Bisons 10-5. In 13 games played in 2009, Scranton/Wilkes-Barre has out-hit their opponent 11 times. The Yankees have also managed to pick up victories in the games they have been out-hit by their opponent. SWB was back to its familiar ways on Wednesday out-hitting Buffalo 12-8 and improving to 12-1 overall and 10-1 when picking up more hits.

ANOTHER SOLID EFFORT FOR HUGHES: **Phil Hughes** picked up his third win of the season on Wednesday night tossing 7.2 innings against Buffalo and taking a shutout into the 8th inning before finishing with one run allowed. Hughes ran his season high consecutive scoreless innings streak to 14.1 IP before allowing the run. The right hander struck out seven and walked one on the night. The base on balls issued with two outs in the 8th was the first walk allowed by Hughes since the second batter he faced in his first start of the season against Lehigh Valley on April 12, a span of 73 batters without a free pass.

SYRACUSE CHIEFS (www.SyracuseChiefs.com)

BYNUM GOES DEEP: Chiefs shortstop **Seth Bynum**, who began the season at Double-A Harrisburg, put together a streak of home runs in three consecutive games April 19-21. Bynum, 28, hit 21 home runs last season between Class-A Potomac and Harrisburg. He joined the Chiefs when the Nationals recalled **Alex Cintron**.

MORE PLAYERS COME AND GO: After just two weeks of baseball the Chiefs have added seven new players to their roster since Opening Day: **Seth Bynum**, **Freddie Bynum**, **Josh Bard**, **Dave Williams**, **J.D. Martin**, **Ron Villone**, and **Lastings Milledge**. Gone are **Alex Cintron**, **Justin Maxwell**, **Kip Wells**, **Jason Bergmann**, and **Garrett Mock** to Washington.

TOWERS STILL ON THE MEND: Chiefs right-handed pitcher **Josh Towers**, who was disabled with a muscle strain in his stomach, is off to the Nationals Florida rehab site for further evaluation. Towers is expected to return to the Chiefs after he pitches in the extended spring program.

CHIEFS RECEIVE FIRST REHAB PLAYER: **Willie Harris** became the team's first rehab player of 2009 when he joined the Chiefs on Wednesday, April 22 against Lehigh Valley. Harris played center field and went hitless in three at bats. He will likely stay with the team through the weekend when the Chiefs take on the Bisons in Buffalo.

TOLEDO MUD HENS (www.MudHens.com)

NICE CROWDS: In the first three home games of the season, the Mud Hens attracted 27,577 fans which eclipsed the previous record of 27,129 fans that came out for the first three home games of the 2005 campaign. In addition, a ballpark single-game record 13,100 fans saw the Mud Hens in their home opener last Thursday. The new record was 350 more fans than the previous best, which was the 2008 home opener.

GRAND SALAMI: **Mike Hessman's** grand slam in Tuesday's 13-10 loss to Indianapolis was the sixth by a Mud Hen in the history of Fifth Third Field. **Brent Clevlen** had done it most recently (5/29/08). **Chris Shelton** (8/21/07), **Mike Rabelo** (8/19/06), **Warren Morris** (7/20/04) and **Brandon Inge** (5/19/02) are the other Hens' players to hit the grand slam.

RECORD BOOKS: **Ryan Raburn** is now fifth on the Mud Hens all-time Modern Era RBI list with 222. In addition, his home run last Friday puts him 4th on the all-time HR list in Toledo baseball.

WILD, WILD WEST: The Hens have opened this season 8-5, all versus International League West opponents. In total, their first 19 games will be against division opponents. It is not until April 30 the Hens travel outside of the division when they take on Lehigh Valley. Last season, the Hens were a combined 30-34 against the IL West, and lost the division to the Louisville Bats by 13 games.