



International League News & Notes



August 6, 2009

BUFFALO BISON (www.Bisons.com)

NIESE'S SEASON ENDS: LHP **Jonathon Niese** saw his 2009 season come to an end yesterday. Just three starts after receiving a big league promotion, Niese tore his right upper hamstring tendon covering first base in a game against the Cardinals. The southpaw had a rollercoaster year with the Bisons, starting 0-6 with a 7.36 ERA in his first nine starts only to win five of his last seven games with the team. At one point, Niese threw 24.1 consecutive scoreless innings for the Bisons. With the Mets, Niese was 1-1 with a 4.21 ERA in five total starts this year.

NOT QUITE IN THE CLUBHOUSE: RHP **Nelson Figueroa** received his third big league promotion to the Mets on Monday. The veteran has been stellar for the Bisons this year, with a 7-5 record and a 2.25 ERA. His ERA is the 2nd-best in the International League, trailing only Charlotte's **Carlos Torres'** 2.21. However, Figueroa only pitched 112.0 innings with the Bisons, which means if doesn't return, he will fall 3.0 innings short of qualifying. That, however, doesn't take the shine off a season that has featured 14 quality starts in 17 games.

SOLID PEN WORK: LHP **Adam Bostick** has emerged as a dominating arm out of the Bisons bullpen. The southpaw has posted a razor-thin 1.44 ERA in 17 outings with the team this year. Overall, he has struck out 28 and allowed just 16 hits in 25.0 innings of work. The 26-year old didn't allow a hit in his first six relief appearances (6.2 IP) after a promotion from Double-A Binghamton on May 31. In his last four outings, Bostick has struck out 14 in 8.0 innings of work.

CHARLOTTE KNIGHTS (www.CharlotteKnights.com)

HIT STREAK: OF **Michael Restovich's** hitting streak came to an end after 11 games. Restovich matched teammate **Josh Kroeger** for the longest hitting streak by a Knights player this season. Over the course of this streak, Restovich went 15-44 (.341) with three home runs and four RBI. The big right-handed slugger has been on a tear for Charlotte, having gone 38-113 (.336) since July 1. The Knights longest hitting steak of 2008 was 16 games by former Knights INF/OF **Jason Bourgeois**.

COMINGS AND GOINGS: The Charlotte Knights parent club the Chicago White Sox were very busy over the non-waiver trade deadline. This caused a major change on the Knights roster. LHP **Aaron Poreda** and RHP **Adam Russell** were traded to the San Diego Padres with two other pitchers in exchange for RHP **Jake Peavy** who has been placed on the White Sox disabled list. The Knights then received RHP **Fernando Hernandez** and RHP **Matt Zaleski** from Double-A Birmingham. The Knights then lost RHP **Jhonny Nunez** as he was recalled to Chicago. Charlotte then activated RHP **John Van Benschoten** from the disabled list.

ROAD TRIP: The Knights are entering the final series of their 12-game, 13-day road trip. This road trip is their longest of the season. So far on the road trip, the Knights have split a four-game series with Syracuse and then lost three of four to Louisville. The Knights are just 21-32 on the road this season. This trip could be a good indicator for how the rest of the season will go for Charlotte. Of the 33 games left this season, 19 are on the road. The Knights will still have a chance to cause some havoc in the IL South as they have 25 games left against their division.

COLUMBUS CLIPPERS (www.ClippersBaseball.com)

ONE MAN SHOW: **Michael Brantley** currently ranks 2nd in the IL with 37 steals, comprising 43% of the team's total. That is the highest percentage of a team's steals in the League. His 37 thefts are a new career high and rank tied for 8th in Clippers history (**Mike Humphreys**, 1992 and **Kerry Robinson**, 2000). He needs six more steals to break into the career top 10.

CLEVELAND CLIPPERS: **Wyatt Toregas** became the sixth Clipper to debut in the Majors this year when he started at catcher against the Tigers (1-5, RBI) on 8/1. Other Clippers to have played their first Major League game this season are **Trevor Crowe** (4/9), **Tony Sipp** (4/22), **Matt LaPorta** (5/3), **David Huff** (5/17) and **Chris Gimenez** (6/3). Currently, there are nine opening day Clippers on the Cleveland roster.

FIRST TO 500 AND 1,000: By scoring nine runs at Lehigh Valley Friday night, the Clippers became the first team in the IL to reach 500 runs scored. The Clippers (508) own a two run lead over Gwinnett for most in the League. Sunday night, Columbus became the first team to reach 1,000 hits on the season, as they now stand at 1,011 (they have since been passed by Norfolk for the lead). The Clippers were also the first team to allow 500 runs (537) and 1,000 hits (1,064). They lead those categories by 29 runs and 55 hits over Rochester.

DURHAM BULLS (www.DurhamBulls.com)

COMEBACK KIDS: On Tuesday, the Bulls earned a split of a four-game set with Indianapolis, thanks to a thrilling 7-6 come-from-behind victory. Durham, trailing 4-0 and 6-1, eventually rallied for four runs in the ninth to win. The victory was Durham's 25th this year when the opponent has scored first. Durham now has six wins when trailing after seven innings, and 14 in its final at-bat. The three-run deficit was the largest the Bulls have overcome at home in the ninth inning this year. On June 7 the Bulls won at Pawtucket, 5-4, scoring four in the ninth to overcome a 4-1 deficit.

HUGHES HOT: **Rhyn Hughes** remains red hot. He went 1-4 on Tuesday, extending his hit streak to 12 games. That's the longest streak by a Bulls player this year, surpassing Chris Richard (May 7-16 – 10 games). Hughes is an incredible 21-41 (.512) over that 12-game stretch.

WEST WRAP-UP: Durham now is done with West Division play. Indianapolis was the only team in the division Durham had a losing record against. The Bulls went 18-14 against the West, 3-5 against the Indians and 15-9 against the other teams.

CLOSE, BUT NO CIGAR: Tuesday was the 17th time in 21 games since the All-Star Break that the contest was decided by one or two runs. Durham is 12-9 in that stretch, 11-6 in the close games. The Bulls are 35-24 (.593) this year in games decided by one or two runs. Of Durham's last 19 losses, 15 have been one or two-run defeats. Since June 6, 37-of-56 Bulls games have been one or two run games (the Bulls are 20-17 in the close games).

GWINNETT BRAVES (www.GwinnettBraves.com)

A WINNING WEEK: In six games since the last edition of International League News & Notes, the Gwinnett Braves have won five games and climbed into a tie with the Durham Bulls for first place in the International League South. It's the first time Gwinnett has reached the top of the division standings since they were 1-0 on April 9. Led by **Chris Burke**, **Reid Gorecki** and **Alvin Colina**, the G-Braves have batted .268 (56-209) as a team during the past week. Burke batted .320 (8-25) with five runs, one home run and two RBI in six games, Gorecki batted .391 (9-23) with two runs and four RBI in five games, and Colina batted .400 (4-10) with four runs, two homers and six RBI in three games during the past week. The pitching staff has worked to a 2.29 ERA (55.0 IP, 14 ER) during the same time frame. Gwinnett pitchers have logged quality starts in four of those six games, including two by **Todd Redmond**.

STREAKY: The Gwinnett Braves will go for their fifth-straight win tonight in the series opener at Toledo. The G-Braves have won five-straight games twice (from 4/26-5/1 and from 5/26-30) and won a season-long seven games from 7/17-24. Gwinnett has won consecutive games 15 times and lost consecutive games a total of 13 times this season. In their current four-game winning streak, the G-Braves outscored Columbus 24-8 in the four-game sweep. It was the G-Braves' third four-game sweep this season.

CLASH OF THE UNBEATENS (IN AUGUST): Gwinnett begins a four-game set at Toledo tonight where one of the two teams will drop its first game in August. The G-Braves and Mud Hens were the only two teams to pull out a sweep in the first series of August. Gwinnett defeated Columbus in four straight while Toledo took care of Buffalo in their four-game series. Gwinnett scored 24 runs in four games while Toledo crossed the plate 30 times. The G-Braves held Columbus to eight runs while Toledo let Buffalo score 19 times. Gwinnett (.309) and Toledo (.364) are two of three teams with a team batting average over .300 early this month (Syracuse has a .306 average). Gwinnett pitched to a 1.95 ERA (37.0 IP, 8 ER) in the four-game series at Columbus and Toledo pitched to a 4.25 ERA (36.0 IP, 17 ER).

INDIANAPOLIS INDIANS (www.IndyIndians.com)

WALKER'S BAT COMES ALIVE: Over his last five games, Indians 3B **Neil Walker** has exploded offensively as the 2008 Indians MVP has batted .522 (12-23) with four runs, three doubles, two home runs, 11 RBI and a stolen base. Walker got off to this offensive tear when he blasted two two-run home runs against Norfolk on July 30 and along with new Indians' 1B **Jeff Clement** became just one of four Indians' players to collect multiple home runs in a contest this season, with the other two being current Pittsburgh Pirates **Garrett Jones** and **Steve Pearce**.

LIVING ON THE BASES: INF/OF **Brian Myrow** went 2-3, with two runs in his most recent contest on Tuesday and has now reached base in 20 of his last 21 contests. Myrow also drew a walk in Tuesday's matchup and continues to show incredible patience at the plate over that stretch as he has drawn at least one walk in 16 of his last 21 contests for a total of 22 free passes. The left-handed slugger has also scored 15 runs and driven in 10 over those 21 contests, along with collecting an International League best 22 walks during the month of July. With his current stretch of living on the bases, Myrow also now ranks second in the IL with a .414 on-base percentage, while ranking tied for fifth with 50 bases-on-balls.

POWER SURGE: The Indians have won 12 of their last 19 contests thanks in part to their recent power surge as the Tribe belted 13 home runs during their recent eight-game road trip and have now collected 21 since the All-Star break. Seven different Tribe players collected a home run during their recent road trip as 1B **Jeff Clement**, OF **Brian Myrow**, INF/OF **Brian Bixler** and INF/OF **Chris Barnwell** have all belted multiple shots and catchers **Erik Kratz** and **Robinson Diaz** have each added a single long ball.

MASTERFUL MCCUTCHEN: Starter **Daniel McCutchen** was nothing short of dominant during the month of July as in his five starts during the month he posted a 4-1 record and 2.10 ERA (7 ER in 30.0), while striking out 17 and walking just two. After beginning the season 2-3 the right-hander has gone 8-3 in his last 12 outings, including a streak of five straight victories (June 22 - July 20) the most in-a-row for a Tribe pitcher this season. McCutchen's streak is the best in his professional career and is his most consecutive outings with a win since he had four straight victories as a member of the High-A Tampa Yankees from June 14 through June 30, 2007. After recording 11 straight decisions the right-hander earned his first no-decision since May 24 as he allowed three runs and struck out seven in 6.1 innings of work at Durham.

LEHIGH VALLEY IRONPIGS (www.IronPigsBaseball.com)

DIFFERENCE A YEAR MAKES: With their next win, the IronPigs (54-56) will match their entire win total from 2008 -- when they went 55-89. If the win comes Thursday at Scranton/Wilkes-Barre, Lehigh Valley will match the total in 33 fewer games. The 'Pigs are 8.0 games better from this point last season (46-64) & are on pace to finish 71-73.

NORTH STARS?: The IronPigs just took three of four games at Rochester, giving Lehigh Valley its first North Division road series victory since taking three of four at Buffalo from 5/25-5/28/09 -- and just their second of 2009. In the process, the 'Pigs are now two games over .500 against the North Division for the first time in franchise history -- as they are now 26-24 (.510) vs. the North in 2009. This comes after faring just 22-58 (.275) in 2008.

SUPER STARTERS!: Phillies' 2007 first-round pick (19th overall) LHP **Joe Savery** won his Triple-A debut on Monday (W, 6 IP, 4 H, 1 R, 1 ER, BB, 0 K). The Rice University product started his season in Double-A Reading and is now a combined 13-4 this season. His win total (13) is tied for second in all of MiLB w/ four others (inc. former IronPig and Louisville Bat **Justin Lehr**) -- one behind leader Carlos Hernandez of Stockton (CAL). A blown lead by the bullpen on Sunday denied LHP **Gustavo Chacin** (n/d, 7 IP, 2 R, 2 ER) from becoming the first Lehigh Valley starter to ever win five consecutive starts, so he remains tied in the record books at four with RHP **Carlos Carrasco**. Even so, the Venezuela native has gone 4-0, 3.26 ERA (38.2 IP, 14 ER, 5 QS) in his last 6 GS.

CLOSER BY COMMITTEE: RHP **Alex Concepcion** earned his first Triple-A save Monday. LHV has had seven different RP earn saves of their last 12 (**Cedrick Bowers**, **Steven Register**, **Jason Anderson**, **Jack Taschner**, **Gary Majewski**, **Jake Woods**). In all, 10 pitchers have combined for the team's 30 SV (including **Mike Koplove**, **Tyler Walker** and **Sergio Escalona**).

LOUISVILLE BATS (www.BatsBaseball.com)

BARKER IL BATTER OF WEEK: For the eighth time this season the Bats have an IL Player of the Week, as 1B **Kevin Barker** was the fourth Louisville batter to be named this season (7/27-8/2) and eighth overall player. He led the IL with 3 HR, 11 RBI, 6 extra-base hits, a .536 on-base percentage & a 1.000 slugging percentage last week, while finishing 2nd in hitting with a .455 average. Last Monday night at Syracuse, Barker crushed his fifth career GS in a Louisville uniform, breaking **Brandon Larson's** franchise record. The bomb began a string of seven straight games in which Barker drove in at least one run. He played in his 450th game in a Louisville uniform on Sunday (8/2) and in his last 24 G, he has 15 R, 10 2B, 1 3B, 6 HR & 24 RBI. His 20 HR are 2nd to only **SWB's Shelley Duncan**, who has 25. He is also 2nd in the League in slugging % (.552), T-5th in RBI (58) & his 20th HR Saturday night gave him his 7th 20-HR season in his career.

STUBBS IS A THIEF: OF **Drew Stubbs** leads the IL in stolen bases with 42 & has been caught stealing 7 times this year. He's on pace for 55 SB this year & if he hits 55, he'll be 2nd on the all-time steals list in a single season. The franchise record for steals in a season is held by **Vince Coleman** who stole an incredible 101 bases during the 1984 season. Stubbs has 7 games this season where he stole more than one base & his 42 SB ranks him T-11th in MiLB.

LOSING IS A DISEASE. SAM'S LECURE: On Monday night vs. Charlotte, RHP **Sam LeCure** fanned a season-high 11 batters en route to his seventh straight winning decision. After allowing two runs in the first and a home run to **Wilson Betemit** to start the second, he struck out the next three batters swinging following the home run and found his groove. In the 8-4 victory, he went 6.0 innings, allowing eight hits and three earned runs, while walking two and striking out 11. The 11 strikeouts tied a career-high, he also struck out 11 while with Sarasota against West Tennessee on 8/22/07. Over his last seven starts, **LeCure** is 5-0 with a 1.85 ERA (43.2IP, 9 R, 9 ER, 10 BB, 42 K, .231 OBA, 6 quality starts).

NORFOLK TIDES (www.NorfolkTides.com)

HIT MAN: With two hits in yesterday's win, **Brandon Snyder** has now hit safely in 13 of his last 14 games. Over that stretch, Snyder has hit .426 (23-54) with 11 runs scored and 12 RBI, upping his average from .200 to .274. Snyder also has five multi-hit games over the span, including four contests in which he's collected three hits. The 22-year-old, who opened the season at Double-A Bowie, leads all O's minor leaguers with 75 RBI and is third in the system with a .312 average.

ANYTHING BUT AVERAGE: Norfolk enters play today with a .277 team batting average, a mark that is tied with Columbus for tops in the IL. If Norfolk finishes the season with its current team average, it would be the highest team mark for a Tides team since the 1999 club batted .280. Since the Tides joined the IL in 1969, only four Tides teams have finished the season with an average of .275 or better: 1969 (.283), 1970 (.280), 1987 (.282) and 1999 (.280).

SOUVENIR CITY: With 32 games remaining, the Tides have already surpassed their 2008 season total of 66 home runs, as Norfolk has slugged 69 long balls this season. This comes despite the fact that the Tides have only had one player reach double digits in home runs thus far, as **Oscar Salazar** clubbed 10 before being promoted to Baltimore in June. However, Norfolk has hit just one homer over its past nine games - an inside-the-park home run by **Jeff Fiorentino** on August 1.

PAWTUCKET RED SOX (www.PawSox.com)

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A YEAR MAKES: Pawtucket is 49-60 on the season which is already more than their total amount of losses from all of last year when they finished 85-58. (The 85 wins last year was a franchise-record). After 109 games last year the PawSox had a 67-42 record. They are 18-games worse at this point this season.

PITCHER'S DUEL: Tonight's game between Norfolk and the host PawSox features an interesting pitching match-up as the two starters were traded for each other last January 19 and as such both were members of the opposing organization last year. PawSox spot starter **Randor Bierd** made 29 relief appearances for Baltimore last season and while he didn't pitch for Norfolk he did appear briefly for three other Baltimore affiliates (the Gulf Coast Orioles, Frederick, and Bowie). Tonight's Norfolk starter, **David Pauley**, is a familiar name to the PawSox as he first appeared for Pawtucket in 2006 and then spent virtually all of 2007 and 2008 in the PawSox rotation (tying former teammate **Charlie Zink** for 2nd most wins in the IL last season while going 14-4 with a 3.55 ERA in 25 GS). For Bierd tonight marks just his second start of the season (he filled in for Zink on Saturday night in G2 at Scranton/WB and lost, 4-0) while Pauley will be making his team-high 20th start for the Tides.

OVER AND DONE IN JULY: The PawSox have begun the month of August 1-5. They closed out what turned out to be their second worst month in club-history this July by finishing 7-19. Their victory in the July finale on July 31 in Buffalo enabled them to edge out their worst month on record which was May of 1985 when they went 7-20. Pawtucket's club-record for most games lost in a month is 24 in June of 1975. What makes this past July even more shocking is the fact that it marked the first time the Sox had suffered a losing month of any sort since August of 2007. Until this July, Pawtucket had been on a franchise-record of eight consecutive winning (full) months dating back to April of the 2008 season. Sox batters hit just .219 with only 81 runs scored this July (3.1 runs per game) while pitchers were 7-19 with a 4.91 ERA. The Sox were outscored 131-81 in July. Ultimately, after a victory to begin July on July 2 the Sox were in 2nd-place and just -2½ GB. They finished the month in 5th-place, -9 GB. They are currently in 5th-place and -12 GB.

BACK TO THE FUTURE: The PawSox and Norfolk Tides will play the finale of their current 4-game series this coming Saturday afternoon at Fenway Park in the annual Future's at Fenway Game. Historic Fenway Park will once again be the site of a regular-season minor league doubleheader as the 4th annual "Futures at Fenway" pits the Double-A Portland Sea Dogs against the Bowie BaySox at 12:00 Noon followed by the PawSox vs. Norfolk at approximately 4:00 pm (both games televised on NESN). The PawSox are undefeated in their two previous "Futures" games played at Fenway. The PawSox won a thriller on August 26, 2006 as **Carlos Pena** delivered a 2-run HR in the bottom of the 8th-inning to give the Sox a 5-4 win over Rochester in a game played in front of 33,394 fans. Last August 9 the PawSox received outstanding pitching from winner **David Pauley** to beat Charlotte, 5-2 before 36,234 fans. Boston Mayor Thomas Menino originally approached the Red Sox with the idea to host minor league games at Fenway Park. "We hope that these games will open the doors of Fenway Park on a summer Saturday to thousands of fans from across the city and throughout New England who may not otherwise be able to attend a Red Sox game," said Mayor Menino. "With Red Sox tickets so tough to come by, this event is a wonderful opportunity to showcase the City of Boston and America's Most Beloved Ballpark for thousands of families and especially the children for whom this opportunity will mean so much."

ROCHESTER RED WINGS (www.RedWingsBaseball.com)

OOOOO....PICK ME....PICK ME: Rochester has yet to have a player selected as Pitcher or Batter of the Week in the International League this season. Since 1985, when it's believed the weekly awards were started, Rochester has never gone a complete season without having at least one winner.

DOWN THE STRETCH THEY COME: The Red Wings have 36 games remaining in the regular season (19 road games and 17 at Frontier Field). Of the 36 games remaining 19 of them are against teams with a losing record (Red Wings have a 19-18 record vs. these teams this season).

REST UP: Yesterday was the Red Wings last scheduled off day of the 2009 season. Starting today Rochester will play 36 games in 33 days. This is the longest stretch to end a season since 1998 when the Wings played 41 straight days without a scheduled off day. The 1998 team actually played 44 games during that 41 day stretch (23-21 record).

SCRANTON/WILKES-BARRE YANKEES (www.SWBYankees.com)

NO STREAK BUT STILL HITTING: **Yurendell de Caster** picked up his ninth multi-hit game since joining SWB in game one of Saturday's DH vs. Pawtucket before **Randor Bierd** and **Hunter Jones** held him hitless in game two, snapping his 15 game hit streak. The streak was the second longest for a Yankee in 2009 (**Todd Linden** 19 games) and tied for the ninth longest in the IL with **Chris Carter** of Pawtucket. **de Caster** hit .351 (20-57) with 8 R, 6 2B, HR, 6 RBI and had five multi hit games raising his average over the stretch from .256 to .319. Since the streak ended, de Caster has now hit safely in 18 of his last 21 games swinging at a .329 clip (24-73) since July 16.

RUSSO'S RAKING: Even though he has missed the last handful of games with a sore knee, **Kevin Russo's** current hit streak is a season high seven consecutive games where he is 13 for his last 26, sporting a .500 average including a three double effort against Toledo July 27 and a pair of two hit games in both ends of the July 30 doubleheader against Durham. Since his average dropped to a recent low of .284 (season low was after 1-5 on opening night .200) following a 0-3 game at Columbus on July 20, the Yanks lead off man has hit safely in 10 of 12, going 19-40 (.475) with a four hit game, two three hit games and a pair of two hit games. He has scored eight runs drawn two walks, has six doubles and two RBI over the 10 game stretch.

IT'S BEEN OVER A YEAR: The Yankees beat Pawtucket 5-2 at McCoy Stadium on August 3, 2008 and moved to within a half game of the IL North lead, after falling out of first place with a June 20, 2008 loss to Toledo. The Yankees entered play on August 4, 2008 one half game behind the Red Sox in second place in the IL North after trailing Pawtucket by as many as 6.0 games as recently as July 9. After a 3-2 win at PNC on August 4 over Pawtucket, the Yankees re-took first in the North and have held it every day since, a span of 368 calendar days and 149 straight days on the IL regular season baseball calendar.

FORTIFYING THE ROSTER: Since July 31, the Yankees have been active moving players up and down as well as bringing in some new arms from outside the organization. SWB added RHP **Jason Hirsch** on July 31 for a player to be named later in a deal with the Colorado Rockies. The Yankees also added RHP **Jonathan Albaladejo** on August 1 as he was optioned back to the team after moving up on July 26. A little over 24 hours after he left PNC Field, **Shelley Duncan** returned to SWB on August 2 after a one day stint with the NY Yankees in Chicago vs. the White Sox. SWB will also add RHP **Russ Ortiz**, a 21-game winner with Atlanta in '03, to the roster to get the start in the opening game of a two game series vs. Lehigh Valley. He will become the 22nd different starting pitcher used by Scranton/Wilkes-Barre during the 2009 season. Ortiz joins **Alfredo Aceves** (4), **Brian Bruney** (1), **Paul Bush** (2), **Anthony Claggett** (2), **JB Cox** (1), **Casey Fossum** (10), **Eric Hacker** (3), **Jason Hirsch** (1), **Phil Hughes** (3), **Kei Igawa** (20), **Steven Jackson** (1), **Jason Johnson** (7), **Ian Kennedy** (4), **George Kontos** (9), **Zach Kroenke** (2), **Sergio Mitre** (7), **Ivan Nova** (7), **Romulo Sanchez** (7), **Jason Stephens** (1), **Josh Towers** (14) and **Chien-Ming Wang** (2) who have all started at least one game for the Yankees in 2009. The 2008 Yankees used 21 different starters, while the 2007 club featured 23 different starting pitchers.

SYRACUSE CHIEFS (www.SyracuseChiefs.com)

PADILLA GETS CALL: After playing in over 1,000 games in 12 minor league seasons **Jorge Padilla** was promoted to Washington this week. The International League batting leader was batting .367 at the time of his promotion. The 29-year-old native of Puerto Rico replaced **Austin Kearns** who was disabled.

RIVERA RETURNS TO NATS: After being one of the Nationals mainstays in the bullpen for the past two three years right-hander **Saul Rivera** was recalled to Washington after spending the past three months with the Chiefs. Rivera compiled a sub 3.00 ERA with the Chiefs this season.

CHIEFS ACQUIRE WARD AND HOPPER FROM KNIGHTS: After playing the Charlotte Knights last week the Syracuse Chiefs decided to acquire two players off the Knights roster for the stretch run. Veteran Outfielder **Daryle Ward** and speedster **Norris Hopper** will join the Chiefs on Thursday in Durham.

TOLEDO MUD HENS (www.MudHens.com)

POWER SURGE: The Mud Hens have blasted their way to second in the IL with 103 in home runs and have been hitting bombs at an incredible pace. They have home runs in each of their last eight games and 18 of their last 19. Leading the way during this span is OF **Jeff Frazier** with six. OF **Brent Clevlen**, 3B **Mike Hessman** and C **Max-St Pierre** all have four. Toledo is also now tied for third in the IL in batting average (.266). On July 1, they were 11th with a .248 average, but their .299 average in that month led the League.

ON A ROLL: The Hens have won six straight games for the first time this season (and first time since July 7-12, 2008). They swept the Buffalo Bisons for four of these wins. It was Toledo's first four-game sweep since July 28-31, 2007 over Richmond.

HUNTING BISON: Since first wearing a Mud Hens uniform in 2005, 3B **Mike Hessman** had not enjoyed much success vs. the Buffalo Bisons. In 37 career games vs. The Herd, he is batting just .188 (24-128) with 6 HR and 16 RBI. The last four games, however, have been a different story. Hessman delivered a home run in the first game of the series, came through with a walk-off single in Game 3, and went 3-5 with 2 RBI in the series finale. Overall in the four games, he hit .313 with a home run and five RBI. Hessman reached a milestone in the last game; his two RBI tied him with **Mike Powers** for third all-time on the Mud Hens RBI list (349). **Bobby Veach** holds the record with 388.

REHABBING TIGERS: Tigers' pitchers LHP **Nate Robertson** and RHP **Jeremy Bolderman** have both started rehab assignments with Toledo. Both appeared in Tuesday's game, though each were on strict pitch counts. Robertson started and went 2.2 innings, allowing a solo shot to Buffalo 2B **Andy Green** in the third but he was otherwise effective. He threw 39 pitches, 31 for strikes. Bolderman needed 13 pitches (7 strikes) to throw a perfect inning of relief.