



International League News & Notes



August 13, 2009

BUFFALO BISON (www.Bisons.com)

OFFENSE COMES ALIVE: The offensive woes of the early season are well behind the Bisons offense. The team has averaged .292 in the first 12 games in August. The club has also hit 11 home runs and is averaging 5.5 runs a game this month. The Herd has also been able to put together the big rally. Buffalo has had a five-run inning or better in each of their last three games. Leading the charge for the Bisons this month are INF **Argenis Reyes** (.370, 20-54), INF **Wilson Valdez** (.393, 11-28), OF **Josh Petersen** (.393, 11-28) and C **Robinson Cancel** (.636, 7-11).

THAT'S THE REY TO BE: INF **Argenis Reyes** has the hottest bat in the Bisons order. The infielder has hit in 12 straight games entering play on Thursday. Since August 1, Reyes has hit .370 (20-54) with two doubles, a triple, six RBI and four runs scored. The stretch has raised Reyes' season average 23 points from .255 to .278. It's the second longest hit streak for a Bisons player this season. INF **Javier Castillo** hit in 16 straight games from June 26 – July 12.

IN LIKE A LAMB: If you consider the fact that INF **Mike Lamb** missed almost a month of the season, his numbers look even better. Lamb was released by Milwaukee during camp and was signed by the Mets on April 25. He had just three at-bats in extended spring training before being rushed up to Buffalo. As a result, Lamb hit just .183 (22-120) in his first 32 games. However, in the past two and a half months, Lamb has averaged .289 (63-218) with 16 doubles, two home runs and 29 RBI in 59 games. Lamb now leads all Bisons hitters with 40 RBI on the season.

CHARLOTTE KNIGHTS (www.CharlotteKnights.com)

PEAVY BEGINS REHAB: RHP **Jake Peavy** has joined the Charlotte Knights to begin a major league rehabilitation assignment. Peavy is scheduled to start for the Knights tonight against Pawtucket. The 2007 NL Cy Young Award Winner was acquired by the White Sox on July 31 in exchange for former Charlotte Knights **Aaron Poreda**, **Clayton Richard**, **Adam Russell** and Low-A pitcher **Dexter Carter**. Peavy, 28, is 6-6 with a 3.97 ERA (36 ER/81.2 IP), one complete game and 92 strikeouts in 13 starts with the Padres in 2009.

STEADY FREDDY: The Knights got a very strong pitching performance from RHP **Freddy Garcia** on Tuesday night vs. Pawtucket. Garcia combined with reliever **Justin Cassel** to throw a team season high 13 strikeouts. Garcia pitched 6.0 innings allowing just two runs off of nine hits to go along with his nine strikeouts. This was Garcia's first start in the IL since April when he was pitching for Buffalo. Garcia has many ties to the White Sox organization as he was the starting and winning pitcher in the clinching game of the 2005 ALDS vs. Boston and 2005 World Series game four vs. Houston. Garcia's wife is also the cousin of White Sox manager **Ozzie Guillen**.

ROAD WOES: The Knights have ended their longest road trip of the season on Sunday with an 8-7 win over Indianapolis. Charlotte went 4-8 on the road trip and is now 22-35 on the road this season. The trip saw the team go to three different cities and play 12 games over the course of 13 days. The Knights return to Knights Stadium where they have gone 31-29 entering Thursday night's matchup with Pawtucket. They are 10-5 at home since 7/7, and have won their last three home series.

COLUMBUS CLIPPERS (www.ClippersBaseball.com)

HUNTINGTON PARK NAMED BALLPARK OF THE YEAR: Despite intense and high-priced competition, Columbus, Ohio's Huntington Park has been named the best in the land. The first-year home of the Columbus Clippers of the International League was named Ballpark of the Year by BASEBALLPARKS.COM. The honor is presented to the new baseball stadium with the best combination of superior design, attractive site selection and fan amenities. The Clippers' new home was selected over the likes of Yankee Stadium, Citi Field and the recently renovated Kauffman Stadium among others. The award will be presented in a ceremony prior to the Clippers' home game against the Toledo Mud Hens on Sunday, September 6.

MISSING MARTE: The Clippers are 4-11 since their Triple Crown candidate, **Andy Marte**, had his contract purchased by Cleveland on 7/28. At the time of his promotion, he was 3rd in average (.327), 2nd in homers (18) and 2nd in RBI (66). Since his departure, the team has hit .234 (118-505) with 9 HR and have been averaging just 3.5 runs per game (53 in 15 games). They have seen their batting average drop seven points to .275 (putting them into a tie for first) and seen their lead in runs scored evaporate (535, 3rd place).

ON THE CUSP: Tuesday night's 3-4 game has put **Lou Marson** at .299 (73-244) on the season between Lehigh Valley and Columbus. In his last 44 games between the two, he has hit .360 (54-150) including 15 of his 16 multi-hit games on the year. He was last above .300 on 7/23 (.302).

DURHAM BULLS (www.DurhamBulls.com)

FIVE STRAIGHT: Durham has dropped the first three games of a four-game series at Gwinnett, giving the Braves 1st place in the South Division by two games over the Bulls. Last night **Brandon Jones** hit a bases-loaded two-out single on a 3-2 pitch, driving home Gwinnett's runs in a 2-1 win. It was Durham's second straight ninth inning loss to Gwinnett. Durham now has lost five consecutive games to Gwinnett. Three of the losses have been by one run, one by two runs, and another by three.

SEEKING RELIEF: The Durham bullpen has suffered four losses in the past six games, and has blown three saves (Durham is 1-5 during that stretch). Each blown save has come in the ninth inning, and each by a different reliever (**Joe Nelson** on Friday, **Winston Abreu** on Tuesday, and **Dale Thayer** yesterday). Durham has given up 15 runs in 24.1 innings out of the pen over the last seven games, allowing runs in each of those seven games (5.55 ERA).

DEFENSE RESTS: Durham committed one more error last night, and now the Bulls have seven in the first three games of the current series with Gwinnett. Those miscues have led to four unearned runs, while Durham has not scored an unearned run on five Braves errors over the past three days. Entering this series the Bulls had the fourth best fielding percentage in the IL, but Durham has committed at least one error in eight straight games, collecting 13 over that stretch.

AKI TO ARRIVE: **Akinori Iwamura** will begin a rehab assignment with the Durham Bulls when the team returns home tomorrow to take on the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Yankees. Iwamura has been on the disabled list with a left knee injury since May 25. Iwamura was injured while attempting to turn a double play against the Florida Marlins on May 22. He was batting .310 with 19 runs scored and 8 stolen bases at the time of the injury. Iwamura has a career .283 batting average in three seasons with Tampa Bay while playing predominantly at third and second base. He played nine seasons with the Yakult Swallows in Japan posting a career .300 batting average with 188 home runs and 570 RBI.

GWINNETT BRAVES (www.GwinnettBraves.com)

MR. JONES: **Brandon Jones** is the hero of the week for the Gwinnett Braves. The outfielder from Wewahatchka, Florida, hit a walk-off home run Tuesday night and a walk-off, two-run single Wednesday night to lift the G-Braves to two consecutive come-from-behind victories over their International League South rivals, the Durham Bulls. The wins have given Gwinnett a two-game lead in the division race. Jones has been one of the most consistent hitters for Gwinnett all season. Since his average exceeded .300 for the first time on April 23, it hasn't dipped below .283 in 74 games in Triple-A. He is fourth on the club with 42 RBI, third among G-Braves with 89 hits and tied with **Brooks Conrad** for third-most extra-base hits with 27. The only thing that has been lacking for Jones thus far this year has been his power, but that's all changed in the last 30 days. Through his first 65 games, Jones failed to hit a home run. He got his first one of the season July 12 and has hit five of them in 22 games since.

WES TIMMONS: **Wes Timmons** was activated from the Disabled List on Sunday and picked up right where he left off. Timmons had his 40-game on-base streak put on pause after fracturing his left thumb and going to the DL on July 21, but Timmons has reached base each of the four games since his return and is 6-for-15 (.400) with a run and three RBI. Timmons' on-base streak now stands at an IL season-high 44 games. Since May 26, the last time he failed to reach base, Timmons is batting .362 (54-149) with 32 runs, 11 doubles, 15 RBI and 37 walks. His on-base streak is tied for the fifth-longest at the Triple-A level since 2005 (Minor League Baseball started keeping that record in 2005). **Brent Clevlen** of the Toledo Mud Hens reached in 44 straight games from April 20-June 21 last year. **Andy Green**, playing for the Tucson Sidewinders, reached base in 55 straight games from June 12 to August 11 in the 2005 season.

CLOSE GAMES: The Gwinnett Braves won back-to-back one-run games on Tuesday and Wednesday against Durham and are now 22-15 in 37 one-run games this season. The G-Braves .595 winning percentage in one-run games is the best in the International League. Gwinnett's 22 wins in one-run games are second only to the Pawtucket's 24 victories (24-17, .585). The Red Sox come to town this weekend, August 14-17, for a four-game series. In the first series between Pawtucket and Gwinnett, the teams split 2-2 with Pawtucket taking the series finale, 1-0.

INDIANAPOLIS INDIANS (www.IndyIndians.com)

TERRIFIC TRIO: The Indians are off to a 7-4 start through their first 11 contests in August. The Tribe's success has come thanks in large part to three of their key aces, RHP **Eric Hacker**, RHP **Virgil Vasquez** and RHP **Daniel McCutchen**. The three hurlers have combined to go 5-0 with a 2.03 ERA (9 ER/ 40.0 IP) through their 11 starts so far in the season's fifth month. The terrific trio has held opposing hitters to a .233 batting average and have totaled 39 strikeouts compared to seven walks in their combined 40.0 innings of work. After some midseason struggles Hacker has been sensational in his five starts since the All-Star break as the defending IL Pitcher of the Week has allowed only six earned runs over 33.0 innings for a 1.64 ERA. Over his last nine starts, Vasquez, has posted a 5-0 record with a 3.00 ERA (17 ER in 51.0 IP) and has struck out 31, while walking just seven. McCutchen put up his longest outing of the season in his last start in which he tossed 7.2 scoreless innings with seven strikeouts en route to a victory over Columbus on August 10. McCutchen ranks second in the IL with 11 wins and has now gone 9-3 in his last 13 outings, including a streak of five straight victories (June 22 - July 20) the most in-a-row for a Tribe pitcher this season.

MAN ON TOP: INF **Brian Bixler** went 2-4 with a run in the Tribe's most recent contest on August 12 and has now reached base in 22 consecutive contests, including his current team best 14-game hitting streak. The right-handed slugger's streak is his longest since he hit in 14-straight (.370, 20-for-54, 14 R, 3 HR, 11 RBI, 2 SB) with Low-A Hickory from June 18-July 6 in 2005. During his current on-base streak, Bixler is batting .359 (33-for-92) with 18 runs, four triples, six home runs, 17 RBI and two stolen bases. The slugger also continues to thrive in clutch situations as he is batting a team best .359 (28-for-78) with a team-high 32 RBI when runners are in scoring position and also has seemed to enjoy the move to the lead-off spot where he is now batting .317 (52-for-164) with 28 runs, 25 RBI and all nine of his home runs.

CLOSE CALLS: With their 2-1 victory over Columbus on Wednesday, the Indians have now seen 22 of their last 27 games be decided by two runs or less. Indianapolis has also had 11 one-run contests over the last 16 games and currently leads the International League with 44 single-run games this season. In their most recent homestand the Tribe had only one game out of seven decided by more than two runs (8/7, 10-3 win vs. CHA) and have now had only two of their 11 August contests decided by more than two scores. The Indians also continue to lead the International League and all of Triple-A Baseball with 70 of their contests having been decided by two runs or less. The Tribe also has the best winning percentage (.875) in all of Triple-A Baseball with a 7-1 record in games that go to extra frames.

TAGG YOUR IT: During the Tribe's recent seven-game homestand against Charlotte and Columbus INF/OF **Tagg Bozied** went 10-for-23 (.435) with four runs, three doubles, one home run, two RBI and four walks. In 15 games at home with the Tribe, Bozied is hitting .308 (16-for-52) with five runs, five doubles, one home run, two RBI and seven walks and also been clutch throughout his time with the Indians in late inning situations where he is batting .325 (13-for-40) with four runs, three doubles, two home runs and three RBI in the seventh inning and beyond.

LEHIGH VALLEY IRONPIGS (www.IronPigsBaseball.com)

MYCLE CYCLE: On Wednesday at Coca-Cola Park, OF **Michael Taylor** became the first player in IronPigs history to hit for the cycle -- for or against Lehigh Valley -- and he did it in dramatic fashion. Trailing 9-8 in the bottom of the ninth and needing a HR for the cycle (he just missed it with his second double of the game off the right-field wall in the seventh), Taylor hit a one-out, game-tying home run off RHP **Logan Ondrusek** -- the first run allowed by Ondrusek after starting his Triple-A career with eight scoreless appearances. Taylor finished the game 5-5 with 2 2B, 3B, HR, 4 RBI and 2 R -- becoming the first 'Pig to ever record a five-hit game and setting a team record with 12 total bases in a game (previously 9, done by **Andy Tracy** on two occasions). One night prior, Taylor became the first IronPigs outfielder to record two assists in one inning (7-4, 7-2 in second inning).

WESTERN WOES: The IronPigs' 10-9 walk-off win in 10 innings against Louisville on Wednesday snapped their eight-game losing streak against the Bats going back to 2008 -- their second longest losing streak to one team in LHV history (lost nine straight versus Pawtucket from 4/7/08-7/4/08). Still, the 'Pigs are just 13-18 (.419) vs. the West Division this season -- the only division they have a losing record against.

WELCOME BACK STARTERS: On Thursday, the IronPigs will add back RHP **Rodrigo Lopez** (5-4, 3.91) and RHP **Kyle Kendrick** (6-6, 3.58), who were both optioned from Philadelphia with the activation of RHP **Chad Durbin** and RHP **Pedro Martinez**. Since these two key cogs in Lehigh Valley departed the rotation, the 'Pigs went just 2-9 in the game started by replacements -- with the starters in those games combining to go 2-8, 5.44 (46.1 IP, 28 ER).

DOUBLE-TROUBLE: 2B **David Newhan**'s RBI single in the 7th inning on Monday snapped his string in which each of his previous six hits were all doubles. All his '2-sackers' have come since he's moved to '2nd' in the order & starting playing '2nd' base. In all, Newhan has six multi-hit games in his last nine games (14-36, .389-0-4, 6 2B, 8 R). In his last 25 G, he's now batting .355-1-8 (33-93, 10 2B, 3B).

LOUISVILLE BATS (www.BatsBaseball.com)

2,000 WINS IN FRANCHISE HISTORY: Sunday night's victory was the franchise's 2,000th since baseball returned to Louisville in 1982. Louisville was a charter member of the National League in 1876 and baseball has been played in the Derby City for all but 20 seasons since. In the 27 seasons since baseball returned in 1982, Louisville has played as the Redbirds, RiverBats and Bats and has been affiliated with the St. Louis Cardinals, Milwaukee Brewers and the Cincinnati Reds. Louisville will play its 4,000th game in franchise history on August 27 at Huntington Park in Columbus.

SAVE-A-LOT: For the second straight season, the Louisville Bats look to lead the International League in saves. In 2008, when the Bats won a franchise-best 88 games, they also set a franchise record with 56 saves. RHP **Jon Adkins** recorded 30 of those saves, which also led the International League. This year the Bats are leading the IL with 41 saves and are on pace to finish with 50. If they finish with 50 saves, it will be the second-best mark in franchise history behind last year's 56. Unlike last season when Adkins handled most of the save situations, the Bats have relied on a closer by committee, with seven different pitchers recording a save. RHP **Josh Roenicke**, who was included in the **Scott Rolen** deal with Toronto and is now pitching with the Blue Jays, leads the club with 12 saves, while LHP **Pedro Viola** is the leader on the active roster with seven. Overall the bullpen is 19-14 with a 3.21 ERA and have converted 41 of 54 save opportunities.

MVP, MVP, MVP: Last Thursday night, 1B **Kevin Barker** hit his second grand slam of the season and a franchise record six in his Louisville career. His 22 HR are 2nd to SWB's **Shelley Duncan** (25) and he is 2nd in the League in slugging % (.554) and T-4th in RBI (66). Barker's 28-game on-base streak (7/6-8/10, .455 OBP) came to an end Tuesday night after his 0-4 game; it's the fourth longest streak in the IL this season. Gwinnett's **Wes Timmons** has the longest streak at 43 games (5/27-pres). Following a scorching July where he hit .368 with five home runs and 22 RBI, Barker has cooled down a bit but not much. In August he is hitting .286 with three home runs and 11 RBI. At the age of 33, he is just three home runs shy of tying his career-high and he is on pace to finish with his second-best batting average at the Triple-A level. He has hit 23 home runs three times (1998-Louisville, 1999-Louisville, 2005-Syracuse) and hit .305 in 91 games with Syracuse in 2005.

NORFOLK TIDES (www.NorfolkTides.com)

WHAT A RELIEF: **Alberto Castillo** has not allowed a run in each of his last eight outings with the Tides, as he's yielded just two hits and four walks while striking out 13 in 8.2 innings of work. For the season, Castillo is a perfect 10-for-10 in save opportunities and 36 of his 43 outings with Norfolk have been scoreless. The 34-year-old southpaw has also allowed just three of 17 inherited runners to score has posted a sparkling 0.47 ERA (1 ER, 19.1 IP) in 19 games at Harbor Park.

POWER OUTAGE: The Tides have gone 7-7 over their last 14 games and have collected 10-plus hits seven of those contests. Norfolk has also clubbed 26 doubles and two triples over that stretch, but the Tides have hit just one home run over that span, an inside-the-park home run by **Jeff Fiorentino** vs. Syracuse on August 1. Norfolk's last home run to leave the field of play came from **Michael Aubrey** on July 27 at Durham. For the season, Norfolk ranks second in the IL with a .275 team average and is 13th in the League with 69 home runs.

STRIKING PERFORMANCES: Five Norfolk pitchers combined to strike out nine Yankees in Tuesday night's contest, giving Tides hurlers 23 strikeouts in the first two games of the series. The Tides have now posted 837 strikeouts this season, trailing only the 843 strikeouts registered by Gwinnett. If the Tides were to continue their current pace of 7.2 strikeouts per game they would finish the season with 1,032 punchouts, which would be the second-highest total in franchise history (1,043 in 1998).

PAWTUCKET RED SOX (www.PawSox.com)

SATURDAY WAKE-UP CALL: RHP **Tim Wakefield** will be the 54th different PawSox player used this season and his battery mate catcher **George Kottaras** would be #55 if the pair, as expected, join the PawSox on injury rehab assignments beginning this Saturday. Wakefield is slated to get the start for the PawSox Saturday night at Gwinnett against the Braves at 7:00 pm as he begins his comeback from a lower back strain along with a left hamstring and calf strain that has had him on Boston's disabled list since July 21 (retroactive to July 18). Wakefield, who turned 43 on August 2, made the American League All-Star team for the first time in his 17-year major league career this season and is 11-3 with a 4.31 ERA in 17 GS for the Red Sox this year – 108.2 IP, 113 H, 52 R, 52 ER, 37 BB, 61 SO. Signed by the Red Sox on April 26, 1995 as a minor league free agent after spending all of 1994 with Buffalo (5-15, 5.84), Wake went 2-1 with a 2.52 ERA in 4 GS for the PawSox and had his contract purchased by Boston on May 27, 1995. Tim went on to lead the Red Sox in wins (16) and ERA (2.95) that year while finishing 3rd in the American League Cy Young voting. Including that season he has spent the last 15 straight years with the Red Sox (1995-2009) and along with **Mariano Rivera** of the Yankees is the only active major league pitchers to have worn the same uniform continuously since at least 1995. Furthermore, his 15 seasons with Boston rank him as the 5th longest tenured player in franchise-history behind only **Carl Yastrzemski** (23 seasons), **Ted Williams & Dwight Evans** (19 seasons), and **Jim Rice** (16 seasons). Yaz, Williams, and Rice are Hall of Famers. Finally, Wakefield ranks near the top of several Red Sox all-time career pitching leaders as he is 2nd in games (521) behind only **Bob Stanley** (637), 2nd in starts (382) behind just **Roger Clemens** (384), 3rd in innings (2,690.1) behind only Clemens and Cy Young, 2nd in strikeouts (1,858) to Clemens (2,590), and 3rd in wins (175) behind just Clemens and Young (192 each). Kottaras, 26, has been with Boston all season and has been Wakefield's personal catcher for the most part. He is batting .224 in 36 games with 1 HR & 9 RBI and has been used as a catcher in 33 games making just 1 error. George was placed on Boston's disabled list on August 1 (retro to July 30) with a lower back strain. He spent most of 2007 and 2008 with the PawSox batting .241 in 87 games in '07 and .243 with 22 HR & 65 RBI in 107 games last season. Wakefield and Kottaras will join notables such as OF **Rocco Baldelli**, INF **Kevin Youkilis**, RHP **Daisuke Matsuzaka**, and RHP **John Smoltz** who have all rehabbed with the PawSox this season.

PITCHING CAROUSEL: The dominoes were falling during a busy stretch for the PawSox pitching staff as the Boston Red Sox reached to Pawtucket to help their taxed pitching staff on several days last week and weekend. It began last Wednesday (August 5) when Boston selected LHP **Billy Traber**, Pawtucket's scheduled starter for that night, to their roster. Traber worked in relief for the Red Sox the next night in New York and then was subsequently designated for assignment. On Friday morning the Red Sox reached to Pawtucket again to grab young RHP **Junichi Tazawa**, who was slated to start for the PawSox the next afternoon in the Future's at Fenway game vs. Norfolk. Instead, the rookie who had pitched in the Japanese Industrial (amateur) League last year made his big league debut in Yankee Stadium in the 14th-inning of a scoreless game. He eventually took the loss giving up a walk-off HR to A-Rod on the 15th-inning. On Saturday it was RHP **Enrique Gonzalez**' turn as he was selected to Boston and instead of starting for the PawSox on Monday in Charlotte he was used in relief for the Red Sox on Saturday (and then designated for assignment himself). Finally, with the PawSox enjoying a rare Sunday off, the Red Sox called again and took closer **Fernando Cabrera** (20-for-20 in SV opportunities) from Pawtucket. Cabrera worked in relief on Tuesday night at Fenway to help preserve Tazawa's first major league win over Detroit.

ROCHESTER RED WINGS (www.RedWingsBaseball.com)

CHICKS DIG THE LONG BALL: First baseman **Brock Peterson** has hit a home run in back-to-back games. If Peterson can hit a home run today he would be the first Red Wing player to hit a home run in three consecutive games this season. Last season four different Red Wings hit a home run in three straight games (**Denard Span, Darnell McDonald, Jason Pridie** and **Randy Ruiz**). The last Red Wings player to hit a home run in four consecutive games was **Sam Horn**, June 23-25, 1990, when Horn hit six home runs during a four-game stretch.

HOT WING: First baseman **Brock Peterson** has a six-game hitting streak batting .450 (9-20) with two doubles, two home runs, five RBI and seven runs scored. Peterson was hitting just .159 (10-63) with one home run and four RBI through the first two months of the season. Since June 1 Peterson is batting .333 (51-151) with six home runs and 27 RBI and has watched his batting average climb from .159 to .282.

THE ONLY CUP THAT MATTERS: Rochester leads the chase for the 2009 Thruway Cup with a 14-8 record. Syracuse is 2nd with a 12-10 record and Buffalo is currently 3rd with a 6-14 record. Rochester has won the Thruway Cup four times (1998, 2003, 2005 and 2008).

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

IF IT'S A DOUBLEHEADER THE YANKEES MUST BE PLAYING: Due to five inches of rain that fell on Harbor Park in the span of a little more than an hour on Wednesday night, the Yankees and Tides will play two this afternoon to wrap up the four game series. The twin bill format is nothing new to the Yanks in '09. Thursday will be the 13th doubleheader that team will play in 2009. In the first 12 doubleheaders in '09, SWB has swept five, been swept twice and has split five. With at least one more scheduled doubleheader slated for Sunday, September 6 vs. Rochester at PNC Field, Scranton/Wilkes-Barre will play at least 14 doubleheaders this season. The Yankees played seven doubleheaders in 2008.

MAKING MOVES: The Yankees will start right-hander **Romulo Sanchez** in the first game of Thursday's doubleheader against Norfolk and are expected to start RHP **Ivan Nova** in game two. The right-hander is on the DL and will need to be activated before starting the second game of the doubleheader. After starting 1-0 with a 1.42 ERA in his first three games, Nova has struggled in his last four starts with a 0-2 record and an 8.27 ERA. In his last 20.2 IP, Nova has allowed 25 H, 20 R, 19 ER, 13 BB and 13 K.

LITTLE BIG MAN: **Kevin Russo** hit his second homer in as many nights on Tuesday night for his second homer of the season, hitting homers in back-to-back games for the first time since his first year as a pro back in 2006. Russo went yard on consecutive nights for the GCL Yankees back on July 21st and 22nd, 2006. Monday's homer for Russo in the series opener against the Tides was his first regular season homer since May 5, 2008 while he was with the Trenton Thunder. His last homer of any kind prior to Monday came in the Arizona Fall League for the Peoria Javelinas on November 19, 2008.

HITTING, PITCHING AND WINNING: After dropping the first game of the current 10 game, 10 day trip to Lehigh Valley by a 4-3 margin, the Yankees have erupted offensively and have gotten very stingy from a pitching standpoint. The Yankees have won their last three games by a combined score of 21-2. Over the last three games the Yankees are hitting .275 as a team (30-109), while holding the opposition to an average of .168 (16-95). SWB is hitting .333 with runners in scoring position (11-33) during the three game winning streak while the opposition is floundering hitting at a .167 clip (3-18). The Yankees team ERA over their last 27.0 innings pitched is a microscopic 0.67.

SYRACUSE CHIEFS (www.SyracuseChiefs.com)

MAXWELL LIKES THIRD: Chiefs centerfielder **Justin Maxwell** moved to the number three slot in the Chiefs batting order on July 27 and has caught fire with the bat. Since then, he is batting .363 (20-55), driven in 9 runs, and scored 13 while stealing 11 bases.

CASTO BECOMES RBI MACHINE: Chiefs right-fielder **Kory Casto** has become an RBI machine since July 24 when he began playing everyday in the outfield due to promotions and injuries. The Nationals two-time minor league player of the year is batting .362 during this current streak with 16 RBI and 12 runs scored. He has also smacked 6 doubles and 2 home runs.

EVERTS JOINS HARRISBURG MATES: Right-handed pitcher **Clint Everts** joined the Chiefs pitching staff (from Double-A Harrisburg) this week which now includes lefties **Jack Spradlin, Dave Williams** and **Yunior Novoa** and fellow righties **Zach Segovia, Zech Zinicola** and **Josh Wilkie** who all began the season with the Sens. In addition the Chiefs also have two starters from Harrisburg, lefty **Ross Detwiler** and righty **Andrew Kown**.

TOLEDO MUD HENS (www.MudHens.com)

MAGIC FOURS: The Mud Hens have scored three runs or fewer in 55 of their 118 games so far (46.61% of games). The team is 10-46 (.179) on these occasions this year. The Hens are 49-13 (.790) when scoring four or more runs.

POWER SURGE: The Mud Hens have blasted their way to second in the IL with 113 in home runs and have been hitting bombs at an incredible pace. They have home runs in 24 of their last 26 games. Leading the way during this span is OF **Jeff Frazier**, OF **Brent Clevlen** and 3B **Mike Hessman** with seven HR each. Toledo is also now 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.

THE SKIPPER: **Larry Parish** has 485 career wins as Mud Hens manager and is five away from tying **Casey Stengel** (1926-31) for third place all-time (490). **Cal Ermer** (1978-85) leads the way with 540, and **Charles Strobel** (1896-1902) is second with 497.

FINALLY BACK TO .500: The Mud Hens have a 9-2 record in August and have improved their record to .500 (59-59). It is the first time the Mud Hens have had a .500 record since May 4, when they were 12-12. They have won 11 of their last 13 games. They are hoping for their fifth straight .500+ season. In 2004, they finished 65-78.