

# BRASSBALL LEAGUE

## AMERICAN LEAGUE NEWSLETTER

August, 2001

With only 22 games remaining in the regular season, the race in the AL West has tightened up quite a bit. With each team playing the remainder of their schedule WITHIN their own division, Toledo, Santa Barbara, and St. Croix all have the chance to take matters into their own hands. The Outlaws trimmed a game off their deficit, and now trail the Mudhens by a scant 3 games. Meanwhile, the Rivermen from St. Croix are making a last minute run, and have narrowed their deficit to only five games, down from nine a month ago.

The Lions from Plaza remain entrenched as the #1 wildcard holder. Who they will face remains to be seen. Santa Barbara holds a two game lead over both St. Croix AND Georgia. Yes.....the Braves from Georgia are right in the mix, and they might have a chance to sneak right in the back door. While the four .500+ teams in the west beat up on each other this month, the Braves have 14 games total with sub-.500 squads from Hessville and Morris. Don't be surprised if it's the BRAVES who are left standing when the dust settles!

Meanwhile, Cook County and Minnesota continue to roll within their own divisions, leading by 13 and 14 games respectively. For more on the month that was August, read on.....

### American League Central

- 1. Cook County Maulers (18-10 in August, 103-37 overall, 53-17 at home, 50-20 away):** The Maulers were the first club to reach the 100-win plateau this year, and are poised to finish with anywhere from 114-120 wins overall. The big story right now is right-fielder Vladimir Guerrero's LEGITIMATE shot at the Triple-Crown. Having blown right past Jeff Kent in the batting average category in August, Vlad's biggest challenge may be trying to hold off teammate Nomar Garciaparra for top hitting honors. Currently leading by .005 points, Vlad leads the HR and RBI categories by 12 and 21 respectively. He also leads the league in hits, and ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in runs. Can a second straight MVP award be in the offing? Stay tuned! In other team news, rookie third baseman Troy Glaus is closing in on the 40-40 club. His 42 homers are something to behold. His 38 errors aren't. On the mound, Pedro Martinez (22-2, 1.76 ERA, 9cg, 3 sho) is looking better and better with each start, though he did drop one game to Bloomington in August. Nobody's perfect.....but Pedro is darn close.
- 2. Plaza Lions (17-11 in August, 90-50 overall, 49-21 at home, 41-29 away):** The Lions still rank as the third best team record-wise in the AL, with a league leading .313 batting average. Jeff Kent (.349-34-123) slumped a bit in August, hitting but three homers and seeing his average fall from .371 to .349. Luis Gonzalez has emerged as one of the true offensive forces in the AL in 2001, with his eye-popping .330-28-136 numbers stacking up with the best in the league. Luis Castillo (.342, 117 runs scored, 71 steals) was red hot in August, swiping 15 bases and raising his average 15 points. Davis Wells (18-8, 4.43) won 5 of 7 starts on the month, while Tom Glavine (17-7, 4.88) won 3 of 5, but saw his ERA rise , run per 9 innings. Armando Benitez saved seven games this month, and is tied for second in the AL with 33 saves.
- 3. Iowa Rubes (13-15 in August, 73-67 overall, 38-32 at home, 35-35 away):** A mediocre August essentially took the Rubes out of contention for the final wildcard slot for 2001. Still, their young talent has gained valuable experience this year, which should only help them in 2002 and beyond. Cliff Floyd (.292-13-56), Magglio Ordonez (.310-22-97), and Carlos Lee (.284-10-54) give the Rubes 3 promising young outfielders to build upon. Jose Cruz Jr (21 homers, 15 steals) has the

tools, if not the experience, to be as good as any in that threesome. Cristian Guzman (.261-6-47-16 doubles-17 triples-35 steals) has emerged as one of the best all around shortstops in the league. On the mound, Jose Mercedes (13-4, 3.88) has been a most pleasant surprise this year, while Kris Benson (12-10, 4.20, 6cgs) has been consistent all season.

4. **Box City (10-18 in August, 49-91 overall, 27-43 at home, 22-48 away):** It is too bad the pitching fell apart in 2001 for Box City.....cuz they have an offense which can compete with the big boys on most nights. Shortstop Miguel Tejada (.281-24-89) has had a fine year overall, though he went homerless in August. Mike Sweeney (.312-21-83) and Ray Lankford (.282-26-76) continue to mash as well. Jim Thome (.263-18-59) has been somewhat of a disappointment in 2001, though he should still finish with 25+ homers. Their 6.13 team ERA ranks last in the AL though, and few offenses can overcome those numbers.

## American League West

1. **Toledo Mudhens (14-14 in August, 82-58 overall, 50-20 at home, 32-38 away):** A .500 month wasn't as costly as one might expect, as the Hens lost only one game off their lead in the division. Still, they'll have to improve in September, as they'll be trying to hold off both Santa Barbara as well as St. Croix. Ranking 6<sup>th</sup> in team hitting, and 7<sup>th</sup> in pitching, Toledo has certainly gotten the most with the talent they have. Aside from Gary Sheffield (.326-36-116), their isn't a true offensive force in the lineup. Don't tell that to Joe Girardi however! The Mudhen backstop has been invaluable, hitting .341 with 44 RBI in 103 games. Chief "little-ball" protagonists Eric Owens (42 steals) and Miguel Cairo (47) have instilled terror within the opposition with their legs. On the hill, Kelvim Escobar (12-2, 4.26) has slowed a bit since his 8-0 start, but is still among the most valuable on this pitching staff. Trevor Hoffman's 32 saves ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in the AL.
2. **Santa Barbara Outlaws (15-13 in August, 79-61 overall, 44-26 at home, 35-35 away):** It'll take a strong effort from the defending division champs if they expect to wrestle first away from the 'Hens in the final 22 games.....but it IS possible. With 7 games between the 2 teams, the Outlaws will be looking to take 5. They'll need another strong month from a resurgent Ellis Burks (.322-19-80). Ellis blasted 9 homers and drove in 23 runs in August, shaking the cobwebs off a bat that had been mediocre thru July. Robin Ventura (.297-32-90) has been hot of late as well. All told, the Outlaws have five players with at least 30 homers. Add in the league leading 168 steals, and the Outlaws have an offense as good as anyone. Will the pitching step up? Their 5.58 ERA ranks 10<sup>th</sup> in the league, though part of that has to be attributed to their tiny home ballpark. Still, when your top three pitchers have a combined ERA near 5.50, there is room for improvement. Colon, Dreifort, and Hernandez are 38-20 combined, but what would the record be if their collective ERA was 4.50 instead of 5.50?? Additionally, the team's 2 left handed relievers (Rocker, Rhodes) have been a monumental disaster this year, with a 6.80 ERA in 105 brutal innings pitched. Yikes!!
3. **St. Croix Rivermen (18-10 in August, 77-63 overall, 34-36 at home, 43-27 away):** The Rivermen have the best road record in the division, and they continued that trend in August, rattling off a stellar 12-2 mark! Had they managed a couple more home wins, they'd be a definite threat for the division. At 35-21 the past two months, the Rivermen are the hottest team in the West. Can they keep it up within their own divisoin?? Kevin Millwood (16-6, 3.34), James Baldwin (12-9, 4.23), and Kirk Rueter (13-11, 4.98) give the team a terrific front three in the rotation. Ben Grieve (.322-27-96) has been the team's hottest hitter of late.....quite an accomplishment when Manny Ramirez (.289-37-94) is a teammate. Scott Spiezio (.269-22-59) continues to flash surprising power in part time duty (342 plate appearances)
4. **Brooklyn Bulldogs (14-14 in August, 73-67 overall, 40-30 at home, 33-37 away):** While their record isn't too shabby (especially for a 4<sup>th</sup> place team!!), the Bulldogs have to rank among the

more perplexing teams in all of BRASSball. On paper, this team looked as good as any in the division. IT hasn't happened though. Whoever said "pitching wins championships" should take a close look at the 2001 Bullldogs. With a BRASSball BEST 3.84 team ERA, one would think the 'Dogs would be knocking on the door for a division crown for sure. Greg Maddux (18-7, 2.26 ERA) won 3 of 4 decisions in August, as did Andy Pettitte (13-8, 3.58) and Garrett Stephenson (10-13, 4.33). The bullpen quartet of Kaz Sasaki, Gabe White, Mike Myers and Jose Paniagua have all been excellent as well this year. What's the problem you ask?? Try this: The offense has scored 620 runs ALL year. The next lowest run output by any AL team is 700!!! Nuff said.

## American League East

1. **Minnesota Mudcats (17-11 in July, 91-49 overall, 44-26 at home, 47-23 away):** Keeping everyone healthy is the goal in September. The Mudcats lead by 14 games with 22 to play. They're also in good shape for the #2 seed overall, assuring them of home field in the first round of the playoffs. Jason Giambi (.288-43-102) launched 12 bombs in August, and drove in 24. Brian Giles (.276-27-130) belted 8 homers himself and knocked in 23. Andruw Jones is a lock for 200 hits (188), and is closing in on 40 homers to boot. Mike Hampton (16-7, 4.06) followed up a winless July with a 4-1 August. Kevin Tapani (19-6, 3.80 ERA) pitched great on the whole, but was only 3-3 for the month. And very quietly, Esteban Loaiza has won 17 games in 27 starts! How about that!
2. **Georgia Braves (14-14 in August, 77-63 overall, 39-31 at home, 38-32 away):** Only 2 games out of the second wildcard slot, the Braves will need to do some damage against the likes of Morris and Hessville in order to sneak past the Outlaws. The Braves didn't do themselves any favors in July, and find themselves a game behind the Outlaws for the final wildcard spot. Tim Hudson (12-12, 4.70) and Russ Ortiz (12-12, 5.62) were on opposite ends of the spectrum in August. Hudson won 4 of 5 decisions, while Ortiz won only one game all month. Albie Lopez (15-6, 3.73) continues to shine as the ace of the staff. Derrek Lee leads the team with 26 homers, to go with his lofty .318 average. Olmaedo Saenz (.332-18-54) has been amazing in less than 200 official AB's, and Dmitri Young (.335-25-98) has emerged as one of the more dangerous hitters in the league. Deivi Cruz-watch: 83 RBI!!
3. **Hessville Evereadys (12-16 in August, 65-75 overall, 37-33 at home, 28-42 away):** Hessville jumped ahead of Morris in August, and are hoping to finish the year at or near .500. Andres Galarraga (.331-29-93) has been a revelation. Unfortunately, he's had little help. Rookie of the Year candidate Terrence Long (.308-19-65) has been consistent, and Jose Vidro (.291-15-72) has put together a nice year as well. Aaron Sele (10-9, 4.87) is the only double digit winner in the rotation.
4. **Morris Monarchs (8-20 in August, 62-78 overall, 33-37 at home, 29-41 away):** For the second straight month, the Monarchs won but 8 games. They've gone 28-56 since their 34-22 start. What a turn of events! They still rank among the AL lead with 200 homers, led by Barry Bonds (.283-41-109). Tim Salmon (.265-20-64) has been hot of late, while Brian Daubach (25 homers) has seen his average sink to .240. Elmer Dessens (9-7, 4.59, 5 CGs) has been the top starter for Morris, though he saw no action in August due to an arm problem. After him, it gets ugly. Curt Leskanic has 15 saves, and a nifty 3.12 ERA.

- á Minnesota signs Tomas DeLaRosa and Will Cunnane to their first callup
- á Morris signs Daniel Garibay and Kevin Jarvis to their 3<sup>rd</sup> callup, and Chris Sexton to his 1<sup>st</sup> callup
- á Toledo signs Mike Holtz to his 3<sup>rd</sup> callup, Travis Lee, Ryan Kohlmeier, Seth Etherton, and Stan Spencer to their 2<sup>nd</sup> callup, and Scarborough Green and JC Romero to their 1<sup>st</sup> callup
- á Brooklyn signs Steve Woodard to his 3<sup>rd</sup> callup, and Juan Pierre to his 1<sup>st</sup>.
- á Cook County signed Britt Reames, Lorenzo Barcelo, and DT Cromer to their 2<sup>nd</sup> callup

## FINES

- Toledo was fined \$1,000,000 for his first late mailing to a league administrator

## Upcoming League Deadlines

SEPTEMBER 15:

- á Mailing deadline for September home game results to opponent, Statistician, **and BACKUP Statistician.** (Lenny)

SEPTEMBER 25:

- á New contracts for players with (M0)&(MM) deals due to your LD
- á Any post-season roster cuts you wish to make due to LD
- á Contract Extensions due to your LD

And last but not least, just a reminder that beginning on the 25<sup>th</sup>, Mark and Corey will be relieving Lenny and myself of our duties. All September 25<sup>th</sup> information should be sent their way.

THAT'S ALL FOR NOW! Talk to you next month, one more time.