



League News May 2002

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Matchup of the Month



VERSUS



Springfield	Tale of the Tape	Iowa
.248	2002 Stats	.273
.756	Batting Average	.824
3.86	OPS	5.29
20	ERA	40
19-9	Steals	15-13
	Record	

This month's *Matchup* features two BRASSball up and comers in the likes of Springfield and Iowa. Springfield was relocated from Wauwatosa in the off-season and excitement is high in the city without a state. Iowa, on the other hand, has been plugging away for a few seasons now behind divisional rivals who have continued to claim league hardware. But this year the Rubes figure to have a team that should compete for the playoffs. Let's see what happened in this intriguing matchup.

The series opened in Springfield with Tanyon Sturtze taking the mound for Iowa and Jarrod Washburn for Springfield. Topes took early lead in second inning on a Mark Quinn homer. In the fifth the Rubes got on the board with back-to-back doubles from Tony Clark and Jose Cruz. Entering the eighth the game was a tight 1-1 affair. Ben Davis reached on a Biggio error. After an EY sacrifice a runner was on third with one out for the Rubes. With a triple from Cristian Guzman and a single by Cliff Floyd, Washburn was chased from the mound and the Rubes game won game 1.

Game 2 had the suddenly aged Ramon Ortiz taking the mound for the Topes while Jose Mercedes was scheduled for the Rubes. Down 1-0 in the fourth the Topes preceded to take the lead. A double, single and another double in the inning gave the Topes a 2-1 lead. Ramon took over from there setting the Rubes down 1-2-3 in the fifth and sixth. Chased in the eighth as the Rubes attempted a rally, Looper got Ramon out of the jam. 2 more runs in the eighth gave the Topes a 4-1 victory.

Two lefties squared off in game 3, old man Kenny Rogers versus the youngster Mark Mulder. The Rubes got off to an excellent start in inning one with three runs coming from three singles, a walk and a steal. But the Topes came back slowly, getting taters from Todd Pratt and Chris Richard to get close with the Rubes still up 4-3. In the sixth a Ben Davis groundout pushed the Rube lead to 5-3. But in the bottom of the frame the Topes got the run back on a two-out single from Wendell Magee. The pitching settled down and the Rubes went to the 9th up 5-4. In the 9th the Topes went to work quickly. Richard walked and stole second. Todd Pratt followed with a gap double to tie it up. Dave Veres got Koskie to flyout with the bases loaded to send the game to extra. Rubes went quietly in the tenth but the Topes did not. A single and two walks got the fans on their feet. With one out Rey Sanchez sent a quickly dropping flyball to right. Mags Ordonez got to it, but it hit in the heel and he couldn't control the ball as it dropped to the ground. In came the winning run for the Topes.

The last game in Springfield had the Rubes big free agent, Hideo Nomo facing off versus Scott Elarton. This game was all Scott Elarton. He threw a six hit, CG shutout. Elarton allowed no extra base hits, walking only one and whiffed eight. The only run came in the sixth on a Chris Richard ground out. So after four games, the Topes had 3 wins and were headed to Iowa.

The first game in Iowa pitted game one starter Jarrod Washburn against Jason Schmidt for Iowa. This one was no contest. Washburn was chased quickly from the mound as he left amidst a seven run barrage from the Rube bats. In the second the Rubes got six extra base hits, including blasts from Mags and Craig Paquette. Jason Schmidt cruised into the seventh and the Rubes went on to an impressive 10-4 victory. Mags and Paquette finished with 3 ribbies apiece.

The second game in Iowa had Ramon Ortiz and Tanyon Sturtze back on the mound. A two out, second inning single by Guzman gave the Rubes an early 1-0 lead. Topes came back with two in the top of the third when Biggio blasted a homer. A double play run by the Rubes and a squeezed in run and a groundout by the Topes left it 4-3 Topes through six. In the seventh the Rubes thought they had something big started. Back to back singles got runners on the corners and no outs. But Floyd got caught trying to steal second. Mags Ordonez delivered a double though to tie it all up at 4. Unfortunately for the Rubes they couldn't plate Mags. The Topes took advantage where the Rubes couldn't. In the eighth, after a steal and wild pitch put a runner on third with two outs, Ken Caminiti drilled a single to put the Topes ahead. Billy Wagner sent the Rubes away quietly in the bottom of the ninth to secure the series for Springfield.

The finale was a wild and woolly affair. Jose Mercedes was the winning pitcher for the Rubes, but it wasn't pretty. Given leads of 9-2 and 11-3, Mercedes preceded to stumble and bumble his way out of the game in the sixth. Four came across in the sixth and the Topes were down only 11-7 now. But the teams exchanged a couple homers and the Rubes hung on for a 12-9 victory. Mark Quinn was 4-5 with 3 ribs for the Topes while Young, Guzman and Ordonez all had 3-hit games for the Rubes.

In the end the Topes took the low scoring pitcher affairs while the Rubes won the slugfests, generally. This is in line with their 2002 stats so far. This series helped the Topes keep their lead in the NL East while the Rubes are still trying to get solidly over .500 and put themselves in the race. June will be the test for the Rubes as the tough AL East comes calling.

"Here comes a guy with an ERA of 7.78. Strat-O-Matic's going to have a hard time making a card for a guy with an ERA of 7.78. There's going to be hits all over that card!" – from a recent Mets-Diamondbacks broadcast by 1 fielder himself, Keith Hernandez, in regard to Brian Anderson.

AL Notes

Moline had the best record in BRASSball in May (22-6) and it allowed them to get some distance between them and their tough division mates. Barry Bonds had a superb May batting .342 with 12 homers and 33 walks. Bret Boone hit .347 in May to raise his season average to .333. On the mound the starters benefited greatly from the robust hitting as Curt Schilling was a perfect 5-0, Elmer Dessens 4-0 and Kevin Jarvis slipped up once and went 4-1. Curt Schilling is now 9-1 on the season with a 1.88 ERA. Jeff Zimmerman recorded 11 saves. If the Cutters keep playing like this the other squads will be put safely in the rear view mirror.

AL East Standings

Moline	40-16	---
Hessville	34-22	6
Minnesota	30-26	10
Georgia	29-27	11

Hessville had another solid month (16-12) and now occupy second place comfortably. For the month Mark McGwire cracked 9 homers and drove in 20. Larry Walker hit .344 to get himself on track. Jose Vidro continues to be slow out of the gate as he batted .230 in May. On the mound Tom Gordon recorded 10 saves from the team's 16 victories. The big news out of Hessville though concerns the acquisition of Jason Giambi from Minnesota. The Everreadys now have that playoff look.

In third are the bewildering Minnesota Mudcats (13-15). With the only sub-.500 record in the division in May, Lentz decided to change the parts on this squad that was still enjoying its AL championship. Noticeably gone now are Jason Giambi and Andruw Jones (see trades section). In May Giambi did all he could to keep this team centered as he hit .333-7-23. John Vander Wal hit an excellent .351 out of the leadoff spot. Matt Morris went 4-2 on the mound. Trevor Hoffman hopefully had his worst month for the Mudcats, 0-2 with a 7.94 ERA.

The Georgia Braves (14-14) round out the tough and talented AL East by also finishing above .500. The Braves smacked 42 homers in May led by Mike Cameron with 8 and Jose Hernandez with 6. Jose also drove in 20 and hit .299. Interestingly, Kotsay and Todd Walker both hit over .300 before being shipped over to Minny for Andruw and Vina. Braves pitching had a much better month in April posting a 4.10 ERA. Wade Miller was 4-2 with a 3.51 while Tim Hudson was 4-1 with a 4.15 ERA.

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Cook County's 20-8 record in May was second best overall in BRASSball. This was due in large part to a mammoth offense that slugged 62 homers in 28 contests. Vlad, Aurilia, Piazza, Glaus and Sheffield all slugged 8 or more taters. Vlad and Aurilia furthered their awesome starts by hitting .422 and .415 in May, respectively. Sheffield was the main recipient of all his teammates being on base as he had 37 ribbies in May. On the mound Moyer, Person and Clemens all won 4 starts. After a so-so start it appears the Maulers got the train rolling again.

AL Central Standings

Cook County	36-20	---
Iowa	28-28	8
Plaza	25-31	11
Box City	21-35	14

Iowa had a rough month in May (13-15). The team speed (52 steals) and hitting (.305) were still evident in May but the pitching was rocky (4.90). Mags Ordonez continues to clamor for MVP attention as he hit .355 with 12 homers and 34 ribs in May. Cristian Guzman hit .383 while legging out five three-baggers and swiping 12 bases. Jose Cruz knocked 8 dingers for good measure. The pen had a fine May, but it had to as no Rube starter could post a sub 5 ERA in the month. Hideo Nomo 1-3 with a 7.98 ERA for the month. Rick White (0.38) and Scott Sullivan (0.96) put up microscopic numbers.

Plaza continues to play better than most thought (12-16). Starring this month was Angel Echevarria as he hit .297 with 13 extra base hits and drove in 16 runners. Tom Goodwin of all players led the Lions

with 17 ribbies while Gerald Williams swiped 10 bases in the month. On the mound two youngsters of note, Nate Cornejo (2-2, 4.19) and Chad Durbin (3-1, 4.89) did nothing to diminish their hopeful futures in Plaza.

Team Brown had a worse month in May (10-18) than in April. A 6.22 ERA for a month will do that to a team. A more than reasonable offense like the Boxmen's can't overcome that deficiency. Jim Thome hit .375 with 10 homers and 27 ribs. Miguel Tejada busted out in May hitting .284 with 11 ding-dings and 25 ribbies. Big signee Darin Erstad (.220) continues to flounder. On the mound Esteban Loaiza and John Halama garnished three wins apiece despite hefty ERA's.

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With a 12-16 May record the Mudhens managed to hold securely to their AL West lead. The offense was less powerful, homer wise, in May (only 18), but still productive. Edgar Martinez hit .340 and drove in 21. Richie Sexson hit .313 and drove 25. Underrated Mike Lowell hit .311 and drove in 24. Jeromy Burnitz had a terrible month as he hit .182 in full-time play with only two long balls. On the mound Dave Burba was 2-0 with a 3.76 ERA in a mixture of roles on the staff. Closer Roberto Hernandez a rough month: 0-2, 7.30. Todd Van Poppel 'vultured' 3 wins with a 6.55 ERA.

AL West Standings

Toledo	31-25	---
Brooklyn	24-32	7
La Crosse	23-33	8
San. Barbara	18-38	13

Well, the down month from Toledo left Brooklyn with an opening to march up the standings. They didn't do it. The Bulldogs went 12-16 again, thanks largely to an under-performing staff that had a 6.18 ERA. Robbie Alomar hit .343 in May to reverse a slow April. Phil Nevin led the well rounded homer attack with 6 for the 'Dogs. Many hitters on this team struggling in the 250-ish range: Tino Martinez, Matt Lawton, Alex Gonzalez. They starting moving upward and the Bulldogs should move up also. On the mound Maddux was the team anchor again going 3-1 with a 3.16 ERA.

The Lagers registered the division's best mark in May at 13-15. Like Brooklyn, they too failed to significantly move up in April after Toledo stumbled. Manny Ramirez is blistering BRASSball. Manny's 24 homers on the season lead the AL (yes, even ahead of that fella in Moline named Bonds). Newcomer Ricky Gutierrez had a fine May hitting .380 with 12 doubles and scoring 20 runs. Pitching improved in May for the Lagers, mainly because of the efforts of their bullpen duo of Farnsworth and Dotel who combined to go 5-1. James Baldwin put up impressive numbers in six starts (2.84) but could manage only a 2-0 record.

The hitting tailed off for Santa Barbara as they had an identical 9-19 record in May as they did in April. April stud Geoff Blum disappeared in May hitting only .267 with one ribbie. Pitchers figured him out I guess. Raul Mondesi hit .290 to lead the Outlaws in April while Garrett Anderson drove in 19. Poor Bart Colon. Last month he had good numbers and so-so results. Now he has crappy numbers and the results to prove it (2-4, 7.52). A better fate for a pitcher like this is deserved. Darren Dreifort had a 4.18 ERA to offset his 2-3 record.

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May AL Leaders: Vladimir Guerrero a .422 batting average. Gary Sheffield 37 rbis. Manny Ramirez 14 homers. Jason Giambi 37 walks. Mike Cameron 41 whiffs. Barry Bonds a .877 slugging percentage. Curt Schilling 5 wins. Jeff Zimmerman 11 saves. Matt Morris 3 complete games. Darren Dreifort 7 wild pitches. Scott Sullivan 4.82 hits/9 innings. Terry Adams 13.5 runs of support per start.

AL STATS LEADERBOARD					
ERA		Saves		Strikeouts	
Curt Schilling, MOL	1.88	Tom Gordon, HES	21	Curt Schilling, MOL	103
Greg Maddux, BRO	2.37	Jeff Zimmerman, MOL	19	Kerry Wood, TOL	87
Elmer Dessens, MOL	2.61	Keith Foulke, GEO	14	Bartolo Colon, SB	80
Terry Adams, CC	2.93	Rod Beck, PLZ	12	Roger Clemens, CC	72
Jamie Moyer, CC	3.12	2 tied with	11	Robert Person, CC	70

NL Notes

The NL East's April leader figured to have a tougher assignment in May, what with a featured matchup vs. Iowa and the Maulers also on the docket. The matchup with Iowa went well for the Topes as they took 4, but versus Cook County they were not as fortunate, winning only twice. All in all, they kept the lead and played over .500. Michael Tucker drove in 21 runs while hitting .379 in May. Corey Koskie had a strange month as he hit only .194, but led the squad in homers (6) and steals (7). Mark Quinn contributed 14 extra base hits to lead the team. Ramon Ortiz 4-1 in May on the mound. Mark Mulder 3-1 with a fine 2.82 ERA. Billy Wagner continues to be the ace in the hole, saving nine Springfield wins.

NL East Standings

Springfield	34-22	---
Glen Allen	31-25	3
Racine	31-25	3
Charlevoix	23-33	11

Glen Allen couldn't roar past Springfield and in fact lost a little ground as they went 13-15 in May. Basically all the Met components are not quite firing together yet. Rookie Albert Pujols smacked 8 homers in May and drove in 31 Met compatriots. The rook is hitting .321 on the season. David Segui and Danny Bautista both hit over .340 in part-time action. Need better hitting from Eric Karros, .231 in May and .232 on the season. Steve Trachsel led the staff again in May going 3-1 with a 3.55 ERA. Young lefties Barry Zito and Eric Milton had up and down month going 4-5 combined.

Racine went 15-13 in May to catch Glen Allen and stay within reach of Springfield. Mark Grudzielanek hit .345 to lead the Heat for the month. Check this May line from Royce Clayton (?): .314, 9 doubles, 8 homers and 22 ribbies. Go figure. Plays like that all year and he's the best SS in the NL, not Derek Jeter. Hyper rookie David Eckstein stole 8 bases to pace one of the faster teams in BRASSball. On the mound Joe Mays went 4-1 with a 3.54 ERA. David Cone and Kris Wilson managed to combine for a 3-2 record in May despite throwing 40 innings total with an ERA well over eight. Whatever works.

The Tigers of Charlevoix sported one of the finer May offenses in BRASSball and finished 14-14 for the month. They hit .296, rapped out 101 extra base hits and averaged 6 runs a game. Tyler Houston hit .429 with 20 ribs in platoon duty. Despite hitting .263, Brad Fullmer led the Tigers with 7 homers and 23 rbis. Ronnie Belliard a fine month hitting .286, scoring 21 runs and producing 17 extra base hits. The Tiger downfall in May? Horrible pitching to the tune a 7.47 ERA. Then again, when you lose 30-0 to Cook County (article below) the final stats won't look so hot. Matt Anderson did save 7 games with respectable numbers. Al has to be wondering why he called up Randy Keisler: 24.16 ERA with 53 baserunners in 12 plus innings of work. Youch!

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Over in the NL Central Stanley still leads but the competition is charging hard already. Only Columbus fell off stride, but they still played over .500 as all the others did. The Sioux went 16-12 in May. Leading the Sioux in May was one of the early slumberers, Rafael Palmeiro. Raffy hit .294 in May with

a team high 7 knocks and 19 ribbies. The other slow starter, Bernie Williams, picked it up a bit as he hit .267 in May, but he can produce more than that. Jeff Cirillo drove in 25 on the strength of his .333 average. Ryan Klesko quietly proving to be a very nice addition to the Sioux with his .390 on base and .576 slugging averages for the season. FeRod and Chad Zerbe stellar in the pen as they allowed only two earned runs in 39 innings of work in May. Big Unit off to another CY-type campaign at 7-2.

NL Central Standings

Stanley	31-25	---
Columbus	28-28	3
Bloomington	27-29	4
Fleetwood	24-32	7

Columbus held onto second with a 15-13 May. The pitching was excellent for the month posting a 3.63 ERA. The offense was a bit of a letdown as it hit only .269. If that pitching keeps up the Bucks will do better and make this race really zany. Scott Rolen hit .280 in May with 23 runs scored, but could only muster 10 ribbies. John Olerud drove in 20 this month to lead the Buckeyes. Carlos Beltran swiped 10 bases without being caught while hitting .300. Randy Wolf produced a month in May that showed no soph slump effects: a 5-1 record and 2.72 ERA. Denny Neagle posted fine numbers too, but ended up with a snake bitten 2-3 record. Sean Lowe 3-0 with a fine 1.35 ERA in swingman duty.

The Bees (18-10) roared back into the NL hunt on the strength of solid pitching, excellent hitting and amazing SPEED! The Bees stole 66 bases in May and were caught only 4 times. Ichiro stole 23 bases and Roger Cedeno 24 to pace this stealthy attack. Both players also hit over .340. Juan Gonzalez supplied the pop with 6 homers and 25 ribbies. Not to be forgotten was Preston Wilson and his all around performance as he hit .299 with 27 ribbies and 9 steals. On the mound lefty Mark Buerhle went 6-0 in seven starts with a miniscule 1.22 ERA. Armando Benitez bounced back to record 5 saves in May and just generally pitch better.

Fleetwood also came out strong in May (17-11), as they could not afford a repeat of their April performance (7-21). Jim Edmonds and Chipper paced the attack. Edmonds hit .327 and slugged .564 while Chipper, not to be outdone, hit .324, but slugged .638. Bob Abreu also got going as he hit .283, got on base (.377) and stole bases (7). Esteban Yan saved 7 games out of the pen and posted a fine 2.08 ERA. Brad Penny 3-0 with a 4.06 ERA. Mike DeJean picked up three easy wins in relief as he had an ERA over five. Livan no better in May for the Walkers (1-3, 6.75).

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May was another excellent month for the Ocelots of Ocala (18-10). Sammy Sosa's binging on BRASSball pitchers continued, albeit a bit more sensibly. For the month he still hit a robust .343 with 14 dingers and 35 ribs. Derek Jeter and Brian Giles both hit over .320. Edgardo Alfonzo (.244) and Shawn Green (.209) had subpar performances. Pitching wise Javier Vazquez could only post a 2-3 record in May with his nice 3.35 ERA. Call-up Adam Eaton went 5-1 despite an almost six ERA. Rookie Shawn Chacon still has little insight into BRASSball batters as he is 4-4 with a 7.46 ERA.

NL West Standings

Ocala	38-18	---
N. Georgia	28-28	10
Gem City	28-28	10
Metropolis	10-46	28

North Georgia pulled even with Gem City in April despite a 13-15 month. Veteran Fred McGriff hit .322, but was only able to deliver 4 souvenir balls. As a team The Jackets had a rough time scoring as they hit .283 but could muster only 93 runs. Dougie Glanville back to earth with a .295 performance in May. Rook Shea Hillenbrand led the squad with five homers. Rheel Cormier won four games in relief. Jon Lieber 3-3 despite a 2.78 ERA. Smoltzie eight saves. Jackets get a few more runs to win the close ones and Tony will be quite happy.

Gem City tumbled in May, going 11-17. Offense just didn't hit for Dave. Delgado led the team for the month with 16 ribbies. Reggie Sanders hit .142 playing regularly. Not a bargain with that production. Julio Lugo made eight errors on a team that made 30 of them. Only Metropolis' defense fared worse. On the mound things couldn't be rosier for the Wolfpack. Chan Ho is now 9-1 on the season. Rick Reed was 4-2 in May. Free Agent signee Jason Istringhausen was barely hittable on his way to saving eight of the eleven 'Pack wins.

Learning curve continues in Avenger-land. Aramis continued to sparkle in his rookie campaign, hitting .287 with 7 homers and 18 ribbies. Dean Palmer led the Avengers with 9 dingers despite a .204 average. Pat Meares hit .165 in a full month of action. Chris Michalak deserved a better fate for his 2.86 effort (1-3). Youngsters Armas, Suzuki and Marquis were a combined 1-14 in their starts. The payoff will come eventually.

BRASSball Factoid: In the seven games Moline and Gem City played they ended up scoring the exact number of runs. However, Moline won six of the contests, each game by one run.

May NL Leaders: Ichiro 32 runs scored. Michael Tucker 5 triples. Roger Cedeno (?) 4 intentional walks. Craig Biggio eight times hit by a pitch. Jermaine Dye .460 on base pct. Sammy Sosa 89 total bases. Chan Ho Park 1.08 ERA. Barry Zito 27 walks allowed. Shawn Chacon 13 homers allowed. Randy Johnson 12.14 K's per 9 innings. Jimmy Anderson allowed 17 steals.

NL STATS LEADERBOARD					
Hits	Doubles	Slugging Pct.			
Ichiro, BLO	91	Todd Helton, OCA	22	Sammy Sosa, OCA	.932
Sammy Sosa, OCA	90	Mark Quinn, SPR	21	Aramis Ramirez, MET	.596
Doug Glanville, NG	83	Shannon Stewart, FLE	19	Brian Giles, OCA	.595
Placido Polanco, NG	77	Sammy Sosa, OCA	18	Chipper Jones, FLE	.590
Derek Jeter, OCA	74	Jeff Kent, STA	18	Todd Helton, OCA	.581

Award Watch

This month's Watch brings into focus Mags for the Rubes. He is off to just a wonderful start down there in Iowa. Last year's NL ROY draws early CY notice in 2002. Schilling mowing down just about anybody. If only *he* could face Bonds like the rest of us ☺

Award	Player	AVG	OBP	SLG	HR	RBI	R	SB	
AL MVP	Magglio Ordonez, IOWA	.353	.431	.674	19	58	40	11	
AL ROY	AJ Pierzynski, GEO	.340	.388	.504	2	19	21	0	
NL MVP	Chipper Jones, FLE	.305	.402	.590	14	45	40	0	
NL ROY	Albert Pujols, GA	.321	.401	.573	13	53	38	1	
		W	L	SV	ERA	IP	H	BB	K
AL CY	Curt Schilling, MOL	9	1	0	1.88	96	70	19	103
NL CY	Randy Wolf, COL	7	4	0	3.31	65	61	13	49

Fines

None. Zippo. Nada. This is the way we like it. Woo-hoo!

Trades

61. Minnesota trades Jason Giambi to Hessville for Andres Galarraga, Garrett Atkins and Hessville's 2003 1st round draft choice.
62. Minnesota trades Andruw Jones, Paul O'Neill, Fernando Vina and Minnesota 2003 3rd round draft choice to Georgia for Mark Kotsay, Jacob Cruz, Todd Walker and Georgia's 2003 1st round draft choice
63. Ocala trades Paul Rigdon to Metropolis for \$25,000.
64. Toledo trades Aaron Myette, Julio Zuleta, Emil Brown and \$120,000 to Metropolis for Mike Lamb.

Signings will come from Corey with updated rosters.

Upcoming League Deadlines

- June 15th Trade deadline for July action
- June 15th Results due to opponents and statisticians (Dave & Corey).
- June 25th Instructions due out. Contract signings to Corey. Rotations to Mark.

Next Issue of League News

Year Eight hits the halfway mark already. All-star ballots go out.