



League News April 2003

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Matchup of the Month



VERSUS



Minnesota	Tale of the Tape	Ocala
.268	2002 Stats	.292
.779	Batting Average	.900
4.27	OPS	4.09
1-6	ERA	6-1
88-74	2002 Series	117-45
	2002 Record	

BRASSball's first *Matchup* feature of 2003 brings together two old rivals- Minnesota and Ocala. In 2001 these two teams squared off for the league title. In 2002, Ocala returned to defend their title while the Mudcats slumped to last in the AL East. Worse yet for the Mudcats, they went 1-6 in 2002 versus their rivals. Revenge was on the minds of Mudcat faithful while Ocala looked to continue its domination in this rivalry.

Two veteran lefties climbed the hill for the series opener in Ocala- Kirk Rueter and Kenny Rogers. A Kevin Millar groundout gave the Mudcats an early 1-0 lead in the first. Rueter looked comfortable on the mound, surrendering only a two-run homer to Derek Jeter in the third. Both starters had quality stuff as Rueter went into the eighth and Rogers pitched through six while allowing only two hits. In the top of the ninth and down 2-1, Mike Lowell and Scott Hatteberg stroked back-to-back two out doubles to knot the contest at two. In the bottom of the ninth Edgardo Alfonzo doubled to the gap to start the inning right for the Ocelots. JC Romero then got Shawn Green to ground weakly to second. But this put the winning run on third with one out. Up next stepped Jason Kendall. Romero fired in to his catcher Greg Myers, but apparently Myers was looking for a fastball inside. The pitch went to the outside corner for a strike, but Myers was barley able to nick the speedball with his glove. The ball scooted away for a passed ball as Alfonzo hurried in from third for the victory.

Game 2 featured journeyman Terry Adams for Minny up against sensational second year hurler Roy Oswalt. The Mudcats were able to jump on Oswalt immediately as Alex Rodriguez cracked a two-run homer to right center for the visitors. In the fifth the Mudcats were able to stretch their lead to four with the aid of a wild pitch and a Scott Hatteberg solo homer. In the bottom of the frame the Ocelots responded with a two-run blast off the bat of Todd Helton. But this was all the closer Ocala would get in this one. The Mudcats tacked on a couple more runs while the pen threw four plus innings of shutout relief to nail down the win.

In game three Matt Morris took his turn for the Mudcats while Weisser trotted out another lefty in the form of Glendon Rusch. In the third the Ocelots opened up the scoring. Jason Kendall led off with a triple that ricocheted past Mark Kotsay. The skilled Ocelot offense then patiently attacked Morris with three more base knocks and a walk. After the dust settled the score was 3-0 Ocala. That would prove to be all Glendon Rusch would need in this one. He would not yield a run in his six plus innings of work. He worked around six baserunners and fanned seven. A late Ocelot run made the final score 4-0.

With game four the series shifted north to Minnesota. Reigning NL Cy Young winner Javier Vazquez made his first start in the series while veteran Kevin Appier went for the Mudcats. In the top of the second Alfonzo led off with a single. Appier then promptly walked the next batter to put himself in an early jam. Jason Kendall and Ramon Martinez followed the walk with solidly stroked singles of their own to plate two runs for Ocala. A walk to Jeter loaded the bases. Appier finally got a decent pitch across the plate to Helton who grounded into a DP, but a third run came in to make it 3-0 Ocala. The Mudcats quickly went 1-2-3 in the bottom of the second and the eager Ocelot hitters climbed back into the box against Appier. Wham! Bam! Sammy Sosa and Shawn Green led off the third with back-to-back dingers to go up 5-0. In the bottom of the fourth the Mudcats threatened as the first three batters all reached safely to plate a run. With runners on first and third and none out Vazquez buckled down and got Mike Lowell to go 6-4-3. Another run came across for the Mudcats, but the rally had been quelled by Javier. In the top of the fifth Appier yielded his third tater of the day, this time to Alfonzo to make it 6-2 Ocala. But the Mudcats would not go quietly. In the bottom of the fifth frame they used three consecutive doubles from Greg Myers, Mark Ellis and Mark Kotsay to get within two runs. In the top of the sixth Ocala picked up a valuable insurance run when the obviously confused tandem of JC Romero and Greg Myers hooked up again on a passed ball. A Kotsay triple in the seventh would get the Mudcats back to within two runs, but in the end Ocala won this less than beautiful game 8-5.

Game five had Kenny Rogers back on the mound while Pedro Astacio took the ball for the Mudcats. What a pitchers duel this one turned into! The game was scoreless after eight complete. The Gambler allowed only five hits in his eight innings of work while needing only one strikeout to mow down Mudcat hitters. Astacio was equally impressive as he yielded only two hits in his six innings of work. In the top of the ninth with one out Todd Helton drove a Ricky Rincon slider into the rightfield stands at Galt Park for the win. In the bottom of the inning the Mudcats tried their best to plate a run as they had runners on first and second with two down, but Mike Williams got Jay Gibbons to ground weakly to Helton at first for the final out.

Roy Oswalt and Kirk Rueter ambled out for their second starts of the series at Galt Park. In the top of the fourth an error and two singles had the bases loaded and Rueter in trouble with only one out. Utilityman Denny Hocking pulled a double into the leftfield corner to score two Ocelot runs. JD Drew followed with a solid single up the middle to get two more home and give the Ocelots the cushion they would need in this one. A late two-run double by Hatteberg

made the score 5-2 Ocala, but it was too little, too late. Oswalt threw seven innings of shutout ball before yielding to the Ocelot pen.

The finale had Rusch and Adams scheduled to face one another. Like game six the Ocelots put this one to bed early. They drove Adams to the showers in the second as they erupted for five runs. Derek Jeter's two run single while rbi doubles from Helton and Sosa only made things more miserable for Mudcat faithful. The Mudcat bullpen proved able as they allowed only one further run to score but the offense just didn't have an answer for Rusch who coasted through six innings of work. Derek Jeter finished the game 3 for 5 with 2 rbi.

In the end the Ocala juggernaut continues to roll. The Mudcats had their chances, but failed to execute in a couple close games in this series. Telling for the Mudcats was their 0 for 4 performance against the Ocelot lefties. This series helped Ocala off to another fine start while thanks to this result the Mudcats are going to have to scrap a bit more if they want to win the AL East.

AL Notes

AL EAST Expanded Standings									
	W-L	GB	HOME	ROAD	Vs AL	Vs LH	1-RUN	OPS	ERA
Bakersfield Rattlers	16-12	---	10-4	6-8	0-0	5-4	6-5	.753	3.38
Moline Cutters	14-14	2	7-7	7-7	0-0	1-7	3-4	.734	3.38
Minnesota Mudcats	13-15	3	5-9	8-6	0-0	2-7	1-7	.744	3.12
Hessville Everreadys	6-22	10	3-11	3-11	0-0	2-7	2-5	.650	6.07

With a solid first month the Rattlers have set the pace in the AL East. Like 2002, pitching continues to be the backbone of this bunch. Its 3.38 ERA was only bested by the Mudcats in the AL. Freddy Garcia was sharp in April going 4-1 with a 2.76 ERA. A nice start for the big Venezuelan after his poor 2002. Russ Ortiz sparkled with a 2.85 ERA but only won once. Keith Foulke was incredible out of the pen as he threw 24 innings, yielded only 9 hits and allowed no runs. That was important because three of his pen mates, Ray King, Jay Witasick and Cliff Politte had subpar starts. Offensively Derrek Lee picked up right where he left off. He hit .275 while leading the Rattlers in doubles (12), homers (8) and ribbies (21). Spunky Mark DeRosa hit .300 with 7 taters. David Bell hit .296 and committed only one error at the hot corner. Pokey Reese (.126) and Jose Hernandez (.195) are the only sluggish Rattlers at the moment.

The defending champs posted a quiet 14-14 April. Coming into 2003 the team knew it was not of the same pedigree as the 2002 club. The offense is still robust as it produced 33 homers. Barry Bonds hit .358 when he was pitched to. He walked 28 times in April while only whiffing 5 times. Torii Hunter led the club in both homers (8) and ribbies (23). Surprising offensive starts from Brian Hunter (.500 slugging) and Pedro Feliz (.277 average). Old man Carlos Baerga back in BRASSball and hit .212 in a cold April. On the mound in April the Cutter story was Miguel Batista. Miguel posted a 0.95 ERA in his six starts, completing 4 of them and notched a 5-1 record for his efforts. Greg Maddux went 2-2 with his 2.40 ERA. Elmer Dessens has two shutouts under his belt already in 2003. Closer Kelvim Escobar was like petro on a fire with his 7.20 April ERA. Moline's 29 errors were the most in the AL after one month.

The Mudcats stumbled to a 13-15 mark in the opening month. Their 1-6 mark highlighted in the *Matchup* feature was of no help, obviously. A-Rod leads the Mudcats in the power categories: 6 homers and 17 rbi. Homers were sparse for the Mudcats in April as they connected for only 22. Youngster Mark Ellis hit .338 in split duty. Kevin Millar hit .318. Gary Sheffield off to a disappointing start as he hit only .241 to go with 1 dinger. Minnesota did

make the fewest errors in BRASSball (10) and has the best ERA in the AL (3.12). Pedro Astacio off to a fine start: 3-1, 2.34. Matt Morris 1-3 despite a 3.18 ERA. Scott Williamson 3-0 in 16 innings of relief work. Kevin Appier and Terry Adams combined to go 2-5.

Oh how the Everreadys have fallen. Their 6-22 mark was the worst in the AL. Jack Wilson hit .324 with 7 two-baggers. Rondell White drove in 22 runs despite a .215 average. T-Long hit .264 with 4 homers. Jeff Cirillo hit .216 in full time action. Shawn Estes deserved better than a 1-4 record with his 3.86 April ERA. Veteran Aaron Sele 2-1 so far. Poor Frank Castillo! He lost all 6 of his starts while registering an 8.64 earnie. "Six-finger" Alfonseca picked up the lone Everready save in April.

AL CENTRAL Expanded Standings									
	W-L	GB	HOME	ROAD	Vs AL	Vs LH	1-RUN	OPS	ERA
Cook County Maulers	20-8	---	12-2	8-6	0-0	7-4	5-1	.930	3.73
Iowa Rubes	19-9	1	12-2	7-7	0-0	7-5	5-2	.831	3.61
Box City Parcelmen	10-18	10	6-8	4-10	0-0	2-9	2-3	.736	6.06
Plaza Lions	7-21	13	5-9	2-12	0-0	4-6	4-4	.676	5.56

The Maulers 20-8 April has them in the lead, but just barely over the Rubes. A whopping 70 homers were blasted by Cook County in the first month. Jim Thome slugged 13 of them and Vlad Guerrero 11. Doug Mirabelli batted 40 times in April and smacked 8 ding-dings. To put the Maulers slugging in perspective only Angel Echevarria failed to launch one in April. Mike Piazza hit .381 off the bat. Free agent pickup Jason Giambi is off to a strong start as he hit .314 and got on base at a .443 clip. Troy Glaus will want to erase April off the books as he hit .179 and committed 6 errors. Pedro Martinez had a spotless 5-0 mark in April. Jamie Moyer went 5-1 despite a 5.45 ERA. Ah, the joys of pitching for the Maulers ☺ Tom Glavine will be better than his 5.85 start. Mariano Rivera saved 7 Mauler victories.

The Rubes busted out of the gate in April and find themselves only a game back at 19-9. It's not 70 homers, but Iowa's 40 total is still impressive. Cliff Floyd hit .343 and led the team in ribbies (21). Mark McLemore hit .354 and swiped 5 bases in part-time duty. Magpipes had 11 doubles to go with hit .310 average. Veteran signee Tino Martinez led the squad with 7 bombs. Jason Varitek (.222) and Robin Ventura (.186) figure to improve as the season progresses. Hideo Nomo led the hurlers with a 5-1 mark in April. Jason Schmidt 4-1 with a 2.83 earnie. John Thomson also perfect at 4-0. Committee approach in the pen saw four Rube relievers pick up six saves. Danys Baez not sharp to start the season as he walked 20 in 26 innings of work.

Box City looks improved over 2002 after finishing out April with a 10-18 record. This team can hit a bit. Its 56 doubles were second only to the Mudcats for the month. Tim Salmon went off in a big way: .377, 12 doubles, 6 HR, 19 rbi. Robert Fick hit .315 with 10 doubles. Miggy Tejada drove in 24 men. Kenny Lofton got on at a respectable .344 clip despite batting only .222. 2B Mike Young hit only .194 for his new club. Pitching was expected to be the stronger component of the Boxmen in 2003 but it flamed out in April with a 6.06 ERA. Esteban Loaiza did go 2-1 with a 1.67 ERA. Cory Lidle also fashioned a solid 3.13 ERA. None of the other 3 starters, however, were below 6.92. Ouch! Jerrod Riggan posted a miserable 8.87 ERA in 16 appearances.

Hessville kept Plaza's 7-21 mark from being the worst in the AL. Little Neifi Perez hit .328 in the first month. Mike Lieberthal hit .301 with 5 homers and 15 rbi. Chris Donnels also drove in 15 Lions. Darren Bragg smacked 9 doubles. Calvin Murray might not start anymore after he hit .157 in April. Ditto for Donnie Sadler and his .214 mark. Veterans Dave Mlicki and Scott

Erickson had the best ERA of the starters in April, but combined won only once. Youngsters Joe Kennedy (5.77) and Nate Cornejo (5.90) were hammered around. Terry Mulholland and Brian Boehringer want do-overs after their April starts.

AL WEST Expanded Standings									
	W-L	GB	HOME	ROAD	Vs AL	Vs LH	1-RUN	OPS	ERA
La Crosse Lagers	15-13	---	9-5	6-8	0-0	7-5	7-4	.762	4.72
Santa Barbara Outlaws	13-15	2	8-6	5-9	0-0	8-5	3-6	.729	3.83
Toledo Mudhens	13-15	2	8-6	5-9	0-0	4-6	3-6	.770	4.96
Brooklyn Bulldogs	10-18	5	5-9	5-9	0-0	4-8	4-2	.702	5.59

The Lagers somewhat surprising have the West lead after April play. At 15-13, though, it is a slim lead. Manny Ramirez went goofy in April as he hit .369, slugged .728 and drove in 29. Ben Grieve got off to a nice start as he hit .309 for the month. Youngster Aubrey Huff had a fine start to his career with a .294 average and 25 driven in. Mike Sweeney disappointing with .260 average and one homer. Johnny Damon hit only .250, but sparked the offense with 11 swipes. If the Lagers hope to stay in it all year they will have to improve on their shaky 4.72 April ERA. Kip Wells just fine though after going 4-0 with a 2.82 ERA. Kevin Millwood's 2-3 mark is not reflective of some fine pitching on his part. Closer pickup Troy Percival has been fantastic out of the pen with 7 saves already. Jason Simontachhi somehow went 4-0 with a 5.90 ERA. John Burkett (6.91) and Carl Pavano (13.80) off to less than stellar starts.

Santa Barbara had an April not unlike the Mudcats: they struggled but have managed to stay close to the leader. Yorvit Torrealba (I love that name!) sported a 904 OPS in only 47 PA's. Jaque Jones hit .320. Garrett Anderson smacked 10 doubles and drove in 16. Mo Vaughn clubbed the most Outlaw homers (7), but hit only .198. Aaron Boone swiped 10 bases. The Outlaw pitching was sharp in April- particularly Roy Halladay (2.17) and Bartolo Colon (2.23). Tomo Ohka could only go 1-1 despite his fine 3.54 ERA. Byung-hyun Kim went 0-4 in 14 relief outings. Robb Nen 5 saves in April.

The Mudhen offense proved quite feisty in April on its way to a 13-15 record. The club hit .300 and swiped 41 bags, good for the BRASSball lead in both categories. The steals are not surprising in Toledo, but the hitting was. Randal Simon hit a gaudy .474 in 76 AB's. Luis Castillo hit .402 and pilfered 19 bags. Shannon Stewart proved a nice pickup already for his new club as he hit .320 and drove in 26 runners. Richie Sexson needs to step up on the homers (3 in April). Dave Roberts 15 swiped bases to form a dynamic duo with Castillo. Pitching off to a ho-hum start as no starter could win more than two contests or post a sub-4.00 ERA. Mike Koplove is the surprising closer in Toledo after registering 6 April saves.

The Bulldogs (10-18) appear to be set on rebuilding in 2003. Sophomore Juan Pierre got out strong as he hit .322 and stole 17 bases. Brian Daubach hit .302 and tied for the team lead in homers (6) and rbi (16). Veteran Jeff Conine also hit 6 homers. Surprising pop came from SS Alex Gonzalez (8 doubles & 6 HR). Team Star Robbie Alomar hit a disappointing .194 in April. Historic free agent signee Kerry Wood was much better than his 1-3 record indicates. Youngster Josh Fogg hammered in April: 1-4, 7.81. Kaz Sasaki picked up 3 saves on the strength of a 1.29 ERA.

AL STATS LEADERBOARD							
Innings Pitched		Walks Allowed		HR per 9 Innings		Hits per 9 Innings	
Kerry Wood	47.2	Hideo Nomo	34	Tomo Ohka	0.00	Miguel Batista	3.80
Tom Glavine	47.2	Mike Hampton	29	Bartolo Colon	0.00	Roy Halladay	6.51
Miguel Batista	47.1	Matt Clement	27	Pedro Martinez	0.20	Hideo Nomo	6.55
Russ Ortiz	47.1	Sean Douglass	27	Miguel Batista	0.38	Elmer Dessens	6.75
Cory Lidle	46.0	Kerry Wood	26	Matt Morris	0.45	Kerry Wood	6.99

NL Notes

NL EAST Expanded Standings									
	W-L	GB	HOME	ROAD	Vs NL	Vs LH	1-RUN	OPS	ERA
Springfield Isotopes	19-9	---	9-5	10-4	0-0	3-3	3-3	.812	3.80
Glen Allen Mets	14-14	5	8-6	6-8	0-0	5-2	2-7	.749	3.77
Port Richey Everglades	12-16	7	6-8	6-8	0-0	5-4	3-3	.701	5.22
Charlevoix Tigers	11-17	8	8-6	3-11	0-0	4-5	2-3	.845	7.03

The Isotopes got off to a strong 19-9 start in April. Free agent signee Larry Walker hit .409 with 13 doubles and 28 rbi. Luis Gonzalez hit .333 with 11 homers. Jeff Bagwell only hit .252 but still produced 33 runs. Glove man Rey Sanchez hit .293, but made 5 errors. Corey Koskie was the worst hitting regular at .238. Jarrod Washburn was 4-2 with a 2.77 ERA. Ramon Ortiz could only muster a 1-2 mark with his 3.60 ERA. Mark Mulder a perfect 5-0 for the month. Billy Wagner slammed the door on 7 Tope victories. Improvement from Paul Shuey (8.64) should definitely come in May.

Glen Allen finished 14-14 despite solid offense and pitching. Improving on that 2-7 mark in one-run games would probably get the Mets on the positive side of .500. Greg Colbrunn slugged .967 in only 30 at bats. Ramon Vazquez hit .359. Quinton McCracken hit .284 with 13 ribbies. Albert Pujols only .272 but he led the club in doubles (6) and rbi (18). Brian Roberts swiped 14 bases. Mel Mora in the hole after hitting .172 to start the season. Barry Zito has rebounded on the mound from his up and down 2002 to go 4-1, 2.20 to start. Orlando Hernandez was 3-1. Esteban Yan saved 7 games despite a 5.00 ERA. Eric Milton (5.71) and Andy Ashby (6.12) surprisingly struggled.

Port Richey came out of April okay with its 12-16 record. A team bereft of power saw Herb Perry lead it in dingers with 4 in April. Dave Eckstein (.311) and Jay Payton (.308) off to solid starts. Joe Randa drove in 16 runs. Catcher Gary Bennett led the 'Glades with 17 rbi despite batting .221. Orlando Palmeiro and Terry Shumpert were productive off the bench. Damian Moss definitely deserved better than an 0-1 record for his 1.73 April ERA. Jamey Wright went 2-2 with a 2.93 earnie. Closer Billy Koch is struggling again after a 6.75 ERA for the month. Guillermo Mota and Valerio de los Santos picked up the slack in the pen.

Charlevoix posted one of the best OPS' in BRASSball in April (845) but its league worst 7.03 ERA doomed it to a 11-17 start. Karim Garcia hit .364 with 7 dingers and 21 rbi. Frank Thomas got on at a .450 clip and slugged .559 in April. Russ Branyan led the Tigers in homers (8) and drove in 25. Todd Zeile hit only .245 but that didn't stop him from driving in a team best 26 teammates. Jeff Suppan fared pretty darn well for the hurlers (4-2, 3.49). Dave Burba also respectable with his 4.11 ERA. After that, not one single Tiger pitcher was able to register an ERA below 6.86. The staff yielded 51 gopher balls! Oh my! What in the good name of Bert Blyleven is up in Michigan? It has to get better in 2003 for Tiger faithful.

NL CENTRAL Expanded Standings									
	W-L	GB	HOME	ROAD	Vs NL	Vs LH	1-RUN	OPS	ERA
Stanley Sioux	21-7	---	11-3	10-4	0-0	2-0	9-1	.812	4.02
Fleetwood Walkers	16-12	5	10-4	6-8	0-0	1-3	2-4	.799	3.71
Columbus Buckeyes	12-16	9	7-7	5-9	0-0	3-0	4-7	.781	5.52
Bloomington Bees	12-16	9	7-7	5-9	0-0	2-2	3-5	.729	4.01

The Sioux's 21-7 has them enjoying a nice five game cushion after April. Bernie Williams busted out 16 doubles and a .378 average. Randy Winn had a very nice start as he slugged .596 and got on at a .425 clip. Jeff Kent led the Sioux in homers (9) and rbi (25). Ryan Klesko a nice start with his .295 average. Raffy Palmeiro and Jermaine Dye drove in some runs, but hit poorly to open the season. Reigning Cy Young winner Curt Schilling did not dissapoint his new fans. His 5-0 start and 2.70 ERA was reminiscent of last year in Moline. Joe Table saved 8 Sioux contests. Chris Hammond (0.00 ERA in 13 innings) made for a deadly duo with Mesa in April. Randy Johnson 4-2 in April. Hometown hero Rick Helling pitched well (3.94 ERA) but could only win once. Shiggy Hasegawa vultured 3 wins in relief. Youngster Joel Pineiro hammered in April (9.10 ERA). The Sioux were a sparkling 9-1 in one run games.

Fleetwood's 16-12 start is a complete 180 from their horrible 7-21 2002 start. This year, while they start behind the Sioux again, they can at least see them up ahead ☺ Paul Konerko led the Walkers with a .358 average and 21 rbi. Jorge Posada a very nice start as he hit .306 with 8 dingers and 19 driven in. Chipper hit .276 and scored 20 runs. A 909 OPS for Bobby Abreu to start. Royce Clayton may not have hit much but his defense is sure an improvement at short for the Walkers. Derrek Lowe had a fantastic start as he went 5-1 with a 1.93 ERA. AJ Burnett also impressive in his starts to go 4-1. Rookie Jorge Julio picked up 5 saves in April. Jeff D'Amico did not take well to swing duty as he went 0-4 with a 5.96 earnie. Brad Penny's 7.36 ERA to start should come down.

Columbus has some ground to make up after their 12-16 start. John Olerud hit .311 and walked 22 times. Bobby Higginson hit .306 and led the Bucks with 27 rbi. Carlos Beltran hit .286, drove in 22 and swiped 8 bags. Jeremy Giambi went yard 8 times to pace the club. Ray Durham got on at a .350 mark and as a result came home to score 24 times. Scott Rolen (.217) and Jimmy Rollins (.211) are in slumps to start the campaign. Veteran lefty Graeme Lloyd picked up 3 relief wins. Randy Wolf 3-2 with a 3.15 ERA to start. Closer Roberto Hernandez stumbled as he lost 3 games and posted a 4.76 ERA. Johan Santana is young, but I didn't think he would look this green (8.44 ERA).

Bloomington tied Columbus to start with their 12-16 April mark. Roger Cedeno looks just like the player who finished 2002: .364, 15 rbi and 9 steals. Ichiro 13 steals in April. Preston Wilson hit 5 homers and drove in 14. David Ortiz collected 9 doubles and had a .404 on base for the month. Marlon Anderson struggled in April to hit .222. Carlos Febles made 10 errors in 12 games at short. Veterans Vinny Castilla (.210) and Tony Batista (.190) should pick it up as the weather warms. Pitching is the Bees strong suit so far as it had a 4.01 team ERA. Poor Vicente Padilla! He went 1-5 despite a 3.15 ERA. Get that man some runs! Mark Buehrle off to a solid start (3-3, 3.94). Sophomore CC Sabathia looks improved over 2002 (2-2, 3.45). Youngster John Lackey broke camp with the big club but he may be sent back down after his April performance (5.65 ERA).

NL WEST Expanded Standings									
	W-L	GB	HOME	ROAD	Vs NL	Vs LH	1-RUN	OPS	ERA
Ocala Ocelots	22-6	---	10-4	12-2	0-0	5-0	5-2	.835	2.68
North Georgia Yellow Jackets	18-10	4	8-6	10-4	0-0	5-1	8-3	.733	3.26
Gem City Wolfpack	14-14	8	9-5	5-9	0-0	2-1	5-4	.736	4.34
Metropolis Avengers	9-19	13	5-9	4-10	0-0	0-3	3-3	.638	4.57

The Ocelots have roared out to a BRASSball best 22-6 record, largely on the strength of a pitching staff that posted a somewhat surprising 2.68 ERA. Glendon Rusch looks like Cy Young out there after going 6-0 in 7 starts with a 3.05 ERA. Soph Roy Oswalt a solid beginning to the campaign (3-2, 2.39). The real story to the pitching success lies in the Ocelot pen. No

Ocelot reliever has an ERA above three. The pen is 6-0 with 10 saves. Each of the six relievers has earned a save. That's teamwork, baby! On offense this is still Sammy's show, just not to the degree it was in 2002. Sammy leads the team in homers (12) and rbi (26) while hitting .290. Todd Helton hit .336 with 7 dingers of his own. Brian Giles has a .420 on base and 24 ribbies. Derek Jeter hitting .301. Jason Kendall the only starter off to a poor start as he is only hitting .206.

The Yellow Jackets opened with a superb April to go 18-10. Offensively the team was led by Edgar Renteria and Fred McGriff. Edgar hit .372, smacked 15 doubles, swiped 6 bases and drove in 16. The Crime Dog led the squad in homers (8) and rbi (19). Ageless Benito Santiago hit .306. Brian Jordan hit .293 but could only drive in 9 runners. Shea Hillenbrand had 13 rbi. On the mound is where the Jackets really excelled. Youngster Casey Fossum went 4-1 with a 1.74 ERA. David Wells also went 4-1. John Smoltz (1.20, 15 IP) is now in a setup role due to the phenomenal emergence of Eric Gagne (9 saves, 16K). Reliable Jon Lieber went 4-2, albeit with a 4.75 ERA.

A mixed bag of results left Gem City 14-14 and 4 games behind North Georgia. Free Agent signee Todd Walker hit .330 in his new digs and also slapped 10 two-baggers. Steve Finley led the Pack with 9 dingers and 19 rbi. Carlos Delgado only hit .237, but he did slam 7 taters and drive in 19 himself. Scott Spiezio hit a disappointing .186 in April. Rookie Jason Jennings led the moundsmen in April with his 3-1, 2.32 numbers. Andy Benes could only go 0-1 with his fine 3.70 ERA. Izzy saved six wins for Gem City. Vets Jason Johnson (9.91) and Chan Ho Park (6.06) had poor Aprils.

The Avengers check in at 9-19 after April. Lance Berkman scored 19 runs and slugged 10 homers. Unfortunately, for the Avengers he could only muster 12 rbi in April. Need somebody on base in front of this bopper ☺ Jose Vidro will do better than his .264 start. Pat Burrell led the young Avengers in rbi with 16. The Avengers demonstrated little team speed in April as they could only swipe 3 bases. Jose Sosa had a fine month of pitching (3-0, 2.57). So did Tony Armas Jr. who went 3-3 with a 3.00 ERA in his 7 starts. Wilson Alvarez no help out of the pen as he lost 3 games and had a whopping 12.10 ERA.

NL STATS LEADERBOARD							
Doubles		Strike Outs		On Base Pct.		Batting AVG vs LHP	
Bernie Williams	16	Russ Branyan	35	Larry Walker	.476	Greg Colbrunn	.500
Edgar Renteria	15	Carlos Beltran	31	Frank Thomas	.450	Terry Shumpert	.478
Larry Walker	13	Tom Lampkin	30	Bernie Williams	.437	Larry Walker	.444
Brian Giles	12	Chris Magruder	29	John Olerud	.434	Corey Koskie	.429
Todd Walker	10	Jeff Bagwell	27	Randy Winn	.425	Karim Garcia	.405

Award Watch

Two unlikely pitchers merit recognition after the first month. Sammy already is on the Watch.

Award	Player	AVG	OBP	SLG	HR	RBI	R	SB	
AL MVP	Manny Ramirez, LAC	.369	.450	.728	9	29	26	1	
NL MVP	Sammy Sosa, OCA	.290	.400	.710	12	26	23	0	
AL ROY	Rob Fick, BOX	.315	.378	.463	2	19	10	0	
NL ROY	Karim Garcia, CHA	.364	.400	.788	7	21	16	0	
		W	L	SV	ERA	IP	H	BB	K
AL CY	Miguel Batista, MOL	5	1	0	0.95	47	20	12	26
NL CY	Glendon Rusch, OCA	6	0	0	3.05	44	41	18	24

New Email address

Ray Martin can now be reached at: rayandrenee564@msn.com
Please make this change in your address book.

New Owner

Scott Mueller has taken over the reigns of the Bakersfield Rattlers. Scott comes to us from Harlan's winter league- the SWIWL. That league is also home to Jon Kjaarsgard. Scott resides here in Minnesota with his wife and family. He is an avid Packer fan. Jeff participates in a number of Strat baseball and football leagues. Scott's email address is: PackfanFW@aol.com. Welcome aboard, Scott!

Trades and Roster Stuff

- 57. Toledo trades Tomas Perez to Springfield for Springfield's 2005 4th round draft choice.
- 58. Springfield trades Damian Easley to Brooklyn for Roberto Alomar and \$2,033,333.

Upcoming League Deadlines

- May 15th Trade deadline for June games
- May 15th Results due to both opponents and Dave and Corey
- May 25th Instructions and rotations due out for June

Next Issue of "League News"

The season marches on.