



BILLINGS MUSTANGS ANNOUNCE 2018 OPENING DAY ROSTER

VETERAN INFIELD LEADS CHARGE

BILLINGS, MT (June 14, 2018) – The Billings Mustangs, in concurrence with the Cincinnati Reds, have announced their Opening Day roster for the 2018 Pioneer League baseball season. The roster features 30 players, including 16 that have previously played in Billings.

This year's opening day roster will highlight a group of position players that are no strangers to the Pioneer League. Urwin Juaquin, Nadir Ljatifi, Carlos Rivero, Jake Turnbull and Francis Azcona, the entirety of the Mustangs' infield on opening day, spent some or all of 2017 with the team. Also returning to Billings to start the year are catcher Pabel Manzanero, outfielders Zeek White and Raul Wallace, as well as a contingency of eight veteran pitchers. Two players on this year's roster tout experience playing in a Pioneer League Championship Series: Andy Cox (2016) and Jeremy Kivel (2014).

Not only will the Mustangs return four more players to the roster than in 2017, but they will also bring 11 draftees into the fold; more than double that of last season. 3rd-round outfielder Brenden Spillane is the highest pick from the 2018 draft fans will have the opportunity to see Friday night. The University of Illinois alumnus is coming off a stellar collegiate spring which saw him earn Big Ten Player of the Year honors as well as the National Player of the Year award from the Collegiate Baseball Newspaper. Spillane will be joined by four other selections from the top 10 rounds of the draft, which includes Ryan Campbell. The right-handed pitcher from the University of Illinois-Chicago was taken in the fifth round, the highest pick of a UIC player since Curtis Granderson in 2002.

"There is always a sense of anticipation and excitement leading up to Opening Day and this year is no different," said Gary Roller, Mustangs General Manager. "As I'm sure all Mustangs fans throughout the area are, we're looking forward to not only Friday night, but the entire season, to see the development of the players as individuals as well as the progress that the team makes as a whole. We hope that the experience this group brings to Billings will contribute to successes on the field throughout the season."

Ray Martinez returns for his third year as the Manager of the Mustangs after successful campaigns in 2016 and 2017. In his first season at the helm, Martinez led the Mustangs to a 41-34 finish and a Pioneer League North Division championship before falling to the Orem Owlz in the championship series, while they would remain in the playoff race until the penultimate day of the season in 2017. Joining Martinez is hitting coach Bryan LaHair, pitching coaches Chris Booker and Micah Owings, athletic trainers Josh Hobson and Brandon Blascak, and strength coach Justin Bucko.

2018 marks the 66th year of Billings Mustangs baseball and the 45th consecutive as the affiliate of the Cincinnati Reds.

The Mustangs open the '18 Pioneer League season at Dehler Park in Billings on Friday, June 15th, when they play host to the Missoula Osprey at 7:05 pm MDT.

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