



# International League News & Notes

March 11, 2010



## BUFFALO BISONS

[www.Bisons.com](http://www.Bisons.com)

**BE LIKE IKE:** First baseman **Ike Davis** has been testing the limits of Tradition Field in Port St. Lucie, Florida already this spring. The Mets #4 prospect is off to a red hot start in his first big league camp, hitting .524 (11-21) with three doubles, two home runs and nine RBI in just his first nine spring games. He's played more games than any other player in Mets camp and leads the team with a .952 slugging percentage. Davis split last season between St. Lucie (Class-A) and Binghamton (Double-A), hitting .298 with 31 doubles, 20 home runs and 71 RBI.

**COMEBACK PLAYER COMES BACK:** The Mets announced this week that they have signed RHP **Kyle Snyder** to a Minor League contract. The 32-year old spent the entire 2009 season with the Bisons and was named the team's comeback player of the year. A versatile arm for the Herd, Snyder made 14 starts and 19 relief outings with the team. He finished 2<sup>nd</sup> on the team in innings pitched (104.1) and 4<sup>th</sup> in strikeouts (74) while posting a 3-8 record and a 4.23 ERA. Snyder has a career Minor League record of 14-24 with a 3.80 ERA in 120 games and 87 starts.

**F-MART'S GOOD START:** One player many Mets fans are keeping an eye on this spring is OF **Fernando Martinez**. Still only 21 years old, Martinez remains one of the top prospects in New York's organization. In six games this spring, the outfielder is averaging .556 (10-18) with two triples, two home runs and five RBI (1.111 slugging pct.). Martinez has not slowed down since winning MVP of the Caribbean World Series with Leones del Escogido. Martinez stormed into Triple-A last year to earn his first big league promotion in June. However, he was placed on the DL on July 9 with inflammation in his right knee and missed the rest of his rookie season.

## CHARLOTTE KNIGHTS

[www.CharlotteKnights.com](http://www.CharlotteKnights.com)

**BROTHERLY LOVE:** **Jordan Danks** enters the season ranked by *Baseball America* as the No. 5 Prospect in the White Sox organization and he is also recognized as having the best outfield arm among the Sox farmhands. Jordan, 23, is getting to play with his older brother John this spring training. The two have not graced the baseball diamond together since 2003 with Round Rock (Texas) High School. In his first Major League spring training Jordan has played in two games hitting .143 (1-7). Jordan combined to hit .266 (107-402) with 23 doubles, nine home runs and 41 RBI in 103 games with Class-A Winston-Salem and Double-A Birmingham in 2009.

**CHANGE OF DIRECTION:** **Sergio Santos** is getting attention in the Cactus League with a 98 mph fastball and developing curveball. Santos, 26, started his baseball career as an infielder playing in four different organizations over the past seven seasons. Last season Santos spent spring training trying to make the White Sox as an infielder. Santos gradually improved last season reaching the Triple-A level as he made three relief appearances out of the Knights bullpen. He also struck out a season-high four batters in his debut with the Knights on August 30 at Norfolk. Santos has been solid in spring training with a 0.00 ERA (0 ER/1.2 IP) with four strikeouts in two games.

**BASEBALL FULL TIME:** The White Sox top prospect, outfielder **Jared Mitchell**, is getting his first opportunity in some time to play nothing but baseball. Mitchell was a two-sport star at LSU, playing wide receiver on the school's national championship football team and center field for the Tigers top ranked baseball team. Mitchell is currently a non-roster invitee of the White Sox and is thought to be their leadoff man of the future. The 21-year-old center fielder is showing no signs of being overwhelmed in big league camp as he is currently hitting .444 (4-9) with two doubles, one triple and four RBI.

## COLUMBUS CLIPPERS

[www.ClippersBaseball.com](http://www.ClippersBaseball.com)

**CHANGING RESERVATIONS:** Former IL All-Star **Brian Bixler** was dealt to the Indians from the Pirates in January. Bixler spent parts of the previous three seasons with the Indianapolis Indians while in the Pittsburgh organization. With his new Tribe, Bixler will try to win the utility role, backing up **Asdrubal Cabrera** and **Luis Valbuena** in the middle of the infield and providing some depth behind Cleveland's young, versatile outfield. Bixler has played 323 games in the IL, batting .276 (331-1199) with 21 HR and 130 RBI.

**QUESTIONS AT CATCHER:** With the free agent signing of veteran backstop **Mark Redmond**, the race for who will win the starting job just got tighter. Vying for the top spot will be **Wyatt Toregas**, a mid-season IL All-Star a year ago and **Lou Marson**, the highly touted prospect acquired in last year's deadline deal for **Cliff Lee**. Also throwing his name into the hat is #1 prospect **Carlos Santana**, last year's Eastern League MVP. Regardless of who gets the starting nod, Columbus has the opportunity to have the best catching corps in the International League. So far this spring, Santana is 1-6 with a double, Marsno is 2-4 with an RBI, and Toregas is 1-3.

**BROWN GOES DOWN:** The reigning IL Batting Champion, **Jordan Brown**, suffered a spring setback last Saturday when he injured his right knee while performing outfield drills. He underwent surgery on that knee two days ago at the Cleveland Clinic and is expected to return to Goodyear on Monday to begin rehabilitation. Brown should be able to return to the field in four to eight weeks. Last season, he became the eighth batting champ in Clippers history when he hit .336, the 2<sup>nd</sup>-highest total in franchise history (**Fernando Seguignol**, .341, 2003).

## DURHAM BULLS

[www.DurhamBulls.com](http://www.DurhamBulls.com)

**MAKING AN IMPRESSION:** It's expected that Durham's top starting pitcher down the stretch last year, **Jeremy Hellickson**, will begin 2010 as a Bull. However, he's still opening some eyes in his first big league camp. Hellickson now has pitched twice, and during that time has allowed one hit while striking out six in 2.2 scoreless innings. Meanwhile, outfielder **Desmond Jennings**, also expected to begin 2010 in Durham, is 3-5 to this point. However, Jennings is expected to miss the next five days or so with a sprained wrist. He is expected to be ready for the start of the Minor League season.

**COMPETITION BRINGS OUT THE BEST:** **Sean Rodriguez**, a Bull during last year's Championship run, and **Reid Brignac**, a Bull in 2008 and 2009, are both playing well as they compete for a roster spot with the Rays. Rodriguez homered in his first three games played, and is hitting .438 this spring. Brignac has driven in a team-best 10 runs and is batting a robust .471. **Matt Joyce**, a Bull last year as well, is hitting .417 as he competes for the right field spot.

**ON THE MEND:** Among the non-roster invites to Rays camp, lefty pitcher **R.J. Swindle** is the only one who has missed significant time due to an injury suffered during Spring Training. Swindle left his outing on Friday with a right oblique strain. Meanwhile, one of last year's closers, **Winston Abreu**, has yet to pitch in a Major League spring training game. He is coming back from an aneurysm in his pitching arm. Abreu was injured pitching in the last game of last year's Governors' Cup Finals at Scranton/Wilkes-Barre.

## GWINNETT BRAVES

[www.GwinnettBraves.com](http://www.GwinnettBraves.com)

**HEYWARD WOVES THE MASSES:** Braves OF **Jason Heyward** came into the 2010 Spring Training season as the reigning Minor League Player of the Year and he's showed why in his first at-bats against MLB pitching. After seven games, he is hitting .429 with 4 runs, 4 RBI, 2 doubles, and a home run. He was held out of Wednesday's game as a precaution after knocking into the outfield wall trying to catch a fly ball.

**G-BRAVES EXHIBITIONS:** Braves organizational players ticketed for Triple-A Gwinnett are scheduled to compete in several exhibitions during Spring Training. Their first contest will be on March 20 against International League opponent Syracuse. They will also be competing on March 22, 23, 27, 29 and April 1. The G-Braves will also be competing during camp days on March 24 and 31.

**MAKING AN IMPACT:** Several Braves players who have played for Gwinnett, or may be donning the "G" this season for the first time, are competing for spots on the Major League roster. **Mitch Jones**, a 2009 Topps Triple-A All Star outfielder with the Albuquerque Isotopes, has homered and accounted for 2 RBI. INF **Brooks Conrad** has homered, recorded 6 RBI, and scored 3 runs while batting .389. **Joe Thurston**, a former 2-time Minor League Player of the Year and recent St. Louis Cardinal, has scored a run on 5 hits and recorded 2 RBI. Gwinnett pitchers **Jonny Venters** and **Mariano Gomez** have also seen some success so far this Spring Training. Venters, a 2009 Southern League Midseason All-Star, is 1-0 with a 2.70 ERA. Gomez is 1-0 and has a 3.38 ERA.

## INDIANAPOLIS INDIANS

[www.IndyIndians.com](http://www.IndyIndians.com)

**SPRING PROSPECTING:** Several top Pittsburgh Pirates prospects that have a chance to begin the year in Indianapolis are turning in excellent efforts in the 2010 Spring Training season. Through the Pirates first eight games, third baseman **Pedro Alvarez**, rated by *Baseball America* as the Pirates No. 1 prospect, leads the Bucs in at-bats (19) and runs (5), while ranking 2<sup>nd</sup> in hits (6) and total bases (11) and 3<sup>rd</sup> in RBI (4). While Alvarez has shined for the offense, RHP **Daniel McCutchen** and LHP **Donnie Veal** have excelled on the mound. McCutchen, who was rated as the Pirates No. 21 prospect by *Baseball America* and was the Indians 2009 MVP, has allowed just one run on three hits, while striking out three and walking none over four innings of work thus far. Along with McCutchen, Veal, who was rated as the Pirates No. 24 prospect entering this season and will be making the move from the bullpen to the starting rotation, is 1-0 and has allowed just one hit over three innings of solid work.

**SPRINGING FOWARD:** Outfielder **Garrett Jones**, who was the Indians April Player of the Month in 2009, has gotten off to a hot start over the Pirates first eight games of the 2010 Spring Training season. Jones, who last season became the fastest player in Pirates history to reach 10 homers, doing so in just 19 games, has belted a team best two long balls in six games played and is also tied with INF **Bobby Crosby** with a Bucco-best six RBI.

**TOPPING THE DEPTH CHART:** Several former Indians are expected to be starters and key contributors for the Pirates in 2010. According to the Pittsburgh depth chart, five of the eight starters in the field and four or five spots in the starting rotation are expected to be filled by former Indianapolis Indians, including **Lastings Milledge** in left field, **Andrew McCutchen** in center field, **Garrett Jones** in right field, **Jeff Clement** at first base, **Ryan Doumit** at catcher and **Paul Maholm**, **Ross Ohlendorf**, **Zach Duke**, **Charlie Morton** and possibly **Daniel McCutchen** in the starting rotation.

**MAKING THE TOP 100:** *Baseball America* recently released its list of the Top 100 Prospects in all of baseball and both of the Pirates first round draft picks in each of the last two seasons made the final cut. 3B **Pedro Alvarez**, who was the No. 2 overall draft pick by the Pirates in the 2008 draft, was rated by *Baseball America* as the eighth best prospect in all of baseball, while C **Tony Sanchez**, who was the No. 4 overall pick by the Pirates in the 2009 draft, was ranked No. 79. Alvarez could begin the year with the Indians and if Sanchez has a strong early-season showing he may make an appearance later in the year.

## LEHIGH VALLEY IRONPIGS

[www.IronPigsBaseball.com](http://www.IronPigsBaseball.com)

**OVERCROWDED OUTFIELD:** The makeup of the 2010 IronPigs outfield is still very much in flux. All of the possible candidates have Major League experience and all have previously played in the International League. Back for his third season with the IronPigs, **Rich Thompson** figures to be the Opening Day center fielder. Thompson is Lehigh Valley's career leader in triples (12) and stolen bases (51). **John Mayberry Jr.** will likely be back in the IronPigs outfield after hitting .256-13-43 a season ago for Lehigh Valley, earning his first big league promotion. **Chris Duffy**, a nine-year veteran, has spent parts of four seasons in the big leagues with Pittsburgh and Milwaukee, where he played last year hitting .125-0-3 in 19 G. The 5'10", 185-pound Duffy is a career .312 hitter at the Triple-A level (.311-10-55 in 116 G for Indianapolis in parts of three seasons). **Dewayne Wise**, known for his 9<sup>th</sup> inning catch to preserve Mark Buehrle's perfect game last year, hit .225-2-11 last season in a career high 85 G with the White Sox. Wise has spent time with five different International League teams (Syracuse, Richmond, Toledo, Louisville and Charlotte) in his 13-year career, batting .321 for the Knights in 62 games over the past two seasons. The player with the most big league experience of the bunch, **Brad Wilkerson**, has spent the better part of seven seasons in the majors playing for Montreal/Washington, Texas, Seattle and Toronto, and has mashed 122 Major League home runs. In 2008, the 32-year-old hit .220-4-28 in 104 G between the Mariners and Blue Jays. Wilkerson announced his retirement after just two games with Pawtucket in 2009 before signing with the Phillies in February. Another free agent signee, **Freddy Guzman**, spent time with three different IL teams in 2009 before finishing his season on the Yankees ALCS roster. The speedy Guzman has swiped 433 bases over eight Minor League seasons. He set career highs in triples (15), home runs (5) and RBI (60) in 2008 between Erie (Double-A) and Toledo.

**"SPRING" ING STARTS:** The Phillies top-rated prospect, **Dominic Brown**, has gotten off to a hot start in Clearwater at Phillies spring training. The 22-year-old has gone 7-17 (.412) with 2 2B and 4 RBI in his first six games. The five-tool outfielder hit a combined .299 with 14 home runs and 64 RBI across three levels last year despite missing more than a month with a broken finger. Brown is expected to start the year in Reading but could be in an IronPigs uniform by summer's end. Outfielder **John Mayberry Jr.** is off to a strong start this spring as well. The 26-year-old is 7-19 (.368) with 3 2B, HR and 5 RBI in his first 6 games.

**ON THE BUMP:** LHP **Joe Savery** and RHP **Drew Carpenter** are expected to lead the starting rotation for the IronPigs this season after solid 2009 performances. RHP **Kyle Kendrick** could be back as well if he doesn't win the fifth spot in the Phillies rotation this spring. Kendrick had a strong 2009 season for the IronPigs, going 9-7 with a 3.34 ERA. A few free-agent acquisitions could fill out Lehigh Valley's starting rotation. RHP **Nate Bump**, a former first round pick by San Francisco in 1998, went a combined 15-3 with a 2.44 ERA last year pitching for Camden of the independent Atlantic League and Toledo. In all 10 of his starts with the Mud Hens, the Penn State product went at least five innings, including six outings where he lasted seven or more. RHP **Ryan Vogelsong** hasn't pitched in the states since the 2006 season when he split time between Indianapolis and Pittsburgh. With the Indians, Vogelsong posted a 2.66 ERA in 10 starts. A fifth-round pick by the Giants in 1998, Vogelsong has spent the last three seasons pitching in Japan. In 2004, he went 6-13 with a 6.50 ERA as a starter for the Pirates. RHP **Brandon Duckworth** makes his return to the Phillies organization after spending his first six professional seasons with the club. Duckworth won 15 games and compiled a 4.87 ERA in 58 starts for Philadelphia from 2001-03. Since then he has spent time with three different organizations, including the Royals where he pitched for Triple-A Omaha the last two seasons going 3-6 with a 5.31 ERA last year. The 34-year-old has a lifetime Minor League ERA of 3.88.

## LOUISVILLE BATS

[www.BatsBaseball.com](http://www.BatsBaseball.com)

**TOP 50 PROSPECTS:** The Bats will likely start the 2010 season with a pair of *Baseball America* Top 50 prospects. Infielder/outfielder **Todd Frazier** (No. 43), and first baseman **Yonder Alonso** (No. 45) made the annual list. Frazier was a supplemental first round pick by the Reds in 2007, and spent the majority of last season in Double-A Carolina, before joining the Bats on Aug. 22. Alonso was the top pick in 2008, and finished the 2009 season in Carolina after being named a Florida State League All-Star.

**BURKE BACK HOME:** Infielder **Chris Burke**, a Louisville native, will likely start the season in his hometown after being signed to a Minor League contract on Dec. 4 that included a non-roster invitation to Spring Training. A graduate of Louisville St. Xavier High School, Burke also helped lead the University of Tennessee to a College World Series appearance in 2001. Burke spent the 2009 season in the Padres and Braves organizations, ending the year in Gwinnett, where he batted .285.

**HOF INDUCTEE:** Bats Chairman **Dan Ulmer** was inducted into the Kentuckiana Business Hall of Fame during a ceremony on March 4. The Hall of Fame honors those who have made significant contributions to the Louisville-area business community. Ulmer, who played a vital role in returning baseball to Louisville after a ten-year absence in 1982, was heavily involved with the organization's move to downtown and Louisville Slugger Field in 2000. He is currently focusing his efforts on the development of the University of Louisville's new downtown arena.

## NORFOLK TIDES

[www.NorfolkTides.com](http://www.NorfolkTides.com)

**TIDES BROADCASTER HONORED...AGAIN:** Tides broadcaster **Pete Michaud** was honored last night at the 65<sup>th</sup> annual Norfolk Sports Club Jamboree with the Abe Goldblatt Memorial Award, which is presented for Outstanding Coverage of Local Sports by a Media Person. The banquet had nearly 800 attendees, with the keynote speaker being Alabama head football coach Nick Saban. In addition to the award last night, Michaud was also honored earlier this month by the Chesapeake Athletic Club as Hampton Roads Outstanding Broadcaster for 2009. Michaud is entering his fourth season broadcasting Tides games and he's been the long-time voice of the Hampton Roads and Norfolk Admirals hockey team, as he's currently in his 18<sup>th</sup> season with the club.

**RHYNE PLAYING FINE:** Infielder/outfielder **Rhyme Hughes** has had a hot start to spring training, as the 26-year-old has hit .364 (4-11) with three home runs and six RBI in seven games for the Orioles this spring. Hughes leads the O's in home runs, RBI, total bases (13) and slugging percentage (1.182). He was acquired by the Orioles from Tampa Bay on 8/15/09 as the player to be named later in a trade in which the Rays received catcher **Gregg Zaun**. Hughes combined to hit .279 with 25 home runs and 79 RBI between Double-A Montgomery, Durham and Norfolk in 2009.

**SPRING IN THEIR STEP:** Several potential Tides have had a solid start to their spring training campaigns. Infielder/outfielder **Jonathan Tucker** has hit .500 (5-10) with three stolen bases thus far, while infielder **Miguel Abreu** has hit .333 (4-12) with two RBI. Top prospect **Josh Bell** also got off to a strong start, as he clubbed two home runs in his first spring game in the Orioles system. On the mound, **Matt Albers** (4.1 IP), **Jason Berken** (4.0 IP), **Will Ohman** (3.0 IP), **Wilfrido Perez** (2.0 IP) and **Luis Lebron** (1.2 IP) have yet to yield an earned run, while **David Hernandez** has struck out seven in just 3.2 innings of work.

## PAWTUCKET RED SOX

[www.PawSox.com](http://www.PawSox.com)

**REPORT FROM THE FORT:** Despite spending the first several days of spring training meeting the 61 players in the Red Sox big league camp, the way **Torey Lovullo** sees it, he has yet to meet any of his PawSox players. "As far as I'm concerned none of the guys that I've met are going to be in Pawtucket," said Lovullo, the PawSox first-year manager. "They all have expectations to be in the big leagues, and that's how I treat it." Lovullo, who played for eight seasons in the big leagues with the Tigers, Yankees, Angels, Mariners, A's, Indians, and Phillies, spent the last eight seasons managing in the Indians organization. He acknowledges it's been a bit of an adjustment getting accustomed to a new uniform this season. "It's been a while since I've been elsewhere. My head was kind of spinning for the first few days," he said. "It's the newness of it. But you've got to get to know faces, players, other staff members. And everybody from top to bottom has been wonderful. It's been a great introduction to a great organization and I'm really excited to be a part of it." Lovullo does have **Ron Johnson**, the former PawSox manager promoted to coach first base for the Red Sox this season, around to help. "I'm honored to really follow in his footsteps and sit in that seat behind him," Lovullo said. "I know that he had a great run in Pawtucket and he's where he's supposed to be now at the big league level. I just want to continue the tradition of helping guys get to the big leagues. We have that same passion. One thing that we have in common is our passion for the Red Sox and our passion for the kids. And I'm excited about that." One thing that has surprised Lovullo about his new organization since he joined the PawSox this winter? "The atmosphere of family," he said. "The atmosphere of it's one group of guys with a collective effort to win a World Series. They believe it and they walk it. And it's something they expect to do every year. I walk out here today, yesterday, and the day before, and I see the fans with incredible amounts of support. I see grandfathers playing catch with grandsons. I see grandmothers hugging their granddaughters. I see parents that are fans, and it's just an impressive dynamic. It's an impressive history, an impressive tradition, and I'm happy to be a part of."

**YOU LOOK SOMEWHAT FAMILIAR:** Of the 61 players in big league camp with the Red Sox, 19 appeared in at least one game for the PawSox in 2009: pitchers **Daniel Bard**, **Michael Bowden**, **Clay Buchholz**, **Daisuke Matsuzaka**, **Dustin Richardson**, **Junichi Tazawa**, **Tim Wakefield**, **Randor Bierd**, **Fernando Cabrera**, **Kris Johnson**, and **Adam Mills**; catchers **Dusty Brown** and **Mark Wagner**; infielders **Aaron Bates**, **Jed Lowrie**, **Kevin Youkilis**, and **Gil Velazquez**; and outfielders **Josh Reddick** and **Zach Daeges**.

## ROCHESTER RED WINGS

[www.RedWingsBaseball.com](http://www.RedWingsBaseball.com)

**RED WINGS IN MAJOR LEAGUE CAMP:** The Minnesota Twins are seven games into their spring training schedule and some expected 2010 Red Wings are playing well. Infielder **Luke Hughes** is batting .300 (3-10), first baseman **Brock Peterson** is hitting .375 (3-8) with a home run and two RBI, and third baseman **Danny Valencia** is batting .429 (3-7) with a home run and three RBI. On the mound LHP **Mike Maroth** is 1-0 with a 3.00 ERA in two games while RHP **Anthony Slama**, who is expected to be the Red Wings closer, has pitched 2.0 scoreless innings.

**SIGN ME UP:** RHP **Brad Hennessey**, who missed 2009 due to injury, was signed to a Minor League deal yesterday by Minnesota. Hennessey had his best year in 2007 when he was 4-5 with 19 saves and a 3.42 ERA for the San Francisco Giants.

**MINOR LEAGUE CAMP OPENS:** Minnesota Twins minor league players report to camp in Ft. Myers, Florida today. The first full squad workout is scheduled for Saturday with the Red Wings opening up their 16-game spring training schedule on Wednesday, March 17 with a 1 p.m. game vs. the Pawtucket Red Sox.

## SCRANTON/WILKES-BARRE YANKEES

[www.SWBYankees.com](http://www.SWBYankees.com)

**YANKEES SIGN MINOR LEAGUE FREE AGENT:** The New York Yankees have signed IF/OF **Myron Leslie** to a Minor League free agent contract. Leslie was originally an eighth round selection of the Oakland Athletics in the 2004 First Year Player Draft and played with the A's through 2008 and into spring training of 2009. After getting released in spring training, Leslie signed a contract and played the 2009 season with the New Jersey Jackals of the independent Can-Am League. Leslie was named the League's postseason All-Star first baseman, as well as player of the month for June and player of the week on two other occasions. The former University of South Florida standout finished with 18 home runs (4<sup>th</sup> in the League), 75 RBI (2<sup>nd</sup> in the League) and 71 runs scored (2<sup>nd</sup> in the League) while hitting .275.

**BIG LEAGUE CAMP IS STILL CROWDED:** All of the 25 non-roster players that have been invited to Major League camp by the New York Yankees are still with the club at Steinbrenner Field, despite Minor League camp opening this week. The first Triple-A exhibition game for the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre group does not happen until March 20 in Tampa against the Pirates Triple-A Indianapolis group. The non-roster invitees still have nine days before the Triple-A spring schedule opens to leave their impressions on the big league coaching staff and player development staff of the Yankees.

**NEW FIELD, NEW PENS:** Scranton/Wilkes-Barre will have a few changes and improvements to PNC Field this spring. In addition to a new playing surface, which was installed following the 2009 season, both of the bullpens at the stadium have been moved back into the park from beyond the outfield wall. The pens will go back to their original location at PNC Field, beneath the party decks down the right and left field lines, which will once again give fans the opportunity to watch the pitchers warm up.

**SYRACUSE CHIEFS**[www.SyracuseChiefs.com](http://www.SyracuseChiefs.com)

**STRASBURG IMPRESSES IN DEBUT:** After nine months of anticipation, number one overall pick **Stephen Strasburg** made his much anticipated debut this past Tuesday. The right-hander worked two scoreless innings against the Tigers, striking out two while allowing a pair of hits.

**SIX SENT TO MINOR LEAGUE CAMP:** The Nationals opened Minor League camp this week and immediately reassigned six players from big league spring training. Top catching prospect **Derek Norris** was among the six as were Major League veterans pitchers **Victor Garate**, **Logan Kensing**, **Joel Peralta**, and **Ryan Speier**, along with outfielder **Jerry Owens**. In addition, Washington released veteran hurlers **Shawn Estes** and **Eddie Guardado**, who had signed Minor League contracts this offseason.

**DESMOND ON FIRE:** SS **Ian Desmond** has been red hot through seven Grapefruit League games, going 8-17 (.471) at the plate with a team-best 10 RBI. Desmond is being considered for a utility role in D.C., but could begin the year in Syracuse as the Chiefs' starting shortstop.

**TOLEDO MUD HENS**[www.MudHens.com](http://www.MudHens.com)

**SPRING UPDATES:** Here is an update on many potential 2010 Mud Hens that are with the Detroit Tigers for Spring Training in Lakeland, Florida. Hitters with more than 10 at-bats: OF **Clete Thomas** (7-17, 2 RBI), OF **Don Kelly** (9-17, 4 RBI), OF **Wilkin Ramirez** (5-12, 2 RBI), 1B **Ryan Strieby** (5-14, 3 RBI), SS **Brent Dlugach** (4-15, 2 HR, 4 RBI), OF **Casper Wells** (4-11, 3 RBI). Pitchers with more than 3.0 IP: RHP **Eddie Bonine** (4.1 IP, 4 ER), LHP **Phil Dumatrait** (3.1 IP, 2 ER), LHP **Brad Thomas** (3.0 IP, 0 ER), RHP **Robbie Weinhardt** (3.0 IP, 0 ER).

**OPENING DAY:** Over 1,000 standing room tickets have been sold for Opening Day at Fifth Third Field on April 8 versus Louisville. It will be the beginning of the ninth season for the Hens in downtown Toledo at Fifth Third Field. It will be the first time that the Hens will entertain the Louisville Bats to begin a season since the 2003 campaign, but one thing is certain, the crowd will be large. Previous Opening Day results and attendance figures at Fifth Third Field:

2002: Hens 7, Norfolk 5 (12,134)	2006: Charlotte 1, Hens 0 (12,500)
2003: Hens 6, Louisville 1 (11,083)	2007: Hens 5, Durham 4 (12,600)
2004: Durham 8, Hens 3 (12,250)	2008: Hens 3, Durham 2 (12,750)
2005: Hens 8, Durham 1 (12,500)	2009: Columbus 2, Hens 1 (13,100)

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