

2012 Governors' Cup Playoff Preview

August 10, 2012

For Immediate Release

2012 International League Season Heads Towards Finish Line; Only Four Teams Destined for Governors' Cup Playoffs

With just over three weeks remaining in the 2012 International League regular season, two teams appear to have the inside track to the League's four-team postseason playoffs. In a likely first round preview, the South Division-leading Charlotte Knights took the first three games of a series this week in Indianapolis before the Indians bounced back last night when Justin Wilson tossed an 8.0-inning no-hitter in a rain-shortened finale. Both the Knights and the West-Division-leading Indians are closing in on their first playoff appearance since 2006. Both clubs also enjoy fairly comfortable leads in their divisions, leaving trailing Columbus (9.0 GB in the West) and Norfolk (7.0 GB in the South) to chase the Wild Card berth for an entry into the postseason. Currently however, the Wild Card would be the odd team out of the heated North Division race. If the playoffs began today, the North Division would belong to the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Yankees, owners of a slight advantage over Pawtucket, Lehigh Valley, and the hard-charging Rochester Red Wings. The PawSox are the current Wild Card leaders, though four teams remain within 5.0 games of Pawtucket in the race for the final postseason entry.

First Round Schedule (Best of Five):

September 5,6 South Division Winner at West Division Winner, North Division Winner at Wild Card Winner
September 7,8*,9* West Division Winner at South Division Winner, Wild Card Winner at North Division Winner

Governors' Cup Finals Schedule (Best of Five):

September 11,12 South/West Division Series Winner at North/Wild Card Series Winner
September 13,14*,15* North/Wild Card Series Winner at South/West Division Series Winner

* If Necessary

First Place Yankees Defy the Odds During Season Away From Home

While construction crews have been hard at work in Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania preparing PNC Field for Opening Day of 2013, the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Yankees have played their "home" games so far this season in Rochester (38 games), Syracuse (6), Lehigh Valley (6), Batavia (5), and Buffalo (4). Despite the club's nomadic existence, manager Dave Miley has the Yankees threatening to make the postseason. With a current record of 65-53 the team dubbed as the "Empire State Yankees" sits alone atop the IL North Division.



SWB Manager Dave Miley

Remaining 2012 Scranton/Wilkes-Barre "Home" Games

August 14-17 vs. Pawtucket at McCoy Stadium in Pawtucket, RI

August 20-21 vs. Buffalo at Coca-Cola Field in Buffalo, NY

August 29-30 vs. Lehigh Valley at Coca-Cola Park in Allentown, PA

* Any SWB Yankees home postseason games will be at Frontier Field in Rochester, NY



Triple-A Rookies Shaping 2012 Governors' Cup Playoff Chase

This season several new faces have emerged on the Triple-A Baseball scene and are leading the way as their teams chase postseason glory. The last time the International League Rookie of the Year played for the team that won the Governors' Cup was in 2002 (Carl Crawford of the Durham Bulls), but here are several rookies that are hoping to reverse the trend this season:

Xavier Avery, Norfolk	21 steals and 23 extra-base hits to go along with team-leading 51 runs
Phillippe Aumont, Lehigh Valley	Team-best 13 saves, 2-1 record, 3.63 ERA, 53 strikeouts in 39.2 IP
Juan Cedeno, Scranton/WB	3-0 record, 3.31 ERA in team-leading 43 appearances for All-Star
Tyler Cloyd, Lehigh Valley	11-1 record (2nd in IL in wins), 2.12 ERA (1st), 84 strikeouts
Pedro Florimon, Rochester	.254 average, 24 RBI, 6 steals for slick-fielding shortstop
Matt Langwell, Columbus	1-0 record, 3.19 ERA, 37 hits allowed in 42.1 IP, 42 strikeouts
Charles Leesman, Charlotte	9-9 record, 2.65 ERA (3rd in IL), 82 strikeouts
Bryan Morris, Indianapolis	Reliever has 2-2 record, 2.73 ERA, and 5 saves in 69.1 innings pitched
Ronnier Mustelier, Scranton/WB	.291 average, 8 homers, 41 RBI for Yankees outfielder

Clippers Still Alive in Quest For Three-Peat

The two-time defending Governors' Cup and Triple-A Baseball National Champions, the Columbus Clippers, have quietly remained in the Wild Card hunt this season despite sitting 9.0 games behind Indianapolis in the West Division. The Clippers, who won the League Championship as the Wild Card in 2010, still have the dream of becoming just the second franchise in IL history to win a third consecutive Governors' Cup. The first was also Columbus, as the Clippers achieved the League's first "three-peat" from 1979 to 1981 as an affiliate of the New York Yankees.

A third title would be unprecedented for manager Mike Sarbaugh, as no skipper in League history has ever won three consecutive Governors' Cups. The 1979-81 Clippers had three different managers in Gene Michael, Joe Altobelli, and Frank Verdi. Earlier this season Sarbaugh became the first manager ever to serve in that capacity in back-to-back Triple-A All-Star Games.

Repeat Governors' Cup Champions

Newark	1937-38
Syracuse	1942-43
Montreal	1948-49
Rochester	1955-56
Toronto	1965-66
Syracuse	1969-70
Columbus	1979-81*
Tidewater	1982-83
Columbus	1991-92
Durham	2002-03
Toledo	2005-06
Columbus	2010-11

* - only three-time consecutive Gov. Cup champion

North Division Teams at Forefront of Wild Card Race

The Wild Card entry can come from any division, and the last three seasons each of the League's three divisions have had a turn sending two teams to the playoffs. Since 1998 when the current three-division format began, the six-team North has produced the Wild Card a League-high eight times, more than the South and West Combined. Last year the Lehigh Valley IronPigs lost the division race to Pawtucket by 2.0 games, but then swept the Red Sox in the first round of the playoffs.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Wild Card</u>	<u>Division</u>	<u>Playoff Results</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Wild Card</u>	<u>Division</u>	<u>Playoff Results</u>
2011	Lehigh Valley	North	Lost in finals	2004	Durham	South	Lost in first round
2010	Columbus	West	Won Governors' Cup	2003	Ottawa	North	Lost in first round
2009	Gwinnett	South	Lost in first round	2002	Buffalo	North	Lost in finals
2008	Pawtucket	North	Lost in first round	2001	Scranton/WB	North	Lost in finals
2007	Richmond	South	Won Governors' Cup	2000	Scranton/WB	North	Lost in finals
2006	Rochester	North	Lost in finals	1999	Charlotte	South	Won Governors' Cup
2005	Indianapolis	West	Lost in finals	1998	Syracuse	North	Lost in first round



Playoff Races Enter Final Weeks; Much Still to be Decided as Teams Battle for a Playoff Berth

NORTH DIVISION REPORT: No team has managed to run away with the North this season, as only 7.5 games separate the six teams of the division from each other. The advantage currently belongs to Scranton/Wilkes-Barre (New York Yankees), who were able to take three out of four games this week from the 4th-place Rochester Red Wings (Minnesota Twins). It was a major setback for the Red Wings, who had won seven in a row prior to facing the Yankees. Rochester faces the prospect of also looking up in the standings at the two teams the division sent to the postseason last year, Pawtucket (Boston Red Sox) and Lehigh Valley (Philadelphia Phillies). Starting last Wednesday, the PawSox and IronPigs played each other for six straight days, splitting things in the end with three victories apiece. Pawtucket has never won consecutive division titles in the International League.

IL NORTH DIVISION STANDINGS

	<u>W-L</u>	<u>Pct.</u>	<u>GB</u>	<u>Gm Rem</u>
Scranton/WB	65-53	.551	--	26
Pawtucket	65-54	.546	0.5	25
Lehigh Valley	64-56	.533	2.0	24
Rochester	60-59	.504	5.5	25
Buffalo	58-61	.487	7.5	25
Syracuse	58-61	.487	7.5	25

IMPACTING THE RACE



RHP Zach Stewart
Pawtucket

Leads staff with 25 SO
 (Since All-Star Break)

*** Fact of the Week ** - Lehigh Valley owns the League's best record in one-run games this season, going 24-16 (.600) in one-run affairs.*

WEST DIVISION REPORT: The International League's best record in 2012 belongs to the Indianapolis Indians (Pittsburgh Pirates). The Tribe owns the League's 2nd-best ERA and has scored the 3rd-highest number of runs, resulting in a 9.0-game lead for Indianapolis in the West Division. The Indians haven't made the postseason since 2006, and the last time the team won the West Division outright was in the Governors' Cup Championship season of 2000. The only other team in the West with a winning record this season has been the Columbus Clippers (Cleveland Indians), though the two-time defending champions of Triple-A Baseball are still alive in the Wild Card picture. The Indians and Clippers meet tonight in Columbus for the first of six games left between the two.

IL WEST DIVISION STANDINGS

	<u>W-L</u>	<u>Pct.</u>	<u>GB</u>	<u>Gm Rem</u>
Indianapolis	72-48	.600	--	24
Columbus	63-57	.525	9.0	24
Louisville	47-73	.392	25.0	24
Toledo	46-74	.383	26.0	24

IMPACTING THE RACE



OF Jose Tabata
Indianapolis

.313, 7 2B, 14 RBI
 (Since arriving July 4)

*** Fact of the Week ** - In June, the Indians went 20-9, the only time this season an IL team has won 20 games in a calendar month*

SOUTH DIVISION REPORT: For the first time since 2006 it appears the IL South Division winner will not be Durham. The Charlotte Knights (Chicago White Sox) are poised to return to the playoffs for the first time since winning the South six years ago. The Knights have gone 18-10 since the All-Star Break to pull away from the 2nd-place Norfolk Tides (Baltimore Orioles). The top two teams in the South meet for four games beginning tonight at Harbor Park in Norfolk. Charlotte's pitching staff owns the League's best ERA this season (3.16), while the offense is led by current home run leader Dan Johnson (25 HR). Norfolk has struggled when on the road this season, posting a road record of 27-32. The Knights have a League-best 36 wins away from home this season.

IL SOUTH DIVISION STANDINGS

	<u>W-L</u>	<u>Pct.</u>	<u>GB</u>	<u>Gm Rem</u>
Charlotte	68-52	.567	--	24
Norfolk	61-59	.508	7.0	24
Durham	57-63	.475	11.0	24
Gwinnett	53-67	.442	15.0	24

IMPACTING THE RACE



OF L.J. Hoes
Norfolk

.476, 5 RBI, 12 Runs
 (Since July 29)

*** Fact of the Week ** - Norfolk's last division title came in 2005. Since then, the Tides have finished in the top half of the South Division just once.*



WILD CARD REPORT: The Wild Card race is living up to its name this season, with several clubs still very much alive in the hunt for the last ticket into the postseason. Neither Columbus or Norfolk has any games remaining against North Division clubs, so those teams may have an opportunity to make a move down the stretch as Scranton/Wilkes-Barre, Pawtucket, Lehigh Valley, and Rochester play one another. No International League team has more victories since the first of July than the Red Wings, who went 18-11 in July and are 5-3 so far in August. The winner of the Wild Card berth will meet the North Division in the first round of the Governors' Cup playoffs, a series the Wild Card has won the last two seasons.

WILD CARD LEADERS

	<u>W-L</u>	<u>Pct.</u>	<u>GB</u>	<u>Gm Rem</u>
Pawtucket	65-54	.546	--	25
Lehigh Valley	64-56	.533	1.5	24
Columbus	63-57	.525	2.5	24
Norfolk	61-59	.508	4.5	24
Rochester	60-59	.504	5.0	25

IMPACTING THE RACE



1B Chris Parmelee
 Rochester

.356, 8 HR, 22 RBI
 (Since All-Star Break)

*** Fact of the Week ** - The team with the most home runs in the IL this year is Columbus with 126. The fewest is 68 home runs for Lehigh Valley.*



SERIES TO WATCH THIS WEEK:

August 10-12: Indianapolis @ Columbus

This weekend's series represents half of the remaining games for the Clippers with the first place Indians and the last ones at Huntington Park. This could be the final opportunity for Columbus to make a run in the West Division.

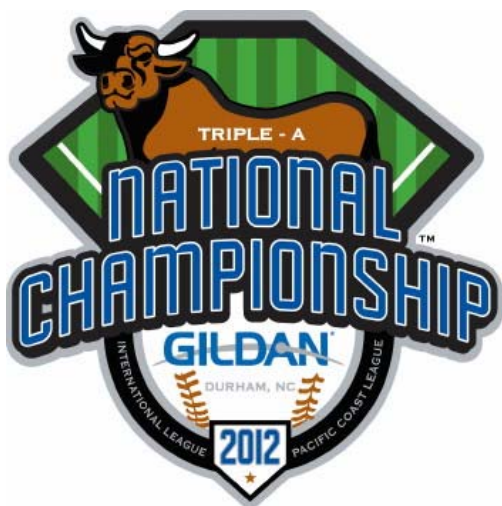
August 10-13: Norfolk @ Charlotte

The top two teams in the South square off at Knights Stadium. The Tides hold a slim 8-7 edge in the season series, having taken two of three games at Charlotte early last month.

August 12-13: Rochester @ Lehigh Valley

Standing directly in front of Rochester in the North Division standings is Lehigh Valley. The Red Wings dropped three out of four during a late-June trip to Pennsylvania.

IL Champion Headed to Gildan Triple-A National Championship Game



The IL postseason contenders are also keeping an eye on the Pacific Coast League playoff picture as the regular season wraps up. The club that wins the Governors' Cup will advance to the 2012 Gildan Triple-A Baseball National Championship Game in Durham on Tuesday, September 18. Who will face the IL's best to determine the champion of Triple-A Baseball live on NBC Sports Network? Here's an update on the division races in the Pacific Coast League for August 10:



American North			American South		
Omaha	69-50	--	Albuquerque	68-51	--
Nashville	54-65	15.0	New Orleans	64-55	4.0
Iowa	44-75	25.0	Okl. City	63-55	4.5
Memphis	44-75	25.0	Round Rock	53-66	15.0
Pacific North			Pacific South		
Reno	70-49	--	Sacramento	72-47	--
Col. Spr.	63-56	7.0	Las Vegas	66-52	5.5
Salt Lake	61-58	9.0	Fresno	63-55	8.5
Tacoma	50-69	20.0	Tucson	46-72	25.5