

BRASS BASEBALL LEAGUE

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Top Stories:
April Results

AL Teams Make Statement; Drub NL

April saw the AL go toe-to-toe with the NL clubs, and the NL never knew what hit them. Overall, ten of twelve AL teams finished the month .500 or better, while the NL could manage but ONE team (Ocala) to a plus .500 record. The AL West had the most success of any division, with all four teams winning at least 16 games versus the NL East. Meanwhile, the AL Central had the only two 20+ game winners for the month, as Plaza and Cook County each feasted on the teams from the NL East. Finally, in the AL East, both Minnesota and Morris tagged the NL Central en route to 16-12 records. Will May prove to be another treacherous month for the NL? Stay tuned.....

American League East

1. Santa Barbara Outlaws (19-9): The Outlaws tied for the league lead in team batting (.329), while slugging a whopping 66 homers and stealing 32 bases, both ranking second in the league. The trio of Orlando Hernandez, Bartolo Colon, and John Burkett each won three games for the month, while Rob Nen saved a league-high 11 games. Delino Deshields was the offensive spark in April, slashing 44 hits and hitting .407, both ranking in the top three in the league. He also added 10 steals to boot. Robin Ventura (.356-11-26) celebrated his first month with the Outlaws in style, and longtime Outlaw Mo Vaughn slugged ten homers and drove in 23 for the month. Perhaps the most surprising stat of the month: reserve outfielder Ozzie Timmons hit .395 with 8 homers in only 41 plate appearances. Ozzie is on a pace for 64 homers, for those of you who track these sort of things.

2. Toledo Mudhens (19-9): Toledo matched the Outlaws win for win in April, and share the top spot after 28 games. What's more, the Mudhens proved you can win WITHOUT going yard 3 times a game!! With only 21 homers, the 'Hens were dead last in the category. Still, they managed to score enough to win more games than just about every other AL club. Why? Check out the bullpen! The quartet of Trevor Hoffman, Bob Wells, Vic Darensbourg, and Mike Stanton combined to go 7-1 with 9 saves and a combined ERA of 2.09! Steve Kline posted a solid 3.21 ERA in 11 relief appearances, but somehow managed to get the "L" in 4 of the team's 9 defeats. Rookie Mike Lowell (.322-9-26) was the team's offensive standout, though new rightfielder Jeromy Burnitz (.275-6-21) contributed as well. Secondbaseman Miguel Cairo stole 12 bases in 15 attempts.

3. Brooklyn Bulldogs (17-11): Their AL low .262 batting average could have proved much more costly, were it not for their AL-best pitching staff. The team ERA of 3.18 was far and away the best in the league. Greg Maddux (5-0, 2.29) and Andy Pettitte (5-2, 2.49) proved to be a lethal 1-2 punch in April. Rookie Ryan Dempster and Garrett Stephenson were a combined 0-6 however, with an ERA over 5.00. Rookie Kaz Sasaki saved 6 games, without yielding a run in 11 innings. Darin Erstad (.365-3-12) had a nice April, while Tino Martinez (.227-4-10) and Dave Justice (.172-5-14) each scuffled. Robbie Alomar hit .309 for the month, adding in 8 steals as well.

4. St. Croix Rivermen (16-12): Lots of young talent here. Johnny Damon (.364-3-14-9 steals) and Ben Grieve (.336-8-23) led the offensive charge, with Manny Ramirez pitching in with 10 homers and 26 RBI. Scott Spiezio proved a valuable commodity, launching 8 homers in only 81 PA's. Unlike

past years, the Rivermen pitching staff got off to a fine start in April. Their deep bullpen (Shuey, Strickland, Embree, and Doug Jones) combined to allow only 12 earned runs in 50 innings (2.16 ERA). Meanwhile, James Baldwin (3-2, 2.68), Kirk Rueter (3-2, 3.02), Carl Pavano (3-1, 3.15), and Kevin Millwood (4-2, 3.76) each provided fine performances out of the rotation. If the pitching holds, this team could be quite a surprise.

American League Central

1. Plaza Lions (22-6): The Lions posted the best record in BRASSball for April, thanks in large part to the fine pitching of Tom Glavine (4-1, 2.45), David Wells (4-0, 3.82, 1 shutout), and Paul Abbott (4-0, 3.06). Luis Gonzalez (364-5-28-15 doubles) and Jeff Kent (.343-5-18) provided the “punch” in the order, while Luis Castillo (.363, 9 steals, league-leading 32 runs scored) provided the “judy”. Mark Grace hit .396 on the month, tying teammate Gonzalez for the league lead with 15 doubles.

2. Cook County Maulers (21-7): Leading the AL in hits, runs, batting, and home runs, it's no wonder the Maulers ran off 21 wins in April. Edgar Martinez (.418 avg, 46 hits) is off to a great start, as is Nomar Garciaparra (.370 avg, 37 hits). Each is among the top 4 in batting. Defending league MVP Vladimir Guerrero (.321-14-42) appears ready to make another MVP run, and rookies Troy Glaus (.327-12-26) and Julio Lugo (.411-7-18) have given the infield a major jolt of power. Pedro Martinez (6-0, 1.62, 75 Ks) is off to an awesome start.

3. Iowa Rubes (17-11): The Rubes haven't seen too many months like this in their history. Their fine start in April is due in large part to some terrific pitching. Their 3.66 ERA ranked third in the league, and they gave up a league-low 18 homers in 28 games. Kris Benson (4-2, 2.28) officially assumed the role of staff ace. Meanwhile, relievers Kevin Walker, Tim Worrell, Rick White, and Dave Veres combined to pitch 80 innings, save eight games, and post a miniscule 1.91 ERA. Eric Young (.336 avg, 13 steals) and Cristian Guzman (.295 avg, 12 steals) have formed one of the more pesky middle infields around. Jose Cruz Junior and Craig Paquette each hit 6 homers, tied for the team lead. And there's no telling how well things could have been had sluggers like Tony Clark (.167) and Cliff Floyd (.169) managed to hit their weight!

4. Box City (8-20): What has happened to our back-to-back champs? Their 5.29 ERA (good for 11th) tells part of the story. No Parcelman starter posted an ERA below 4.50, and three (Harnisch, Halama, and Alex Fernandez) posted ERAs above six. Offensively, Mike Sweeney (.359-8-23) and Jim Thome (.280-7-21) carried much of the load. Budding star shortstop Miguel Tejada only hit .250, and committed 9 errors. Ouch! Kenny Lofton hit .256 with 9 steals, providing a mild threat at the top of the order.

American League West

1. Minnesota Mudcats (16-12): With such high hopes entering the season, one could contend that 16-12 to start the month is a disappointment. Still, the 'Cats sit tied atop their division, despite putting up some pretty ordinary numbers. Their team ERA of 4.20 ranked 7th leaguewide, as did their .272 average. Mike Hampton (3-2, 2.70) earned his big bucks with a fine April, as did Daryl Kile (2-1, 2.17), even though he clearly did not get much support from his teammates. Andruw Jones (.358-6-24) led the offense, while stalwarts Alex Rodriguez (.261-6-23) and Brian Giles (.224-4-21) each struggled. Jason Giambi (.240-8-22) also struggled, possibly under the weight of his healthy paycheck. Odds are, all three of these stars will straighten out in the coming months.

2. Morris Monarchs (16-12) : Barry Bonds entered 2001 with a thing or two to prove, after his lackluster 2000 campaign. If April is any indication, Barry will be among the candidates for

league MVP. His .330-11-30-11 doubles spearheaded an exciting offense. Centerfielder Jim Edmonds also broke out in style, hitting .267-13-26. (His 13 homers ranked second to Vladimir Guerrero's 14). Tony Womack hit only .234, but his 14 steals leads the AL. Rookie Brian Tollberg (3-1, 2.30) was superb, as were Rolando Arrojo (4-2, 3.73) and Jesus Sanchez (3-1, 3.76). Curt Leskanic saved six games and won two others in his 10 appearances. Pedro Astacio and Jamie Moyer combined for an ERA close to 7.00 in their eleven starts. If they can get untracked, this team could be a factor.

3. Hessville Evereadys (14-14): It seems like finding enough quality arms has been this team's bugaboo for awhile now. April 2001 was no different. Though the team hit a solid .281 with 41 homers (they stole only 3 bases all month however), the pitching staff posted a league-worst 5.35 ERA. Frank Castillo, Shawn Estes, and Aaron Sele managed but 3 wins all month combined, though each kept their ERAs below five. Rob "the Vulture" Ramsay won 4 games out of the bullpen in April, while Cliff Politte emerged as the team's closer with 4 saves and a tiny 0.64 ERA. Ryan Rupe and Jimmy Haynes got absolutely torched in their 11 starts, and Dave Eiland gave up an amazing 29 hits in 13 innings. Golden Oldies like Andres Galarraga (.330-7-17) and Harold Baines (.329-5-11) lit up opposing hurlers, as did rookie Terrence Long (.279-7-18). Jeff Cirillo (led the team with 38 hits and 12 doubles.

4. Georgia Braves (12-16): Not the start the Braves envisioned, but when you rank 11th in hitting and 10th in pitching, you are going to struggle to win ballgames. Albie Lopez did his part, posting a 3-2 record and a fine 2.83 ERA in his 5 starts. Sid Ponson (2-1, 4.38 in 6 starts) also pitched well. As for Tim Hudson, well.....not good. 1-5, 7.15 are not numbers one would have attributed to the supposed staff ace. Olmaedo Saenz (.381-6-17) was the hitting star for April, though he only came to the plate 45 times! Travis Fryman (.293-6-21) and Dmitri Young (.330-3-18) also had nice months. Mike Cameron (.214) and Mark Kotsay (.235) must provide more sock out of the outfield spots however, if this team is going to compete with the likes of Minnesota and Morris.