

BRASSBALL LEAGUE

AMERICAN LEAGUE NEWSLETTER

September, 2001

Thanks to the wildcard and an up-for-grabs AL WEST, there were some interesting battles to watch this month. When the dust had cleared, the Toledo Mudhens had successfully held off the Outlaws from Santa Barbara, taking the West by five games. The Outlaws were able to salvage the 2nd wildcard spot, holding off divisional foe St. Croix by a scant one game. Georgia finished up a solid year three games off the pace. In the EAST, the Mudcats took the division by 20 games over Georgia, while in the Central Division, Cook County finished 22 games better than 100-game winner and first wildcard entrant, Plaza.

The Wildcard Series is set: Santa Barbara (89-73) will take on the Lions from Plaza (100-62) in what should be one heck of an offensive showdown. The Lions tied for the AL lead in team batting at .311, while the Outlaws finished at .299. The Outlaws come in with the edge in power, out-homering the Lions during the season 304-202. The Lions rate the edge in the pitching department, as their 4.75 team ERA ranked sixth in the AL, while the Outlaws finished 10th at 5.53. Both teams have speed to burn, as evidenced by their combined 333 stolen bases. Both teams also have legitimate MVP candidates. Plaza's Jeff Kent (.351-39-140) and Santa Barbara's Carl "Mr. Friendly" Everett (.321-41-127-27 steals) both played crucial roles in their team's success. The Lions boast twin 19-game winners in Tom Glavine and David Wells, while the Outlaws will rely heavily on ace Bartolo Colon (16-8, 4.55). Rob Nen (Outlaws) and Armando Benitez (Lions) ensure that both teams will place a premium on holding the lead late in the game. Despite the considerable edge Plaza had over the course of the year, winning 11 more games, this series should be a doozy. Anything less than 6 games will be a surprise. (Editor's Note: Plaza wins in seven!)

Overall, it was an exciting regular season. And while the playoffs are now ready to take center stage, let's take a final look at the 2001 season, on a team by team basis.....

American League Central

1. Cook County Maulers (19-3 in September, 122-40 overall, 64-17 at home, 58-23 away):

The Maulers enter the playoffs absolutely on fire. A perfect 11-0 home month, a first in franchise history, catapulted the Maulers to 122 wins, 15 more than they finished with last year. Vladimir Guerrero (.352-61-179) fell short in his quest for the Triple Crown, losing the batting title to Plaza's Luis Castillo (.361). Rookie Troy Glaus (.312-50-131) gave the Maulers two of the league's three 50+ home run hitters. All told, the Maulers had SIX regulars who hit 40 or more home runs. On the mound, Pedro Martinez finished up an amazing season, posting a 26-2, 1.87 mark. Pedro fanned 301 hitters in 226 innings, and had 9 complete games and 3 shutouts. He led the league in virtually every big pitching category. Chan Ho Park (21-7, 3.75) and Kevin Brown (16-5, 3.16) give the Maulers three aces to trot out there in the playoffs. Having led the AL in both hitting AND pitching, the Maulers have the talent to go all the way. Whether or not they peaked a month early with such a fine September remains to be seen.

2. Plaza Lions (10-12 in September, 100-62 overall, 56-25 at home, 44-37 away): A 3-8 road month surprised even the Lion's toughest critics, as it is hard to fathom this team losing 8 of 11 games during ANY stretch. Still, the Lions were one of only three AL teams to notch 100 wins, and they'll be a tough team to get past this October. Luis Gonzalez (.317-33-151) and Jeff Kent (351-39-140) form one of the most dangerous duos in the league. They've had plenty of opportunities to drive in runs, as leadoff hitter and AL batting champ Luis Castillo (.361, 90 steals) was on base constantly. Luis knocked in an amazing 65 runs from the leadoff spot, while banging

out 202 hits and scoring 138 runs. No leadoff hitter had a better year, in either league.

The Lions had five starters with 12 or more wins. No team allowed fewer bases on balls..... which should come as no surprise with pitchers like Glavine, Wells, Heredia, and Woody Williams.

Quite simply, aside from the lack of walks allowed, the Lions just don't beat themselves. Only division winners Toledo (82) and Minnesota (64) had fewer errors than the Lions (94). Watch out for this group. They could be the last "man" standing.

3. Iowa Rubes (7-15 in September, 80-82 overall, 42-39 at home, 38-43 away): A second straight poor month resulted in the Rubes falling below .500 after spending much of the year well above the break-even mark. Magglio Ordonez (.311-27-113) was the offensive leader in his first year with the Rubes. Todd Hundley (25 homers) provided some needed power from the catching position. Christian Guzman had one fine rookie season himself, posting 20 doubles, a league-leading 19 triples, 52 RBI and 39 stolen bases, all while playing a quality shortstop. Eric Young hit .298 with 55 steals, giving the Rubes a middle infield with 94 total stolen bases. Jose Mercedes (14-4, 4.23) was the club's most consistent starter, though Kris Benson (13-13, 4.47, 6cgs) had a steady if unspectacular year himself.

4. Box City (8-14 in September, 57-105 overall, 33-48 at home, 24-57 away): Whatever COULD go wrong in the pitching department DID go wrong in 2001 for Box City. Five Mailmen pitchers finished with double-digit loss totals, with ERAs above six. In fact, only veteran hurlers Mike Morgan and Jeff Shaw finished the year with an ERA below five. Too bad. The Parcelmen had a fine offensive team. Mike Sweeney (.318-27-97) was the team's most consistent hitter, though Ray Lankford (.286-28-78) and Miguel Tejada (.280-32-108) had fine years as well. After winning the League Championship the past two years, another city will have a chance in 2001.

American League West

1. Toledo Mudhens (12-10 in September, 94-68 overall, 59-22 at home, 35-46 away): The 'Hens didn't do anything exceptionally well this year.....they just did a lot of different things well. Consistent pitching, timely hitting, good defense, and some team speed were the recipe for a 94-win season and an AL West crown. Only two teams posted worse road records during the course of the season, so it will be interesting to see if they can break that pattern in the postseason. Gary Sheffield will be the key to any hopes for postseason success. Gary (.336-39-129) was the one true force in the lineup, and he'll need some help in the playoffs. Mike Lowell (.263-21-83) and Jeromy Burnitz (.249-27-88) do lend some additional pop, while Eric Owens (46 steals) and Miguel Cairo (51) serve as team waterbugs.....scooting all over the basepaths. Trevor Hoffman (35 saves) and Bob Wells (9-4, 3.36) lead an excellent bullpen, which may be called into service quite a bit in October. No Mudhen starter with over 25 starts had an ERA below five. Kerry Wood (11-5, 5.13) and Denny Neagle (12-8, 5.15) did provide some stability however, and Kelvim Escobar (12-4, 4.51) was valuable in a swing role, though he scuffled in the second half of the year. If Plaza takes out the Outlaws in the wildcard round, the Mudhens will board a flight to Cook County to face the Maulers. If Santa Barbara wins, they'll face off with Minnesota. Either way, the Mudhens have their work cut out for them.

2. Santa Barbara Outlaws (10-12 in September, 89-73 overall, 50-31 at home, 39-42 away): The Outlaws couldn't overcome the Mudhens, but they're in the "dance" all the same. Garrett Anderson (.312-42-122), Mo Vaughn (.268-40-110), and Carl Everett (.321-41-127) give the Outlaws three 40+ home run hitters. Add in Ventura (38), Javy Lopez (34), and Raul Mondesi (31), and you have one powerful lineup. And what of the year Delino Deshields had?? Delino hit .327, drove in 95 runs, hit 40 doubles and stole 51 bases!! Aside from 16-game winner Bartolo Colon, Orlando Hernandez and Darren Dreifort each won 14 games themselves, though they were both erratic throughout the year. Rob Nen (50 saves, 2.04 ERA) was one of the most

dominant pitchers in the league this year, while Danny Graves (87 innings, 2.99 ERA) posted great numbers in a setup role. The Lions will be a firm test, but these Outlaws are playoff tested, and have the offense to do some damage this postseason.

3. St. Croix Rivermen (11-11 in September, 88-74 overall, 42-39 at home, 46-35 away): The young talent of the Rivermen came of age to a certain extent in 2001, posting their best record ever. 88 wins and just narrowly missing the playoffs are definitely something that can be built upon, as the Rivermen continue to cultivate good young talent. Manny Ramirez (.286-45-107) was once again the team's primary offensive weapon. However, Ben Grieve (.305-32-103) and Eric Chavez (.284-29-96) had fine years also. Luis Alicea (.318-8-64) had a great year also. Kevin Millwood (18-8, 3.31), James Baldwin (12-10, 4.39), and Kirk Rueter (15-12, 4.85) each had nice years too, and Jason Istringhausen (30 saves) had a much more consistent year as closer, after finishing 2000 with an ERA over five.

4. Brooklyn Bulldogs (11-11 in September, 84-78 overall, 47-34 at home, 37-44 away): Easily the biggest surprise of the season, the Bulldogs somehow managed to finish in last place despite having arguably as good a pitching staff as anyone. Greg Maddux (20-10, 2.30 ERA) and Andy Pettitte (16-8, 3.83) anchored this fine staff, and Garrett Stephenson (11-16, 4.54) pitched pretty well but in tough luck all year. Rookie Kaz Sasaki (32 saves) led a fantastic bullpen which also included Gabe White (7-5, 2.25) and Jose Paniagua (3-2, 3.78). Offensively, Dog of the Year candidate David Justice (.221-34-77) was a major disappointment, and a major part of the reason this team had trouble scoring runs. Still, Darin Erstad (.330-16-89-20 steals) and Roberto Alomar (.310-15-78-22 steals) had all-star years. Tino Martinez and Dean Palmer each hit 23 homers, though neither drove in 80 runs or hit above .260. End result: The 'Dogs scored 119 FEWER runs than ANY OTHER team in the AL.

American League East

1. Minnesota Mudcats (15-7 in September, 106-56 overall, 50-31 at home, 56-25 away): The Mudcats finished off a fine regular season with a fine 15-7 September. Where do you start with this bunch? How bout this: They had SIX 100+ RBI men in their everyday lineup. Brian Giles (.282-32-150) ranked third in the AL in RBI, while slugging firstbaseman Jason Giambi (.306-53-123) ranked 2nd in homers. Andruw Jones (.294-37-121) led the team with 204 hits. Additionally, in the walks category, four of the top seven "walkers" are in this lineup (Giambi-157, Giles-124, A. Rodriguez-112, Posada-109). With the power and plate discipline this team exhibits, it's no wonder they finished second to Cook County in ALL of BRASSball in the "runs scored" department. On the mound, the Mudcats sported two 20-game winners and a 19 game winner. Kevin Tapani (20-6, 3.78) and Esteban Loaiza (20-9, 5.74) each reached the 20-win landmark, while Mike Hampton (19-7, 3.81) came up just short. Darryl Kile (17-12, 4.36) could have reached the 20-win mark as well with a little more run support. The bullpen is solid, though it lacks a true closer. Matt Morris saved 28 on the year, but his 5.87 ERA is disconcerting entering the playoffs. Gee.....talk about finding a flea on an elephant's butt!!!

2. Georgia Braves (9-13 in September, 86-76 overall, 42-39 at home, 44-37 away): The Braves hung onto second place in the division, and finished just three games out of the playoffs. All in all, a fine year for this up and coming club. Albie Lopez (15-9, 3.96) and Tim Hudson (15-12, 4.49) were excellent at the top of the rotation, while Keith Foulke and Jason Christiansen formed an dynamic left-right duo out of the pen. Dmitri Young (.314-27-106) had a great offensive season, and Derrek Lee (.309-32-86) backed him up nicely in the lineup. Mike Cameron had a nice 20-20 season, and Travis Fryman hit .300 with 98 RBI. There is a lot to like about this club's future. Keep an eye on them heading into next year.

3. Hessville Evereadys (11-11 in September, 76-86 overall, 41-40 at home, 35-46 away): Pitching was the bugaboo once again for the Evereadys, en route to their third place finish. Jimmy Haynes (12-12, 5.39) led the team in wins, and only Aaron Sele (10-11, 4.90) joined Haynes with double-digits in that category. Josias Manzanillo was a nice surprise out of the bullpen, saving 35 games on the year. Jeff Cirillo was the offensive spark for the team, knocking out 210 hits (4th in the AL), and an amazing 62 doubles (led league). “Ol Graybeard” Andres Galarraga (.333-34-117) proved he still had a little gas left in the tank also. Rookie Terrence Long (.311-25-89) had a great season as well.

4. Morris Monarchs (9-13 in September, 71-91 overall, 37-44 at home, 34-47 away): Though they started the year like a house afire, the Monarchs limped past the finish line like a three-legged horse. Barry Bonds (.279-46-122) was one of the team’s few bright spots, at least after the trade of slugger Jim Edmonds. Shortstop Tony Womack ranked second in the league with 63 steals, but scuffled with a .229 average. On the hill, Curt Leskanic saved 19 games out of the bullpen, while Elmer Dessens (9-7, 4.59) served as the team’s best starter in his rookie season. Not much else good to report here. Tough year in Morris.

CHANGE AT THE TOP

As you are all aware, this is my final newsletter submission as L.D. I just wanted to take a moment to thank those of you who took the time to chime in with a “thanks” or other kind words about the league. One of the main reasons I’ve spent the last seven years as LD/Commissioner of BRASSball is to ensure this league is (and remains) enjoyable to others. It’s nice to hear that is still the case.

I’m very excited about our new LDs and the energy I know they’ll bring with them. I think BRASSball has another 7 years left, at the **very minimum**. With the group of owners we have, I think even brighter days are ahead for the league. I’m looking forward to remaining a part of it.

TRADES

1. Metropolis trades Jason Johnson and Desi Relaford to Gem City for Luke Prokopec and Brad Wilkerson.
2. Wauwatosa trades Alfonso Soriano and their 2002 third-round draft pick to Cook County for Justin Morneau and Hank Blalock.
3. Santa Barbara trades John Burkett and the SB #4 (2002) to Stanley for Ted Lilly, Wes Helms, and SS #4 (2003).
4. Minnesota trades Darryl Kile to Gem City for Gem City's 2002 2nd and 4th round draft choices.
5. Minnesota trades David Weathers to Stanley for Stanley's 2002 3rd round draft choice and

\$300K.

6. Racine trades Phil Nevin to Ocala for Kris Wilson and Juan Encarnacion.

FINES

Cook County is fined \$1.5 million for overusing John Wetteland.

MVP/CY YOUNG/ROY AWARDS

Enclosed are ballots for the 2001 post season awards. AL owners are to cast their votes for the three major categories, and return these ballots to Mark by October 25th. Voting is mandatory, and will count against your on time mailing record. (NL teams do not vote for AL awards) For your convenience, the following are those players eligible for the Rookie of the Year award.

PLAYER	AVG	HR	RBI	2B	3B	SB	AB	Hits
Agbayani--Toledo	0.301	7	66	17	3	7	365	110
Lowell--Toledo	0.263	21	83	36	0	1	520	137
Lee, Der--GA	0.309	32	86	22	0	0	414	128
Vidro--Hes	0.298	20	89	50	2	3	628	127
Long---Hes	0.311	25	89	28	6	3	521	162
Lugo---Cook Co	0.284	15	67	13	7	22	429	122
Glaus---Cook Co	0.312	50	131	56	2	18	596	186
Floyd--IA	0.283	16	68	29	0	9	368	104
Guzman C--IA	0.267	7	62	20	19	39	561	150
PITCHER	WINS	LOSSES	ERA	SAVES	IP	HITS	BB	Ks
Dempster--Brkln	8	16	4.76	0	223	219	104	189
Sasaki--Brkln	5	3	2.33	32	54	27	28	73
Walker, K.--IA	5	3	3.02	0	63	46	35	48