



# *BRASSball League News*

## *April 2004*

[www.brassball.org](http://www.brassball.org)

### **AL Report - April**

(AL Reporter – Robert Smith)

### **AL Notes**

<b>AL EAST Expanded Standings</b>							
	<b>W-L</b>	<b>GB</b>	<b>HOME</b>	<b>ROAD</b>	<b>Vs AL</b>	<b>Vs LH</b>	<b>1- RUN</b>
Bakersfield Rattlers	14-14	---	8-6	6-8	14-14	3-5	5-4
Moline Cutters	10-18	4	4-10	6-8	10-18	5-3	4-4
Hessville Everreadys	9-19	5	7-7	2-12	9-19	3-6	4-3
Minnesota Mudcats	6-22	8	3-11	3-11	6-22	2-7	1-8

At 14-14 the Rattlers are leading a division that struggled in April. The Rattlers are hitting only .223 as a team. AJ Pierzynski has been the one lone bright spot hitting .324 with a team high 21 RBI's. On the down side, what's wrong with Derek Lee (.196 BA) and Andruw Jones (.191 BA). As they go, so will Bakersfield. The pitching has kept the Rattlers in front so far. Tim Hudson has been brilliant with a 5-1 record and 2.55 ERA. Keith Foulke has been a workhorse in the pen posting 7 saves and a win in Bakersfield's first 28 games.

**AL BATTING: M. Ramirez, BOS .381, Grudzielanek, BOS .368, Lieberthal, TOL .352**

The Moline Cutters are off to a slow start but are within striking distance. Pedro Feliz has been a surprise with 9 HR and 23 RBI. Torii Hunter has contributed 5 HR and 25 RBI while batting only .245. The pitching staff has been disappointing so far. Rookie sensation Mark Prior has gotten off to a slow start going 0-3. He has posted decent numbers though, as his 3.61 ERA and 52 strikeouts would indicate.

**AL RBI: M. Ramirez, BOS 35, Giambi, OUT 35, Ortiz, TOL 27, A. Ramirez, BOS 27**

The Everreadys are struggling offensively. They are at the bottom of the league in both HR(17) and RBI(92). Rondell White has been one of the bright spots hitting .296 with 3 HR and 16 RBI. Craig Biggio remains solid with a .283 BA including 6 doubles and 6 SB. The pitching hasn't fared much better. Brian Anderson has pitched well though, posting a 2-2 record with a 3.52 ERA.

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**AL OBP: M. Ramirez, BOS .453, Giambi, TOL .436, Lieberthal, TOL .410**

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The Mudcats are at the bottom of the AL East, thanks in large part, to their league low .215 team batting average. Alex Rodriguez leads the Mudcats in almost every offensive category while hitting only .255. Mark Kotsay is the only player over .255..Kotsay is scorching the ball batting .338 in only 71 AB. The pitching isn't much better. Darren Dreifort leads the way with a 1-1 record and 2.70 ERA.

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**AL HITS: M. Young, PAR 43, M. Ramirez, BOS 40, Pierre, BUL 39, Anderson, OUT 39**

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<b>AL CENTRAL Expanded Standings</b>							
	<b>W-L</b>	<b>GB</b>	<b>HOME</b>	<b>ROAD</b>	<b>Vs AL</b>	<b>Vs LH</b>	<b>1- RUN</b>
New Hampshire	16-12	---	11-3	5-9	0-0	5-7	4-7
Cook County	12-16	4	6-8	6-8	0-0	4-9	1-2
Plaza Lions	10-18	6	4-10	6-8	0-0	3-8	2-4
Box City Parcelman	8-20	8	6-8	2-12	0-0	3-10	0-3

New Hampshire leads the way in the Central division thanks in large part to the middle of the lineup. Cliff Floyd leads the way with a .409 BA and 7 HR in only 66 AB. Jim Thome has contributed 8 HR and 24 RBI and a .315 BA while Magglio Ordonez is hitting .308 with 6 HR and 21 RBI. The pitching has been okay as Kenny Rogers has pitched to a 4-0 record with a decent 3.72 ERA. Reliever Mike Timlin has already pitched a whopping 37.2 innings while earning 4 saves.

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**AL HR'S: M. Ramirez, BOS 13, Giambi, TOL 10, A. Ramirez, BOS 9, Feliz, MOL 9**

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The revamped Maulers are in 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the Central. Young players like Jason Phillips .329 with 14 RBI and Carl Crawford .280 with 11 steals are leading the way offensively. Veteran Carl Everett, whose days appear numbered in Cook County has 7 HR but only 11 RBI. The pitching has been the problem. The team ERA is a robust 5.98. Brian Fuentes has pitched well in relief posting a 1-0 record and 3.00 era in 21 innings of work.

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**AL RUNS SCORED: M. Ramirez, BOS 28, Thome, NWH 28, Cameron, RAT 23**

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The Lions are struggling with a 10-18 record so far in April. Offensively Preston Wilson has been a major disappointment hitting .283 with only 3 HR and 8 RBI. On the bright side Nick Johnson leads the team with 19 RBI and 4 HR. The Lions pitching hasn't been much better. The team ERA is a very high 5.89. Rookie Brett Myers hasn't been the problem as he has gone 2-1 with a respectable 3.77 ERA. Ben Sheets has been lit up to the tune of a 0-5 record with a 6.57 ERA.

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**AL STEALS: Pierre, BUL 13, Podsednik, BUL 12, Crawford, MAU 11**

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The Parcelmen have gotten off to a rough start pulling up the rear in the Central by going 8-20. Offensively Box City has some players as Michael Young is hitting .339 with 10 doubles. In the middle of the lineup Miguel Tejada .276 with 7 HR and 25 RBI and Raul Ibanez .291 with 7HR and 22 RBI have provided some spark. What's the problem then...the pitching has been bad. The team ERA is the 2<sup>nd</sup> worse in all of BRASSball with a 6.39 ERA. Brian Lawrence has been one of the main culbribs going a surprising 1-5 with a 7.65 ERA.

<b>AL WEST Expanded Standings</b>							
	<b>W-L</b>	<b>GB</b>	<b>HOME</b>	<b>ROAD</b>	<b>Vs AL</b>	<b>Vs LH</b>	<b>1-RUN</b>
Santa Barbara	18-10	---	9-5	9-5	18-10	3-3	5-6
Toledo Mudhens	18-10	---	10-4	8-6	18-10	3-5	2-5
Boston Rust	16-12	2	7-7	9-5	16-12	3-4	4-2
Brooklyn Bulldogs	10-18	8	5-9	5-9	10-18	1-6	5-7

Santa Barbara got off to a flying start in the tough AL West posting an 18-10 record. Offensively, Garret Anderson, who batted .333 with 8 HR and 35 RBI, led the Outlaws. Mike Lowell contributed 6 HR and 19 RBI to go with a .318 BA. Nomar Garciaparra surprisingly didn't smack one homerun but contributed with a .303 BA to go with 7 doubles and 3 triples. The Outlaws pitching has been dominant posting a league leading team ERA of 2.63. Leading the way is Roy Halladay with a 6-0 record and 2.52 ERA while old veteran Greg Maddux had a 4-0 record with a 2.43 ERA.

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**AL SAVES: Foulke, RAT 7, Kim, OUT 5, Reitsma, MAU 4**

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The Mudhens kept pace with the Outlaws in the Western division by also going 18-10. Jason Giambi walloped 10 HR to go with a .325 BA. Mike Lieberthal is among the league leaders with a .352 BA while David Ortiz has contributed 7 HR, 27 RBI and a .322 BA. The Mudhens pitching staff has been solid as well. Esteban Loaiza was 4-3 with a sparkling 2.72 ERA while rookie Ryan Franklin was even better posting a 4-1 record with a 2.45 ERA. Veteran Jamie Moyer was also sharp as he pitched to a 4-1 record as well.

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**AL APPS: Backe, TOL 17, Fuentes, MAU 16, Timlin, NWH 16**

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Boston has hung tough in the Western division primarily due to Manny Ramirez. Ramirez has been unconscious. If the season were to end in April, Ramirez would be your triple-crown winner as he led the league in HR with 13, RBI with 35 and hit .381. Also contributing offensively was Aramis Ramirez who belted 9 HR to go with 27 RBI. Kevin Millwood has led the Rust pitching staff with a 4-2 record and 3.86 ERA. Carl Pavano has also been solid with a 3-1 record and 3.00 ERA.

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**AL OPP/BA: Wood, BUL .141, Colon, OUT .173, Timlin, NWH .187**

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The Bulldogs are pulling up the rear in the Western division with a 10-18 record. Offensively speedsters Juan Pierre, .315 BA with 5 triples and 13 steals and Scott Podsednik, .302 BA with 26 RBI and 12 steals lead the attack. The team is second to last in BRASSball with a paltry 18 homeruns. The pitching staff has been okay. Kerry Wood has been dominating, as his no-hitter against Plaza would indicate. Wood was 4-1 in April with a 3.46 ERA. In 41.2 innings he has yielded only 19 hits while striking out 55.

**American League Player of the Month: Manny Ramirez**

**American League Pitcher of the Month: Kerry Wood**

NL News and Power Ratings: The season is off to a raging start and a couple of teams are desperate to make my prognostications look fallible. The surprise of the first month, is of course that rascal that I've never been able to spell, Charlevoix, who jumped out to a surprising 19-9 record. A record that would actually be the best in the much weaker AL. In fact, the early results show true NL dominance as they played to a cumulative .562 record.

The easily predicted battle between the juggernauts went as expected with both Ocala (23-5) and Metropolis (22-6) already distancing themselves from the rest of the teams in the NL. Eventually the NL will begin to play amongst themselves and even greater separation will result, but in the meantime eat heartily at the expense of the AL.

DRUM ROLL PLEASE .....

#### #1 Ocala (23-5) Predicted/Previous Week (#2/#2)

Ocala assumes the #1 ranking due to the simple fact that faced with identical opponents, they managed to eke out one additional win than their arch nemesis Metropolis. It still seems odd to be writing that Metropolis, the perennial cellar dweller, is anybody's arch nemesis, but what the heck. Ocala did everything right the first month and should continue to with their powerful offense. They managed a team average of .328, with three regulars hitting at a Williams-esque .400 or better. (Sheffield .407, Kendall .402 and Helton .400). Their efforts mask very productive starts by Boone .330 and Giles at .308. This is truly a powerful team, as illustrated by their 46 taters and while preying on AL pitching they covered their largest cosmetic glitch which is their pitching. Supported with a ridiculous 11 runs per game, Affeldt and Dubose went 10-1. Dubose is limited by innings so his Cy Young Start will end abruptly, but his first month's effort will count the same as if the wins came in September. The bullpen, an anticipated strength, had both good and bad to report, as both Hawkins and Quantrill were hit hard the first month and not one member of this vaunted bullpen managed an ERA under 3.00. Cormier became the defacto closer with five saves. The pen is likely an aberration, but the rotation will need to be addressed to stay ahead of Andy, unless Corey manages to have three .400 hitters at the conclusion of September.

#### #2 Metropolis (22-6) Predicted/Previous Week (#1/#1)

An outstanding month for Metropolis was only blemished by Ocala's slightly better start. Truly built for the pennant, this team did not disappoint, despite a sluggish start with the bats. Truly that has got to frighten the rest of the league and most certainly next month's victims in the AL, as they won 22 games batting just .263 as a team. The batting average is deceiving however as the team walked 134 times versus only 157 strikeouts. This on-base percentage support coupled with the 47 homeruns still allowed the team to average nearly six runs per game. The hitting was led by Jose Guillen (.310, 3HR and 10 RBI) and Jose Vidro (.300, 4HR and 22 RBI). But the walks coupled with the pop throughout the line-up resulted in contributions from everyone as eight different batters knocked in between 16-22 runs, while nine different hitters scored between 13-25 runs). Believe me, that is plenty of support when your composite ERA was 2.78. The staff was led by Rookie of the Year Webb and his absolutely stupid 0.92 ERA, 4-0 start and allowing of just 6.46 base runners per nine innings. His fine start was augmented by the usual suspects, Pedro (3.07, 57K's and 4-1), Jason Schmidt's (3.06, 50K's and 4-1) and Hideo Nomo's (3.76, 40K's and 3-2). Much like Ocala, they benefited by a nice effort by a limited usage player in Tony Armas (1.97, sub 1.00 Whip and 3-0). The bullpen arms of Dotel and Wagner pitched over 26 innings without giving up even an unearned run. Scariest part yet, though is that the most dominant card in the set (Eric Gagne) was human, with 6.00 ERA and just 3 saves despite the 22 team wins. With the bats cold and a couple of disappointing

starts in the Pen (Worrell and Gagne), this team is truly frightening, as little went better than expected or even as expected, yet they amassed 22 wins.

### #3 Glen Allen (20-8) Predicted/Previous Week (#4/#4)

Glen Allen moves up a notch, just edging out previous #3 Stanley. The team's success was found with stellar hitting with a .307, 42HR, and 7.7 runs per game averages. The big bats were Pujols (.336, 12HR, 33RBI) and Dmitri Young (.291, 11HR and 36RBI). Lost in the glow of these two was an outstanding effort by Roberts (.320, 14 runs, 5 steals and nine walks in part time usage). Not a lot of pitching would be needed to win 20 games with these batsmen, but Zito (3.15 and 5-0), Clemens (4-1) and Hampton (4-1) produced solid efforts. The cumulative 4.27 ERA may well be an ominous sign for this team, as this is fine against the worst of the AL, but it will certainly lead to a plummet against the NL. A tenuous #3 here with needed pitching being clearly seen as the potential Achilles heel.

### #4 Stanley (16-12) Predicted/Previous Week (#3/#3)

Stanley fell one spot in the ratings, but looked poised to battle strongly to be the best team not named Ocala or Metropolis. 6<sup>th</sup> best pitching with a 3.93 ERA allowed for the record and the maintaining of the #4 slot. But the pitching has to get better, as the numbers for the core of these stud starters were less than stellar individually. Kevin Brown (5.82, 3-3, 29K's), Williams (5.29, 4-2, 21K's), Piniero (4.30, 0-2 and 21K's) are all off to sluggish starts. Gil Meche appears to be a solid addition (2.97, 2-1 and 15K's). The pen was solid with King, Hasegawa (Six Saves), Carter and Ayala all posting solid ERA's. The hitting was average at best and will require an upgrade for this team to challenge the big guns. J. Lopez (.267, 8HR and 21RBI's) and C. Jones (.327, 4HR and 12RBI) led the way and will surely improve as the season grows older. Eight stolen bases in thirteen attempts and the cumulative batting average of .247 will need to be addressed, but the likely turnarounds by Brown, Williams, and Piniero should ensure that they play meaningful games all season.

### #5 Springfield (16-12) Predicted/Previous Week (#5/#5)

Springfield stays the course at #5 and hangs right with Bloomington as predicted. A .278 BA and 38 HR's were respectable and allowed for the team to remain near the top of the standings. The team was outstanding on the base paths, 15 of 17, and showed good extra-base ability with 103 in 28 games. Key hitters for month one were- MVP candidate Bagwell (.380, 10HR, 24 RBI and 16 walks), Edgar (.308, 8HR, 29RBI and 16 walks) and Blalock (.357, 4HR and 15RBI). The pitching was led by some solid efforts out of the pen, but the pitching was and projects to remain mediocre without some moves. Embree, Levine and Ryan pitched 30 quality relief innings, giving up 8 runs and just three homeruns. The rotation actually pitched to their abilities, but that does not bode well if they are to even think of a leap into the fray with the big dogs of the NL. Mulder (5-1 with a 4.46 ERA) led the way. Washburn (2-1 with a 4.33 ERA), Redman (2-3 with a 4.35 ERA) Lohse (2-3 with a 4.70ERA) and Ortiz (1-2 with a 5.02 ERA).

### #6 Bloomington (16-12) Predicted/Previous Week (#6/#6)

How did they manage to win 16 games, remain #6 and overcome their opposition? The numbers do not speak to the heart of this team and their miraculous 8-1 record in one run games and 3-0 record in extra frames. Bottom line: If you get a lead on these Cinderella's you better put them away. They hit .258 and averaged 4.6 runs per game, while they were outscored by over a run per game by the opposition. Soriano is the early team MVP (.308,

6HR, 20RBI and 11SB). While professional hitters Rodriguez (.287, 5HR and 23RBI) and Suzuki (.292, 8HR, 22RBI and 8SB) helped with clutch hitting. The pitching produced a less than stellar 5.54 era, so what went right. Mariano Rivera and a team built to steal bases. Mariano pitched in half of the games and saved eight of the sixteen wins. He and dependable starts from Padilla (3-2 and 4.58ERA) and Sabathia (2-2 with a 4.71 ERA).

#### #7 Gem City (15-13) Predicted/Previous Week (#9/#9)

It's all about the pitching!! Month one was a renaissance from some unlikely sources. Armando Benitez finished with a sub 1.00 ERA and 4 saves. The team managed a cumulative 3.95 ERA that was largely bolstered by fine efforts from the pen (Kershner, Isringhausen and Loooper). Amazingly, R. Bauer managed to find his way into 15 games in relief and pitched incredibly in 36 innings(3.03 ERA). The rotation was surprisingly effective, but was primarily led by Ponson (3-1 with a 3.00 ERA). The renaissance was also seen on offense where Barry Larkin managed a superlative month (.326, 10RBI, 16 RUNS, 13 Walks). Reggie Sanders (.307, 7HR, 26RBI) was also essential in the winning month. Too many things went right here for this to be continued for very long, the team pitched over it's head, averaged an error per game and has virtually no team speed (7 steals in 11 attempts). Without moves this team has likely peaked, but it is amazing to see success squeezed out an AB, an out and one match-up at a time. Go Wolfpack!!

#### #8 Charlevoix (19-9) Predicted/Previous Week (#11/#11)

On a mission to show that predictions were flawed, Charlevoix should find even greater motivation in their being ranked below several teams that they, on paper, outperformed in April. How do three starters average ERA's in the 6.00 range and win 19 games? Offense baby, total offense. Glavine finished 2-1 in five starts despite a 7.40 ERA. Suppan went 4-2 with a 6.03 ERA. Only Meadows (4-1) and Leiter (4-1) had pitching numbers that supported their wins. Lopez, Adams and early Roloids relief man of the year Brad Lidge were dominant; especially Lidge with a 1.31 ERA and a league leading nine saves. The offense managed 137 extra-base hits and a combined .319 average. A lot of surprises here, as Mark Loretta thinks he plays for Ocala and hits .408 for the month. Shawn Green (.345, 9HR and 37RBI), Adrian Beltre (.312, 8HR and 18RBI) and Vlad (.379, 7HR and 21RBI) all had outstanding months. Effective platooning and solid match-ups are a tribute to the manager, but this cannot continue for six months without an influx of talent.

#### #9 North Georgia (13-15) Predicted/Previous Week (#7/#7)

The 4.64 ERA and the early struggles by dominant Smoltz (5.40 ERA) explain it all. A lot of room for gains here if their players just play close to their cards, as Redding (6.25 ERA), Lilly (4.98 ERA) and Nathan (4.50) can all do better. Amazingly, Bong was used for 20 of the 28 games in relief and managed to pitch in each of them ineffectively with a 7.02 ERA, giving of 7 dingers and allowing over 1.5 base runners per inning. His running out of usage alone should make for a brighter future for North Georgia. The offense was solid as expected ( .277 with 37 bombs ). These efforts were fortified with the production of Renteria (.311), Polanco (.308, 6HR and 21 RBI), Helms (.304, 8HR, 15RBI and 20 Runs) and Patterson (.294, 9HR and 25RBI). The hitters hitting a little over their heads compensated for the pitchers doing worse than expected which likely stipulates that this is a true gauge of this team's potential.

#### #10 Maine (12-16) Predicted/Previous Week (#8/#8)

The team hit .217 for the month, so twelve wins is pretty good and must be attributed to the pitching. No surprise here as the pitching provided a yeomen effort with a combined 3.86 ERA. D. May looks like Cy Young with a sparkling 1.09 ERA and a WHIP around .90, but with this offense he managed to go 2-1. Wolf went 4-2 with 3CG, illustrating that you need to stay around awhile in Maine to get a win with this anemic offense. Olerud gets an honorable mention with the stick as he did manage to hit .292 and to clog the bases like only he can with 16 walks. It could become a very long season for the Maine faithful, but the rumored late April sacrifices of live chickens could start some magic or at least get some added attendance from the animal rights activists. Truth has it that the players tried (but failed) to sacrifice them by hitting them with their bats, so no laws were broken or animals injured in the actual event.

#### #11 Port Richey (11-17) Predicted/Previous Week (#12/#12)

Question of the month: Did they play their way out of the 12 spot or did Fleetwood play their way into the 12 spot (Answer at the 7<sup>th</sup> inning stretch)? Joe Randa may have been the answer, at least for April, as he rocked with .309, 5HR and 25 RBI effort. Jody Gerut, rookie of the year candidate, had a nice start at .288, 4HR and 11RBI. .322, 4HR, 16 RBI and 19RUNS contributed by Encarnacion make him a likely team MVP, even if for but one month. The pitching was not good as expected with a combined 5.14 ERA and lacked depth. D. Oliver was a standout with 3-2 record and 3.31 ERA. Carrasco going 3-0 with a 3.58 ERA, while pitching in 21 of 28 games is to be lauded. Their no longer #12, so celebrate heartily Port Richey fans.

#### #12 Fleetwood (6-22) Predicted/Previous Week (#10/#10)

NL GM's are left pondering how one of their brethren managed to lose 22 games to the AL. Grim facts are that how could they win anymore with an ERA of 6.54 and team batting average of .238. I see a season long battle here between this team and Port Richey, but not much else on the horizon. The team has solid building blocks in Abreu (.330, 18 walks and 16 runs) and Giles (.297, 3HR and 14 Runs). The pitching staff should see better results from Seo (1-3 with 5.94 ERA) and Penny (2-4 with a 5.60 ERA).

**National League Player of the Month: Gary Sheffield**

**National League Pitcher of the Month: Barry Zito**

### **Statistician Wanted: Apply Now**

Dave Little has decided to resign his post as League Statistician, effective immediately or until a viable replacement is found. If you have interest in this position, let me know. Be sure to elaborate on your experience / abilities. In other words, explain the things that will make you an asset in this position.

On a side note, I am not eager to see Dave resign. He has done an excellent job as the statistician. Words cannot begin to describe how well he has handled this job. At least Dave is remaining in the league. That is a plus. (Well, until he pulls a Metropolis and starts competing for the NL West division. ☺)

### **E-Mail Change**

Joal Kjarsgaard's e-mail address has changed. His new e-mail address is joalk@sbcglobal.net.

## Trades

71. Metropolis trades Pat Burrell to Maine for Maine's 2005 2<sup>nd</sup> round draft choice and 2006 1<sup>st</sup> round draft choice.

## Upcoming League Deadlines

### **May 15**

#### May Home Series Results deadline

Series results for May are due to home opponents, League Statistician and Backup Statistician.

#### June Trade deadline.

Trades must be reported to the LD by this date to be effective for June.

### **May 25**

#### June Rotation deadline.

Starting pitcher rotations for June games due to the LD.

#### June Road Instructions deadline.

Instructions (HAL) for June games are due to road opponents.

## League Membership Articles

Al Telgenhof, Jim Clark and Dave Little have submitted articles for this month. The articles from Al and Jim are below. You can read Dave's article at <http://pages.prodigy.net/drlittle/gem404.html>.

## TIGERS OFF TO HOT START

The Charlevoix Tigers are off to a blazing start, especially relatively speaking as last year's 60-102 cellar dwellers are 18-7 and in a strange position—division contender.

“We thought the off-season acquisitions would help us,” general manager Al Telgenhof said. “But we had no illusions that we are where we need to be to compete in this league. This first month has been great, but it's still just the first month.”

The winter brought both MVPs from last season, Shawn Green and Vladimir Guerrero, to Charlevoix. Green, the NL winner, came via free agency while Guerrero, the AL MVP, came over in a trade with Cook County.

Guerrero has been hobbled by injuries in the early going, but was still hitting .382 with 7 HRs in his first 55 ABs. Green has picked up where he left off last season, going 9-36-.347 in 25 games.

Mark Loretta is also off to a great start, batting .421 and scoring 27 runs in 25 games. The Tigers are hitting .321 as a team.

Even more encouraging is the pitching staff's 3.98 ERA in the league's smallest bandbox, a vast improvement over last year's 6.98 season mark.

Rookie Brad Lidge was handed the closer's job in spring training after the Tigers were unable to land a proven commodity and he's blossomed, posting seven saves and an 0.53 ERA in April.

Newcomer Al Leiter is 4-1 with a 3.48 ERA and the surprise thus far has been Brian Meadows who won the 5<sup>th</sup> starter spot in spring training and is 4-1 with a 2.96 ERA.

Can the magic continue?

“There are a lot of encouraging signs but time will tell,” Telgenhof said. “We were thinking we're a couple of years away from contention but in baseball, you never know.”

## Glen Allen Off to Great Start

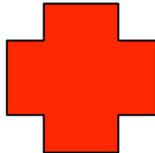
Mets almost unbeatable at the Yard lost only three games and just five on the road. Hitters slugged 42 home runs lead by Pujols 12 and Young 11. Zito 5-0 to lead pitchers and Clemens and Hampton each 4-1. Only three hitters have averages below .280 while only two pitchers have ERA above 4.25.

Manager Clark has instructed his troops not to get too overconfident. "Remember this is not a sprint, but a marathon. We are only one game ahead of the Tigers, who also have a very good team. We need to stick to our fundamentals, tighten our defense and keep playing as a team."

Bench coach Mike Stanley, although pleased so far sees room for improvement. "McLemore has had a rough start, not hitting or fielding very well. Vazquez has been ok in the field but is not hitting where he should and with the great start by Cora has fallen down on the depth chart. Segui had solid spring but looks like he left it all in Florida; maybe the warmer weather will help him.

Jimmy Key the pitching coach also noted several problems. "The walk to strike out ratio is not where it should be. We also do not put have over areas that need work which I am not at liberty to disclose since they are under investigation." He sounded more like a police detective than a coach, but that is just part of the job.

### *Injury Update*



Juan Rincon has developed shoulder tendonitis and will not pitch in May. Trevor Miller will take his place in the bullpen and provide another left-handed pitcher.

Ricky Ledee is on rehabilitation and hopes to be ready for June.

Runelvys Hernandez and Mike MacDougal have begun to throw and also hope to return in June.

### Bottom Feeders Have Great Month

The guys on a team's bench develop a bond because they usually sit together to watch the game while the starters get the credit. When they get an opportunity to fill in, they will bat in the bottom third of the lineup, hence the name. Vance Wilson the back up catcher and fisherman came up with the designation. "We know our roles on this team and just hope to contribute when give a chance." Vance has hit .400 in only 30 AB with 12 hits, 2 doubles, 1 HR and 10 RBI while providing solid defense behind the dish. Quinton McCracken made the squad as the #5 outfielder for his defensive ability, but is hitting a nice .360. Alex Cora was signed in the off-season to be a backup infielder as a defensive replacement. He has played fine defensively at shortstop and is hitting .323 in 62 AB. Ramon Vazquez left Florida as the #1 SS, but as the second month begins Cora has moved into that role.

### 95%

*The Mets have only been thrown out one time in twenty attempted stolen bases. Mookie Wilson had a career known for his base running and was all smiles about the teams success so far, "We are just doing great! We pick our spots and will not run when the game is out of reach just to pad our stats. A few guys have the eternal red light, but we have seven guys with stolen bases. As long as we finish above 80% I'll be happy."*