

# 2007 International League Preview



## International League North Division

### Buffalo Bisons

**Year in IL (Buffalo, NY):** 93<sup>rd</sup> **Record:** 6,810-6,364 **Affiliate:** Cleveland Indians **Last Governors' Cup:** 2004

**2006 Finish:** 73-68, third in North (-10.5)

**Manager:** Torey Lovullo (2<sup>nd</sup> year) Career – 5 yrs. 397-302

**Coaches:** Dave Myers (1<sup>st</sup> year); Scott Radinsky (1<sup>st</sup> year)

**Stadium:** Dunn Tire Park (18,150)

**Probable Starters:** 1B – Ryan Garko; 2B – Hector Luna; 3B – Jake Gautreau/Keith Ginter; SS – Joe Inglett; C – Mike Rose; LF – Ben Francisco; CF – Franklin Gutierrez; RF – Brad Snyder/Shin-Soo Choo/Jason Cooper; DH – Trent Durrington/Ryan Mulhern.

**Key Pitchers:** *Starters* – RH Adam Miller, RH Brian Slocum, LH Jason Stanford, RH Jake Dittler, LH Rafael Perez. *Relievers* – RH Edward Mujica, LH Tony Sipp, RH Tom Mastny, RH Mike Koplove.

**Top Prospects:** RHP Adam Miller had a great 2006 campaign with Double-A Akron, going 15-6 with a 2.75 ERA and 157 strikeouts in 154 innings. He was a first round draft pick by Cleveland in 2003...OF Brad Snyder led Akron in home runs (18) and RBI (72), but also had 158 strikeouts. He was also a first round draft pick in 2003...OF Ben Francisco enjoyed a 25-game hitting streak last year, a season in which he was named Buffalo's MVP after hitting .278 with 17 HR and 59 RBI.

**Other Organizational Prospects:** Trevor Crowe is a speedy outfielder who hit .318 last year at Class-A Kinston...OF Brian Barton had a fine 2006 season, combining to hit .323 with 19 home runs between Kinston and Double-A Akron...Asdrubal Cabrera is a slick fielding shortstop who spent the second half of 2006 with the Bisons. At the start of 2007, Cabrera might be nosed out of Triple-A by the losers of the battle for Cleveland's utility infielder role.

**Veterans to Watch:** Ben Francisco and Franklin Gutierrez are a great outfield combination that can hit for power, average, and can steal bases. Last year the pair stole 38 bases and blasted 26 home runs for the Bisons...Ryan Garko drove in 45 runs in 50 Major League games last year, but may start 2007 back in Triple-A to complete his conversion from a catcher to a first baseman. If he does make the Indians, several Bisons currently slated for DH or OF may be in line to take the first base job. That turn of events could also open up a spot on the club for 38-year-old veteran Alan Zinter.

**Items of Interest:** Since becoming an affiliate of the Cleveland Indians in 1995, the Bisons have made the postseason 9 out of 12 years (missing it only in 1999, 2003, 2006)...Torey Lovullo returns for his second season as manager. He's the only Buffalo Baseball Hall of Famer to return to manage the club...This year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> season at Dunn Tire Park, something that will be celebrated all season long in Buffalo. The facility opened on April 14, 1988, and later that summer hosted the first Triple-A All-Star Game.

**Strengths of the Club:** The starting rotation should be one of the best in Triple-A, even without Fausto Carmona. Carmona will start the year in the Indians' rotation, filling in for Cliff Lee while he's injured. Carmona may be back in Buffalo early in the season...RHP Edward Mujica, LHP Tony Sipp, and RHP Tom Mastny will all compete for the role of closer with the Bisons...There is potentially a lot of power in the Buffalo lineup. Ben Francisco, Brad Snyder, Ryan Mulhern, Ryan Garko, Shin-Soo Choo, Jason Cooper, and Keith Ginter all have the ability to go deep often.

**Weaknesses of the Club:** The biggest concern to start the season is probably Buffalo's defense, particularly up the middle. Joe Inglett is coming off of a hamstring injury, while Hector Luna made eight errors in Major League camp before he was optioned this spring.

### Ottawa Lynx

**Year in IL (Ottawa, ONT):** 20<sup>th</sup> **Record:** 1,255-1,473 **Affiliate:** Philadelphia Phillies **Last Governors' Cup:** 1995

**2006 Finish:** 74-69, fourth in North (-10.5)

**Manager:** John Russell (2<sup>nd</sup> year) Career – 9 yrs. 611-579

**Coaches:** Rod Nichols (3<sup>rd</sup> year); Sal Rende (4<sup>th</sup> year)

**Stadium:** Lynx Stadium (10,332)

**Probable Starters:** 1B – Randall Simon; 2B – Carlos Leon; 3B – Brennan King; SS – Joey Hammond; C – Jason Jaramillo; LF – Chris Roberson; CF – Michael Bourn; RF – Ron Calloway; DH – Lou Collier.

**Key Pitchers:** *Starters* – LH Brian Mazone, LH J.A. Happ, LH Eude Brito, RH Zach Segovia, LH Fabio Castro. *Relievers* – RH Brian Sanches, RH Joe Bisenius, RH Talley Haines, RH Ryan Cameron, LH Jim Crowell, RH Kane Davis, RH Jeff Farnsworth.

**Top Prospects:** LHP J.A. Happ had a 2.69 ERA over three Minor League levels last season. The 24-year-old lefty has impressed at his first Major League camp this spring with Philadelphia...OF Michael Bourn is a speed demon who has looked impressive this spring. Bourn will almost certainly see time with the Phillies at some point before the end of the season...RHP Zach Segovia went 16-6 between Class-A and Double-A last season, and also pitched for Team USA in the Olympic qualifier in Cuba...RHP Joe Bisenius got a long look from the Phillies this spring for a bullpen spot, despite the fact he has yet to pitch one game at the Triple-A level...C Jason Jaramillo is considered a possible catcher of the future in Philadelphia. An excellent defensive catcher, the 24-year-old Jaramillo has only played two games at the Triple-A level.

**Other Organizational Prospects:** OF Mike Spidale led the Class-A South Atlantic League with a .345 batting average last season. Spidale could conceivably work his way up to Triple-A in 2007...OF Javon Moran hit for an impressive average (.328) and added 20 stolen bases between Class-A and Double-A last season.

**Veterans to Watch:** LHP Brian Mazone is being counted on to be the anchor of the Lynx starting rotation. Mazone is coming off of an excellent 2006 season in which he led the International League in ERA (2.03) and finished second in wins (13)...1B Randall Simon has more than 500 Major League games under his belt. Last year he also played for The Netherlands in the World Baseball Classic...Outfielders Lou Collier and Ron Calloway are former members of the Ottawa Lynx. Both will be counted on to provide some offense and leadership to the lineup.

**Items of Interest:** 2007 marks the 15<sup>th</sup> season of Lynx baseball in Ottawa, and the first affiliated with the Philadelphia Phillies...The 54<sup>th</sup> win this season for the Lynx will be the 1,000<sup>th</sup> in team history...The 4<sup>th</sup> game of the season will be the 2,000<sup>th</sup> game in team history.

**Strengths of the Club:** Much of Philadelphia's Triple-A staff from last season, which led the IL in ERA, will be in Ottawa this season...Bourn and Roberson are burning up the basepaths this spring. Both have been known for their speed throughout their careers...Manager John Russell is the defending IL Manager of the Year. Hitting coach Sal Rende is a former Manager of the Year in the American Association (Omaha, 1990). Pitching coach Rod Nichols guided Scranton/Wilkes-Barre's staff to the top of the IL in wins, ERA, and saves in 2006.

**Weaknesses of the Club:** The biggest weakness for Ottawa would appear to come in the power department. Lynx Stadium is hardly a homer-friendly park, and none of the players expected to begin the season in Ottawa hit 20 home runs last season.

## International League North Division

### Pawtucket Red Sox

**Year in IL (Pawtucket, RI):** 35<sup>th</sup> **Record:** 2,364-2,456 **Affiliate:** Boston Red Sox  
**Last Governors' Cup:** 1984  
**2006 Finish:** 69-75, fifth in North (-16.0)  
**Manager:** Ron Johnson (3<sup>rd</sup> year) Career – 15 yrs. 1,048-1,047  
**Coaches:** Mike Griffin (5<sup>th</sup> year); Mark Budaska (4<sup>th</sup> year)  
**Stadium:** McCoy Stadium (10,031)

**Probable Starters:** 1B – Luis Jimenez; 2B – Joe McEwing; 3B – Chad Spann;  
SS – Ed Rogers; C – George Kottaras; LF – Brandon Moss; CF – Dave Murphy;  
RF – Alex Ochoa; DH – Jeff Bailey.

**Key Pitchers:** *Starters* – LH Jon Lester, LH Kason Gabbard, RH Devern Hansack,  
RH David Pauley, LH Abe Alvarez. *Relievers* – RH Craig Hansen, LH Craig Breslow,  
RH Runelvys Hernandez.

**Top Prospects:** LHP Jon Lester rode the fast track to the big leagues until he was diagnosed with cancer last year. After making a complete recovery during the offseason, Lester showed signs in spring training of regaining the form that prompted Boston to promote him in the first place...RHP Craig Hansen was basically bumped from the Boston bullpen when Jonathan Papelbon was returned to the closer's role. For Hansen to find his role in the Boston bullpen, he'll need to display his command and control that has allowed him to average a strikeout per inning in his Minor League career....David Murphy displayed the ability to play all three outfield positions in his first full Triple-A season last year. He hit .305 in his first 31 games with Pawtucket, but just .245 in his last 53. Murphy hit his first Major League home run in September at Yankee Stadium...OF Brandon Moss was one of the key players for Portland's Eastern League Championship club in 2006. He earned playoff MVP honors by hitting .361 with 5 HR and 10 RBI.

**Other Organizational Prospects:** OF Jacoby Ellsbury was Boston's Minor League and Defensive Player of the Year in 2006. He hit .308 in 198 at-bats after being promoted to Double-A Portland...RHP Edgar Martinez saved 12 games and posted a 2.61 ERA in 49 appearances for Portland last season...RHP Clay Buchholz was 11-4 with a 2.42 ERA in 24 starts between Class-A Greenville and Wilmington last season, making a seamless jump from the South Atlantic League to the Carolina League. Buchholz is likely to begin the year with Lancaster of the California League.

**Veterans to Watch:** Speedy OF Kerry Robinson has Major League experience with the St. Louis Cardinals. Last year he played 100 games with Omaha of the Pacific Coast League, hitting .311 and swiping 17 bags...RHP Runelvys Hernandez was a starter last season, splitting time between Omaha and Kansas City.

**Items of Interest:** Manager Ron Johnson returns for his third season at the helm of the PawSox after guiding the club to an even 144-144 record during his first two campaigns.

**Strengths of the Club:** The starting rotation appears to be very deep. Runelvys Hernandez could slide in if a hole opens in the rotation...There's a nice blend of youth and experience in the outfield. Moss and Murphy are two of the brightest young prospects in the Boston system, while Ochoa and Robinson are both veterans of the Major Leagues.

**Weaknesses of the Club:** Coming out of the spring, the lack of speed looks to be Pawtucket's biggest weakness...There is also a question mark surrounding the infield defensively with 2006 IL postseason All-Star Dustin Pedroia ticketed for Boston.

### Rochester Red Wings

**Year in IL (Rochester, NY):** 120<sup>th</sup> **Record:** 8,762-8,303 **Affiliate:** Minnesota Twins  
**Last Governors' Cup:** 1997  
**2006 Finish:** 79-64, second in North (-5.5), won Wild Card, lost in Governors' Cup Finals  
**Manager:** Stan Cliburn (2<sup>nd</sup> year) Career – 13 yrs. 872-878  
**Coaches:** Stu Cliburn (2<sup>nd</sup> year); Rich Miller (4<sup>th</sup> year)  
**Stadium:** Frontier Field (10,840)

**Probable Starters:** 1B – Glenn Williams; 2B – Alexi Casilla; 3B – Matt Moses;  
SS – Tommy Watkins; C – Jose Morales; LF – Josh Rabe; CF – Denard Span;  
RF – Garrett Jones; DH – Matthew LeCroy.

**Key Pitchers:** *Starters* – RH Matt Garza, RH Scott Baker, RH Kevin Slowey,  
LH Dave Gassner, LH Glen Perkins. *Relievers* – LH Mike Venafro, RH Bobby Korecky,  
LH Jason Miller, RH Julio DePaula, RH Tristan Crawford, RH Jeremy Cummings.

**Top Prospects:** RHP Matt Garza was the 2006 USA Today Minor League Player of the Year, and should be the ace of an excellent staff in Rochester...LHP Glen Perkins was the Twins' top draft pick in 2004 and jumped from Double-A to the Major Leagues last season...RHP Kevin Slowey may have the best control in baseball, with 30 walks in 221 career innings...Alexi Casilla is a speedy, sure-handed second baseman who could take over for Luis Castillo in Minnesota next year...OF Denard Span is also speedy and a strong defensive player in center field.

**Other Organizational Prospects:** RHP Anthony Swarzak is yet another starting pitching prospect in the Twins' system. He was 11-7 with a 3.27 ERA at Class-A Fort Myers last year, leading the Florida State League with 131 strikeouts.

**Veterans to Watch:** OF Garrett Jones is trying to become the first Red Wing in franchise history to hit 20 or more homers in three straight seasons. He'll primarily play right field but will also see action at first base...SS Tommy Watkins is coming off of a great year and will start at Triple-A for the first time in his 9-year professional career.

**Items of Interest:** Rochester ended an eight-year playoff drought last season, coming within one game of capturing the Governors' Cup Championship...2007 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Red Wings becoming a community-owned team. The front office is performing 50 days of community service, ending on Opening Day (April 6)...The Red Wings will have five former big leaguers in town for autograph sessions this season including Boog Powell, Bobby Grich, Jim Kaat, Dennis Eckersley, and Chris Chambliss... After three seasons in Rochester, C Chris Heintz earned the last spot on the Minnesota roster this spring. That move opens the way for Jose Morales, the Red Wings' catcher during the 2006 playoffs, to open the 2007 season as the club's starting backstop.

**Strengths of the Club:** Without a doubt, the strength of the team is starting pitching. Garza, Perkins, and Slowey are three of the top pitching prospects in the Twins' system and could all see action in the big leagues this year. Baker won the IL ERA title in 2005 and Gassner won 16 games to lead the IL in 2004...The outfield also looks strong, with the power-hitting Jones moving from first base to right field. The speedy Span is a likely successor to Torii Hunter in Minnesota next year and 2006 Triple-A All-Star Josh Rabe is back for a fifth season with the Red Wings.

**Weakness of the Club:** The bullpen has several question marks. RHP Bobby Korecky was inconsistent as the closer last year after IL All-Star Pat Neshek was promoted to the Twins. LHP Ricky Barrett, a solid hurler, expects to start the season on the disabled list with an arm injury...Besides Jones, there's not a lot of power on the club this year.

## International League North Division

### Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Yankees

**Affiliate:** New York Yankees

**Year in IL (Scranton/WB, PA):** 19<sup>th</sup> **Record:** 1,305-1,268 **Last Governors' Cup:** None

**2006 Finish:** 84-58, North Champions (+5.5), lost to Rochester in Gov. Cup first round

**Manager:** Dave Miley (2<sup>nd</sup> year) Career – 16 yrs. 1,184-914

**Coaches:** Dave Eiland (1<sup>st</sup> year), Alvaro Espinosa (1<sup>st</sup> year), Butch Wynegar (1<sup>st</sup> year)

**Stadium:** PNC Field (10,310)

**Probable Starters:** 1B – Eric Duncan; 2B – Andy Cannizaro; 3B – Chris Basak;  
SS – Alberto Gonzales; C – Raul Chavez; LF – Kevin Thompson; CF – Kevin Reese;  
RF – Bronson Sardinha; DH – Shelley Duncan.

**Key Pitchers:** *Starters* – RH Philip Hughes, RH Tyler Clippard, RH Ross Ohlendorf, RH Darrell Rasner, RH Steven Jackson. *Relievers* – RH Justin Pope, RH Scott Patterson, RH Jason Jones.

**Top Prospects:** Widely considered to be the Yankees' top prospect, RHP Philip Hughes will make his Triple-A debut this season at the top of the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre rotation. Hughes has electric stuff, including a 95-mph fastball and a good changeup to compliment it. He's an overpowering pitcher...RHP Tyler Clippard went 12-10 last year at Double-A Trenton, with a 3.35 ERA and an amazing 175 strikeouts compared to 55 walks. Clippard has superb control and is able to consistently keep his pitches down in the zone...RHP Ross Ohlendorf won 10 games for Trenton in 2006, posting a 3.29 ERA and striking out 125 batters, compared to just 29 walks. Ohlendorf as a great fastball/changeup combination and remarkable control of all his pitches. He is definitely bound for the Major Leagues...1B Eric Duncan is a power hitting lefty who is still learning to play first base...SS Alberto Gonzales covers a lot of ground and is considered an excellent defensive shortstop.

**Other Organizational Prospects:** 1B Cody Ehlers won the Class-A Florida State League MVP Award last year after leading the circuit in total bases, RBI, extra-base hits, and doubles. He will start the year at Double-A Trenton as a 25-year-old...RHP Kevin Whelan was acquired from Detroit in the Gary Sheffield trade. Whelan has an above average fastball and splitter, and may be the heir apparent to Mariano Rivera as the closer for New York.

**Veterans to Watch:** 2B Andy Cannizaro had an outstanding camp this spring with the Yankees, on the heels of a .276 season last year at Triple-A...OF Bronson Sardinha is a Major League-level talent, stuck in an organization where he can't advance yet. He will be a free agent next year...

**Items of Interest:** After 28 years of affiliation with the Columbus Clippers, the New York Yankees will begin their new partnership with Scranton/Wilkes-Barre in 2007...The club's ballpark, now known as PNC Field, has converted to a natural playing surface for the first time...Dave Eiland joins Scranton/Wilkes-Barre as the pitching coach. Eiland tutored Hughes, Clippard, and Ohlendorf at Trenton in 2006...After spending most of the last five seasons in Triple-A, catcher Wil Nieves will begin this season as the backup catcher for the Yankees, opening a position for C Raul Chavez on the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre club.

**Strengths of the Club:** Scranton/Wilkes-Barre may boast one of the top pitching rotations in Minor League Baseball in terms of prospects. The top three hurlers (Hughes, Clippard, and Ohlendorf) all seem destined for the Major Leagues in the near future...Defensively, the Yankees will have a solid outfield.

**Weaknesses of the Club:** There seems to be a lack of consistent hitters on this club...There is also a clear lack of power. 1B Eric Duncan is the only true threat to hit a lot of home runs...While the starting rotation looks very strong, the bullpen appears mediocre at best.

### Syracuse Chiefs

**Affiliate:** Toronto Blue Jays

**Year in IL (Syracuse, NY):** 93<sup>rd</sup> **Record:** 6,225-6,728 **Last Governors' Cup:** 1976

**2006 Finish:** 64-79, sixth in North (-20.5)

**Manager:** Doug Davis (1<sup>st</sup> year) Career – 6 yrs. 382-331

**Coaches:** Rick Langford (2<sup>nd</sup> year); Al LeBoeuf (1<sup>st</sup> year)

**Stadium:** Alliance Bank Stadium (11,604)

**Probable Starters:** 1B – Kevin Barker; 2B – Russ Adams; 3B – John Hattig;  
SS – Sergio Santos; C – Curtis Thigpen; LF – Adam Lind; CF – Jeff Duncan;  
RF – Chad Mottola; DH – John-Ford Griffin.

**Key Pitchers:** *Starters* – RH Dustin McGowan, RH Josh Banks, RH Ismael Ramirez, RH Casey Janssen, RH Josh Towers. *Relievers* – RH Brandon League, RH Ty Taubenheim, RH Ryan Houston, RH Lee Gronkiewicz, RH Victor Zambrano, RH Geremi Gonzalez.

**Top Prospects:** OF Adam Lind is ranked by *Baseball America* as the Blue Jays' #1 prospect. Lind was MVP of the Double-A Eastern League last year, joining Carlos Delgado and Luis Lopez as the only players in Toronto history to win an MVP award for a Minor League team three times...C Curtis Thigpen is Toronto's #5 prospect. The Blue Jays believe Thigpen is their catcher of the future, even though he wasn't a catcher in college at Texas. Thigpen will work closely this year with manager Doug Davis, a former backstop.

**Other Organizational Prospects:** LHP Ricky Romero is ranked #3 on *Baseball America's* list of Toronto prospects. A first round draft choice from Cal State Fullerton in 2005, Romero will likely start the season at Double-A New Hampshire, where he posted a 2-7 record with a 5.08 ERA last season...RHP Jesse Litsch is also slated to begin the season in New Hampshire, where he went 3-4 with a 5.06 ERA in 2006...LHP David Purcey posted a 2-7 record with a 5.40 ERA in 12 starts for Syracuse last season. The 24-year-old will probably begin the season at Double-A, but should return to Syracuse before the year is out.

**Veterans to Watch:** OF/DH Chad Mottola enters his fifth season with Syracuse ranked third in franchise history with 83 home runs and 114 doubles. With an average season, he'll crack the top ten in games, at-bats, runs, hits, and stolen bases...OF/DH John-Ford Griffin was one of the IL's top rookies in 2005, but missed most of last season due to a shoulder injury. In 2005 he became the second 30 HR / 100 RBI player for Syracuse in the Blue Jays' era (along with Mottola)...RHP Dustin McGowan was once the top prospect in the Toronto organization. McGowan is back in Syracuse after Major League Baseball granted the Blue Jays another option year because he missed most of 2004 recovering from Tommy John surgery. McGowan remains the best pitching prospect in Syracuse.

**Items of Interest:** The team will once again be known as the "Chiefs", the club's name from 1934-1996...Manager Doug Davis was promoted from Double-A New Hampshire to replace Mike Basso. Davis, like his predecessors (Basso, Marty Pevey, and Omar Malave) has been highly successful in the lower Minor Leagues. Davis' clubs have won two championships in six years...LHP Jo Matumoto is a 36-year-old Brazilian hurler who was signed by Toronto as a free agent this spring. His wife sent an email to all Major League teams pleading for a tryout, and the Blue Jays signed him. Matumoto may begin the year in the lower Minor Leagues.

**Strengths of the Club:** The offense features Lind batting third, surrounded by the likes of Barker, Mottola, Griffin, Adams, and IL veteran Mike Vento. The Chiefs should score plenty of runs...Several players who would have made the Chiefs in years past will be sent to Double-A. Syracuse should be better equipped to handle players lost to Toronto...Of the projected starters, only Lind and Thigpen don't have extensive Triple-A experience.

**Weaknesses of the Club:** Many of the same players return from one of 2006's worst IL defensive teams. The Chiefs are not suited defensively for the turf at Alliance Bank Stadium...Second year pitchers McGowan, Janssen, and Banks need to make big strides if the Chiefs are to contend.

## International League West Division

### Columbus Clippers

**Affiliate:** Washington Nationals

**Year in IL (Columbus, OH):** 47<sup>th</sup> **Record:** 3,510-3,128 **Last Governors' Cup:** 1996

**2006 Finish:** 69-73, fourth in West (-7.0)

**Manager:** John Stearns (1<sup>st</sup> year) Career – 6 yrs. 377-404

**Coaches:** Steve McCatty (2<sup>nd</sup> year), Charles “Boots” Day (1<sup>st</sup> year)

**Stadium:** Cooper Stadium (15,000)

**Probable Starters:** 1B – Larry Broadway; 2B – D’Angelo Jimenez; 3B – Tony Batista; SS – Melvin Dorta; C – Juan Brito; LF – George Lombard; CF – Abraham Nunez; RF – Darnell McDonald; DH – Michael Restovich.

**Key Pitchers:** *Starters* – LH Mike Bacsik, LH Chris Michalak, RH Josh Hall, RH Pedro Astacio. *Relievers* – RH Emiliano Fruto, LH Bill Traber, RH Jesus Colome.

**Top Prospects:** RHP Emiliano Fruto is a 22-year-old hurler from Colombia. He went 2-2 with a 5.50 ERA in 23 relief appearances for Seattle last season, striking out 34 hitters in 36 innings...3B/OF Kory Casto was the Eastern League Rookie of the Year in 2006. The 25-year-old played third base but is being groomed for left field in the Major Leagues. Casto could make the Nationals this spring, as he is considered a top prospect ready to contribute every day in the majors...LHP Matt Chico, 23, is likely to make the Nationals as a fourth or fifth starter, but could very well see time in Columbus during the year.

**Other Organizational Prospects:** OF Roger Bernadina, a native of the Netherlands, hit .270 last year for Class-A Potomac...RHP Collin Balester reached Double-A Harrisburg at the end of last season, going 1-0 with a 1.83 ERA in three starts. Both he and Bernadina have a legitimate chance of making it to Triple-A sometime this season.

**Veterans to Watch:** RHP Pedro Astacio went 5-5 with a 5.98 ERA with Washington in 2006. The 37-year-old is 129-124 in his Major League career. His veteran arm could be insurance for the Nationals if some of their youngsters don't pan out. It's also possible Astacio's best days are behind him...1B Larry Broadway, 26, was expected to push for a starting job with Washington while Nick Johnson is injured. A lack of power in spring training means Broadway will return to Triple-A to begin the season...LHP Mike Bacsik, 29, was 11-0 for Triple-A Champion Tucson last season. After making 15 appearances out of the bullpen, Bacsik went 7-0 with a 2.85 ERA in 10 starts. He has posted a 5-5 record in 22 career Major League games.

**Items of Interest:** The biggest change in the offseason was the severing of relations with the Yankees after 28 years, signing a two-year affiliation agreement with Washington. The Clippers have incorporated the Nationals' red, gold, and blue on the lettering of their road gray uniforms and will wear an alternate blue jersey for some weekend home games. The traditional navy blue pinstripes will remain for all other home games...Huntington Park, the new facility in the Arena District of downtown Columbus, is now scheduled to open at the start of the 2009 season...2007 marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of Red Birds Stadium and the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the debut of the renovated Franklin County Stadium. The park is now known as Cooper Stadium...The new Columbus Sports Network is expected to televise at least 14 home games this season.

**Strengths of the Club:** Veterans! The Clippers should be loaded with Minor League experience, which could be good or bad. Many have a chance to help the Nationals, but the dog days of summer might drain their enthusiasm as the schedule plays out...The pitching staff is solid...There is plenty of power on the club...Defensively, the Clippers are strong up the middle with experienced players...There should be fewer promotions and demotions with Washington than Columbus experienced in the past with the Yankees.

**Weakness of the Club:** The Washington organization is not deep at the higher levels of the system, but should be stronger in a few years...Speed is lacking throughout the lineup...Many Clippers will be playing their first season in the IL, after the Nationals moved their Triple-A affiliate from New Orleans of the Pacific Coast League.

### Indianapolis Indians

**Affiliate:** Pittsburgh Pirates

**Year in IL (Indianapolis, IN):** 11<sup>th</sup> **Record:** 735-708 **Last Governors' Cup:** 2000

**2006 Finish:** 76-66, West Co-Champions, lost to Toledo in Governors' Cup first round

**Manager:** Trent Jewett (3<sup>rd</sup> year) Career - 13 yrs. 851-841

**Coaches:** Jeff Andrews (2<sup>nd</sup> year); Hensley Meulens (3<sup>rd</sup> year)

**Stadium:** Victory Field (14,500)

**Probable Starters:** 1B – Brad Eldred; 2B – Yurendell de Caster; 3B – Chris Truby; SS – Brian Bixler; C – Carlos Maldonado; LF – Vic Buttler; CF – Rajai Davis; RF – Adam Boeve; DH – Mike Edwards.

**Key Pitchers:** *Starters* – RH Bryan Bullington, LH Sean Burnett, RH John Van Benschoten, LH Shane Youman. *Relievers* – RH Jim Brower, RH Jesse Chavez, RH Mark Corey, RH Kevin Gryboski, RH Masumi Kuwata, RH Brian Rogers, RH Allan Simpson.

**Top Prospects:** SS Brian Bixler, a second round draft choice by Pittsburgh in 2004, owns a .289 batting average with 17 HR and 123 RBI in 318 career Minor League games. Last year, he was named to the Carolina League mid-season and postseason All-Star teams...RHP Bryan Bullington was the first player chosen in the 2002 draft. He returns after missing all of 2006 with an arm injury.

**Other Organizational Prospects:** OF Andrew McCutchen was a first round draft choice in 2005. He is likely to begin the 2007 season at Double-A Altoona, but appears to be on the fast track to the Major Leagues...Neil Walker, also slated to be the year in Altoona, is making the move from catcher to third baseman. He was Pittsburgh's first round draft pick in 2004.

**Veterans to Watch:** RHP Jim Brower is entering his 14<sup>th</sup> season as a pro. He has big league experience with Cleveland, Cincinnati, Montreal, San Francisco, Atlanta, Baltimore, and San Diego...RHP Mark Corey is entering his 13<sup>th</sup> professional season, which includes Major League experience with the Mets, Rockies, and Pirates. Corey was the Indianapolis closer in 2005...C Einar Diaz is entering his 17<sup>th</sup> season as a pro, having played in the big leagues with the Dodgers, Indians, Rangers, Expos, and Cardinals...3B Chris Truby also has big league experience with several teams (Houston, Montreal, Detroit, and Tampa Bay). Truby is entering his 15<sup>th</sup> professional season...RHP John Wasdin enters his 15<sup>th</sup> professional season, which includes big league experience with Oakland, Boston, Colorado, Baltimore, Toronto, and Texas...LHP Shane Youman pitched his way from Double-A Altoona to Pittsburgh in 2006, going 11-2 with a 2.29 ERA overall.

**Items of Interest:** Indianapolis has posted back-to-back winning seasons (78-66 in 2005; 76-66 in 2006) for the first time since 1999-2000. The 2005 Indians advanced to the Governors' Cup Finals, while the 2006 Tribe earned a share of the West Division crown (with Toledo).

**Strengths of the club:** Pitching appears to be a strength once again for the Indians in 2007. Last year the club was second in the IL with 48 saves, third in the IL with 14 shutouts, and fourth in the IL with a 3.55 ERA. In particular, the bullpen should be very solid...The Tribe boasts a lot of speed once again. Rajai Davis returns after stealing 45 bases. Overall in 2006, Indianapolis stole 180 bases to lead the IL...Trent Jewett's club should be solid defensively. Many of the same players return from a team that led the IL with a .982 fielding percentage.

**Weaknesses of the club:** The Indians need to find a consistent source of offensive production. In 2006 the Tribe placed 11<sup>th</sup> in the IL with 578 runs and 88 home runs. Hopefully 1B Brad Eldred regains his power stroke that saw him hit 40 homers in 2005 and 38 in 2004.

## International League West Division

### Louisville Bats

**Affiliate:** Cincinnati Reds  
**Last Governors' Cup:** 2001

**Year in IL (Louisville, KY):** 15<sup>th</sup> **Record:** 1,031-974

**2006 Finish:** 75-68, third in West (-1.5)

**Manager:** Rick Sweet (3<sup>rd</sup> year) Career – 17 yrs. 1,190-1,201

**Coaches:** Smokey Garrett (5<sup>th</sup> year); Ted Power (2<sup>nd</sup> year); Jay Sorg (3<sup>rd</sup> year)

**Stadium:** Louisville Slugger Field (13,200)

**Probable Starters:** 1B – Joey Votto; 2B – Mark Belhorn; 3B – Earl Snyder;  
SS – Anderson Machado; C – Dan Conway; LF – Bubba Crosby; CF – Dewayne Wise;  
RF – Norris Hopper; DH – Jesse Gutierrez.

**Key Pitchers:** *Starters* – RH Homer Bailey, LH Bobby Livingston, LH Mike Gosling,  
LH Tyler Pelland. *Relievers* – RH Brad Salmon, LH Brian Shackelford,  
RH Gary Majewski.

**Top Prospects:** RHP Homer Bailey is among baseball's top pitching prospects. The 20-year-old is coming off a season in which he went 7-1 at Double-A Chattanooga with a 1.59 ERA. He is rated by *Baseball America* as the Reds' #1 overall prospect. Bailey was honored as Cincinnati's 2006 Minor League Player of the Year...1B Joey Votto, 23, was the 2006 Southern League MVP, and was named Cincinnati's Minor League Hitter of the Year. Votto hit .319 with 46 doubles for Chattanooga.

**Other Organizational Prospects:** OF Chris Dickerson is still recovering from shoulder surgery, so he may start 2007 in Double-A. Last year he hit 12 homers to go along with 48 RBI and 21 stolen bases for Chattanooga before his injury...Paul Janish is the most advanced of Cincinnati's prospects at shortstop. He split time between the two levels of Class-A (Dayton and Sarasota) in 2006, plus earned a brief promotion to Double-A, combining to hit .304 with 14 HR and 75 RBI. Janish is primarily known for his defensive skills...OF Jay Bruce is the top young hitter in the Reds' organization. The first round draft pick from 2005 hit .291 with 16 HR and 81 RBI in his full season debut at Dayton last year. He added 19 stolen bases, and with his strong arm is regarded as a true multi-tooled talent.

**Veterans to Watch:** SS Anderson Machado has the defensive skills to be in the Major Leagues, but he will have to show the Reds that his bat has improved before he'll get another opportunity...OF Bubba Crosby begins the season in the Minor Leagues for the first time in three years. The former New York Yankee signed with Cincinnati as a free agent in the offseason...Outfielder Norris Hopper has battled all spring for a roster spot with the Reds, but may be headed to Louisville if the Reds opt to carry three catchers again this season. Hopper was the 2006 IL batting champion, posting a .347 average.

**Items of Interest:** Manager Rick Sweet returns for his third year at the helm of the Louisville Bats. Last year, Sweet's club finished just 1.5 games behind the IL West co-champions Toledo and Indianapolis...RHP Gary Majewski was optioned to Louisville as he continues his comeback from shoulder inflammation.

**Strengths of the Club:** The Louisville pitching staff won't be at a loss for strong arms. Led by top prospect Homer Bailey, the staff will also boast a veteran presence with the likes of Mike Gosling and Bobby Livingston.

**Weaknesses of the Club:** The Bats have to find a way to score runs this season. Last year's club led the International League in batting average, but finished just 11<sup>th</sup> in runs scored. The addition of slugger Joey Votto should help the cause.

### Toledo Mud Hens

**Affiliate:** Detroit Tigers

**Year in IL (Toledo, OH):** 44<sup>th</sup> **Record:** 2,848-3,217 **Last Governors' Cup:** 2006

**2006 Finish:** 76-66, West Co-Champions, defeated Rochester for Governors' Cup

**Manager:** Larry Parrish (6<sup>th</sup> year) Career – 8 yrs. 473-440

**Coaches:** Britt Burns (1<sup>st</sup> year); Leon Durham (7<sup>th</sup> year); Mike Rojas (1<sup>st</sup> year)

**Stadium:** Fifth Third Field (8,943)

**Probable Starters:** 1B – Chris Shelton; 2B – Kevin Hooper; 3B – Mike Hessman;  
SS – Ramon Santiago; C – Mike Rabelo; LF – Ryan Raburn; CF – Brent Clevlen;  
RF – Timo Perez; DH – Jack Hannahan.

**Key Pitchers:** *Starters* – RH Jordan Tata, RH Virgil Vasquez, RH Dennis Tankersley,  
RH Zach Miner, RH Jair Jurrjens. *Relievers* – RH Jason Karnuth, LH Tim Byrdak,  
RH Yorman Bazardo, RH Preston Larrison, LH Corey Hamman, LH Felix Heredia,  
LH Vic Darensbourg.

**Top Prospects:** OF Brent Clevlen is ranked the third-best prospect in the Detroit organization by *Baseball America*. He was MVP of the Florida State League in 2005, and played part of last season with the Tigers...RHP Jair Jurrjens is ranked fourth by *Baseball America*. Just 21 years old, he had a 3.36 ERA in 12 starts for Double-A Erie as a 20-year-old last season...RHP Jordan Tata is ranked fifth by *Baseball America*. He was 10-6 with a 3.84 ERA in 21 starts for the Mud Hens last year.

**Other Organizational Prospects:** SS Tony Giarratano was scheduled to start at shortstop in Toledo before having surgery on his right shoulder in late February. He has been ranked among the Tigers' top prospects in years past...RHP Eulogio de la Cruz, ranked sixth in the organization, is expected to begin the season with Double-A Erie. He pitched for the Mud Hens in last year's playoffs...LHP Andrew Miller and OF Cameron Maybin, two of the top prospects in baseball, will begin the year in the low minors, but both are expected to move quickly through the organization.

**Veterans to Watch:** INF Mike Hessman ranked among the IL home run leaders with 24 last season and had 28 for the Mud Hens the previous year...INF/OF Ryan Raburn was a mid-season IL All-Star last year and finished the season hitting .275 with 20 HR and 79 RBI...INF Kevin Hooper is a sparkplug who hit .276 with 1 HR and 29 RBI last year...INF Jack Hannahan returns after hitting .282 with 9 HR and 62 RBI last season...RHP Jason Karnuth had 23 saves for the Mud Hens in 2005...RHP Dennis Tankersley had a 4.35 ERA in 28 starts for Memphis of the PCL in 2006...OF Brandon Watson split time between Washington and Cincinnati last season.

**Items of Interest:** After winning back-to-back Governors' Cups, the Mud Hens look to become the second franchise to win three straight since the award was instituted in 1933. Columbus won three Governors' Cups in a row from 1979-81...Even though last year's pitching coach Jeff Jones was promoted to Detroit as a bullpen coach, this year's field staff will be familiar to Toledo fans. Manager Larry Parrish is back for his sixth season with the Mud Hens, while hitting coach Leon Durham and trainer Matt Rankin are back for their seventh. Britt Burns, pitching coach in 2002, replaces Jones as pitching coach. Parrish will miss at least the first week of the season recovering from ankle surgery. Mike Rojas will serve as interim manager in his place.

**Strengths of the Club:** The pitching staff features a good number of top prospects...The bullpen includes a number of veterans and an inordinately high number of lefties...A solid number of key players from the two championship teams are back, including Jack Hannahan, Mike Hessman, Kevin Hooper, and Ryan Raburn...Double-A Erie should have a number of prospects who might play well enough to force a promotion to Toledo.

**Weaknesses of the club:** Not as many power hitters as in recent years...Not much speed on the roster besides Hooper, who stole 24 bases last year...The starting rotation doesn't have much Triple-A experience besides Tankersley.

## International League South Division

### Charlotte Knights

**Affiliate:** Chicago White Sox

**Year in IL (Charlotte, NC):** 15<sup>th</sup> **Record:** 990-1,003 **Last Governors' Cup:** 1999

**2006 Finish:** 79-62, South Champions (+15.5), lost to Toledo in Gov. Cup first round

**Manager:** Marc Bombard (1<sup>st</sup> year) Career – 22 yrs. 1,556-1,350

**Coaches:** Juan Nieves (3<sup>rd</sup> year); Tack Wilson (2<sup>nd</sup> year)

**Stadium:** Knights Stadium (10,000)

**Probable starters:** 1B – Casey Rogowski; 2B – Andy Gonzalez; 3B – Josh Fields;

SS – Pedro Lopez; C – Wiki Gonzalez; LF – Ryan Sweeney; CF – Jerry Owens;

RF – Luis Terrero; DH – Ernie Young.

**Key pitchers:** *Starters* – RH Gavin Floyd, RH Charlie Haeger, LH Paulino Reynoso, LH Heath Phillips, RH Lance Broadway. *Relievers* – LH Boone Logan, RH Ryan Bukbich, RH Joe Gannon, RH Ehren Wassermann.

**Top Prospects:** 3B Josh Fields hit .305 with 19 HR and 70 RBI for the IL South Division Champions last season, earning recognition as the IL's Rookie of the Year. He is considered ready for the Major Leagues, but is stuck behind Joe Crede, the established third baseman in Chicago. Fields worked some in the outfield during the offseason, but the club currently has no plans to move him permanently. He'll begin the year in Charlotte...OF Jerry Owens is a speedster who enjoyed a nice 2006 campaign in Charlotte which included 40 stolen bases and 75 runs scored. He is rated by *Baseball America* as the #5 prospect in the White Sox system...The top prospect in the Chicago organization is OF Ryan Sweeney. He helped the Knights to the division title last year by hitting .296 with 13 HR and 70 RBI. He also appeared in 18 games for the White Sox at the end of the season, driving in five runs.

**Other Organizational Prospects:** C Cole Armstrong was acquired by Chicago from Atlanta in the 2005 Rule 5 Draft. Last year at Class-A Winston-Salem he hit .237 in 131 at-bats. Armstrong showed up this spring in great shape physically...RHP Kyle McCulloch was Chicago's 2006 first round draft pick. In 12 starts between Rookie League Great Falls and Winston-Salem, McCulloch combined to go 3-6 with a 3.12 ERA...OF Aaron Cunningham saw action in 95 games at Class-A Kannapolis last year, hitting .305 with 41 RBI. He also stole 19 bases and posted an impressive .386 on-base percentage...RHP Adam Russell split last season between Winston-Salem and Double-A Birmingham, going 10-6 with a 3.43 ERA in 27 total starts. His 4.75 ERA at the Double-A level likely means that's where he'll begin the 2007 campaign.

**Veterans to Watch:** DH Ernie Young is entering his 18<sup>th</sup> season in the Minor Leagues. He has hit 306 career Minor League home runs. Young has represented the International League in the last three Triple-A All-Star Games...1B Casey Rogowski returns to the Knights, after stealing a career-high 26 bases and driving in 76 runs in 2006.

**Items of Interest:** April 15, 2007 will be the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the no-hitter tossed by Juan Nieves as a member of the Milwaukee Brewers, which remains that franchise's only no-hitter...Former Charlotte O shortstop Cal Ripken, Jr. is a 2007 Hall of Fame inductee, and will be honored by the Knights with a bobblehead giveaway this season.

**Strengths of the Club:** The Knights' pitching staff returns most of the starters from last year's playoff team, including IL wins leader Charlie Haeger and IL Pitcher of the Year Heath Phillips.

**Weaknesses of the Club:** Other than slugger Ernie Young, there's not a lot of power in the Knights' lineup to begin the season.

### Durham Bulls

**Affiliate:** Tampa Bay Devil Rays

**Year in IL (Durham, NC):** 10<sup>th</sup> **Record:** 677-611 **Last Governors' Cup:** 2003

**2006 Finish:** 64-78, second in South (-15.5)

**Manager:** Charlie Montoyo (1<sup>st</sup> year) Career – 11 yrs. 626-634

**Coaches:** Gary Gaetti (1<sup>st</sup> year); Xavier Hernandez (1<sup>st</sup> year)

**Stadium:** Durham Bulls Athletic Park (10,000)

**Probable Starters:** 1B – Wes Bankston; 2B – Elliott Johnson; 3B – Joel Guzman;

SS – Jorge Velandia; C – Shawn Riggans; LF – Chris Richard; CF – Jeremy Owens;

RF – Justin Ruggiano; DH – Hee-Seop Choi.

**Key Pitchers:** *Starters* – RH Andy Sonnanstine, RH Jeff Niemann, RH Jason Hammel, RH Mitch Talbot. *Relievers* – LH Jeff Ridgway, RH Chad Orvella, RH Juan Salas.

**Top Prospects:** 1B Wes Bankston has 77 career homers and was named the Devil Rays' #7 overall prospect by *Baseball America*. He is considered the first baseman of the future in Tampa Bay...3B Joel Guzman was rated the #1 prospect in the Dodgers' organization before being traded to Tampa Bay...RHP Jeff Niemann was a first round pick in 2004 and was named the game's 41<sup>st</sup> best prospect by *Baseball Digest*. He was slowed by injuries during the early part of 2006, but bounced back to post a 2.68 ERA in 14 starts and 84 strikeouts in 77 innings for Double-A Montgomery...RHP Andy Sonnanstine was the Southern League's top right-handed pitcher in 2006. He was rated as having the "Best Control" in the Southern League and the Tampa Bay organization by *Baseball America*. Last season he went 15-8 with a .267 ERA and 153 strikeouts in 186 innings of work...RHP Mitch Talbot was Houston's second round draft choice in 2002. Talbot is rated as having the "Best Changeup" in the Tampa Bay organization by *Baseball America*.

**Other Organizational Prospects:** INF Evan Longoria was the third player chosen in the 2006 draft, and made it all the way to Double-A last season. He was named by *Baseball America* as the game's #2 infield prospect and Montgomery's best power hitter...LHP Jonathan Barratt came up one inning shy of the California League ERA title (2.93). He struck out 111 batters in 111 innings.

**Veterans to Watch:** DH/1B Hee-Seop Choi looks to avoid the injuries that have plagued him, and get back to the form he showed as a member of the Los Angeles Dodgers in 2005...C Yamid Haad is likely to share time behind the plate with Shawn Riggans. Haad looks to bounce back after a tough 2006...SS Jorge Velandia was a mid-season and postseason All-Star in the International League in 2006, hitting .291 with 10 HR and 56 RBI for the Charlotte Knights.

**Items of Interest:** 2007 will be the 10<sup>th</sup> season for the Durham Bulls in the International League and Triple-A Baseball...The "Blue Monster" in left field has been replaced at Durham Bulls Athletic Park. The new wall includes a video board.

**Strengths of the Club:** The biggest strength for the Bulls appears to be pitching with Andy Sonnanstine, Jeff Niemann, and Mitch Talbot in the rotation, plus Juan Salas anchoring a solid bullpen. Tampa Bay's Double-A affiliate, Montgomery, was the Southern League Champion last year due in large part to compiling 19 shutouts. Can the members of last year's Double-A staff be just as effective at Triple-A?

**Weaknesses of the Club:** Durham's biggest strength last year, power, may be the club's most glaring weakness heading into 2007. This group has yet to display consistent power in the high Minor Leagues.

## International League South Division

### Norfolk Tides

**Year in IL (Norfolk, VA):** 39<sup>th</sup>    **Record:** 2,771-2,590    **Affiliate:** Baltimore Orioles  
**Last Governors' Cup:** 1985  
**2006 Finish:** 57-84, third in South (-22.0)  
**Manager:** Gary Allenson (1<sup>st</sup> year)    Career – 12 yrs. 720-759  
**Coaches:** Larry McCall (2<sup>nd</sup> year); Dallas Williams (2<sup>nd</sup> year)  
**Stadium:** Harbor Park (12,067)

**Probable Starters:** 1B – J.R. House; 2B – Cesar Crespo; 3B – Terry Tiffiee;  
SS – Brandon Fahey; C – Alberto Castillo; LF – Jeff Fiorentino; CF – Ruddy Yan;  
RF – Jason Dubois; DH – Jon Knott.

**Key Pitchers:** *Starters* – RH Hayden Penn, RH Rob Bell, RH Sean Tracey,  
RH Jon Leicester, LH Garrett Olson. *Relievers* – RH Sandy Rleal, LH John Parrish,  
LH Jamie Walker.

**Top Prospects:** RHP Hayden Penn, 22, was slowed last year while recovering from an appendectomy. He went 0-4 in six starts with Baltimore, but was 7-4 with a 2.26 ERA in 14 starts at Triple-A...OF Jeff Fiorentino, 24, knows he must improve his power numbers this year to increase the likelihood of a call to the Orioles, a team starved for power. At Double-A Bowie last year, Fiorentino hit .275 with 13 home runs and 62 RBI. Recalled to Baltimore in September, he collected 7 RBI in 19 games...LHP Garrett Olson is a 23-year-old southpaw who has steadily worked his way through the Minor Leagues since he was chosen in the first round by Baltimore in 2005. Olson won six games at Bowie after posting four victories in the Class-A Carolina League. He appears likely to start the 2007 season at Triple-A.

**Other Organizational Prospects:** RHP Brandon Erbe fanned 10.4 batters per 9 innings last year in the South Atlantic League, thanks in large part to his velocity. Erbe struggled in his last 12 starts though, going 0-4 with a 4.33 ERA during that stretch. Look for Erbe to begin the 2007 campaign at Class-A Frederick of the Carolina League...OF Neil Reimold looked strong last year at Frederick until back and foot problems slowed his progress. Reimold was healthy by the fall, when he hit .284 with 9 RBI in 25 games for Grand Canyon of the Arizona Fall League...1B Dustin Yount combined to hit .253 with 12 homers and 50 RBI between Frederick and Bowie in 2006.

**Veterans to Watch:** OF Jason Dubois was one of Baltimore's last cuts this spring. The 28-year-old is coming off a fine 2006 season in which he was named a mid and postseason International League All-Star. Playing for Buffalo, Dubois hit .275 with 22 HR and 87 RBI...DH/1B Jon Knott was one of Minor League Baseball's top power threats in 2006, clubbing 32 home runs for Portland of the Pacific Coast League...SS Brandon Fahey spent more than half of the 2006 season with the Orioles, but it appears he'll start the 2007 campaign at Triple-A. Fahey hit .235 in 91 games with Baltimore last season.

**Items of Interest:** After a 38-year relationship with the New York Mets, the Norfolk Tides begin a new affiliation in 2007 with the Baltimore Orioles...Gary Allenson takes over managerial duties in Norfolk this season, returning to the League for the first time since guiding Ottawa to the Wild Card in 2003. Allenson was MVP of the International League in 1978 after hitting .299 with 20 HR and 78 RBI for Pawtucket.

**Strengths of the Club:** There should be no lack of power in the Tides' lineup this season, led by Triple-A veterans Dubois and Knott, who combined to hit 54 homers last season.

**Weaknesses of the Club:** With a lot of power usually comes a lack of speed, as is the case for Norfolk.

### Richmond Braves

**Year in IL (Richmond, VA):** 57<sup>th</sup>    **Record:** 3,813-4,155    **Affiliate:** Atlanta Braves  
**Last Governors' Cup:** 1994  
**2006 Finish:** 57-86, fourth in South (-23.0)  
**Manager:** Dave Brundage (1<sup>st</sup> year)    Career – 9 yrs. 653-605  
**Coaches:** Guy Hansen (1<sup>st</sup> year); Leon Roberts (1<sup>st</sup> year)  
**Stadium:** The Diamond (12,134)

**Probable Starters:** 1B – Carlos Mendez; 2B – Martin Prado; 3B – Wes Timmons;  
SS – Yunel Escobar; C – Corky Miller; LF – Doug Clark; CF – Gregor Blanco;  
RF – T.J. Bohn; DH – James Jurries.

**Key Pitchers:** *Starters* – RH Anthony Lerew, RH Kyle Davies, RH Kevin Barry,  
RH Trey Hodges, RH Buddy Carlyle. *Relievers* – RH Manny Acosta, RH Blaine Boyer,  
RH Joey Devine, RH Peter Moylan, RH Phil Stockman, RH Jonathan Johnson,  
LH Steve Colyer.

**Top Prospects:** Yunel Escobar is a 24-year-old shortstop who hit .264 with 45 RBI in 121 games last season at Double-A Mississippi...RHP Anthony Lerew hopes to fulfill lofty expectations as a future hurler in the Atlanta rotation. Lerew suffered through a disappointing 2006 campaign in which he went just 3-5 with a 7.48 ERA for Richmond. In his lone Major League appearance, he allowed five runs on five hits with three walks in 2.0 innings...INF Martin Prado showed a lot of promise last season. In 60 games with Richmond, Prado hit .282, and in 24 games with Atlanta, he posted a .262 average...RHP Joey Devine pitched at three levels of the Atlanta farm system in 2006, which included one appearance at Triple-A in mid-April in which he failed to record an out. Devine also made 10 appearances in the Major Leagues, posting a 9.95 ERA in 6.1 innings of work. With success at the Triple-A level in 2007, Devine could earn a return trip to Atlanta.

**Other Organizational Prospects:** LHP Matt Harrison has a real chance of making it to Triple-A this season. He started the 2006 campaign at Class-A Myrtle Beach, where he went 8-4 with a 3.10 ERA before being promoted to Double-A Mississippi, where he finished the year by going 3-4 with a 3.61 ERA...With veteran catchers Corky Miller and Carlos Mendez likely to begin the season with Richmond, it appears highly touted catching prospect Jarrod Saltalamacchia will start the year at Double-A. In 2006 with Mississippi, Saltalamacchia hit .230 with 9 HR and 39 RBI in 92 games.

**Veterans to Watch:** OF Willie Harris was a free agent signing by Atlanta this offseason. He figures to find plenty of playing time in Richmond as a utility man who can also play in the infield at several positions...C Corky Miller was also signed as a free agent. The 31-year-old backstop has played in 89 Major League games with Cincinnati, Minnesota, and Boston...Carlos Mendez represented Richmond at the Triple-A All-Star Game last season. Splitting time between catcher and first base, Mendez had a fine year, hitting .290 with 5 homers and 54 RBI.

**Items of Interest:** Richmond has enjoyed just two winning seasons during the past 11 years. Assuming the roster isn't depleted by Atlanta during the season, this year's team seems capable of finishing above .500.

**Strengths of the club:** The pitching staff looks solid, as there should be several good arms in the rotation and the bullpen...New manager Dave Brundage is known for his aggressive style of baseball, and he will have lots of speed at his disposal with the like of Willie Harris, Doug Clark, and T.J. Bohn...That speed will also help the club defensively, with the ability to run down balls in a spacious park.

**Weaknesses of the club:** There's a lack of power on the initial roster for Richmond.