

August 30, 2005

RED BARONS' SHANE VICTORINO NAMED IL MVP; PARRISH, DUKE, LIRIANO ROUND OUT AWARD WINNERS

The International League today announced its post-season All-Star Team and Award Winners as selected by the League's managers, coaches, media, and club representatives. 2005 IL Manager-of-the-Year Larry Parrish has guided his Toledo Mud Hens to Triple-A Baseball's best record (84-53), clinching the IL West Division Championship last night with a victory over Louisville. For the first time ever, the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Red Barons can claim the IL's Most Valuable Player. Outfielder Shane Victorino has won the award on the heels of his best season as a professional, setting career highs in nearly every offensive category. Lefty Zach Duke of the Indianapolis Indians has been named the Most Valuable Pitcher in the League behind the strength of a 12-3 record in 16 starts. Rounding out the list of 2005 Special Award winners is Rochester pitcher Francisco Liriano, named IL Rookie-of-the-Year after dominating the League since his promotion from Double-A in mid-June.

Scranton/Wilkes-Barre outfielder Shane Victorino has put together an incredible season in 2005. After his average dipped to .243 on June 22, he put together five straight multiple-hit games, sparking the 24-year-old to a torrid second half. He currently enjoys a 22-game hitting streak, second longest of the season in the IL (former teammate Ryan Howard, 24). Known for his defensive skills in center field, Victorino is now among the League leaders in several offensive categories, including 8th in batting average (.310), 3rd in hits (153), 3rd in slugging percentage (.534), T-1st in extra-base hits (59), 1st in runs scored (93), and 1st in triples (16). His 16 triples is two more than any other player has collected this season in all of professional baseball. The Wailuku, Hawaii native has twice been named the IL Batter-of-the-Week this season (July 25-31, August 8-14).

The IL Manager-of-the-Year Award returns to Toledo for the first time in 37 years as Larry Parrish wins the honor. The last Mud Hens' skipper to win the award was Jack Tighe in 1967 and 1968, the first two seasons the IL recognized a Manager-of-the-Year. 1968 also represents the last time Toledo owned the League's best record, something they appear headed towards accomplishing again in 2005. The first three months of the season produced a tight three team race in the IL West between Toledo, Indianapolis, and Columbus, but the Mud Hens took the lead for good on June 23, and have gone 40-25 since then to clinch their first post-season appearance since 2002. Parrish managed the Hens to back-to-back 65-78 seasons in 2003-04, but this year has guided his club to one of the most impressive single-season turnarounds in IL history, becoming the first club to go "worst to first" since the 1964 Jacksonville Suns.

For the second consecutive season, the Indianapolis Indians have produced the IL's Most Valuable Pitcher. In his first season pitching above the Double-A level, Zach Duke dominated IL hitters in the first three months of the season. He was promoted to the Pittsburgh Pirates in early July, yet he is still tied for 2nd in the International League in wins with a 12-3 record. Duke, who was also selected as the Starting Pitcher on the Post-Season All-Star Team, was tabbed prior to 2005 as Pittsburgh's top prospect. He made his Major League debut July 2, and has posted a 6-0 record with a 1.81 ERA for the Pirates in 10 starts, making a strong case for National League Rookie-of-the-Year.

While Duke was the IL's most dominant pitcher in the first half of the season, there's little

argument about who's been the most dominant pitcher since. 21-year-old Francisco Liriano made his Triple-A debut June 20. In just 13 IL starts, he's posted a 9-1 record with a 1.67 ERA which included a stretch of five straight victories in which he allowed a total of one run in 36 innings. His combined total of 194 strikeouts (92 for New Britain, 102 for Rochester) leads all of Minor League Baseball. Opposing IL hitters have managed just a .172 batting average against him, including a mere .137 for left-handed hitters. Liriano, who was twice named the League's Pitcher-of-the-Week (July 18-24, August 1-7), follows Jason Kubel as the second consecutive member of the Rochester Red Wings to win the IL Rookie-of-the-Year Award. It's the first time a team has won the honor in consecutive seasons since Columbus won the award three straight times (Scott Bradley, 1984; Dan Pasqua, 1985; Orestes Destrade, 1986).

The IL began the practice of naming a post-season All-Star Team in 1957, and 2005 marks the very first time that no club placed multiple players on the squad. The clubs with the League's twelve best records each boast one representative. Most Valuable Player Shane Victorino and Most Valuable Pitcher Zach Duke headline the 2005 All-Star Team, and are joined by ten more of the IL's brightest stars.

Columbus first baseman Mitch Jones was among the most powerful hitters in Minor League Baseball in 2004, earning a selection to the Eastern League Post-Season All-Star Team, and winning the Eastern League's Home Run Derby. He has managed to match both accomplishments this year in the International League, winning the Triple-A Home Run Derby in July, and now being selected to the IL Post-Season All-Star team. He is tied for 1st in the IL with 59 extra-base hits, and tied for 3rd with 27 home runs.

Ottawa Lynx second baseman Bernie Castro, a member of the Pacific Coast League All-Star team in 2003, has bounced back from a sub-par 2004 season in this, his first year with the Baltimore organization. His 157 hits has set a new Lynx single-season record, and he's third in the International League with 41 stolen bases. It's the sixth time in seven professional seasons Castro has swiped at least 40 bases.

Shortstop B.J. Upton of the Durham Bulls was rated the most exciting player in the International League this season by Baseball America, and for good reason. Having just turned 21 less than two weeks ago, Upton leads the League with 158 hits and is among the leaders in several more offensive categories, including stolen bases (2nd, 43), extra-base hits (T-4th, 58), doubles (3rd, 35), on-base percentage (3rd, .391), and runs scored (2nd, 91).

Despite playing in just 78 games this season at the Triple-A level, Louisville's Edwin Encarnacion played well enough to be named the third baseman for the All-Star Team. He made his Triple-A debut this April after a tremendous 2004 season that included being named to the Southern League Post-Season All-Star Team. Encarnacion played in his third consecutive MLB All-Star Futures Game this July, and three days later was named the Player of the Game for the IL in the Triple-A All-Star Game. He's collected 5 HR and 16 RBI in 40 games with the Reds this season.

Pawtucket catcher Kelly Shoppach is the IL All-Star catcher for the second straight year. The 25-year-old has set career highs with 26 HR and 75 RBI. 24 of his home runs have come in game's in which he's caught, breaking his own PawSox franchise single-season home run record for catchers. No IL catcher has gunned down more would-be base stealers this season than Shoppach (34).

A pair of Triple-A rookies, Syracuse's John-Ford Griffin and Toledo's Curtis Granderson, flank Victorino in the IL's All-Star outfield. The 25-year-old Griffin has established new career highs in 2005 with 26 HR, 91 RBI, 120 hits, and 74 runs scored. He leads the League in RBI. Griffin is the first member of the SkyChiefs on the IL Post-Season All-Star Team since Cesar Izturis and Matt Dewitt made the squad in 2001.

Granderson has been the offensive spark all season for the Toledo Mud Hens. A member of the 2004 Eastern League Post-Season All-Star team, the 24-year-old has displayed a rare blend of speed, defense, and power for the Mud Hens in 2005. Currently in his second stint this season with Detroit, Granderson has hit .267 with 4 HR and 9 RBI in 17 games for the Tigers.

Norfolk designated hitter Brian Daubach is a member of the IL Post-Season All-Star team for the second time in his career (1998 – Charlotte). Now in his 16th professional season, the 33-year-old Daubach is the IL's leading hitter with a .338 batting average. He also leads the League in on-base percentage (.434) and slugging percentage (.581). This comes despite the fact he spent over a month with the New York Mets from mid-June to mid-July, marking the 8th season in which he's spent time in the Major Leagues.

Rochester pitcher Travis Bowyer entered his first Triple-A season with just 9 career saves, but quickly adapted to the closer's role for the Red Wings. His 23 saves this year is the 3rd best mark in the International League, and his 93 strikeouts also represents a career high. The 24-year-old right-hander has struck out at least one hitter in 48 of his 57 appearances.

The final All-Star spot goes to Buffalo's Ryan Garko, who has been selected as the League's top Utility Player. Garko received votes at catcher, first base, and designated hitter. Garko had high expectations entering his second full professional season, and he has not disappointed, hitting .306 with 19 HR and 76 RBI. He was a standout collegiate player at Stanford, where he became just the sixth player in school history to hit .400 in 2003, winning the Johnny Bench Award as the nation's top catcher. He was Cleveland's 2004 Minor League Player of the Year

2005 IL AWARD WINNERS

Most Valuable Player Shane Victorino

Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Red Barons

Most Valuable Pitcher Zach Duke, Indianapolis Indians

Rookie-of-the-Year Francisco Liriano, Rochester Red Wings

Manager-of-the-Year Larry Parrish, Toledo Mud Hens

2005 IL ALL-STAR TEAM

First Baseman	Mitch Jones, Columbus Clippers
Second Baseman	Bernie Castro, Ottawa Lynx
Shortstop	B.J. Upton, Durham Bulls
Third Baseman	Edwin Encarnacion, Louisville Bats
Catcher	Kelly Shoppach, Pawtucket Red Sox
Outfielders	John-Ford Griffin, Syracuse SkyChiefs
	Curtis Granderson, Toledo Mud Hens
	Shane Victorino, SWB Red Barons
Designated Hitter	Brian Daubach, Norfolk Tides
Utility Player	Ryan Garko, Buffalo Bisons
Starting Pitcher	Zach Duke, Indianapolis Indians
Relief Pitcher	Travis Bowyer, Rochester Red Wings

ALL-STAR STATISTICS

Batters		BA	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR			
RBI	SB										
Mitch Jones		COL	.268	481	81	129	29	3	27		
77	2										
Bernie Castro		OTT	.316	497	81	157	21	5	1		
35	41										
B.J. Upton		DUR	.303	521	91	158	35	6	17		
70	43										
Edwin Encarnacion			.314	290	44	91	23	0	15	54	7
Kelly Shoppach	PAW		.255	368	60	94	16	0	26	75	0
John-Ford Griffin	SYR		.248	483	74	120	18	1	26	91	1
Curtis Granderson	TOL		.290	445	79	129	29	13	15	65	22
Shane Victorino	SWB		.310	494	93	153	25	16	18	70	17
Brian Daubach		NOR	.338	320	63	108	28	1	16		
60	1										
Ryan Garko		BUF	.306	444	74	136	24	3	19		
76	1										

Pitchers	Team	W-L	ERA	SV	G	IP	SO	
Zach Duke	IND	12-3		2.92	0	16	108.0	66
Travis Bowyer	ROCH	4-2		2.90	23	57	71.1	93

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