

International League North Division

BUFFALO BISON

Year in IL (Buffalo, NY): 94th **Record:** 6,885-6,431 **Affiliate:** Cleveland Indians
Last Governors' Cup: 2004
2007 Finish: 75-67, 3rd in North (-8.5)
Manager: Torey Lovullo (3rd year) Career – 6 yrs. 472-369
Coaches: Dave Myers (2nd year); Scott Radinsky (2nd year)
Stadium: Dunn Tire Park (18,150)

Probable Starters: 1B – Jordan Brown; 2B – Josh Barfield; 3B – Aaron Herr;
SS – Danny Sandoval; C – Wyatt Toregas; LF – Ben Francisco / Jason Cooper;
CF – Jason Tyner; RF – Brad Snyder; DH – Ryan Mulhern.

Key Pitchers: *Starters* – LH Jeremy Sowers, LH Aaron Laffey, RH Adam Miller, RH Brian Slocum, RH Jeff Harris. *Relievers* – RH Sean Smith, RH Rick Bauer, RH Edward Mujica, LH Rich Rundles, RH Bubbie Buzachero.

Top Prospects: RHP Adam Miller returns to Triple-A hoping to rebound from an injury-plagued rookie campaign. The former 1st round draft pick experienced elbow troubles in 2007...1B Jordan Brown led all Double-A hitters with a .333 average last season on his way to Eastern League MVP and Rookie of the Year honors. He was also MVP of the Carolina League in 2006...C Wyatt Toregas led all Eastern League catchers last season by throwing out 52% of would-be base stealers. Toregas gives the Bisons their first true run-stopper in several years.

Other Organizational Prospects: LHP Chuck Lofgren may start in Double-A because of a crowded Bisons staff. He led all Cleveland minor leaguers with 151.1 innings of work last year. Lofgren won 12 games and notched 130 strikeouts with Akron...LHP Reid Santos won 8 games with Double-A Akron last season...LHP Ryan Edell went 11-6 with Class-A Kinston...OF Trevor Crowe stole 28 bases last year, 3rd-best in the Eastern League. Combined with plate discipline that accounted for 62 walks, he may soon be Buffalo's leadoff hitter.

Veterans to Watch: OF Ben Francisco may start in Triple-A again thanks to a crowded outfield in Cleveland. He was the Bisons Co-MVP in 2006 and the IL batting champion in 2007 (.318)...1B/DH Ryan Mulhern was the Bisons MVP last year, finishing in the IL's top ten in hits (138), doubles (36), and slugging (.475)...3B Aaron Herr hit 19 home runs and was an IL Postseason All-Star with Louisville in 2007...2B Josh Barfield, with two big league seasons under his belt, will start the year in Buffalo...Three-time Governors' Cup Champion Jason Tyner was signed in the spring and should bolster the outfield depth.

Items of Interest: Buffalo baseball Hall of Famer Torey Lovullo returns for his third season at the helm. The entire Bisons coaching staff, including Dave Myers as hitting coach and Scott Radinsky as pitching coach, returns for its second season together...Buffalo's 94th season in the IL is tied with Syracuse for the second-most years in League history.

Strengths of the Club: The starting rotation is very solid and deep with Sowers, Laffey, Miller, and Slocum. LHP Chuck Lofgren could also spend significant time in Buffalo...The offense has plenty of power with Herr, Mulhern, Francisco, Snyder, Cooper, and Brown all coming off of double-digit home run campaigns last season.

Weaknesses of the Club: Health is the biggest question mark. RHP Adam Miller, RHP Brian Slocum, RHP Sean Smith, and OF Brad Snyder all saw their 2007 seasons cut short due to injuries. LHP Tony Sipp didn't pitch at all in 2007 and will miss the first couple of months of 2008. C Wyatt Toregas served two stints on the DL last year.

LEHIGH VALLEY IRONPIGS

Year in IL (Allentown, PA): 3rd **Record:** 39-60 **Affiliate:** Philadelphia Phillies
Last Governors' Cup: None
2007 Finish (Ottawa Lynx): 55-80, 6th in North (-29.0)
Manager: Dave Huppert (1st year) Career – 20 yrs. 1,425-1,214
Coaches: Greg Gross (1st year); Rod Nichols (4th year)
Stadium: Coca-Cola Park (10,000)

Probable Starters: 1B – Andy Tracy; 2B – Casey Smith; 3B – Brennan King;
SS – Gookie Dawkins; C – Jason Jaramillo; LF – T.J. Bohn; CF – Brandon Watson;
RF – Val Pascucci; DH – Mike Cervenak.

Key Pitchers: *Starters* – RH Kevin Beirne, RH Ron Chiavacci, LH J.A. Happ, LH Brian Mazone, RH Kris Wilson. *Relievers* – RH Jason Anderson, RH Joe Bisenius, RH Matt Childers, LH Vic Darensbourg, RH John Ennis, LH Jason Kershner.

Top Prospects: 25-year-old C Jason Jaramillo is among Philadelphia' top 10 prospects according to *Baseball America*. The 2nd round pick from 2004 hit .271 last year for Ottawa and earned a trip to the Triple-A All-Star Game. He also played well for the United States team at the 2007 World Cup...LHP J.A. Happ was 4-6 with a 5.02 ERA in 24 starts for Ottawa last season. It was the first time in his four-year career his ERA was over 2.81...25-year-old RHP Joe Bisenius went 3-4 with a 5.48 ERA in his first season at the Triple-A level in 2007. One year earlier he combined to go 8-3 with a 2.25 ERA in 51 games between Class-A Clearwater and Double-A Reading.

Other Organizational Prospects: The Double-A Reading Phillies will feature many of the organization's top prospects to open the 2008 campaign. These players include the top overall prospect RHP Carlos Carrasco, as well as LHP Josh Outman, OF Greg Golson, C Lou Marson, and RHP Drew Carpenter, who won a Minor League leading 17 games last year at Clearwater...Reading also features INF Jason Donald and INF Brad Harman.

Veterans to Watch: OF/1B Val Pascucci hit .285 with 34 HR and 97 RBI for Albuquerque of the Pacific Coast League last season...1B/DH Andy Tracy was also impressive in the PCL, hitting .281 with 23 HR and 87 RBI for New Orleans...3B/OF Mike Cervenak led the International League with 157 hits last year for Norfolk...OF Brandon Watson was 3rd in the League in 2007 with a .313 average, and along the way established a new IL-record with a 43-game hitting streak...LHP Brian Mazone returns from Korea. He was 3-2 with a 2.21 ERA with Ottawa before leaving, and the year before was 13-3 with an IL-best 2.03 ERA for Scranton/WB...RHP Ron Chiavacci was 12-6 with a 3.39 ERA in 2007 for Toledo...C Pete LaForest hit 29 HR last year for Triple-A Portland.

Items of Interest: 2008 will be the first season for affiliated baseball in Allentown since 1960. The city hosted independent baseball from 1997-2003...Coca-Cola Park is the first facility named after the soft drink giant in the U.S....The club has sold more than 3,500 season tickets for its first season...The name "IronPigs" is a variation of pig iron, an ingredient in the making of steel and a tribute to the steel industry that dominated Lehigh Valley through the 1970's.

Strengths of the Club: The addition of Pascucci, Tracy, and Cervenak should add punch to a team that finished last in Triple-A last year in homers...The starting pitching should be strong with Happ and proven Triple-A starters Mazone and Chiavacci...The bullpen has some nice arms but no closer. Matt Childers will likely get the first crack at that role.

Weaknesses of the Club: There is little team speed in the lineup...The outfield defense is questionable.

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PAWTUCKET RED SOX

Year in IL (Pawtucket, RI): 36th **Record:** 2,431-2,531 **Last Governors' Cup:** 1984
2007 Finish: 67-75, 4th in North (-16.5)
Manager: Ron Johnson (4th year) Career – 16 yrs. 1,115-1,122
Coaches: Russ Morman (1st year); Rich Sauveur (1st year)
Stadium: McCoy Stadium (10,031)

Probable Starters: 1B – Brandon Moss; 2B – Joe Thurston; 3B – Keith Ginter;
SS – Jed Lowrie; C – Dusty Brown; LF – Chris Carter; CF – Jonathan Van Every;
RF – Rich Thompson; DH – Jeff Bailey.

Key Pitchers: *Starters* – RH Devern Hansack, LH Michael Tejera, RH Charlie Zink,
LH Abe Alvarez, RH David Pauley. *Relievers* – RH Craig Hansen, RH Lee Gronkiewicz,
RH Edgar Martinez, LH Jon Switzer, RH Lincoln Holdzkom, RH Dan Kolb.

Top Prospects: Jed Lowrie is a versatile infielder who can play second, third, or shortstop. He was voted Boston's Minor League Offensive Player of the Year in 2007 after tying for 4th in the farm system with 148 hits and 2nd with 47 doubles...The athletic Brandon Moss has been converted to first base. In his Triple-A rookie season last year, Moss hit .282 with 17 HR and 78 RBI and played in the Triple-A All-Star Game...C Dusty Brown made his Triple-A debut last August, one month after being named Boston's Minor League Offensive Player of the Month. Brown threw out 43% of attempted base stealers with Double-A Portland prior to his promotion.

Other Organizational Prospects: RHP Justin Masterson is a big right-hander (6'6", 250 pounds) who reached Double-A last year in his first full professional season. It appears he will start this season back in Portland, but a jump to Pawtucket at some point is likely...RHP Michael Bowden had a great season in 2007 at the age of 20. At Class-A Lancaster, Bowden posted a 1.37 ERA and a strikeout per inning in eight starts before being promoted to Double-A. His time in Portland was up-and-down.

Veterans to Watch: OF Jonathan Van Every is an excellent defensive outfielder who played 50 games last season in Buffalo without committing an error. He will have a chance to drive in a lot of runs for the PawSox...RHP Devern Hansack is the classic rags-to-riches story. Hansack was out of baseball for two years and started a fishing business in his native Nicaragua. He signed with Boston prior to the 2006 season and last year he went 10-7 with a 3.57 ERA for Pawtucket, earning a three-game stint in Boston.

Items of Interest: For the second time in three years, Pawtucket will play a regular season game at Fenway Park (August 9 vs. Charlotte)...Both of Boston's recent World Series trophies will be on display at McCoy Stadium on Sunday, April 6...Three individuals with ties to the PawSox are being inducted into the International League Hall of Fame this year. Owner Ben Mondor, former manager Joe Morgan, and 1974 IL MVP and Triple Crown winner Jim Rice will be honored in a ceremony at McCoy Stadium on July 20.

Strengths of the Club: The bullpen is deep. The key may be Craig Hansen, who has shown flashes of Major League-type stuff but must be more consistent...Jed Lowrie might be a star in the making...The PawSox have a lineup that appears suited to hit well for average.

Weaknesses of the Club: Pawtucket lacks a "shut down" starter, though there is a lot of experience in the rotation...The team is also missing a big stick in the middle of the lineup, although Brandon Moss and Jeff Bailey can (and have) put up double-digit home run figures in the past.

ROCHESTER RED WINGS

Year in IL (Rochester, NY): 121st **Record:** 8,839-8,370 **Last Governors' Cup:** 1997
2007 Finish: 77-67, 2nd in North (-7.5)
Manager: Stan Cliburn (3rd year) Career – 14 yrs. 949-945
Coaches: Stu Cliburn (3rd year); Riccardo Ingram (1st year)
Stadium: Frontier Field (10,840)

Probable Starters: 1B – Garrett Jones; 2B – Matt Tolbert; 3B – Brian Buscher;
SS – Alexi Casilla; C – Jose Morales; LF – Tommy Watkins; CF – Denard Span;
RF – Darnell McDonald; DH – Randy Ruiz.

Key Pitchers: *Starters* – LH Brian Duensing, LH Randy Keisler, RH Kevin Mulvey,
RH Nick Blackburn. *Relievers* – RH Casey Daigle, LH Ricky Barrett, LH Carmen Cali,
RH Julio DePaula, RH Bobby Korecky.

Top Prospects: Two of Minnesota's top pitching prospects could open the year in Rochester. RHP Nick Blackburn (rated Minnesota's #1 overall prospect by *Baseball America*) went 7-3 with a 2.11 ERA in 17 starts for the Red Wings in 2007, earning a September promotion to Minnesota. LHP Brian Duensing (#8 overall), was 11-5 with a 3.24 ERA last year for Rochester...SS Alexi Casilla is only 24, but he is a career .298 hitter in the minors (and .223 in the majors)...C Jose Morales' stock is on the rise after hitting a career-best .311 in a full season with Rochester last year, but there is someone named Joe Mauer blocking his path to the Major Leagues.

Other Organizational Prospects: RHP Anthony Swarzak is a former 2nd-round draft pick who is 33-23 with a 3.31 career ERA. Swarzak was suspended 50 games last year for a violation of baseball's drug policy.

Veterans to Watch: OF Denard Span is a former #1 draft pick who figures to be in Rochester if he loses the spring battle for Minnesota's center field job with Carlos Gomez...1B/OF Garrett Jones has hit 58 homers for Rochester over the past three seasons, finally making his big league debut last year. After hitting .200 (5-25) for Minnesota this spring, he cleared waivers and was outrighted to Rochester...2B Matt Tolbert led the IL in hitting for the first half of 2007 and finished with a .293 average...3B Brian Buscher was Minnesota's Minor League Player of the Year last season, zipping from Double-A to the majors...RHP Bobby Korecky set a club mark with 35 saves in 2007, but also had seven blown saves...OF Jon Knott hit 32 homers for Triple-A Portland in 2006 and has Major League experience with San Diego and Baltimore. He could start in LF if Tommy Watkins makes the Twins.

Items of Interest: Former Rochester player, manager, and general manager Joe Altobelli will be inducted into the IL Hall of Fame on June 28, along with several other former IL greats...The Red Wings have a record 10 Governors' Cups, but have not won one since 1997, their first season in Frontier Field...Stan Cliburn is back for his third season as manager. The Red Wings have never been under .500 during his reign...Former Toledo outfielder Riccardo Ingram takes over as hitting coach after managing Double-A New Britain the past two seasons.

Strengths of the Club: Starting pitching looks to be strong...The Wings should have plenty of power with Jones, Ruiz, and Knott in the lineup...Depth. The Red Wings have a potential IL All-Star at every position.

Weakness of the Club: OF Darnell McDonald could open the season on the disabled list, meaning Jason Pridie would start in his place...Bobby Korecky can be inconsistent as the closer...There is no clear backup at catcher if Jose Morales gets hurt.

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SCRANTON/WILKES-BARRE YANKEES **Affiliate:** New York Yankees
Year in IL (Scranton/WB, PA): 20th **Record:** 1,389-1,327 **Last Governors' Cup:** None
2007 Finish: 84-59, North Champions (+7.5), lost to Richmond in Gov. Cup first round
Manager: Dave Miley (3rd year) Career – 17 yrs. 1,268-973
Coaches: Rafael Chaves (1st year), Alvaro Espinosa (2nd year), Butch Wynegar (2nd year)
Stadium: PNC Field (10,310)

Probable Starters: 1B – Juan Miranda; 2B – Nick Green; 3B – Cody Ransom;
SS – Alberto Gonzales; C – Chad Moeller; LF – Justin Christian; CF – Brett Gardner;
RF – Jason Lane; DH – Eric Duncan.

Key Pitchers: *Starters* – RH Alan Horne, RH Jeff Marquez, LH Chase Wright,
LH Kei Igawa, RH Steven White. *Relievers* – RH Steven Jackson, RH Darrell Rasner,
RH Edwar Ramirez, RH Dan Giese, RH Scott Patterson.

Top Prospects: RHP Alan Horne was the Eastern League Pitcher of the Year in 2007. He went 12-4 with a 3.11 ERA and 165 strikeouts in 27 starts with Trenton...1B Juan Miranda has enjoyed an excellent spring coming off a 2007 season in which he hit .264 with 16 homers between Class-A Tampa and Double-A Trenton. Miranda is a native Cuban who missed two full seasons while his immigration paperwork was sorted out...RHP Jeff Marquez led the Yankees organization and the Eastern League with 15 wins last season. He posted a 3.65 ERA to go along with his 15-9 record.

Other Organizational Prospects: 21-year-old Austin Jackson hit .345 when he reached Tampa last season. Overall he combined to hit 13 homers with 59 RBI and 32 stolen bases. He should start the year as Tampa's center fielder but could reach Scranton/Wilkes-Barre sometime in 2008...OF Matt Carson hit 16 HR and drove in 76 runs in his first full season at Double-A last year...OF Colin Curtis played 61 games last season at Trenton in his first taste of Double-A, hitting .242. The 23-year-old Curtis enters his third professional season in 2008.

Veterans to Watch: OF Jason Lane is one of the hottest hitters for the Yankees in spring training this season. Lane has 61 career home runs at the Major League level, including 26 for Houston in 2005...DH Greg Porter made his Triple-A debut in 2007 with Salt Lake of the Pacific Coast League, hitting .345 with 7 HR and 33 RBI in 56 games. Porter is a career .297 hitter with 63 HR in the Minor Leagues...2B Nick Green is a slick fielding infielder who possesses a decent amount of power at the plate.

Items of Interest: After finishing with the IL's best regular season record the last two seasons, the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Yankees look to finally win the franchise's first Governors' Cup in 2008...Dave Miley returns for his second year in Scranton/Wilkes-Barre and his third as skipper of New York's Triple-A affiliate. Miley was named the International League Manager of the Year in 2007.

Strengths of the Club: The SWB Yankees should have a great bullpen to go along with a solid rotation. Alan Horne is a "lights out" pitcher who is destined for New York very soon...OF Brett Gardner has dazzling speed...There should be a nice balance of veterans and young players...DH Eric Duncan may be ready for a breakout season.

Weaknesses of the Club: Major League veteran Chad Moeller is a solid catcher, but he has an escape clause in his contract. No one has stepped up as a clear backup to Moeller as of yet, which could be a major concern if Moeller leaves.

SYRACUSE CHIEFS **Affiliate:** Toronto Blue Jays
Year in IL (Syracuse, NY): 94th **Record:** 6,289-6,808 **Last Governors' Cup:** 1976
2007 Finish: 64-80, 5th in North (-20.5)
Manager: Doug Davis (2nd year) Career – 7 yrs. 446-411
Coaches: Rick Langford (3rd year); Al LeBoeuf (2nd year)
Stadium: Alliance Bank Stadium (11,604)

Probable Starters: 1B – Chip Cannon; 2B – Joe Inglett; 3B – Sergio Santos;
SS – Pedro Lopez; C – Curtis Thigpen; LF – Adam Lind; CF – Buck Coats;
RF – Matt Watson; DH – Russ Adams.

Key Pitchers: *Starters* –RH Josh Banks, RH Kane Davis. *Relievers* – RH Jordan De Jong,
RH Shawn Camp.

Top Prospects: C Curtis Thigpen begins his second year at the Triple-A level. Thigpen hit .285 last year for the Chiefs in 50 games. He also played 47 games with the Blue Jays in his first taste of the majors, hitting .238 with 11 RBI. Thigpen is no stranger to the spotlight, thanks to three trips to the College World Series with the Texas Longhorns...Thigpen will be backed up by another up-and-coming young backstop, Robinzon Diaz. Diaz, who can also play third base, has a strong throwing arm and makes good contact at the plate, as evidenced by his .306 average over seven pro seasons. The 24-year-old hit .338 in 93 games for the Chiefs last season, and should see plenty of playing time in Syracuse in 2008.

Other Organizational Prospects: LHP David Purcey posted a 1.23 ERA in six Arizona Fall League starts. He is likely to start 2008 in New Hampshire where he was slowed last season by cysts in his throwing arm...LHP Ricky Romero was Toronto's top draft pick in 2005. Romero went 3-6 with a 4.89 ERA with Double-A New Hampshire last season...OF Ryan Patterson suffered a broken arm after being hit by a pitch last April, but he returned to hit .267 with 18 HR and 68 RBI for New Hampshire...OF Travis Snyder is regarded as one of the top prospects in the Toronto system. Last year he hit .313 with 16 HR and 93 RBI at Class-A Lansing in his first full professional season.

Veterans to Watch: OF Matt Watson is back in the United States after spending the last two seasons in Japan. Watson is a career .307 hitter in the Minor Leagues, and he has also played 34 games in the Major Leagues with the Mets and A's...Russ Adams, after playing 155 games for Syracuse the last two seasons at second base, will have to adjust to being the club's utility man in 2008. Adams hit .262 with 11 HR and 54 RBI for the Chiefs last season...2B Joe Inglett is a career .301 hitter in the Minor Leagues. He also has 66 Major League games under his belt, combining to hit .291 with Cleveland and Toronto.

Items of Interest: The Astro turf at Alliance Bank Stadium has been replaced with a grass playing surface. The Astro turf was in place since the park opened in 1997. The left-center field wall has also been pushed back from 380 ft. to nearly 400 ft.

Strengths of the Club: The Chiefs will begin the year with a strong outfield. Lind, Coats, and Watson will provide solid defense and speed on the basepaths...Syracuse will also have a deep bullpen.

Weaknesses of the Club: Infield defense will be a big question mark heading into the 2008 season. Sergio Santos, a career shortstop, will make the move to third base this year...The starting rotation doesn't match up with others around the International League.

International League West Division

COLUMBUS CLIPPERS

Affiliate: Washington Nationals

Year in IL (Columbus, OH): 48th **Record:** 3,574-3,208 **Last Governors' Cup:** 1996

2007 Finish: 64-80, 4th in West (-18.5)

Manager: Tim Foli (1st year) **Career – 3 yrs.** 174-177

Coaches: Steve McCatty (3rd year), Rick Eckstein (1st year)

Stadium: Cooper Stadium (15,000)

Probable Starters: 1B – Larry Broadway; 2B – Bret Boone; 3B – Kory Casto;
SS – Pete Orr; C – Wil Nieves; LF – Ryan Langerhans; CF – Garrett Guzman;
RF – Jason Dubois; DH – Yurendell de Caster.

Key Pitchers: *Starters* – LH John Lannan, RH Collin Balester, RH Garrett Mock, RH Tyler Clippard, LH Michael O'Connor. *Relievers* – LH Mike Bacsik, LH Arnie Munoz, RH Rob Bell, LH Eude Brito, RH Brian Sanches, LH Jason Stanford, RH Chris Booker.

Top Prospects: RHP Collin Balester has consistently improved since his professional debut in 2004. At 21, Balester was the youngest player on the Columbus roster last year, where he went 2-3 with a 4.18 ERA after being promoted from Double-A Harrisburg in July...RHP Garrett Mock's career has been something of a roller coaster ride. Hampered by injuries, he made 14 starts at three levels of the Washington system last year. Mock has a fastball that clocks in the low to mid-90's, a power slider, and a jumpy curveball, but his change-up still needs work. His personality has made him a favorite among his teammates and fans at every stop along the way...OF Garrett Guzman hit .222 with a double, a homer, and 2 RBI in 12 games with the Nationals this spring. Guzman hit .312 with a 14 HR and 88 RBI for Double-A New Britain last year. Guzman suffered a broken neck in 2005 in a serious car accident.

Other Organizational Prospects: C Jesus Flores was a Rule 5 pickup before the 2007 season, and spent all of last year as the backup to Brian Schneider, playing in 79 games and hitting .244 with 25 RBI. Flores is expected to start this year in Washington, but once Johnny Estrada is healthy Flores will head to Double-A Harrisburg...Speedy OF Roger Bernadina made his International League debut in 2007, playing 13 games with the Clippers. He spent most of the season in Harrisburg, where he hit .270 with 6 HR, 36 RBI, and 40 stolen bases. He is expected to begin the 2008 season back in Harrisburg.

Veterans to Watch: 2B Bret Boone, a three-time Major League All-Star, will be the Clippers' second baseman to begin the 2008 season. He has not played since 2005. Boone received only 37 at-bats with the Nationals this spring and is looking to play everyday to regain his swing and overall consistency.

Items of Interest: The Clippers will celebrate the final season at Cooper Stadium this year, with the new Huntington Park scheduled to open in 2009. The facility on Mound Street first opened in 1932 and has hosted several professional Columbus baseball teams.

Strengths of the Club: The starting rotation should be one of the youngest but best in the International League. John Lannan and Collin Balester only have five Triple-A wins between them, but both young prospects continue to excel in the Nationals system. Garrett Mock is healthy for the first time in two seasons, and Tyler Clippard is only 22 years old but has already reached the Major Leagues.

Weakness of the Club: The Clippers lineup will, most likely, be without a major base-stealing threat. Last year Bernie Castro led the International League in stolen bases, but with a veteran lineup and a few more power hitters, the 2008 Clippers will have a more difficult time swiping bases.

INDIANAPOLIS INDIANS

Affiliate: Pittsburgh Pirates

Year in IL (Indianapolis, IN): 12th **Record:** 805-781 **Last Governors' Cup:** 2000

2007 Finish: 70-73, 3rd in West (-12.0)

Manager: Trent Jewett (4th year) **Career - 14 yrs.** 921-914

Coaches: Hensley Meulens (4th year), Ray Searage (1st year)

Stadium: Victory Field (14,500)

Probable Starters: 1B – Adam Boeve; 2B – Josh Wilson / Jorge Velandia;
3B – Neil Walker; SS – Brian Bixler; C – Carlos Maldonado; LF – Andrew McCutchen;
CF – Chris Duffy; RF – Steve Pearce; DH – Kevin Thompson.

Key Pitchers: *Starters* – RH Bryan Bullington, RH John Van Benschoten, RH Ty Taubenheim, RH Luis Munoz, LH Phil Dumatrait. *Relievers* – LH Juan Perez, RH Romulo Sanchez, RH Marino Salas, RH Jonah Bayliss, LH Dave Davidson, RH Brian Rogers, RH Adam Bernero, RH Jesse Chavez.

Top Prospects: OF Andrew McCutchen is the top prospect in the Pittsburgh farm system. He is a five-tool outfielder who was Pittsburgh's 1st round draft pick in 2005...This time last year Neil Walker was in the midst of a conversion from catcher to third baseman. With a little more instruction at Triple-A, Walker is nearing the date of his Major League debut...Brian Bixler is the natural successor to Jack Wilson as the Pirates shortstop. A solid player offensively and defensively, Bixler should be promoted during the 2008 season...OF/1B Steve Pearce had a breakout 2007 season, hitting better than .300 at three Minor League levels before reaching Pittsburgh in September...RHP Bryan Bullington, the former #1 overall draft pick, is at a crossroads in his career. Out of options after this season, he needs to succeed when his next opportunity to pitch in the big leagues is granted.

Other Organizational Prospects: All of the following players from the lower levels of the Pittsburgh system have a chance to reach Triple-A sometime this season: RHP Olivo Astacio, RHP Ronald Bellisario, OF James Boone, 2B Jason Bowers, RHP Patrick Bresnehan, OF Brad Corley, 1B Jason Delaney, RHP Yoslan Herrera, and RHP Todd Redmond.

Veterans to Watch: RHP Elmer Dessens spent time in three organizations last year and hasn't played a full season in the majors since 2004. The Tribe hopes the 12-year veteran has something left...RHP Hector Carrasco is another journeyman who might pitch in Indianapolis if he feels he has a chance of making the Pirates sometime this year...39-year-old RHP Masumi Kuwata is making one last attempt to make the majors...LHP Casey Fossum has never lived up to the hype since pitching in Boston in 2001 and 2002. He may end up in the Indians bullpen or starting rotation.

Items of Interest: Manager Trent Jewett needs 79 wins to reach 1,000 for his Minor League career...Ray Searage is the new pitching coach, entering his 15th season as a Minor League instructor...1963 IL MVP Don Buford will be honored at Victory Field in June for his induction into the International League Hall of Fame. The IL Hall of Fame Display will be on hand for the ceremony.

Strengths of the club: Speed. If Nyjer Morgan starts the year in Triple-A, the Indians will have three (including Duffy and McCutchen) outfielders with above-average speed. The Indians have led the IL in stolen bases for the past three years...Indianapolis should be strong offensively. Pearce is a major home run threat, while Walker and McCutchen should be locks to hit over .300.

Weaknesses of the club: It is unclear who will be the "go to" guy in the bullpen. With a host of under-performing prospects and journeymen, the Indians' bullpen is the team's big unknown.

International League West Division

LOUISVILLE BATS

Affiliate: Cincinnati Reds

Year in IL (Louisville, KY): 16th **Record:** 1,105-1,044 **Last Governors' Cup:** 2001

2007 Finish: 74-70, 2nd in West (-8.5)

Manager: Rick Sweet (4th year) Career – 18 yrs. 1,264-1,271

Coaches: Smokey Garrett (6th year); Ted Power (3rd year)

Stadium: Louisville Slugger Field (13,200)

Probable Starters: 1B – Kevin Barker; 2B – Andy Green; 3B – Adam Rosales;
SS – Paul Janish; C – Ryan Hanigan; LF – Drew Anderson; CF – Jay Bruce;
RF – Chris Dickerson; DH – Andy Phillips.

Key Pitchers: *Starters* – RH Homer Bailey, RH Tom Shearn, LH Adam Pettyjohn, LH Matthew Maloney, RH Richie Gardner. *Relievers* – RH Josh Roenicke, RH Ramon Ramirez, RH Marcus McBeth, LH Jon Coutlangus, LH Bill Bray.

Top Prospects: OF Jay Bruce, considered by some a clone of Ken Griffey, Jr., played the second half of last season in Louisville, hitting .305 with 11 HR and 25 RBI. Bruce has risen quickly through the Minor Leagues and probably won't remain with the Bats too long...RHP Homer Bailey appears destined to begin the season with Louisville. The Reds top pitching prospect for the last few years saw his season end early last year due to nagging injuries...24-year-old LHP Matthew Maloney was acquired from Philadelphia last season in the trade that sent RHP Kyle Lohse to the Phillies. Maloney was the 2006 South Atlantic League Pitcher of the Year...1B/OF Joey Votto, the 2007 IL Rookie of the Year and MVP of the Louisville Bats, might be the odd man out on the Reds roster this spring.

Other Organizational Prospects: INF Todd Frazier hit .319 between Rookie-level Billings and Class-A Dayton last season...OF Drew Stubbs could follow Jay Bruce's lead and rise from Class-A to Triple-A in the same season, if he can cut back on his strikeouts...OF Michael Griffin hit .327 in 47 games with Double-A Chattanooga in 2007. He also played in the Hawaiian League during the offseason...RHP Darryl Thompson, 22, went 14-5 last season between Class-A Dayton and Sarasota. He was placed on Cincinnati's 40-man roster in the offseason.

Veterans to Watch: RHP Adam Pettyjohn was a member of the Pacific Coast League's Postseason All-Star Team last year with Nashville. He consistently pitched deep into games, going 12-4 in 17 starts...RHP Marcus McBeth went 3-2 with a 5.95 ERA in 23 relief appearances with the Reds last year...1B Kevin Barker brings a steady left-handed bat to the Bats lineup.

Items of Interest: Louisville Slugger Field will play host to the 2008 Triple-A All-Star Game. Louisville previously hosted the event in 1991 when 20,000 fans packed Cardinal Stadium...Rick Sweet returns for his fourth year at the helm in Louisville. He has compiled a 215-216 record in his first three seasons with the Bats.

Strengths of the Club: Veterans who will start the season in Louisville should make the team powerful early in the season...With Jay Bruce, Chris Dickerson, and Drew Anderson, the Bats should have one of the best outfield tandems in the International League...Pitching figures to be strong if Homer Bailey can stay healthy.

Weaknesses of the Club: It's just a matter of time before some of the veterans, and the youngsters exploding with talent (like Jay Bruce) that make the Bats strong will be promoted to the Reds, probably before the All-Star Break. It could leave the club with a young team that has to redefine itself midway through the season.

TOLEDO MUD HENS

Affiliate: Detroit Tigers

Year in IL (Toledo, OH): 45th **Record:** 2,930-3,278 **Last Governors' Cup:** 2006

2007 Finish: 82-61, West Champions (+8.5), lost to Durham in first round of playoffs

Manager: Larry Parrish (6th year) Career – 8 yrs. 473-440

Coaches: Leon Durham (8th year); A.J. Sager (1st year)

Stadium: Fifth Third Field (10,300)

Probable Starters: 1B – Jeff Larish; 2B – Henry Mateo; 3B – Mike Hessman;
SS – Erick Almonte; C – Dane Sardinha; LF – Clete Thomas; CF – Freddy Guzman;
RF – Brent Clevlen; DH – Timo Perez.

Key Pitchers: *Starters* – RH Virgil Vasquez, RH Chris Lambert, LH Macay McBride, RH Armando Gallaraga, RH Eddie Bonine. *Relievers* – RH Aquilino Lopez, LH Clay Rapada, RH Preston Larrison, RH Francis Beltran, RH Jeremy Johnson, LH Ian Ostlund.

Top Prospects: INF Michael Hollimon ranks as Detroit's fourth-best prospect according to *Baseball America*. Hollimon injured his shoulder in spring training and will begin the season on the DL. He was an Eastern League All-Star in 2007, hitting .282 with 14 HR and 76 RBI...1B Jeff Larish led the Eastern League in home runs (28) and RBI (101) in 2007...OF Matt Joyce and OF Clete Thomas are two of Detroit's better prospects and will give the Mud Hens talent and depth in the outfield. Both played at Double-A Erie last season. Joyce hit .257 with 17 HR and 70 RBI while Thomas hit .280 with 8 HR and 53 RBI.

Other Organizational Prospects: RHP Francisco Cruceta, ranked by *Baseball America* as Detroit's ninth-best prospect, is currently unable to leave his native Dominican Republic because of visa issues...RHP Jordan Tata will probably join the Mud Hens rotation after the hand injury he suffered in spring training heals...RHP Rick Porcello is in his first professional season, but the Tigers' top prospect looked strong in spring training and may move quickly through the farm system.

Veterans to Watch: 3B Mike Hessman is the reigning IL MVP after leading the League with 31 HR and 101 RBI...OF/DH Timo Perez was also a 2007 IL Postseason All-Star after hitting .309 with 13 HR and 69 RBI...RHP Aquilino Lopez was 4th in the IL last year with 26 saves...RHP Virgil Vasquez went 12-5 with a 3.48 ERA in 25 starts for the Mud Hens in 2007...INF/OF Ryan Raburn, who hit .292 with 17 HR and 64 RBI in 85 games for Toledo last year, may also return to the Mud Hens to start the season.

Items of Interest: Toledo has won the IL West the past three years and four times in six seasons...The Mud Hens have also broken franchise attendance records three straight years...Manager Larry Parrish returns after missing last season because of foot surgery...The team's new pitching coach, A.J. Sager, played baseball and football at the University of Toledo.

Strengths of the Club: Plenty of players return from last season's IL West Champions, including IL MVP Mike Hessman. Henry Mateo and Erick Almonte also return to the Toledo infield, Brent Clevlen and Timo Perez return to the outfield, and Dan Sardinha is back at catcher...A good nucleus of starting pitchers is also back, including Virgil Vasquez, Chris Lambert, and Jordan Tata. Aquilino Lopez, Preston Larrison, and Clay Rapada are just some of the returning relievers...The entire team should be motivated by the opportunity to be promoted to a potential World Series team in Detroit.

Weaknesses of the club: Depth is lacking more so than the past few seasons...Several key players, including Jeff Larish, Michael Hollimon, Clete Thomas, and Matt Joyce are making their Triple-A debuts...An unsteady bullpen in Detroit may force the Tigers to make moves that shake up the Toledo pitching staff...Freddy Guzman and Henry Mateo are the only Mud Hens with true speed.

International League South Division

CHARLOTTE KNIGHTS

Affiliate: Chicago White Sox

Year in IL (Charlotte, NC): 16th **Record:** 1,053-1,083 **Last Governors' Cup:** 1999

2007 Finish: 63-80, 4th in IL South (-17.0)

Manager: Marc Bombard (2nd year) **Career – 23 yrs.** 1,619-1,430

Coaches: Rich Dotson (1st year); Joe McEwing (1st year)

Stadium: Knights Stadium (10,000)

Probable starters: 1B – Brad Eldred; 2B – Danny Richar; 3B – Josh Fields;
SS – Jason Bourgeois; C – Donny Lucy; LF – Miguel Negron; CF – David Cook;
RF – Thomas Collaro; DH – Jeff Liefer.

Key pitchers: *Starters* – RH Lance Broadway, RH Jack Egbert, RH D.J. Carrasco, LH Andrew Sisco, RH Charlie Haeger. *Relievers* – RH Jason Childers, RH Adam Russell, RH Dewon Day, RH Oneli Perez, RH Ehren Wassermann, RH Joe Winkelsas.

Top Prospects: RHP Lance Broadway is a former 1st round draft pick of Chicago who enjoyed success during a September promotion to the White Sox in 2007. He won his first career Major League start against Kansas City, making him 1-1 with a 0.87 ERA in four appearances...RHP Jack Egbert made great strides with Double-A Birmingham last year. He struck out 165 hitters while allowing just 44 walks and 138 hits in 161.2 innings of work...C Donny Lucy displayed excellent defensive skills in 2007, bringing him from Double-A to the majors. The 2nd round pick from 2004 is still learning to hit at the higher levels, but is patient at the plate and rarely strikes out.

Other Organizational Prospects: 2B Chris Getz might be ready to play second base in the majors right now. His 2007 season in Birmingham was limited to 72 games because of injury. He batted .299, over 40 points higher than his 2006 average. With a logjam of middle infielders in the Chicago farm system, Getz figures to return to Birmingham to begin the 2008 campaign...RHP Kyle McCulloch was a 1st round pick in 2006 out of Texas. Last year he went 7-7 with a 3.64 ERA in 22 starts for Class-A Winston Salem and earned a late season promotion to Birmingham. McCulloch should start this season back in Double-A. He is a converted outfielder who is continuing to develop his command.

Veterans to Watch: INF/OF Jason Bourgeois led the Knights last season with a .311 average. He stole 38 bases combined between Birmingham and Charlotte. Bourgeois played every position for the Knights except pitcher and catcher in 2007, while posting an OPS of .813. After eight years as a pro Bourgeois is finally showing Major League potential...1B/DH Jeff Liefer hit 47 home runs for Charlotte in 198 games from 1999-2001. He spent the last two seasons with Seibu of the Japanese League, which represent the first two years since 1999 he did not make an appearance in the Major Leagues.

Items of Interest: Manager Marc Bombard enters the season with 1,619 wins, the most of any active manager in Minor League Baseball...Jason Bourgeois needs 29 stolen bases to reach 200 for his Minor League career...Brad Eldred enters the season 10 hits shy of 500 for his Minor League career.

Strengths of the Club: Pitching. The rotation should be solid, led by Lance Broadway, Jack Egbert, and Charlie Haeger. The bullpen has Major League caliber hurlers in Ehren Wassermann and Dewon Day. Oneli Perez will likely be the closer after recording 16 saves with Birmingham in 2007.

Weaknesses of the Club: Hitting for average and speed. The Knights lack players who can reach base consistently. Jason Bourgeois and Danny Richar are the only true threats to steal a base.

DURHAM BULLS

Affiliate: Tampa Bay Rays

Year in IL (Durham, NC): 11th **Record:** 757-674 **Last Governors' Cup:** 2003

2007 Finish: 80-63, South Champions (+2.0), lost to Richmond in Gov. Cup Finals

Manager: Charlie Montoyo (2nd year) **Career – 12 yrs.** 706-697

Coaches: Gary Gaetti (2nd year); Xavier Hernandez (2nd year)

Stadium: Durham Bulls Athletic Park (10,000)

Probable Starters: 1B – Chris Richard; 2B – Elliot Johnson; 3B – Evan Longoria;
SS – Reid Brignac; C – Mike DiFelice; LF – Justin Ruggiano; CF – Fernando Perez;
RF – Jeremy Owens; DH – Jon Weber.

Key Pitchers: *Starters* –RH Jeff Niemann, RH Mitch Talbot, RH Jae Kuk Ryu, RH Chris Mason, LH Mike Prochaska. *Relievers* – RH Scott Munter, RH Calvin Medlock, RH Grant Balfour, RH Scott Dohmann, RH Dale Thayer, LH Brian Henderson, RH Nick DeBarr, RH Steve Andrade.

Top Prospects: Joel Guzman, who may see time at first base for the Bulls, was an All-Star shortstop in the Florida State League in 2004 and the Southern League in 2005...3B Evan Longoria was Tampa Bay's 1st round pick (third overall) in 2006, and was in the running for the Rays' third base job this spring...SS Reid Brignac, Tampa Bay's 2nd round pick in 2004, is a tremendous defensive shortstop who was named MVP of the California League in 2006 after hitting .326 with 21 HR and 83 RBI at Class-A Visalia. Last year he hit .260 with 17 HR and 81 RBI at Double-A Montgomery...OF Fernando Perez was the MVP of the 2006 Visalia club, despite the fact Brignac was League MVP. Last year Perez was named to the *Topps* Southern League and Double-A All-Star teams...RHP Jeff Niemann went 12-6 with a 3.98 ERA in 25 starts for Durham last season.

Other Organizational Prospects: LHP Jacob McGee, Tampa Bay's 5th round pick from 2004, posted a 2.93 ERA in 21 starts at Class-A Vero Beach last season and was briefly promoted to Montgomery...RHP Wade Davis was Tampa Bay's 2007 Minor League Pitcher of the Year. He combined for a 2.50 ERA between Vero Beach and Montgomery, striking out 169 batters in 158.1 innings...LHP David Price will make his professional debut in 2008. The top overall draft pick from last season was the consensus College Player of the Year with Vanderbilt.

Veterans to Watch: Durham brings back several players who led the 2007 club to within one win of the Governors' Cup Championship including Chris Richard, Jon Weber, Jeremy Owens, Jeff Niemann, and Mitch Talbot.

Items of Interest: In his first season at the helm in Durham, manager Charlie Montoyo led the Bulls to the South Division crown just one year after leading Double-A Montgomery to the Southern League Championship in 2006. It was the sixth time Durham won the IL South in the club's first ten seasons in the League.

Strengths of the Club: The Bulls bring a very strong club into the 2008 season as they attempt to repeat as IL South Champions. Hitting, power, speed, defense, and a solid coaching staff are all strengths for this year's club.

Weaknesses of the Club: The one weakness on this year's club appears to be depth in the pitching staff. While Jeff Niemann, Mitch Talbot, and Jae Kuk Ryu were all key for Durham down the stretch last season, there aren't many other proven commodities at the Triple-A level.

International League South Division

NORFOLK TIDES

Affiliate: Baltimore Orioles
Year in IL (Norfolk, VA): 40th **Record:** 2,840-2,664 **Last Governors' Cup:** 1985
2007 Finish: 69-74, 3rd in South (-11.0)
Manager: Gary Allenson (2nd year) Career – 13 yrs. 789-833
Coaches: Larry McCall (3rd year); Dallas Williams (3rd year)
Stadium: Harbor Park (12,067)

Probable Starters: 1B – Scott Moore; 2B – Eider Torres; 3B – Oscar Salazar;
SS – Luis Hernandez; C – Ben Davis; LF – Adam Stern; CF – Chris Roberson;
RF – Nolan Reimold; DH – Mike Costanzo.

Key Pitchers: *Starters* – RH Garrett Olson, RHP Radhames Liz, RH Jim Johnson,
RH Hayden Penn, LH Craig Anderson. *Relievers* – RH Tim LaVigne, RH Bob McCrory,
RH Ryan Bukvich, LH Alberto Castillo, RH Jim Miller, RH Andy Mitchell,
RH Fredy Deza, RH Esteban Yan.

Top Prospects: RHP Garrett Olson pitched in seven Major League games last season and was in contention for a rotation spot with Baltimore this year. He has, however, battled arm problems...OF Nolan Reimold hit .306 with 11 home runs and 34 RBI for Double-A Bowie last year, but played in only 50 games due to an oblique injury...Hard-throwing RHP Radhames Liz is still learning control. Currently a starter, Liz could be moved to the bullpen in the near future...RHP Bob McCrory had Tommy John surgery just three years ago, but thanks to a fastball topping out at 97 MPH, he isn't far from being ready to contribute in the bullpen at Baltimore.

Other Organizational Prospects: SS/3B Bill Rowell, just 19 years old, is coming off a year in which he hit .273 with 9 home runs for Class-A Delmarva after an oblique injury kept him out the first month of the season. He also, however, struck out 104 times in 352 at-bats...2007 was a disappointing year for RHP Brandon Erbe. At 18 years of age, Erbe went 6-8 with a 6.26 ERA for Class-A Frederick. Erbe will begin the 2008 season back in Frederick, but if he regains his command he could conceivably get a taste of Triple-A before the year is over.

Veterans to Watch: RHP Ryan Bukvich is now with his fourth organization, having spent considerable time in the Major Leagues. He could very well end up being promoted to Baltimore after pitching in 45 games last season with the Chicago White Sox...RHP Jon Leicester, one year after pitching in 10 games with the Orioles, is still battling for Baltimore's fifth and final rotation slot. Whether he starts the year in Baltimore or Norfolk, he could end up appearing for both clubs during the course of the season.

Items of Interest: The entire field staff returns from 2007. Gary Allenson, in his second year at the helm. Looks to improve upon his club's 69-74 finish in 2007. Allenson has previously guided Louisville (1998) and Ottawa (2003) to the Governors' Cup playoffs.

Strengths of the Club: The Tides should have a deep and reliable bullpen filled with experienced pitchers such as Ran Bukvich, Esteban Yan, and Tim LaVigne. Cory Doyne, a 2007 IL Postseason All-Star, will be starting the year on the DL but should rejoin the Norfolk bullpen later this season.

Weaknesses of the Club: Norfolk hit just 92 home runs last season, 11th-best in the International League. This year's lineup appears to be equally lacking in terms of power.

RICHMOND BRAVES

Affiliate: Atlanta Braves
Year in IL (Richmond, VA): 58th **Record:** 3,890-4,219 **Last Governors' Cup:** 2007
2007 Finish: 77-64, 2nd in South (-2.0), Wild Card Winners, Won Governors' Cup
Manager: Dave Brundage (2nd year) Career – 10 yrs. 730-669
Coaches: Chris Chambliss (1st year); Guy Hansen (2nd year)
Stadium: The Diamond (12,134)

Probable Starters: 1B – Barbaro Canizares; 2B – J.C. Holt; 3B – Wes Timmons;
SS – Diory Hernandez; C – Clint Sammons; LF – Brandon Jones; CF – Gregor Blanco;
RF – Joe Borchard; DH – Reggie Taylor.

Key Pitchers: *Starters* – RH Charlie Morton, LH Jo-Jo Reyes, RH Matt DeSalvo,
LH Francisely Bueno, RH Ryan Drese. *Relievers* – RH Phil Stockman, RH Zach Schreiber.

Top Prospects: RHP Charlie Morton moved from the bullpen to the starting rotation late last season with Double-A Mississippi, and went on to post a 4-1 record with a 2.57 ERA in the Arizona Fall League...OF Brandon Jones combined to drive in 100 runs between Mississippi and Richmond a year ago. He is ranked by *Baseball America* as Atlanta's fourth-best prospect. Jones was given his first taste of the Major Leagues last September...LHP Jo-Jo Reyes went 4-0 with a 1.00 ERA in six games with Richmond in 2007, giving him 14 wins overall.

Other Organizational Prospects: RHP Sung Ki Jung has a career ERA of 1.77 but missed the last three seasons due to military service in South Korea...1B Kala Ka'aihue hit 22 HR for Class-A Myrtle Beach in 2007...OF Carl Lodenthal stole 40 bases for Double-A Mississippi last summer, then added another 11 steals playing winter ball in Venezuela...OF Jordan Schafer led all of Minor League Baseball with 176 hits between Class-A Rome and Myrtle Beach last season, hitting .312 overall. His 49 doubles were third-best in the minors. If he continues to produce early this season in Double-A, there is no reason to think he couldn't be promoted to Richmond.

Veterans to Watch: 1B Barbaro Canizares has hit .325 in two seasons in the Atlanta farm system. Canizares played for ten years in Cuba's Serie Nacional...OF Joe Borchard has 115 home runs in the Minor Leagues, including 29 for Charlotte in 2005. Borchard has played in over 300 games at the Major League level, including 85 for the 2007 Florida Marlins...RHP Matt DeSalvo was named the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Pitcher of the Year in 2007. He went 9-5 with a 2.70 ERA for the Yankees.

Items of Interest: The defending Governors' Cup Champions are playing their 43rd and final season in Richmond, Virginia. Next year the club will relocate to Gwinnett County, Georgia.

Strengths of the club: Starting pitching. Several hurlers are competing for a place in the Richmond rotation, including a pair of Major League 10-game winners (RHP Ryan Drese and LHP Chuck James) as well as 2007 Pacific Coast League ERA Champion RHP Jorge Campillo...Team speed. Gregor Blanco is a speedster in center field, as is Josh Anderson, who will also see time in center. J.C. Holt, Diory Hernandez, and Brandon Jones can all also run...The Braves will also be solid defensively up the middle with Clint Sammons, Diory Hernandez, J.C. Holt, and the combination of Gregor Blanco and Josh Anderson.

Weaknesses of the club: Power. Aside from Brandon Jones and Joe Borchard, there are few long ball threats in a park that plays big...Relief pitching. There are no pitchers in the bullpen who are proven closers at any level of the high Minor Leagues.