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RAYS NAME MINOR LEAGUE PLAYERS OF THE YEAR

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ST. PETERSBURG, FL---The Tampa Bay Devil Rays honored their minor league players of the year at a pre-game ceremony prior to the Rays-Yankees game at Tropicana Field on Wednesday, September 26.

The Rays minor league player of the year was outfielder Ryan Royster from Columbus in the South Atlantic League (A) and the team's minor league pitcher of the year was righthander Wade Davis who pitched at Vero Beach in the Florida State League (A) and Montgomery in the Southern League (AA).

Previous Rays Minor League Players and Pitchers of the Year

	Player	Pitcher
1998	OF Alex Sanchez, St. Petersburg	Dave Eiland, Durham
1999	1B Steve Cox, Durham	Jason Standridge, Charleston, St. Petersburg
2000	3B Aubrey Huff, Durham	Jim Magrane, Charleston
2001	C Toby Hall, Durham	Joe Kennedy, Orlando, Durham
2002	OF Rocco Baldelli, Bkrsfld, Orlando, Durham	Lance Carter, Durham
2003	OF Joey Gathright, Bakersfield, Orlando	Scott Autrey, Charleston, Orlando
2004	OF Delmon Young, Charleston	Chad Orvella, Chrilstn, Bkrsfld, Orlando, Durham
2005	OF Delmon Young, Montgomery, Durham	Jason Hammel, Montgomery, Durham
2006	SS Reid Brignac, Visalia, Montgomery	Andy Sonnanstine, Montgomery

Ryan Royster – Rays Minor League Player of the Year

Led the organization in the each of the triple crown categories, hitting .329 with 30 home runs and 98 RBI for Columbus... His 30 home runs, .601 slugging percentage and 65 extra-base hits led the South Atlantic League... His 98 RBI were 2nd in the league and his .329 average was 3rd...His 30 homers tied for 11th in the minors... His 285 total bases ranked 8th in the minors and his .601 slugging percentage was tied for 8th... Homered in 6 straight games from August 5-11, the longest such streak in South Atlantic League history... He doubled and homered in the clinching game of the SALLY League Championship Series, helping lead the Catfish to the title... Won the Rays Minor League Player of the Month in August.

Wade Davis – Rays Minor League Pitcher of the Year

Led the Rays organization with a 2.50 ERA combined between Vero Beach and Montgomery... His 169 strikeouts were 2nd in the organization and 7th overall in the minor leagues... Was a combined 10-3 in his 27 starts during the regular season... Started game #1 in both of Montgomery's Playoff series... Named the Rays Minor League Pitcher of the Month for June.

Justin Ruggiano – Durham Bulls Player of the Year

Batted .309 on the season, 6th in the International League and the Rays organization... Hit a team-high 20 homers and stole a team-best 26 bases, becoming the first Triple-A Durham Bulls player to have a 20/20 season, and the first player overall in Durham since Ron Gant in 1986... The International League All-Star ranked third in the league with 149 hits, a .386 on-base percentage and 78 runs scored... His .502 slugging percentage was good for 4th in the league... Batted .367 in the playoffs, with a team-best 4 home runs as the Bulls finished one game short of an International League championship.

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Jeff Niemann – Durham Bulls Pitcher of the Year

Went 12-6 with a 3.98 ERA in 25 regular season starts on the year... His 12 wins were 5th in the organization and tied for 3rd in the International League... Selected to participate in the All-Star Futures Game and the International League All-Star Game... Went 2-0 in the playoffs, striking out 16 over 13 innings as he helped the Bulls advance to within one game of a championship.

Evan Longoria – Montgomery Biscuits Player of the Year

When Longoria was promoted to Durham on August 1 he was tied for the Southern League-lead with 21 home runs... Despite missing the last month of the season, he ended up leading the league with 76 RBI and 78 runs scored... He was also 2nd with 117 hits, 3rd with a slugging % of .528, 5th in on-base percentage at .403 and 7th in hitting with a .307 average... The 21 homers set a new Montgomery single-season record... Named the Southern League's MVP... In 31 games with Durham he posted an on-base percentage of .398 and a slugging percentage of .490... His overall total of 26 home runs was 2nd in the organization, as were his 95 total RBI... *Baseball America* ranked him as the hitter with the best power in the Southern League in their "Best Tools" issue... Hit .375 in the playoffs with Durham, with a team-high 4 doubles to go with 2 home runs and 6 RBI.

Chris Mason – Montgomery Biscuits Pitcher of the Year

Named the Southern League's Pitcher of the Year after leading the league with 15 wins and a 2.57 ERA... His 136 strikeouts were 4th in the league and his 161.1 innings were tied for 4th... His ERA ranked 3rd in the organization, while his wins ranked 2nd and his strikeouts were 5th... Was touted as having the Best Control in the Southern League by *Baseball America*... Went 1-0 in two postseason starts, helping the Biscuits win their second consecutive Southern League title.

Rhyme Hughes – Vero Beach Devil Rays Player of the Year

Was the batting champion of the Florida State League with a .329 average, the third Ray to win a batting title (also Steve Cox in 1999 and Toby Hall in 2001 both won International League batting titles with Durham)... His .392 on-base percentage finished 3rd in the league and his .515 slugging percentage was 4th... Promoted to Montgomery where he hit .295 before being hit by a pitch in the face, ending his season on August 25... Finished with an overall average of .323, 2nd in the organization... Racked up a total of 14 HR and 72 RBI on the season... Named the Best Defensive First Baseman in the Florida State League by *Baseball America*.

Jake McGee – Vero Beach Devil Rays Pitcher of the Year

Led the Rays organization and ranked 4th overall in the minors with 175 strikeouts... Fanned 11.25 per 9 innings, 6th best in the minors... Finished with a 2.93 ERA at Vero Beach, ranking 2nd in the league... Led the league with 145 punchouts despite his promotion to Montgomery in August... His 3.15 ERA combined between Vero Beach and Montgomery ranked him 6th in the Rays organization... *Baseball America* listed him as having the Florida State League's best fastball... Won the Rays Minor League Pitcher of the Month in August.

Desmond Jennings – Columbus Catfish Player of the Year

Twice named the Rays Minor League Player of the Month (April and June)... Stole an organization-high 45 bases, 4th in the South Atlantic League and 13th overall in the minors... Hit .315 on the year, 4th in the organization and 6th in the SALLY League... Carried a .401 on-base percentage, 5th in the league... Was tabbed the league's Best Defensive Outfielder by *Baseball America*.

Lewis Rollins – Columbus Catfish Pitcher of the Year

Was named the Rays Pitcher of the Month in both May and July... Set the Rays organizational record with 17 wins, a mark that tied for the most in the minor leagues... His 2.54 ERA was 2nd in the organization and 4th in the South Atlantic League while his 149 strikeouts were 2nd in the league and 3rd-most in the organization... Went 2-0 in two Playoff starts with a 1.38 ERA in 13 innings, helping the Catfish win the South Atlantic League title.

Emeel Salem – Hudson Valley Renegades Player of Year

Led the Renegades with a .311 average, 7 triples and 28 stolen bases...Ranked 9th in the New York-Penn League in average, tied for 2nd in triples and finished 3rd in steals.

Alex Cobb – Hudson Valley Renegades Pitcher of the Year

Started a team-high 16 games and tossed a team-most 81.1 innings – third in the league... Pitched to a 3.54 ERA on the season while leading the club with 62 strikeouts.

Omar Luna – Princeton Rays Player of the Year

Led the team with a .289 average and 67 hits on the season... Collected 26 RBI and 10 stolen bases.

Jeremy Hall – Princeton Rays Pitcher of the Year

Finished 2nd in the Appalachian League with a 1.56 ERA in a league-high 69.1 innings before being promoted to Columbus for his final start of the season... Earned the victory in that start, and then earned another in the Playoffs with a 4.1 inning relief stint.

Ramon Novas – Rays Dominican League Player of the Year

Led the Rays Dominican team with a .313 average, 65 games played and 73 hits... Added 6 homers (2nd on the team), 33 RBI and 10 stolen bases on the season.

Juan Santana – Rays Dominican League Pitcher of the Year

Pitched to a team-best 1.05 ERA in 15 games (3 starts)... Posted a 3-4 record, striking out a team-high 57 and issuing just 13 walks...Allowed only 25 hits, one home run and 5 earned runs in 42.2 innings,

Julio Cedeño – Rays Venezuelan League Player of the Year

Played in 51 games with the Rays Venezuelan team, batting .300 with 13 doubles, 2 triples, 5 home runs, 32 RBI and 5 stolen bases... Had a .468 slugging percentage and a .381 on-base percentage on the year.

Omar Bencomo – Rays Venezuelan League Pitcher of the Year

Went 2-3 in 12 games (8 starts) with a 2.89 ERA in 46.2 innings... Struck out 31 and walked just 6.

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For more information please contact the Devil Rays Communications Dept., (727) 825-3242.

The Tampa Bay Devil Rays have proudly represented Major League Baseball in the Tampa Bay region since 1998. The organization and its foundation are committed to building a strong community bond through meaningful interaction and charitable contributions.