

# The TBL

# Baseball Annual

A publication of the Transcontinental Baseball League

## The TBL Hall of Fame

2010 Edition

Walter H. Hunt  
Robert Jordan  
Paul Harrington

All 24 Teams Analyzed  
Using the T.Q. System



# The TBL Baseball Annual

**A publication of the Transcontinental Baseball League**

2010 Edition

by

Walter H. Hunt

Robert Jordan

Paul Harrington

with contributions from all of TBL's managers

and extra help from:

Mark Bloom

Ray Murphy

Darrell Skogen

Clay Beard

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This book was produced using a Macintosh with Adobe  
InDesign CS2 and Adobe Photoshop 7.0.

I can be reached by mail at

**3306 Maplebrook Road,  
Bellingham, MA 02019**

or by e-mail at

***hotc@walterhunt.com.***

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# the TBL baseball annual

Welcome to the 2010 *TBL Baseball Annual*. This is the fifteenth year of the *Annual* in the book format. This year we return to print with our newly-inaugurated TBL Hall of Fame as the unifying theme. We also have many of our regular features, and a fine article from Mark Bloom on the "Art of the Trade."

Last year's pause for breath has given us strong motivation to bring you back the product you've become accustomed to reading. Team articles have been pared down in size, with one page reviewing the previous season – most written by you, the team managers – and three pages of our usual incisive analysis. Some of the content we have included before is now available on the TBL stats site; no need to reproduce it here.

Mr. Jordan has said, more than once, that your humble editor is the only one who can get him to write for free. That may be so, but his continued contribution to this work is of a high enough caliber that I would be willing to pay for it . . . if I couldn't get it for free myself. And the continued assistance by Mr. Harrington makes this effort even better.

As always, it's probably as much fun to write as it is to read. Have a great season.

Walter, Editor  
Robert  
Paul  
May, 2010

## The T.Q. System

Shamelessly stolen from the Mazerowski annual, the T.Q. System assigns points to each area of the team's expected performance and totals the result. The maximum score under the T.Q. System is **50**, divided as follows:

<b>Pitching:</b>	20 points
<b>Offense:</b>	15 points
<b>Defense:</b>	10 points
<b>Bench:</b>	5 points

The T.Q. System does not take age or prospect value into account, only present capability. It does, however, consider usage (available games, at bats and innings).

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# future drafts

In many cases, what's on the field isn't the whole story. Some of our teams have quite a bit to say in future drafts, and any evaluation should properly take that into account.

The graphical displays below show how much each team has in the tank. The middle mark on the thermometer represents a full draft (picks #1-#3) in 2011; above the middle line is excess, while below means something's missing.



base

## haves



**MUNICH.** It takes a lot of effort to take a team apart from tapped-out contender to punchless rebuild, but it's impressive to see all you can get for your trouble. A top #1 and two others.



**BROBDINGNAG.** The #1 will be good, but not as good as this year's; still, there are three #2s and two #3s.



**GRAND CAYMAN.** Their own draft and two extra #3s.



**BLUE HILL.** Their own draft, along with an extra #2 from Knoxville. They may be choosing first overall.



**WAKEFIELD.** Their own draft, along with an extra #2 from Rye. Their own picks will be much higher.



**MARACAIBO, MIDWEST, MELROSE.** Three former contenders. Midwest has an extra #1 and no #3; Maracaibo and Melrose have extra picks.



**KANSAS, GREATER OHIO, RICHMOND.** Their own drafts for the first two, with higher #1s in 2009; for Richmond, an extra #3.

## balanced



**COLUMBUS, DALLAS, ZION, GOTHAM CITY.** Their own drafts.



### LAS VEGAS.

Back in a rebuild cycle. No #2, but two #3s, and likely a high position in the 2011 draft.

## have nots



**HOUSTON.** No third rounder (or even a fourth rounder) in 2010. But it's a better team on the field, at least.



**WHITMAN, HUDSON, KNOXVILLE.** No second rounder in 2011 for these three serious contenders.



### PORTLAND, NEW WESTMINSTER.

Portland has no #1; the Canadian boys have only a #1.



**NORTHBORO.** Just a #2 for the Phoenix; the rest of the draft has been turned into stuff to help them win games in 2010.



**RYE.** Mr. Musselman doesn't need no stinking draft. They might be right. But there's no room for error, and no draft before the fourth round.

***These indicators also appear at the bottom of each team article, for your convenience.***

# t.q. summary

TEAM (DIVISION)      OFFENSE      DEFENSE      PITCHING      BENCH      TOTAL

## The Cream of the Crop



Rye (Mays)	11.0	9.0	16.0	3.0	<b>39.0</b>
Portland (Aaron)	10.0	7.5	14.5	3.5	<b>35.5</b>
Dallas (Ruth)	12.0	7.5	13.5	2.5	<b>35.5</b>
Northboro (Aaron)	9.0	8.5	13.0	3.0	<b>33.5</b>
Whitman (Clemente)	10.0	7.0	12.0	2.5	<b>31.5</b>

## The Solid Performers



Hudson (Mantle)	11.0	7.0	9.5	2.5	<b>30.0</b>
Zion (Mantle)	8.5	8.5	8.5	3.0	<b>28.5</b>
New Westminster (Ruth)	10.5	4.0	11.0	2.5	<b>28.0</b>
Knoxville (Williams)	8.0	5.0	11.0	2.5	<b>26.5</b>

## The Transitional Teams



Gotham City (Mays)	7.0	4.5	11.5	2.5	<b>25.5</b>
Houston (Ruth)	6.0	5.0	12.0	2.0	<b>25.0</b>
Wakefield (Williams)	7.0	8.0	7.5	2.5	<b>25.0</b>
Melrose (Mantle)	7.5	4.5	11.0	2.0	<b>25.0</b>
Columbus (Clemente)	8.5	4.5	9.5	2.0	<b>24.5</b>
Kansas (Aaron)	8.5	4.0	9.5	2.0	<b>24.0</b>
Richmond (Williams)	8.5	8.0	5.0	2.0	<b>23.5</b>
Greater Ohio (Clemente)	8.5	5.5	7.5	2.0	<b>23.5</b>

## The Rebuilders



Maracaibo (Aaron)	6.5	7.0	6.5	2.5	<b>22.5</b>
Brobdingnag (Ruth)	10.5	4.0	5.5	2.5	<b>22.5</b>
Grand Cayman (Mays)	6.5	4.5	8.0	3.0	<b>22.0</b>
Las Vegas (Mays)	5.5	5.5	8.5	2.0	<b>22.0</b>
Midwest (Williams)	6.5	4.5	4.0	2.5	<b>17.5</b>
Munich (Mantle)	5.0	3.0	4.5	2.0	<b>14.5</b>
Blue Hill (Clemente)	5.0	5.0	3.0	1.5	<b>14.5</b>

### Conference Totals

International	313.0 (26.1 average)
National	306.0 (25.5 average)

### Division Totals

Aaron (NC)	115.5	Mantle (NC)	98.0
Ruth (IC)	111.0	Clemente (IC)	94.0
Mays (IC)	108.0	Williams (NC)	92.5

# features

We have several team evaluation metrics that go beyond what we see in the team envelopes. On a previous page we showed the contents of each team's 2011 draft; on the next two pages, we show other ways in which we can measure how our teams are doing.

## The Rebuilding Clock

We again present the rebuilding clock for your edification. As previously noted, there are fewer teams willing to hit the wall at high speed – we have learned from Joe and others to hedge our bets; so there isn't anyone at the bottom of the clock cycle. Still, we have a wide range of clock settings this year.

### Teams In Serious Rebuild Mode



**12:00** The team has hit the wall and is a hideous train wreck. The Munich and East Anglia collapses, the self-created Brob team two decades ago. **This Year:** NONE.



**01:00** The first steps back from the abyss. Usually the team has had one draft and has some more coming in future. The post-Rusty Cobb Carolina Spirits, the New Westminster 38-win club. **This Year:** NONE.



**02:00** A team that has taken the plunge toward a major rebuild. Usually that means no pitching, but a few key players on the roster. **This Year:** Blue Hill, Munich.



**03:00** Teams at 3 have either built down but not completely out, or have had some of their future start to show ability. **This Year:** Las Vegas, Maracaibo, Midwest.

### Teams Turning The Corner



**04:00** These teams have either unbuilt only modestly, or are on the road to recovery. There are usually flaws keeping them from contention. **This Year:** Columbus, Grand Cayman, Greater Ohio, Richmond, Wakefield.



**05:00** A contender in a weak division, a .500 club in a strong one. This team will often be coming off a strong draft and may make the mistake of trying to contend too soon. **This Year:** Whitman, Brobdingnag, New Westminster.



**06:00** An above .500 club, likely one that has just made a trade to strengthen its hand but not spent in a major way to get to the playoffs. **This Year:** NONE.

### Teams In Their Prime



**07:00** A good contender with young players. It hasn't made a complete commitment to drafting cardboard and getting veterans to fill holes – but has the ability to do it. **This Year:** Whitman.



**08:00** A contender in its prime with a mix of youth and veteran players. A team that's made a commitment to win now. **This Year:** Dallas, Hudson, New Westminster, Northboro



**09:00** A team completely around the corner. Some of the present, and possibly some of the future, has been traded away to keep it solid. **This Year:** Knoxville, Rye.



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## Teams Headed For The Cliff



**10:00** Teams that reach 10 can see what will happen when their luck has run out, but have decided to move forward rather than back. This is where you go if you don't go to 2 or 3.

**This Year:** NONE.



**11:00** This is the last stop before the cliff. Note that teams at this stage can often be quite good, but when the old guys run out of mojo, they become quite bad. **This Year:** NONE.

*Remember that this is about the state of a team, not necessarily its ability or projected performance.*

## SNTs

We once again present the Shiny New Things found under TBL managers' holiday foliage. Here are our choices – briefly considered – for each team's new toy:

<b>Blue Hill:</b>	<i>Gordon Beckham, 3B-2B</i>
<b>Brodingnag:</b>	<i>Travis Snider, OF</i>
<b>Columbus:</b>	<i>Brett Anderson, SP</i>
<b>Dallas:</b>	<i>Andrew Bailey, RP</i>
<b>Gotham City:</b>	<i>Alcides Escobar, SS</i>
<b>Grand Cayman:</b>	<i>Tommy Hanson, SP</i>
<b>Greater Ohio:</b>	<i>Luis Valbuena, 2B</i>
<b>Houston:</b>	<i>Rick Porcello, SP</i>
<b>Hudson:</b>	<i>Luke Gregerson, RP</i>
<b>Kansas:</b>	<i>Brian Matusz, SP</i>
<b>Knoxville:</b>	<i>Andrew McCutchen, OF</i>
<b>Las Vegas:</b>	<i>Jeff Niemann, SP</i>
<b>Maracaibo:</b>	<i>Cameron Maybin, OF</i>
<b>Melrose:</b>	<i>Matt LaPorta, OF</i>
<b>Midwest:</b>	<i>Jordan Zimmermann, SP</i>
<b>Munich:</b>	<i>Erick Aybar, SS</i>
<b>New Westminster:</b>	<i>Dexter Fowler, OF</i>
<b>Northboro:</b>	<i>Javier Vazquez, SP</i>
<b>Portland:</b>	<i>Matt Wieters, C</i>
<b>Richmond:</b>	<i>Gerardo Parra, OF</i>
<b>Rye:</b>	<i>Chris Carpenter, SP</i>
<b>Wakefield:</b>	<i>Elvis Andrus, SS</i>
<b>Whitman:</b>	<i>David Price, SP</i>
<b>Zion:</b>	<i>Garrett Jones, OF</i>



## The Vegas Line

The staff of the *Annual* never claimed to have exclusive right to baseball analysis in TBL, and a few years ago we gladly made room for Paul Harrington's **Vegas Line**, which first made its appearance on our mailing list.

When we became kinder and gentler some editions ago – due to an incident most of us would rather forget – some of our most visceral analysis went with it. But our friend Mr. Harrington, untarred by the same brush, delivered some of what we had left behind. It is a pleasure to continue to add his commentary to ours under the logo you see above.

In each team article, there's a quip from Paul Harrington. His position does not always agree with the extended description – but it provides some additional insight that we hope you enjoy.

## Numbers, Numbers, Numbers

Don't we like them, too. Over the course of fifteen years, part of the preparation process for the *Annual* has involved poking through stacks of paper with previous seasons' stats, draft lists, and records from our history.

As a result of Herculean effort by Steve Stein, much of this material has been compiled and presented online in our Stats Archive. It has made our job here much easier, and has given us insights and perspectives we might not have otherwise had.

This year, as we celebrate the creation of the TBL Hall of Fame, we are able to bring this enormous amount of data to bear as we look forward – and backward. Enjoy.



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# the tbl hall of fame

## a quarter century of cardboard excellence

by Bob Jordan



Welcome to the 2010 *TBL Annual*!

The ice has melted, the shovels and sand and windshield scrapers are put away for another year, and the 2010 baseball season is upon us. The *Annual* writing staff, rested and tanned after a 2009 offseason that crowded out most of the activities we love in favor of family and professional obligations, is back with a vengeance this year. In this tightly-crafted little volume you will find all of the bold analysis, saber-sharp wit and death-defying predictions you have come to expect from the *Annual*.

In the process, we celebrate a huge milestone in the long history of our extraordinary league – the founding of the Transcontinental Baseball League Hall of Fame. This project, which was discussed and planned for years by a number of illustrious league members, was finally brought to fruition as we held our first TBL ballot in the offseason, and named and elected eleven amazing players and two special members of our brotherhood as founding members.

Three people deserve particular applause for making the TBL Hall of Fame happen. First and perhaps foremost, Clay Beard relentlessly collected and archived league statistical data for years with little fanfare – often entering data into computer files by hand in the early years. Second, the amazing and gifted Walter Hunt kept the concept of the Hall of Fame in our league conversation at the annual draft; he published an important article in the 2006 *Annual* evangelizing on the topic, and took the lead in setting up the rules for induction. Lastly, Mr. Stephen Stein and his trusty Macintosh computer brought together the spectacular TBL History website (<http://www.tblhome.com/history/>). This statistical extravaganza allowed us to do what fans of Major League Baseball have done for generations – compare players across eras based on the statistical data.

Before we hand out the plaques, we need to offer our sincere thanks to a select group of folks that kept the ball rolling for us in the last year. First, thanks to Joe Auletta for his service as League Commissioner during the 2009 season. He hands the big hat (and the teeny weeny paycheck) to our new Fearless Leader and 2009 TBL League Champion Darrell Skogen. Helping Darrell rough up less cooperative owners is our new Commissioner of Vice, Paul Harrington.

Commissioner Skogen proved that there is more than one path to TBL glory as he combined airtight pitching, Minnesota Little Ball and a lot of clutch performances to roll to the league title. The Midwest Mongrels completed a mind-buckling comeback from a 3-0 deficit in the International Conference championship against Mark Freedman's intimidating Melrose Avengers. Then, Darrell went nose-to-nose with one of TBL's best game managers, beating Anton Greenwald 4 games to 2 to take the World Championship.

Clay Beard gets a tip of the hat for his steady work as our league roster czar. Stephen Stein and Ray Murphy get twenty-three thumbs up for their work on the TBL web sites, and their help keeping the remote managers plugged in and turned on during the TBL draft. Ray also deserves a big slap on the back for stepping in as our first Commissioner of Vice, and helping Darrell get things smoothed out after some in-season turbulence.

Last, but certainly not least, we once again offer gratitude to the indefatigable Walter Hunt for his relentless service to this volume. This year, Walter hammered out this piece of work while completing the publication of *New England Rails* – a high-end strategy game that took twenty-five years to design. Walter's creativity seems to have no bounds, and we are all the lucky beneficiaries.

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## tbl hall of fame managers' wing



### Paul Montague

TBL's founder, owner of the Munich Marauders and a two-time league champion. He has been with us for all of our 28 seasons. The first league draft was held in his dorm room at Virginia Tech.

Paul was also the League Commissioner from the league's founding in 1982 through the 1987 season.



### Clay Beard

Owner of the Hudson Generals. Clay celebrates a quarter of a century with TBL this year. League Commissioner from 1990 through 1992, roster czar and stat keeper through his entire tenure with the league.

Clay has worked harder than anyone to fine-tune our league rulebook to increase the statistical integrity and realism in our results. He's still working on getting rid of the +5 first batter increase for relievers.



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## the class of 2010

**Kevin Brown** (1990-2006; *Dallas, Portland, among others.*) 235 lifetime wins and a 3.46 ERA, 2,571 strikeouts and 121 complete games in 467 starts. In the mid 1990s, Brown was one of TBL's most dominant pitchers. From 1992 to 1998, Brown was 138-60, including a 27-4, 1.89 performance in 1997.



only 114 homers, but won 96 games with pitching and blinding speed. Henderson led the way with 95 bags for a Hudson team that set a TBL single-season record with 310 steals.

**Orel Hershiser** (1985-2000; *Munich, Knoxville, Richmond.*) A steady performer from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, he recorded 197 lifetime victories and 94 complete games, winning 23, 25 and 21 games for Munich in three consecutive seasons. In 1988 and 1989 Hershiser was 48-10. He is the last TBL starter to record 40 starts in a season (1987).



**David Cone** (1987-2002; *primarily with Rochester.*) 214 lifetime wins, 2,617 strikeouts in 2,971 innings, with 117 complete games and a 3.22 lifetime ERA. He was a key part of the Rochester Express dynasty. In 1995, Cone led Rochester to the TBL World Series, going 23-5, 2.16, allowing only 155 hits in 275 innings.



**John Franco** (1985-2005; *various teams.*) 210 saves ranks him second all time, and his 2.68 ERA highlights his long-term effectiveness. He pitched in more games (922) than any other player in TBL history, and recorded ERAs of 1.88 or lower in six different TBL seasons.

**Tony Gwynn** (1985-2002, *primarily Gotham City.*) Gwynn is TBL's all time hit leader with 3,277 and batting average at .338. Hit .403 in 1988 and .388 ten years later. He had over 200 hits 8 times, and led TBL in hits 7 times. In 1988, he had 269 hits and reached base 332 times.



**Barry Larkin** (1988-2005, *Zion*). Perhaps the best shortstop in TBL history thus far, with a lifetime batting average of .297 and 333 steals. Larkin was a steady performer both at the plate and in the field for the excellent Zion club. Between 1990 and 1996, Larkin committed only 48 errors while playing shortstop virtually every day. In 1997, he hit 39 homers, walked 111 times, and scored 138 runs.

**Mark McGwire** (1988-2002, *Rochester, Brobdingnag and others.*) A fearsome slugger and on-base player, he hit 531 lifetime homers, 1351 RBI and 1105 walks. Recorded consecutive seasons of 42, 58, 62, 71 and 72 home runs in the late 1990s. He led TBL in homers for 4 straight years (1997 through 2000). McGwire was a cornerstone of the 1997 – 1999 Brobdingnag Barbarian teams that won two TBL World Series and lost a third to Melrose by 4 games to 3.



**Rickey Henderson** (1984-2002, *primarily Hudson and Munich.*) The all-time leader with 887 stolen bases, six times stealing 50 or more in a season. He owns a .362 lifetime OBP; he slugged 258 homers, four times hitting 20 or more in a season. He also ranks third all time in runs scored with 1739. In 1989, the Hudson Generals hit .223 as a team, with



**Rafael Palmeiro** (1988-2006, *primarily Maracaibo.*) A dominant hitter for the Rumrunners, he recorded 493 homers, 1886 RBI, 670 doubles and scored 1638 runs. Palmeiro is one of only three players in TBL history

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## the class of 2010

to reach the 3000 hit mark. He also made only 90 errors in 19 seasons, primarily at first base. An extraordinarily durable performer, Palmeiro played at least 146 games every year from 1989 through 2003.



**Tim Raines** (1985-2002, primarily *Maracaibo*.) A great leadoff man and base stealer, he swiped 526 bases, scored 1326 runs and walked 854 times. He is TBL's all-time leader in career triples with 108. He grounded into only 67 double plays in a 17 year career. A .288 hitter over the course of his career, in 1987 he led Maracaibo to the championship with 255 hits and 155 runs scored.



**Larry Walker** (1991 – 2006, *his best seasons were with Flint in the 1990s*.) A lifetime .297 hitter with a .554 slugging percentage, Walker hit 432 homers and drove in 1479 runs in a spectacular career. He hit over .300 eight times, and hit more than 50 homers in a season in both 1998 (52) and 2000 (55). He was also an outstanding defender with a very strong arm, recording only 66 errors in 16 major league seasons, all but three as an everyday player. In 2000, Walker recorded a season for the ages, hitting .387-55-172.

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*Congratulations to all our inductees, and thanks to both Paul and Clay for their outstanding and continuing contributions to TBL.*

## predictions

TBL 2010 has several excellent pennant races in store. Applying the secret formula and dividing by the square root of Hank Aaron's hat size, we hereby predict the following results:

In the Clemente, Whitman will cash in on an aggressive offseason rebuilding program to claim the prize. Rye will dominate the Mays. Dallas will win 100 games for the first time ever and hold off the rest of the pack to win the Ruth. Portland is the pick in the Aaron over a game but overmatched Northboro club. Hall of Famer

Clay Beard's Hudson Generals will add to their legend over the dangerous Elders of Zion. In the Williams, Richmond will win their first pennant since 2006.

The *Annual* is glad to be back, and we hope its arrival brings the usual moments of outrage, surprise and laughter. Whether your club is built like the '98 Yankees or the '62 Mets, we wish you all the best in 2010.



Last fall we had our first chance to cast ballots for the TBL Hall of Fame. I think I would have to call it a qualified success. In addition to the players shown above, it was a tremendous pleasure to recognize Clay Beard and Paul Montague for all that they've done for TBL.

In order to set the standard that we consider worthy of Hall of Famers, a committee put together the ten players that formed our charter member class; by the votes of league members, we elected Larry Walker to join them, using a point system and a threshold value. We assumed that there were some consensus choices – Walker, Bagwell, Alomar, perhaps one or two others – but there was enough difference of opinion that only Walker reached the target.

What does this say about the method? If you ask at least one of our managers, the qualifications for the possible inductees fell generally short of his expectation of what constitutes a Hall of Famer – he only voted for three. Even with his *bona fides*, Walker didn't even appear on every ballot. And even though we had a wealth of information from Steve Stein's amazing TBL historical stats site, we all tended to look at career stats rather than particular outstanding seasons.

Truthfully, we made a *lot* of assumptions about what our fellow managers would think and what they'd do.

No method is perfect. In the *Annual* we've provided eight short bios of players who we believe have Hall of Fame credentials. You might or might not agree, but they have all had great runs in TBL. Should they all be elected next year, or at all? You decide. It's certainly possible that there are others you might choose. The criteria are relatively simple: ten seasons in TBL, two seasons retired – no card, no usage. We make the retirement time a little shorter than in real MLB,

because there's really no reason to wait – once a player is gone, he's *gone*. If this was next year, the highlighted players would have names like Barry Bonds, Roger Clemens or Greg Maddux. I think it's fair to say that those guys all deserve your attention when they appear on the ballot.

But that doesn't disqualify Jeff Bagwell, Roberto Alomar or Wade Boggs. Therein lies one of the problems with a system like the one that is used in real MLB; some really good players get left by the wayside as more recent players take their place in the voters' consciousness. Another one of the problems with a limited ballot is that it moves independent of the *number* of qualified candidates. If there are only five votes, there may be ten worthy recipients. If we use a point ranking system, there might be two or three players worthy of the top ranking – or none.

I have thought about the system since we had the exercise last fall, and have a few possible choices for the next ballot.

1. Let voters assign a 1-5 point rating to each candidate. Managers can give out five 5s, or five 1s, or anything in between.
2. Consider the number of ballots on which a player appears as well as the total point value, or instead of it. The number of ballots is the determining factor in the BBWAA balloting for Cooperstown.
3. Allow some portion of the votes cast for a player to carry over. This would mean that some players who don't make the cut in one year would get credit in future years, helping them compete against better future candidate classes.

These, or other, proposals will be coming to a ballot near you. I hope we continue to evolve our voting system so that we can put worthy players in our Hall of Fame.

# 2010 computer pre-play

by Clay Beard

This is the same low labor project you've come to expect from me. For the settings I used Duke Robinson Jr. to manage all the teams. I checked Fatigue only under Fatigue and Injury Rules. I also checked all three of the options at the bottom; Automatic AIM Subs, Enforce BFP, and that No PR> 930 thing, which provides some innocuous usage. All players were active for the whole season.

These settings basically allow the season to be played with usage similar to that of the MLB season, with some innocuous help. Then I just pushed the button and played the season 10 times. The won/loss records indicate the average of the 10 seasons.

In the International Conference, there is likely only one good race – the Ruth Division, which should overall be competitive; the other two divisions will be over early in the season. But the two wild card spots will be fought over.



In the International Conference there is only one dominant team – Portland – but there are possibly as many as seven or eight teams fighting for the four other playoff spots. It should be a very exciting season.



## International Conference TYPICAL SEASON (rounded off)

Clemente	W	L	GB	Hi*	Lo†	Div‡	WC§
WHITMAN	96	66	--	106	86	9	0
GREATER OHIO	81	81	15	88	69	1	2.5
COLUMBUS	79	83	17	85	71	0	1
BLUE HILL	53	109	43	62	46	0	0

Mays	W	L	GB	Hi*	Lo†	Div‡	WC§
RYE	108	54	--	117	99	10	0
GOTHAM CITY	84	78	24	91	80	0	3
LAS VEGAS	70	92	38	76	63	0	0
GRAND CAYMAN	70	92	38	83	59	0	0

Ruth	W	L	GB	Hi*	Lo†	Div‡	WC§
DALLAS	94	68	--	101	84	7.5	1.5
NEW WESTMINSTER	89	73	5	94	87	1.5	7.3
BROBDINGNAG	81	81	13	97	69	1	3.7
HOUSTON	76	86	18	86	66	0	1

## National Conference TYPICAL SEASON (rounded off)

Aaron	W	L	GB	Hi*	Lo†	Div‡	WC§
PORTLAND	103	59	--	118	92	8.5	1.5
NORTHBORO	94	68	9	102	83	1.5	8.3
KANSAS	83	79	20	90	76	0	1.7
MARACAIBO	67	95	36	76	58	0	0

Mantle	W	L	GB	Hi*	Lo†	Div‡	WC§
HUDSON	94	68	--	102	82	6	2
ZION	88	74	5	96	80	2	4.5
MELROSE	86	76	8	100	70	2	2
MUNICH	62	100	32	69	51	0	0

Williams	W	L	GB	Hi*	Lo†	Div‡	WC§
KNOXVILLE	81	81	--	90	69	5.5	0
WAKEFIELD	80	82	1	88	73	4.5	0
RICHMOND	70	92	11	78	61	0	0
MIDWEST	55	107	26	71	46	0	0

fractions reflect ties.

\* Highest number of wins recorded  
† Lowest number of wins recorded

‡ Division Championships (in 10 seasons)  
§ Wild Card appearances (in 10 seasons)

# international conference hall of fame eligibles

**Tom Candiotti, SP** 1984-1999  
*Brazil, Statesmen, Puget Sound,  
Knox Sox, Douglass/Gumsville*

A well-travelled knuckleballer, Candiotti was a regular starter for his entire TBL career. He never won 20 games, but won 10 or more in all but three of his full seasons, winning 173 games and striking out 1,833 batters in 2,757 TBL innings, recording a lifetime 3.85 ERA, with 92 complete games in his 395 starts.



Tom Candiotti



Juan Gonzalez

**Juan Gonzalez, OF** 1992-2005  
*Brobdingnag, Rochester*

A money player and RBI machine, Gonzalez played for two of the most powerful offenses in TBL history – the Barbarians of the mid 1990s and the Express of the early 2000s. His career was shortened by injury, but his early seasons featured three prodigious years of power production – 40, 49 and 51 homers with 113, 151 and 141 RBI. He hit 415 homers and drove in 1363 in his TBL career.



**Wade Boggs, 3B** 1991-2004  
*Amherst, Raleigh/Winston-Salem,  
Jessup/Boston, Cape Cod, Diamond Point, Whitman.*

A contact-hitting machine, Boggs was a lifetime .307 hitter, sixth in TBL history as of this writing. He recorded 2,517 hits and 1,123 walks in 16 seasons (with only 835 strikeouts), leading to a lifetime .390 OBP. From 1986 to 1990 he had five straight 200-hit seasons for Amherst, the North Carolinian franchises, and the Jessup club.



Wade Boggs



Jeff Bagwell

**Jeff Bagwell, 1B** 1992-2005  
*Dallas, Louisville/Capitol Hill/Pensacola, Mahopac.*

Bagwell was a prodigious power hitter who was in the lineup every day; he played all 162 in four seasons, and in all but one of his 16 years he was in 140 or more. He hit 413 homers in his 14 years in TBL, driving in 1,455 and walking 1,335 times. He recorded a .281 lifetime batting average, with OBP of .389 and a .507 SLG.

HALL OF FAME

# Another Curtain Call

In the Clemente, there is nothing that is more like a sure thing than *Brian Hanley* and the Whitman River Rats. There was a down period, two and three years past, but it has always been the opinion of the *Annual's* editorial staff that no one makes more of what he's got. This year he has the luxury of having a lot, and not a lot of competition – very much like Maracaibo a year ago.



It's not as if Mr. Hanley will take anything for granted, though. Two of the other three teams are a good ways from being pushovers. The closest competitor is over in Columbus, where *Vic Vaughn* has finally put his own stamp on the locomotive that was heading over the cliff. The Jets are probably – *probably* – not a contender yet, but unlike some recent editions there are some pitchers and some hitters and even some guys who can catch the ball. If some of the kids can come together, this team is going to make serious noise.

Meanwhile up in Greater Ohio, the pitchers all seem to be lefthanded, and the



Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Whitman*	86	76	.531	—
Greater Ohio	82	80	.506	4
Columbus	72	90	.444	14
Blue Hill	58	104	.358	28

\* Lost to Las Vegas in IC playoff.

roster is studded with names we like. Still, there isn't enough on the mound or in the lineup to challenge for a pennant this year. That being said, Devlin Toth and his Chia Pets have made a great comeback from a long way down – and that's great to see.

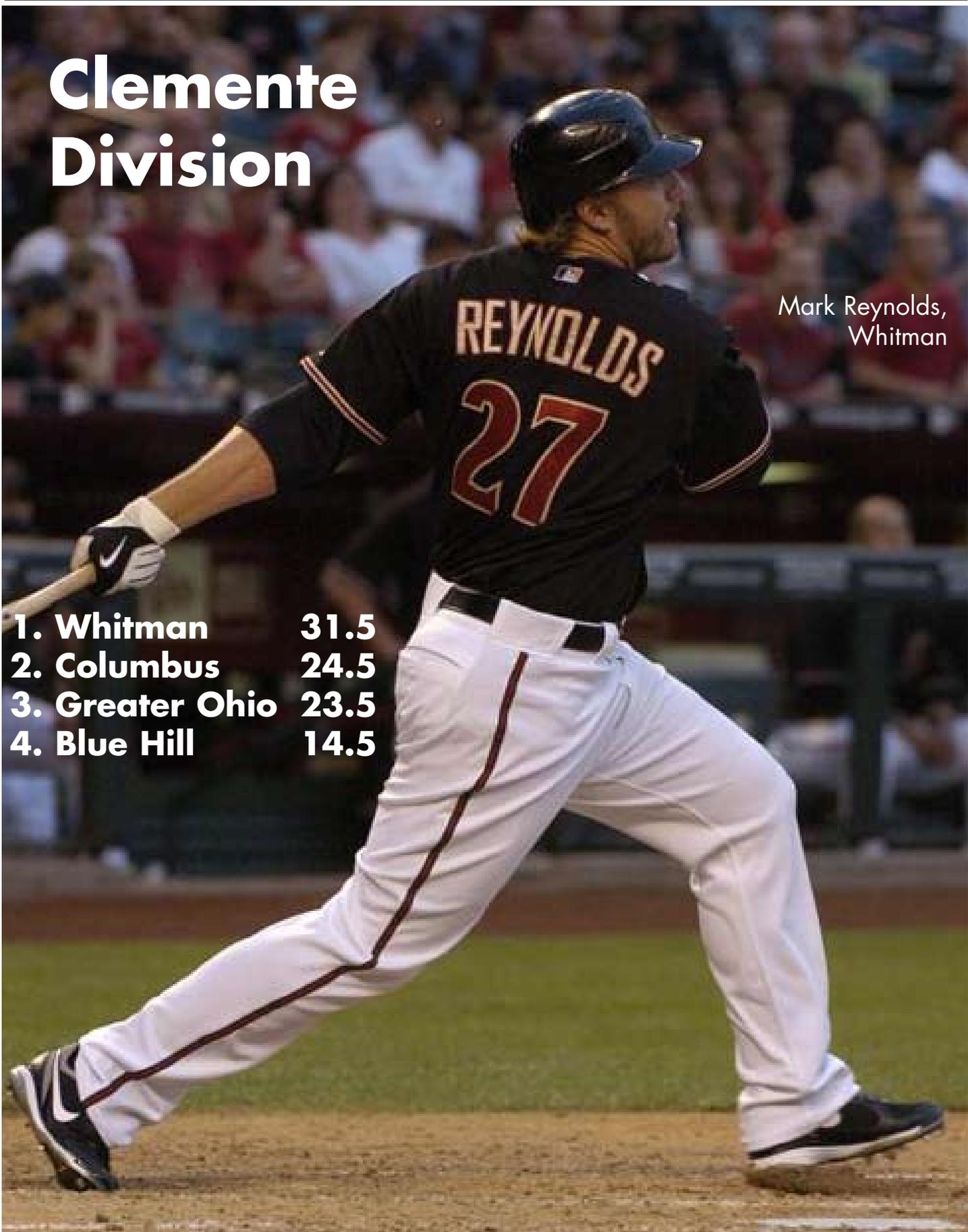


Oh. Speaking of a long way down. We show our stripes when we look at a roster and see a lot of names we like – or, rather, that we *liked* . . . years ago. *Mark Ludwig's* Blue Hill Mudslides were a model of consistent competence for most of the last decade, making the playoffs every other year, but sometimes mortgaging the future to fill a gap or make a stretch run. It started to come apart in 2009, as too many holes opened at the same time. There will be more innings in purgatory this season. They are serious contenders in the Jason Heyward Sweepstakes.



# Clemente Division

Mark Reynolds,  
Whitman

A photograph of baseball player Mark Reynolds in a batting stance. He is wearing a dark navy blue jersey with "REYNOLDS" and the number "27" in red and white lettering on the back. He is also wearing white pants with a red stripe down the side and a black batting helmet. He is holding a wooden bat and is captured in the middle of a swing. The background shows a blurred crowd of spectators in a stadium.

1. Whitman	31.5
2. Columbus	24.5
3. Greater Ohio	23.5
4. Blue Hill	14.5

# 2009 whitman RIVER RATS in review



*The offense was not what you would call potent, rather mildly sufficient.*

## 2009 in Review

### Final Record: 86-76 (1st, Clemente)

Our 86 win season put us in a tie for tenth-best record in the league. While this was enough to secure a division crown (by 4 games) and a playoff spot it was likely more a product of a lack of quality teams in the conference than a statement about the quality of this squad. Our pitching carried us, the team ERA of 3.71 was just enough to overcome a lackluster team offense that hit a combined .252 with a measly .317 OBP. We managed to hit 153 homers despite only having two batters who hit more than 16 total. 155 stolen bases helped us score an average of 4.5 runs per game. Despite a first round playoff exit that took 7 games to conclude, the season was a success.

### What went right?

There were some bright spots offensively. Nick Markakis had a line of .314 / .401 / .486, and drove in 106 runs while scoring 92 with 196 hits and 62 doubles. Both Eric Hinske and Mike Jacobs hit 32 dingers, Juan Pierre hit .300 while stealing 38 bags second only to the 52 thefts by Jacoby Ellsbury. The offense was not what you would call potent, rather mildly sufficient.

Pitching was the path to success. The bullpen had an ERA of 2.89 with 33 saves. Jesse Carlson (1.24 ERA, 30 saves) and Brian Tallet (2.40 ERA and a 10-2 record in relief) were the stars of the pen. Kyle Lohse's 33 starts were the highlight of the rotation as he finished 15-12, 3.54. Three other starters posted 10+ win seasons capped by the Rats' first-ever no-hitter vs New West spun by rookie Clayton Kershaw on July 6.

### What went wrong?

Expectations were honestly a bit higher for this offense. Fernando Tatis is a clear example of unfulfilled expectations. Despite an excellent card he hit a paltry .212 with just 21 extra base hits in 89 games. Kelly Johnson underperformed at .247 / .320 / 411, while other regulars had similar results which left the offense barely able to create leads that the solid pitching could protect.



Eric Hinske: 32 dingers

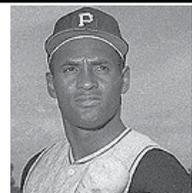
### 3 Things

1. *The draft can be fickle.* Sometimes fate smiles, but most of the time everything goes completely wrong. I rarely have my choice fall to me, but the last two drafts have been like déjà vu, yielding Clayton Kershaw and David Price. Drafting pitchers high means passing on offensive studs like Alexei Ramirez and Chris Coghlan.
2. *Trading future for present value is risky business.* In 2009 we dealt our #2 pick for Kyle Lohse with short term gain in mind. He was our 2009 ace but will sting a bit in 2010. Our 2011 #2 went for Paul Konerko. We will almost certainly feel some pain in February 2011 when that pick comes on the board.
3. *Does anyone like acquiring bullpen?* I detest it but must constantly work to add quality to my bullpen. 2009's pen required 3 picks, and this year 4, to rebuild it. This year I was able to get some good young arms that might last a while but time will tell. I am hoping to win the division and go deep in the playoffs, but 15 years in TBL have taught me to expect the unexpected. The rotation is solid, the bullpen is deep and we will hit the ball and play good defense. I leave the rest to fate and let the chips fall where they will.

# whitman RIVER RATS

Brian Hanley (15th year)

*The team's success will depend on how they fare against the powerhouses.*



In the words of a popular song: *oops, he did it again.*

Last year's *Annual*, composed in brief and in haste, we observed that Brian Hanley could manufacture 90 wins out of cereal boxes, string and cufflinks. The Whitman club that went north from TBL Spring Training was good enough to go .500, we thought: good enough to stay in the race deep into the season, but not quite good enough to overtake Greater Ohio, what with Evan Longoria and Andre Ethier and Cliff Lee and all.

Score one for the spare parts. Hanley thought he had enough to contend, but that it would be close. He did. It was. But that was it: 86 wins was four more than Greater Ohio, but like New Westminster, not enough to overtake the powerhouse clubs in the Mays Division. Both 86-win teams fell in six games to better teams.

This year, though, there's more punch, more pitching, and – as usual – more boxes, string and cufflinks. There are fewer dominant teams in the International Conference, and no others in the Clemente Division. But it comes down to the usual question: *is it enough?*

## **Pitching: 12.0** **Young and wild.**

Whitman's pitching staff has undergone significant improvement in the last few years, especially in the starting rotation. Best of all, the new folks are young. Even the more sketchy members of the bullpen have youth on their side. The question of sufficiency still applies. Garza is the everyday ace. Kershaw is excellent – but is wild and can't go deep. Price is solid, but only has 23 starts. After that, it's 7s and 6s. The bullpen



## **SNT: David Price**

*He was headed for a top 10 pick as soon as he got the last out in the 2007 ALCS. He's a fine addition to an already-talented rotation in Whitman.*

**Turnover Rate: 28%**

**Arrived:** Henry Blanco, Tyler Clippard, Matt Daley, Jeff Fiorentino, Raul Ibañez, Adam Kennedy, Paul Konerko, Justin Miller, David Price, Tony Sipp, Sean White.

**Departed:** Jamie Burke, Jesus Colome, Cliff Floyd, Steve Holm, Mike Jacobs, Jeff Kent, Masahide Kobayashi, Odalis Perez, Saul Rivera, Javier Valentin.

is led by a lefthander, usually risky in TBL, and Sherrill's rookie henchmen are wild. As usual, though, the Rats' management will get the utmost from them.

**ROTATION.** The ace has just turned 22: lefty Clayton Kershaw (Grade 17 C-53 HR+44, f23) came into his own in his second season, and with Matt Garza (Grade 13 C-16) and rookie David Price (Grade 11 C-23) there are 85 solid starts. The Whitman instructions optimistically have them going six or seven innings.

The second tier is competent if uninspiring. Old hand Aaron Cook (Grade 7 C-21) has 27 starts, while Aaron Laffey (Grade 7 C-32 HR+33), Brian



# Whitman RIVER RATS

Tallet (Grade 7 C-24) and Kyle Lohse (Grade 6 C+21) make up the rest of the starts.

**BULLPEN.** Closer George Sherrill (Grade 19\* HR+35) is the lefty anchoring the bullpen. The newcomers to help him are predominantly right handed, to go with holdover lefties Sherrill and Jesse Carlson (Grade 8\* C+23), and righthanders Justin Miller (Grade 15\* C-33) and Carlos Villanueva (Grade 7\* C+22). The new quartet includes Tyler Clippard (Grade 22\* C-54 HR-22: that should be entertaining), Tony Sipp (Grade 20\* lefty C-62), Sean White (Grade 15\* HR+44) and Matt Daley (Grade 11\*). Brett Tomko (13/13\* C+25 HR-36) lends some dubious quality off the waiver pile. The bullpen has more than 350 good innings and some bulk to go with it.



Kershaw: the ace

of the offense, though, share the outfield with Ibañez: Nick Markakis (4 Os, 10 hits, 3 walks, L-7 R+3) and speedster Jacoby Ellsbury (3 Os, 11 hits, 3 walks, 82 SBA), who will be here long after Ibañez has gone on to his next career. Paul Konerko (1-0-0-0, 10 hits, 3 14s+42) adds another good bat, though he has a platoon problem (L+6 R-4).

The rest of the lineup isn't quite as powerful. Juan Pierre (0-6, 11 hits, 2 14s+41, 42 SBA) and Adam Kennedy (3 Os, 10 hits, 3 walks+22, L-7 R+1) will play most days; Brendan Ryan (3 Os, 11 hits, 21 SBA) and Cesar Izturis (9 hits, L+2) will play shortstop; Ronny Paulino (1-0-0, 10 hits) and Kelly Shoppach (1-0-0, fewer hits, but an amusing L+12) catch.

There's power and some speed, no egregious shifts and three 11-hit cards. But some innings will be empty. While the lineup is solid, the bench – such as it is – will have to be used frequently and effectively.

**Defense: 7.0**  
**Strong almost everywhere.**

It's a good staff, with some terrific high points. Rebuilding teams will have trouble with these arms; the team's success will depend on how they fare against the powerhouses.

**Offense: 10.0**  
**Looks like a contender.**

The Whitman attack has a solid center, led by slugger Mark Reynolds (1-1-5-6, 9 hits, 4 14s, 10 13s, 33 SBA)

and power-hitting contender acquisition Raul Ibañez (1-1-0-0-0, 10 hits, 3 walks).

The most talented parts



Ibañez: Contender acquisition

The pitching staff will be able to rely on fielders to catch the ball at most positions. There are two strong shortstops; both Ryan and Izturis are SS9s and Ryan is also Fielding One at second (2B8), who will back up Kennedy (rated only 2B7 this year). Alberto Gonzalez comes off waivers (2B8) to help out. Paul Konerko as well as utilityman Fernando Tatis are Fielding One (1B4) at first.

In the outfield, Markakis is superb in right field (OF3, 37 arm) and Ellsbury solid in center (OF3, 33). Ibañez is an OF2 this year with a 32 arm, as does Clete Thomas. There are only two weak spots, one of which (Reynolds, a 3B3) can not be fixed by anyone on the roster; and behind the plate (Paulino and Shoppach, C7 with Th+0 and Th-2 respectively), which can (Henry Blanco is a C8 with a +4 arm).



*The real Clemente powerhouse in 2010! A solid Staff Ace in Kershaw, a great closer in George Sherrill, a well built offense balanced with both power and speed, and a good defense. They should start printing the playoff tickets now.*

As with the offense, some players catching the ball will do well, while others will cause Brian Hanley to cringe when making fielding rolls.

**Bench: 2.5**  
**Some of this and some of that.**

With a need to patch the bullpen and to make key acquisitions such as Ibañez and Konerko, there was no means for Whitman to acquire a hitting toy or a useful utilityman to shore up infield defense. Thus, some of the bench players have no real purpose; Kelly Johnson, last year's everyday second baseman, has 4 0s and a L+11 but little else (8 hits, 9 SBA) and the pale shadow of Andruw Jones (1-0-0-0, 7 hits, 5 walks) is the spare outfielder and will rarely emerge.

The only useful bench players are the resurgent Fernando Tatis (1B4, OF2 and ratings all around the infield; 4 0s, 10 hits, 2 walks+42); waiver pickup Alberto Gonzalez (2B8, 3 0s, 10



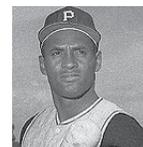
Ellsbury: Run and hit

hits, L+17) defensive catcher Henry Blanco (3 0s, 8 hits, 4 walks); and Ryan Garko (1-0-0, 9 hits, 3 walks+42), who has been displaced by Konerko. These three will help address the deficiencies in the lineup, and give Whitman a few options at least.

**1st**

They will certainly win the Clemente; both the Greater Ohio and Columbus clubs are capable, but neither has tooled for a serious contention. Blue Hill has a long rebuilding effort ahead.

It's taken some effort to get the team to this point, as the club has climbed back to contention. The era of Andruw Jones, drafted in 1997, is almost over. This is the team of Ellsbury and Markakis. The question is whether the core has staying power.



**Whitman RIVER RATS**

**How they got here**

	2007	2008	2009
SNT	Markakis	Ellsbury	Kershaw
W-L	68-94	70-92	86-76
C	Paulino	Paulino	Valentin/Burke
1B	Jacobs	Garko	Jacobs/Garko
2B	M.Giles	K. Johnson	K. Johnson
3B	Brunlett/Belliard	Reynolds/Hinske	Reynolds
SS	A. Everett	C. Izturis/Ryan	C. Izturis
OF	Markakis A. Jones Jenkins	Markakis A. Jones Jenkins	Markakis Ellsbury Pierre
DH	Ibañez/Garko	D. Johnson/Jacobs	Tatis/Kent
P	Armas	K. Wells	Lohse
P	Cook	Od. Perez	Cook
P	Fossum	Cook	Garza
P*	Littleton	Sherrill	Carlson
P*	S. Rivera	Tallet	Colome
P*	R. Ramirez	Colome	Tallet



2009 finish: 86-76 (1st, Clemente)  
 Last 5 years: 399-411, .493  
 PITCHING: 12.0 OFF: 10.0 DEF: 7.0 BNC: 2.5

**TQ: 31.5**

# 2009 columbus JETS in review



*Given the makeup of the team, it's hard to say a lot went wrong.*

## 2009 in Review

**Final Record: 72-90 (3rd, Clemente)**

The 2009 edition of the Jets finished 72-90, representing an eighteen game improvement over the 2008 squad, fueling hopes among the hometown faithful that the worst was over following the teardown of the Rochester Express and the rise back to respectability.

### What went right?

The offense was led by Carlos Lee, who posted a line of .320 / .571 / .381 in 115 games. Mr. Lee led the team in home runs with 26 and RBI with 74. Jerry Hairston managed .341 / .500 / .420 in 78 games and Nomar Garciaparra who contributed .297 / .531 / .362 in an injury shortened 51 games. The hurlers were led by Wandy Rodriguez who posted the only winning record among starters with a 12-7 record and 4.08 ERA. Randy Johnson edged closer to 300 TBL victories, winning nine games in 2009 for a career total of 298. The bullpen was led by Jason Grilli who saved 13 games with a 2.98 ERA and Francisco Cordero who had a 5-1 record with 5 saves and a 3.42 ERA. The defense improved from a horrific 133 errors in 2008 to a more acceptable 95 in 2009.

The 2009 draft produced some building blocks for the future; Jay Bruce, Dana Eveland, John Baker, Sean Rodriguez and Brett Gardner joined the team. While nobody in the 2009 draft class makes an immediate impact, the Jets' fan base is hoping that these players reach their potential in the next couple of seasons and make meaningful contributions in the years ahead.

### What went wrong?

Given the makeup of the team, it's hard to say a lot went wrong with the 2009 Jets. Most of our best cardboard was usage-limited in the amount of games they could play in, forcing non-performers like Aaron Rowand (.214 / .311 / .282), Corey Hart (.231 / .392 / .259), and John Buck (.195 / .307 / .275) to come to the plate far more often than we would have liked. No one hit 30

home runs, and no one sniffed 80 RBI. While we believe Dana Eveland will bounce back from his 2009 season, his 7-16 record and 5.80 ERA was a testament to the difficulty lefthanded pitchers with poor control (his 95 walks led the team) have in this league.

### 3 Things

1. *Will back-of-the-rotation starters rebound?* If Dana Eveland and Andy Sonnanstine don't recover from less-than-stellar 2009 seasons, it'll put a big dent in Columbus' hopes of being competitive in the near term.
2. *Take advantage of draft position.* The rebuilding Jets were in great position in the 2009 draft and were hoping for a little bigger splash from our selectees. Eveland and Rodriguez may find more happiness and productivity in new locales.
3. *What about realignment?* Say what you want about the Clemente (and many of you have!), but it's been a division where the teams have been fairly equally matched as evidenced in the 2009 draft when we had three of the top five draft slots. The dynamics will change with the Gamblers in the mix.

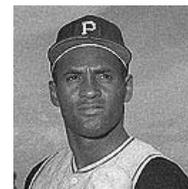


Carlos Lee: Team leader

# columbus JETS

Vic Vaughn (5th year)

*[O'Day's] stellar 2009 is a prima facie case of Landrum Effect and, since it came out of nowhere, is likely to go right back to the same place.*



So this is Year Five of the Vic Vaughn regime.

It's always tempting to do something other than evaluate the Columbus ball club on its own merits, rather than harkening back to the glory days in another city, when the players whose names stud the team leader boards were doing their thing. The departure of Nomar Garciaparra, and the end of Randy Johnson's career, pretty much put a punctuation mark on that era.

Truthfully, thanks to The Stein's fabulous TBL stats site, we can look back at the team that Mr. Vaughn piloted through the first year of his TBL existence, and note very few names still on the roster. Aaron Rowand, Juan Uribe, Carlos Lee and a still young Corey Hart are still here on offense; Francisco Cordero and the aforementioned Photogenic One are the last of the hurlers. This is Vic Vaughn's team now. 2008 marked the start of the real changeover, with the addition of Andy LaRoche and Brandon Wood, Wandy Rodriguez and Andy Sonnenstine and Jeremy Sowers and Kevin Slowey. Last year netted Jay Bruce, Sean Rodriguez, John Baker, Ben Zobrist (by trade), and some other, younger pitchers. Brett Anderson (pictured right) and Brad Bergesen were the principals in this year's draft.

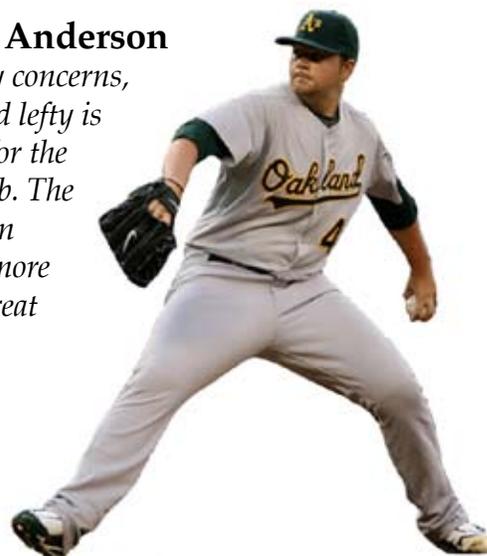
Trading for Russell Branyan doesn't automatically make you a contender; but it also is a signal that you don't think you're rebuilding anymore. Keeping Darren O'Day and especially Francisco Cordero, not to mention Carlos Lee and Aaron Rowand and Juan Uribe, is an indication that you'd like to, you know, *participate in the pennant chase*. That is what we're here for, isn't it? The Jets aren't mortgaged out in the 2011 draft; they have some decent starters and a pretty well-stocked bullpen; they have Branyan, Uribe, Lee

and Zobrist. Age is a factor with some key guys on the roster, but it's rare to find a team where that's *not* the case. The club has its weaknesses and there are important parts that haven't turned out as well as could be hoped: Jay Bruce didn't turn into a monster, Brandon Wood has yet to develop, Andy Sonnenstine and Kevin Slowey and Jeremy Sowers are deficient . . . and there are some off-year cards on the roster too.

But this is a good team. Good enough to catch Whitman? The TQs say no. But we've been wrong before. The building blocks are sound and there's room to maneuver. Columbus will stay around all summer.

## SNT: Brett Anderson

*Despite injury concerns, the 22-year-old lefty is a great catch for the Columbus club. The rotation is even younger and more talented – a great combination.*



**Arrived:** Brett Anderson, Brad Bergesen, Russ Branyan, Greg Burke, Randy Choate, Roman Colon, Jeff Gray, Fu-Te Ni, Eli Whiteside.

**Departed:** Brian Anderson, Michael Barrett, Buddy Carlyle, Chris Duncan, Jim Edmonds, Nomar Garciaparra, Jason Grilli, Mark Grudzielanek, Shawn Hill.

**Turnover Rate: 26%**



**Pitching: 9.5**  
**Depth and promise.**

**ROTATION.** Truly, no writeup about this club would be complete without a nodding reference to the photogenic qualities of Randy Johnson, a future MLB and TBL Hall of Famer. He recorded his 300th win last summer in real life, and with 298 victories in TBL is very likely to do so here as well.

But he's no longer the ace (Grade 7 C+15 HR-34); he only makes 17 starts. Top honors belong to fellow lefty Wandy



Unit: Photogenic

Rodriguez (Grade 12 C+16), who has emerged as a key part of the Columbus club; Mr. Vaughn resisted all attempts to pry him loose during the last few years and has been rewarded. He's backed up by two workhorses, one veteran (Bronson Arroyo, Grade 10 C+22 HR-16) and one rookie (Brett Anderson, lefty Grade 9 C+24) each of whom make 30 starts. The rest of Randy Johnson's rotation turns belong to rookie Brad Bergesen (Grade 10 C+26 HR+23) who doesn't throw particularly hard, but can find the plate.

The last 30 starts belong to two pitchers who are still highly regarded but were underperformers last year: Jeremy Sowers (Grade 6 C-15 HR+25) and Kevin Slowey (Grade 4 C+42 HR-21). The arrival of Anderson and Bergesen means that Andy Sonnanstine, a pleasant surprise last year, doesn't have to haul his Grade 1 out all season.



O'Day: Who?

**BULLPEN.** As stated above, an indication that a team wants to contend is its willingness to retain present value players that come out

of nowhere. TBL cognoscenti know who Darren O'Day is (Grade 19\* C+14 HR+42) but fear – with good cause – that his stellar 2009 is a *prima facie* case of Landrum Effect and, since it came out of nowhere, is likely to go right back to the same place. But in the meanwhile O'Day, long-time Jet Francisco Cordero (Grade 16\* C-26 HR+52) and rookie Fu-Te Ni (Grade 19\*) give Columbus more than 150 innings of very capable relief.

The Jets have a very capable supporting crew as well. Hard-throwing David Robertson (Grade 15\* C-43 HR+24) and middlemen Randy Choate (Grade 14\* C+25 lefty) and Clay Condrey (Grade 13\* C+22 righty) add another 120 innings, and there are almost 200 more among four others Grade 8\* and 9\*. It must come as a pleasant surprise to have even this much pitching.

**Offense: 8.5**  
**Four bashers and some Guys.**

When we lay out a team to analyze, the first thing we try to locate is guys that we don't want to face with the game on the line. A sure sign of a rebuild is when there are none to be found.



Lee: Still the Caballo

In Columbus, though, there are at least four. The biggest basher is the Caballo – the Horse – Carlos Lee (1-0-0-0, 11 hits, 2 walks), who will get to DH all year (more good news). The Jets have brought another big bat in to help him: veteran power hitter Russell Branyan (1-1-0-0, 8 hits, 4 walks+42, only L-4 but 9 13s), who turned in the card of his life. He'll miss a lot but will make lots of noise when he connects. Add to these the versatile Ben Zobrist (1-0-0-0, 10 hits, 5 walks, E29) and the resurgent Juan Uribe (1-4-5-6, 11 hits, 2 walks) and there's a nice core for the everyday Columbus lineup.



*The Jets now fully bear the mark of manager Vic Vaughn. While the likes of Nomar and Randy Johnson are heading for the exits, young stars like Bruce, Zobrist, Gardner and Sean Rodriguez are ready to help the Jets to blast off for greatness again.*

There is a bit of difficulty after that. Zobrist is the everyday second baseman, and Lee's OF1 doesn't go in the field, so Columbus' outfield has to include at least two of the following: Aaron Rowand (1-6-6, 9 hits, 2 walks+42); Corey Hart (3 0s, 9 hits, 3 walks, 2 10s, D25); Jay Bruce (1-0-0-0, 9 hits, 4 walks, L-5, 6 13s); and Brett Gardner (2 0s, 9 hits, 3 walks, 32 SBA). They'll fare all right against mediocre pitching, but the better teams will make a lot of at-bats into outs.

The same is true of the remaining field positions. John Baker (3 0s, 10 hits, 3 walks+22) has a L-9; John Buck (1-4-5-6, 9 hits, 2 walks, 8 13s) has nice power but a L-5. They have 171 games between them. The defensive catcher off waivers is Eli Whiteside (3 0s, 8 hits) who's really only here for his glove. Third base belongs to Andy LaRoche, whose card (3 0s, 9 hits, 2 walks, L+4) doesn't frighten.

It's the makings of a good offense, but could use one more bat with 11 hits to make the lineup go.

**Defense: 4.5**  
**Not a cornerstone feature.**

Both Ben Zobrist (2B8) and Andy LaRoche (3B5) joined the Fielding One club this year; the guy who stands in between them, Juan Uribe, is in Fielding Two all around (SS8, 2B7, 3B4). Jerry Hairston's SS7 will play about forty games here also. At first base, Branyan (1B3) is the main man; Ross Gload's 1B4 is available for defense.



2009 finish: 72-90 (3rd, Clemente)  
Last 5 years: 383-427, .473

PITCHING: 9.5 OFF: 8.5 DEF: 4.5 BNC: 2.0

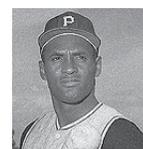
**TQ: 24.5**

The outfield can pick it well. Rowand (OF3, 32 arm) and Brett Gardner (OF3, 31 arm) share time with Hart (OF2, 32) and sophomore Jay Bruce (OF2, 37 arm). They'll help keep the club in the game. The same cannot be said of the backstops; Buck (C6, Th-4) and Baker (C7, Th-3) invite a running game. Eli Whiteside (C7, Th+3) is the defensive sub. Overall while it's not bad, defense is not a cornerstone feature.

**Bench: 2.0**  
**Versatile, but few options.**

The Jets have some choices for lineup, but the need to retain a defensive catcher and an extra man to make up games (Hairston, mediocre at three positions and OK in the outfield, has 3 0s, 9 hits and 3 walks but a lot of playing time), coupled with some dead weight in Ross Gload (3 0s, 9 hits, L-12) and "still a prospect" Brandon Wood, who might as well be uncarded, the bench has few options for Mr. Vaughn to choose from. The lineups will be fairly pat, with only a few late-game moves.

**2nd** We know they're not built like the Whitman boys, but they have a good chance to keep ahead of the Pets. This is a slightly better than .500 club with a surprisingly capable staff and some good offensive weapons. Columbus has done an excellent job of getting younger and more talented; Bruce, Wood, LaRoche, Slowey, Robertson, and certainly this year's draftees are evidence of movement in the right direction. When it all comes together, watch out.



**columbus JETS**

# 2009 greater ohio CHIA PETS in review



*The playoffs were that close – and that distant.*

## 2009 in Review

**Final Record: 82-80 (2nd, Clemente)**

The interval between Greater Ohio, the predicted division champion, and the actual one (Whitman) was four games. The playoffs were that close – and that distant. Of course, that *is* why we play the games.

There were some warning signs: all the lefty starters, the weak spots in the lineup, the capability of the rivals from Whitman, the powerful competition from the Mays Division. Whitman racked up 11 more shutouts – perhaps that was all the difference.

A disappointment? Certainly. A failure? TQ 28 corresponds to a win total in the 80s, so probably not. But it may make the Chia Pets even more hungry to get to the postseason in 2010.

### What went right?

It is no surprise that Evan Longoria turned into a superstar. He piled up impressive Triple Crown numbers (.318-37-128), leading the team in each category. Ray Durham (.294, 51 doubles) closed out an impressive TBL career, and Miguel Cabrera chipped in 24 homers, 107 RBI and 45 doubles. The team was among league leaders in OBP.

On the pitching side, John Danks (17-7, 3.44) and Cliff Lee (15-10, 3.35) each pitched very well, while Carlos Marmol recorded 25 saves and 56 strikeouts in 47 innings. While the starters completed very few games, the team's bullpen was extremely effective in keeping the Pets competitive.

### What went wrong?

Neither of the other prominent starters pitched very effectively. Barry Zito (10-13, 4.57, 334 base runners in 195 innings) and rookie Greg Smith (13-15, 5.02, 318 baserunners in 199 innings) simply failed to send enough opposing hitters back to the bench. Former ace Daniel Cabrera (7-8, 5.58) was even worse.

On the other side of the ball, the Pets struck out 1162 times, with five players (Longoria, Durham, Cabrera, Varitek and Fukudome) recording over 100. Casey Blake hit 16 homers, but hit only .251. Rookie Fukudome hit an anemic .218; Maicer Izturis, Jack Wilson, and Brandon Moss created many outs.



Evan Longoria: Superstar

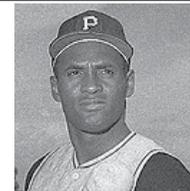
### 3 Things

1. *Lefties still have problems in TBL.* The *Annual* suggested that 112 starts by southpaws would present some problems for the Chia Pets, and there is some evidence to suggest that was the case. Still, it's hard to dislike the lefties the team already has.
2. *The Clemente Division has been tough on the Pets.* It is time for a change of venue, and the team may be going elsewhere in 2011.
3. *The Pet brain trust hasn't panicked.* The core of the team – Danks, Lee, Zito, Longoria, Ethier, Cabrera, and some lesser lights – is still very solid. The World Series appearance was four years ago and it's taken three to return to respectability. It's not time to rebuild yet.

# greater ohio CHIA PETS

Devlin Toth (15th year)

*There's a lot of talent here. So watch out. You heard it here first.*



What does Devlin Toth have to do to win? The history of the Chia Pets has an unfortunate number of seasons where the club from Greater Ohio has been a doorstop: since taking the helm fourteen seasons ago, our friend Mr. Toth has suffered five years with 100 or more losses and two more with 90 or more losses. Other than the fine run to the World Series in 2006 (100-62), 92 wins was the peak achievement for the club.

Of course, Pets management doesn't need to be reminded of this. If anything, it is extraordinary how patient our friend Devlin and his Shadow Pet advisor have been; they have made careful selections in the draft, held on to players who might have brought value, and built, built, built trying to assemble a talented team that would become a consistent winner. It's easy to see how careless management can fail to build such a team. (For example, Mr. Toth's immediate predecessor, Jack Chapman, had an obsessive desire to acquire members of the San Francisco Giants, his home team; this was during a time when they weren't very good. He had a concept for his team, but it is unclear even fifteen years later what the hell it was.) But that criticism doesn't apply to Greater Ohio. Things have just not worked out. It is unnecessary to provide a litany of those things.

The *Annual* believes that this sequence of events is about to be broken. This year may not yield a playoff contender, but there's a lot of talent here. So watch out. *You heard it here first.*

**Pitching: 7.5**  
**Three lefties. Then two more.**

**ROTATION.** The top three starters in the Greater Ohio rotation are once again lefthanded. They

are the same as last year: John Danks (Grade 12 HR-14), Barry Zito (Grade 10 C-14) and Cliff Lee (Grade 9 C+35 HR+31). These three solid pitchers make 99 starts between them.

To make up the remaining starts, it has been necessary to replace the departed Daniel Cabrera and the injured Greg Smith. The draft yielded three pitchers – two more lefties and a righty – have been pressed into service, joined by a returning righty from last year's team.

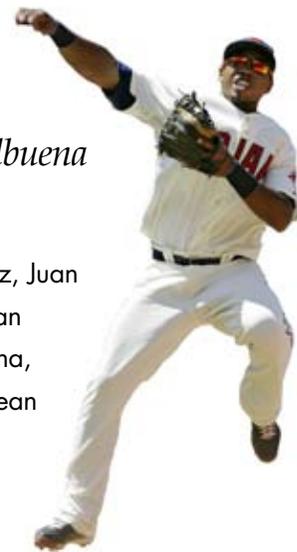
The best grade among these four belongs to righty Rick Vanden Hurk (Grade 9 C+15 HR-32).

## **SNT: Luis Valbuena**

*With the departure of Ray Durham to the land of NutraLife®, the Pets needed a new second baseman. The slick fielding Valbuena more than fits the bill.*

**Arrived:** Josh Geer, Chris Getz, Juan Gutierrez, Angel Guzman, Nolan Reimold, Eric Stults, Luis Valbuena, Joe Veras, Rick Vanden Hurk, Sean West.

**Departed:** Eric Bruntlett, Daniel Cabrera, Alex Cintron, Chris Duncan, Ray Durham, Jim Edmonds, Mark Grudzielanek, Logan Kensing, Duaner Sanchez, Doug Waechter.



**Turnover Rate: 28%**



# greater ohio CHIA PETS

The other righty is bulk starter Jason Hammel (Grade 5 C+34 HR+15). Two rookie lefthanders, Eric Stults (Grade 7 C-34 HR+35) and Sean West (Grade 6 C-21), will also start some games. Hammel and West are probably keepers; Stults, past 30, is a space filler.

This is a competent rotation, with some talented, solid pitchers. Once again, the heavy lefty composition might be a deficiency, but they'll be better at home on the computer.

**BULLPEN.** Through good times and bad, the Pets have held tightly on to their hard-throwing wild closer, Carlos Marmol (Grade 18\* C-62 HR+54). He strikes out a lot of batters, but walks a lot of them too – making his every appearance a risky thing. His setup man, rookie Angel Guzman (Grade 17\* HR-16) provides 61 good innings to support Marmol's 74; as with many other players in the past,

events have conspired against a recent draftee, as Guzman is already gone for 2010.

The middle relief is capable, though not outstanding. Former ace Kerry Wood (Grade 13\* C-44) is the best righty; John Grabow (Grade 14\* C-45 HR+32), in his sixth year as a Pet, is the best lefty. Jose Veras (Grade 12\* C-53 HR-15), Bobby Seay (Grade 10\* lefty C+16 HR+36), and Juan Gutierrez (Grade 9\* HR+53) fill out the bullpen with about 300 innings among them. They'll keep the team in the game.

**Offense: 8.5**  
**Some good depth, with bashers.**

There are three outstanding cards in the Greater Ohio lineup. The best one belongs to Miguel Cabrera (1-0-0-0, 11 hits, 3 walks). Cardboard does not go on drinking binges, so he should be, er, good to the last drop. All-world All Star Evan



Zito, Lee, Danks: Same, same, same.

Longoria (1-5-5-6, 10 hits, 4 walks+22, 9 SBA with 35 SSN) is excellent as well. Neither player has any platoon shift. The third belongs to Andre Ethier, who as emerged as an outstanding hitter (1-5-5-6, 9 hits, 4 walks+42, but a L-13 R+3 BC.) Ethier is the oldest of the three at just 28; they should be together for some time.

The next tier of hitters consists of Kosuke Fukudome (4 0s, 9 hits, 5 walks, L-13), rookie Nolan Reimold (1-5-6, 10 hits, 4 walks+22, but 2 10s, 10 SBA with 31 SSN), and Maicer Izturis, who turned in the best offensive card of his career (3 0s, 11 hits, 3 walks+22, 18 SBA with 28 SSN, L+7 R-3). Fukudome's shift will keep on the bench for some games, while the other two are only available for two thirds of a season. Elijah Dukes (3 0s, 9 hits, 4 walks+22) and Frank Catalanotto (3-6, 10 hits, 3 walks, 3 31s) will fill some of the remaining games, along with rookie infielder Luis Valbuena (4 0s, 9 hits, L-6).

The weakest positions in the lineup are shortstop and catcher. Izturis will play some games at short and some at second; when he's at second, Jack Wilson (3 0s, 9 hits, 2 walks) will be flashing the glove. To damn with faint praise, he has a reasonably decent bunting card. (*Don't laugh: it got Midwest to, and through, the World Series. I'll never doubt little ball again. Wait, yes I will. But I digress.*) At catcher, there's really no help: Jason Varitek (1-6-6, 7 hits, 4 walks) and Jarrod Saltalamacchia (1-6-0, 8 hits, 3 walks) will spit up many outs.



Ethier: Emerged

There are many things to be said to recommend this lineup. There's good power and some scary cards, and a fair number of walks. Some lefty shifts will be problematic, and too much of the team speed is on the bench, but they should score runs, particularly against poorer pitching staffs.

**Defense: 5.5**  
**Infield strong; outfield, not so much.**

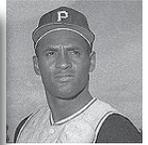
The Greater Ohio middle infield on many days is as good as you'll find in TBL: Jack Wilson (SS9) and two 2B8s: Maicer Izturis and Luis Valbuena. If Izturis is the shortstop, he's only an SS8. At third base, Evan Longoria (3B5) is also a Fielding One defender.

Other positions are not as favored. 1B Miguel Cabrera has achieved Fielding Two status (1B3) and there's no one to rescue him; indeed, only space-filler Andy Marte (1B2) is also rated there. In the outfield, Andre Ethier (OF2, 31 arm) and Kosuke Fukudome (OF2, 34 arm) will be fine, as is Elijah Dukes (OF2, 36 arm); but Frank Catalanotto (OF1, 29 arm) and Nolan Reimold (OF1, 33 arm) leave something to be desired. Catchers Varitek (C8 Th-4) and Saltalamacchia (C7 Th-2) offer no compensatory gloves to make up for their inferior bats. There's no defensive catcher on the bench, and only about 30 extra games between the two – so what you see on any given day is likely what you get.

Some parts of the defense are excellent. Others – duck!



*Devlin would love to pack another Division Crown in his suitcase for the trip to the Mays. I think Whitman will have something to say about it as well. The rotation is almost all lefty, usually a dangerous problem for a contender. They will be plucky, though, so watch out!*



**greater ohio CHIA PETS**

**Bench: 2.0**  
**Don't just stand there.**

Platoon choices will give Greater Ohio a little bit of versatility, but past those extra games there's very little help on the bench. Brandon Moss (3 0s, 8 hits, 3 walks) offers an OF2 but not much else. Reggie Willits (OF2, 19 speed) had a terrible year, and the hitting card is best left well concealed; the same is true of Andy Marte (1-0-0, 8 hits, 3 walks+22). Rookie Chris Getz (0-6, 9 hits, 3 walks+22, 27 SBA with 35 SSN) is a great pinch-runner and the best pinch-hitter on the bench. If he was a catcher he'd play every day.

If the Pets find themselves in a pennant chase, this area of the team will need to be strengthened – a hitting toy or a defensive player would help a lot.



Wilson: Flashing the glove.

**3rd**

It's probably as close as the TQ indicates, and there's no reason that the Pets couldn't finish second, winning 85 games, and come ahead of Columbus. The problem is that there are too many traditional weaknesses – lefty pitching, a weak bench, not enough lineup speed, likely too many strikeouts. But it's a good crew. They shouldn't have to rebuild to become good in future.



2009 finish: 82-80 (2nd, Clemente)  
 Last 5 years: 394-416, .486  
 PITCHING: 7.5 OFF: 8.5 DEF: 5.5 BNC: 2.0

**TQ: 23.5**

# 2009 blue hill MUDSLIDES in review



Hopefully the young players will continue to get better.

## 2009 in Review

### Final Record: 58-104 (4th, Clemente)

Blue Hill management recognized that the time had come to infuse some youth into the team as several players had become old and only useful as part-time solutions. The 2009 draft was used to bring in rookies Daric Barton, Jeff Clement, Chase Headley, Radhames Liz and Steve Pearce with an eye towards the future.

Nonetheless, it was a long season in Blue Hill, as the team lost more than 100 games.

### What went right?

Aramis Ramirez was the Mudslides' best player (.289, 46 doubles, 26 home runs, 107 RBI), leading the team in all those categories. Jimmy Rollins had a decent year but nothing like he's done in the past. There is really nothing else to mention except that Luis Gonzalez had his final year in Blue Hill, finally retiring after being the Mudslides first pick in the 1995 expansion draft! Congratulations to Gonzo for 14 good years in Blue Hill.

Daisuke Matsuzaka led the pitching staff with 10 wins and was one of the league leaders in strikeouts with 191. He was also one of the league leaders in walks with 110! His countryman Hideki Okajima took over the closer duties and had a respectable 24 saves for a 58 win team.

### What went wrong?

The team had no power, and other than Ramirez no offensive threat to be concerned with. Five regulars

hit .250 or below, leading to a .241 team average. The team hit only 111 homers, last in TBL.

The pitching staff was poor. Even Matsuzaka with his Grade 17 had a losing 10-12 record, in large part due to his terrible control. The rest of the starting rotation posted abysmal records of 6-22 (Bannister), 8-16 (Byrd), and 5-16 (Ponson). This led to a 4.93 team ERA, in the bottom one-quarter of TBL.



Aramis Ramirez: Team leader

### 3 Things

1. *Build around youth.* There's not a lot that looks good for 2010. Hopefully the young players will continue to get better. Gordon Beckham, Julio Borbon, Wade LeBlanc and Lou Marson were added in this year's draft to aid the youth movement. They won't do a lot for the 2010 season but we expect them to be helping the Mudslides to get back into contention.

2. *Live with the bad.* The starting rotation is the worst the team has ever had, including the expansion year. You know times are tough when Brian Bannister is your ace! Ouch! The bullpen is led by a Grade 14\*, but we're not expecting many save chances. The offense is weak as well.

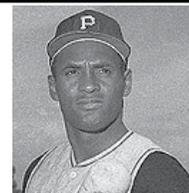
3. *Wait and hope.* Between injuries to key players and the need to watch youngsters mature, it'll be a long season in Blue Hill, but hopefully some of the draft will work out and, if some injured players return to health, we could be turning around soon and be back in contention.

# blue hill MUDSLIDES

Mark Ludwig (15th year)

*It's been a while since a team from the Clemente has been dominant outside its division, so maybe Blue Hill will be the next one. Just not in 2010.*

BH



For the past several seasons competing in the always interesting Clemente Division has been especially rough on Blue Hill GM Mark Ludwig. Even though slugger Richie Sexson was “retired” several years ago, Blue Hill still hasn’t found his replacement at first base. Japanese import Daisuke Matsuzaka was drafted to solidify the starting rotation and did so for his first two years – but after a disastrous 2009 MLB season filled with injuries and recriminations, his ability to lead any staff (TBL or MLB) has been cast in doubt.

Like most of the Clemente, catching has been a virtual black hole with a procession of placeholders moving in a veritable conga line behind the plate. Aging veterans like Ken Griffey and Hideki Matsui, holdovers from a better time, may have overstayed their welcomes here and blocked younger players’ progression to the majors.

None of these things are Mark’s fault. We all try to take the best players when we draft – either to address immediate needs or to replace a veteran who is on the way out. Blue Hill just seems to have had a run of bad luck. Mark’s good buddy, Whitman manager Brian Hanley, and Columbus manager Vic Vaughn have had better recent drafts, causing Blue Hill to fall farther behind.

The 2010 draft was better. If some of the prospects mature, the team could be more competitive. But none of that will happen in 2010. Mark’s own instructions and a glance at the cards will tell you that this will be a long season.

**Pitching: 3.0**  
**We don’t need no stinkin’ pitching.**

**ROTATION.** Despite the fairly overused quote from “The Treasure of Sierra Madre”, Blue Hill

## SNT: Gordon Beckham.

*The top AL rookie will be moving from*

actually needs quite a bit of pitching or, more precisely, a lot better pitching. The starter mak-

ing the most 2010 starts for the Mudslides is Carl Pavano (Grade 5 C+35) and that alone should be a sign of trouble. His 33 starts should be interesting and he has one of the rotation’s better grades – another bad omen. Brian Bannister (Grade 8 C+16 HR+22) will be the most effective starter with his combination of a decent grade and good peripherals. 2010 draftee Wade LeBlanc (Grade 14 C-16 HR-14), one of the many young Padre pitching prospects in San Diego’s system, will show his stuff for nine starts. Former staff



**Arrived:** Brandon Allen, Gordon Beckham, Julio Borbon, Edgar Gonzalez, Rob Johnson, Austin Kearns, Wade LeBlanc, Lou Marson, Vin Mazzaro, Carl Pavano, Jeff Suppan, Drew Sutton, Joe Thurston

**Departed:** Paul Bako, Tim Byrdak, Miguel Cairo, Tony Clark, Luis Gonzalez, Rhadames Liz, Steve Pearce, Alex Romero, Justin Speier, Jack Taschner, Matt Tolbert, Jake Westbrook

**Turnover Rate: 37%**

BH

blue hill MUDSLIDES

ace Tim Hudson (Grade 7) made it back from major arm surgery to make seven starts.

Now we get to the "gristle" of the rotation, for there is certainly no "meat" here. Vin Mazzaro and Jeff Suppan (both Grade 3s) have the best grade among the innocuous hordes. 'Nuff said there! Then there's Dice-K (Grade 2 C-35 HR-15). Is he the phenom of 2007 and 2008 or the pudgy, petulant disaster of 2009? Unfortunately Sidney Ponson and Paul Byrd (both Grade 1s) will make a number of starts in 2010, rounding out 94 unpleasant trips to the mound. Most will not make it to the fifth inning, which may be a good thing.

**BULLPEN.** A recurrent theme in TBL bullpens is "Middle Relievers in Search of a Closer." Blue Hill is no different. Mark knew his team was going nowhere fast, so why draft a closer? Darren Oliver (Grade 14\*

C+33 HR+32) would look great as the situational lefty in some contender's bullpen, but here he'll lock down the ninth inning. His setup crew includes Mark Lowe (Grade 13\* HR+24) and Hideki Okajima (Grade 13\* C+15). Seth McClung (Grade 9\* C-62 HR-25), and Edgar "G" Gonzalez (Grade 6\* HR+41) will mill about in innings 5 thru 7, trying to heroically extinguish starters who burst into flames! And just when you thought that there couldn't be any more rotten starters on this team, there's more hiding in the bullpen! Both Mitchell Boggs (Grade 6\* C-52 HR+42) and another former staff ace, Dontrelle Willis (Grade 1 C-6 HR+15) will enter the

**Offense: 5.0**  
**The darling buds of May.**

game when one of their brethren goes down early. Blue Hill is the leading contender in the Steven



Rollins: Low OBP.



Pavano: Staff Ace. Bad news.

Strasbourg Sweepstakes with this pitching staff. If you've read this far you're probably thinking to yourself "Could their offense be as bad as their pitching staff?" and the answer would be ... yes. Don't get us wrong. The offense isn't horrific. It's just that it doesn't do a lot of anything very well.

Of the 19 offensive players, only two (Aramis Ramirez and Julio Borbon) have as many as 11 hits. Of that same set, only four (Beckham, Matsui, Rollins and Allen) have as many as 4 power numbers. Of the seven fast players, only Jimmy Rollins and Willy Taveras are real steal threats and neither of these two has an OBP over .300!

A prize pick in Blue Hill's draft was CF Julio Borbon (11 hits, 3 walks, SSN 32 for 23 attempts). He has only 46 games for 2010, but he'll make an impact when he's available. Aramis Ramirez (11 hits, 3 walks+42) turned in a decent card ... for half a season. Top pick Gordon Beckham (1-0-0-0, 10 hits, 3 walks) who will help Ramirez with third now and take over second from 2011 onward. Another player changing positions (kind of) is OF Chase Headley (9 hits, 4 walks), who'll now be San Diego's full time 3B. DH Hideki Matsui (1-0-0-0, 9 hits, 4 walks) gave good effort for 142 games. Long time superstar Jimmy Rollins (1-0-0-0, 9 hits, 2 walks, SSN31 for 39 SBA) has power and speed but a low OBP (.296).

That's the good news. Former leadoff hitter Willy Taveras (9 hits, 2 walks) is still around, but appears to have completely forgotten what



**Mark Ludwig has decided to open a half-way house for innocuous starting pitchers. With a staff like this, Blue Hill becomes the favorite in the Heyward/Strasburg Sweepstakes.**

to do with that wooden stick in his hands. His OBP of .275 from the top of the order is pure death to any offense. Even worse is the continued slippage of Ken Griffey, Jr. (7 hits, 5 walks). He can't hit, run or play defense anymore but is a great "clubhouse presence". Mike Fontenot (3 0s, 9 hits, 3 walks), Jeremy Reed (2 0s, 9 hits, 3 walks), and other lesser luminaries such as Joe Thurston, Daric Barton, Drew Sutton and a number of light-hitting catchers round out the roster. Any one of these could break out. This

**Defense: 5.0**  
**Somebody please catch the ball!**

lineup won't really threaten good staffs, but will occasionally smack down poorer pitchers. Too bad they can't face their own staff. There is some good stuff here. The infield duo of Rollins (SS9) and Fontenot (2B8) will work well together, but will be flanked by Fielding 3 at third base (Ramirez and Beckham) and a lot of 1B2 (Chase Headley, sometimes relieved by 1B4 Daric Barton). Drew Sutton's 2B6 will see some time when Fontenot is unavailable.

In the outfield, Jeremy Reed (OF3, 33 arm) is the best defender, with help from Taveras (OF2, 32 arm), Headley (OF2, 31 arm) and waiver pickup Austin Kearns (OF2, 34 arm). Unfortunately, Borbon is only an OF1, as is Griffey, and they'll have to play. Behind the plate is a flotilla of C7s: Wil Nieves (Th-1), Rob Johnson (Th+1) and a

**Bench: 1.5**  
**Guys taking up space.**

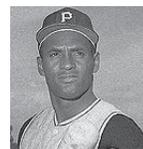
few minutes of Lou Marson (Th+5). Overall, this mediocre defense isn't helpful with a poor

pitching crew and inferior offense. Never let it be said that Blue Hill can't cover its games. No sir! There are tons of guys here just dying to shoehorn their way into the lineup – like Joe Thurston (3 0s, 8 hits, 4 walks) and Drew Sutton (3 0s, 8 hits, 3 walks). They'll all get their chance but probably won't help out a whole lot.

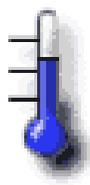
There is no "batting toy" on the bench waiting to win a game or two. There is versatility enough that a poor batting shift can be countered from the bench, even if the card itself isn't any better.

Oh, joy. Anyone with a good bat or a good glove and any significant playing time is usually in the starting lineup.

They may finish 7th in a 4 team race. Ladies and Gentlemen! It's time to mark all of our calendars for August 5-8, when the Midwest Mongrels will be hosting the Mudslides in a four game set that could go a long way towards deciding the first pick in the 2011 draft. Blue Hill has serious deficiencies in every phase of its game and we think 100-110 losses are unavoidable. But there are definitely signs of hope. Players like Borbon, Beckham and Sutton blended together with vets like Headley, Rollins and Ramirez could mean an uptick in 2011 for Blue Hill. If Dice-K, Willis and Hudson can recapture some of their lost magic, then maybe a return to contention is just around the corner. It's been a while since a team from the Clemente has been dominant outside its division, so maybe Blue Hill will be the next one.



**blue hill MUDSLIDES**



2009 finish: 58-104 (4th, Clemente)  
 Last 5 years: 397-413, .490

PITCHING: 3.0 OFF: 5.0 DEF: 5.0 BNC: 1.5

**TQ: 14.5**

# Everything and the Kitchen Sink

We've been waiting a while to see what *Craig Musselman* will do when he's going for the big prize. Early in his TBL career, Mr.



Musselman's club, the Rye Herons, required massive transfusions of pitching to become competitive, after Doug Chapin showed what a Senators fan could do when driving the

bus; but a few years ago came the Manny trade, and now Rye is off to the races. They truly have put everything, kitchen sink included, into building this club; there'll be no picks in Rounds 1-3, and no help in September. They may not need it.

Gotham City fell short of another championship in 2009, but not for lack of trying by veteran GM *Anton Greenwald*. This year's club is probably short on both offense and defense, but it's not without its merits. With a great track record of making as much as possible of whatever is available, Dr. Greenwald's team – which has a few bashers, a solid rotation, and a decent bullpen – will certainly make some noise and has a decent shot at the post-season. Incidentally, they had a pretty good draft, especially for a team that nearly won the TBL championship. Their presence is noted.



## 2008 Mays Division Final Standings

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Gotham City*	97	65	.599	—
Rye†	91	71	.562	6
Las Vegas‡	89	73	.549	8
Grand Cayman	68	94	.420	29

\* Lost to Midwest in the World Series.

† Lost to Las Vegas in the Wild Card playoff.

‡ Lost to Gotham City in the IC Championship.

Meanwhile out in the Cayman Islands, *Mark Bloom's* team presents a curious façade: names of players we like, but with many having off



seasons. They have some depth in the 2011 draft, and added some good young talent in this one – but both for veterans and rookies, the club's future fortunes depend on how many lottery tickets pay out. It means that we don't know for sure which direction they're going . . . but this year they're likely going nowhere.



Las Vegas sings a familiar refrain. Having turned in another winning season but having fallen short of a chance to play in the World Series, they are falling back and

rebuilding once more. *Paul Harrington* even sent away The Guy He Wanted, Jason Bay, as part of the dip. This time, however, the young core is better than before. Maybe the wait for contention won't be quite as long. But like Grand Cayman, their future is cloudy. Ask Again Later.



Zack Greinke, Rye

# Mays Division

- |                 |      |
|-----------------|------|
| 1. Rye          | 39.0 |
| 2. Gotham City  | 25.5 |
| 3. Grand Cayman | 22.0 |
| 4. Las Vegas    | 21.5 |

# 2009 rye HERONS in review



*Those things can go awry, no pun intended.*

## 2009 in Review

### Final Record: 91-71 (2nd, Mays)

For the Rye Herons, 2009 was year three of a five year plan to reach competitiveness. It was a predictable step along the way for a team that was expected to be on the playoff bubble, but not yet potential championship material. During the regular season, the Herons over-performed, finishing with 91 wins, and a playoff berth for the second year in a row (short row). For the second year in a row, the Herons were one and done in the playoffs, losing easily in the first round.

Rye General Manager Craig Musselman wasn't concerned about the 2009 season, which he said was fun and moderately successful, a little better than expected. The team is looking ahead, planning on being championship-driven for 2010 and 2011. Those things can go awry, no pun intended, but that is the Rye plan.

### What went right?

The Rye offense was predictably led by Manny Ramirez who hit 40 home runs and drove in 124, hitting .304, an excellent year preceding his suspension. Chase Utley underperformed again for Rye, hitting only .251, but he scored 121 runs to lead the team in that category. Nelson Cruz' Rye debut was excellent, as he hit .303 and had an OBP over .400.

A lot went right with the pitching staff, and this was the key to the team's performance. Jered Weaver led the team with a 15-10 record, and Jesse Litsch was outstanding, with a 13-3 record and a 3.15 ERA. The bullpen was much better than expected, led by LaTroy Hawkins with a 1.51 ERA.

The weird story about what went right, was also the lead item on what went wrong. Rye needed 24 anemic starts from Grade 6 Scott Feldman. The plot was to

front-load Feldman's starts, with all of them coming before October, to maximize the team's place in the draft order, and then drive for the last playoff spot with Joba Chamberlain. Feldman went 14-5 with a 4.04 ERA. He had amazing offensive support consistently. Go figure. This plan indeed went awry.

### What went wrong?

See Feldman. See Chase Utley's batting average. Matt Kemp underperformed, which is becoming an annual thing. His +3 against right handed pitchers and his loads of singles on his card, makes for an underperformance. None of the catchers hit over .220. Casey Blake, acquired in September to shore up the third base position in 2010, hit only .212 over the remaining course of the season.

Almost nothing went wrong for the pitching staff. Mike Adams, with a 2.94 ERA, went 2-8, perhaps the hard luck reliever of all time.

### 3 Things

1. *Going for it all.* The young pitching had solidified, the young hitters were coming into their own, and the Herons decided that a plan for competing in both 2010 and 2011 was in order. Rye acquired Scutaro, Carpenter and Berkman. The later draft went to add young relievers.
2. *Expend the assets.* Everything available was committed to adding players, and the team's strengths are its dominant starting pitching, strong offense and a dominant closer. The Herons would have liked to have improved the bullpen but was absolutely out of assets.
3. *Win the division and take your chances.* The starters may have to go deep, and there are lots of clear competitors. But the Herons are ready to fly.



Manny Ramirez: Predictable

# rye HERONS

Craig Musselman (6th year)

*Fasten your seat belts.*



The long labors are over in Rye. When Craig Musselman arrived in 2005, he inherited a 44-118 Dunn Loring Iconoclasts team from Doug Chapin. While Doug left to save democracy from election fraud, Craig and his boys have travelled long in dark places on their way to this, their first championship-caliber offering. If Rye wins the TBL title, it will be the first one for this franchise since Ron Davis' Shangri-La Nowheremen won the 1984 TBL World Series – the first one for which we have data.

The immediacy of the situation is obviously not lost on the savvy Mr. Musselman. Most of his 2011 draft is invested here already. They have stacks of everything, a division in fearful retreat, and a manager with a sharp eye for talent. The only thing left is to execute the plan.

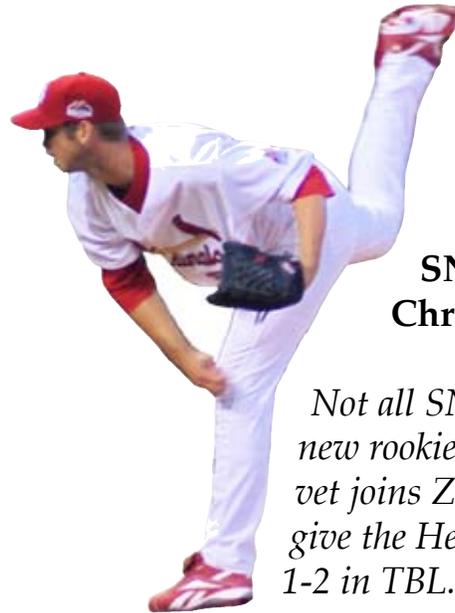
**Pitching: 16.0**  
**Give away nothing.**

**ROTATION.** In the 2007 *Annual*, a genius who shall remain nameless pointed out that Zack Greinke's return to health and productivity was critical to Rye's attempt to move into the upper echelon on TBL. Lo and Behold: Zack Greinke (Grade 16 C+26 HR+43, 33 starts). It's terrific to see Zack blowing away American League hit-

**Arrived:** Lance Berkman, Jason Bulger, Chris Carpenter, Elmer Dessens, Wes Helms, Jason LaRue, Edwin Maysonet, Brian Sanches, Marco Scutaro, Tim Stauffer, Joe Thatcher

**Departed:** Joaquin Benoit, Hank Blalock, Sean Casey, Joba Chamberlain, Doug Davis, Toby Hall, Scott Hinshaw, Cesar Jimenez, Jesse Litsch, Aquilino Lopez, Noah Lowry, Mike Rabelo

**Turnover Rate: 31%**



**SNT:**  
**Chris Carpenter**

*Not all SNTs are brand new rookies. This talented vet joins Zack Greinke to give the Herons the best 1-2 in TBL.*

ters, his arsenal of nasty pitches and his anxiety disorders seemingly under control. This is almost as good as starters get in TBL this year, other than Hudson's Tim Lincecum. The other rotation beast is Cris Carpenter (Grade 15 C+33 HR+45, 28 starts). Carpenter was acquired from Wakefield for a 2010 #1 and a 2011 #2. The 61 starts at the top of this rotation are as good as you'll find in TBL this year.

Carpenter and Greinke have three solid full season cards behind them in the rotation. Jered Weaver (Grade 12 C+15, 33 starts) has become the durable, high-quality starter that Craig thought he was getting with the #7 pick in the 2006 TBL draft. Scott Feldman (Grade 11 HR+21, 31 starts) has exceeded every expectation and has emerged as the #1 starter for the Rangers. Veteran Jarrod Washburn (Grade 12 C+21, 28 starts) is one of those quietly effective pitchers who seems under-appreciated. He went 14-5 for this outfit in 2008, and after getting injured



# RYE HERONS

last year is back in a big way. Tim Stauffer (Grade 11 C-32, 14 starts) also fits in here. The total of 162 starts at Grade 11 or better is imposing to say the least. Rye is giving away nothing with this unit – they will compete for every game.

**BULLPEN.** In 2007, the Herons and their manager enjoyed a season with a rare Grade 30\* as his closer – Joaquin Benoit. Rare for other people, maybe, because this year Mike Adams (Grade 30\* C+32 HR+52, 37 IP) is the Rye closer for as long as his innings last.



Adams: While it lasts.

The last time a grade/peripherals combination like this showed up in TBL envelopes, the name was Dennis Eckersley, and the year was 1991.

Unlike Joaquin Benoit, Gomez Adams has a good solid setup crew led by LA Angel Jason Bulger (Grade 17\* C-36, 65 IP). Then comes the gang of 14\*s. LaTroy Hawkins (C+26, 63 IP), Florida’s Brian Sanches (C+14 HR+21, 56 IP) and Joe Thatcher (C+24 HR+43, 45 IP), a fine lefty from San Diego, are around for games when Craig needs to play matchups.

Shawn Camp (Grade 12\* HR+23, 79 IP) provides some needed bulk to the pen. The last guys off the pine are Miguel Batista (Grade 10\* C-44 HR+23, 71 IP) and the short-season Elmer Dessens (Grade 15\* C+16 HR-24, 32 IP).

The pen is a little shorter than we would like to see – about 450 innings in total – but the instructions are to ride top-end starters through a reduction or two. However, there is no questioning the quality. Not a single pitch will be thrown for Rye this year by a pitcher with a single digit grade.

## Offense: 11.0 Fasten your seat belts.

The offense features three pieces of eyeball-scorching cardboard, starting with the sublime Chase Utley (1-5-6, 9 hits, 5 walks+42, 35 SSN for 23 attempts). Utley is one of those rare cornerstone hitters that also play an important defensive position. These guys are valuable in ways that have nothing to do with the quality of their cardboard. For example, great players like Utley who play 150+ games a year allow draft picks to be allocated to other positions. Some clubs pick middle infielders every year and never stumble upon a Chase Utley.

Lance Berkman (1-0-0-0, 9 hits, 6 walks) and Manny Ramirez (1-5-5-6, 10 hits, 5 walks) were brought to Rye by trade. Berkman came from Grand Cayman. Ramirez came from Portland at the cost of a #1 and a #2 and Juan Rivera. Both of these guys will terrorize pitchers all season long.

There are three other high-impact cards that play regularly as well. Nelson Cruz (1-1-5-6, 9 hits, 3 walks, 32 SSN for 24 attempts) has developed into a deluxe power hitter. Now he has to work on this “making contact” thing. Marco Scutaro (3 0s, 9 hits, 5 walks, 29 SSN for 19 attempts) will be an All-Star caliber shortstop for Rye this year. Matt Kemp (1-4-5, 10 hits, 3 walks, 31 SSN for 42 attempts) is gradually emerging as a superstar out in Los Angeles.



Cruz: Deluxe

There are plus cards later in the lineup as well. Torii Hunter (1-0-0-0, 10 hits, 3



**Craig Musslemen is another of our fairly recently added managers who have nicely turned around an inherited franchise and made it truly his own. Craig has been patient and in 2011 he will be rewarded.**

walks, 31 SSN for 22 attempts) bats cleanup against lefties due to his L+4 shift. Against righties he bats seventh, which is another signpost that Rye is loaded this season. Casey Blake (1-4-6, 10 hits, 4 walks, L+8 R-4) bats eighth against righties, but tears up lefties. The Catchers Three are generally not scary hitters, but Miguel Olivo (1-0-0-0, 9 hits, 2 walks, 28 SSN for 7 attempts) will have his moments.

There's power, speed, on base ability – in short, everything this team needs to blow the doors off mediocre pitching and steal the occasional game away from the high-grade opponents they face.

Fasten your seat belts.

**Defense: 9.0**  
**That'll be Fielding One.**

The defense starts with Chase Utley (2B8) and Marco Scutaro (SS9). That's a pretty good start. The outfield is all OF3s – Matt Kemp (OF3, 37 arm; thanks for asking), Torii Hunter (OF3, 35 arm) and Nelson Cruz (OF3, 31 arm) will catch anything that flies through the air, including sparrows and bats. Casey Blake (3B5) will vacuum up everything hit to the hot corner. Even Miguel Olivo (C8, Th+0) is a capable defender, and his backup Raul Chavez (C8, Th+3) is even better.

The only guy that doesn't catch the ball with robot-like consistency is Lance Berkman (1B4), but he's still pretty good.

Rye will not extend innings or fumble and bumble their way to silly losses



Kemp: Thanks for asking

against overmatched opponents. This defense is right there with Northboro as the league's best.

**Bench: 3.0**  
**So deep it's silly.**

Omar Infante (2 0s, 11 hits, 3 walks, 2 31s) is pretty much a bench in and of himself. He plays second, short, third and the outfield. Josh Anderson (30 SSN for 15 attempts) is a terrific pinch runner who has no other role – sort of like Herb Washington. Brian Buscher (2 0s, 8 hits, 5 walks+42) is the poster boy for how deep this club is. 14 on-base numbers, and he has no role at all. The same is true of Jeff Keppinger (3 0s, 9 hits, 3 walks+22, L+4) and waiver acquisitions Edwin Maysonet (2 0s, 11 hits) and Wes Helms (3 0s, 10 hits).

The only thing missing is the 16-hit freak show that occasionally shows up on this kind of club. Rye will be too busy pounding opponents into the dust to notice the void.

**1st** Craig is riding a juggernaut with this edition of the Herons. There will be no race in the Mays this year: Mr. Musselman's timing is as beautiful as the club he's built.

Rye should handle Whitman and Dallas and could make it to the World Series. Portland is the only club in the league this year that can match up with them card for card. If that series materializes, it should be a classic.



**rye HERONS**



2009 finish: 91-71 (2nd, Mays)  
Last 5 years: 418-392, .518

PITCHING: 16.0 OFF: 11.0 DEF: 9.0 BNC: 3.0

**TQ: 39.0**

# 2009 gotham city BATMEN in review



*The V8 that drove our team coughed and choked and we could not get up speed.*

## 2009 in Review Final Record: 97-65 (1st, Mays)

We made the World Series. We lost the World Series. That is the summary of our year – in essence what went right and what went wrong. Why did we reach the championship? The team had power like a V8 engine – and had excellent starting pitching to go with it. How did we lose it? The V8 hat drove our team coughed and choked and we could not get up speed. For a team that lives or dies with the home run, this was telling.

### What went right?

In 2009 we saw much better pitching than average for Gotham City. We had to add a starting pitcher but, surprisingly, the bullpen was stronger than anticipated. Felix Hernandez won 20 games; Justin Duchscherer went 12-5; and the ageless Jamie Moyer won 13 games with a 3.57 ERA. Four relievers had ERAs under 2.00, covering more than 250 innings.

In the draft we missed getting the outfielder we coveted – and this may leave us with a hole at CF in the future – but the alternate has power and the “home run or bust” gang took off. Jermaine Dye hit .278-32-109 with 52 doubles; Ryan Howard hit 46 homers and drove in 145; Mark DeRosa hit .286 with 16 HR and 77 RBI.

In the other conference, we would have struggled to make the playoffs. In our division, there was little competition and the whole conference was weaker than average - so we waltzed into the post-season.

### What went wrong?

Our Series opponent was focused on pitching, and our key offensive player, Ryan Howard, whiffed a lot and had no extra base hits in the Series. We might have seen this coming; the team struck out almost 1200 times, led by Howard (210), and four others with 100 or more. The 186 homers showed what kind of power the team possessed; only 15 steals (in 25 tries) showed that we had little team speed.

### 3 Things

1. *A time to contend.* With the weakness in the conference, there was no reason to do anything but go for it. Adding a starter and some temporary “cardboard” was the right thing to do for 2009.

2. *A flawed team.* The Gotham City Batmen have long been known for their offense; defense and pitching were always secondary to scoring. The offense from our World Series champion from 2001 was worn down. We had no hitting to speak of from the catching duo and instead of 10 or 11 hits and 5 walks, most cards had 9 hits and 4 walks instead. We had lots of power for the 2 through 6 hitters but not much speed.

3. *This team is getting old.* Giles retired. Dye may follow. We dumped Moyer. Tim Wakefield never looks unhittable, ever. Tejada may be over the hill too. Rebuilding is necessary, but some of the older players would not bring enough. Escobar is our hope as the future SS, and if one or more of the new pitchers work out we could be in decent shape for 2011.



Jermaine Dye: V8 Power

# gotham city BATMEN

Anton Greenwald (26th year)

*It may come down to how many walks and how many homahs come out of Anton's dice.*



They have been here before. They have done this before.

It has been worse in the past. 2005 is not all that long ago: Hideo Nomo went 3-19, giving up 338 baserunners and 33 homers in 153 innings recording an 8.96 ERA. They hit .237 as a team that year, and their pitching staff gave up 900 runs. Some of those players were here last year and remain even now: Nick Swisher, Mark DeRosa, Gary Matthews, Jermaine Dye, Ryan Howard, Tim Wakefield. It was the tail end of five great years following three years of similar struggle.

The fact is, there's not much that Dr. Anton *hasn't* seen in 26 years in TBL. Eleven trips to the playoffs, including three World Series. Five, or maybe six, rebuilds depending on how you count. Some things are constant; Gotham City has always been about power (consider the archetypical Greenwald hunting cry: "*walk ... walk ... homah!*") and rarely, if ever, about speed; Pat Listach is the all-time single season steals leader with 41 in 1993. When there was pitching they contended. When not ... it was ugly.

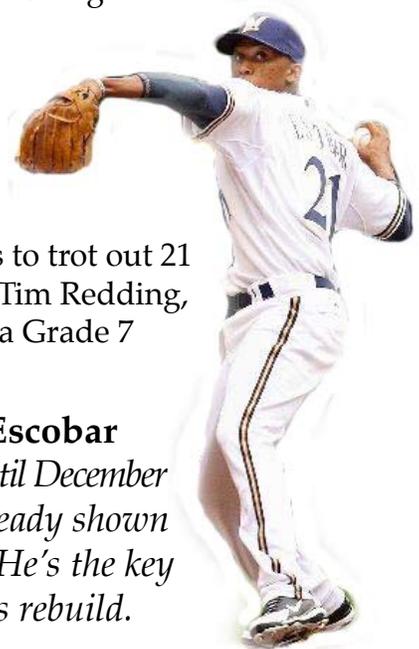
But what can be made of this year's Batmen? The offense is down, but not out – there are at least five good power cards and a handful of other players to support them. For two-thirds of the season there are decent starting pitchers. There isn't enough bullpen, but there is a righty and a lefty with closer grades. Rye is all in and probably wins the Mays by a landslide, but this club, which the good Doctor considers a rebuild, has a decent chance of a twelfth visit to the post season. It's a team good enough to win some games, but likely not a sufficient number. It may come down to how many walks and how many *homahs* come out of Anton's dice.

## **Pitching: 11.5** **Younger, but maybe not enough.**

**ROTATION.** Let's start with one of the best pitchers in the majors: King Felix Hernandez (Grade 15 C+14 HR+35). He has help: rookie lefty Mark Rzepczynski (Grade 15 C-43), clearly a name that Anton should never be forced to say, adds 11 quality starts; and workhorses Justin Verlander (Grade 12 C+24 HR+24) and Jorge de la Rosa (Grade 10 lefty C-25) add 67 more capable trips to the hill, making 112 altogether.

What comes after that isn't too bad.

Tim Wakefield, now collecting AARP benefits, gets to trot out 21 times as a Grade 8; Tim Redding, arrived by trade, is a Grade 7



### **SNT: Alcides Escobar**

*He won't be 24 until December 2010, but has already shown what he can do. He's the key to Gotham City's rebuild.*

**Arrived:** Jesse Chavez, Alcides Escobar, Tim Redding, Mark Rzepczynski, Michael Saunders, Craig Stammen, Taylor Teagarden

**Departed:** Geoff Geary, Randy Flores, Brian Giles, Brandon League, Javier Lopez, Dustin Moseley, Jamie Moyer

**Turnover Rate: 20%**



# gotham city BATMEN

for 17 more starts; and rookie Craig Stammen will style for a dozen more (Grade 5 C+32 HR-14). This is a good rotation for most of the season, enough to keep Gotham City in most games.

**BULLPEN.** Regular-season success in TBL depends on one of the few things a manager actually can control: use of the bullpen. To be effective, a team needs a closer – Grade 18\* or better – and depth in innings. Gotham City has it half right.

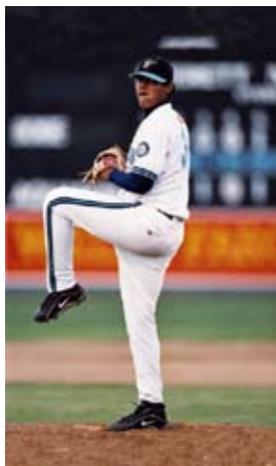
Jonathan Papelbon (Grade 19\* HR+32), whose name Anton should really learn to spell, leads the bullpen. He is not at his best, but provides 68 closer innings. His lefty tag-team partner is J. P. Howell (Grade 18\* C-35), who has 66 innings of his own.

Unfortunately, the ability of the setup crew – who, if this were a deliberate contender, would have 14\*-16\* grades – will force the starters to stay in longer than intended. Bobby Jenks (Grade 11\* C+21) and Lance Cormier (Grade 12\* C+16 HR+31) will rescue the middle and later starters, but the best of the Gotham City rotation will have to remain in the game until fatigued. D.J. Carrasco (Grade 8\* C+23 HR+42), rookie Jesse Chavez (Grade 9\* C+21 HR-24) and veteran Cla Meredith (Grade 7\* C+23 HR+35) round out the bullpen with 220-plus additional innings.

If the Batmen find themselves close to a playoff spot late in the season, they might consider improving this area. Fortunately, middle relief is usually on offer in September.

**Offense: 7.0**  
**Much the same, but not as much.**

The Gotham City lineup continues to rely upon the chief tools of a “mature” offense: walks and



Hernandez: King Felix.

extra-base hits. With a few rare exceptions such as Albert Pujols, that usually means a load of strikeouts as well. No one exemplifies this sort of risk/reward proposition like Ryan Howard (1-1-0-0-0, 10 hits, 4 walks+22, 8 13s, L-13 R+5). When he is good, he is very good. His best backup is the resurgent Miguel Tejada (4 0s, 12 hits) who is very good indeed. The remaining power bats in the lineup sport 1-0-0-0

power: Gabe Kapler (8 hits, 4 walks, L+6), Clint Barmes (9 hits, 2 walks+42), and Nick Swisher (8 hits, 6 walks, but 6 13s). Kapler has only two-thirds of a season, but the other two can play most of the time.

Things decline after that. Jeff Baker (3 0s, 10 hits, 3 walks) and Mark DeRosa (1-5-6, 9 hits, 3 walks+22) will get into the lineup, and Jermaine Dye (1-5-5, 9 hits, 4 walks, L+4) will be the every day DH. Scott Podsednik (3 0s, 11 hits, 2 walks, 43 steal attempts) provides the only real speed. Gary Matthews (3 0s, 9 hits, 4 walks) and Brendan Harris (3 0s, 10 hits, 2 walks+22) are space fillers in certain lineups. At the catching position, there are no hit numbers to be found at positions 31 and 51. Rod Barajas, Dioner Navarro and Taylor Teagarden will create many outs.

This offense will likely produce some big innings, and a bunch of empty ones, particularly against better pitching staffs.



Howard: Risk/reward.



*This year's version of the Batmen are a step back from last year. The rotation is light at the back end and there will be trouble getting the ball to the back of Gotham's bullpen. They could be a Wild Card possibility in a weak conference.*

**Defense:  
Average at best.**

**4.5**

It has never been a priority in Gotham City to catch the ball (as opposed to merely hitting the hell out of it.) When Miguel Tejada arrived from Portland, he had a momentary bump to an SS9 rating, but he has subsided to SS8 this year. He is a typical Batman defender; Ryan Howard is a 1B3, Mark DeRosa a 3B4 (and an OF2 with a 32 arm, and a 1B3 ... he's very versatile.)

The entire the outfield consists of OF2s with arms between 30 and 34. Jermaine Dye, once an outstanding defender, has gotten old (OF1, 34 arm) but need not take a glove with him this season. The catching crew is largely Fielding Two, though it can throw (Rod Barajas is a C7 with a Th+2; Taylor Teagarden is a C7 with a Th+3). The only top defenders are the third catcher, Dioner Navarro (C8, Th-1) and Clint Barmes (2B8).

The players in the field are not going to make innings last significantly longer, but they are overall average at best.

**Bench:  
Bits and pieces.**

**2.5**

A contender bench often has what we like to call a "hitting toy". These cards turn up in every draft: 12 hits or 5 power numbers or sometimes both, usually with relatively few plate appearances. The player often is the embodiment of the Landrum Effect: a year from now he'll either be

mediocre, or simply vanished below the waves.



There's none of that here, though there are a few interesting players that don't have enough playing time to be regulars. Alcides Escobar (2 Os, 11 hits, L+10 R-6) should be a good pinch-hitter or pinch-runner this year; Brendan Harris (3 Os, 10 hits) might help counter a bad batting shift, as can Will Venable (1-5-6, 9 hits, 3 walks, 2 10s, L-11 R+2). Michael Saunders, the fastest guy on the bench, has a cool first-column 3, but is here for his future potential.

A veteran manager will make the best of the spare parts he has available, so these are better than space fillers – but not much better.

**2nd** And not much chance of any other outcome. Grand Cayman and Las Vegas are both further along in rebuild mode than Gotham City and should hug the bottom of the division this year – neither has the offensive attack or pitching depth of the Batman. As for the Mays Division pennant, there's nothing here that can keep up with the Rye attack or arms.

On the other hand, the International Conference is wide open like last year. Picking division winners is not difficult in 2010, but it looks like there will be quite a battle for Wild Card spots. Expect the Gotham City club to be right in the middle of that fight.



DeRosa: Versatile

**gotham city BATMEN**



2009 finish: 97-65 (1st, Mays)  
Last 5 years: 403-417, .498

PITCHING: 11.5 OFF: 7.0 DEF: 4.5 BNC: 2.5

**TQ: 25.5**

# 2009 grand cayman HAVENS in review

Grand Cayman  
**HAVENS**

*The rebuilding process is just underway.*

## 2009 in Review

**Final Record: 68-94 (4th, Mays)**

When a team loses 96 games, you know things went wrong. When that team won 109 the year before, you start to get a picture of a precipitous fall from grace.

### What went right?

The team's offense ranked seventh in the league. Bengie Molina carried the team all year, getting clutch hits when others didn't. He bested .300 for the first time in his TBL career, ending at .316. He also smacked a career-high 47 doubles. Team captain Lance Berkman hit .279, his highest TBL average since 2004. He led the team in homers (25), runs (95), RBIs (105), doubles (48), homers (25), and walks (102). He even stole 12 bases, good for second on the team. Ryan Theriot, in his first year with the Havens, hit a solid .278 mostly from the lead-off spot, and he walked more (90) than he struck out (58).



Lance Berkman: Leader

Trade acquisition Troy Percival held up all year to post 28 saves and a solid 3.21 ERA, the second-best mark on the club. Workhorse Javier Vazquez won 14 games, and Scott Kazmir won 12—and both had winning records—for a team that won only 66 times. Vazquez once again led the team in strikeouts, this time with 213. Rookies Kyle McClellan and Wesley Wright chipped in with winning records out of the pen.

### What went wrong?

Of the key contributors to the pennant-winning Lewiston-Auburn Draftdodgers of 2008, no one

was more disappointing than Chone Figgins. His average dropped from .290 to .242, and that included a late surge. His stolen bases dropped from 39 to more pedestrian 24. Worst of all, he smacked only 12 extra-base hits *all year*.

But it wasn't just Figgins' fault. Placido Polanco's average fell from a league-leading .365 to .289.

Curtis Granderson, the 2008 team MVP, had a disappointing season in all areas (including a mediocre .255 batting average), although he did hit a team-leading 12 triples. The pitching was even worse, with five starters posting double-digit losses.

### 3 Things

1. *No standing pat.* The face of the team has changed. Berkman, Figgins and Vazquez are gone; others went as well, as the roster approached 50 percent new faces. It's true the team is younger, but will it make a difference on the field?

2. *Fix the pitching.* It has improved over last year. Rookie Tommy Hanson leads the team as a Grade 14, Jonathan Sanchez improved to a 12, and Clay Buchholz returns as a 10. For the first time in memory, this might be a pitching-dominated team.

3. *Suffer the rebuild.* The offense has some strong hitters in Bay and Hawpe, but the team lacks a truly awesome card. There's limited playing time for the best power, while inferior cards play way too much. The team has strengths, but there'll be some growing pains as the rebuilding process is just underway.

# grand cayman HAVENS

Mark Bloom (20th year)

*Uncle Boomer has been this route before.*



During the last two years, Mark Bloom has visited both the penthouse and the basement of the Transcontinental Baseball League. In 2008, the Lewiston-Auburn Draft Dodgers won 109 games and rolled into the International Conference championship round before getting unceremoniously dispatched by the Brobdingnag Barbarians. In 2009, Boomer changed everything except Whitey Bulger, built the team down and set the stage for the next big step forward, as the Grand Cayman Havens went 68-94 and finished 29 games behind Gotham City in the Mays Division.

Having seen both sides, Boomer heads into 2010 with a basketful of very nice names and some extra picks in the 2011 draft. The big jump into the first division won't happen this year, but the Havens are pointed in the right direction.

**Pitching: 8.0**  
**Just add a pinch of experience.**

**ROTATION.** This year's starters are less about the grades and more about the names. Five of the six names in this rotation are on our Guys We Like list. It starts with the hard-throwing Bay City lefthander Jonathan Sanchez (Grade 12 C-44, 29 starts). Last year for the Giants, Sanchez struck out 177 batters in 160 innings. This is a special arm. And the same could be said of 24 year old Atlanta righty Tommy Hanson (Grade 14 HR+23, 21 starts). Hanson's grade and youth made him the #5 pick in the 2010 TBL draft.

Two solid righties and a golden-armed lefty back up Sanchez and Hanson. Clay Buchholz (Grade 10 C-13 HR-13) and Joba Chamberlain (Grade 9 C-32) devour the next 47 starts between them. These two are interest-bearing accounts – they will deliver more value in the coming years than they have to

date. Scott Kazmir (Grade 8 C-21 HR+13, 26 starts) has struggled a bit in the last couple of years, but is still only 26.

The last two slots in the rotation are occupied by veteran workhorse Aaron Harang (Grade 6 C+31 HR-21, 26 starts), and the enigmatic Garrett Mock (Grade 2 C-23 HR+16, 15 starts). Mock's 13 starts for Cayman will not be pretty, but Mr. Bloom has him on a very short leash.

## SNT: Tommy Hanson

*The youngest of a collection of sparkly talent in the Grand Cayman starting rotation – also including Kazmir, Sanchez and Chamberlain – which may go nuclear any time now.*



**Arrived:** Alex Avila, Jason Bay, Hank Blalock, Kyle Blanks, Joba Chamberlain, Edwin Encarnacion, Jeff Francis, Sammy Gervacio, Tommy Hanson, Shawn Kelley, Evan Meek, Garrett Mock, Jose Morales, Jason Motte, Eric Patterson, Drew Stubbs, Eric Young Jr.

**Departed:** Brian Barton, Lance Berkman, Fausto Carmona, Ronny Cedeño, Chone Figgins, Livan Hernandez, Jason Isringhausen, Warner Madrigal, Craig Monroe, David Murphy, Troy Percival, Mike Redmond, David Riske, John Smoltz, Brian Stokes, Javier Vazquez, Jose Vizcaino, Wesley Wright.

**Turnover Rate: 46%**



# grand cayman HAVENS

Overall, this is not a rebuilders' starting staff. It is to be remembered the Boomer traded away a full-season Grade 14 Javier Vasquez to Northboro in the offseason. The guys that are here are talented enough to win a division title – time is required, but not much more.

**BULLPEN.** The relief staff had better limber up, because they will be working hard this season. The top end of the pen is like a McDonald's cheeseburger – a little thin and apt to cause dyspepsia. Jeremy Accardo (Grade 15\* C-62 HR+26, 24 IP) is the wild and crazy thing that will have Boomer gobbling Tums for a couple of months. Sammy Gervacio (Grade 16\* C+23 HR+41, 21 IP) is a really intriguing prospect whose minor league numbers are fabulous. He will make for more comfortable nights when the Islanders have a late lead.

The setup men are almost indistinguishable from the closers. Evan Meek (Grade 15\* C-62, HR+44, 47 IP) and Kyle McLellan (Grade 14\* C-36 HR+34, 66 IP) have better homer ratings than Accardo, and the instructions do call out Meek as a closer alternative when the two stoppers are off getting hot dogs and Cokes. Significantly, the M&Ms have 113 innings between them. Add in Renyel Pinto (Grade 13\* C-62 HR+34, 61 IP) and Grand Cayman has 219 innings of Grade 13 and above.

The middle relief crew has lower grades but the same control issues. Franklin Morales (Grade 10\* C-34 HR+14, 32 IP), who closed for a while for Colorado in 2010, has the best grade among the middle guys. Joel Zumaya (Grade 9\* C-61 HR-14, 31 IP) is still working his way back from the arm injury that shelved his 103 MPH fast-ball. Jason Motte (Grade 8\* C-15 HR-26, 56 IP) is



*I'm sure fresh air and sunshine did wonders for Whitey and the boys, but all those Mai-Tais must have gotten to him. How else did David Wells shoehorn himself into the Haven's GM "opening"? And how is this not a reality show on either ESPN or MLB Network?*

another terrific arm on a staff of terrific arms. Shawn Kelly (Grade 9\* C+36 HR-32, 46 IP) and Ramon Pena (Grade 6\* C+26 HR-16, 70 IP) will be around to bail out the weaker starters when they get in early foul trouble.

It's not a championship staff but the talent is there to get better. There's also this little factoid – not a single reliever on this staff is 30 years old.

**Offense: 6.5**  
**Solid, but not championship ready.**

Mr. Bloom is adding dry powder to his cannon on the offensive end – his second pick in the 2010 draft was Kyle Blanks (1-1-6-6, 8 hits, 4 walks+42, 54 games), who is an exciting power prospect. The offense really begins, though, with two full-time slugging outfielders - Jason Bay (1-0-0-0, 9 hits, 5 walks, 31 SSN for 16 attempts) and Brad Hawpe (1-5-6-6, 9 hits, 5 walks). Both guys will play every day, bat in the middle of the lineup, and hit for big power. Last year, Bay hit 31 homers and drove in 98 for Las Vegas, and Hawpe hit 22 homers and scored 88 runs for Grand Cayman.

Unfortunately, those are the only high-impact cards in the everyday lineup. Curtis Granderson (1-4-5, 9 hits, 4 walks, L-14 R+4) crushes right-handed pitching, but will need some help against lefties this year.

Placido Polanco (3 0s, 10 hits, 2 walks, 3 31s, 30 SSN for 9 attempts) is a nice player to add to a motion offense, and he will bat second all year behind shortstop Ryan Theriot (2 0s, 10 hits, 3 walks, 26 SSN for 31 attempts).



Bay: Full time



Things get a little shaggy after that. Hank Blalock (1-0-0-0, 9 hits, 2 walks) is back hitting for power again, but he has been having problems making contact for a few years. Edwin Encarnacion (1-0-0, 8 hits, 4 walks+22) looked like he was going to be an All-Star third baseman for years, but he slumped and changed leagues last year. He is 27 years old, so it will be interesting to see what he does on the rolling turf in Toronto this year. At catcher, the everyday guy is Bengie Molina (1-5-6, 10 hits), who will hit for better-than average power. Jose Morales (0-6, 11 hits, 4 walks, L+5) will match up against lefties, particularly on the boards. Mike Sweeney (1-6-6, 10 hits, 2 walks) and Jose Guillen (1-6, 9 hits, 2 walks+42) perform most of the DH duties.

There is enough to compete on most days, but this club will struggle against playoff-caliber pitching.

**Defense: 4.5**  
**Sometimes good. Other times? Ew.**

On defense, the Havens are pretty solid up the middle but have weaknesses elsewhere. Placido Polanco (2B9), center fielder Curtis Granderson (OF3, 30 arm), and Benji (Big Money) Molina (C8, Th-2) will make the plays all year long in three important positions for Grand Cayman. Ryan Theriot (SS8) will be average this year. Jason Bay (OF2, 33 arm) is a solid defender at one OF corner, but Brad Hawpe (OF1) is not. Kyle Blanks (OF2, 33 arm) must have been rated after a three-martini lunch at the Game Company – he’s nowhere near this good.

The corner infield slots are big trouble. Hank Blalock (1B2) and Edwin Encarnacion (3B3) are an adventure out there. There’s a little bench help, though.

**Bench: 3.0**  
**Some options.**

Alex Avila (1-1-6-6, 9 hits, 5 walks, no shift) will be a nice hitting toy this season. Eric Young, Jr. has a 19 speed number to help out as a pinch running option. Eric Patterson (3 Os, 9 hits, 5 walks, 33 SSN for 7 SBAs) is also a nice running option. Emilio Bonifacio is a competent fielder at five positions and can run a little (30 SBA with 27 SSN). Drew Stubbs (OF2, 1-0-0, 9 hits, 3 walks, 14 SBA with 28 SSN) is a useful bench player as well. Jose Guillen’s 37 arm likely doesn’t make it worthwhile to put him in the outfield (OF1).

This is a decent bench that will offer managers some flexibility.



They should beat Las Vegas and challenge the 75-win plateau; but the pitching is a year away, and the hitting is thin past Bay and Hawpe.



Granderson: Solid

Grand Cayman is improving, and the young pitching staff should allow them to make a move in 2011 or 2012. There is a tendency by some managers to look at an assembly of talent and conclude that there’s enough to contend – but Uncle Boomer has been this route before. Patience is a virtue.



2009 finish: 68-94 (4th, Mays)  
Last 5 years: 412-408, .509  
PITCHING: 8.0 OFF: 6.5 DEF: 4.5 BNC: 3.0

**TQ: 22.0**

# 2009 Las Vegas GAMBLERS in review



*Only one more thing stood between us and the promised land . . .*

## 2009 in Review

### Final Record: 89-73 (3rd, Mays)

Gamblers management staff knew by mid-2008 of the MLB season that the 2009 edition of Las Vegas would be a pretty good team, one that might just be able to finally make it over the hump and into their first World Series. A decent set of starters at the top of the rotation to go with a revived hitting attack made for a few high hopes in Sin City, but what of the bullpen? In a moment of weakness, locked tight in the grip of pennant fever, we traded the top four picks in our 2010 Draft for a closer (K-Rod) and a set up man (Saito).

### What went right?

Both of the bullpen studs were worth the price as K Rod went 9-5, with 9 saves and a 2.14 ERA in 63 IP and Saito was 6-2 with a 2.68 ERA in 47 IP. Sergio Romo (31 saves in 31.2 IP, 1.70 ERA) was the very model of efficiency and frugality. Staff Ace Shaun Marcum (14-8, 4.14 ERA) and the up and coming Gavin Floyd (12-10, 4.14 ERA) paced a talented crew, but the biggest surprise performer was Manny Parra. Parra, a very wild Grade 8 lefty was in the rotation because he had 29 low-expectation starts. Manny Bay went 11-10, 4.08, best among Vegas starters.

On the offensive side Jason Bay, in his last year in a Gamblers' uniform, once again paced the offense with 70 XBH's including 34 doubles and 31 HR. Vlad Guerrero showed he could still contribute by kicking in 37 doubles and leading the team in triples with 8! A team batting average of .261 with an ERA of 3.86 was good enough for



Jason Bay: Paced the offense

an 89-73 record and the second Wild Card spot in the International Conference. We were able to turn back both Rye and Whitman to reach the Conference Finals and only one more thing stood between us and the promised land ...

### What went wrong?

... and that thing was Gotham City (*Dun! Dun! Dun!!!*). Ever playing Rome to our Carthage.

Holmes to our Moriarty. Always ready at a moment's notice to send Las Vegas players running home, crying to their mommas. This year was no different than years past. Anton ran out the string to six games before pulling it taut around our gasping throats until we stopped twitching. Another playoff corpse laying lifeless at the Batman's feet in their eventual road to the World Series, where they suffered the same fate at the hands of the Midwest club.

### 3 Things

1. *The big trade.* We hoped that acquiring K-Rod for a #1 and #2 would give us a closer for a few years and stop overpaying for cardboard. We're still optimistic.
2. *Taking the plunge.* Rebuilding is a Las Vegas tradition, and sometimes it means tough choices – like trading away Jason Bay. But we'll be back.
3. *Making the move.* The club is getting ready to change divisions, returning to the Clemente. It remains to be seen if we'll have a better road to the playoffs in the future.

# Las Vegas GAMBLERS

Paul Harrington (14th year)

*There is ultimately no substitute for gambling.*



What raises our baseball diversion from merely a mathematical exercise that has a thin patina of our favorite sport spackled onto it is our personal identification with our team. For Gotham City it's power and walks; for Midwest it's 1960s-era little ball; for Grand Cayman, it's Whitey Bulger; when our friend Don Nipps was in TBL it was clever manipulation of interchangeable parts (we didn't call him the "Shift Doctor" for nothing).

It is with only a minimum amount of jocularity that the *Annual* suggests the following for newer managers: *to place your own personal stamp upon your team, it's not necessary to make a big trade or be a draft contrarian – it's important to pick a good theme for the club and design a good logo.*

Paul Harrington, a key contributor to this fine publication, has placed a personal stamp on his team from the time he drafted it thirteen years ago. He has done it in exactly the manner we describe above. The logo, and the theme, are an essential part of the Las Vegas mystique. What's more, the theme – gambling, hedonistic living, and everything else that Sin City represents – fits in well with the way in which the Gamblers have

fared during their time in TBL. Paul Harrington has never hesitated to make the big trade, to take what was necessary in the draft, to put it all on the line to cast the dice on a chance to make it to the Big Dance.

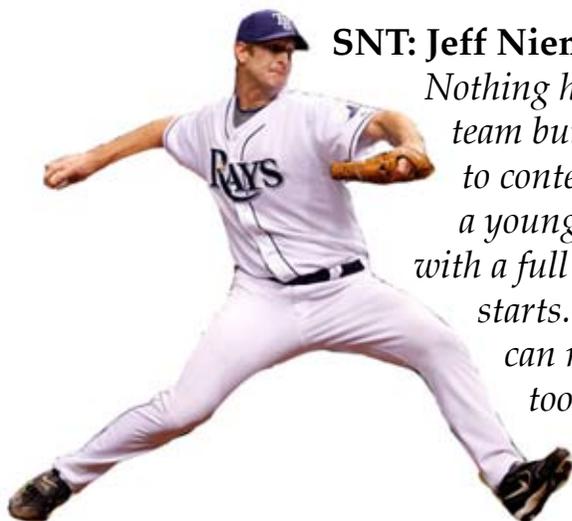
And isn't that what gambling is all about? Entropy – the enemy of all long-term plans in TBL – ultimately overcomes timidity and excessive patience. An article in this publication a few years ago ("To Go For It", Anton Greenwald, 2008) suggested that it takes 15 players to make a run at contention. A good draft will yield one or two of them; assuming that you start with, say, 5 of those key players, it would take 5 drafts to build up that critical number. But by Draft #5, some of those original ones will be hurt or their skills will be diminished or they'll be at the wrong position.

There is ultimately no substitute for gambling. In thirteen seasons, Las Vegas has been in the playoffs seven times – and in the years it has not, the team has posted a 376-596 record. With one exception (2002: 82-80) there is little trouble

**Arrived:** Jonathan Albaladejo, Robert Andino, Wladimir Balentien, Jake Fox, Sam Fuld, Nick Green, David Huff, Ron Mahay, John Mayberry, Jeff Niemann, Jayson Nix, Trent Oeltjen, Brayan Peña, Luis Perdomo, Jack Taschner

**Departed:** Rich Aurilia, Jason Bay, Dallas Braden, Russell Branyan, Doug Brocail, Eric Chavez, Ryan Freel, Eddie Guardado, Mike MacDougal, Franquelis Osoria, John Parrish, Alexei Ramirez, Al Reyes, Greg Reynolds, David Ross, Scot Shields

**Turnover Rate: 42%**



**SNT: Jeff Niemann.**

*Nothing helps a team build back to contention like a young pitcher with a full season of starts. And he can rebound too.*



# Las Vegas GAMBLERS

identifying the post-contention rebuild cycles. We've always said that Las Vegas is a high-speed version of the Munich boom and bust we know so well . . . but isn't that what gambling is all about?

## **Pitching: 8.5** **A team strength.**

**ROTATION.** Rebuilding teams usually do not have enough reliable pitching, and that is certainly the case in Las Vegas – but there is a staff ace: Gavin Floyd (Grade 11 C+16), who leads the starting rotation.

Along with Jeff Niemann (Grade 10 C+13 HR+22), the tall and talented rookie, and returning veteran Hiroki Kuroda (Grade 10 C+33), the Gamblers have half a season of quite capable starting pitching. Brendan McCarthy (Grade 9) adds a half-season (17 starts) and September

trade-bait Robinson Tejeda (Grade 24, 6 starts) will also serve well.

The train goes off the track for the last two rotation spots. Manny Parra (Grade 1 C-34), who showed such promise a year ago, will have to make 30 or so brutal starts. He'll be joined by rookie David Huff (Grade 3 C+16), who will do the same. These two lefties may bring about as many losses as the competent starters will win.

**BULLPEN.** The former closer, Francisco Rodriguez, has declined to the level of setup man (Grade 15\* C-36). He, along with veteran Takashi Saito (Grade 16\* C-23), will shoulder the bulk of the "quality" relief for the Gamblers this year. They have a bit over 120 innings between them. Robinson Tejeda is also a Grade 16\* (C-62 HR+42) for 42 innings, but as mentioned above, he may well depart in a trade to a contender.



Floyd: Ace.

The quality declines rapidly after that. Sergio Romo (Grade 10\* HR+52) is far from his former top grade, but has 34 good middle innings; Luis Perdomo (Grade 10\* C-44 HR-26) has future upside, but his present innings are a bit scary. The Gamblers were active in the waiver draft, sending three other relievers away to add some bulk innings to the bottom of their bullpen – Ron Mahay (Grade 7\* HR+24), rookie Jonathan Albaladejo (Grade 5\* C-15 HR-21) and soft-tossing Jack Taschner (Grade 4\* C-55 HR+16). Like Perdomo, the singular advantage of these worthies is that there is a lot of them available.

This staff is not contender-caliber, but does offer some good starts, innings, and has some young arms. It's a team strength.

## **Offense: 5.5** **Impostors abound.**

Team building is in part based on getting Guys You Like. Paul Harrington's club has a number of guys that he likes, from recent draftees such as James Loney and Asdrubal Cabrera to the franchise, Vladimir Guerrero (an obligatory picture of whom appears on the page opposite). But it seems that many of the principals have been replaced by impostors, who have the right names on their cards but the wrong numbers.

To see the truth of this assertion, consider that the two best cards in the lineup belong to the infielders: Asdrubal Cabrera (4 0s, 11 hits, 3 walks, 31 SSN for 21 SBA), Chone Figgins (0-6, 10 hits, 5 walks, 59 SBA) and Skip Schumaker (3 0s, 11 hits, 3 walks, L-13 R+1). Vlad's not bad (1-5-6, 11 hits, 2 walks) but, like most of the other principals, does not meet expectations. The same is



*The Gamblers came up just short of their first World Series and now must pay the price of that "almost". They will be laboring in the shadow of the valley of mediocrity in 2010. A future upswing is always possible. Here's hoping.*



Guerrero: Obligatory.

true for Loney (3 0s, 10 hits, 4 walks), Alfonso Soriano (1-5-6, 9 hits, 3 walks), and catcher Geovanny Soto (3 0s, 7 hits, 4 walks+22). In order to make up for these deficiencies, the Gamblers have been forced to bring in a collection of players with "Guy" on their backs: Jayson Nix (1-5-6, 8 hits, 3 walks, L+3 R-5, 32 SSN for 12 SBA); Jake Fox (1-0-0-0, 9 hits, 2 walks+42); Nick Green (3 0s, 8 hits, 2 walks+42), Robert Andino (2 0s, 8 hits, 2 walks) and the surprisingly capable Brayan Peña (1-6-6, 10 hits, 2 walks). Returning spare parts Jamey Carroll (2 0s, 10 hits, 4 walks) and DeWayne Wise (3-5-6, 8 hits, 1 walk+42) round out the players that will see regular playing time.

This is a lineup that sounds much scarier than it looks, and it will not perform well against solid pitching.

**Defense: 5.5**  
**Some good news.**

On some days, the Gamblers will be able to put a Fielding One team on the field. James Loney (1B4) and Chone Figgins (3B5) are at the infield corners. Cabrera (SS9) and Carroll (2B8) are the best middle infield gloves, though they may not be in the lineup at the same time. Unfortunately, the Gamblers will often have a 2B7: Andino, Nix and Schumaker.

The outfield is not as good news. Schumaker (OF2, 31 arm) will play center in many games, and he will be flanked by a collection of OF1s: Soriano (36 arm), Nick Green (37 arm) and

perhaps Jake Fox (31 arm). DeWayne Wise is an OF3 (33 arm), but his bat is deficient. Behind the plate, Geovanny Soto (C8, Th-0) is a Fielding One defender, and Brayan Peña (C7 Th+3) can throw out opposing runners.

The defense of the Gamblers should be considered good news for the team. Beyond the various Guys that will take turns in the lineup, the Gamblers have a few bench outfielders, all of whom might be considered lottery tickets.

**Bench: 2.0**  
**If they were good . . .**

Wladimir Balentien (3 0s, 8 hits, 3 walks, L-8 R+2) has arrived by trade; Trent Oeltjen (1-4-5-6, 9 hits, L-10 R+4), John Mayberry (1-1-5-6, 8 hits, L+4 R-6) and Sam Fuld (3 0s, 10 hits, 5 walks for a limited amount of time) arrived by draft. But if these cards were good . . . they'd be in the lineup.

**4th** Third is a possibility, depending on whether Grand Cayman performs better or worse against the many mediocre and rebuilding teams in TBL this year. Truthfully, it's a little hard to evaluate a team like the Gamblers. It has some pitching, some hitters and some defense; it's not a contender, but is not prostrate either.

It's fair to say, however, that in a year it'll look much different – for better or worse – but Mr. Harrington will still put down his money and take his chances.



**Las Vegas GAMBLERS**



2009 finish: 89-73 (3rd, Mays)  
Last 5 years: 430-380, .531

PITCHING: 8.5 OFF: 5.5 DEF: 5.5 BNC: 2.0

**TQ: 21.5**

# Jockey For Second Place

What is more satisfying than to see a plan come together? That's a question that can be asked of *Steve Powell*, whose Dallas Eagles have all the tools and all the talent they need to cruise through the Ruth Division this year. In the past we have remonstrated, *politely of course*, regarding one or another deficiency on Dr. Steve's roster.



We have very little to say this year. There's lots of pitching, there's good speed, and there's plenty of power. It is the *Annual's* position that there is a great deal of daylight between the club over in Dallas and the rest of the division, and the other three teams will be jockeying for second place.

Up in Canada they sit and listen to stories about that Algonquian trickster, the Canada jay (also known as a whiskey jack). No tricks here from New Westminster; the team with the longest name in TBL is coming off a Ruth Division pennant and is looking for more. *Jim Jeatt* has done a good job building the team and has spent some of his present and future resources to try and reach the post season again. Don't worry about that addiction, Jim: it's much more fun to win.



## 2008 Ruth Division Final Standings

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
New Westminster*	86	76	.451	—
Dallas	79	83	.488	7
Brobdingnag	77	85	.475	9
Houston	62	100	.383	24

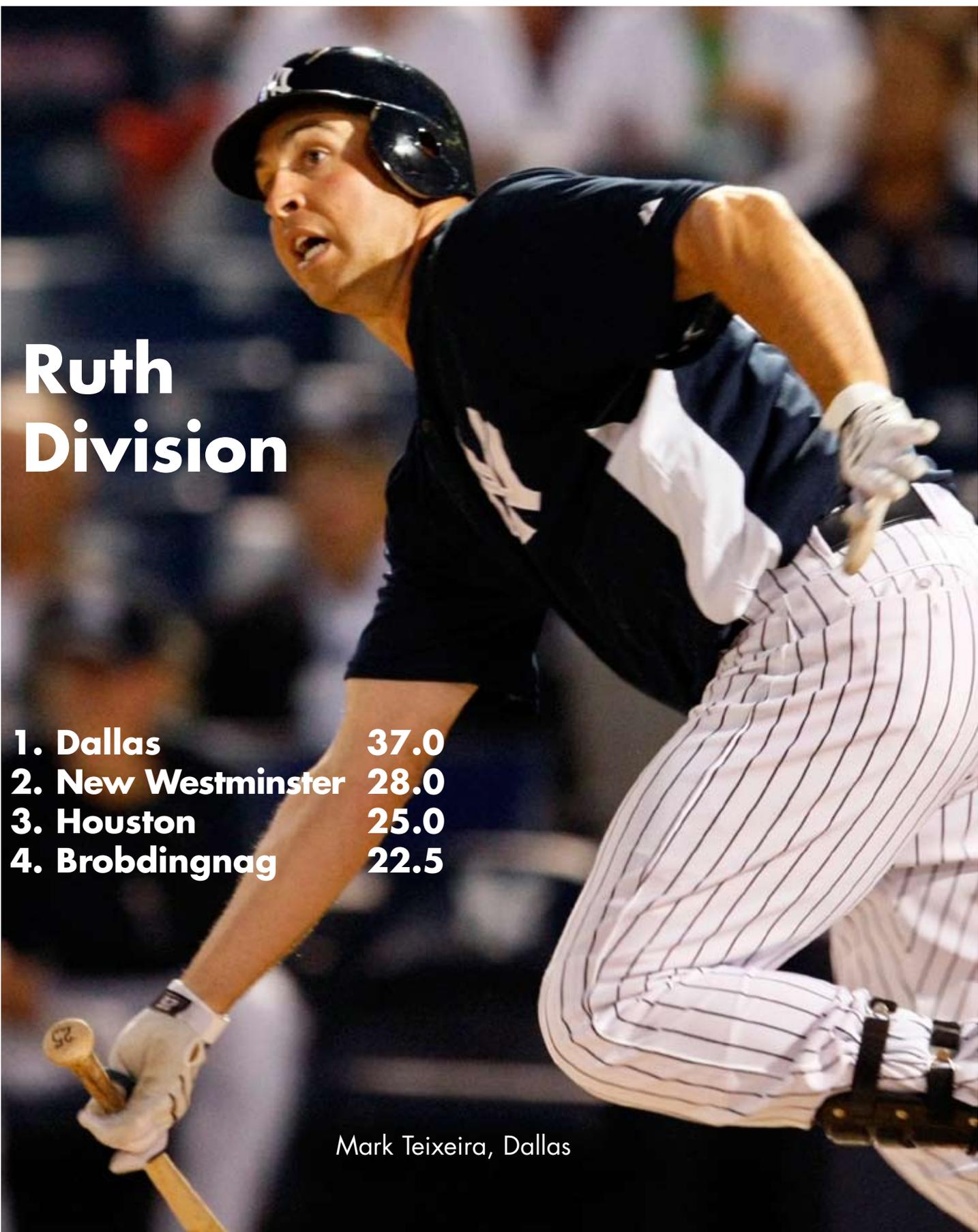
\* Lost to Gotham City in IC playoff

The mysterious ways of the Zen Master are on prominent display in Houston, where there's more talent – especially on the mound – than any time since *Dean Rogers* took the wheel four years ago. The staff will keep the team in the game; the question is whether the Zen approach can be as fruitful as the Guru method of little-ball and pitching to bring Houston to the playoffs. We would not venture to say.



The Prince of Darkness certainly knows what he is doing: you don't get your nickname by standing around here in TBL. But during his long time in the league, *Joe Auletta* has always wanted to be in the position of controlling events, rather than having events control him. Brobdingnag is neither fish nor fowl: it's too good to be a high-draft rebuild, and it's likely not good enough to get deep into the playoffs. Unfortunately, to be good enough would be too expensive; and to be bad enough would mean letting go of guys he loves. It's no place to be.





# Ruth Division

- |                           |             |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| <b>1. Dallas</b>          | <b>37.0</b> |
| <b>2. New Westminster</b> | <b>28.0</b> |
| <b>3. Houston</b>         | <b>25.0</b> |
| <b>4. Brobdingnag</b>     | <b>22.5</b> |

Mark Teixeira, Dallas

# 2009 dallas EAGLES in review



After Mark Teixeira's MVP season, it's hard to find a name worth mentioning.

## 2009 in Review Final Record: 79-83 (2nd, Ruth)

The 2009 season started out much differently than anticipated, with occasional runs at a playoff position and division lead. Our stated goal was to remain competitive, but not a serious contender. As it turned out, we achieved our goal with a second half swoon that firmly entrenched us in second place and miles from the playoffs.

### What went right?

We totaled 79 wins in 2009, 20 fewer than the 2008 edition. Looking at the offense, it's hard to imagine how we even achieved that. After Mark Teixeira's MVP season, (.304/.403/.579, 62 doubles, 97 walks) it's hard to find a name worth mentioning. Pat Burrell's 32 HR led the team while batting .205, rookie Denard Span batted .293 at the lead-off spot, and supersub Joe Inglett contributed a .286 average while filling in at three positions. On the pitching side, Dan Haren's 15-11, 3.21, 217 Ks in 241 innings and Dave Bush's 13-11, 3.91, plus the return of Josh Johnson after missing all of 2007 were the only bright spots in an otherwise brutalized starting staff. Dallas tried the Tim Wakefield approach to closing out games as knuckleballer R.A. Dickey recorded 22 saves before being pressed into a starting role.

### What went wrong?

Those responsible for the 99 wins in 2008 were also on the hook for the downturn in 2009. Carl Crawford stumbled and fumbled to a

.254 and a .649 OPS, with only 22 steals. Ryan Zimmerman's further development took a 180° turn with only 8 HR in 108 games and a .657 OPS. Matt Diaz was a virtual no-show until 12 games at garbage time in November.

Eric Bedard lasted only 15 starts that resulted in just 3 wins and an ERA near 6 before being shut down. Other starters from 2008's playoff run, Micah Owings and Chad Gaudin, combined for just five wins in 25 starts.



Dan Haren: Bright spot.

### 3 Things

1. *Too many spare parts.* Dallas relied too much on bench and fill-in players in 2009. Crawford, Zimmerman, and Diaz need to return to their pre 2009 form for this team to fully take advantage of Denard Span's on-base potential and Teixeira's run producing capabilities.
2. *A better rotation.* The starting rotation needs better supporting pieces to those who anchored the staff in '09. The #3-5 starters need to carry games beyond the fifth inning and take some heat off the relief staff.
3. *Contenders need closers.* 2009 had no defined closer after Dickey joined the starting rotation. The middle relievers and bridge types were either too short on innings or too low graded to be effective. Even with an improved offense and starting staff, this team goes nowhere in 2010 without a balanced and higher graded bullpen.

# dallas EAGLES



Steve Powell (21st year)

*They have all the pieces – they just need to win.*

Back in 2008, the *Annual* tried its best to refute the foregone conclusion that Dallas would once again finish second to the Brobdingnag Barbarians in the Ruth Division. We pointed to Dr. Steve's outstanding drafting, his clever stockpiling of sparkling talent through trade and waivers picks. Our conclusion was: *with talent like this, they have to win eventually. Why not this year?*

Steve Powell did his part to make us look good, winning 99 that season and breathing down Joe Auletta's neck all year long. The Eagles fell one game short of the Ruth division pennant, smacked a good Rye squad in the Wild Card round, then ran into the Prince of Darkness in the playoffs. Vlad conducted a public demonstration of his charming public persona, as Brobdingnag dispatched the Eagles 4-0 on their way to the 2008 TBL World Series Championship.

Undeterred by this, Dallas spent 2009 regrouping, and they regrouped in a serious way. The 2010 Eagles are stacked, with outstanding pitching and a young, dynamic offense that we predict will push the savvy Mr. Powell past the 100 win mark for the first time in his TBL career.

## Pitching: Matches up well.

**13.5**

**ROTATION.** The Dallas starting rotation would have been really scary if Eric Bedard (Grade 16 C-24 HR+21, 15 starts) had managed to stay healthy all year. Instead, he will only be up for three months. Dallas has two other top-shelf starters who have considerably less Paid Time



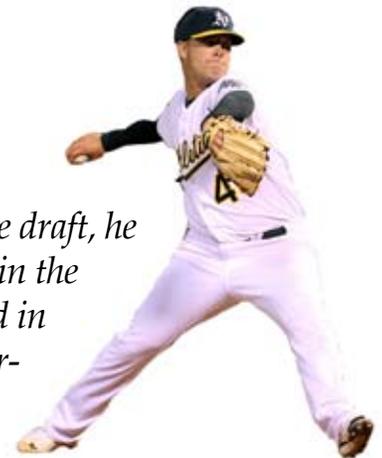
Haren: Less time off

Off: Danny Haren (Grade 13 C+41 HR-13, 33 starts) and Josh Johnson (Grade 12 C+24 HR+31, 33 starts). These three give Dallas half a season that can match up with any club in TBL not named Portland.

The other half of the rotation isn't bad either. Newly-minted draftee Tommy Hunter (Grade 10 C+21, 19 starts) and offseason trade acquisition Clayton Richard (Grade 9 C-35, 26 starts) lead this group; Chad Gaudin (Grade 9 C-35 HR+21, 25 starts), who went 18-5 for this club in 2008, also contributes here, giving Dallas 151 starts of Grade 9 and above. Jeff Karstens (Grade 6) picks up the rest, when he's not tending the tomato patch in the bullpen.

## SNT: Andrew Bailey

*The best reliever in the draft, he was a strikeout artist in the minors. He dominated in MLB, and will be overpowering in TBL.*



**Arrived:** Grant Balfour, Tommy Hunter, Kevin Jepsen, Jeff Karstens, George Kottaras, Doug Mathis, John McDonald, Jose Mijares, Clayton Richard, Rusty Ryal, Claudio Vargas

**Departed:** Shawn Chacon, Vinnie Chulk, R.A. Dickey, Johnny Gomes, Joe Inglett, Will Ohman, Felix Pie, Mike Rivera, Ramon Santiago, Luke Scott, Keiichi Yabu

**Turnover Rate: 31%**



# dallas EAGLES

This rotation might be a little vulnerable in the back end because of some control issues, but the 2010 Dallas Eagles have a loud and resounding answer for that little difficulty.

**BULLPEN.** As Steve says in his instructions: "When I unpacked from the Milford trip, there they were." The story starts with not one but two Grade 23\* righties - American League rookie of the year Andrew Bailey (C+21 HR+34, 83 IP) and Claudio Vargas (C-13, HR+23, 41 IP). It's safe to say that Dallas won't be giving away a lot of late leads with these two beasts tossing the pill late. Bailey was the biggest, nastiest piece of bullpen pie in the draft; after striking out 313 in 293 minor league innings, he

was converted to a reliever, and as a rookie he gave up only 49 hits in his 83 rookie innings. Wow.

Andy and Claudio have a pair of fine setup men to protect leads with 130 innings between them: righty Heath Bell (Grade 15\* HR+43) and rookie lefty Jose Mijares (Grade 17\*). Bell's big homer number has been a career-long pattern, and it makes him a favorite here at the *Annual*. Doug Mathis (Grade 13\* C+25 HR+21) and Mets lefty Pedro Feliciano (13\* C+25) add another 110 innings, giving Dallas almost 400 innings of Grade 13\* or better out of the pen. In long relief, Grant Balfour (Grade 11\* C-42 HR+24) and some guys with mops and squeegees fill out the pen. The Dallas instructions recommend aggressive bullpen use, so none of this will go to waste. The pen goes 460 innings deep before it drops below Grade 11\*. Dallas has everything it needs here to make a championship run.

**Offense: 12.0**  
**Every place you look.**

There are seven terrific bats in the pile, starting with the sublime Mark Teixeira (1-5-5-6, 10 hits, 4 walks +42). Tex has hit 183 homers in the

six years he's been parked at first base for Dallas. Last year he hit 30 dingers and 62 doubles. Expect more of that this season.

Teixeira will bat cleanup, and will have plenty of folks to drive in this year. Jason Bartlett (4 0s, 11 hits, 3 walks, 31 SSN for 37 attempts) plays shortstop all season and bats third in most lineups. Carl Crawford (3 0s, 11 hits, 3 walks, 30 SSN for 76 attempts) bats second against righthanders. He does not lead off this season, because Denard Span (2 0s, 11 hits, 4 walks, 27 SSN for 33 attempts) emerged as an outstanding leadoff man in his second season.



Span: Emerged

The lower half of the batting order starts with a great young third baseman - Ryan Zimmerman (1-5-5-6, 10 hits, 3 walks). Zimmerman won't turn 26 until September. He may be the best young player at his position. Brandon Phillips (1-4-6, 10 hits, 3 walks, 28 SSN for 34 attempts) has quietly become a rock-solid second baseman with a plus bat and excellent speed. Matt Diaz (1-4-6, 11 hits, 3 walks+42, L+10 R-8) will get some protection against high-grade righties, but he's got a monster card. Against lefties, he bats third and he will inflict damage.

There are three other regulars who will see extended playing time for Dallas, but they aren't at the level of the players above. Danny Murphy (4 0s, 10 hits, 2 walks) will DH against high-grade righties. Ryan Sweeney (3 0s, 10 hits, 3 walks) is the regular right fielder. Starting catcher Greg Zaun (3 0s, 9 hits, 4 walks) continues to deliver good solid cards every season. Ryan Doumit (1-6-6, 9 hits, 2 walks) will be behind the plate against lefties.



*Dallas just missed winning the Ruth when a late season stumble allowed New West to pass them for the title. This season Dallas has the best pitching in the division, a great offense and stellar defense. Here's hoping our favorite pharmacist makes a deep playoff run.*

This is a great lineup with power in almost every slot, augmented by exceptional team speed. They are not the offense that Brobdingnag is, but look for 850 to 900 runs from this group.

**Defense: 7.5**  
**Matches up well.**

Dallas is a very good fielding team as well, with one caveat – they are average in the spots where you really want strong defenders.

Good news first. Mark Teixeira (1B5), Brandon Phillips (2B8), Ryan Zimmerman (3B5), Carl Crawford (OF3, 33 arm), and Denard Span (OF3, 31 arm) and Ryan Sweeney (OF3, 33 arm) will catch everything that rolls, hops, or flies through the air in their direction. Matt Diaz (OF2, 33 arm) will be very competent in his out-field starts.

The trouble spots are Jason Bartlett (SS8) at short and the catching combination of Greg Zaun (C7, Th-3) and Ryan Doumit (C7, Th+1). Bartlett is buttressed by the exceptional fielding of John McDonald (SS9, 2B8), acquired from Zion after the rookie draft, who can come into close games late to catch whatever moves.



Phillips: Rock-solid

The weaknesses are few and probably not consequential. This team can match up with almost any team in the league defensively, and their pitching staff will be the better for it.

**Bench: 2.5**  
**Some help for the starters.**



There are two big pieces off the bench. The aforementioned John McDonald (3 Os, 10 hits, but 0 walks: he even has a 19 on dice number 13) will help frequently as an infield glove. Rusty Ryal (1-0-0-0-0-0, 9 hits, 3 walks+42, 59 AB) is a deluxe hitting toy who will hit rarely, but will wake opposing managers in the middle of the night.

The remaining bench players are space fillers. Pat Burrell (1-6, 8 hits, 4 walks) had an off year; Delwyn Young (3 Os, 9 hits, 3 walks, 2B7) doesn't do anything well; and George Kottaras (5-6-6-6) has a little power but not much else.

Steve instructs us to stick largely with the starting nine. Given the quality of the starting nine, one can't fault the tactic.

**1st** There isn't much question about the capability of this squad. There are good competitors in the Ruth Division – New Westminster, Houston and Brobdingnag all have attributes that make them tough opponents – but Dallas is more in the league of Rye and Portland. They should win this pennant.

Steve Powell has never played in a TBL World Series. Nothing short of a World Series appearance will do with this beautifully balanced, powerful club. They have all the pieces – they just need to win.

**dallas EAGLES**



2009 finish: 79-83 (2nd, Ruth)  
 Last 5 years: 413-407, .510

PITCHING: 13.5 OFF: 12.0 DEF: 7.5 BNC: 2.5

**TQ: 35.5**

# 2009 new westminster WHISKEYJACKS in review



*As the Big Three go, so goes the team.*

## 2009 in Review Final Record: 86-76 (1st, Ruth)

The New Westminster Whiskeyjacks enjoyed both the most successful season and the most success in the franchise's various incarnations. The team set new records for wins with 86 and led the league in scoring with 880 runs. The season marked the first time the franchise had floated above the .500 level and the first time the playoffs had been reached. In reaching the playoffs New Westminster also came home as the Ruth Division champions. The season ended in a 4-2 play-off loss to the Gotham City Batmen.

### What went right?

The team was propelled by the Big Three on offense. These three players had all been developed at home and were first round picks from the lean years. Hanley Ramirez (.312-44-132, 136 runs) had an outstanding season. Prince Fielder clubbed 36 homers and drove in 136 while scoring 92. Matt Holiday hit .303-24-100 and scored 90 runs. Russell Martin, also a former rounder, scored 100 runs and walked 102 times. Fred Lewis chipped in with 29 doubles and 21 triples. The team scored 880 runs total.

The pitching staff was led by rookies Jorge Campillo and Johnny Cueto. Campillo came from nowhere to go 11-7 with a 4.05 ERA. Cueto was also solid at 13-12, and John Maine won 12. Jim Johnson anchored the bullpen with 26 saves. Broxton and Acosta combined for 116 innings of sub 2.00 ERA.

### What went wrong?

The left handed batters seemed to struggle the most on this team in 2009. The Big Three produced 104 HR and 368 RBI. The rest of the team had 89 HR and 474 RBI. This includes late season addition Ryan Ludwick, who had 12 HR and 32 RBI in 42 games. Alex Gordon struggled much of the season and was benched in favour of Augie Ojeda. Mientkiewicz and Chavez both failed to break the .240 barrier.



Prince Fielder: One of three

The pitching staff's long story was the long ball. Maine gave up 25 and Guthrie and Cueto gave up 24 each. Zach Miner incredibly went 6-6 with a 6.75 ERA.

### 3 Things

1. *As the Big Three go, so goes the team.* Ramirez, Holliday and Fielder drive this team. The emergence of Callaspo, the return of Ludwick and the drafting of Fowler will indicate if there is more than last year's 86 wins available.
2. *The starters were at least mediocre.* With Correia and Ohlendorff taking a year off in the minors and Piniero on the verge of breakthrough we came into the season with enough starts to concentrate on the bullpen.
3. *The bullpen needs to dominate.* Broxton has been the workhorse, and with better starters an influx of relief will push the team forward. Aarsdsma is ready to make the jump along with Hendrickson. New additions will give the Whiskeyjacks the best bullpen in franchise history.

# new westminster WHISKEYJACKS

Jim Jeatt (7th year)

*Most of us would trade our team for this one, and like the trickster, take our chances.*



As ever, when writing a team analysis article, it is an interesting exercise to try and understand something about the team, or the manager, or even the mascot. We've met the manager, and the editor of this fine publication had a hand in the building of the team. As a consequence, the author consulted Wikipedia regarding the chosen mascot of the New Westminster franchise – the Whiskey Jack, or Canada Jay.

This fine creature is found across North America, and – according to that well-known source – builds a new nest every year; forms permanent pairs that jointly hatch and feed their young; readily capitalizes on new food sources; and appears prominently in Algonquian mythology as a mischievous prankster. One wonders which, if any, of these attributes most accurately informs the choice of the Whiskeyjack as New Westminster's mascot.

The *Annual* would not venture to discuss Mr. Jeatt's marital or parenting habits except to note that he has taken considerable interest in fostering a younger and more skillful team than the one he originally inherited. If the metaphor regarding food sources were extended to include relief pitchers, it's fair to say that New Westminster has done quite a bit of capitalizing in that area.

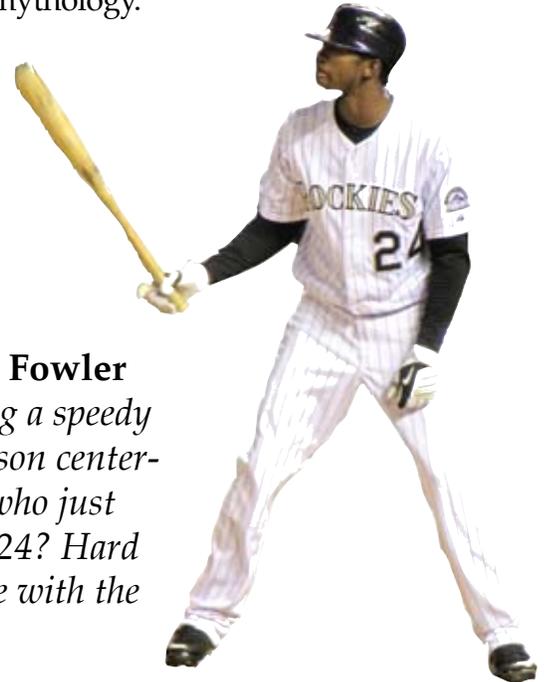
That leaves the business of Algonquian mythology. Having met Mr. Jim at a previous draft – when he journeyed out here to the Bay State during a fairly intense snowstorm and arrived with many draft picks and without most of his luggage – he didn't seem to be a trickster ... indeed, he was quite straightforward in his objectives and his approach. A long time APBA player and devoted fan of the National Pastime, Jim has pursued the rebuilding of his club, replacing the box full of parts with which he began with a formidable collection of

Guys We All Want. There have been some steps on this path that have been wayward ... or perhaps they were no more than the workings of the trickster whiskeyjack. It remains only for posterity – and the *Annual* – to determine which.

New Westminster is not a rebuild anymore, but a contender, at least a *soi-disant* one. The *Annual* is pleased to provide Mr. Jim with some narrative cover; in case anyone doesn't understand some move he's made, he can always blame it on Native American mythology.

At least for now.

**SNT:**  
**Dexter Fowler**  
*Drafting a speedy full-season center-fielder who just turned 24? Hard to argue with the logic.*



**Arrived:** Josh Bard, Jorge Cantu, Brett Carroll, Dexter Fowler, Kenshin Kawakami, Arthur Rhodes, Ryan Roberts.

**Departed:** Jorge Campillo, Alex Gordon, Mike Hampton, Doug Mientkiewicz, Glendon Rusch, Mark Teahen, Tyler Yates

**Turnover Rate: 20%**



**Pitching: 11.0**  
**The virtue of depth.**

**ROTATION.** The Whiskeyjacks lack a top-notch ace like Danny Haren or C.C. Sabathia like fellow Ruth Division contenders, but there are also no really bad starts all season. The top starters are Ross Ohlendorf (Grade 10 C+15 HR-21) and aged rookie Kenshin Kawakami (Grade 10 C+13 HR+14) who, with part timer John Maine (Grade 11 C-31 HR+14) provide 69 good starts.

The balance of the rotation consists of three other starters: Kevin Correia (Grade 9 C+16 HR+21), Joel Piniero (Grade 8 C+45 HR+36) and Johnny Cueto (Grade 8 HR-15). They are all full-season pitchers. In addition to the merits of the six starters listed, they also prevent former ace Jeremy Guthrie from any need to start a single game.

**BULLPEN.** This area is a clear team strength. The closer is Jonathan Broxton (Grade 20\* C-21 HR+35), whose fastball rates him both a K and an X in the Master Game. He has a trusty sidekick in the surprising David Aardsma (Grade 19\* C-33 HR+45), the first name in the *Baseball Register*. Along with trade acquisition Arthur Rhodes (Grade 17\* lefty HR+34) the 'Jacks have 200 high quality innings.



Broxton: Fastball.

The next tier is a bit less capable than Mr. Jeatt might like, but again reflects the theme of depth. There are four Grade 11\*s, two lefties (Mark Hendrickson, C+22 HR-15, and Sean Marshall, C+13) and two righties (Zach Miner, C-34, and Matt Herges, C+26



*Jim Jeatt, TBL's only Canadian manager, has his work cut out for him this year. Three of the five playoff spots in the conference may come from the Ruth. Jim may have to pull the goalie to seal the deal this year.*

HR-15). Then there's a scary Grade 10\* in Kevin Gregg (C-23 HR-32), a competent Grade 9\* in Jim Johnson (C+21) and some bulk Grade 6 innings in Manny Acosta and the aforementioned Guthrie.

The bullpen will have to be used in waves to get to the fine top end, but there's lots to rescue the rotation.

**Offense: 10.5**  
**Top three: huge. Rest pretty good.**

The reward for some years of suffering is to be able to write the names Fielder, Holliday and Ramirez into the lineup every day. Prince Fielder (1-1-5-6, 10 hits, 5 walks+22), Matt Holliday (1-0-0-0, 11 hits, 4 walks+22, 22 SBA with 26 SSN), and Hanley Ramirez (1-0-0-0, 12 hits, 3 walks+22, 35 SBA with 30 SSN) are three mighty scary cards. The worst you can say about them is that they're all susceptible to lefties, Ramirez most of all (L-8). So what.

The next three cards are also quite functional. Alberto Callaspo (4 0s, 11 hits, 3 walks), Jorge Cantu (4 0s, 10 hits, 3 walks+22) and rookie Dexter Fowler (3 0s, 9 hits, 5 walks, 37 SBA with 28 SSN) would be fine additions to any lineup. These three can all hit lefties and can be placed among the previous three monsters.

The rest of the lineup is a little more mix and match. Russell Martin (2 0s, 8 hits, 4 walks+42, 17 SBA with 25 SSN) is the every day catcher; Kazuo Matsui (3 0s, 9 hits, 2 walks, L+4, 22 SBA with



Mighty scary.

33 SSN) is the regular second baseman; and a pair of Ryans, Roberts (3 0s, 10 hits, 4 walks+22, L+6) and Ludwick (1-5-6, 9 hits, 3 walks+22) who will get some playing time as well.

With three huge bats and three solid ones, this will be a scary lineup against any kind of pitching. There's a lot of speed, some serious power, and hits and walks to bedevil opposing staffs. They'll

**Defense: 4.0**  
**Mostly optional.**

score a lot of runs.

There's nothing wrong with a good defense, but no one would suggest that average fielders like Fielder or Ramirez should be traded for Casey Kotchman or Paul Janish. It wouldn't even make a good Native American trickster story.

The best defenders on the field for the New Westminster boys are Kaz Matsui (2B9) and Russell Martin (C8, Th+1). Their superior gloves will keep them in the lineup, though there are not any alternatives on the roster. Most of the rest of the fielders are decidedly Fielding Two.

Hanley Ramirez (SS8, contrary to the text in the standard instructions) and Prince Fielder (1B3) are average fielders, while the regular outfielders are all OF2s: Ryan Ludwick (30 arm), Matt Holliday (31 arm), and Dexter Fowler (33 arm). Reserves on the bench, Fred Lewis (OF2, 31 arm) and Brett Carroll (OF3, 34 arm) reinforce that. The only real problem position is third base, where Jorge Cantu and everyone else on the team that's rated there is a 3B3. The only possible defense improvement would be to move Matsui there and put Augie Ojeda (2B8) in his

**Bench: 2.5**  
**Could be better.**



place.

In addition to the part-time players, New Westminster has some useful spare parts: Fred Lewis (3 0s, 9 hits, 4 walks, L-12 R+1) could help as a pinch-runner; Brett Carroll (3 0s, 8 hits) is useful for defense; Mark Teahen (3 0s, 10 hits, 2 walks+22) can play a number of positions badly, but has no platoon shift; Augie Ojeda (3 0s, 8 hits, 4 walks+42, 2B8, SS8) would be much more helpful if he were a 3B4 as well.

Rocco Baldelli (1-0-0, 9 hits, 2 walks) is still the best active ballplayer from Woonsocket, RI. Chad Moeller (4 0s, 9 hits, 3 walks+22, L-8 R+5) is the back-up catcher, sort of (C7, Th-4).

Overall, the bench has some good players, but not necessarily the right players. This might be something to improve in September if the 'Jacks are in the playoff chase.



This is a marvelously improved team with a great core of talented players. It has its flaws: a defensive infielder on the bench, a cardboard hitting toy, and a solid middle reliever are all things that would make this team's playoff hopes more secure.

But most of us would trade our team for this one, and like the trickster, take our chances.

**new westminster WHISKEY JACKS**



2009 finish: 86-76 (1st, Ruth)  
Last 5 years: 339-471, .419  
PITCHING: 11.0 OFF: 10.5 DEF: 4.0 BNC: 2.5

**TQ: 28.0**

# 2009 houston LONE STARS in review



*If C. C. Sabathia could have pitched twice every five days as two 140-pound guys they would have done lots better.*

## 2009 in Review

### Final Record: 62-100 (4th, Ruth)

The *Annual* had low expectations for the Houston club coming into 2009, and the team performed much as was expected. The number of poor starts, the number of empty at-bats, and the obvious rebuilding cycle suggested that it would be a long season.

They lost 100 games. We suggested that they might lose 120: if they'd dumped some of their bullpen the record might have been that bad. Instead, they played as hard as they could. If this was Melrose, or Munich, or Las Vegas, this might be a year to try and jump to contention – but we suspect that the Zen Master is not that style. Instead, 2009 was a part of the ongoing rebuild – and it's over. The Lone Star fans are breathing sighs of relief.

### What went right?

In his first full season, Hunter Pence delivered a good average (.295) and good power (21 homers, 118 RBI, 42 doubles, 8 triples). He led all regulars in those categories and played excellent defense as well (2 errors). Johnny Damon hit 19 homers and stole 28 bases in 31 attempts. Cody Ross had 84 RBI to go with 21 homers, 40 doubles and 8 triples of his own.

The pitching side had some highlights, especially the big guy, C. C. Sabathia (18-10, 2.59, 309 strikeouts and 14 complete games). He did everything that could be expected of an ace. The bullpen guys that didn't move – Jose Valverde (26 saves, 2.93 ERA) and J. C. Romero (3.12 ERA) – helped keep the staff in the game.

### What went wrong?

The club scored 692 runs, but surrendered 870, at least what you'd expect for a 62-100 team. The pitching staff struck out 1179 opponents, but surrendered 179 homers; Houston scored runs but only hit .250, in part because they had six regulars with 100 or more strikeouts (led by Cody Ross' 143 and Pence's 130). The two guys with 21 homers were the team leaders, and the club hit only 121 total, walking only 469 times.

If C.C. Sabathia could have pitched twice every five days as two 140-pound guys the staff would have done lots better. Instead, they had to send Brandon Backe (3-13, 5.98), Jason Bergmann (6-10, 6.18) and Adam Eaton (1-12, 8.81) out there 65 times. It was a long, painful season.

### 3 Things

1. *Temptation resisted.* C. C. is still on the team, despite many offers and many opportunities to move him. In real life, the ace has shown just how good he can be, and Mr. Rogers will enjoy writing his name in every fifth day for a few years to come.
2. *Have a plan. Stick to it.* See the team article to the right; the Zen Master has a plan, though it's not clear what the particulars are. We're glad to see it.
3. *Out with the bad air.* And in with the good. The club's management shows no sentimentality for the players that don't matter, and the face of the team is much changed from when the new regime took charge. It's easier that way.



Hunter Pence: Led the team

# houston LONE STARS



Dean Rogers (5th year)

*What is he doing? We don't know, we say. What does he intend?  
We shall have to observe and see.*

One way you can tell that you're at the big boy table is when you acquire a nickname. TBL – and this publication – have a habit of bestowing such titles upon those whose conduct or style renders such matters unavoidable. (Admittedly, there are those who join our exclusive fraternity and come fully equipped with a nickname; yes, Boomer, I'm talking about you.)

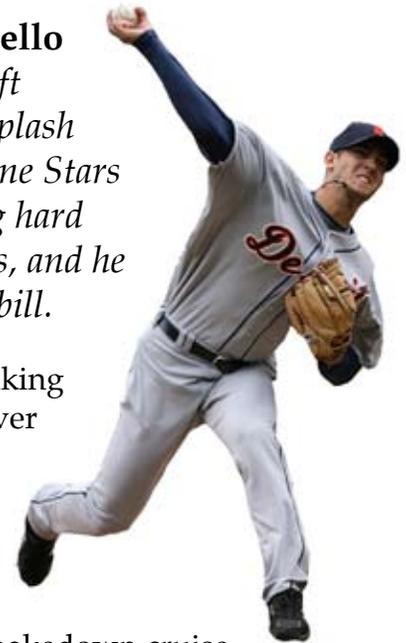
For example: twenty or so years ago Rich Meyer (the Wall of Sound, the Sensei) dubbed our good friend Joe Auletta "the Prince of Darkness" due to his willingness to provide temptation to those who were willing to mortgage the future for the present. Don Nipps, the long-time manager of the East Anglia Pirates (now the Rye Herons) became the Shift Doctor, due to his penchant for skillfully using part-time players who had interesting batting splits. And we have not hesitated to call a doctor a doctor, as in the case of Steve Powell (pharmacist) and Anton Greenwald (physicist). Darrell Skogen arrived with the title 'Guru' and last year earned it by winning the World Series.

Following the submission of an article to the *Annual* two years ago, in which Dean Rogers gave us an analysis of baseball general manager strategy using *The Art of War*, it was only logical to assign him the nickname Zen Master. It is a title which is – at present – baseball-neutral, saying nothing in particular about his acumen or our perception of his long-term plans. It has a sort of delightful mystery, rather like the mystery that has surrounded his intentions with the Lone Star club over the first four years that he has been at the reins. What is he doing? *We don't know, we say.* What does he intend? *We shall have to observe and see.* It is at this point that we must leave it all to some obscure metaphor about lotus leaves

## SNT: Rick Porcello

*The top 2007 draft pick made a big splash at age 22. The Lone Stars have a yen for big hard throwing pitchers, and he certainly fits the bill.*

and still brooks making delightful noises over carefully arranged smooth stones. You know. Zen. Mu. All that.



But now that the shakedown cruise is over, now that the majority of the empty at-bats and stopgap innings have been dismissed to APBA oblivion, it's time for the Zen Master to start earning his accolades. This team is much improved over past editions; it has a solid rotation, a deep bullpen, a good defense, and some parts of a lineup. Let's see what the Zen Master can do.

**Arrived:** Alfredo Aceves, Brian Duensing, Tommy Everidge, Tony Gwynn Jr., Mike Jacobs, Don Kelly, Trevor Miller, Russ Ortiz, Matt Palmer, Rick Porcello, Randy Wells

**Departed:** Brandon Backe, Jason Bergmann, Randor Bierd, Brian Bures, Brandon Duckworth, Adam Eaton, Josh Fogg, Gary Glover, Ruben Gotay, Horacio Ramirez, Doug Slaten, Salomon Torres

**Turnover Rate: 28%**



## Pitching: 12.0 Much improved.

**ROTATION.** In the leanest times, the Zen Master resisted trading his top ace, C. C. Sabathia, who was sought by many contenders. He's still here and will be great this year (Grade 13 C+22 HR+26), and is the best of a pretty solid starting crew. Rookie SNT Rick Porcello (Grade 10 C+15) and fellow rookie Randy Wells (Grade 11 C+24 HR+22), as well as returning soft-toss lefty John Lannan (Grade 9 C+15), give Houston 125 solid starts. Another two rookies, Brian Duensing (Grade 13 HR+25, 9 starts) and Matt Palmer (Grade 11 C-33 HR+16, 13 starts) will share time with Francisco Liriano (Grade 6 C-34 HR-14), who is coming back from injury.



Sabathia: Ace still here.

Liriano, when not starting, can likely help out as well.

The pitching staff is much improved, and if properly used (and the Houston standard instructions are aggressive) they should

keep the team in the game quite effectively. It will be interesting to see how Dean handles it.

## Offense: 6.0 Some surprises.

The Houston offense has some high spots. Veteran hitter Johnny Damon (1-0-0-0, 10 hits, 4 walks, 12 SBA with 35 SSN) is also still on the roster, though he has been much in demand in recent years; dynamo Martin Prado (4 0s, 11 hits, 3 walks, L+3 R-4) is available for three-quarters of the season; Hunter Pence (1-5-6, 10 hits, 3 walks, but 2 10s) had a decent year; Cody Ross (1-0-0-0, 10 hits, L+5 R-3) and Josh Willingham (1-0-0-0, 9 hits, 4 walks+42, L+6 R-3) fill out the middle of the lineup.



Prado: Dynamo

The rest of the bats are a little more pedestrian. Rafael Furcal had a good comeback year (3 0s, 10 hits, 3 walks, 18 SBA with a 26 SSN); third baseman Pedro Feliz (3 0s, 10 hits, 2 walks) is an average hitter; and Geoff Blum (3 0s, 9 hits, 3 walks+42) will fill in at first base.

The only seriously deficient position is catcher, where Jason Kendall (8 hits, 3 walks+42, 3 31s)

Jose Valverde (Grade 17\* C-15 HR+14) is the closer, with help from lefty Trevor Miller (Grade 18\* C+25). These two have just under 100 innings between them. To these are added 120-plus innings of two other Grade 17\*s: Matt Palmer and Nick Masset (HR+21), and a few innings from lefty J.C. Romero (Grade 16\* C-62).

The draft served up a solid long man: Alfredo Aceves (Grade 13\* C+36), who has 84 innings and a serious fatigue rating (f10\* on the boards, Q2\* in the computer). Returning Jamey Wright (Grade 12\* C-42 HR+21) has 79 innings of his own. Jason Bergmann (Grade 8\*) and Duensing (Grade 7\* in relief) round out the pen, with Russ Ortiz (Grade 5) and Matt Lindstrom (Grade 3\*) available to carry the mop. Francisco



*Dean Rogers finds himself on a beach with his back to a vast ocean. Charging at him from the front is a huge demon wearing a Brob t-shirt. From the left a huge eagle is swooping in for the kill and from the right a particularly vexed whiskeyjack is hoping to peck out an eye. What does Dean do? Learn to swim, baby!*

is a drain on the lineup. Ryan Hanigan is better defensively and a little better offensively (2 0s, 9 hits, 4 walks+22), but not much better, and is available only for half a season.

This lineup has some surprises – Prado, a surprisingly powerful Damon, Willingham – but it still doesn't menace good pitching.

**Defense: 5.0**  
**Some can catch the ball.**

There are some good fielders for the Lone Stars. Martin Prado (2B8, 1B4) has become a superior defender, as is Pedro Feliz (3B5); Hunter Pence (OF3, 33 arm) is the best of the outfielders. Behind the plate, Jason Kendall is Fielding One but has a noodle arm (C8 Th-3), but sophomore Ryan Hanigan, also a C8, turned in an excellent (Th+5) arm.

The rest of the defense is solidly Fielding Two. The other outfielders are all OF2s: Willingham (32 arm), Cody Ross (31 arm) and part-timer Tony Gwynn (31 arm). Johnny Damon is an OF2, but shouldn't have to drag his 26 arm around during the season. The last remaining position, first base, would be best served by Prado, but since he's holding down the middle infield, the job falls to Geoff Blum (1B3) or a collection of 1B2s (Willingham or waiver acquisition Mike Jacobs).

Some of these guys can catch the ball, but the Houston defense is fairly neutral overall. A few gloves are unusually good, and there are no particularly weak spots. It shouldn't extend too many innings for the pitching staff.

**Bench: 2.0**  
**Spare parts.**



Surprisingly, there are two or three players on the roster who really have no purpose. Darin Erstad (1B4) and Eric Byrnes (OF2, 1-6-6, 8 hits, a few SBA) are pale ghosts of former key players for the Lone Stars. Also, Luis Rodriguez (SS8, 2B7, 3B3, 7 hits) is listed as a starter against lefties, but his L+6 doesn't make the card any good; and rookie 1B Tommy Everidge (3 0s, 8 hits, 7 24s) is just a Guy.



Damon: Bat, no glove

There are a few useful cards that can be used to counter pitching changes. Tony Gwynn (3 0s, 9 hits, 4 walks, L-11 R+2) can pinch-hit or cover a few outfield games; Cliff Pennington, possibly the shortstop heir apparent, has a useful card (3 0s, 10 hits, 3 walks, L-12 R+3, SS8); Don Kelly is versatile for limited use (4-6, 9 hits); and waiver pickup Mike Jacobs (1-0-0, 8 hits, 3 walks) might be an alternative at first.

**3rd** This is not a pennant winner – yet. But the Zen Master has shown that he knows a thing or two about pitching, and that he has some sort of plan (even if some of it is veiled in mystery). Most commendable is his willingness to pass up easy short-term gain so that he can now have players like Sabathia on the roster. Not this year – but watch this space.

**HOUSTON LONE STARS**



2009 finish: 62-100 (4th, Ruth)  
 Last 5 years: 363-447, .448

PITCHING: 12.0 OFF: 6.0 DEF: 5.0 BNC: 2.0

**TQ: 25.0**

# 2009 brobdingnag BARBARIANS in review



*The Pied Piper came to collect, with interest.*

## 2009 in Review

**Final Record: 77-85 (3rd, Ruth)**

The lights dimmed on the win-loss numbers but an abundance of power remained. It was a fun season in Brobdingnag, but not an especially successful one.

### What went right?

The team hit 224 HR with 11 batters reaching double digits. They were led by Alex Rodriguez (41 HR, 113 RBI) and Adam Dunn (35 and 91). Joe Mauer only had 12 long balls but had a .308 BA and .384 OBP. Rookie Chris Davis (12 HRs, 36 RBIs and .535 SLG in 44 games) was the best Barbarian-In-Training performance.

On the mound the biggest positive surprise was Braden Loooper topping the staff in wins (18-13 despite a 5.13 ERA). Jake Peavy (16-9, 3.17) and James Shields (15-11, 3.91) actually pitched better but had much less run support. Rookie Justin Masterson was converted from starter to reliever and posted 22 saves and a 1.35 ERA.

### What went wrong?

The Pied Piper came to collect, with interest. Large quantities of cardboard – vital to winning in 2008 – went up in smoke in 2009. The Big 6 in the '08 pen (Saito, Percival, Moylan, K-Rod, Hoffman, and Miller), who had 302 IP with a 1.93 ERA, 20 wins, 54 saves, and 266 Ks, were replaced with a group recording a sub-pedestrian 58 IP, 6 wins, 3 saves and a 4.01 ERA.

The Thome-Alou DH duo (.314-38-138) was replaced by a group that hit .216-26-76. Paul Konerko went from rock solid anchor to part-timer hitting .229-4-20. Young sluggers Evans and Balentien – the “next Barbarian mashers” – weren’t ready (combined 1 hit and 1 walk all season). The Lopez and Betancourt DP duo hit a hollow .260 without walks or punch. Stolen bases fell from 104 to 29.



Alex Rodriguez: Leader

### 3 Things

1. *If you can't outrun the Grim Reaper, embrace him.* Tell Vlad to take a loooooong nap – about about three years' worth. Pretend it's already 2012, not 2009. There were enough draft picks to patch the holes, replace cardboard with more cardboard, and stay in the hunt – but then the fall in '10 and '11 would be monumental.
2. *Restock the farm.* Many aged players went to other teams or retirement. In the recent off-season the pruning continued until TBL's oldest franchise is now one of the youngest. Half the 2008 roster is gone and only one player is older than 33. The starting line-up has 7 hitters 30 and under. No pitcher that matters is older than 28.
3. *Be average, for a change.* The Barbarians haven't done that in 20 years. The team lacks speed to manufacture runs. The pitching staff has some impressive names – Peavy, Hughes, Shields, Tillman, Holland – but more Arms than Pitchers. If the bats are on, or the young pitching is on, they'll win. Often neither will happen. Expect .500.

# brobdingnag BARBARIANS



Joe Auletta (22nd year)

*No one takes the long view more seriously than Joe Auletta.*

Years ago, this publication took on the management of the Council Squares with a fairly Yoda-like admonition regarding the need to go forward or back, but not to stand still. Because of the way in which our playoffs and draft work, it's almost the worst place to be; staying around .500 might work in real baseball to keep the ticket sales up, but it doesn't get you much traction in the draft. And .500 is usually not good enough to get into the playoffs – or get very far. You can finish *last* with a .500 record in some divisions in some seasons.

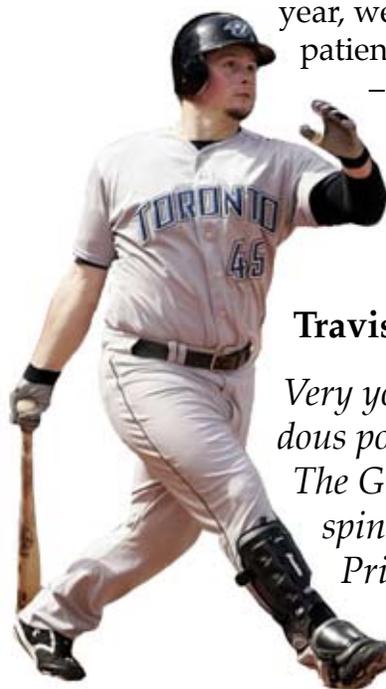
The Prince of Darkness knows that. Indeed, he holds an even higher standard than usual for what is good enough to drag the team forward into contention. Just getting to .500 is far from good enough. 90 wins is usually insufficient. Not that it has changed Mr. Auletta's mind one iota, but he has been taken to task somewhat for taking a pass with a team that could not be dominant. Sensei logic (and we *do* love Sensei logic here at the *Annual*) says that entropy is your enemy and you should contend when you can. But no one takes the long view more seriously than Joe Auletta.

So what are we to make of this team? It is not a contender – there's not enough pitching, for one thing. Even if the Prince were willing to roll up some of his substantial future draft to improve the staff, there's a clear Ruth Division leader, a dominant team in the Mays, and an all-in club in the Clemente. But it's not clearly a rebuild either. The good pitchers are actually pretty good. There are at least six regular players that would start anywhere, including possibly the best card in the set. There's even some bench.

The cleft stick in which Brobdingnag finds itself – orbiting around .500, where you don't want to be – is due to a single important factor. While

waiting to be awesome and dominant, management is faced with a difficult problem. They're not good enough – but Joe Auletta, who claims to be completely unsentimental about his players – *likes who he's got*. It's an understandable spot. It's just uncharacteristic for Joe, who far prefers to direct the wind than to be blown by it. In a

year, we'll find out whether patience was the right tactic – or whether Sensei logic should have prevailed.



## SNT: Travis Snider

*Very young, tremendous power, huge upside. The Giuseppe pre-draft spin played down the Prince's interest. We were never fooled.*

**Arrived:** Everth Cabrera, Coco Crisp, Derek Holland, Brandon League, Justin Maxwell, Josh Outman, Bobby Parnell, Ryan Perry, Randy Ruiz, Dan Schlereth, Travis Snider, Chris Tillman

**Departed:** Wladimir Balentien, Yuniesky Betancourt, Neal Cotts, Nick Evans, Scott Eyre, Jeff Francis, Craig Hansen, Trevor Hoffman, Paul Konerko, Braden Looper, Dallas McPherson, Corey Patterson

**Turnover Rate: 34%**



# broddingnag BARBARIANS

## Pitching: Change horses.

5.5

**ROTATION.** Teams see turns in their fortunes based on the way in which their pitching staff performed in the previous MLB season. For some years, the Barbarians have counted Jake Peavy as their ace, but injury early in the season limited him to 16 (admittedly solid) starts – he’s a Grade 13 (HR+23). But the most steady pitcher in this year’s rotation is James Shields (Grade 8 C+26), who will be there all season. Along with rookie Josh Outman (Grade 15 C-15 HR-13), who drifted lower in the draft due to a 2010 injury, there are about 60 good starts this year.



Shields: Steady.

After these three it’s a bit of a mix and match. The best of the rest is Justin Masterson (Grade 9 C-26 HR+23), who has half a season as a starter and half as a reliever. Charlie Morton

(Grade 7 C-22 HR+26), Pat Misch (Grade 7 C+14 HR-16), Phil Hughes (Grade 6 HR+21), Tom Gorzelanny (Grade 6 HR-13), Chris Tillman (Grade 5 HR-36) and Brad Penny (Grade 5 C+16) are all available to make up the remaining three-fifths of the starts this year.

**BULLPEN.** As with the starters, there’s a lack of serious depth here, making it difficult for the Barbarians to contend. But there *is* a closer. Phil Hughes gets only 7 mediocre starts, but he has 51 outstanding innings as a Grade 25\*.



Hughes: Closer

He will shut the door for most of the season. To get to him, though, there are few

stepping-stones: two Grade 13\*s – Peter Moylan (C-14 HR+62) and rookie Ryan Perry (C-52). They have 134 innings. Masterson (Grade 12\*), Bobby Parnell (Grade 11\* C-33 HR+23), Brandon League (Grade 9\* C+23 HR+14) and a little bit of Daniel Schlereth (Grade 8\* C-62 HR+42, the only lefty of the group) fill out the majority of the remaining innings, a little over 180 total. The rest of the relief will fall to mop pitchers who will suffer (as Joe’s instructions say) “for the good of the team.”

## Offense: 10.5 Runs. Lots of runs.

And then there’s the lineup. Let’s start with Joe Mauer. The Chairman is a monster (1-0-0-0, 12 hits, 4 walks, 3 31s, L-7 R+2). He has some friends: Alex Rodriguez doesn’t have the best card of his career, but it’s pretty damn good (1-1-6, 10 hits, 5 walks+22s, 34 SSN). Both Mauer and Rodriguez will miss some time. Then there’s Adam Lind, who has finally arrived (1-0-0-0-0, 11 hits, 3 walks, L-8 R+1), and Adam Dunn (1-0-0-0, 9 hits, 6 walks, also L-8 R+1). Jayson Werth’s BC will counterbalance that somewhat, and he will be scary too (1-5-5, 9 hits, 5 walks, L+8 R-5, 33 SSN for 23 attempts).

The next tier of players continue the theme of power and walks – more evidence of the “mature” offense, which usually gets you, Munich-fashion, to the playoffs. Marlon Byrd (1-0-0-0, 10 hits) and Jose Lopez (1-0-0-0, 10 hits) turned in surprising power cards that don’t even have to hit high up in the lineup. Jim Thome, whom the Prince tried – and failed – to deal away during the draft, has a fairly typical card (1-5-5, 8 hits, 6 walks) that will extend the lineup one more batter on most days (his L-6 is a bit of a handicap).

The rest of the hitters who get regular playing time are a little less threatening. Stephen Drew (4 0s, 9 hits, 3 walks, L-10 R+2) will be the regular shortstop, but may get some relief from rookie Everth Cabrera (3 0s, 9 hits, 4 walks+22, 33 SBA with 29 SSN). Chris Davis (1-5-5, 9 hits, 2 walks) hasn’t turned out to be the monster Joe



*After some wheeling and dealing, the Prince of Darkness has decided to take on both Dallas and New West. But this time there's a twist. He's decided to try it with a mediocre pitching staff. After centuries of absolute dominance I guess Vlad decided to give himself a real challenge.*

thought he might turn out to be, but the same could have been said of Adam Dunn a few years ago. Rookie Travis Snider (1-6-6, 9 hits, 4 walks+22) might turn out to be one or the other, and Chris Iannetta (1-5-6, 8 hits, 4 walks+42) is still waiting for a breakout.

They'll score lots of runs, though they will tend to do so in bunches, occasionally registering no more than three straight Ks.

**Defense: 4.0**  
**Not a point of pride.**

Joe Mauer has become an outstanding defender to go with his offensive accomplishments. He'll be the featured player on defense for the club this year (C9 Th-1). Chris Iannetta (C7 Th-1) is a step down alternative for a handful of games.

The other Fielding One defenders are at first base (Chris Davis is a 1B4; the rest of the other players are 1B2s and 1B3s) and in the outfield, where Jayson Werth (OF3, 36 arm), Chris Young (OF3, 32 arm) and Coco Crisp (OF3, 31 arm) will catch everything. Unfortunately Young and Crisp don't come equipped with bats this year, so the outfield will mostly be OF1s (Dunn, Lind and Snider). Only Byrd is an OF2 (36 arm).



Mauer: Outstanding

The rest of the infield is Fielding Two at best. Alex Rodriguez is a 3B4;



2009 finish: 77-85 (3rd, Ruth)  
Last 5 years: 434-386, .536

PITCHING: 5.5 OFF: 10.5 DEF: 4.0 BNC: 2.5

**TQ: 22.5**

Stephen Drew is an SS8; Jose Lopez is a 2B7. Everth Cabrera, who is the only spare infielder, is an SS7.



Overall, the defense isn't really a point of pride for the Barbarians.

**Bench: 2.5**  
**Odds and ends.**

Games are a little tight for Brobdingnag this year, due to missing games for A-Rod, Mauer and Drew, but there are some extra bits for the outfield.

There is also a contender-like hitting toy: Randy Ruiz (1-1-0-0-0, 11 hits, 3 walks+42, but 5 24s and 6 13s). Chris Young (1-0-0-0, 7 hits, 4 walks, 28 SSN), Coco Crisp (3 0s, 8 hits, 5 walks, 33 SSN) and Justin Maxwell (1-4-5, 9 hits, 4 walks, but 9 13s) have some limited usefulness. Pinch-running is a strength, but other than Ruiz, pinch-hitting will only be useful to counter the worst of batting shifts. But most of these guys won't be replacing Dunn or Lind except for defense.



Mood statements aside, there is no evidence that the Prince of Darkness wants to contend with this team. They'll be fun and will win some 10-8 games, but will lose games by that score as well (particularly when 5s and 6s get knocked out in the second inning). The team scores runs, but good pitching should be able to keep them down to a dull roar. In any case, the roster should be really different in a few years.

**brobdingnag BARBARIANS**

2009's post-season featured some exciting moments and some newcomers to the playoffs. When all was said and done, the World Series came down to one of our most senior managers – Anton Greenwald – and our new TBL commissioner, Darrell Skogen.

## Wild-card Round



### Las Vegas vs. Rye

Las Vegas returned to the playoffs having borrowed from the future to load up the present team. Their opponent, the Rye Herons, had finished two games ahead of them in the Mays Division, but in the post-season the Gamblers were much better: they won the first three games and clinched the series 4 games to 1. Alexei Ramirez was the hitting star for the Gamblers.



### Richmond vs. Munich

Richmond got off to a great start in the 2009 playoff season, facing off against a powerful Marauders club that many folks – including the *Annual* – thought might have a chance to go all the way. The Rebels (in their old uniforms) upset the boys from Munich in a series that picked the bones clean off both pitching staffs. The highlights included a grueling 16-inning Richmond win in Game 4, and some emergency closer work from Richmond's Gil Meche – Bruce Taylor's last available pitcher - to win Game 7, 2-1.

## Conference Playoffs



### Midwest vs. Maracaibo

After winning its first pennant in the Williams, the Midwest Mongrels took on the Aaron winner Maracaibo. The Dawgs took the first two at home but the Rumrunners roared back to win three straight.

Midwest then broke out the dead ball dice and took advantage of the glaciers and icy hillocks of their home park in beating Maracaibo twice more in Minnesota to squeeze out a 4-3 series win. Adam LaRoche doubled and homered in the deciding seventh game.



### Gotham City vs. New Westminister

New Westminister's first trip to the playoffs was against a tough Gotham City team, a veteran of the post-season. Things went badly at the start: at home, the Batmen took the first two by exploiting the Whiskeyjacks' vulnerability to left-handed pitching.

When the series moved to Canada, the 'Jacks returned to better form, taking two of three; heading back east, they almost stole Game 6 from Gotham, but were finally stopped by the left arm of J.C. Howell, who wound up saving all four Gotham City wins. That, along with Ryan Howard's three homers, got the Batmen to the conference championship.



## Melrose vs. Richmond

Two powerful teams met for the right to go to the National Conference championship. There were fireworks from the start: Melrose took two close games at home, both by the score of 6-5. Richmond came roaring back, keeping it close, leading up to a decisive seventh game – all that stood between the Rebels and their first visit to the TBL World Series.

In Game 7, Melrose took a 2-0 lead, and Chad Billingsley, Kuo and Brad Lidge made the lead stand up all night. This series was a tight affair throughout, with four 1-run games out of the seven contests.



## Las Vegas vs. Whitman

Having dispatched Rye, the Gamblers moved on to tackle the tough Clemente champs, the Whitman River Rats. One of the pleasures of proximity is the ability to play some of our contests face-to-face, and during a long evening, the two teams played the first five games. All five were close ones, with the teams trading victories and championship caliber performances. Paul and Brian apparently closed a mall during an exhausting evening, with the Rats leaving up 3 games to 2.

When the series resumed, the Gamblers were able to even it up in Game 6 on a critical homer by Vlad Guerrero. In Game 7, the powerful Vegas offense blew Whitman away 7-2, lifting them to the conference championship series.

## Conference Championship Round



## Gotham City vs. Las Vegas

These two old rivals faced off again, playing face-to-face for a chance to go to the 2010 TBL World Series. They split the first four games, with strong pitching dominating all four contests. Gotham City got their bats oiled for Game 5, pounding out Shawn Marcum, then put the series away behind a solid effort by Felix Hernandez.



## Midwest vs. Melrose

The series began as expected, with the dangerous Melrose club taking the first two at home and then a third out on the frozen tundra. It appeared that the pitching-and-defense approach would fall before the usual dominating offense.

But the Dawgs weren't done. They won Game 4 behind Ervin Santana, 2-0, then pummeled all Melrose pitchers in their path in a 14-5 win. Darrell arrived at the draft expecting Mark to have closed it out by winning on the silicone in Melrose. Instead, David Wright hit a 2-run homer in the eleventh to win Game 6 for Midwest, 6-4. In Game 7, Johan Santana came up huge, and Midwest completed an incredible comeback to move to their first World Series.

# 2009 TBL World Series

by Darrell Skogen



## Midwest vs. Gotham City

The Championship Series pitted veteran manager Anton Greenwald and his Batmen with their offensive approach against Darrell Skogen's little-ball pitching and defense approach for the Dawgs.

Representing the International Conference, Gotham City was the class of that division with a 97-65 record; the Batmen outlasted Rye's 91 wins and division winners Whitman and New Westminster, rising powers with 86 wins apiece during the regular season. The Dawgs felt fortunate to win the National Division championship, as Melrose (112 wins), Munich (109), Maracaibo (99) and Richmond (95) were all poised to make championship runs. The series pitted one of the most veteran managers against a relative newcomer. The difference between style of play was on display as well.

### Game 1 at Midwest Hernandez vs. Webb

Twenty-game winners Felix Hernandez and Brandon Webb faced off, and Hernandez came away with the victory 4-2.

Jermaine Dye's two run homer in the fourth and Troy Glaus' two run shot in the sixth gave King Felix and the bullpen all it needed to best the Dawgs. Alexi Casilla's single in the fourth scored Ramon Hernandez, who had been bunted to second. Nate McLouth singled and stole second in the eighth, scoring on a David Wright single. Big ball trumped little ball in this hard fought game.



Hernandez

**Gotham City 4, Midwest 2**

**WP: Hernandez LP: Webb S: Geary**

### Game 2 at Midwest Wakefield vs. Dempster

Ryan Dempster and Tim Wakefield struggled against each other, leaving with the score tied at four and allowing the bullpens to determine the winner of this game. There was a typical Midwest rally in the bottom of the first to draw first blood. Adam Jones walked and went to second on an infield grounder. McLouth walked, and Jones scored on a two base error on Wakefield on a tapper by Adam LaRoche. Derrek Lee's single plated the second run of the inning. Gotham City scored two each in the second and third to take the lead.



McLouth

Dempster could not find the plate, walking two in each inning, three of whom scored. Big doubles by Dye and Troy Glaus paced the rally in the third. The Dawgs played big ball in the bottom of the third, with McLouth hitting a two run shot for the tie. Geary failed in the bottom of the eighth, giving a single to PH Oscar Salazar and walking LaRoche before allowing a two-run double to Wright. Dan Wheeler got the win and Joey Devine pitched a 1-2-3 ninth for the save, tying the Series at one game apiece.

**Midwest 6, Gotham City 4**

**WP: Wheeler LP: Geary S: Devine**

### Game 3 at Gotham City J. Santana vs. Duchscherer

In Game Three, the Batmen scored one each in the second and third. In the second, a single by Jeff Baker drove Jermaine Dye to third, and Tejada's groundball to short scored the run. Mark DeRosa hit a solo homer in the third for the 2-0 lead.

In the fifth, David Wright singled, stole second, and scored on a single. But in the bottom of the

inning, DeRosa jacked his second homer to give Gotham City a 3-1 lead. But in the ninth, a double, a trusty sacrifice bunt, and a sac fly tied the game. The tenth began with little-ball, passing through three straight hit and run singles, ending with a dramatic three-run homer by McLouth. Russ Springer slammed the door to cinch victory.



Wright

Midwest 8, Gotham City 3

WP: Springer LP: Jenks

### Game 4 at Gotham City E. Santana vs. Verlander

Two underachievers in the regular season matched up in Game Four. Midwest drew first blood in the second when Wright walked and scored on Hernandez' double. The Batmen stormed back with three in the second: Tejada's RBI single scored Matt Joyce, and Rod Barajas' triple plated Nick Swisher and Tejada.



Barajas

The Dawgs chipped away and got one in the sixth when Oscar Salazar walked and pinch-runner Mike Aviles scored on Wright's double. In the seventh, they tied it up against Jonathan Papelbon when Nick Punto doubled, Casilla bunted him to third, Kotsay was hit by a pitch, and McLouth tapped into a forceout to score Punto. But it all became academic when Dye homered to ice the game.

Gotham City 5, Midwest 3

WP: Jenks LP: E. Santana

### Game 5 at Gotham City Webb vs. Hernandez

With the series tied, Webb and Hernandez faced each other in a rematch. Webb was brilliant, pitching a solid eight innings of one run ball. Midwest played big ball, with Aviles drawing first blood in the opening inning with a solo homer, but onsecutive two out singles by Scott Podsednik, Tejada, and Dioner Navarro tied the game in the second.



Webb

The Dawgs had a typical rally in the sixth, getting two walks with two outs. Javier Lopez got the final out against pinch-hitter Blanco, and the first two outs in the seventh. But then it was big ball time again. Back to back jacks by McLouth and LaRoche gave the Dawgs the win and a Series lead of 3 games to 2.

Midwest 3, Gotham City 1

WP: Webb LP: Lopez S: Devine

### Game 6 at Midwest Wakefield vs. Dempster

Dempster found the plate this time around, striking out 10 Batmen in eight innings. Midwest scored first in the fifth inning, as Carlos Gomez singled, stole second, and scored on Adam Kennedy's single.



Dempster

After two outs in the sixth, Gotham City solved Dempster. Jermaine Dye doubled and Glaus delivered an RBI single. Tim Wakefield started the bottom of the eighth and yielded a single to Adam Jones, bringing Geary on in relief. Aviles bounced out to second on the hit and run, and McLouth hit a ball to short with the runner holding. LaRoche produced the clutch double to put the Mongrels on top 2-1.

Devine got the first two outs in the ninth, before walking Joyce. He bore down to get Swisher on a grounder to short, and the Dawgs celebrated their first TBL championship in front of their 14 season ticket-holders.

Midwest 2, Gotham City 1

WP: Dempster LP: Wakefield S: Devine

**Series MVP: Nate McLouth.** His timely hitting was the highlight of the Midwest offensive attack. His homer tied Game Two and made up for Ryan Dempster's wild start; his three-run homer in the tenth inning of Game Three broke the heart of the Batmen, and his Game Five homer was the game winning RBI.

# national conference hall of fame eligibles



Craig Biggio

**Craig Biggio, C-2B-OF** 1990-2007  
*Brodingnag, Maracaibo, Blue Hill and other clubs.*

Biggio was an on-base specialist, with nearly 1000 walks in his 19-year TBL career, and remains the all-time leader in HBP with 264 (and the record holder with 51 for the 1998 Rumrunners). He was an everyday player, averaging 151 games a year in his 17 full seasons; he stole 333 bases and drove in 1224 runs with 276 homers and 611 doubles.

**Roberto Alomar, 2B** 1989-2005  
*Amherst, Melrose/Northboro*

Arguably one of the best players in baseball during his stellar career, Alomar was a great all-around player; he could hit, hit for power, field and run. He drove in 1207 in his career, hitting .292 in 16 full seasons, four times crossing the .300 barrier (leading the league in 1994 with a .368 average). He stole 412 bases and, in his career, made only 117 errors.



Roberto Alomar



**Kevin Appier, SP** 1991-2004  
*East Anglia, Minnesota, Munich, and Maracaibo.*

Shortened by injury, Appier's career included a number of remarkable seasons. Other than his final year in Maracaibo (8-3), he had double-digit wins in every TBL season, winning 21 with the 1998 Munich Marauders. In his 2,773 TBL innings, he struck out 2,067 batters. He has a 3.59 lifetime ERA and was consistently among league leaders throughout his career.



Kevin Appier



Fred McGriff



**Fred McGriff, 1B** 1998-2004  
*Amherst, Melrose, Zion*

A dominant power hitter, McGriff made his greatest impact as a part of the dominant Elders of Zion from 1996 until his retirement. His 488 career home runs and 1569 RBI place him among the all-time leaders; he crossed the 100-RBI plateau eight times, and hit 30 homers in eight seasons, hitting 50 to lead Greg Hamburg's 1989 Amherst Avengers.

HALL OF FAME

# Falling Into Place

They say suffering is good for the soul. If so, *Ray Murphy* must have an amazingly good one.



Last year was a trying one for him, enough so that your *Annual* staff was not even aware of the Stygian depths. But this year's club will more than make up for it. It's been a long road since the World Series – and now the team is stacked and ready to go, with pitching and offense, speed and power as good or better than any team in TBL.

Oh, and that stuff about suffering? That's total *crap*. You can't play to win every year, but a season like the one *Murphy* had last year with Portland isn't good for anyone's soul. Fortunately, he gets to have a year like *this* year where it all falls into place.

Down the road in Northboro, the reluctant heroes seek once again to get to the playoffs and go deep. *Bob Jordan* and *Steve Stein* have different approaches to scouting, to lineup construction, and to long-term development – but it's a partnership that works. It got *Steve* into TBL, and got *Bob* back.

As noted elsewhere, teams with talent have to make the decision to contend because they think they're good enough – regardless of whether the competition is better. Northboro has a lot of it on their roster: a solid rotation, a good bullpen, a strong lineup and a versatile bench. This team can go far – but can it go all the way? Wait and see.



## 2008 Aaron Division Final Standings

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Maracaibo*	99	63	.611	—
Northboro	77	85	.475	22
Kansas	66	96	.407	33
Portland	51	111	.315	48

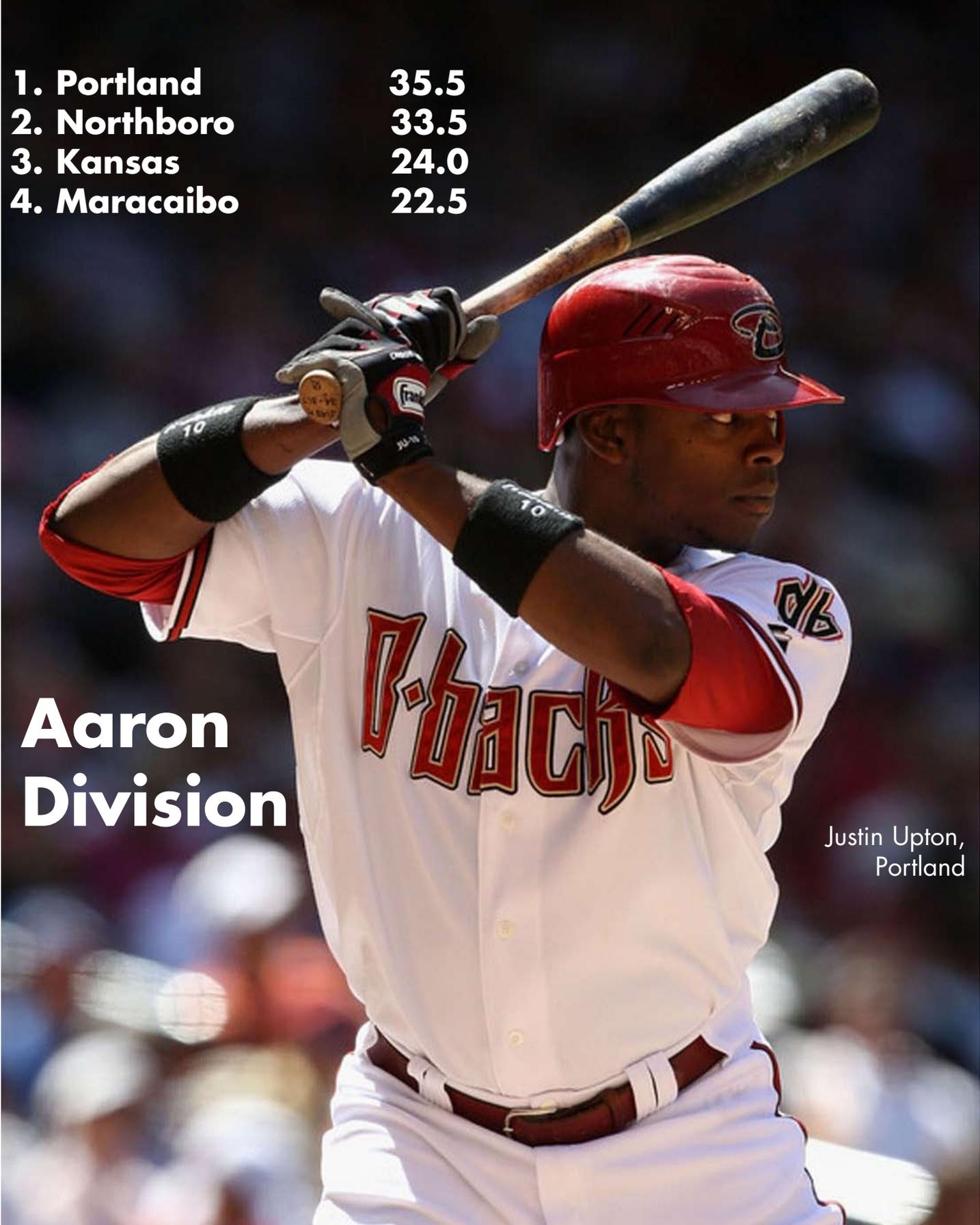
\* Lost to Midwest in NC playoff.

Out in flyover country, TBL's newest manager *Bill Schwartz* faces a similar uphill climb. Last year was a disappointment, particularly for a Yankee fan unaccustomed to losing – in its first season, the Koyote franchise made a late run to overtake division rival Maracaibo and make the playoffs. Neither that team, nor the 2009 edition, was equipped to go far. Expectations have to be modest for this year's club . . . but it starts by reaching the playoffs, and then things will have to take care of themselves.



For Maracaibo, it's a case of been there, done that. Manager *Walter Hunt* has been in TBL for 22 seasons, most of them successful; when it has been necessary to rebuild, the process was a one-year effort, what we call here at the *Annual* a "bounce". It is unclear whether it is possible for this rebuild to be accomplished in one year – there are some younger building blocks, there are some veterans who can still perform – but it may take more than a year to accomplish the task. In the meanwhile, Maracaibo may have to plumb the depths for a bit before emerging as a beautiful butterfly. For this club, it's unfamiliar territory.



- 
- |                     |             |
|---------------------|-------------|
| <b>1. Portland</b>  | <b>35.5</b> |
| <b>2. Northboro</b> | <b>33.5</b> |
| <b>3. Kansas</b>    | <b>24.0</b> |
| <b>4. Maracaibo</b> | <b>22.5</b> |

# Aaron Division

Justin Upton,  
Portland

# 2009 portland POSSUM in review



Luckily, TBL doesn't have relegation rules.

## 2009 in Review Final Record: 51-111 (4th, Mays)

There is a certain satisfaction in putting away a team that endured as last year's team did. The 2009 Possum were just as anticipated, and worse: roadkill for the Aaron Division and for the rest of the league.

Portland management is not sad to see them go away.

### What went right?

As you might expect based on the 51-111 record, not a whole lot went right in any phase of the game.

Octavio Dotel went 9-5, 2.85 out of the pen, and Brandon Morrow saved 28 games on a team that only won 51. To find much more good news, you really have to squint.

On offense, the best performer was Joey Votto, who hit 13 homers and led the team with a .234 average. Kelly Shoppach hit 17 homes, best on the club. Mike Napoli had the distinction of striking out the fewest times among regulars, with 95. Matt Cain was the most productive starter with 9 wins, including 3 complete games and 2 shutouts.

### What went wrong?

Where to start? Garrett Olson went 1-22, 7.94. No pitcher won 10 games, no batter hit 20 HR. Six regulars struck out 100 times or more, one of them – Ian Stewart – in only 285 at-bats. The team

was last in TBL in batting average, OBP, slugging, ERA, WHIP and, of course, wins.

It was a *long* season. The team was outscored by 433 runs, nearly three per game. Luckily, TBL doesn't have relegation rules, or else Portland would be playing in a lower division in 2010.

### 3 Things



Octavio Dotel: 9 relief wins

1. *Staff upgrade.* The pitching staff took their lumps (in a big way) in 2009, but their struggles did not lead to wholesale changes in the offseason. It will be mostly the same crew that sets out in search of better results in 2010 (and we like their chances). The Wainwright-Cain-Gallardo-Happ rotation core may bear the same names as 2009's members, but the grades are very different.

2. *OBP.* After posting a horrifying .286 team OBP in 2009, offseason emphasis was placed on getting more guys on base in 2010. Additions J.D. Drew, Lyle Overbay, and Craig Counsell should keep the basepaths more fully stocked going forward. And where nobody hit 20 HR in 2009, there could be 8 or more guys in that club in 2010. Again, the names may be the same, but the cards are very different.

3. *Roster depth.* Although the 2011 #1 pick is gone, this roster is very deep with young talent. After spending almost half a decade building out a roster core and running a revolving door in the clubhouse, expect to see this group stay largely intact for the next several years.

# portland POSSUM



Ray Murphy (19th year)

*There are easily 15 guys under 30 that you can build a team around.*

*No, says the wise analyst. There is, in fact, no better feeling than constructing a team capable of kicking ass.*

Coming off a 51-111 season, the third rebuilding campaign after a World Series sweep of the Chia Pets, noted baseball analyst, ex-Commissioner and all around nice guy Ray Murphy is enjoying that feeling now. Some amount of it is luck; some of it is compensation for those three losing seasons. But the knowledge and foresight that the esteemed Mr. Murphy has exercised for this club should be rewarded – not just for this season, but for a while to come.

Dr. Greenwald told us a couple of years ago that you need 15 guys to consider contention. Laying out the Portland club's cards on the table, there are easily 15 guys under 30 that you can build a team around. Then there are at least a dozen more – including much of the big-time bullpen – that will play major roles in this year's run to the playoffs.

Dynasties are *lots* of fun. Just watch.

**Pitching: 14.5**  
**Three and a half aces to open.**

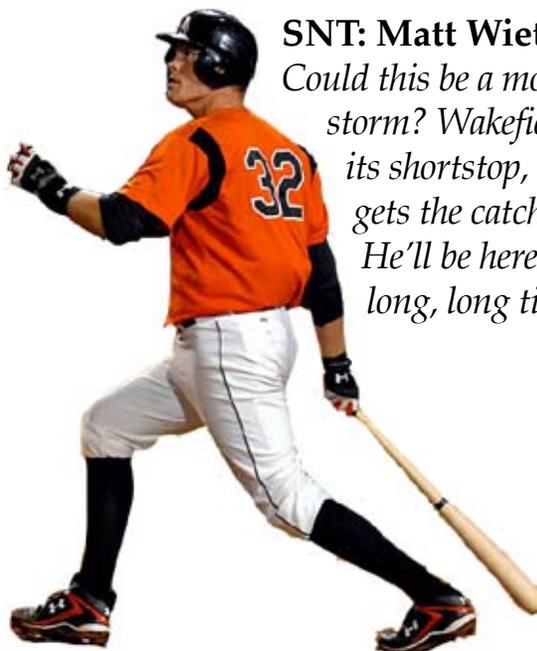
**ROTATION.** In a 24-team league with TBL's grading system, it's highly unusual to see a team with more than 100 starts of Grade 13 or above. But here it is, looking like the 1970 Orioles. The first ace is Adam Wainwright (Grade 13 C+21 HR+25), who has remarkably never before been pictured in the *Annual*. That situation has been remedied this year. But he's only Ace



Wainwright: Ace #1

#1: his good friends are named Matt Cain (Grade 14 C+13), Yovani Gallardo (Grade 14 C-41) and J.A. Happ (Grade 13 lefty). Wainwright gets to be Ace #1 because he has the most starts and the best peripherals, but they're all pretty good.

What follows? Well, future TBL HOFer Pedro Martinez is already gone with the waivers, but



**SNT: Matt Wieters**

*Could this be a more perfect storm? Wakefield gets its shortstop, Portland gets the catcher prize. He'll be here for a long, long time.*

**Arrived:** Todd Coffey, Craig Counsell, J. D. Drew, Freddy Garcia, Johnny Gomes, Gio Gonzalez, Trevor Hoffman, Bud Norris, Lyle Overbay, Tyler Walker, Matt Wieters, Michael Wuertz

**Departed:** Erick Aybar, Colin Balester, Chris Burke, Bartolo Colon, Luis Cruz, Kei Igawa, Zach Jackson, Pedro Martinez, Kevin Millar, Wily Mo Peña, David Purcey, Clayton Richard, Kelly Shoppach

**Turnover Rate: 37%**



# portland POSSUM

the Portland club will use a variety of other pitchers to fill the last quarter of starts in 2010. Brendan Morrow (Grade 12 C-62), last year's 30\*, and Dustin Nippert (Grade 12 C-23 HR+21) are the best of them. Rookie Bud Norris (Grade 8 C-23 HR-22) and resurrected veteran Freddy Garcia (Grade 9 C+31 HR+32) make up the rest.

**BULLPEN.** A truly effective relief corps consists of pitchers better than the starters they rescue. Portland's top group consists of five pitchers all rated higher than all of the starters – even the three and a half aces.

It's led by Trevor Hoffman (Grade 20\* C+25 HR+45) – another future Hall of Famer

who might be making his last turn around the league. He has lots of help: Michael Wuertz (Grade 19\* C+14 HR+25) and Octavio Dotel (Grade 15\* C-61) from the right side, and Jeremy Affeldt (Grade 21\* C-42 HR+41) and Mike Gonzalez (Grade 16\* HR+14) from the left. Together they have 330 innings, almost 200 of which are closer-grade.

Because the old chestnut regarding “never too much pitching” is actually true, Portland has some more innings in case the starters falter. Ty Walker (Grade 13\* C+31) came off waivers to provide 35 decent innings; Todd Coffey (Grade 12\* C+31) is a reliable middle reliever for 83 more; and Nippert and Morrow have almost 40 innings between them as 12\*s. Gio Gonzalez (Grade 6 C-46) is there to drive the bus and shag fly balls.

This is an excellent, enviable staff. The upper tier of the bullpen is old, but there are lots of young arms.



Hoffman: Once more.



*Ray has been tinkering in his basement for a few years. A screw tightened here, a bolt adjusted there: now he's flipped the switch that sent life coursing through this beast of a team. Hide the women and children, get out the torches and pitchforks – this team's a real monster.*

**Offense: 10.0**  
**Oh, they hit, too.**

Let's start with Justin Upton (1-4-5-6, 11 hits, 3 walks, L+11 R-5, 25 SBA with a 31 SSN). He'll turn 23 sometime this summer, but has grown up nice and strong, joining other fine young hitters in the Portland lineup: not-quite-25 Carlos Gonzalez (half a season of 1-4-4-5, 10 hits, 3 walks+22, 20 SBA with a 31 SSN; 27-in-the-fall Joey Votto (1-5-6-6, 11 hits, 4 walks+22); just-turned-25 Ian Stewart (1-0-0-0, 8 hits, 4 walks+22); and back-from-injury and not-yet-26 Troy Tulowitzki (1-0-0-0, 10 hits, 4 walks, 31 SBA with a 25 SSN). And please let's not forget 24-year-old Matt Wieters, only half a season, but a nice little 10 hit and 3 walk card that is just the tip of the iceberg for his potential.

And those are the *young guys*.

Add to them the other half of the catching tandem, Mike Napoli (1-0-0-0, 10 hits, 3 walks+22, L+7 R-4); the half season of DH/hitting toy Jonny Gomes (1-1-6-6, 9 hits, 3 walks+22), veteran Lyle Overbay (1-0-0-0, 9 hits, 5 walks, L-16 R+2), J.D. Drew (1-4-5-6, 9 hits, 4 walks+22), and Juan Rivera (1-5-6, 10 hits, 2 walks, L+8 R-5). The weakest parts of the lineup, those who are there for defense, have a little bit of offense: Kevin Kouzmanoff



Tulo, Tulo, Tulo.

(1-6-6, 9 hits, 2 walks+42, L+4 R-4) and Craig Counsell (3 0s, 10 hits, 3 walks+22, 3 31s). Justin Upton's brother B.J. (3 0s, 9 hits, 3 walks, L-6, 25 SBA with 29 SSN) will get most of his work as a defensive replacement or as a pinch runner. Years of baseball fandom, and years of writing

**Defense: 7.5**  
**Not quite 1970 O's, but solid.**

for this publication, have made your *Annual* staff fond of comparisons. The 1970 Baltimore Orioles are apt for the starting rotation, as McNally, Palmer, Cuellar and Phoebus is a good benchmark for Wainwright, Cain, Gallardo and Happ (O's by a nose, we think.) But they match up decently on defense as well:

	<b>Portland 2010</b>	<b>Baltimore 1970</b>
<b>C</b>	Wieters C7/Napoli C7	Etchebarren C7 / Hendricks C7
<b>1B</b>	Volto 1B3 / Overbay 1B5	Powell 1B4
<b>2B</b>	Counsell 2B8 / I. Stewart 2B7	D. Johnson 2B8
<b>3B</b>	Kouzmanoff 3B5	B. Robinson 3B6
<b>SS</b>	Tulowitzki SS9	Belanger SS9
<b>OF</b>	J. Rivera OF2	Buford OF1 / Rettenmund OF2
<b>OF</b>	J. Drew OF3	Blair OF3
<b>OF</b>	J. Upton OF2	F. Robinson OF2
<b>Def Sub</b>	B. Upton OF3, Mathis C8	as if!

Orioles win by a nose again, with Brooks Robinson at the hot corner. But I'm sure that Mr. Murphy doesn't mind a bit having his club compared to them.

It should be noted that the Possum outfield arms are good. Both Uptons have a 37; Carlos Gonzalez is a 33, Juan Rivera and J.D. Drew 32. The only real defensive deficiency is behind the plate, where Wieters (Th-1) and Mathis (Th-2) don't help stop opposing runners. Neither does defensive sub Jeff Mathis (C8 Th-1).

**Bench: 3.5**  
**A nice box o'parts.**

The recitation on the facing page lists 13 players who will be seeing regular playing time this season. Since only nine are allowed at a time, some of the bench will consist of those worthies



Drew: Glove.

who do not start, as there are many games among them (Gomes, Gonzalez and the catchers are partial seasons; the others have plenty).



**portland POSSUM**

There are also a few extra fly-shaggers and bus-drivers on the roster who may make appearances during the year. Jeff Mathis (8 hits, 2 walks) is here primarily for his defense; Rickie Weeks (1-0-0-0, 9 hits, 3 walks+42) and Mat Gamel (1-4-6, 8 hits, 4 walks+22) for their Brewer upside; and Adam Rosales (0-6, 7 hits) for his versatility – he's equally poor at four positions. And, of course, none of them are more than 28 years old. This should be a fun team to manage all year, not least because there'll be lots of mixing and matching opportunities off the bench.

**1st** We like some of the talent on the Northboro and Kansas rosters, but don't see either of them threatening Portland for the Aaron Division pennant. Maracaibo, the defending pennant winner, will be watching the race from the hot dog vendor's spot in the Uecker seats.

The Possum probably won't win in a walk, but it would be hard to imagine them not recording 100 victories with this excellent club. The 2011 draft lacks a first rounder, but the #2 and #3 are still there – expect this crew to stay together for quite a while.



2009 finish: 51-111 (4th, Aaron)  
 Last 5 years: 352-458, .435  
 PITCHING: 14.5 OFF: 10.0 DEF: 7.5 BNC: 3.5

**TQ: 35.5**

# 2009 northboro PHOENIX in review



*The backyard regrouping effort went better than the 2009 regular season.*

## 2009 in Review

### Final Record: 77-85 (2nd, Aaron)

The Phoenix tried to execute a soft rebuild in 2009, trading off some valuable bullpen talent and replacing them with young draftees. The result was a mess – a 77-85 record, 22 games behind Maracaibo in the Aaron Division and 18 games behind Richmond in the National Conference wild-card chase. First round draftee Sean Gallagher and bonus pick Jerry Blevins are both uncarded for 2010, although futures appear to be pointing north for both youngsters.

The backyard regrouping effort went better than the 2009 regular season. Northboro enters the 2010 season with a solid bullpen and an offense recast around speedsters like Michael Bourn.

### What went right?

There were a few surprises in the hitting cards for Northboro, and they yielded better than expected results. Ian Kinsler exceeded every reasonable expectation with a .318/.367/.534 line, including 17 homers, 48 doubles and 25 steals. Carlos Peña clubbed 34 home runs, and drove in 95. David Ortiz had 63 XBH in 414 at bats.

Overall, Northboro scored a respectable 822 runs, good for fifth in the league.

Second round draft pick Seth Smith played 133 games in Colorado and will play a huge role in the 2010 Phoenix lineup. Northboro traded a large Ryan Ludwick card to New West for Michael Bourn and a draft pick, giving the Phoenix a true center fielder/leadoff talent for the first time in recent memory.

### What went wrong?

In December, the Phoenix dealt away Scott Downs (Grade 19\*) to Munich along with Joe Beimel (Grade 14\* HR+62), leaving the bullpen closing duties in the hands of Grade 13\* Huston Street. Beimel and Downs combined for 96 stellar innings for Munich, while Northboro struggled all year to snuff out late rallies.



Ian Kinsler: Exceeded.

This forced the Phoenix to lean heavily on their top three starters – none of whom proved equal to the task. Roy Halladay, Carlos Zambrano, and Andy Pettitte combined to go 31-40 on the season. Only Tim Redding (13-11), overperformed his grade. The back of the rotation was an unmitigated disaster. Sean Gallagher and Luis Mendoza went 9-16 with an ERA over 6 in 33 starts. Northboro's 4.75 team ERA was in the lower third of the league.

### 3 Things

1. *Trading dragged the team down.* The extra 100 solid bullpen innings would have helped. Ludwick's departure gave Northboro a chance to balance its offense, adding a much-needed speedster to the top of its lineup, and allowing Ian Kinsler (30 homers for Texas in 2009) a chance to hit lower in the order.

2. *Gallagher and Blevins were high-risk, high-reward.* The talent is there for them to return in 2011 despite being absent in 2010. Gallagher will thrive in San Diego, a pitcher's haven.

3. *Hanging onto Soriano and Betancourt paid off.* Northboro paid the price by shouldering their way past 2009 with an uncarded Soriano and a very mediocre Rafael Betancourt card. Both will contribute heavily to the resurrected Northboro bullpen in 2010.

# northboro PHOENIX

Bob Jordan (11th year) / Steve Stein (8th year)

*Any competition where there are many dice rolls and many turns and twists can hardly give any team a lock.*



If you ask them, the two-headed brain trust in Northboro would be happy to tell you that 2009 was merely a prelude to this year. There was no doubt that there was a rebuild in progress, a climb down from the 103-win team from 2008 that was *supposed* to get to the World Series.

Teams make decisions to contend for a variety of reasons. Both the Sensei and the Prince of Darkness will tell you, and no doubt the Guru will be happy to concur, that a manager must first believe that *this is the time* – that the players he has are good enough to contend. Sometimes this is a long time coming, as it has been up the road in Portland. Sometimes it is merely an alternative between a good season and an unsatisfying rebuild, as it was last year in Maracaibo. But whatever the reason, a manager must always look at his own roster first. The consideration of what the competition might be should come later.

Therefore, after shamelessly extolling the virtues of the fine Portland club a few pages ago, it remains important to note that the fine Northboro club about to be described is a contender because it started with good talent and has made it better through drafting and trading, and should perform well in its own right: not *despite* Portland, not *despite* anything or any team.

Does that make them good enough to go all the way, to be the Northboro team that *does* make it to the World Series? The *Annual* doesn't offer that sort of pronouncement, and any competition where there are many dice rolls and many turns and twists can hardly give any team a lock on that particular distinction. The road to the TBL World Series is strewn with 110-win teams that didn't make it. So Northboro should take heart. No promises, no exaggerated predictions. The

club is a contender; it has a good chance. This is why we play the games.

**Pitching: 13.0**  
**No bad starts, no bad innings.**

**ROTATION.** Javier Vazquez (Grade 14 C+33 HR+14) has come over from Grand Cayman to join an impressive starting rotation. Is he the ace of the staff? Does it matter? Roy Halladay (Grade 12 C+42 HR+21) has a lower grade, but his peripherals will make him hard to beat. And then there's Johan Santana (Grade 12 C+23), gone from Minnesota at last.

These three starters have 89 starts between them,

## SNT:

### Javier Vazquez

*The old adage is: "never too much pitching."*

*Adding Johan Santana and the V Man certainly suggests that the Northboro boys believe that.*



**Arrived:** Joe Beimel, Ronald Belisario, Dallas Braden, Ramon Hernandez, Darnell McDonald, Angel Pagan, Ramiro Peña, David Ross, Johan Santana, Javier Vazquez, Clay Zavada.

**Departed:** Coco Crisp, Wes Helms, Chin-Lung Hu, Luis Mendoza, Corky Miller, Garrett Mock, Greg Norton, Edwar Ramirez, Billy Sadler, Ryan Sadowski, John Smoltz, Julian Tavaréz.

**Turnover Rate: 31%**

just over half the season. Disturbing for opponents, the Northboro starters that *aren't* named Vazquez, Halladay and Santana are pretty good too: former ace (and power hitter) Carlos Zambrano turned in a good rating for a #4 starter (Grade 11 C-24 HR+35); veteran lefty Andy Pettitte is a Grade 10; and Dallas Braden is a Grade 9 (C+16 HR+35). There are no bad starts for Northboro all year.

**BULLPEN.** There are no bad innings either, though the relief staff lacks the dominant closer that could lock up the 9th inning. Instead, the pen will be led by a rookie Grade 18\* (Ronald Belisario) with a HR+35. The good news is that he'll have plenty of help. Rafael Soriano returns from injury with a passel o'innings (Grade 16\* HR+22) and a good set of other middle relievers (Rafael Betancourt, Grade 15\* C+21 HR+26; Huston Street, Grade 15\* C+42; Brandon Med-

ders, Grade 13\* C-15 HR+22; and lefty rookie Clay Zavada, Grade 13\* C-25 HR+14). The total count of innings is just short of 400, with 70 for Belisario himself.

There are almost 200 more bulk innings, all Grade 9\* or above, that are also available. This is a deep bullpen, a great asset to the club.

**Offense: 9.0**  
**Got it right here.**

The Northboro offense is a nice combination of power, speed and on-base. The savvy Mr. Jordan and the analytical Mr. Stein have their own ideas about the way to build a lineup, but it always comes down to hits, walks, and power numbers



Peña: Power to spare.



*"The 'terrific tandem' that is the Northboro brain trust, Steve Stein and Robert Jordan, have gathered quite the rotation for 2010. Halladay, Santana and Zambrano (who could be his own cleanup hitter!) form a sort of 'Staff Ace by Committee.' Is it enough?"*

– and there are a number of each category. One of the nicest combinations of power and on-base is Scott Rolen, who has come back from mid-life mediocrity to turn in a great card (4 0s, 11 hits, 3 walks+22). However, he'll have a tough platoon shift (L+10 R-5). Similarly, Ian Kinsler (1-0-0-0, 9 hits, 3 walks+22, 36 SBA with a 33 SSN, L+7 R-4) has some of everything you want in a hitter.

There's more. Seth Smith turned in a surprisingly good card with a lot of playing time (1-0-0-0, 10 hits, 4 walks+22); Carlos Peña strikes out a lot but has power to spare (1-1-5-6, 8 hits, 5 walks+22); and Big Papi is still something like Big Papi (1-0-0-0, 8 hits, 4 walks+22). Freddy Sanchez has a nice card (3 0s, 11 hits, 3 31s, L+2 R-2) that doesn't even make the starting lineup.

The outfield features a mix-and-match combination of various features. Michael Bourn (3-6, 10 hits, 3 walks) has 73 steal attempts with a 32 SSN; Jeff Francoeur (3 0s, 10 hits) had a nice comeback after joining the Mets; Melky Cabrera (3 0s, 10 hits, 3 walks, 12 SBA with a 32 SSN) turns in another useful card; and rookie Angel Pagan (4 0s, 11 hits, 2 walks, 21 SBA with a 26 SSN) will provide a nice half season for the Northboro offense.

The only deficiencies in the lineup are at short, where J.J. Hardy acquired a glove but misplaced his bat (3 0s, 8 hits, 3 walks), and catcher, where there are twice as many heads as in the front office (Ramon Hernandez, Chris Snyder, Ramon Castro and David Ross), only one of whom can really hit (Ross has a 1-0-0-0, 9 hits, 5 walks, but only 54 games).

The number of choices is reflected in the variety of lineups in the instructions. While it lacks some of the Brobdingnag-type star power, the lineup is very functional.

**Defense:**  
**Strong all around.**

**8.5**

What goes with pitching? *Defense.* The Phoenix will be catching the ball this year. In the infield, there's strength everywhere – Peña is a 1B5, Kinler (and Sanchez) are 2B8s, Hardy gets playing time because of his SS9, and Rolen is a 3B5. On some occasions Ramiro Peña (3B4, SS8) will get some playing time, but otherwise it's Fielding One all the way.

There are no OF1s on the roster. Melky Cabrera (34 arm) and Michael Bourn (32 arm) are both OF3s; Jeff Francoeur (35 arm), Seth Smith and waiver pickup Darnell McDonald (33 arm) and Angel Pagan (31 arm) are all OF2s. There's no Ichiro out there – not for lack of trying, as the Jordan did make an offer for him – but this outfield will run down most everything.

Behind the plate is more pedestrian, as Ramon Hernandez (C8, Th-1) and Ramon Castro (C7, Th+2) will get most of the work. Chris Snyder is a C8, but lost both his arm (Th-3) and his bat and is unlikely to be a contributor. David Ross apparently found both, as he is an excellent defender (C8 Th+6) but may be saved to start games against better opponents rather than serve as a defensive replacement.

**Bench:** **3.0**  
**Lots to play with.**

In addition to the versatile potential starters, there are a few extra things on the bench for The Bob and The Steve



Bourn: Early '80s

to play with. Freddy Sanchez, who need not start, is a useful pinch hitter, and has default ratings at shortstop and third base when needed; Ramiro Peña has a remarkably useful card (3 0s, 10 hits, 2 walks, L-12 R+4 but an SA-0 on the computer) and is rated Fielding Two across the infield; and waiver pickup Darnell McDonald (3 0s, 10 hits, and a wacky L+10 R-12 BC) is a nice waiver pickup with a lot of talent for someone who will turn 92 in the fall (check the misprinted date of birth).

Expect the Northboro scoresheets and box scores to be crowded with moves, as they'll have a number of them to make. This should be a fun team to manage.

**2nd** Despite the favorable light in which the Northboro team is painted, the *Annual* does not think that it has the stuff to overcome Portland. We can hardly be blamed for preferring the talent on the Possum, particularly given its youth and the way it matches up head-to-head.

But neither should Mr. Murphy expect to be setting his playoff rotation around Memorial Day, as some division leaders will be doing. This team has talent. They can hit; they can run – Michael Bourn has early 1980s speed, like Vince Coleman or Rickey Henderson – they can field, and they can certainly pitch. The club should do well in division, and should be strong both on the boards and the computer. What the boys in Northboro make of it ... we'll see in December.



2009 finish: 77-85 (2nd, Aaron)  
Last 5 years: 406-404, .501

PITCHING: 13.0 OFF: 9.0 DEF: 8.5 BNC: 3.0

**TQ: 33.5**



**northboro PHOENIX**

# 2009 Kansas KOYOTES in review



*When avoiding 100 losses is considered an accomplishment, not too much can be qualified as noteworthy.*

## 2009 in Review Final Record: 66-96 (3rd, Mays)

After injuries and underachieving hitters plagued the real life roster in 2008, the Koyotes knew 2009 would be a down year, but didn't think they would be so bad that they would end up scrambling to avoid a 100 loss season. Their 66-96 season left them 33 games behind Aaron Division champion Maracaibo and possessor of the sixth worst record in TBL.

### What went right?

When avoiding 100 losses is considered an accomplishment, not too much can be qualified as noteworthy.

The keystone combo of Dustin Pedroia and Michael Young sparkled defensively and provided timely hitting, with Pedroia leading the team with 195 hits and a .308 average and Young chipping in with a .286 BA and 85 runs scored. Mike Cameron led the Koyotes with 26 HR's and Jack Cust chimed in with 25 dingers and led the league in free passes with 122.

Second round draft choice Ramon Ramirez' 68.7 RIP, 7-4, 1.97 year provided a few good relief moments and Joakim Soria saved 35 of the Koyotes' 66 wins.

Kansas tried to run when possible and went 60 for 63 in the SB department, but were hindered by the fact that they were habitually behind.

### What went wrong?

It started with the draft. Previous management had traded away the third round pick and the league rule concerning first year managers deprived the Koyotes of a Bonus round pick, leaving them with only two of the top 105 picks and forcing them to draft either future potential or one year stopgap help after the first two rounds. 207 usable innings of relief entering the draft dictated the latter option. First round pick Max Scherzer was essentially a future pick, also, so the decision was made to make an all-out commitment to the future by trading NL batting

champion Chipper Jones and Joe Blanton for Chien-Ming Wang, Melvin Mora and draft choices. Who foresaw the toe injury to Wang as a possible career-ending one? It remains to be seen how the draft choices acquired in the Jones trade will affect the future. Assessment of the 2009 draft: pretty dismal!

Injuries to starters Wang, Dustin McGowan and Jose Contreras necessitated the use of no less than 8 starters to achieve the required 162 starts and led to roster problems.

Stopper Soria, expected to be one of the few bright spots on the team, suffered through a horrendous first two thirds of the season and sported a 5.03 ERA as late as mid-September. A late season reverting to form dropped it to 3.54 at the end, still not what one would expect from a Grade 25\* reliever!

After trading Jones, a season-long case of anemic bats doomed the Koyotes, who struggled to a final BA of .237. No less than 9 hitters, all who saw significant action, hit under .206.

Ted Lilly, victimized by those ice cold hitters, ended up with 22 losses, quite possibly a league record for a Grade

11 starter. Lilly, Randy Wolf and Jon Garland, the three starters with 30+ starts, had records of 6-22, 8-17 and 7-14 respectively.

### 3 Things

1. *A better draft in 2010.* The Koyotes selected two prospects whom some pundits consider the top two pitchers in the draft. They will be added to a much improved rotation and a better lineup, giving us higher expectations for 2010.

2. *A deeper pen.* Neftali Feliz' 31 RIP of Grade 29\* will provide a half season of a top-notch closer, with Joakim Soria's 53 RIP of Grade 17\* supplying the rest.

3. *Patience, always patience.* It appears that the decision to hold on to the injured Chris Ray may have been a wise move. However, the jury is still out on uncarded McGowan and injury-plagued Wang. As of this writing neither has made an appearance in 2010.



Dustin Pedroia: Timely hitting

# kansas KOYOTES



Bill Schwartz (3rd year)

*[Bill] is proving to be a savvy, calm, opportunistic manager with a keen eye for top-shelf pitching talent with huge upside.*

Bill Schwartz' first full season in TBL was a 66-96 ice bath that saw the staff's three best starting pitchers – Ted Lilly, Dustin McGowan and Randy Wolf – chalk up 53 losses between them. This is not an easy way to spend your summer nights.

The general expectations for this club point north. They drafted brilliantly over the last few years, adding stars like Dustin Pedroia, Billy Butler, Miguel Montero and closer Joakim Soria. Then came this year's draft, with Neftali Feliz, Brian Matusz and James McDonald all belonging to the coveted "guys we'd like to have" category. Bill is proving to be a savvy, calm, opportunistic manager with a keen eye for top-shelf pitching talent with huge upside (that would be *you*, Max Scherzer).

A couple of years ago, T. J. Williams rolled out an Oklahoma City club with a terrific lineup and a mediocre pitching staff. The *Annual* looked them up and down, sniffed, and picked them last. They went on to ride their 900 run hitting



**SNT: Brian Matusz**  
*A hard-throwing lefthander, he may be the prize pick of the 2010 draft for the Koyotes. He will be a key part of the rotation for years to come.*

attack to a Williams Division title. Surprises *do* happen in TBL, and this Kansas club could be one of those teams that we underestimate. They won't beat out Portland's ridiculous outfit for the division, but Northboro had better learn to make their wacky lineup work, or the Koyotes could scamper into second in the tough Aaron Division.

**Pitching: 9.5**  
**Good starters, talented pen.**

**ROTATION.** The starting rotation starts strong but lefthanded. Grade 13s Randy Wolf (C+21) and Ted Lilly (C+33 HR-14) have 61 starts between them; there will be no repeats of their combined 14-39 performance from a year ago. Behind them is a good righty – Max Scherzer (Grade 9, 30 starts). These three cover more than half a season, but that pales in comparison with Northboro and Portland this season.

Jon Garland (Grade 7 C+23, 33 starts) and Scott Richmond (Grade 7 C-22 HR-26, 24 starts) combine to cover most of the rest of the season. Brian Matusz (Grade 6 C+15) and a spot start or two from James McDonald (Grade 10 C-32 HR+16, 4 starts, 63 IP) get the Koyotes through the rest of the year.

This staff does not have the canyons in it that are evident in Maracaibo's starting staff, but they

**Arrived:** Reid Brignac, Neftali Feliz, Cristian Guzman, Chris Jakabauskas, Brian Matusz, James McDonald, Laynce Nix, Scott Richmond, Omir Santos, Chris Smith, Andres Torres

**Departed:** Aaron Boone, Bill Bray, Jolbert Cabrera, Kevin Cash, Kyle Farnsworth, Austin Kearns, Ryan Langerhans, David Riske, Dennis Sarfate, Ron Villone

**Turnover Rate: 34%**



# KANSAS KOYOTES

don't have the powerhouse righty starters featured at the top of the Northboro and Portland rotations. However, this is a good staff that should improve over the next couple of years.

**BULLPEN.** The exciting news is the arrival of the very special Neftali Feliz (Grade 29\* C+16 HR+33). Feliz has only half a season, but one surmises that Bill is going to enjoy slapping this card on the table against struggling opponents. Feliz was the tenth player picked in the 2010 draft, and has already stolen the closer's job in Texas as of this writing.



Feliz: Special

9 hits, 6 walks+42). Unless you're rocking a Joe Mauer card in your stack this season, you can pretty much forget about finding any 16 on-base number cardboard in your envelope. Incredibly, Johnson managed to stay physically intact for 133 games last year.

After Johnson there are four more terrific full-season cards. Dustin Pedroia (4 0s, 10 hits, 4 walks, 28 SSN for 28 attempts) followed up his MVP season with another rock-solid performance.

Michael Young (4 0s, 11 hits 3 walks, 15 speed number, 28 SSN for 11 attempts) has been a standard bearer on this team for years, and will deliver big once again as the number three hitter. The 34 year old Young has 1300 hits and 100 homers in his excellent TBL career so far.

In the months that Feliz is getting his scalp massaged by the training staff, Joakim Soria (Grade 17\* C+16 HR+22, 53 IP) will close. Soria's consistent work over the last few years has been shrouded in the mystery that we call the Kansas City Royals. Ramon Ramirez (Grade 15\* C-22 HR+16, 69 IP) and Bobby Howry (Grade 13\* C+22 HR+23, 63 IP) set up both of the closers. Middle men James McDonald (Grade 10\* C-32 HR+16), Chris Jakubauskas (Grade 12\* C+23 HR-22) and the somewhat scary Chris Smith (Grade 12\* C-22 HR-45) round out the bullpen. The first two will be a help to the 200-plus innings of Grade 13\* and above, while the last may cause women and small children to hide their eyes. Overall, there are about 500 innings here before the mopup pitchers start making appearances. For a club that has 71 starts of grade 7 and below, though that seems a little light.

**Offense: 8.5**  
**Better than advertised.**

The offense starts with one of the best leadoff hitters in the set: Nick "The Stick" Johnson (0-6,

The cleanup hitter is Billy Butler (1-6-6-6, 11 hits, 3 walks). The 24-year-old Butler turned the corner as a hitter last year, and this could be the first of a large number of imposing cards. The last plus hitter is catcher Miguel Montero (1-0-0-0, 10 hits, 3 walks, 129 games). Having a catcher who hits .294 with power at the age of 26 means that Kansas will not be burning bushels of draft picks over the next few years trying to patch the catching slot.



Pedroia: Rock-solid

The second tier hitters are all outfielders. Andres Torres (1-2-3-6, 10 hits, 3 walks) has a sexy little card, but only half a season to show it off. Laynce Nix (1-0-0-0, 9 hits, 2 walks) is a rarity – a 30 year old with upside. Mike Cameron (1-5-6, 9 hits, 4 walks) is 37 but is one of the rare 'tools guys'



*Bill Schwartz continues to retool a moribund franchise into a perennial powerhouse. With a pair of lucky lefty Grade 13's, a modest bullpen and a fun little offense Kansas might sweat out a wild card berth this year.*

that actually turned into a decent player in a long career. As for the rest of the lineup, Gary Sheffield (1-4-6, 9 hits, 4 walks, 3 24s) is still an effective hitter, and is probably a shoo-in for the TBL Hall of Fame when he hangs 'em up. His 19-year career includes 483 homers, over 2300 hits, 161 stolen bases in 204 attempts, and almost as many walks (1197) as strikeouts (1229). The only other everyday performer looks good too - Cristian Guzman (3 0s, 11 hits, 2 31s). This lineup may perform better than advertised. There are really no soft spots, and there are even good hitters coming off the bench. This is a better lineup than Northboro's but lacks Portland's explosiveness.

**Defense: 4.0**  
**Very average.**

Fielding is a bit of a soft spot for this club. Dustin Pedroia (2B8) will make all the plays at second, and Mike Cameron (OF3, 32 arm) is still terrific out there. And that's all the top-notch defense we'll be discussing here today.

Kansas is very average in most other places. Cristian Guzman (SS8) will be competent but unspectacular at short. Michael Young (3B4) is decent at third. Laynce Nix (OF2, 31 arm) and Andres Torres (OF2, 32 arm) will not be challenging for any gold gloves this year. After that group, things get ugly. Nick "The Stick" Johnson (1B3) will never be renamed "The Glove." Gary Sheffield (OF1, 28 arm) might as well wear a suit of armor out there - it won't affect his range. Miguel Montero and Omir Santos (both C7s) are not there for work



Cameron: Tools

in the field. The bench options won't be enough to compensate for a defense in the lower half in TBL.

**Bench: 2.0**  
**Value in gloves.**

There are a few decent hitting options on the pine. Jeremy Hermida (3 0s, 9 hits, 4 walks, R+1) can hit righties. Rick Ankiel (1-6-6, 8 hits, 2 walks) has some power, as does Jack Cust (1-0-0, 8 hits, 5 walks). There's no huge hitting toy, though, and most of the value off the bench is in the gloves, like Brad Ausmus (C8), Melvin Mora (3B5) and Mark Ellis (2B8).



This team should achieve somewhere between 85 and 95 wins, depending on how hard Bill wants to push this.

Kansas is loaded with quality kids. They are on the rise and there are clearly better years ahead.

**How they got here**

	<b>Mahopac: 2008</b>	<b>Kansas: 2010</b>
SNT	Butler	Feliz
W-L	91-71	?
C	Montero/Ausmus	Montero/Ausmus
1B	Dm. Young	N. Johnson
2B	Pedroia	Pedroia
3B	C. Jones	M. Young
SS	M. Young	C. Guzman
OF	Cameron	Cameron
	Kearns	L. Nix / A. Torres
	Cust/Sheffield	Ankiel/Hermida
DH	Vidro	Sheffield
P	McGowan	Wolf
P	Lilly	Lilly
P	Blanton	Scherzer
P*	Soria	N. Feliz
P*	Riske	Soria
P*	Howry	Howry



**KANSAS KOYOTES**



2009 finish: 66-96 (3rd, Aaron)  
Last 5 years: 412-398, .509

PITCHING: 9.5 OFF: 8.5 DEF: 4.0 BNC: 2.0

**TQ: 24.0**

# 2009 maracaibo RUMRUNNERS in review



*This was a fun team to manage.*

## 2009 in Review

**Final Record: 99-63 (1st, Aaron)**

The ability to think in the long term is a hallmark of a perennial contender. Just ask Joe Auletta: he'll be happy to tell you how. But there's another side to the same coin, which any contender also knows: when the time is right, *contend*. Getting this right is the hardest task any general manager will face.

Two things. First, sometimes it's only for a year – arise from the ranks and return there, boom and bust. Second, sometimes the window occurs when there are other, better teams and the likelihood of getting past them is low. It is at this point that some back away, while others rush forward. In 2009, Maracaibo chose the latter. It was a great ride that fell a little short.

## What went right?

Rebuilding was an option, but with others doing the same in the Aaron, the Rumrunners jumped forward with some bold moves. Joe Blanton (12 wins) and Chipper Jones (.304-18-80) were big trade acquisitions, and the draft brought most of the bullpen: Arthur Rhodes (1.60 ERA), Grant Balfour (70 Ks in 56 innings) and José Arredondo (2.69 ERA and 54 Ks in 60 innings), who set up Mariano Rivera (1.67 ERA, 38 saves, 73 Ks in 65 innings). Cole Hamels came up huge: 18-7, 3.11 ERA, 239 Ks in 234 innings, 10 complete games.

Maracaibo was again among the league leaders in team performance with 877 runs (barely second to New Westminster's 880) and led overall with a .284 average. With a stellar defense (only 79 errors, second in TBL) and the fewest team strikeouts (884) of any offense, the club was efficient at getting leads and keeping them. This was a fun team to manage and it didn't suffer the blowout that derailed the 2008 club down the stretch.

## What went wrong?

Without serious competition in the Aaron (no other team had a .500 record), the Rumrunners had most of the season to set up their playoff roster. One part of the club was ideally suited for short series: the deep and talented bullpen and strong rotation.

But playoff series are also decided by offensive surges led by doubles and home runs, and Maracaibo fell short. The team slugged only .424 and hit only 151 homers (in the lowest third of the league). They also had only 312 doubles and 22 triples; the eventual champion Midwest Mongrels had comparable numbers, but hit 14 more triples and 26 more homers – and their pitching was even better. In a seven game series, they were just superior enough to move on.

## 3 Things

**1. Last Chance To Tango.** As stated above, when the window is going to close – Ichiro, Chipper, Mariano, Delgado are all getting older – it's worth it to take the ride. Just ask the Guru. They're rebuilding out in Midwest, but that championship looks pretty good in the rear-view. Maracaibo's last one in 2005 led to a 70-92 campaign – and Cole Hamels in the first round.

**2. No Wombats Were Injured.** Committing the draft to Arredondo (injured) and Balfour (traded) will make this rebuild less tasty, but the 2010 draft remained mostly intact. This year will be a rebuild and not a train wreck.

**3. The Next Team Picture.** While sentimental about Rumrunners of the past, a rebuild is about moving on. When Maracaibo is back in the championship hunt, many key players will be different from those that took Midwest seven games at the end of 2009. The names might be Maybin, Bard and Desmond. But other names will be there that we don't know yet.



Cole Hamels: Delivering

# maracaibo RUMRUNNERS



Walter Hunt (23rd year)

*The kinetic energy on the bench leads us to believe that this will be a short rebuilding period.*

These are interesting times. Darrell Skogen won his first TBL title and became commissioner of the league within a couple of months. The United States elected its first African American President and its first female Speaker of the House. Tiger Woods proved that even if your wife is supermodel pretty and you play golf for millions, you can still become a national laughingstock.

One other rarity occurred late last year. Walter Hunt decided to rebuild his Maracaibo Rumrunners. To appreciate this phenomenon, consider that since Walter's entrance into TBL in 1988, he has had a total of 3 losing seasons. He has won 90 games or more 15 times in 22 years in the league. In nine of those years, he won over 100 games. This record of accomplishment alone would make Mr. Hunt a TBL Hall of Famer, but of course there is so, so much more to Walter's role in this amazing organization including the little volume you're reading right here.

So, what we get to watch this year is The Hunt playing the back game – piling up picks and getting younger as he crafts his next contender. The Aaron is hoping it takes five years, but we're all way too smart to bet on it.

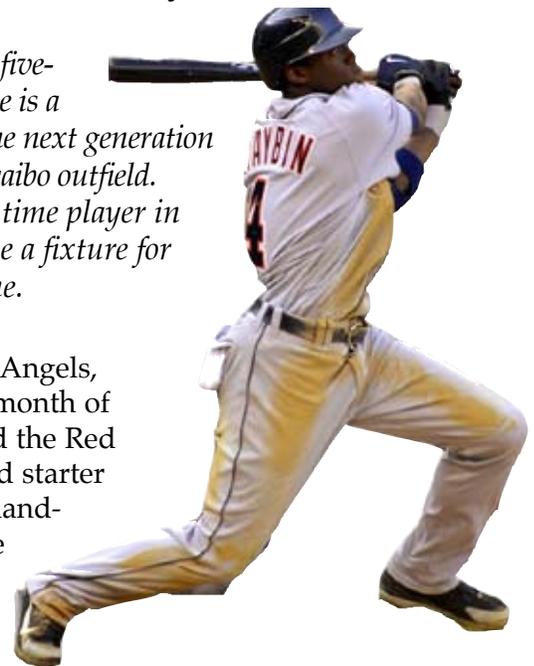
## **Pitching: 6.5** **Waiting for a comeback.**

**ROTATION.** There were a large number of factors that went into Walter's decision to tear it down last year, and one of the biggest was the off season of Cole Hamels (Grade 7 C+33 HR-13, 32 starts). To have your 26 year old ace put up a stinker of a season like Hamels had last year is one of those signs from the TBL Gods that it's time to regroup. There is no possible way that this is going to happen twice in a row – Hamels is just too talented and pitches for too good a team to be this hittable. Put another way, the Rumrunners will not turn the corner without this guy at the head of their rotation.

For this season, the ace of the staff is John Lackey (Grade 10 C+23 HR-21, 27 starts), who, while doing solid

## **SNT: Cameron Maybin**

*A legitimate five-tool player, he is a key part of the next generation in the Maracaibo outfield. Only a part time player in 2010, he'll be a fixture for years to come.*



work for the Angels, is missing a month of starts. Behind the Red Sox' new stud starter is Ryan Rowland-Smith (Grade 12 C+21 HR+22, 15 starts).

It's a good grade, good peripherals, but only about half a season of starts. Those three guys have 69 starts that can be best described as "not atrocious." Then comes a circus parade of kids and veteran lottery tickets.

The best grade and probably the best arm of the bunch is 25 year old David Hernandez (Grade 6 C-25 HR-45, 19 starts). Hernandez has been flying

**Arrived:** Daniel Bard, Brian Bass, Ian Desmond, Luke French, David Hernandez, Joe Inglett, Braden Loper, Cameron Maybin, Felix Pie, Humberto Quintero, Jordan Schafer, Luke Scott, Ron Villone, Kip Wells

**Departed:** Alfredo Amezaga, Cha-Seung Baek, Danny Bautista, Joe Blanton, Chris Coste, Joe Crede, Phil Dumatrait, Kelvim Escobar, Anderson Hernandez, Luke Hochevar, Aaron Miles, Arthur Rhodes, Matt Stairs

**Turnover Rate: 40%**



# maracaibo RUMRUNNERS

under the radar in Baltimore as Chris Tillman and Brian Matusz hog the spotlight. When he cuts down on the gopher balls (27 last year in 101 IP) Hernandez will be terrific. Another young arm is Luke French (Grade 4 C-13 HR-15). These two children have 31 starts between them. Two veterans will take up many of the remaining starts: Todd Wellemeyer (Grade 1 C-24 HR-16, 21 starts) and Braden Loooper (Grade 4 C+21 HR-33, 34 starts). One can state firmly and with assurance that they will mostly not be winning efforts.

This rotation is designed to survive the year. They will show up every day. One of them will start each game. Then the cards will show up in December and we can re-evaluate. There are four high-quality arms here. Wellemeyer and Loooper have had long track records of success in the majors. We'll see how quick this unit can bounce back.

**BULLPEN.** Walter received serious offers throughout the offseason for future TBL Hall of Famer Mariano Rivera (Grade 20\* C+35, 66 IP). Clay Beard came the closest to prying the Yankees' great closer from Walter's iron grip, but in the end, here he is. Being behind the Rumrunners in the ninth will once again mean trying to come back on the greatest reliever to ever

don cleats. Rivera will be 41 years old in November, and it's possible he may be closing for a TBL World Series contender then.

Rivera has a three-man setup crew, led by one of the most electrifying young reliever in baseball, Daniel Bard (Grade 14\* C-15 HR+16, 49 IP). Watching Bard effortlessly hit 98 or 99 on the Juggs gun is a sight to behold, and he could be the next great closer here in Maracaibo. Chad Durbin (Grade 13\* C-62, 69 IP) and Joe Smith (Grade 14\* C-16, 34 IP) will also aid in slowing down hitters in the seventh and eighth



Bard: Electrifying



*Our humble editor takes a step back from last season's division winner; but with a good nucleus in place, a very good 2010 draft and some midseason bargaining chips (Posada, Rivera) to play with, a bounceback is likely in the cards for 2011.*

innings when Maracaibo is nursing a lead. Things thin out rapidly after that. Jensen Lewis (Grade 11\* C-16 HR-31, 66 IP) is a little scary, but he passes for a middle reliever. Ron Villone (Grade 8\* C-36 48 IP) and veteran Kip Wells (Grade 11/8\* C-53 HR+23, 7 starts, 35 RIP) are around to help in the middle innings. Last year's #1 draft pick Jose Arrendondo (Grade 6\* C-32, 45 IP) got hurt and never produced after pitching 60 quality innings with a 2.69 ERA for Maracaibo last year. Brian Bass (Grade 6\* C-24 HR+11, 86 IP) has a silly number of innings, and will use many of them here.

The top end of the bullpen will bring home the bacon when asked, but the depth is not anywhere near what we've become accustomed to seeing from Maracaibo. There is quantity, though – almost 500 innings total. Bullpen pitchers will earn their paychecks.

## **Offense: 6.5 Three old men and some rookies.**

The good news with Maracaibo's hitting is that there are three terrific cards in the lineup. The bad news is that they are all over 35 years old. The lineup starts with the sublime Ichiro Suzuki (3 0s, 13 hits, 3 3Is, 19 speed number, 29 SSN for 35 attempts). Suzuki has 1721 hits in his TBL career, which did not start until he was 29. He has averaged 215 hits per season over 8 years. This card will deliver at least that many.

Also looking spiff way past his expiration date is Jorge Posada (1-0-0-0, 10 hits, 4 walks in 111 games; 39 years old in August). Catchers are not supposed to perform like this late in their career, but the Yankee backstop continues to put up gorgeous cards season after season. This guy and 38-year-old Chipper Jones (1-0-0, 9 hits 5 walks) will bat in the middle of most lineups starting May 1.

Other regulars are younger and have more modest cardboard. Carlos Quentin (1-5-5, 8 hits, 3 walks+42, 99 games) will hit for power in his two thirds of a season. Returning veteran Luke Scott (1-0-0-0, 9

hits, 4 walks, 128 games, no shift) has proven to be a tough out throughout his stay with the Rumrunners. Orlando Hudson (3 0s, 10 hits, 3 walks, 2 31s) and Cabrera (3 0s, 10 hits, 2 walks, 2 31s, 30 SSN for 17 attempts) have been solid performers for years, and will bolt down the middle infield for a little while longer. Casey Kotchman (3 0s, 10 hits, 3 walks) will play first base full time since Carlos Delgado got hurt.



Posada: Spiff

The most interesting players are part-timers. Cameron Maybin only needs time to become a star. Shortstop Ian Desmond has hammered his way into the starting lineup in Washington already. Felix Pie (1-4-6, 9 hits, 3 walks) is an interesting ticket for the future who will get lots of playing time this year for Maracaibo.

There are some really terrific players here, but whether they last all through the year depends on how aggressive the offers are in September. As is, this offense is short of Kansas and Northboro, and light years from Portland's juggernaut.

**Defense: 7.0**  
**Still serviceable.**

Maracaibo has always fielded some of TBL's best defensive teams. This season, the defense is off its highs, but still serviceable. Three of the Maracaibo defenders are top-shelf. Ichiro Suzuki (OF3, 38 arm) is still the best outfielder of this generation. Orlando Hudson (2B8) will make all the plays around the keystone, and Casey Kotchman (1B5) will scoop 'em out if the infielder bounce a throw.

But several Rumrunners will be wearing extra padding out there. Jorge Posada (C7, Th+0) may not be showing his age at bat, but he looks 39 in the field.

Both of Jorge's backups – Jose Molina (C9) and Humberto Quintero (C8, Th+5) are fantastic receivers. Orlando Cabrera (SS8) will perform at about the league average this year after posting SS9s during the championship years. Chipper Jones (3B3) is lead-footed out at third.

The real problems are in the corner outfield positions. Luke Scott (OF1) and Carlos Quentin (OF1) are the two bats you want out there, but neither can catch a cold. Part timers like Endy Chavez (OF3, 34 arm) and Reed Johnson (OF3, 34 arm) as well as Cameron Maybin (OF2, 33 arm) can replace them.

Overall, the Rumrunners will be outstanding when they care to be. For a hard rebuild, this is a good defensive team.

**Bench: 2.5**  
**All kinds of toys.**

There are hitting toys and some defensive substitutes. Along with Carlos Delgado (1-0-0-0, 10 hits, 4 walks+42) and Ian Desmond (1-3-5-6-6, 10 hits, 2 walks), Cameron Maybin (4 0s, 9 hits, 3 walks) can come out to pinch hit or pinch run. Reed Johnson (0-0-6, 10 hits, 3 walks+42, L+7, 65 games) is a nice option against lefties. The bench is the strength of this club, and is young overall. Next year, look for a lot of these names to be in the starting lineup.

**4th** This club was built to lose, and lose they will for the first time in a while. The kinetic energy on the bench leads us to believe that this will be a short rebuilding period, but they will get a good draft position. With Portland, Northboro and Kansas all looking for playoff spots, Maracaibo will not even be in the rear view mirror in November.



**maracaibo RUMRUNNERS**



2009 finish: 99-63 (1st, Aaron)  
Last 5 years: 457-353, .564

PITCHING: 6.5 OFF: 6.5 DEF: 7.0 BNC: 2.5

**TQ: 22.5**

# Now, About Face

## 2008 Mantle Division Final Standings

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Melrose*	112	50	.691	—
Munich†	109	53	.673	3
Zion	88	74	.543	24
Hudson	78	84	.481	34

\* Lost to Midwest in NC Championship.  
† Lost to Richmond in NC Wild Card.

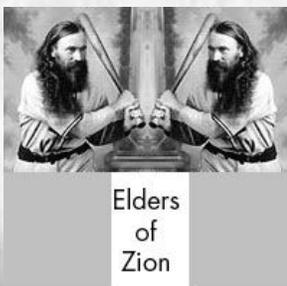
The 2009 Mantle Division was about Melrose and Munich; this year will be about Hudson and Zion. There is a bit of a difference: Zion was decent in 2009 (as Melrose is this year), but *Clay Beard's* Hudson Generals were pretty

much a .500 club in 2009, while the 2010 Mantle Division features an appallingly bad Munich club that the other three (and most every other team in TBL) will beat up.



As for Hudson, the 2010 campaign should be fun. It's no easy walk: they'll have to perform, and most likely will have to do what Mr. Beard doesn't often do – make a trade to get to the finish line. Otherwise, there's a team in their rear-view mirror that might try to pass on the outside.

And that club, of course, belongs to the Sensei, *Rich Meyer*. After a few years of good but not great – 88 to 95 wins, four playoff exits, and a sideline view last year – the Elders of Zion have a better chance this time. While the club isn't a Rye or a Portland, it's nicely built, a power tool in the hands of a master craftsman. Fellow contenders take Zion lightly at their peril. See you in the post season.



Meanwhile down in Melrose, *Mark Freedman's* club didn't quite fulfill its superheroic destiny, dropping a tough 7 game series to the eventual World Series winner. It now falls to management to pick up the pieces and rebuild. That being said, the pieces are really

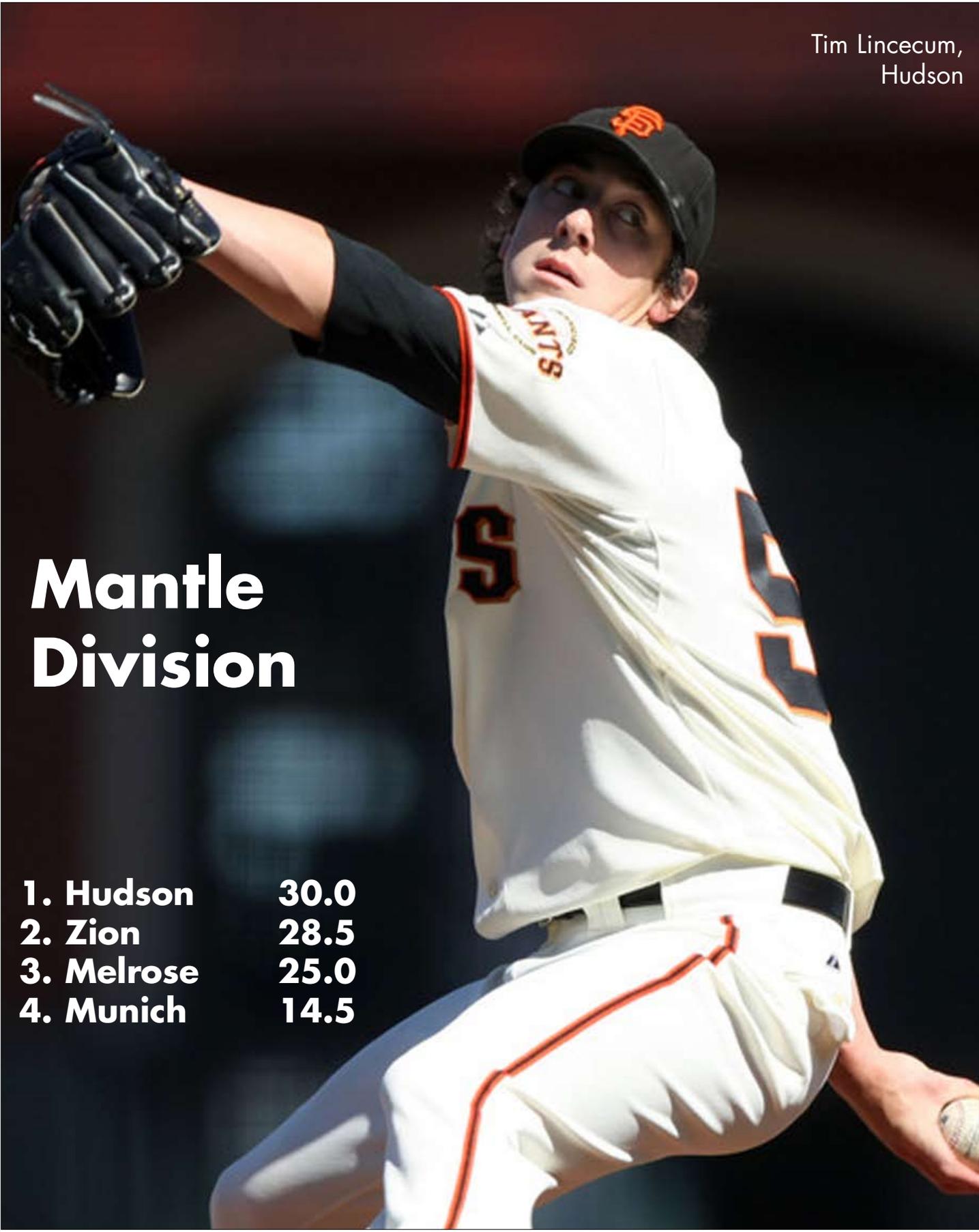


not too bad. There's a starting rotation, some relief innings, three enormous hitting cards, and a 2011 draft waiting in the wings. Even if the club doesn't get to the playoffs this year, they

have a bright future ahead. It'll be a fun ride as they move forward.

There'll be less of a fun ride over in Munich. *Paul Montague* has been here before: in fact, he's been in worse than this (and the *Annual* has had the dubious pleasure of chronicling it). Still, as our intrepid reporter suggests, it certainly seems like the team has just found a collective Picture of Dorian Gray. There are many space fillers and a fair number of empty at bats and ugly innings. A year from now the team will be much different.





Tim Lincecum,  
Hudson

# Mantle Division

<b>1. Hudson</b>	<b>30.0</b>
<b>2. Zion</b>	<b>28.5</b>
<b>3. Melrose</b>	<b>25.0</b>
<b>4. Munich</b>	<b>14.5</b>

# 2009 hudson GENERALS in review



The GM was overheard in an elevator saying, "This team can't even lose right!"

## 2009 in Review

**Final Record: 78-84 (4th, Mantle)**

The 2009 edition of the Hudson Generals lacked a productive offense to keep their solid pitching in the game, but did a remarkable job, mostly benefiting from excellent part-time performances and timely hitting.

### What went right?

TBL hitters, meet Mr. Lincecum. 19-7 with a baaad offensive team. he recorded a 2.73 ERA and a team record 274 Ks. Considering the era we're in, this is probably the best pitching season in Generals history. Roy Oswalt also recorded his typical consistent performance with a 3.55 ERA but only a 10-11 record. There were solid performances out of the bullpen from Fuentes (2.30, 33 saves) and Jared Burton was reliable in a setup role with a 1.72 ERA

While the hitting was very timely, resulting in 22 one run wins and an unexpected 78 wins overall, there were very few performances worth noting. Derek Jeter was the only decent full-time performer at .305 11 HRs and 82 runs. There were several solid part-time performers of note: Joaquin Arias .316, Pablo Sandoval .306 and a .469 slugging as a pinch-hitter extraordinaire; Ty Wigginton slugging .591 before being shipped to Munich in the Edwin Jackson deal.

I checked minor league stats just before *not* cutting Ryan Raburn at the waiver wire.

### What went wrong?

This is a much longer list. We went to Northboro in November and all of the good karma from the rest of the season evened up in one series. The Generals unexpectedly found themselves still alive at the end of October, but the Phoenix crushed that pipe dream with four walk off wins.



Derek Jeter: Decent

All season the Generals had no offense. The team had a .236 average, .310 OBP, .371 SLG. Ouch. The team leader in homeruns was on the Munich roster, Wigginton with 18. The next guy was Wilson Betemit with 14 in half a season. Here is some of the ugliness from players with over 100 games: Rajai Davis .214, Brandon Boggs .212, Castillo .207, Raburn .200, Milledge .198, and Gross .195.

### 3 Things

- 1. Lack of coordination.* There was none between the GM and the manager. The GM successfully backloaded half-seasons and injured talent, but the team played .500 through October, leading to a draft position of 14 rather than the anticipated upper third. There was scandal on the back pages when the GM was overheard in an elevator saying, "This team can't even lose right!"
- 2. Who's on first?* Or anywhere but SS and C. Only three players – Jeter, Suzuki and Milledge – even had enough PA's to qualify as regulars.
- 3. Bad hands.* We didn't catch the ball either, with a .977 fielding percentage and 132 errors.

# HUDSON GENERALS

Clay Beard (26th year); Hall of Famer

*No one in TBL works harder than Clay Beard.*



Clay Beard's successful TBL career has been marked by discipline, passion and a firm belief in doing the right things at the right time for the right reasons. We are all the beneficiaries of this man's labor, and the TBL Hall of Fame would simply not exist without Clay's efforts.

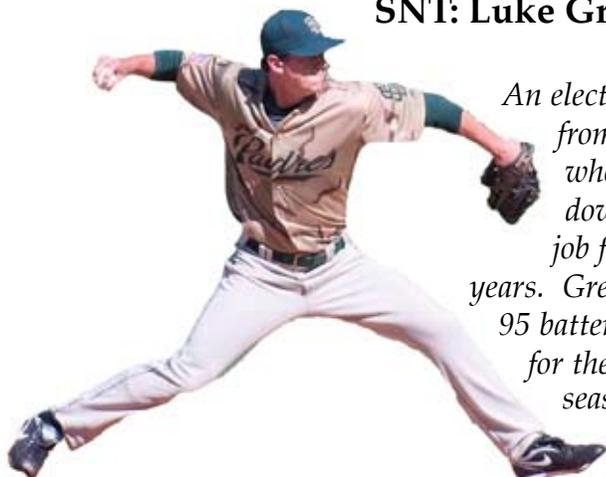
Mr. Beard has some unfinished business. Back in 1990, the Generals pieced together a club around Howard Johnson, Ricky Henderson and Tim Belcher (19-4, 2.78) and made it all the way to the World Series. They lost in 7 to Lou Umile's Jessup Coal Barons. That was Hudson's first and last World Series appearance.

The 2010 Hudson Generals look like a team gearing up for a World Series run. Their last two drafts have netted them the best starting pitcher in baseball and one of the best young hitters of this generation. They are just missing one big piece ...

**Pitching: 9.5**  
**Rotation fine; bullpen needs help.**

**ROTATION.** There is nothing lacking in the starting rotation. It starts with the aforementioned Best Starter in the League - Tim Lincecum

**SNT: Luke Gregerson**



*An electrifying arm from San Diego who should bolt down the closing job for a number of years. Gregerson fanned 95 batters in 75 innings for the Padres last season.*

**Arrived:** Carlos Beltran, Trevor Cahill, Phil Coke, Scott Eyre, Luke Gregerson, Koyie Hill, Casey McGehee, Ramon Santiago, Ken Takahashi

**Departed:** Joaquin Arias, Wilson Betemit, Brandon Boggs, Santiago Casilla, Esteban German, Lastings Milledge, Yusmeiro Petit, Ryan Spilborghs, Jeff Suppan

**Turnover Rate: 26%**

(Grade 16 C+14 HR+43, 32 starts). Lincecum has won two straight National League Cy Young awards. He went 19-7, 2.75 for Hudson last year in a season where the Generals went 78-84. Because of the ... um ... *structure* of the bullpen, he will likely lead TBL in innings pitched this year. He will be 26 in June. Edwin Jackson (Grade 12, 33 starts), acquired from Munich during the September trading period last year, is a nice second starter, and he is only 27. So the top of Hudson's rotation looks set for a while.

These two studs are followed the very capable Kevin Millwood (Grade 11, 31 starts). Millwood is 36 and has spent 12 seasons with Hudson, compiling a 120 - 101 record over his long career. Millwood's advanced years are balanced by rookie Trevor Cahill (Grade 9 C-16 HR+15, 32 starts), one of the youngest pitchers in the 2010 TBL draft - he turned 22 in March.

Roy Oswalt (Grade 8 C+32, 30 starts) chips in his usual season of solid work at the back end of the Generals rotation. The 33-year-old Oswalt, who has been as steady as a rock during his career, enters this year with a 106-70 career record over 8 seasons. His modest numbers illustrate how difficult it is to build a TBL Hall of Fame portfolio as a starting pitcher.

# HUDSON GENERALS



These five guys give Hudson 158 starts at Grade 8 or better. The last four starts are taken by Edward Mujica (Grade 7). This is a very solid group, and they will need to over-perform for Clay to make a deep playoff run, because the other half of the pitching staff is a bit problematic.

**BULLPEN.** The closest thing Hudson has to a closer is Scott Eyre (Grade 22\* C-53 HR+13). With only 30 innings to play with, he is only in the majors in four months. The rest of the year, Hudson will look to 41-year-old Ken Takahashi (Grade 15\* C-41 HR+26, 27 IP) and rookie Luke Gregerson (Grade 13\*, C+15 HR+44, 75 IP). This is not a championship-caliber bullpen closing staff.

The top end is set up by a battalion of middle-grade arms of various quality. The best of the breed are righties Guillermo Mota (Grade 13\* C+24

HR+14, 65 IP) and Ramon Troncoso (Grade 11\* C+15 HR+46, 82 IP), both of whom have good peripherals to support their grades. Lefthanded hitters will have to deal with Phil Coke (Grade 13\* C+16 HR-25, 68 IP) and Brian Fuentes (Grade 11\* C-16 HR+15, 55 IP). The ugly-game relievers are Rodney (Grade 11\*, C-42 HR+15, 75 IP) and Aaron Heilman (Grade 10\*, C-23 HR-13, 72 IP).

The key to this pen is not its quality but its depth. There are nine guys who will make contributions to the bullpen. They have 541 innings to work with, and Clay's instructions make it clear that "work" is the key syllable here. The Generals will use Walter Hunt's wave technique

Vegas



Line

*The Generals can boast of a taut rotation where only five guys, with grades ranging from 16 to 8, make 158 starts. But with a bullpen full of middle relievers in search of a Closer, they may not go as far as they'd like to. They're still a division contender.*



Oswalt: Credentials?

**Offense:  
Lots of plusses.**

**11.0**

to try and leverage the +5 reliever bonus to slow down opposing offenses late in close games.

This has been executed successfully by others in the past, but Clay will be asking road managers to really *work*. The home/road splits for this club will be very telling.

The Hudson lineup is built around 4 outstanding full-season cards. Leading the pack once again is the outstanding Todd Helton (0-6-6, 11 hits 5 walks, R+2, L-9). Helton may sit a little against board lefties, but after struggling through a subpar 2009 he's back to being one of the league's best hitters.

He may no longer be the best hitter on the club. Last year, Hudson took Pablo Sandoval (1-5-6-6, 12 hits, 3 walks, a 7 on 55) with the 17th pick of the 2009 draft. This makes one wonder - who were the 16 guys that were supposed to be better than this guy? Batting in



Sandoval: Kung Fu Panda

front of these two beasts is the league's best #2 hitter, Derek Jeter (3 0s, 11 hits, 4 walks, 3 31s, 33 SSN for 35 attempts.) Jeter had one of the better seasons of his spectacular career in 2009, and he will score runs regularly from his spot at the front of this lineup.

Casey McGehee (1-0-0-0, 11 hits, 3 walks, no shift) is the regular 2B for this season, and his bat makes him a solid contributor for 110 games. Luis Castillo (0-7-7-7, 10 hits, 4 walks, 3 31s, 30 SSN for 26 attempts) gets the other 52

games at second, and serves as the DH when McGehee is playing. There is one other monster card: Carlos Beltran (4 0s, 11 hits 4 walks, 35 SSN for 12 attempts, 81 games) has half a season of All-Star quality at bats available. That makes 5 cards with more than 14 on base numbers.

There are other plus offensive players as well. Rajai Davis (3 0s, 11 hits, 2 walks+42, 30 SSN for 53 attempts) has emerged as a terrific top-of-the-order hitter. Kurt Suzuki (3 0s, 10 hits, 2 walks+22, 31 SSN for 10 attempts) is a very good-hitting catcher. Ryan Raburn (1-0-0-0, 10 hits, 3 walks, L+2) gets some starts against lefthanders on the boards when Helton's nasty lefty shift becomes an issue. Ryan Church (3 0s, 10 hits, 3 walks+22) is also a regular, and the most generic card in the lineup.

When Hudson has all their lineup pieces available, they are going to be a handful for any pitcher.

**Defense: 7.0**  
**Four exceptional: no soft spots.**

Hudson has four exceptional defenders, two of them in the critical catching and shortstop positions – Kurt Suzuki (C8, Th-1) and Derek Jeter (SS9) will handle all the plays at their respective positions. Backup catcher Koyie Hill (C8, Th+4) is an even better glove man than Suzuki. Todd Helton (1B5) is a silky smooth defender at first base. Two of the regular outfielders are top-notch defenders – Carlos Beltran (OF3 with a 34 arm) and Rajai Davis (OF3).

The other positions are manned by average glove men. Pablo Sandoval (3B4) is Fielding Two at third. Luis Castillo and Casey McGehee are both

2B7, as is Ramon Santiago. Ryan Church (OF2, 34 arm) and Ryan Raburn (OF2, 31 arm) will perform capably.



**HUDSON GENERALS**

There are no real soft spots, although a 2B8 off the bench would be nice. Hudson will play solid defense all season long.

**Bench: 2.5**  
**Everybody plays. FWIW.**

Everybody plays on Hudson, but there are not many bench options that particularly compelling. Koyie Hill's glove is one upgrade off the bench. Gabe Gross (3 0s, 8 hits, 5 walks) is the best hitter, but he's certainly nothing to write home about. Nate Schierholtz (3 0s, 10 hits, 2 walks) is also decent, but uninspiring. The regular lineup is strong and durable, and many of the platoon guys have a lot of games. The lack of eye-popping bench options could be a limiting feature of this club.

**1st** Richard Meyer likes what he sees on his Zion club, so we can expect a serious race in the Mays Division this year.

Hudson has a team with a scary lineup and a very solid starting staff. There are things that the team needs: top-end bullpen, some support players on the bench . . . things that are usually on offer during the September trading period. Hudson has no #2, but isn't tapped out in 2011.

He'll have to work with this team, but no one in TBL works harder than Clay Beard.



2009 finish: 78-84 (4th, Mantle)  
 Last 5 years: 430-380, .531

PITCHING: 9.5 OFF: 11.0 DEF: 7.0 BNC: 2.5

**TQ: 30.0**

# 2009 ELDERS of zion in review



*Any year in Zion that ends without a post-season appearance is a disappointment.*

## 2009 in Review

### Final Record: 88-74 (3rd, Mantle)

Back in February 2009, the pundits consulted the tea leaves and concluded that the Elders were a good looking club in the wrong conference, solid but probably sixth best. And six divided by five (playoff teams) doesn't go.

When the dust cleared, the pundits were right. And any year in Zion that ends without a post-season appearance is (let's be blunt) a disappointment.

### What went right?

A look at the stat sheet for the season suggests that many things went well. Grady Sizemore at the top of the order assembled another Texas style 'everything big' season (31 HR, 127 runs scored, 25 SB, 135 Ks), and Adrian Beltre held down the middle of the order with reasonable efficiency (only .260, but 33 HR and 108 RBI). Shin-Soo Choo was the half season whirlwind he was supposed to be (.367, 17, 60), and Conor Jackson hit .340. The starting rotation all hung around a 4.00 ERA, and the top three (Pelfrey, Maddux, Baker) went 45-32. Indeed, Pelfrey's 16 wins and 8 CGs were pretty impressive for a post-millennium MLB team.

### What went wrong?

Although most everybody did their job, very few scaled the heights. As a result, the team got to 10-12 games over .500 early and then hung there for the remainder of the season. The catching corps barely managed to top .200, but that was expected going in. Bobby Abreu (.247, 19, 74), Brian Roberts (.241, despite 48 doubles and

30 steals) underperformed their cardboard, as did titular ace Scott Baker (14-12, 4.34). Though nobody actually pooched the season, in the end the whole somehow did not add up to be the sum of the parts.

### 3 Things

1. *Elvis (Mr. Maddux) has left the building.* Zion and TBL will probably never see his like again. Mr. Maddux was reduced to a mortal in his seasons after

the age of 40, but his pinpoint control helped him out-pitch his grade. In his swan song he went 15-11, 4.00, with 25 walks in 214 IP, passing the 400 win mark. Start practicing the HOF speech, Greg – you and Mr. Glavine will be there pretty much as soon as the rules make you eligible. Thanks for the two decades you've made me look so good.

2. *It's hard to build a rotation from the 16-20 draft spot.* The team mantra is "rebuilding is for the other guys", but the Zion attempts to build a new starting five has made it hard – as have injuries – and with only one high profile pick per season, it's difficult to see Zion as a serious title contender.

3. *On-field skill has hidden GM failures.* Early returns from the real world of 2010 show a ravaged middle infield with way too many doctor's visits and far too few hits. The real catcher of the future probably isn't on the roster, and maybe the 1B isn't either. And with Maddux gone and Marquis out until August, there are only six Elders starters pitching in real-life rotations entering May – a thin margin for error.



Grady Sizemore: Everything big

# ELDERS of zion



Rich Meyer (26th year)

*When you face Mr. Meyer in the playoffs, you'd best be prepared to battle for your life.*

Rich Meyer has been very quiet of late, biding his time and rebuilding his pitching staff after losing stalwarts Greg Maddux and Tom Glavine to retirement. He has won exactly one TBL World Series in the last thirteen years – his legendary defeat of Dave Suter's terrifying 2001 Rochester Express (124-38 in the regular season) was that shining moment.

This is not to say that the Big Guy has been resting on his laurels. This year's starting rotation is not scary, but aside from Jason Marquis, everyone is under 30 years old. Most of the nice names (Mat Latos, age 23, and Chris Volstad, age 24, for example) are just entering their prime. The offense is packed with quality players picked by the discerning Sensei over the last few years in the draft.

There are signs that Rich is starting to see this club congeal into the inevitable powerhouse that they will become. The most obvious omen was the selection of 29-year-old Garrett Jones in the 2010 draft. Taking a guy this old with big present value in place of a youngster would indicate that Rich likes what he sees here, and is ready to throw the engine into overdrive in search of his eighth TBL World Series title.

**Pitching:**  
**Wait for it.**

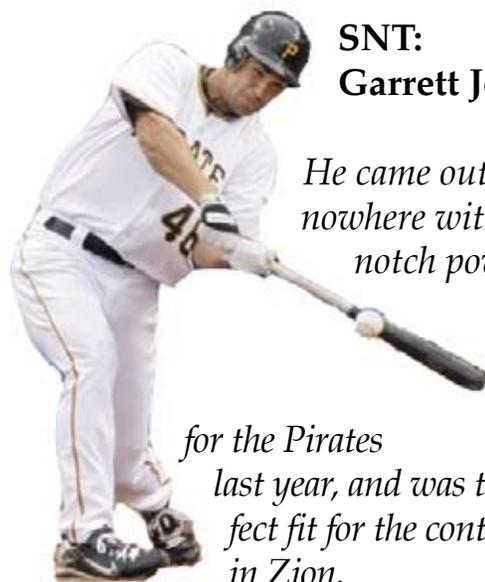
**8.5**

**ROTATION.** The starting pitching has been a work in progress for a number of years. From the names already on the roster, there is little left for the Sensei to do except wait for these guys to mature.

The ace of the rotation is Scott Baker (Grade 10 C+25 HR-14, 33 starts), the 29 year old control specialist from Minnesota. Baker does a pretty fair Brad Radke impersonation, which means

that on a World Series contender he would be a #2 or #3 starter. Here, however, he gets to be the guy selected to go outpitch Tim Linceum. Veteran Jason Marquis (Grade 9 HR+31, 33 starts) is the other quality full-season starter.

Then things get a bit dicey. Anibal Sanchez (Grade 11 C-34, 16 starts), a first-round draft pick a few years ago who rewarded Rich's confidence by immediately having arm surgery, is on his way back to being the nice starter we all expected. His lousy control and half a season of starts make him a marginal third starter. Matt Latos (Grade 11 C-32 HR-16, 10 starts) and Ken



**SNT:**  
**Garrett Jones**

*He came out of nowhere with top-notch power*

*for the Pirates*

*last year, and was the perfect fit for the contenders in Zion.*

**Arrived:** Blake Hawksworth, Garrett Jones, Mat Latos, Dan Meyer, Leo Rosales, Koji Uehara

**Departed:** John Bale, Greg Dobbs, Justin Hampson, Greg Maddux, John McDonald, Rudy Seanez

**Turnover Rate: 17%**



# ELDERS of zion

Uehara (Grade 8, C+41 HR+14, 10 starts) help get Zion through 100 starts without having to wear bags on their heads.

Paper sacks with eye holes will be called for when Mike Pelfrey (Grade 4 C+15 HR+15, 31 starts) and Chris Volstad (Grade 6 HR-31, 29 starts) head to the hill. Rich describes the back end of the rotation as "messy," and we at the *Annual* are not in the habit of disagreeing with owners who are rocking seven TBL titles.

We love the names, but this unit is the reason that Zion may finish behind Hudson in the Mays this season.

**BULLPEN.** Mr. Meyer grabbed rookie Blake Hawksworth (Grade 18\*, C+13 HR+36, 40 IP) with his 2010 Bonus pick so that he would have a closer grade somewhere on the staff. The rest of the relief staff is filled with exciting power arms who will eventually take a step forward and become the kind of terminators that clubs like Portland have in abundance.

There is a parcel of decent setup grades available. Chan Ho Park (Grade 14\* HR+35, 50 IP) will be the closer in months that Hawksworth is taking a sabbatical. Dan Meyer (Grade 14\*, 58 IP) provides help from the left side. Frankie Francisco (Grade 13\* C+16, 49 IP) will try to provide a competent bridge to the closers. The top four relief arms have 197 innings between them. They will have to leverage the +5 reliever bonus to be effective against the best lineups.

The middle relief crew includes two Guys We Like: Jon Rauch (Grade 10\* C+14 HR+23, 70 IP), the 6' 11" inch, 290 pound Minnesota closer, and Cleveland fireballer Chris Perez (Grade 14\* C-41 HR-15, 57 IP). Perez struck out 68 batters in his 57 innings, and won't turn 25 until July and has a tramp stamp with the words "future closer."

There's more. Chad Qualls (Grade 8\* C+52 HR+14, 52 IP) is available when guys are on base and a free pass just won't do. Leo Nunez (Grade 12\*, C+13 HR-33, 68 IP) will be out there when gale-force winds are blowing straight out. Leo Rosales (Grade 9\* C+31, 45 IP) and Juan Cruz (Grade 9\* C-56, 50 IP) will also find work supporting the weaker starters.



Rauch: Guy we like.

This club does not have the problems that Hudson has in its bullpen, but proper handling are necessary because of the question marks in the rotation.

**Offense: 8.5**  
**This should be fun.**

This offense is built in the Zion tradition, with speed and on base capability everywhere. It starts with a new hitting star: 28 year old Shin-Soo Choo (1-6-6, 10 hits, 4 walks+42, 35 SSN for 22 attempts). Choo is off to a terrific start in 2010 and will bat all over the lineup for Zion this year. Veteran Bobby Abreu (3 0s, 10 hits, 5 walks, R+1, 30 SSN for 39 attempts), who has been doing this for a decade, will be written into the lineup in various places. His lefty shift (L-6) is the only limiting factor. These two play every day in the outfield.

The third outfield slot is a pure platoon between Nyjer Morgan (2 0s, 11 hits 3 walks, 3 11s, 28 SSN for 58 attempts, R+2) and Franklin Gutierrez (1-0-0, 10 hits 3 walks, 2 31s, 29 SSN



*I've known Rich for more than 20 years. If he thinks he can compete, he will, even despite little things like a black hole at C, half a 1B, a closer with 40 innings, or less than 60 starts of Grade 10+. These are mere inconveniences. But why keep three 2Bs?*

for 21 attempts, L+8). Around the infield, the first base platoon of Travis Hafner (1-5-6, 9 hits 4 walks, R+1, 94 games) and Garrett Jones (1-1-6-6, 10 hits 4 walks, R+4, 32 SSN for 12 attempts, 82 games) will bring some heavy lumber to support the speedsters on the bases. There are also two second basemen – Brian Roberts (4 0s, 10 hits, 4 walks, 31 SSN for 37 attempts) and Aaron Hill (1-0-0-0, 10 hits, 2 walks) and two *third* basemen – Felipe Lopez (3 0s, 11 hits, 4 walks) and Adrian Beltre (3 0s, 10 hits, 4 24s, L+7). At shortstop, Yunel Escobar (3 0s, 11 hits, 3 walks, R+1) is one of the better two-way players in the game. The catching situation is also in the Zion tradition – there are *three* of them. Nick Hundley (3 0s, 9 hits, 3 walks, R+1), Kenji Johjima (1-0-0, 9 hits, 2 walks+42) and Robinson Diaz (0-6-7-7-7, 10 hits, 1 walk+42, R+4) all play.

The catchers are not overwhelming, but every other slot in the lineup is packed with excellent cards. There is a balance of guys who smoke righties and bash lefties. There is speed everywhere. The Big Guy is going to have a lot of fun with this offense.

**Defense: 8.5**  
**Superior. Sometimes.**

Zion can be as good as they want to be on the field. At their best, it's tough to beat a defense that includes Kenji Johjima (C8 Th+6), Aaron Hill (2B9), Yunel Escobar (SS9), Adrian Beltre (3B5) and Nyjer Morgan (OF3).

The issue is that the best fielding cards are not always in the lineup. At catcher Robinson Diaz (C6 Th-1) will get a lot of early-season starts. Felipe Lopez (3B3) is out of position at third, and will be replaced when the game is close and late.

In the outfield, Shin-Soo Choo (OF2, 34 arm) and Bobby Abreu (OF2, 36 arm) are both very respectable. Grady Sizemore (OF3) backs up all three outfield slots. Franklin Gutierrez (OF3, 33 arm) might be the best defensive OF on the club, but plays strictly against lefthanders. There are soft spots at first base with Travis Hafner (1B2) and Garrett Jones (1B3). Brian Roberts (2B7) is paid primarily for his stick. Nick Hundley (C7, Th-3) is not an asset defensively. There are a lot of defensive options, and the best defenders like Hill and Escobar are in the positions that matter most. This is a very good defensive team which can ratchet it up when needed.

**Bench: 3.0**  
**Lots of moves. Naturally.**

Zion platoons mean that there is always someone to spot up against a righty or lefty pitcher when a hit is needed. Grady Sizemore (1-4-6, 9 hits, 4 walks) would certainly be a starter on almost any other team in TBL, but has a limited bench role here. Eugenio Velez (3 0s, 10 hits, 2 walks, 27 SSN for 19 attempts) is around when Zion needs even *more* speed. The bench gets this club little closer to Hudson.

**2nd** The offense is imposing, and the Sensei will squeeze every last run out of it. There's not much the club can do about its substandard rotation so Zion will be vulnerable to early blowouts. Overall, this club is dangerous and getting better. And when you face Mr. Meyer in the playoffs, you'd best be prepared to battle for your life.



**ELDERS of Zion**



2009 finish: 88-74 (3rd, Mantle)  
 Last 5 years: 459-351, .567

PITCHING: 8.5 OFF: 8.5 DEF: 8.5 BNC: 3.0

**TQ: 28.5**

# 2009 melrose AVENGERS in review



Well, what can you say?

## 2009 in Review

**Final Record: 112-50 (1st, Mantle)**

It was a fun year. After five years rebuilding the team won 112 games most in TBL in 2010. We had balance with 57 wins at home and 55 on the road and won our first round playoff series.

### What went right?

Melrose young starters came together. The team ERA was 3.21. Jon Lester went 20-10 with a 3.05 ERA and 5 shutouts. Jair Jurrjens went 22-7 with a 2.88 ERA. Billingsley and Jimenez each won 17 games. Even Kyle Davis contributed 11 wins while posting a 4.62 ERA. Overall the starters went 92-42.

Brad Lidge saved 35 games while posting an ERA of 2.26. Overall the pen was outstanding posting a 20-8 record, with Brian Bruney, Mitch Stetter, Hong-Chih Kuo, and several others all contributing.

On offense the team scored 848 runs led by Adrian Gonzalez' .333 average, 42 HR and 116 RBI. Dan Uggla batted .284 with 31 HR and 114 RBI and Ryan Braun hit only .273 but had 36 HR and 104 RBI. Jorge Cantu and Kevin Youkilis added 31 and 33 homers respectively as the team hit 237 dingers on the season to lead TBL.

### What went wrong?

Well, what can you say? The team was up 3-0 against Midwest looking to make our fourth World Series appearance, then the team just choked. Including losing game 6 and 7 at home,

we dropped the next four to the eventual World Series champs.

It was our best shot since 2001 to win a second ring. However I think it showed the weak spots in the team. Although defensively we only had 83 errors starting an SS7, a 3B3 and a 2B7, we evidently did not help clear the basepaths and game 6 was lost to a bounty of errors. Also a lack of legitimate SB threats – only Alex Rios was a regular season base stealers – and low on-base percentage hitters (other than Gonzalez and Youkilis) contributed to struggles against good pitching.



Adrian Gonzalez: Big year

### 3 Things

1. *Build the rotation.* The big four – Chad Billingsley (age 25), Ubaldo Jimenez (age 26), Jon Lester (age 26) and Jair Jurrjens (age 24) were huge in 2009. They look even better in 2010 and are likely to be around for a long time.

2. *Develop core offensive players.* Kevin Youkilis, Adrian Gonzalez and Ryan Braun provide huge punch in the middle of the lineup, and opposing pitching staffs have nowhere to hide.

3. *Watch out for low OBP.* One concern for Melrose management is that too many guys have low-hit low-walk cards in 2010. Yuniesky Betancourt, Gerald Laird, Alex Rios, Garrett Anderson and Delmon Young – to name a few – are all below average. The team, despite some scary cards, will sometimes struggle to score runs.

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# melrose AVENGERS

Mark Freedman (17th year)

*Can Mark Freedman and his legions triumph over the forces of evil?*

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Many TBL managers have added an alternate “back story” for their franchises. Consider Count Vlad and his hoary hordes in Brobdingnag, or the death struggle in the Caymans between “Whitey” and “Boomer” – they add an interesting and unforgettable twist to these teams’ personality.

Through emails and his illustrated instructions Mark Freedman has let it be known that Marvel / DC superheroes appear to have taken over the leadership of the Avengers. That got us thinking about spring training . . .

*“The Flash” stands at home plate with a group of base stealing prospects. “OK, guys,” he says. “Here’s how it’s done.” With barely a ripple of air or a whirl of dust he’s standing in almost the same position. “Any questions?”*

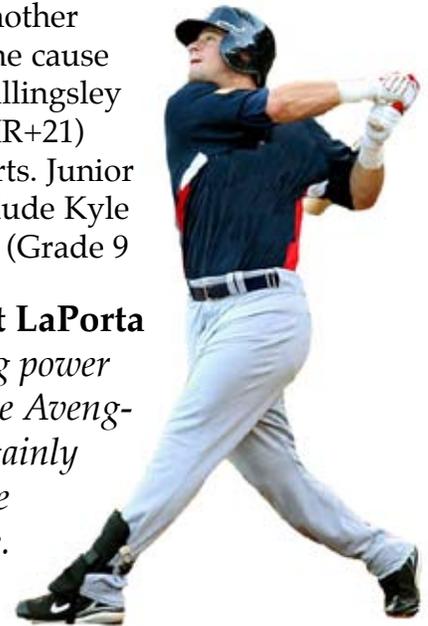
*Superman is in the batting cage. The pitcher nervously hopes that the reinforced triple steel plate in front of him will hold. He delivers the ball and Clark Kent gets under it and fouls it off his hands. The ball shoots into the stratosphere as if shot from a bazooka, disappearing from sight. One of the power prospects watching sheepishly raises his hand and asks, “Sir, if it never comes back down, is it a homer?”*

. . . The mind boggles with the possible scenarios. All this goodness and light was still not enough to get Melrose through last year’s playoffs – they were turned back by a plucky little Midwest squad.

With a rotation benefiting from a training regimen designed by Batman and a middle of the batting order that’s really “Hulked” out, Mark Freedman is trying to get back there and to another Championship.

## **Pitching:** **11.0** **Faster than a speeding bullet.**

**ROTATION.** The top three here could easily be the superheroes of just about any other team’s rotation. They start with Team Leader Jair “YaMan” Jurrjens (Grade 14 HR+26), who is ably served by capable sidekicks like Ubaldo “UMan” Jiminez (Grade 13 HR+34) and Jon “The Jester” Lester (Grade 13 HR+16). This trio toes the rubber for 100 starts and they should keep the Avengers in the fight more often than not. Another warrior helping the cause is Chad “CBill” Billingsley (Grade 11,C-23/HR+21) for another 32 starts. Junior members also include Kyle “The Kid” Davies (Grade 9



**SNT: Matt LaPorta**  
*Another big power bat joins the Avengers. He certainly fits with the team theme.*

**Arrived:** Yuniesky Betancourt, Ronny Cedeño, Aaron Cunningham, Mark DiFelice, Kyle Farnsworth, Alex Gordon, Matt LaPorta, Kris Medlen

**Departed:** Garrett Anderson, Jorge Cantu, Edwin Encarnacion, Khalil Greene, Brandon Jones, Omar Quintanilla, Ramon Vazquez, Cory Wade

**Turnover Rate: 23%**



Jurjens, Jimenez, Lester: Team leader and sidekicks

C-51 HR-14), Andrew “The Toddler” Miller (Grade 7 C-43 HR+23) and Kris “Little Buddy” Medlen (Grade 9 C-22 HR+26) for the final 30 starts. Overall it’s a good group that would do better with bigger grades in the bullpen. Heroes can only do so much, after all.

**BULLPEN.** Not everyone can be a superhero and the bullpen for Melrose seems to prove that. It’s like the Captain and First Officer were killed in action and now the junior cadets are trying to steer the ship back to the spaceport.

The Designated Senior Cadet is Jason Frasor (Grds 16\* C+25 HR+32), who will try for a save on most days. The setup crew includes Hong-Chih Kuo (Grade 16\* C-14 HR+31), Dennys Reyes (Grade 13\* C-36 HR+42) and Mitch Stetter (Grade 13\* C-33 HR+22). This trio of worthies is not only wild, but all lefthanded. The seventh and eighth innings may be cliffhangers.

From the right side, Brian Bruney (Grade 13\* C-44 HR+15), Ryan Madson (Grade 11\* C+24 HR+15) and Mike Difelice (Grade 10\* C+36). Medlen and Miller have some relief innings as well. Kyle Farnsworth (Grade 6\*), acquired on waivers, might be there for a cup o’joe. Notable by his absence is the former Captain, Brad Lidge, who has been reduced to fetching drinks and mopping up the mound when some noxious pitching substance has been spilled there. While decent and deep, the lack of a true closer may hurt the Avengers’ chances.

## Offense: 7.5 A few men of steel.

There are three really good cards that any of us would gladly welcome to our teams and the middle of our batting orders. First up is Adrian “Agon” Gonzalez (1-1-0-0, 9 hits, 6 walks, R+4).

Next is Kevin “Youk” Youkilis (1-5-5-6, 10 hits, 5 walks+42), who’d be most other teams’ starting firstbaseman, but here he takes his act to third. Ryan (“R.B.”) Braun (1-4-5-6, 11 hits, 3 walks+42, L+12) will anchor both the cleanup spot and left field both this year and in years to come.

When the “Avengers Assemble” call goes out, the junior members of the team that answer include the tandem of Delmon Young (1-0-0, 11 hits, but 7 13s and 5 24s) and rookie power hitter Matt LaPorta (1-0-0-0, 9 hits, 2 walks+22). Both have talent, but haven’t quite earned their own solo comic yet.

The rest of the lineup isn’t quite as good news. Dan “Yugg” Uggla (1-5-6, 8 hits, 5 walks+22) is the best of the rest, but like David “the Murph” Murphy (1-6-6, 9 hits, 4 walks) he’s a bit hampered against lefties and strikes out too much. Garrett “G.A.” Anderson (3 0s, 10 hits, 2 walks) is some ways down from his best days, as is David “X-Factor” Eckstein (2 0s, 10 hits, 2 walks, 3 31s). The presence of Eckstein at the top of the lineup suggests how bare the cupboard is beyond him. Yuniesky “Yuggoth” Betancourt (3 0s, 9 hits, 2 walks) has been brought in to play shortstop; Alex “A-Team” Rios (3 0s, 9 hits, 2 walks+22, 32 SSN) is a caricature of his former self; and the catching tandem of Gerald “G.L.” Laird (3 0s, 8 hits, 3 walks+42) and Ivan “Pudge” Rodriguez (3 0s, 9 hits) will scare no one.

Most days if the Big Bats don’t get it done, it ain’t getting done. If you can deal with Gonzalez, Braun and Youkilis, you have a good chance against the Avengers.



**Good rotation, but a weak bullpen. The top five guys average only 42 IP each and there are no closer grades. But good management, and a middle of the order consisting of Braun, Youkilis and Adrian Gonzalez, Melrose is still a playoff contender.**

**Defense: 4.5**  
**Leaps small huts with a running start.**

There are a few overachievers on defense but, again, there just aren't enough of them to make this a strong point for the Avengers. Both Gonzalez and Youkilis are 1B5s. Since there can be only one Highlander, Youk has to shift over to man 3B (as a 3B4). Eckstein is a reliable 2B8. Gerald Laird (C9 Th+4) will shut down most opponents' running games, as will his backup, the formerly great Ivan "Pudge" Rodriguez (C8, Th+2).

Both Yuniesky Betancourt and Ronny Cedeño (SS8) are adequate at short, and the outfielders are OF2s (Braun, Murphy, Rios, Montanez) or OF1s (LaPorta, Young, Anderson). That's really about it. There is no defensive whiz waiting to come into a close game late, and the defense may well lose a few games during the course of the season.

**Bench: 2.0**  
**The future of mankind? Not quite.**

Due to the nature of his leftover parts, Mark has decided to go with a small bench: a couple of extra outfielders, the backup catcher and Ronny Cedeño (1-4, 8 hits, 2 walks+22) will be what's available most of the season. Luis Montanez, Aaron Cunningham and Alex Gordon (acquired from New Westminster only a year after he was a top draft pick!) really have no purpose and will have no speaking lines this year.



2009 finish: 112-50 (1st, Mantle)  
Last 5 years: 341-469, .421  
PITCHING: 11.0 OFF: 7.5 DEF: 4.5 BNC: 2.0

Other than Young, all of the starters have at least 134 games; Young can share with Anderson and LaPorta. In any case, they are so much better than the subs. Melrose will probably ignore its bench much of the season. You should follow that example when they come to visit.



The *Annual* is predicting a good race in the Mantle Division this season, but we expect that Hudson will win out over Zion and Melrose.

Melrose is probably – *probably* – deficient enough that they will not be a big part of that dogfight. Munich cannot even begin to compete with the middle of the order power or starting rotation on display here. Still, Melrose has a few extra resources in next year's draft (New Westminster's #2, and an extra #5 and #6), giving them maneuver room if the rotation really gets going and the offense produces. A wild card berth is not out of the question. Can Mark Freedman and his legions triumph over the forces of evil? You'll just have to tune into the next episode to find out!



**melrose AVENGERS**



Braun, Youkilis: Avengers Assemble!

**TQ: 25.0**

# 2009 munich MARAUDERS in review



*Somehow the rhythm was never right.*

## 2009 in Review

### Final Record: 109-53 (2nd, Mantle)

Munich went into the 2009 season feeling that the Marauders could contend for another TBL crown. In fact, the prognosticators even predicted they might be more qualified for a title than the 2007 team. The hitting was at least equal, starting pitching was noticeably better, and the bullpen was deeper. Somehow the rhythm was never right and the 2009 roster under-performed (if 109 wins can be called “under-performing”). Munich never led the stacked Mantle, and even a mid-season blockbuster trade didn’t allow it to make up the gap on first-place Melrose. Facing a strong Richmond club in the wild-card series, Munich bowed out in the first round, although it was a tense and exciting seven-game series.

### What went right?

The pitching staff held up its end: the league-leading team ERA was below 3.00 (at 2.95), four starters won between 17 and 19 games (Rich Harden 19, Joe Saunders 18, Derek Lowe and rookie Edinson Volquez 17 each.) No fewer than eight relievers saved at least one game apiece, led by rookie Brad Ziegler’s 32 (with a team total of 48). Milton Bradley was a legitimate MVP candidate, with 71 extra-base hits (20 homers), 76 walks and .334 / .450 / .606 stats in 130 games. Trade acquisition Aubrey Huff led the team in RBI with 118 and had a creditable .291 / .351 / .503 line.

### What went wrong?

Most of the rest of the offense didn’t show up consistently. The team OPS was below .800 despite cards that averaged 14 on-base numbers

and nearly 4 power numbers in the starting line-up and a deep and flexible bench. In particular, the Marauders never learned to hit enough on the road to support the pitching; the road record didn’t top .500 until September, by which time Melrose had a 7-game division lead. Close games were especially upside-down, as even at home the Marauders only topped .500 by one game in 1-run efforts – despite no fewer than five ‘closer grades’ in the bullpen.



Milton Bradley: MVP candidate

### 3 Things

1. “Bench toy” Chris Dickerson. He cost a #2 for critical hitting situations in a tight pennant race. He was *way* below his expected numbers until a handful of upbeat November full games – non-critical at bats – gave him decent-looking stats. Moral: “toys” are often going to be subject to the small-sample-size effect, buyer beware.
2. *The bullpen.* Somehow a bullpen that averaged Grade 17\* with at least three ‘closer’ grades always available managed to lose 14 games and contribute more than a few “L”s to the starters. Moral: good, deep bullpens don’t guarantee pennants. The 2010 bullpen won’t be as awe-inspiring on paper.
3. *Age.* With many key players well over 30 and few under 25, Munich decided to deal several key components of the 2007 and 2009 pennant runs, including Drew, Overbay, and “mini-mite” Scutaro, to stock up for the future. Moral: in TBL, you have to be willing to step back periodically in order to step forward with determination when the time is ripe. For Munich, 2010 will be a significant rebuilding year.

# **munich MARAUDERS**

Paul Montague (27th year); Hall of Famer

*Too bad the Marauders couldn't have gone further in the 2009 playoffs.*

*M*



Our good friend from upstate New York, the Senior Member Paul Montague, has too frequently been absent from our annual draft day festivities much to the disappointment of the members gathered there. His calm countenance and sage advice on that important day can be most welcome.

But since Munich had deposited most of its 2010 draft value into other managers' accounts, there wasn't much for Monty to do then other than, perhaps, to fetch beverages – and that's not a dignified use of a Senior Member. Munich's abrupt departure from the 2009 TBL playoffs at the hands of the Richmond Rebels has to sting a bit, but Mr. Montague can take the heat. He has endured many a poor season in Munich while slowly accumulating raw talent, waiting for it to mature into critical mass and explode into a World Series champion. 2010, instead of a step back, is more like a plummet over a guard-rail onto a busy highway. A basement finish in the Mantle can be expected, but I'm sure the Marauders will always put up a valiant struggle.

**Pitching: 4.5**  
**Rich Harden and the five dwarves.**

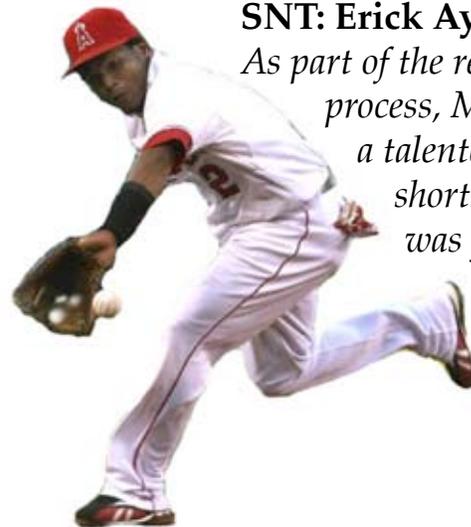
**ROTATION.** The good news about the Marauders' 2010 pitching rotation is that only six starters are needed to cover all 162 starts. The bad news is that after Harden, the other five guys are kind of ... well ... *crappy*. Harden (Grade 12 C-26 HR-24), with his poor peripherals and a fatigue of 24, doesn't make for much of a staff ace either. Joe Saunders (Grade 8 HR-16), the best of the five, will occasionally sparkle, we're sure. Next up is Ricky Nolasco (Grade 6 C+33) and the transition from the adequate to the mediocre (or worse) begins.

What's left consists of David Purcey (Grade 5 C-61), the piker of the group with only a measly nine starts to contribute; a fall from grace for former ace Derek Lowe (Grade 4 C+22 HR+24); and last out of this little clown car of futility is that ageless wonder Livan Hernandez (Grade 3, C+13/HR+13). Garrett Olson (Grade 1) doesn't need to start at all.

**BULLPEN.** Another area of the Marauders that's taken a downward turn from 2009. Brad Ziegler (Grade 10\* HR+54) was "lights out" for last year's edition and, for nostalgic purposes,

**SNT: Erick Aybar**

*As part of the retooling process, Munich adds a talented young shortstop who was just cooling his heels in Portland anyway.*



**Arrived:** Erick Aybar, Craig Counsell, Nick Evans, Livan Hernandez, Casey Janssen, Brent Leach, Mark Loretta, Dallas McPherson, Pat Neshek, Garrett Olson, David Purcey

**Departed:** Joe Beimel, Andrew Brown, Roy Corcoran, J.D. Drew, Dan Giese, Tadahito Iguchi, Matt Murton, Lyle Overbay, Marco Scutaro, Donnie Veal

**Turnover Rate: 40%**

# M

## MUNICH MARAUDERS

will be given the chance to keep his closer's role in 2010, despite his diminished status and the presence of superior grades. His sweet peripherals evidently sealed the deal with Monty.

The best grades will set up Mr. Ziegler: Craig Breslow (Grade 17\* C-31) from the left side and Joe Nelson (Grade 15\* C-62 HR-22) from the right side. These two will occasionally get a road save. More situational lefty relief is here in the form of Garrett Olsen (Grade 12\* C-24 HR-42) and Scott Downs (Grade 12\*, C+24 HR+25). These guys will see lots of action in the middle innings. Olsen (with only 28 IP) will be much more "situational" than Downs.



Ziegler: That's "Mr. Ziegler".

There are a few other arms in the pen, including J.J. Putz (Grade 7\* C-42 HR+51), much reduced from 2009, and rookie Brent Leach, who has 20 bad innings as a Grade 9\*. There are also three Grade 1s – Casey Janssen, Donnie Veal and Chad Bradford (and his excellent peripherals). They are more or less an oily residue to be scraped off of the bullpen floor and liberally spread on the mound to try and take the form of a relief pitcher. Apply them often to infected starters. This is not quite the worst bullpen in the league, but what's here isn't enough to help the depleted rotation. It's a case of the blind leading the visually impaired.

**Offense: 5.0**  
**It was next on the list. Promise.**

Let's take an inventory of what Munich has on offense for the 2010 season. Keeping with the theme of reduced expectation for this season, we find only one player with 11 hits (Erick



*The early 2009 playoff exit for Munich was a shock to most in TBL. They were built for a much deeper run. And now, in 2010, Paul Montague has to deal with the hangover from having such an intoxicating team in 2009. They'll take a good beating.*

Aybar). Only three players have at least 4 power numbers (Spilborghs, Hairston and McCann). Only three players are rated as Fast and two of them (Lugo and Winn) are beginning to reach their maximum shelf life. There will be a lot of station to station baseball played by the Marauders this season.

The best card on the team belongs to new starting SS Erick Aybar (3 0s, 11 hits, 2 walks). His arrival was coupled with the departure of Marco Scutaro to Rye for future talent. Other useful players include Scott Hairston (1-0-0-0, 10 hits, 2 walks+22, L+7 R-5), Brian McCann (1-0-0-0, 10 hits, 3 walks+22), and Chris Dickerson (3 0s, 9 hits, 5 walks, 16 SBA with 30 SSN). McCann has most of a season, while Hairston and Dickerson will miss some time.

Things decline after that. Ty Wigginton (3 0s, 10 hits, 2 walks) and Julio Lugo (2 0s, 10 hits, 4 walks) will share second base; Ryan Spilborghs (4 0s, 9 hits, 3 walks) and Randy Winn (3 0s, 9 hits, 3 walks, L-16 R+3, 20 SBA with 34 SSN) will play in the outfield. A collection of lesser veterans will fill at bats elsewhere: Aubrey Huff (3 0s, 9 hits, 3 walks+22); Brandon Inge (1-0-0, 8 hits, 3 walks+42); Milton Bradley (3 0s, 8 hits, 5 walks+42); Marcus Thames (1-5-6, 9 hits, 3 walks, 7 13s); Jose Bautista (1-0-0, 8 hits, 5 walks+22, L+6 R-5); and former defensive whiz Omar Vizquel (2 0s, 10 hits, 2 walks, 2 10s, 3 31s, L+12 R-5). Jason Giambi (1-0-0, 6 hits, 6 walks+42) is a bearded lady who



McCann: Useful

might provide some entertainment value, but will be far too much of a bad thing. Overall it's an offense that really doesn't do anything very well and a lot of things quite poorly.

**Defense: 3.0**  
**At least stop a few with your face.**

There's really not much room for optimism in this defense. The defensive maturation of Erick Aybar (SS9) makes him a worthy successor to the departed Marco Scutaro. Randy Winn (OF3) can still get after it, but his arm (30) means he'd be better off running the ball back to the infield.

Julio Lugo (2B7) is the better half of the second base platoon with Ty Wigginton (2B6), and if that doesn't scare you then nothing will. Omar Vizquel proves human as his ratings (SS8, 2B7, 3B4) are merely pedestrian. McCann (C7) is average behind the dish and is saddled with a rag arm (Th-2). His backup is starting third baseman Brandon Inge, who is better at third (as a 3B4) than spelling McCann behind the plate (as a C6 Th-4). There are far too many DH types (OF1's and 1B2's) and few standouts. They can achieve Fielding Two fairly regularly, but will stray close to Fielding Three when Aybar, Winn or McCann have to sit. It's just another example of having to recover from that 2009 playoff hangover in Munich.

**Bench: 2.0**  
**But where would they sit?**

Paul Montague's standard instructions divide his season into three phases: April (Mark Loretta's farewell tour), May and June, and July through November. In each of these phases

there is a defined bench listed. It seems laid out more for managing usage restrictions than actual game-winning situations, but these things happen when your entire team becomes the touring cast for "The Picture of Dorian Gray", aging all together and not very gracefully either.

Ryan Spilborghs is the utility outfielder, Omar Vizquel is the utility infielder and the "wacky neighbor" (i.e. general utilityman). Jose Bautista can help out the cause from April thru June, but only if it's really close. Munich will have to be careful with him as he's slated as the starting third baseman from July to the end of the season. If anyone here could really make a difference, they'd be starting already.

**4th** Too bad the Marauders couldn't have gone farther in the 2009 playoffs. It might have mitigated the terrible season that Paul will surely have to endure now.

Good players like Chris Dickerson and Erick Aybar give hope for a brighter future ahead but with so many professional space fillers like Julio Lugo, Milton Bradley and Jason Giambi dragging down the roster, that future may take a while. Paul was the original pioneer in this territory, blazing a trail for others to follow. It may take laying low for a few drafts and acquiring fresh talent, but Paul has the patience for this. Good luck, Monty!



**MUNICH MARAUDERS**



2009 finish: 109-53 (2nd, Mantle)  
Last 5 years: 463-347, .572

PITCHING: 4.5 OFF: 5.0 DEF: 3.0 BNC: 2.0

**TQ: 14.5**

# Some Things Change

The 2009 season brought a championship to the Williams Division: not for long time contender Richmond, but instead for the pitching and defense oriented Midwest Mongrels. The dynasty turned out to be one year long, and Midwest has returned to the basement. The Mongrels' replacement at the top of the division is the other half of the Minnesota twins: *Pat Martin*, who has bounced from conference champion to 97-game loser to our pick to take the Williams again.



It's unclear how long *this* dynasty will last. There are some very good parts on this team, but others are held together more loosely, and things blow apart in Minnesota autumns – and winters.

Things have certainly changed for the better out in Wakefield, where there's a rebuild going on – and it seems to be going just fine. There are some folks missing or sent away by *Glenn Taylor*, but the new additions look like they're settling in just fine. This team is good enough to make the Outlaws work for this pennant, but likely not good enough to take it away from them. In any case, the *Annual* is impressed with what's been done.



And speaking of change, it's coming to the Richmond Rebels after a number of successful seasons. It starts with a new logo, but for *Bruce Taylor's* team it certainly doesn't end there. This appears to be the end of an era for Richmond, but it probably doesn't mean that *Albert Pujols* is on the trading block. But there are others that have already left town, and there may be more before this is over.

And now we come to the defending champions, the Midwest Mongrels. This publication has spent considerable ink lampooning the efforts of *Darrell Skogen* over his first several years in TBL – though, truth to tell, we're all very fond of the Guru. He's earned his nickname, that's for sure: whatever our thoughts about bunting and little ball, it worked against one of the top offenses in TBL. Pitching and defense works in the real major leagues but it doesn't really work here. *Oh, yes it does* – at least once. How long before the Mongrels have another chance to prove it?



## 2008 Williams Division Final Standings

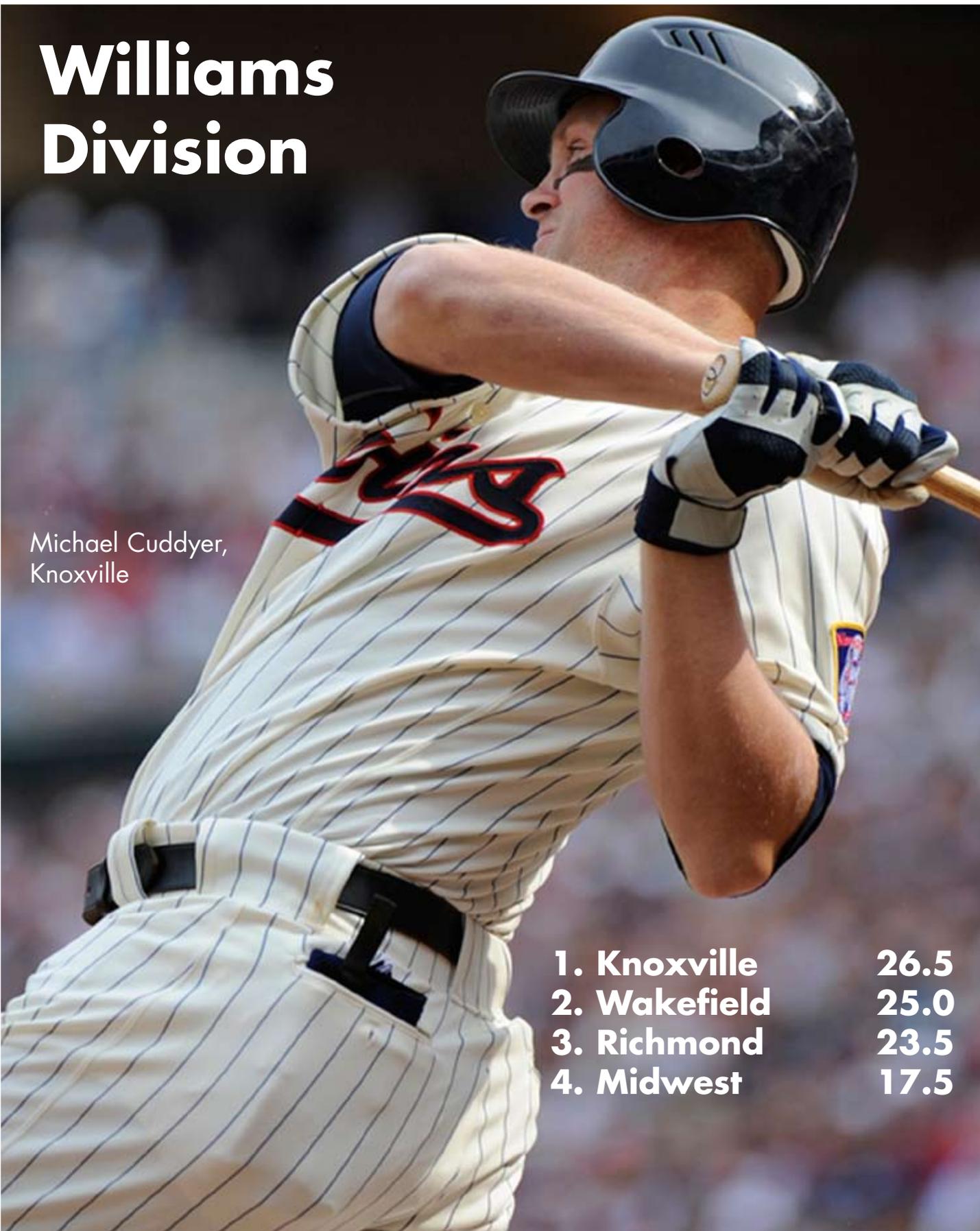
Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Midwest*	105	57	.512	—
Richmond†	95	67	.463	10
Knoxville	65	97	.660	40
Wakefield	52	110	.432	53

\* TBL World Champion in 2009.  
 † Lost to Melrose in conference semifinal.



# Williams Division

Michael Cuddyer,  
Knoxville



1. Knoxville	26.5
2. Wakefield	25.0
3. Richmond	23.5
4. Midwest	17.5

# 2009 Knoxville OUTLAWS in review



The team came into 2009 with low expectations, and it more than met them.

## 2009 in Review

### Final Record: 65-97 (3rd, Williams)

Knoxville came away from its World Series loss prepared for a long season. The outcome was not unexpected: the offense was competent enough to keep the team in games, but the pitching staff was weak enough to lose many close contests. While not the worst team in TBL, it was certainly far from contending, losing just short of 100 games with a .253 team average, 120 homers and a 4.95 team ERA.

### What went right?

Though power was down, there were some good offensive performances. Justin Morneau had a good well-rounded season (.273-24-103), leading the team in homers and RBI, and delivering 43 doubles. Jose Reyes had 73 XBH, including team-leading totals in triples (18) and doubles (44). He also stole 58 bases in 63 attempts and hit .272. Magglio Ordoñez hit .287, tops on the team.

Rookie Nick Blackburn turned in a very decent full season, leading the rotation with 12 wins and a 3.98 ERA. Mark Buehrle won 10 games with 5 CG. The relief corps had to work hard but performed well when called upon; Matt Capps recorded 32 saves in just 45 innings to lead the bullpen.

### What went wrong?

As mentioned above, the team came into 2009 with low expectations, and it more than met them. Four regulars struck out more than 100 times, led by Reyes (136); three players hit 20

or more homers, but Morneau's 24 was tops on the team. There was no speed other than Reyes and Joey Gathright (11 SB in a limited role), and with a team OBP of .311 there weren't many runners to drive home.

Other than Blackburn and to a limited extent Buehrle (10-17, 4.67) the starting staff was forced to go deep into games; both Ian Snell and Carlos Silva went 6-17 with ERAs under 7.00.



Justin Morneau: Well-rounded

And, in cruel irony, the only winning month the team had was in August which did not help draft position.

### 3 Things

1. *The "Twins Connection" still holds.* The team still has the core group intact for another season. Morneau and Jason Kubel will be joined by first-rounder Andrew McCutchen who will help make the eventual replacement of Magglio Ordonez a very smooth one. This lineup will help the team contend; the question is how deep they can go in the playoffs.
2. *Rotation and bullpen improved.* There are 150+ games of Grade 7 and above in the rotation. We also drafted and traded for youth in the offseason to start the rebuilding process. The relief corps is vastly improved over last season and is the strength of the Outlaws this season.
3. *Back and fill.* The middle infield was hard hit by injuries, forcing some quick moves to rebuild it. While Reyes and Iwamura recover, others will take their place. We hope that this is the beginning of a buildup to a stronger team in the future.

# knoxville OUTLAWS

Pat Martin (24th year)

*This team is certainly good enough to win the division.*



Pat Martin still had the World Series in the rear-view mirror when he realized that 2009 was not going to be a great year for the Outlaws. He sold off a couple of extra pieces and sat back to watch the 2009 TBL season unfold. What he saw was his good friend and neighbor, Commissioner Darrell Skogen, pilot his band of stalwarts to his first TBL Championship.

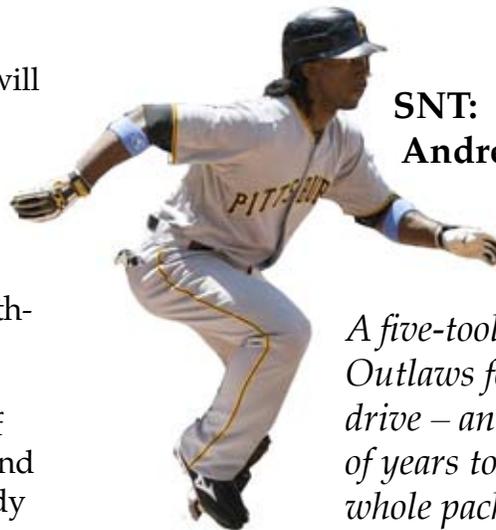
Pat was bound and determined to follow the Guru's lead and try to keep the Trophy in the Williams for at least one more year. That task will be made harder by the physical disintegration of Knoxville's starting infield. A takeout play at second limited 2B Akinori Iwamura to only 69 games and, worse yet, leg problems held superstar SS Jose Reyes to but 36 games! Resources that could have been used to strengthen other areas went to bring in their replacements. Doug Davis, brought in from an over packed Rye rotation, will step up to act as Staff Ace. The bullpen was enhanced via the draft and some clever trades and now Pat feels he is ready to dominate the Williams Division and, maybe make a run at a return to the Big Dance. We'll see.

## **Pitching: 11.0** **Good enough for the Williams.**

**ROTATION.** When Pat finally made the call to go for it in 2010, he noticed a large hole at the top of his rotation where an Ace should be. The Rye Herons, through years of careful drafting, found that they had a surfeit of good hurlers for the upcoming season. It was a good match so a deal was brokered. Now leading the Outlaws' rotation for the 2010 season: Doug Davis (Grade 10 C-42). A 35-year-old lefty with severe control issues may not be the first choice to lead a staff but he was who was on offer – so Pat grabbed

him and ran. Helping Mr. Davis with starting chores will be Mark Buehrle (Grade 9 C+33), Nick Blackburn (Grade 7 C+34), Joe Blanton (Grade 9 C+22 HR-22) and Ian Snell (Grade 8 C-52 HR+21). Blackburn, now pitching for Pat's beloved Twins, is especially treasured.

This rotation is better than many TBL teams will field in 2010, but is it playoff caliber? Probably



## **SNT:** **Andrew McCutchen**

*A five-tool player joins the Outlaws for the pennant drive – and for a number of years to come. He's the whole package.*

**Arrived:** Ron Belliard, Joe Blanton, Tim Byrdak, Kiko Calero, Doug Davis, Matt Guerrier, Anderson Hernandez, Luke Hochevar, Steven Jackson, Andrew McCutchen, Felipe Paulino, Nick Punto, Edgar Renteria, Mark Teahen, Jess Todd.

**Departed:** Willy Aybar, Brian Bass, T.J. Beam, Boof Bonser, Jose Castillo, Damion Easley, Joey Gathright, Travis Ishakawa, Mike Lincoln, Brandon Lyon, Ron Mahay, Jo-Jo Reyes, Juan Rincon, Carlos Silva, Ryan Speier, Tyler Walker, Dmitri Young

**Turnover Rate: 42%**



not, beyond securing the Williams division title.

**BULLPEN.** What the starters lack in big grades the bullpen more than compensates. Brought in to close via the draft was journeyman Kiko Calero (Grade 22\* C-36 HR+56), who has been around the diamond a time or two. He is more than ably assisted by a motley crew of relievers such as Tim Byrdak (Grade 19\* C-62 HR-24), Ryan Franklin (Grade 17\* HR+51) and Matt Guerrier (Grade 17\* C+34 HR-13). That trio provides almost 200 innings of sweet and wild setup duty.

The second level of relievers here, middle relievers all, is led by C.J. Wilson (Grade 14\* C-15 HR+46). Assisting Mr. Wilson in early duty will be newcomer Steven Jackson (Grade 13\* C-31 HR+43) and veteran Jesse Crain (Grade 10\* C-33 HR+41), another of Pat's hometown Twins. Even part time starter Brad Thompson (Grade 8\* C+24 HR+13) has 37 relief innings to throw on the pile. This is a very capable bullpen and will go a long way towards helping out the starters, when used probably, and towards advancing the Outlaws' playoff hopes.

**Offense: 8.0**  
**No high rollers, but solid citizens.**

None of the hitters on the 2010 Outlaws has as many as 11 hits. Not *one*. But that doesn't mean that Knoxville has no offense: on the contrary. The standard lineups call for Yadier Molina (2 0s, 10 hits, 3 walks, 5 24's) to lead off. Better to keep those 24's in front of the rest



Davis: Your ace

of the lineup. Others at the top of his batting order are vets Magglio Ordoñez (3 0s, 10 hits, 4 walks), who seems to have lost his power stroke, and Justin Morneau (1-0-0-0, 9 hits, 4 walks), who has not. But the serious power belongs to Mike Cuddyer (1-4-5-5, 10 hits, 3 walks, L+5) against lefties and Jason Kubel (1-5-5-6, 10 hits, 3 walks, R+3) against righties. Newly acquired outfielder Andrew McCutchen (4 0s, 10 hits, 4 walks) adds a nice blend of speed and power that should grace Knoxville lineups for years to come, joining holdovers Ben Fransisco (1-0-0-0, 9 hits, 3 walks+42) and David DeJesus (3 0s, 10 hits, 3 walks).

The infield will consist of a combination of damaged goods and replacements brought in to fill the void. The former includes Akinori Iwamura (3 0s, 10 hits, 3 walks, 69 games) and Jose Reyes (3 0s, 10 hits, 4 walks, 39 games); the latter, Ronnie Belliard (1-6-6, 10 hits, 3 walks), Edgar Renteria and Anderson Hernandez (both 2 0s, 9 hits, 3 BB's).

The rest of the offense is present for other reasons, like defense or speed, not hitting ability.

Overall it's a good attack, but a step behind either Portland or Northboro. They'll feast on the weak sisters and lose too often to better pitching staffs.

**Defense: 5.0**  
**Picking, not much grinning.**

When both Iwamura and Reyes were laid low with injuries, it made the Outlaws have to



Belliard: Stabilizing



*Pat Martin yielded the way in 2009 to the other half of the Minnesota Mafia, the Guru, who won his first TBL Championship. Now Mr. Martin would like a trophy of his own to admire. The 2010 Outlaws in good, but is it good enough? Wait and see, bunky!*

scramble to assemble a defensive unit. There are a few standouts on the roster; the starting catcher, Yadier Molina (C9 Th+4) is about as good as it gets, as is Nick Punto (2B9). Justin Morneau (1B4) and David DeJesus (OF3, 30 arm) round out the Fielding One defenders.



Molina: Good as it gets

In the middle infield, the regular players will be 2B7s and SS8s (with a little help from Iwamura's 2B8 when available), but unfortunately all of the regulars at third will be 3B3's (Atkins and Teahen). In the outfield, most regulars are OF2s: Cuddyer (37 arm), Francisco (32 arm), and McCutchen (31 arm). Ordoñez (OF1, 31 arm) will play the outfield against righties.

Occasionally with Punto in at second and a Fielding Two pitcher on the mound, the defense can reach Fielding One, but will mostly hover around Fielding Two. It's an adequate defense that will sometimes cost a win with an untimely miscue, but it shouldn't be a constant source of *agida* for Mr. Martin. Maybe a midseason trade for a 3B5 or an OF3 would be in order.

**Bench: 2.5**  
**The Island of Misfit Toys.**

There isn't much help on the bench in Knoxville, due to the need to cover games and at-bats. Nick Punto (3B4) plays defensively for all of the 3B3's, when Iwamura plays second; Ben Francisco (OF2) can spell Ordoñez late in games Knoxville has the lead. Yorvit ("Best

Yorvit in Baseball") Torrealba is Molina's backup, but his arm (-4) will have opponents' speedsters running wild. He can hit a little (0-6, 10 hits, 3 walks), but is a prime example of a Misfit Toy.

There is no "hitting toy" lounging around the clubhouse, waiting to step up late in close games. While there is good team speed, there is no designated "pinch runner", just limited use guys that are "Fast". As Pat's instructions say, "The best players are usually in the starting lineup" and that's usually true. The starting nine will mostly be what makes or breaks the Outlaws' season.

**1st** This team is certainly good enough to win the division: Midwest is skimming the bottom, Richmond is rebuilding, and this club is better than the much improved Wakefield club.

They'll get a chance to fatten up against division opponents, but when the playoffs come around and Knoxville has to deal with teams like Hudson, Portland and Northboro, that will be the true test of their competitive mettle.

Pat is a good field manager and will make the best of the hand dealt to him. The *Annual* won't be wagering against his 2010 success.



Punto: Top glove



**KNOXVILLE OUTLAWS**



2009 finish: 65-97 (3rd, Williams)  
 Last 5 years: 375-435, .463  
 PITCHING: 11.0 OFF: 8.0 DEF: 5.0 BNC: 2.5

**TQ: 26.5**

# 2009 wakefield WIZARDS in review



*The season went as planned, but that doesn't mean it was pleasant.*

## 2009 in Review

**Final Record: 52-110 (4th, Williams)**

In 2007, the Wakefield Wizards won 97 games and got all the way to the National Conference championship before losing to eventual league champion Munich. Glenn Taylor spent the next two years rebuilding his team, bottoming out with last year's 52-110 cliff dive.

### What went right?

Glenn paid the price and got the prize – the #1 draft pick in the 2010 draft. The team had suffered so many injuries in 2009 that blowing it all apart was really only one plan that made sense.

Mr. Taylor made a courageous move trading the top pick for the #2 pick and passing on catcher Matt Wieters, but he got a starting shortstop in Elvis Andrus who will be a star here for years. Elvis will be paired in the middle infield with one of the few high-performing players on the club – Robinson Cano – who hit 16 homers, 46 doubles and 5 triples for Wakefield last year.

There weren't too many other bright spots for Wakefield in 2009. Raul Ibañez hit 28 homers and 37 doubles; rookie Jeff Bennett had 5 relief wins; Josh Beckett struck out 172 in 188 innings.

### What went wrong?

The season itself went according to plan, but that doesn't mean it was pleasant to be slaughtered by all comers all season long. Much of

the blame can be laid at the feet of the offense, which scored a scanty 582 runs, which landed them twenty-third in the league. The Wizards hit only .233 as a team, with a .288 on base percentage.

It is no surprise that Wakefield selected a shortstop and two good young outfielders – Chris Coghlan and Colby Rasmus - with their first round draft picks in 2010. Later in the draft, he chose Ricky Romero for the starting rotation, adding a fine young arm to a staff that already sports Josh Beckett and Chris Young.

### 3 Things

1. *Trading the #1 pick for the #2 overall.* Wakefield passed on Matt Wieters to get Elvis Andrus, who he hopes will be the next Derek Jeter. Wieters comes with the hype; Andrus comes with the glove, and the speed. Time will tell.
2. *Rebuilding the outfield.* Raul Ibañez left town for pieces and parts in a draft day deal with Whitman. Coghlan and Rasmus will start immediately, and they both have the potential to contribute in a big way for a long time.
3. *Restocking the pitching staff.* Ricky Romero is the first of many pieces that Wakefield needs to collect before the team can crack the first division again. The way Josh Beckett is pitching for the Red Sox right now, this may take longer than anyone thinks.



Robinson Cano: High-performing

# wakefield WIZARDS

Glenn Taylor (9th year)

*The Annual likes what it sees here.*



Glenn Taylor's Wakefield Wizards have survived their summer of discontent, and are now pointed firmly towards a brighter future. The 110-loss self-immolation they engineered last year netted them an outstanding 21-year old shortstop in Elvis Andrus. The Wizards already have Robinson Cano, who might be the best second baseman in baseball not named "Utley", so this club is set at two critical infield positions for the next five years. This will make their rebuilding efforts much more efficient – there will be no need to burn draft picks on middle infielders in upcoming drafts. If Carlos Ruiz' performance last year is to be believed, Wakefield has solid players at the three sink-hole positions.

The 2010 Wakefield edition has grown naturally from the investments made in youngsters over the last few years. This will be a competitive team most days. The long night is over.

## Pitching:

### 7.5

## Improved rotation, bullpen

**ROTATION.** In 2009, The Year without a Sunrise in Wakefield, the rotation went 32-78. The 2010 Wakefield rotation goes 133 starts deep before it craters, so Glenn can look for better days this year.

It starts with Josh Beckett (Grade 11 C+23, 32 starts), who has been one of the best starters in baseball for the last seven years – all of them spent right here in Wakefield. His TBL career record of 63 – 80 is a lesson that Hall of Fame performance as a starting pitcher in TBL is largely situational. We can anticipate that many great pitchers in MLB – even MLB Hall of Famers – will often have trouble being voted into our Hall Of Fame.

Beckett is followed in the Wakefield rotation by two Grade 9 starters – rockin' rookie Ricky Romero (Grade 9 C-31 HR+21, 29 starts) and San Diego's Chris Young (Grade 9 C-36 HR-22, 14 starts). Young is currently fighting shoulder issues, so his contribution to the 2011 Wakefield efforts are a work in progress. At his best, he's a special pitcher. In 2007 and 2008, Young was a combined 36-15 for Glenn. A healthy Chris Young is a critical piece of the next great leap forward.



**Arrived:** Elvis Andrus, Willy Aybar, Michael Aubrey, Burke Badenhop, Francisco Cervelli, Chris Coghlan, Jeff Fulchino, Danny Herrera, Jason Jennings, J.D. Martin, Jamie Moyer, Eric O'Flaherty, Sean O'Sullivan, Colby Rasmus, Ricky Romero, Cory Sullivan, Esmerling Vasquez.

**Departed:** Jeff Bennett, Gregor Blanco, John Bowker, Emil Brown, Alberto Castillo, Blake DeWitt, Kyle Kendrick, Joel Peralta, Robb Quinlan, Humberto Quintero, Clay Rapada, Josh Rupe, B.J. Ryan, Oscar Villareal, Michael Wuertz.



# wakefield WIZARDS

Wakefield has 75 starts of Grade 9 and better in this rotation – a marked improvement over a year ago.

After the top three, Glenn has two durable grade 7 starters. Lefty Zack Duke (C+26, 32 starts) has never become the Johan Santana clone that everyone expected when he jumped out of the minors, but he is workmanlike. Vincente Padilla (C-12 HR+13, 26 starts) is one of those guys whose performance never seems to match up with his stuff. The last 29 starts are learning opportunities for 25 year old Matt Harrison (Grade 2 C+11 HR-12) and 85 year olds Brian Moehler (Grade 2 C+25 HR-14) or waiver pickup Jamie Moyer (Grade 5 C+24 HR-24).

For about half the season, Wakefield’s starting staff should give them a chance to win. This is an improving unit, with a lot of young talent.

**BULLPEN.** Sean Burnett (Grade 18\* C-13, 57 IP) is Wakefield’s closer. The fact that Wakefield has a closer is an indication that things are pointed north for the Wizards. The fact that he’s left-handed means that Glenn loses style points

– there will be plenty of pinch hitters against whom his closer will not steal 8s.

Burnett is set up by rubber-armed righty Jeff Fulchino (Grade



Fulchino: Rubber arm



*Glenn Taylor fields a team that is much improved than the 2009 edition that finished with the worst record in TBL. They will probably slug it out with Richmond for 2nd in the Williams. Only the Guru’s free fall keeps one of them from the basement.*

12\*, C+15 HR+21, 82 IP). Fulchino’s filling in where a Grade 16\* would normally be: the rebuild is not finished. But there’s so much of him that the instructions have him in the seventh and eighth innings.

The rest of the late setup staff is lefty Eric O’Flaherty (Grade 11\* C+24 HR+46, 56 IP) and lefty Danny Herrera (Grade 11\* HR+23, 61 IP). The fact that three of the top four relievers in the pen are lefthanded may prove to be troublesome against the best teams, who typically have guys genetically engineered for such occasions. As a public service, we should point out that Burke Badenhop (Grade 9\* C+21 HR+31, 72 IP) is a quality right-handed alternative. The good peripherals and penchant for throwing right-handed will serve the Wizards well. Jason Jennings Grade 9\*, C-21 HR+13, 61 IP) and Esmerling Vasquez (Grade 9\*, C-42 HR+26, 53 IP) add another 114 innings of good effort to the cause. Wakefield has a total of 442 innings of Grade 9 and above, which is a very nice total for a second year rebuild.

The rest of the relief staff is ticketed for bailing out the lame starters. There is plenty of volume – Over 550 innings of relief, and a closer to hand the ball to late in close games. They’ll get through the year.

## **Offense: 7.0** **The Robinson and Kendry Show.**

Wakefield has three terrific cards in the stack – and all are young enough to be around for years. Robinson Cano (1-5-6-6, 12 hits, 2 walks) is a batting champion waiting to happen – the only obstacle seems to be this Mauer kid, who is supposed to be pretty good. Cano bats third all season long. The cleanup hitter is slugging first baseman Kendry Morales (1-0-0-0-0, 11 hits, 2 walks). Rookie DH Chris Coghlan (3 0s, 11 hits, 3 walks) bats second all season and has a sparsely first card as well. These



Cano: Terrific

three give Wakefield a middle of the lineup they lacked last year.

The rest of the lineup is lower voltage. Young catcher Carlos Ruiz (4 0s, 9 hits, 4 walks+22, 107 games) will get some applause this season, with rookie Francisco Cervelli picking up the slack. Elvis Andrus (3 0s, 9 hits, 3 walks+22, 32 SSN for 39 attempts) is the shortstop and leadoff hitter; Jhonny Peralta (3 0s, 9 hits, 3 walks) is the regular third baseman; Colby Rasmus (1-0-0, 9 hits, 2 walks+22) and Vernon Wells (3 0s, 9 hits 3 walks, 31 SSN for 21 attempts) are the right fielder and center fielder in all lineups, and they bat fifth and sixth all year respectively. Cory Sullivan (2-5, 9 hits, 4 walks, 34 SSN for 8 attempts) and Willie Harris (3 0s, 8 hits, 5 walks+42) will be terrific in the nine hole for this club. For some reason, Harris (L-7) is listed in the instructions as the starter against lefties. He should probably be starting some games against righties where he has an even shift (R+0). His on base ability would certainly help this lineup.

Wakefield has enough offense to keep opponents honest. There will be no repeats of last year's 550 run performance, thank heavens.

**Defense: 8.0**  
**Leather flashing in all the right places.**

For the next five years or more, We can cut and paste the following: *Wakefield has exceptional defense in its middle infield. Elvis Andrus (SS9) and Robinson Cano (2B8) will bolt down the middle and devour all grounders all year long.* Even on the rare day when Elvis gets a rest, Paul Janish (SS9) is around to help Cano turn two. Behind the plate, Ruiz (C8, Th-0) and Brian Schneider (C8, Th+2) are more than adequate, while Kendry Morales

(1B4) is Fielding One as well. Jhonny Peralta (3B3) may have to wear an extra cup, but Jack Hannahan (3B5) can help out. The outfield is all OF2s with good arms, plus Willie Harris (OF3).

There's not a thing wrong with this defense. With Harris on the field this is quite a strong defensive team.

**Bench: 2.5**  
**Some help here.**

The bench includes some options. Michael Aubrey (1-5-6-6, 10 hits, 2 walks, L-11 R+4) is a terrific pinch hitting option against righties. Chad Tracy (1-6-6, 9 hits, 3 walks, L-10 R+1) will be the correct pinch hitter to use when a man is on third – the 6s turn into homers. Alex Cora (2 0s, 9 hits, 3 walks+22) has a decent hitting card, a good lefty shift (L+3) and plays well at first, second and shortstop. Paul Janish is an SS9, Jack Hannahan is a 3B5, and Brian Schneider is a C8, but none of them hits much; waiver pickup Willy Aybar (1-0-0, 9 hits, 4 walks+22, L+5) is a pinch-hitter against lefties. Overall, Wakefield is reasonably deep, especially when Harris is used as a backup.

**2nd** They won't be anywhere near Knoxville for the division title, but this team is in the third year of their rebuild, Richmond is just on its downslide, and Midwest is bottoming out this year. The *Annual* likes what it sees here.



**wakefield WIZARDS**



2009 finish: 52-110 (4th, Wakefield)  
 Last 5 years: 349-461, .431

PITCHING: 7.5 OFF: 7.0 DEF: 8.0 BNC: 2.5

**TQ: 25.0**

# 2009 richmond REBELS in review



*Given the names, maybe the club should consider moving to Manassas.*

## 2009 in Review

### Final Record: 95-67 (2nd, Williams)

With a rebuild on the horizon, this is not how the Rebels would have liked the story to have ended. There was one more playoff chance for the smooth crew that had been picked to win the Williams, and maybe this time to go all the way – but the scrappy Midwest club won in the regular season, and it would take eight wins against two teams that had won 109 and 112 games to get them to the Series.

And in the end, they only won seven. There was no Zion in the way, as there had been three times before. Portland, the opponent on two other occasions, was not a factor. And one of the opponents, Munich, lost a game 7 at home. But Melrose was just a little too much.

### What went right?

Despite finishing ten games behind the Mongrels, Richmond put up some pretty solid numbers. Albert Pujols – that man again – was outstanding (.333 / .439 / .609; 35 homers, 116 RBI, 49 doubles, 107 walks against only 64 strikeouts). Josh Hamilton belted 33 homers, along with 43 doubles and 8 triples. Shane Victorino stole 33 bases in 38 tries. The team hit .267 overall, tied for third in the league, and slugged 177 homers, with nine players reaching double figures in that category.

On the mound, Scott Olsen (15-8, 2.94) was superb, recording 7 complete games and 4 shut-outs. A. J. Burnett (16-11, 3.41) had 285 strikeouts to lead TBL. Joe Nathan had 37 saves and a 2.14 ERA, and Matt Thornton (1.24), Chris Sampson (1.73), Steve Shell (1.94) and Manny Delcarmen (1.98) were all excellent in setup roles. Overall, the

team struck out more than 200 more batters than its own hitters K'd, and allowed 300 fewer hits, en route to a 3.39 team ERA.

### What went wrong?

The playoffs, as usual, were an unsatisfactory outcome. If there were signs of the team's deficiencies, it was its relatively streaky offense; the club did not put as many people on base as it should have with the big hitters coming up. The .325 team OBP points this up: Pujols' OBP was .439, but there was no other regular or platoon player above .350. 177 homers is a good total, but Munich hit 203 and Melrose 237.



Albert Pujols: That man again.

The playoff opponents also had superior pitching. The top three ERAs in TBL belonged (in order) to Munich, Melrose and Midwest. The Rebels defeated #1, lost to #2

and finished ten games back of #3, the team that eventually won the World Series. Given the names, maybe the club should consider moving to Manassas.

### 3 Things

1. *You can't win with a one-gun offense.* It takes more than Albert Pujols, and some big hitters didn't come through in a big way.
2. *Know when to fold 'em.* Even before Nathan's injury, it was apparent that the old gang would have to be broken up. Time to start again.
3. *The club never stopped being scary.* Despite its playoff difficulties, Richmond has been dangerous for many years, and was well-respected.

# richmond REBELS

Bruce Taylor (13th year)

*It's going to be an interesting lack of race in the Williams this year.*



The Richmond Rebels have been one of the most successful franchises in TBL in the last decade. Bruce Taylor's boys have won five Williams Division titles and compiled a record of 716-580 since 2002. Last year, they chalked up another 95 wins on their way to a second place finish behind eventual league champion Midwest. They took a powerful Melrose team to 7 games before their season ended.

It was a great run, but the run is over. Bruce makes no bones about it in his instructions, this club is entering a hard rebuilding period, and this year's pitching staff very much reflects that team direction, as does their early-season record.

**Pitching: 5.0**  
**Some bullpen, but not enough.**

**ROTATION.** There is one bright spot in the rotation - A.J. Burnett (Grade 12 C-35, 33 starts) will make the sun shine and the fans cheer in Richmond for this season. Last season, the Yankee righthander went 16-11, 3.41 for Richmond, and he can be counted on for more quality work this season. The bad news is that he has been abandoned like a baby hunchback on the streets of London by his rotation mates.

The next name to peel off the pile is Gil Meche (Grade 7, C-25, HR+0, 23 starts). The fact that a rather generic grade 7 is the #2 starter tells you that this club is contending for the Jason Heyward sweepstakes, not the Williams Division. And so it goes. Brett Myers (Grade 7 C+15 HR-52, 10 starts) shows up for



Burnett: Bright spot.

two months of abuse, then disappears. Armando Galarraga (Grade 6 C-31 HR-21, 25 starts), one of the uglier Grade 6 starters you'll see this year, hangs around for two thirds of a season before he runs out of steam. Fausto Carmona (Grade 3 C-45) makes all 24 of his starts. Then, things get *really* ugly. Sergio Mitre (Grade 1 C+34 HR-24, 24 starts) and Scott Olsen (Grade 1 HR-24, 23 starts) combine for two full months of truly horrific pitching.

They're...well...*bad*. There's no getting past it. This is a group that will put Bruce really high in the draft list for 2011.



**SNT:**  
**Gerardo Parra**  
*He skipped AAA last year and the Diamondbacks didn't regret calling him up – he hit .290 with power. He's got all kinds of talent.*

**Arrived:** Denys Baez, Andres Blanco, Fausto Carmona, Manny Delcarmen, Josh Fields, Carlos Fisher, Alex Gonzalez, Rich Hill, Jason Jaramillo, Lastings Milledge, Sergio Mitre, Gerardo Parra, Alexei Ramirez, Jason Vargas

**Departed:** Ron Belliard, Carlos Beltran, Kason Gabbard, Cristian Guzman, Wil Ledezma, Charlie Manning, Mike Mussina, Shawn Riggans, Steven Shell, Alfonso Soriano, Brian Wolfe.

**Turnover Rate: 34%**



**BULLPEN.**

*"...and the award for the Man Most Likely to be traded in the September trading period goes to...{tear open envelope}...Joe Nathan!"*

Mr. Joe Nathan (Grade 22\*, C+12 HR+13, 68 IP) stands out like a clown on a beach on this pitching staff. Given his season-ending arm injury, he'd better have his bags packed because he's headed to Hudson or some other contender before the end of the year. While he's here, he'll be exquisitely effective. The problem is going to be finding leads for him to protect.

If Nathan is sitting around waiting for Richmond to lead a game in the ninth inning, he won't be able to blame Matt Thornton (Grade 15\* C+23 HR+32, 72 IP) or Brian Wilson (Grade 14\* C+13 HR+44, 72 IP). These are Richmond's only legitimate setup

men. Thornton is one of the most overpowering lefties on the planet right now. Last year, the fireballing White Sox lefty gave up 33 hits in 65 innings while striking out 81 for Richmond. Wilson has emerged as San Francisco's closer. Both will work all of their innings this year.

There are three middlemen. Danys Baez (Grade 12\* C+22, 71 IP) was a Richmond draftee early in his career and is back again, this time sporting a respectable grade and positive peripherals. Carlos Fisher (Grade 10\* C-56 HR+25, 52 IP) is wild but usable. Manny Delcarmen (Grade 9\* C-41 HR+31, 59 IP) somehow cards out better than he looked on television.

The top six names in the pen have 326 innings between them. The only other name with any decent hope of getting a major league hitter out



*Richmond has some great bats, but lacks its usual capable pitching. With Knoxville ready to dominate the division and the death scrum in the rest of the conference, which way do the Rebels go?*

is a starter used as a long reliever, Jason Vargas (Grade 7 C+24 HR-24, 91 IP).

There's a great closer. There are a couple of setup men who are competent, and there's some bulk if you count the 1s. Richmond will get through the year, and Nathan should command a premium when it's time to send him away.

**Offense: 8.5**  
**It'll be a good season at bat.**

It starts with the best player in the game, Albert Pujols (1-1-5-6-6, 11 hits 5 walks, 2 31s, 31 SSN for 20 SBA). Given that Pujols is built like Frank Thomas, it's a little hard to believe he's fleet enough to be a stolen base threat, but that's just one small area of excellence in his arsenal. Last season, Pujols posted a .333/ .439/ .609 stat line, while hitting 35 homers and driving in 116. He is 30 years old and has lots of career ahead. Shane Victorino (4 0s, 10 hits, 3 walks, 29 SSN for 33 attempts) is the other plus card in the lineup. He will play center every day and leads off.



Victorino: Leadoff plus.

The rest of the lineup has some decent cards, but nothing that scares you. Josh Hamilton (1-6-6, 10 hits, 2 walks, R-4) is still a fine power hitter, but he's definitely off his highs of last year. Mike Lowell (1-0-0-0, 11 hits, 2 walks, 5 24s) gutted it out for 119 games for the Red Sox last year, and he'll play third for most of the season in Richmond. Alexei Ramirez (2 0s, 10 hits, 3 walks, 29 SSN for 19 attempts, R-5) is an upgrade over the short-stop carousel that's been rotating here over the last few years. A.J. Pierzynski (3 0s, 11 hits, 3 7s) is a good hitting catcher, and plays a ridiculous 148 games back there. Howie Kendrick (3 0s, 11



**richmond REBELS**

hits, 2 walks, 28 SSN for 15 attempts) keeps threatening to become Craig Biggio, but it hasn't happened yet. Willie Bloomquist (3 Os, 10 hits, 2 walks, 31 SSN for 31 attempts) brings speed and versatility to the table – he plays competently at every position except catcher.

Two of the most exciting cards in the stack belong to 25-year-old Lastings Milledge (2 Os, 10 hits, 2 walks+22) and 23-year-old Gerardo Parra (3 Os, 10 hits, 2 walks). Both of these guys are the kind of cornerstone players that rebuilders like Bruce Taylor are looking for – multiple-skill, high-upside talent. Others may leave in the next few years, but these two will be here to see the Rebels rise again.

Overall, this is a good offense with a great core. They will be playing from behind a lot, though there is less power than in earlier years. Still, look for a good season at bat in Richmond.

**Defense: 8.0**  
**Very solid. Mostly.**

Richmond is a solid defensive team, though Alex Gonzalez, an SS9, is only a replacement, as Alexei Ramirez (SS8) has been brought in as the every day shortstop. The rest of the infield is top-notch: Albert Pujols (1B5), Howie Kendrick (2B8), and Mike Lowell (3B5), who got a gift from the Game Company – his range last year was the width of his outstretched arms.



Lowell: Gameco gift.

The outfield is led by Shane Victorino (OF3, 38 arm), but the rest are OF2s: Parra (34 arm), Milledge (32 arm),

Gerut (34 arm), Sullivan (33 arm) and Bloomquist (32 arm, with Fielding Two infield ratings.) The catchers are all C7s, with Pierzynski's Th-2 arm making him the weakest of the lot. Jason Jamarillo has a Th-0; Jesus Flores (Th+4) is the best of the group, but he only has a month of at bats. When Gonzalez is at short, they'll be very strong defensively.

**Bench: 2.0**  
**Guys, waiting.**

The reserve players are an uninspiring lot. Jesus Flores (1-4-4, 11 hits, 3 walks, R+1) could be a nice pinch hitter in limited use. Willie Bloomquist can play just about everywhere and can pinch-hit and pinch-run (2 Os, 10 hits, 2 walks, 31 SBA with 31 SSN). Manny Burriss (6, 8 hits, 2 walks, 28 SSN for 15 attempts) is a good pinch running option. But the bench is mostly a bunch of *Guys* like Andres Blanco, Josh Fields, Jody Gerut, Jason Jaramillo and glove man Alex Gonzalez hanging around waiting for the odd at-bat or late substitution.

**3rd**

The starting rotation is just awful, and though there are some great bats and solid gloves, the team is set up to make a charge at Jason Heyward or Stephen Strasburg. The only saving grace – if you view it that way – is that Midwest is diving for the basement as well. It's going to be an interesting lack of race in the Williams this year.



2009 finish: 95-67 (2nd, Williams)  
Last 5 years: 446-364, .551

PITCHING: 5.0 OFF: 8.5 DEF: 8.0 BNC: 2.0

**TQ: 23.5**

# 2009 midwest MONGRELS in review



*It is impossible to quibble when the result is a world championship.*

## 2009 in Review

**Final Record: 105-57 (1st, Williams)**

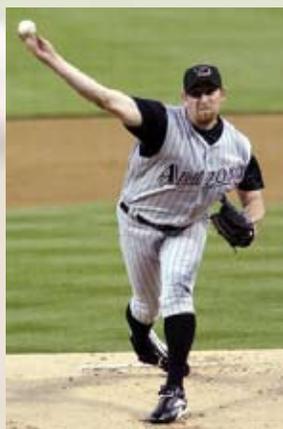
*Not just another Gumsville after all.* That was the thought going through the mind of the Midwest Mongrels' management team after winning the TBL World Series in February. While the team's pitching carried it to the championship, it was the development of the offense that finally made the Dawgs a top tier club. 105 wins, victories over Maracaibo and Melrose to make it to the finals, and a six-game series win allow the Guru to finally rest easy with his nickname.

### What went right?

The Dawgs always emphasize pitching. At the end of last season, it was clear that the rotation could be one of the best in the league. The five starters lived up to the expectations. The big three of Brandon Webb (20 wins, 2.91 ERA), Johan Santana (20, 3.00), and Ryan Dempster (19, 2.94) was marvelous. Ervin Santana and Paul Maholm won 26 more games, giving the starters 85 victories.

In the bullpen, closer Joey Devine had 35 saves and a 0.74 ERA, while setup man Taylor Buchholz chipped in 11 more saves to go with his 1.71. Damaso Marte, Russ Springer, and Billy Wagner contributed 120 innings of middle relief, winning 10 games and combining for an ERA in the twos.

A late trade cemented a solid offensive lineup, as Derrek Lee came over from Knoxville to hit .285-18-68. David Wright (.286-27-88, 36 doubles, 37 SBs) combined with Nate McLouth (.271-30-113, 43 doubles, 22 SBs) and Adam LaRoche (.235-27-82) to pace an offense that scored 782 runs against the 579 allowed by the pitching staff.



Brandon Webb: 20 wins

Rookies Mike Aviles and Alexei Casilla were solid contributors, and super sub Oscar Salazar was terrific (.456-13 HR-33 RBI in 79 AB!)

### What went wrong?

Darn little went wrong. Ervin Santana was a pedestrian 15-14 with a 4.05 ERA, but he made up for that in the playoffs. LaRoche slumped often, but his big bat provided numerous key homeruns at opportune times. Martinez and Hernandez only combined for 10 homers and 69 RBIs, but Martinez did solid work in the number two spot in the order when he played. It is impossible to quibble when the result is a world championship.

### 3 Things

1. *Pitching staff injuries.* This led to a decision to trade away Johan Santana to get draft choices for the future. Webb will be out in 2010, and Ervin Santana enters the season with arm problems that will likely lower his results. Others are injured as well.
2. *Key players injured, missing or traded.* McLouth, Jones, Gomez, Wright, Aviles, and Casilla are all facing long stints on the DL. Nick Punto, Henry Blanco, and Hernandez have all been traded for draft picks, and the team will have to depend on retreads and rookies.
3. *Too many low grades.* For a team focusing on pitching, it will be a steep decline – more like falling off the cliff! – as the Dawgs rely on a number of bad pitchers to start and relieve. They will not put fear into any opponents. The core of the team is solid. The Dawgs are not Gumsville this year, either—they are not good enough!

# midwest MONGRELS

Darrell Skogen (8th year)

*The Original Fourteen will be watching and waiting.*



Their time had finally come. That plucky little band of upstarts, the Midwest Mongrels, was at long last able to make a deep playoff run. At the end, Darrell "The Guru" Skogen was able to proudly raise the TBL Championship Trophy for all the fans and of course all fourteen of the season ticket holders to see.

What an eclectic group of individuals they must be. As they stroll through their sleepy little towns like demigods, little children will follow them just to touch the hem of their garments; the bolder among them will ask the great people if they knew the Guru himself! Ah, yes ... good times, indeed. But after the parades and speeches, the rubber chicken circuit must finally end and the aftermath of the celebrations must now be faced. The 2010 season looms, and many important contributors are badly injured (such as Brandon Webb) or have had a brownout of power (Victor Martinez, Nate McLouth, David Wright). Facing these and other difficulties, the Guru even dealt away Johan Santana. Back-to-back titles are out of the question. But Darrell's instructions make it clear: a return to contention is just around the corner. I'm sure the Original Fourteen will be watching and waiting.

## **Pitching: 4.0** **Who turned out the lights?**

**ROTATION.** Even amidst the pomp and circumstance of his 2009 TBL, watching Brandon Webb leave his first start in 2009 with an arm injury and never return must have filled the Guru with trepidation. As of this writing he is still working his way back in 2010, but it was a signal that Midwest had to make some moves. Having moved most of his 2010 draft to stock the championship club, he knew no immediate

## **SNT: Jordan Zimmermann**

*Before Stephen Strasburg was drafted, this was the Nationals' future ace.*

*Tommy John surgery set him back, but he's making a quick recovery, and the Guru can be patient ...*



help was forthcoming. Trading Johan Santana was a very sensible thing for Mr. Skogen to do.

Despite having more good seasons in that left arm, Johan is no spring chicken and, don't forget, he had his own arm issues last year. Thus, Ryan Dempster (Grade 10, C+15, 33 starts) has been promoted to Staff Ace. Possible future staff leader Homer Bailey (Grade 8, C-31, 20 starts) finally makes a real contribution to the Mongrels.

Jordan Zimmermann was available much lower in the 2010 draft than anticipated, due to his arm

**Arrived:** Alberto Arias, Jason Berken, Blaine Boyer, Michael Brantley, Billy Buckner, Juan Castro, Brett Cecil, Trevor Crowe, Ross Detweiler, Shairon Martis, Landon Powell, Jeff Weaver, Jordan Zimmermann.

**Departed:** Jeff Bailey, Henry Blanco, Taylor Buchholz, Chris Gomez, Joey Devine, Edgar Gonzalez, Ramon Hernandez, Micah Hoffpauir, Adam Kennedy, Damaso Marte, Justin Miller, Nick Punto, Johan Santana.

**Turnover Rate: 37%**



# midwest MONGRELS



Dempster: New Ace

surgery; he'll be an important contributor for half a season this year (Grade 7 C+14), with fellow rookie Shairon Martis (Grade 7 C-22 HR-13) filling the other half.

Both Ervin Santana (Grade 6 C+15 HR-22, 23 starts) and Paul Maholm (Grade 5 C+21 HR+26, 31 starts) were major pieces of the Guru's rotation last year and return for another go in 2010, both in reduced form.

Brett Cecil (Grade 5 C-15 HR-23), Ross Detweiler (Grade 4 C-13 HR+46), and a pair of Grade 1s – Jason Berken and Billy Buckner (oy, that name!) – fill out the rest of the rotation like spackle.

They will also provide bulk innings for the depleted bullpen. Think they'll be tired by the end of the season? Yeah, we thought so too.

**BULLPEN.** The save opportunities this year will be few and far between for this moribund bullpen, but when they arise Mr. Dan Wheeler (Grade 16\* C+44 HR-35) will get the first crack at them. But he may need to act as his own middle man and setup because, except for about five minutes of Billy Wagner (Grade 15\* C-55 HR+34 for 15 IP) there's very little available other than guys trying to pitch above their pay grades. They include Alberto Arias (Grade 9\* C+14 HR+55), Blaine Boyer (Grade 8\* HR+56) and Russ Springer (Grade 7\* C+26 HR-15). Jeff Weaver has 47 relief innings as a competent Grade 6\*, but his 7 starts as a Grade 11 will be set aside, available for a contender.

When Wagner expires like month old cottage cheese, the situational lefty becomes Scott

Schoeneweis (Grade 1\*). There should always be one or two of the leftover starters mooching around in the bullpen like unwanted party crashers. They'll try for as much pizza and beer as they can score before getting the boot.

**Offense: 6.5**  
**I've fallen and I can't get up.**

Last year's version of the Mongrel offensive attack was built upon good-average players with speed and power. Well, for the most part, the speed is still present. As for the hitting and power, well ... Only three of the regulars (Wright, Lee and Martinez) hit over .300. The rest of the regulars hit even lower.

The best news is at first base, where the two most powerful cards in the lineup – Derrek Lee (1-1-6-6, 11 hits, 4 walks) and Adam LaRoche (1-0-0-0, 10 hits, 4 walks, L-8 R+2) – are in residence. Odds are one of them will be on offer during the trading period. The rest of the good news consists of David Wright, who can still hit (3 0s, 11 hits, 4 walks, L+13 R-5) and run (36 SBA with 29 SSN), but who lost his power somewhere. Oscar Salazar (1-0-0-0, 11 hits, 3 walks, L+5 R-5) plays at a variety of positions for about half the year. Victor Martinez (1-6-6, 10 hits, 4 walks) also has a very solid card.

Things go off the track after that. Nate McLouth (1-6-6, 9 hits, 4 walks, 25 SBA with 29 SSN) and Adam Jones (1-5-6, 10 hits, 2 walks+22, 14 SBA with 28 SSN), and Mark Kotsay (3 0s, 10 hits, 2 walks) are viable outfield options,



Lee: Moving



*The fourteen season ticket holders must be in hog heaven (or are there more by now?) must be in hog heaven. But injuries and ineffectiveness in MLB 2009 means a step back in TBL 2010. But with this level of talent it's surely a temporary setback.*



though they all are weak against lefties. The middle infield consists of weak bats – ranging from the merely inadequate (Juan Castro, 2 0s, 10 hits, 2 walks) to the basically incompetent (Alexi Casilla, 7 hits with a little speed; Adam Everett, 3 0s, 9 hits; Mike Aviles, 2 0s, 7 hits). Mitch Maier (2 0s, 8 hits, 2 walks, 2 10s) and Carlos Gomez (3 0s, 8 hits, 2 walks) completes the lineup.

available to try to win the Mongrels a game or two. Michael Brantley (6, 11 hits, 2 walks, L+7 R-4) has some quality at-bats as well. Trevor Crowe (4-6, 9 hits, a few steal attempts) is a space filler. Landon Powell (1-5-6, 8 hits, 3 walks, L-10 R+3) is here to catch.

There is a mix of bad and good cardboard that would do fairly all right if provided with a decent pitching staff. Since that's not the case for Midwest this season, they'll probably tank.

Most of the time, the best cards will already be in the lineup, so most changes may be due to injuries. Still, there are at least a few moves that the Guru can make.

**Defense: 4.5**  
**Those who can't hit, field.**

There are a few defensive standouts for Midwest this year. Darrell can trot out an entire outfield of OF3's with the likes of Adam Jones, Carlos Gomez and Mitch Maier (all with good arms); Nate McLouth (OF2, 31 arm) is a satisfactory component as well. Derrek Lee and Adam LaRoche are 1B5's and Kotsay is a 1B4 to boot. Martinez (C7, Th-1) will not do much to stop the opponents' running game, but his backup, Landon Powell (C7, Th+4) just might.

**4th** And probably by double digits of games.

As the sweet summer days pass in Minnesota, our new Commissioner will be able to sit quietly in his den, fondly cradling his 2009 World Series trophy and staring longingly at the pictures of last year's Championship season while the 2010 edition of the team desperately tries to break the 60 win plateau.

David Wright (3B3) would be best as DH, but then who would man third? Oscar Salazar is also a 3B3, but is equally incompetent at other positions. The middle infield consists of 2B7s (Casilla, Castro) and SS8s (Everett, Aviles).

This is going to be a long season, to be clear. Still, with all of the latent talent on this roster, such as LaRoche, Wright and others – who will clearly return – he may not have long to wait too long for Trophy No. 2.



Wright: Will return.

**Bench: 2.5**  
**Send in the clowns.**

Every month there should be a defensive replacement, a pinch runner or pinch hitter



2009 finish: 105-57 (1st, Williams)  
Last 5 years: 447-363, .552

PITCHING: 4.0 OFF: 6.5 DEF: 4.5 BNC: 2.5

**TQ: 17.5**

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# breakthrough

There are fringe players on TBL rosters right now who might be important players on rosters in 2008. Some of those names appear in the list below. Some of the names below won't make it, but last year's list included Pedro Sandoval, Ian Stewart, Chase Headley, Seth Smith, Emilio Bonifacio, Max Scherzer, Clay Buchholz, Ryan Hanigan, Carlos Gonzalez, Kyle McClellan, Nyjer Morgan, Ross Ohlendorf, and Clayton Richard.

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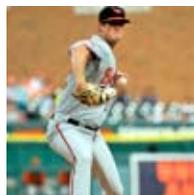
- 1** **Wade LeBlanc, P, Blue Hill**  
A promising young lefthanded arm, he's a big part of Blue Hill's pitching staff rebuild.



- 2** **Mat Latos, P, Zion**  
A fine young righthander, he represents another opportunity for the Elders of Zion to show us how smart the Sensei truly is.



- 3** **Michael Saunders, OF, Gotham City**  
It looked like Saunders was going to get squeezed out by veterans and bench players, but injuries and luck have given him another chance.



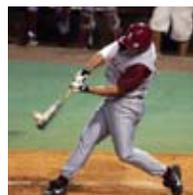
- 4** **Brian Matusz, P, Kansas**  
The Koyotes' SNT is a big, strong lefty with a powerful arm. Neftali Perez was the top name, but Matusz might be the steal of the draft.



- 5** **Alcides Escobar, SS, Gotham City**  
It was a good year for shortstops. He won't be 24 until December, and is a very worthy successor to Miguel Tejada, who has conveniently moved to 3B.



- 6** **Ian Desmond, SS, Maracaibo**  
The Rumrunners' Bonus pick was made when no one would trade for it. The shortstop of the future might turn out to be a very lucky choice after all.



- 7** **Alex Avila, C, Grand Cayman**  
The Havens get to add a power hitting catcher to their roster. Avila is very young, and will learn his craft studying one of the best in the game in Laird.



- 8** **Derek Holland, P, Brobdingnag**  
Nothing remains to prove at AAA; another good lefty arm for the Barbarians, it's a further opportunity to make Joe Auletta look smart. As if we need one.



- 9** **Reid Brignac, IF, Kansas**  
A crowded infield in Tampa Bay gives Brignac limited playing time, but he'll make the most of it. A nice pickup for the Koyotes.



- 10** **Chris Tillman, P, Brobdingnag**  
One of the top prospects in the Orioles' system, he'll be in the major league rotation before season's end.
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**Honorable mention:** Brandon Allen, Blue Hill; Robert Andino, Las Vegas; Jason Berken, Midwest; Michael Brantley, Midwest; Billy Buckner, Midwest; Brett Cecil, Midwest; Francisco Cervelli, Wakefield; Ross Detweiler, Midwest; Carlos Fisher, Richmond; Jake Fox, Las Vegas; Luke French, Maracaibo; Sam Fuld, Las Vegas; Mat Gamel, Portland; Josh Geer, Greater Ohio; Sammy Gervacio, Grand Cayman; Matt Harrison, Wakefield; Danny Herrera, Wakefield; Shawn Kelley, Grand Cayman; Lou Marson, Blue Hill; Kris Medlen, Melrose; Garrett Mock, Grand Cayman; Jason Motte, Grand Cayman, Bud Norris, Portland; Landon Powell, Midwest; Jordan Schafer, Maracaibo; Daniel Schlereth, Brobdingnag; Craig Stammen, Gotham City; Drew Sutton, Blue Hill; Jess Todd, Knoxville; Brandon Wood, Columbus; Delwyn Young, Dallas; Eric Young, Jr., Grand Cayman.

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# future

Every year we look forward to see who might be the big names in the next draft. Sometimes these predictions are prophetic, and sometimes they fall short. Last year, the *Annual* listed more than half of the first 48 picks in the 2007 draft (including 9 of the top 10) in this section, so you be the judge. Thanks to Ray Murphy for his assistance in preparing this list.

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## 1 Jason Heyward, OF, Atlanta

The next superstar, a dynamic player with all five tools. He's a lock for a top draft position in 2011.



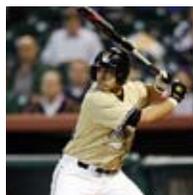
## 6 Justin Smoak, 1B, Texas

A huge power prospect, he's got a good batting eye to go with it that should let him hit for average in the majors.



## 2 Stephen Strasburg, P, Washington

As of this writing he's blasting through the minors, unhittable and in outstanding form. He's the best pitching prospect in baseball.



## 7 Pedro Alvarez, 3B, Pittsburgh

Power and plate discipline make Alvarez a top-notch prospect, with sure hands and a superior arm that should make him a fine major league 3B.



## 3 Mike Stanton, OF, Florida

A top power prospect, he's just the sort of guy that looks good on an APBA card. He might be a year away – and then again, maybe not.



## 8 Austin Jackson, OF, Detroit

A key part of the Yankee-Tiger trade, Jackson has a live bat and terrific speed. He should be at home in the Detroit outfield for some time to come.



## 4 Carlos Santana, C, Cleveland

A key part of the Indians' future, he has a major league arm and has become a good run-producer from both sides of the plate.



## 9 Buster Posey, C, San Francisco

His bat will get him to the majors and keep him there, but the Giants haven't decided where he'll play. But he's got a great throwing arm too.



## 5 Desmond Jennings, OF, Tampa Bay

Another player whose debut may still be a year away, he has blazing speed and solid power. He's also a plus fielder in the outfield.



## 10 Mike Leake, P, Cincinnati

He went practically from the AFL to the majors, and has yet to pitch a complete season in pro ball. He's off to a good start.

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**Honorable mention:** Hector Ambriz, P, CLE; Lars Anderson, 1B, BOS; J.P. Arencibia, C, TOR; Luis Atilano, P, WAS; Antonio Bastardo, P, PHI; Josh Bell, 3B, BAL; Roger Bernadina, OF, WAS; Eddie Bonine, P, DET; Michael Bowden, P, BOS; Zach Britton, P, BAL; Madison Bumgarner, P, SFG; Jason Castro, C, HOU; Starlin Castro, IF, CHC; Jhoulys Chacin, COL, P; Tyler Colvin, OF, CHC; Trevor Crow, P, KCR; Ike Davis, 1B, NYM; Wade Davis, P, TAM; Terry Doyle, P, CHW; Kyle Drabek, P, PHI; John Ely, P, LAD; Doug Fister, P, SEA; Wilmer Flores, SS, NYM; Tyler Flowers, P, CHW; David Freese, 3B, CIN; Cole Gillespie, OF, CHC; Nick Hagadone, P, BOS; Jeremy Hellickson, P, TAM; Gorkys Hernandez, OF, PIT; Rhyne Hughes, 1B, BAL; Ryota Igarashi, P, NYM; Jose Iglesias, SS, BOS; John Jaso, C, TAM; John Jay, OF, STL; Desmond Jennings, OF, TAM; Kila Ka'aihue, 1B, KCR; Brad Kilby, P, OAK; Mike McCoy, 2B, TOR; Jennry Mejia, P, NYM; Carlos Monasterios, P, LAD; Jesus Montero, C, NYY; Adam Moore, C, SEA; Chris Narveson, P, MIL; Jon Niese, P, NYM; Jarrod Parker, P, LAD; Max Ramirez, C, TEX; Wilson Ramos, C, MIN; Josh Reddick, OF, BOS; Carlos Rosa, P, ARZ; Dan Runzler, P, SFG; Adam Russell, P, SDP; Gaby Sanchez, 1B, TAM; Scott Sizemore, 2B, DET; Brandon Snyder, 1B, BAL; Nick Stavinoha, OF, STL; Zach Stewart, OF, STL; Drew Storen, P, WAS; Jeff Tabata, P, PIT; Michael Taylor, OF, PHI; Josh Thole, C, NYM; Carlos Triunfel, 2B, SEA; Ryan Tucker, P, FLA; Josh Vitters, 3B, CHC.

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# the art of the trade

by Mark Bloom



Every general manager has his own strategy for building a team: pitching versus hitting, fielding versus offense, boom-and-bust versus steady growth, the draft versus trades. A lot depends on individual preferences. I assume Darrell Skogen really likes to sacrifice bunt, which is why his teams are always built to lead the league in that category.

To get deep into the playoffs in this very competitive league, however, you must at some point make a deal for that missing piece you can't acquire in the draft, whether it's a big bat, a staff ace, or a defensive shortstop. In this article, I intend to explain how I, as one of 24 GMs, go about making a trade. I'm sharing this knowledge with the understanding that I'll have to deal with better-informed competition. That's all right. I believe better competition makes us *all* better.

## Setting the Stage

The first step for me every off-season is "building" the team rosters. Using the latest (post-mid-season-trading-period) rosters, I add pitching grades and batting averages to every team. I list the number of starts and relief innings. I estimate who *might* start at every position, given performance and usage. I even add the number of draft picks.

Of course, I do my own team as well, although I already have a pretty good idea what I need. It's still useful to see it in black and white. This step takes time, but it's necessary to ascertain each team's weaknesses and strengths—in other words, what each team needs and has in excess.

## Looking for Faces in All the Right Places

Now the fun begins. I look for teams that have what I need, preferably in excess, and needs something I have, preferably in excess. If I find a perfect match, which is admittedly rare, I offer a trade and negotiations begin. (More on negotiations below.)

I often catch the other GM's attention because I'm offering something he needs. It's a win-win situation.

An example of this was the Dan Uggla for Bengie Molina trade I made with Mark Freedman a few years back. All we had to do was swap a couple fourth-rounders, and the deal was done.

Of course, it's not *always* that easy. Sometimes, my initial offer is rebuffed without a counter-offer. Sometimes, the counter-offer exposes a difference of opinion in a player's value. Sometimes, negotiations reach an impasse. That's fine. I just return to the rosters and keep searching. There's always another trade possibility out there.

While I'll trade with anyone, I've found that certain GMs are more amenable to trade conversations than others. That's what made it especially gratifying to make the Lance Berkman deal with Craig Musselman this year. Craig doesn't make trades willy-nilly, but when he does, it's usually a doozy.

When I contacted him with an offer, I knew I could get Hank Blalock back in the deal, and by studying his roster, I reckoned Joba Chamberlain wasn't going to be a key contributor to his pennant drive. The last piece of the puzzle was the draft pick. I got everything I asked for except I had to settle for a 2011 #3 instead of the #2 I asked for. I might have stuck to my guns except for the intervening trade of Paul Konerko, which set the bar somewhat lower. (Damn you, Joe! Actually, my situation was different, but these factors do matter.)

## Negotiations 101

Whether I initiate a trade or another GM approaches me, I first try to figure out players' values. There are many ways to do this, but what I do is to place the player in the current, upcoming draft. I've found this a good place to begin. Some players are easy to place. Paul Harrington and I both readily agreed, for example, that Jason Bay was worth a #1. Our negotiations started from that point.

Other players are more troublesome. For example, where would you place David Murphy in this year's

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draft? He had 120+ games of a 9-hit, 4-walk card. He's a decent defender (OF-2, 33 arm), has some pop (1-6-6), and can run a little. He's still south of 30. Of course, he's now the fourth outfielder in Texas and likely to get less playing time in the future. He also carries a hefty shift vs. LHPs. Given the strength of this draft, I valued him as a high #4.

In a deal with Mark Freedman, I essentially acquired Edwin Encarnacion for Murphy (although there were other pieces exchanged). Encarnacion plays a skill position (3B) and is about a year younger. He has less usage and one fewer hit this year, but is Toronto's starting third baseman. You could argue one way or another, but it seemed a fair overall trade.

One side note: I knew Encarnacion would be available because Mark had just traded for Alex Gordon. I could have tried to trade for Gordon, whom I like better, but it's very difficult to trade for a player just acquired. I could have got him, I'm sure, but it would have cost more than I was willing to pay.

Keep in mind that valuing players is a personal process for your own benefit – the other GM may not agree with you. That's all fine and fair. But as long as you have a sense of value, you won't overpay a lot for a player.

## Negotiations 102

Another tactic I like to use is to establish a bidding war. In an ideal world, you could have two or more teams trying to outbid each other for one of your players. All you have to do is sit back and watch. Realistically, this hardly ever happens, but you can still try it with the right player.

This off-season was unusual for me. I traded away some big-name players still in their prime. When I offered Javier Vazquez, I expected a bidding war. Who *doesn't* need a quality starting pitcher? I started the process the usual way. I valued Vazquez as a #1-plus. In short, there were no other starting pitchers in the draft with his grade, number of starts, and peripherals. I wouldn't trade him unless I got a #1 plus another player or pick. Then I studied the rosters to see which competitive team might really want him. That narrowed the field.

I contacted those teams directly to let them know Vazquez was on the block. Needless to say, I got

some interest. It was early in the off-season, so I didn't feel the need to hurry. I received some initial offers, but nothing that swept me off my feet. So I did something I don't often do, but it's a tactic I highly recommend: I posted to *HeyTBL*, advertising to *every* team that Vazquez could be had. I posted my asking price, too. I knew if I wasn't asking enough, someone would step in with a better offer.

As it turned out, one team offered a package early that no other team wanted to match. It was the trade I eventually made with the Steve Stein/Bob Jordan tandem: Vazquez for the tenth pick in the draft and a #3. It was what I'd wanted, after all, but the response I received from the league let me know it was fair. Could it have backfired? Sure. Steve and Bob could have pulled out at any time, since the deal wasn't consummated. But they *wanted* Vazquez, and I *had* him. If the trade didn't go through, I still had Vazquez to trade or keep. It was a gamble worth the risk.

## A Final Thought

This is an extraordinary league. Rich Meyer, Joe Auletta, Walter Hunt, and others have won multiple championships, but think of all the GMs who've had great teams over the years without winning a World Series: Clay Beard, Bruce Taylor, and Paul Harrington come to mind.

My point is that there are a lot of smart (or lucky) people in the league. There's a lot of experience with building winning teams. My oldest brother plays a successful Stratomatic team. I bounce ideas off him occasionally. Sometimes, I turn to good friends in the league, like Walter or Rich. I trust their instincts, and I trust them to be honest. Tap that knowledge. If you are trying to put together a trade, and you don't think it quite adds up, tell your trading partner you want to sleep on the latest offer and then use the opportunity to talk to someone you trust, whether it's a Shadow Pet or Theo Epstein. You might not agree, but at least you'll get a different perspective.

I hope you'll remember this article the next time you go to make a trade. Even if you don't feel the need to do all this work before pulling the trigger, I hope you at least take one thing away from this article: your opponent might have put a lot of thought into his offer, and if you aren't prepared, you're at a distinct disadvantage.



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# commissioner's report by Darrell Skogen



Writing the commissioner's column is always difficult for TBL commissioners. The league has been together with pretty much the same crew of members for years, and it just keeps rolling along, even when the waters get a little rocky.

Another season has been successfully completed and a new one christened after the draft in February. Walter and the boys are working to produce the *Annual*, Steve has produced a new system for tracking progress in playing and reporting games, and the first month has moved along well. Bottom line – none of that was ever in doubt.

TBL just *works*. It comprises a group of good guys who have grown together over the years and have become more than just APBA acquaintances. As past commissioners have said more eloquently than I can, great friendships have developed that go beyond the gaming table. It never fails to amaze me the memories you all share during the draft about past years, and it has been an honor to join the league and be accepted as part of the on-going by-play. Reboulet-Man isn't quite at the Hamlinesque level, but I know I will hear about it for the rest of my days in the league. And I wouldn't want that to be any other way, Laughter is the oil that keeps the league functioning at a high level; our ability to enjoy each other is the essential difference that makes this league different from any other I have experienced.

And so I finally reach the point of this year's commissioner article – the enjoyment that we all take from our association. It is that factor that keeps Ray doing the web site management, and Clay the rosters and historical data, and Steve the new databases, and Walter and company the *Annual*. It is the reason a Hall of Fame has been developed, not just for players but also for people like Clay and Paul, who have been so much a part of the continued success of the group. It is the reason Joe stepped up to the

plate last year to serve as commissioner, and why I have done so this year. It is behind Paul's decision to become Commissioner of Vice. And it is certainly why everyone comes back and continues to play, meeting deadlines, bouncing around ideas for making the league better, and supporting each other when times get tough in their lives away from the league. Simply said, I have been in a number of leagues since I first created one in 1979. None has ever or will ever match my experience in TBL, and I am betting that the same is true for those of you who have been in other leagues.

Best wishes to everyone for another great season this year. Paul and I are assuming the position of head cheerleaders, encouraging everyone to pull together, knowing that the hard work necessary to do that is done by all of you, not us. Please contact us at anytime during the season when issues arise that make your play difficult.

Most of all, enjoy the experience. That is what we all wanted when we started playing APBA as youngsters. The game has been part of our lives during college, finding jobs, marrying, buying houses, raising kids, facing divorces or deaths in the families, and all the other life experiences we have had. It came through loud and clear as I contacted each of you during the off-season: TBL has always been, and should continue to be, first and foremost, a fun, exciting relief from the cares of life. Our goal is to be sure that we can help everyone enjoy that result once again this season.



# in memoriam

Bats: Left	Throws: Left	
Height: 6-2	Weight: 181	
Born: 4-13-40 Mineral Springs, Ark.		
William Henry		
"No. 3"		
<b>DAVIS</b>		
(F) Outfielder (2)		
11- 0-1	31- 8-2	51-10-2
12-25-6	32-26-6	52-27-6
13-40-2	33- 0-1	53-16-2
14-30-6	34-31-6	54-32-6
15-11-2	35- 9-2	55- 8-1
16-28-6	36-14-6	56-34-6
21-32-6	41-28-6	61- 9-6
22- 8-1	42-13-2	62-29-2
23-12-2	43-29-6	63-31-6
24-30-6	44- 8-1	64-13-2
25-11-2	45-14-2	65-33-6
26-30-6	46-32-6	66- 0-1



**Willie Davis (1940-2010)**

2,091 hits, 1,053 RBI, 398 SB. Willie took over center field from Duke Snider in 1961 and held that spot for 13 years. He was a five-tool talent.



Bats: Left	Throws: Right	
Height: 6-1½	Weight: 190	
Born: 9-20-26 Springfield, Ill.		
Robin Evans		
"Robbie"		
<b>ROBERTS</b>		
Grade 8 Pitcher (2)(2)		
11- 8	31-14	51-14
12-25	32-12	52-27
13-13	33- 8	53-13
14-30	34-31	54-32
15-23	35-13	55-21
16-28	36-33	56-34
21-13	41-24	61-24
22- 9	42-13	62-13
23-26	43-29	63-32
24-13	44- 9	64-13
25-36	45-14	65-35
26-13	46-13	66- 7

**Robin Roberts (1926-2010)**

286 lifetime wins, 3.41 lifetime ERA, 2,357 strikeouts. Roberts pitched for some terrible Phillies teams but still won 20 games every year, logging more than 300 innings. Elected to the Hall of Fame 1976.



Bats: Left	Throws: Left	
Height: 6-0	Weight: 165	
Born: 5-8-37 Santa Clara, Cuba		
Miguel Angel		
"Crazy Horse"		
<b>CUELLAR</b>		
(F) Grade 8 Pitcher (1)(1)(2)		
11- 7-1	31-13-1	51-13-1
12-25-6	32-26-6	52-27-6
13-13-1	33- 8-1	53-13-1
14-30-6	34-31-6	54-32-6
15-23-1	35-13-1	55-21-1
16-28-1	36-33-1	56-34-1
21-13-6	41-13-6	61-29-6
22- 9-1	42-13-1	62-13-1
23-12-1	43-29-1	63-32-1
24-27-1	44-14-1	64-13-1
25-13-6	45-36-6	65-35-6
26-30-1	46-13-1	66- 0-1

**Mike Cuellar (1937-2010)**

185-130, 3.14 ERA. He came to Baltimore for Curt Blefary in 1969 and won 20 games in four of the next six years; "Crazy Horse" is still considered one of the greatest Oriole pitchers in history.



**Ernie Harwell (1918-2010)**

The voice of the Tigers for nearly forty years, he was elected to the broadcasters' wing of the Hall of Fame in 1989. He was chosen as the voice of APBA's Broadcast Blast in 1996.

"For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone;  
the flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds has come."  
— Song of Solomon 2:11  
(read by Ernie Harwell before the first spring training game each year.)

# TBL

The Transcontinental Baseball League is a 24-team, continuous ownership APBA Baseball League that plays a 162 game season using the Master Board Game and the Computer Game. We play roughly twenty games a month from April through November. TBL uses an innovative, realistic pitching system and restricts players to real-life usage.

Our members are loyal, fun-loving and astute, and we have a high rate of retention. Now in our twenty-ninth season, our pennant races are always competitive and exciting.

TBL is always interested in adding backup managers to its roster. To get involved, send e-mail to our Commissioner, Darrell Skogen, at

**[darrell.s@comcast.net](mailto:darrell.s@comcast.net)**

or TBL's unofficial recruiter and analyst, Walter Hunt, at

**[hotc@walterhunt.com](mailto:hotc@walterhunt.com)**.