

2010 Governors' Cup Playoff Preview

August 20, 2010

For Immediate Release

Durham and Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Closing in on Playoff Berths; IL West and Wild Card Entries Still Up for Grabs

With 18 days remaining in the 2010 International League regular season, crunch time is here for teams looking to secure one of the IL's four postseason berths. The team closest to reaching that goal is the Durham Bulls, who currently have a magic number of just two to clinch the IL South Division. If tonight, like last night, Durham wins at Norfolk and Gwinnett loses to Charlotte, the Bulls could clinch their fourth straight IL South title this evening. In the IL North, the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Yankees enjoy an advantage of 6.0 games over the 2nd place Buffalo Bisons, who seemingly have a better chance of winning the Wild Card than they do catching the Yankees. The Wild Card race is led by the Louisville Bats, who at 71-54 are just a half-game behind the Columbus Clippers for the top spot in the IL West Division. Louisville briefly held a half-game lead last week before losing three straight in Columbus, but since then the Bats have won three straight at home against Syracuse while the Clippers have dropped two of three at home to Scranton/Wilkes-Barre. Each of those series will conclude tonight. The Syracuse Chiefs, now 7.5 games behind Louisville in the Wild Card race, can ill afford another loss to the Bats.

First Round Schedule (Best of Five):

September 8,9 South Division Winner at West Division Winner, North Division Winner at Wild Card Winner
September 10,11*,12* West Division Winner at South Division Winner, Wild Card Winner at North Division Winner

Governors' Cup Finals Schedule (Best of Five):

September 14,15 South/West Division Series Winner at North/Wild Card Series Winner
September 16,17*,18* North/Wild Card Series Winner at South/West Division Series Winner

* If Necessary

Help on the Way from Double-A?

Each of the postseason contenders has added players in recent weeks from within the organization who could make a major impact in the chase for the 2010 Governors' Cup. That was never more evident than Wednesday night in Louisville, when newly arrived catcher Devin Mesoraco from Double-A Carolina hit a walk-off grand slam in his first game with the Bats. Here is a look at a few of the recent arrivals in the IL to clubs looking for a late-season boost:

| <u>Club</u> | <u>Player</u> | <u>Added to Roster</u> | <u>Before Reaching Triple-A</u> |
|--------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Buffalo | OF Kirk Nieuwenhuis | August 5 | .289, 16 HR, 60 RBI, 13 SB at Double-A |
| Columbus | OF Matt McBride | July 29 | .283, 17 HR, 64 RBI at Double-A |
| Durham | INF/OF Leslie Anderson | August 5 | .304, 6 HR, 25 RBI at Double-A |
| Louisville | C Devin Mesoraco | August 17 | .313, 23 HR, 62 RBI between Class-A & Double-A |
| Scranton/WB | RHP Lance Pendleton | August 10 | 10-4, 3.43 ERA, 111 SO in 120.2 IP at Double-A |
| Syracuse | SS Danny Espinosa | August 6 | .262, 18 HR, 54 RBI, 20 SB at Double-A |



Best Regular Season Record Doesn't Guarantee Postseason Glory

The defending Governors' Cup Champions, the Durham Bulls, currently have the International League's best record in 2010 at 78-47. The Bulls mark is 4.0 games better than the IL North leading Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Yankees. While finishing with the IL's best regular season mark is certainly a worthy accomplishment, recent history suggests it doesn't guarantee success in the playoffs.

Since the League membership increased to 14 teams in 1998, just three teams who finished with the best regular season record went on to win the Governors' Cup. In the last four years, the regular season king didn't even win its first round series. (The 2008 Governors' Cup champion SWB Yankees tied Louisville with a 88-56 mark, but lost six of eight games to the Bats head-to-head and are not recognized as having the best regular season mark that year).

It wasn't always this way in the IL. During the five years the League had ten teams (1993-97), the top club in the regular season went on to win the Governors' Cup four times. (The exception was Ottawa in 1995, who upset the best regular season team, Norfolk, in the finals). Prior to 1993 the IL consisted of eight teams, and in the late 80's and early 90's, the winningest regular season club went on to postseason glory more often than not.

Governors' Cup Champions With Best Regular Season Record (Last 25 Years)

| | | |
|------|-----------|---|
| 1986 | Richmond | 80-60 (defeated Tidewater & Rochester for Gov. Cup) |
| 1988 | Rochester | 77-64 (defeated Tidewater for Gov. Cup) |
| 1990 | Rochester | 89-56 (defeated Columbus for Gov. Cup) |
| 1991 | Columbus | 85-59 (defeated Pawtucket for Gov. Cup) |
| 1992 | Columbus | 95-49 (defeated Richmond and Scranton/WB for Gov. Cup) |
| 1993 | Charlotte | 86-55 (defeated Richmond & Rochester for Gov. Cup) |
| 1994 | Richmond | 80-61 (defeated Charlotte & Syracuse for Gov. Cup) |
| 1996 | Columbus | 85-57 (defeated Norfolk & Rochester for Gov. Cup) |
| 1997 | Rochester | 83-58 (defeated Pawtucket & Columbus for Gov. Cup) |
| 1998 | Buffalo | 81-62 (defeated Syracuse & Durham for Gov. Cup) |
| 2004 | Buffalo | 83-61 (defeated Durham & Richmond for Gov. Cup) |
| 2005 | Toledo | 89-55 (defeated Norfolk & Indianapolis for Gov. Cup) |

Fit to be Tied – IL Tiebreaking Scenarios

If two teams finish tied for one postseason berth, the IL playoffs will officially expand to include both teams. The tied teams will then compete in a one-game first round series to see who will advance to the traditional four-team format. The following formula will be used to determine which club will serve as the home team for the one-game playoff:

1. Most wins in the head-to-head series
2. Club with the highest winning percentage during intradivisional play
3. Club with the highest winning percentage against other division winners
4. Coin toss

If two teams tie for a division title but the 2nd place team would still advance as the Wild Card, they will be declared co-division champions and the above formula will be used only to determine who enters the playoffs in the Division Winner slot.

Home Cooking Spells Success for 2010 Playoff Contenders

Not coincidentally, the teams who have been toughest to beat in their home ballparks this season are the teams in position for a run at the Governors' Cup playoffs. Louisville is in the midst of the biggest home winning streak in franchise history, now at 15 games.

The teams with the most home wins this season in the IL are: Durham (42), Columbus (40), Scranton/Wilkes-Barre (40), Louisville (39), Buffalo (38), and Syracuse (35).



A Day at the Races; Updates on the International League Division & Wild Card Races

NORTH DIVISION RACE: The Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Yankees (New York Yankees) are closing in on another IL North Division title. The 2nd place Buffalo Bisons (New York Mets) are 15-3 since July 30, but have picked up only 2.5 games in the standings during that stretch. Tonight the Yankees wrap up what has been a successful trip through Ohio this week. They took three of four in Toledo before winning two of the first three games in a potential playoff preview against IL West leader Columbus. Buffalo's last chance at a division title might rest in its remaining head-to-head contests against Scranton/WB. The Bisons and Yankees will get together for three games in two days at PNC Field in Pennsylvania next weekend, and two days later they will do it again – playing three games in two days at Coca-Cola Field in Buffalo. The Bisons have won six of the ten games between the two so far this year.

IL NORTH DIVISION STANDINGS

| | <u>W-L</u> | <u>Pct.</u> | <u>GB</u> | <u>Gm Rem</u> |
|---------------|------------|-------------|-----------|---------------|
| Scranton/WB | 74-51 | .592 | -- | 19 |
| Buffalo | 67-56 | .545 | 6.0 | 21 |
| Syracuse | 64-62 | .508 | 10.5 | 18 |
| Pawtucket | 54-71 | .432 | 20.0 | 19 |
| Lehigh Valley | 49-76 | .392 | 25.0 | 19 |
| Rochester | 47-79 | .373 | 27.5 | 18 |

IMPACTING THE RACE



1B Juan Miranda
 Scranton/Wilkes-Barre
 .429, 3 HR, 9 RBI
 (Current 11-game hit streak)

WEST DIVISION RACE: The Columbus Clippers (Cleveland Indians) retook the lead in the IL West last weekend when they swept a three-game series at home against the Louisville Bats (Cleveland Indians). Since July 22, the Bats have lost just four of 26 games, and all four losses have come at Huntington Park in Columbus. Luckily for the Bats, they don't return to Columbus again during the regular season. The Clippers will be in Louisville for a quick two-game set beginning next Thursday, after which they won't meet again. Louisville hopes to win the West for a third consecutive year, but the Bats are in position to bring home the Wild Card if they can't catch Columbus. Louisville currently leads Buffalo by 3.0 games for the Wild Card.

IL WEST DIVISION STANDINGS

| | <u>W-L</u> | <u>Pct.</u> | <u>GB</u> | <u>Gm Rem</u> |
|--------------|------------|-------------|-----------|---------------|
| Columbus | 72-54 | .571 | -- | 18 |
| Louisville | 71-54 | .568 | 0.5 | 18 |
| Indianapolis | 63-63 | .500 | 9.0 | 18 |
| Toledo | 58-67 | .464 | 13.5 | 18 |

IMPACTING THE RACE



OF Jose Constanza
 Columbus
 .591, 6 R, 4 RBI, 5 SB
 (Last 7 Days)

SOUTH DIVISION RACE: The Durham Bulls (Tampa Bay Rays) hope to clinch another IL South Division title as early as tonight, thanks in large part to their domination of their opponents within the South this year. Durham is 29-17 versus the South, which includes wins the last four nights against Charlotte and Norfolk. The Bulls, with a lead of 17.0 games, have a chance to finish further out in front of their division than any International League team in nearly two decades. The last club to win a division by a margin of 17.0 games or more was the 1992 Columbus Clippers, who won the West by 22.0 games over 2nd place Richmond. Durham could clinch this evening with a win at Norfolk coupled with a Charlotte victory over Gwinnett.

IL SOUTH DIVISION STANDINGS

| | <u>W-L</u> | <u>Pct.</u> | <u>GB</u> | <u>Gm Rem</u> |
|-----------|------------|-------------|-----------|---------------|
| Durham | 78-47 | .624 | -- | 18 |
| Gwinnett | 61-64 | .488 | 17.0 | 18 |
| Charlotte | 61-65 | .484 | 17.5 | 18 |
| Norfolk | 58-68 | .460 | 20.5 | 18 |

IMPACTING THE RACE



RHP Richard De Los Santos
 Durham
 6-0, 1.67 ERA, 26 SO
 (Last six starts)



WILD CARD RACE: The Wild Card leading Louisville Bats are an amazing 13-4 in August, but even more amazing is the fact that their lead over Buffalo in the Wild Card race has actually decreased by a half-game during that time. The Bisons own the League's best August record, having gone 13-3 so far this month. Pitching has been the key for Buffalo, who own an IL-best 3.27 ERA this month. The Bisons made a statement when they swept Columbus four-straight in Buffalo from August 5-8, giving them six wins in eight games this year against a team that could end up as the Wild Card. The Bisons went 5-3 against Louisville this year, but have no games remaining versus either of the teams contending for the IL West. With three doubleheaders left on their schedule, Buffalo could inch even closer to the Bats, who have just 18 games to go.

WILD CARD LEADERS

| | <u>W-L</u> | <u>Pct.</u> | <u>GB</u> | <u>Gm Rem</u> |
|--------------|------------|-------------|-----------|---------------|
| Louisville | 71-54 | .568 | -- | 18 |
| Buffalo | 67-56 | .545 | 3.0 | 21 |
| Syracuse | 64-62 | .508 | 7.5 | 18 |
| Indianapolis | 63-63 | .500 | 8.5 | 18 |
| Gwinnett | 61-64 | .488 | 10.0 | 18 |

IMPACTING THE RACE



OF Lucas Duda
 Buffalo

.351, 7 HR, 23 RBI
 (Since July 24)

SERIES TO WATCH THIS WEEK:

August 21-22: Scranton/Wilkes-Barre @ Syracuse

The Yankees hope to put more distance between themselves and the Chiefs, who are in danger of falling out of both the IL North and Wild Card races with a poor showing against their division rivals.

August 21-25: Pawtucket @ Buffalo (live on MiLB.TV)

The Bisons host Pawtucket in a rare six-game series over five days in Buffalo, where the Herd hopes to take advantage of a 4th place PawSox team that is out of the playoff picture. The Bisons managed just a split during a four-game series in Pawtucket last weekend, their only losses since August 3.

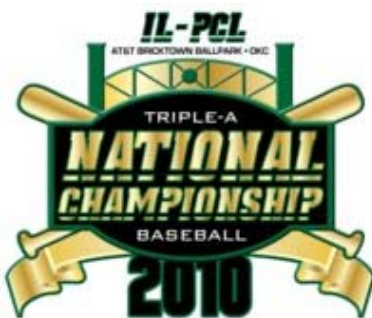
August 26-27: Columbus @ Louisville (live on MiLB.TV)

The race for the IL West could hinge on the two-game set at Louisville Slugger Field, which is the final meeting this season between the Bats and Clippers. Columbus swept a three-game series at Huntington Park last weekend to retake the division lead, and overall the Clippers have won 13 of 19 against Louisville this season.

August 26-27: Buffalo @ Syracuse

Syracuse hosts Buffalo in a key two-game series at Alliance Bank Stadium. The in-state rivals have not met since before the All-Star break.

National Championship Game Awaits Governors' Cup Champion



The International League postseason contenders will also be keeping an eye on the Pacific Coast League playoff picture as the season wraps up. The club that wins the IL's Governors' Cup trophy will advance to the one-game Triple-A Baseball National Championship in Oklahoma City on Tuesday, September 21. The winner will be crowned the champion of Triple-A Baseball for 2010. So who will the Governors' Cup Champion face in Oklahoma City? Here's a quick look at the current division races in the PCL:

| American North | | | American South | | | Pacific North | | | Pacific South | | |
|-----------------------|-------|-----|-----------------------|-------|------|----------------------|-------|------|----------------------|-------|-----|
| Iowa | 71-54 | -- | Okl. City | 65-59 | -- | Tacoma | 66-59 | -- | Fresno | 68-58 | -- |
| Omaha | 70-56 | 1.5 | Albuquerque | 61-63 | 4.0 | Salt Lake | 65-61 | 1.5 | Sacramento | 67-59 | 1.0 |
| Memphis | 69-57 | 2.5 | New Orleans | 60-65 | 5.5 | Col. Spr. | 56-69 | 10.0 | Las Vegas | 61-65 | 7.0 |
| Nashville | 65-60 | 6.0 | Round Rock | 53-73 | 13.0 | Portland | 48-78 | 18.5 | Reno | 58-67 | 9.5 |