

Northern League Opens 16th Season

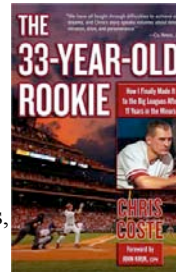
The Northern League opened their 16th season on May 15, 2008 as the longest tenured independent league in baseball. For the first time since 1995, the league will consist of six teams: Winnipeg Goldeyes (15th season), Fargo-Moorhead RedHawks (13th season), Schaumburg Flyers (10th season), Gary Southshore RailCats (7th season), Joliet JackHammers (7th season), and Kansas City T-Bones (6th season). The 96-game regular season spans from May 15th to August 31st and for the first time in modern league history, the Northern League will not consist of a split season of two halves. The top four regular season records will qualify for the post-season. The playoffs will pit the top four teams against each other in two rounds. The #1 team will face the #4 finisher and the #2 team will square-off against the #3 team. Each of the two playoff rounds will consist of a best-of-five series.

The 2008 Season Off and Running

The Gary Southshore RailCats began their defense of the 2007 Northern League Title opening the season at home with a 3-0 loss to Joliet. They proceeded to lose seven of their first nine games. On the other hand, the front-running Kansas City T-Bones sit atop the league with a 12-4 record, including five of six wins over the defending champs and a sterling 8-1 record on the road. Fargo-Moorhead sits in second place, only two and a half games back. The T-Bones and RedHawks are set to meet for the first time in the '08 season in a three-game set in Kansas City beginning Friday, June 6th.

NL Alumnus Chris Coste Releases his Book "The 33-Year-Old Rookie"

"Coste detailed his 11-year journey through the minor leagues in his autobiography, "The 33-Year-Old Rookie," which was released March 4th, 2008 during spring training. The former RedHawks player wrote the book himself, spending countless hours recalling his memories and typing on his laptop. The book tells a straightforward story, giving readers an opportunity to understand the obstacles and tough times minor leaguers and marginal players endure. Despite many ups-and-downs, Coste never quit. His perseverance finally paid off when the Phillies called up him on May 21, 2006." USA TODAY



Northern League Alumni

Over the previous 15 years, the Northern League has moved 622 players to major league organizations. Below is a list of current NL Alumni playing with affiliated teams:

Fargo-Moorhead – Chris Coste (Phillies – Majors), Jon Weber (Rays – AAA), Darryl Lawhorn (A's – A)

Gary – Tim Byrdak (Astros – Majors), Nathan Haynes (Rays – AAA), Willie Glen (Marlins – AAA), Chad Blackwell (Blue Jays – A), Todd Martin (Indians – A), Jose Yopez (Mariners – A)

Joliet – Tim Byrdak (Astros – Majors), Alex Morales (Nationals – AA), Mike Spidale (Phillies – AA), Dennis Blackmon (Red Sox – A), Justin Fiske (Cardinals – A), Derrell McCall (Marlins – A)

Kansas City – Greg Jacobs (Dodgers – AA), Darryl Lawhorn (A's – A)

Schaumburg – Brandon Villafuerte (Marlins – AAA), Brad Ziegler (A's – AAA), Gabe DeHoyos (Padres – AA), R.J. Swindle (Phillies – AA)

Winnipeg – Brian Myrow (Padres – Majors), George Sherrill (Orioles – Majors), Matt Davis (Marlins – A), Mike Wagner (Mariners – A)

Recent Alumni News: Baltimore closer George Sherrill ranks second in the Major Leagues with 17 saves. The former Goldeyes lefty was acquired by the Orioles on February 8, 2008 in a six-player trade with the Seattle Mariners for Eric Bedard. Sherrill is currently 1-1 with a 3.42 ERA and has successfully converted 17 of 19 save opportunities. He was originally purchased by the Seattle Mariners from the Goldeyes on July 2, 2003.



RailCats and JackHammers Franchises Mirror in Won-Loss Record

Entering the 2008 season, Gary Southshore and Joliet had nearly identical franchise won-loss records. After seven full seasons, Joliet was 265-299 (.470) while Gary was 265-300 (.469). However, the RailCats hold the upperhand in the post-season going a combined 16-13 (.552), including league championships in 2005 and 2007. Joliet was 0-3 (.000) in their lone post-season appearance in 2002.

Standings

	W	L	GB	Pct.
Kansas City	12	4	----	.750
Fargo-Moorhead	9	6	2.5	.600
Joliet	9	7	3.0	.563
Schaumburg	6	10	6.0	.375
Gary	6	10	6.0	.375
Winnipeg	5	10	6.5	.333

Home Record

	W	L	Pct.
Fargo-Moorhead	5	1	.833
Joliet	4	3	.571
Kansas City	4	3	.571
Gary	4	5	.444
Schaumburg	3	6	.333
Winnipeg	3	6	.333

Road Record

	W	L	Pct.
Kansas City	8	1	.889
Joliet	5	4	.556
Fargo-Moorhead	4	5	.444
Schaumburg	3	4	.429
Winnipeg	2	4	.333
Gary	2	5	.286

Attendance

	Total	Openings	Avg.
Winnipeg	49,997	9	5,555
Kansas City	32,657	7	4,665
Fargo-Moorhead	19,413	6	3,236
Joliet	22,045	7	3,149
Gary	26,397	9	2,933
Schaumburg	23,457	9	2,606
Total	173,996	47	3,702

Team Batting

	AVG	R	HR	SB
Joliet	.308	100	13	15
Kansas City	.279	108	18	25
Fargo-Moorhead	.270	81	12	13
Gary	.268	74	8	15
Winnipeg	.257	64	13	9
Schaumburg	.247	77	10	34

Team Pitching

	ERA	ER	BB	SO
Kansas City	2.81	45	51	98
Fargo-Moorhead	4.13	63	62	108
Joliet	4.30	69	63	117
Gary	4.64	76	69	119
Winnipeg	4.85	71	38	116
Schaumburg	6.52	104	69	82

Team Fielding

	%	G	E	TC
Fargo-Moorhead	.984	15	10	620
Schaumburg	.972	16	18	641
Gary	.971	16	19	648
Kansas City	.970	16	19	627
Winnipeg	.967	15	19	576
Joliet	.963	16	24	642

Power Rankings

	Rank	Pts	Previously
Kansas City	1	26	-
Fargo-Moorhead	2	24	-
Joliet	3	20	-
Gary	4	15.5	-
Schaumburg	5	10.5	-
Winnipeg	6	9	-

Note: Power Rankings compiled by cumulative league rank in win pct, avg, run differential, era, and fldg pct.





Manager Doug Simunic leads Fargo-Moorhead for the 13th consecutive year. Simunic has posted winning seasons in all 15 years he has managed in the Northern League (812-515, .612) and has qualified for post-season play in 14 of those 15 seasons. Under his helm, the RedHawks have averaged 56 wins a season since they joined the league in 1996. The Hawks returned seven players from their 2007 squad; a team that had the second-best record in the league (57-38, .600), and won the North Division Second Half Title. Veterans Joe Mathis and Ruben Salazar are expected to lead the '08 team offensively, while pitching stalwarts Dane Renkert (13-1 in '07) and Nate Cotton (22 saves) return from last year's pitching staff.



The defending Northern League Champion Gary Southshore RailCats, managed by Greg Tagert, return nine players from their 2007 squad that posted the best record in the league (58-38, .604). Tagert, who joined the RailCats after managing nine years in the Frontier League, has enjoyed winning seasons every year of his managing career. With the RailCats for three seasons, Tagert has a sterling 169-136 (.554) career record and has led the team to the league championship series every year, taking home the crown in both 2005 and 2007. Tony Cogan, the league leader with 25 saves in '07, returns for '08 but is making the move to the starting rotation. So far, he is 1-1 with a 1.05 ERA.



Former major leaguer Wally Backman became the JackHammers fourth manager in franchise history this past off-season. He brings with him an impressive record of success, with won three league championship titles in his managerial career (1999 Tri-City/Western League, 2002 Birmingham/Southern League, and 2007 South Georgia/South Coast League). The JackHammers return five players from their '07 team, including the defending home run champ (Juan Diaz - 28) and ERA champ (Brian Forystek - 2.73). Backman also brought in five players from his championship winning team in South Georgia, including the South Coast League's batting champ (Doc Brooks - .353).



Kansas City manager Andy McCauley returns to the T-Bones for the second consecutive season after four successful seasons leading the Schaumburg Flyers. The 2004 Northern League Manager of the Year, has nine players returning from a squad that went 44-52 (.458) in 2007. Expected to lead the way offensively are Brad Correll and 2007 NL All-Star second baseman Rob Watson. Correll returns to the T-Bones after being signed by the Boston Red Sox organization midway through last season. Watson batted .343 and reached base safely in 45 of 46 home games last year. He also amassed a 44-game consecutive on-base streak in '07 for the T-Bones.



Schaumburg will be skipped for the second straight season by manager Steve Maddock. Maddock joined the Flyers from the Winnipeg Goldeyes organization where he served as Bench Coach and Director of Player Procurement in 2006. He has previously coached and managed eight seasons, including leading the San Angelo Colts to the 2002 Central League Title. On the field in '08, the Flyers do not return any players from last season's team that went 39-57 (.406). Former major league outfielder, Rontrez Johnson, is expected to lead the Flyers offensively. In nine professional seasons, he has 212 career stolen bases. Jim Popp, who pitched in Schaumburg in 2006, returns to the Flyers after not pitching in 2007.



Former Winnipeg pitcher Rick Forney, enters his third season at the helm of the Goldeyes and his 12th with the organization. He pitched three seasons for the Fish prior to being the pitching coach for six years. As manager, Forney has led the Goldeyes to consecutive appearances in the playoffs posting a 104-87 (.545) career managerial record. The 2008 squad returns eight players from last year's team that went 52-43 (.547), including two-time NL All-Star outfielder, Fehlandt Lentini, and slugger Brent Metheny. Lentini has led the league in stolen bases two years in a row (57 in '06 and 45 in '07) and Metheny ranked second in the league with 21 home runs in '07.

League Leaders



AVG
Doc
BROOKS
.390

2	Max Poulin	WIN	.383
3	Juan Diaz	JOL	.373
4	Neb Brown	KC	.366
5	Nick McIntyre	JOL	.362

HR

Brad
CORRELL
5



2t	Steve Mortimer	F-M	4
2t	James Fasano	KC	4
2t	Max Poulin	WIN	4
2t	Kevin West	WIN	4

RBI

Brad
CORRELL
23



2	James Fasano	KC	16
3	Juan Diaz	JOL	15
4	Tanner Townsend	GAR	14
5t	several players at		13

WINS

Anthony
BOUGHNER
3



1t	Aaron Trolia	JOL	3
3t	Brett Lawson	F-M	2
3t	Brian Holford	GAR	2
3t	Ricardo Rivas	KC	2

ERA

Brian
BEUNING
0.54



2	Tony Cogan	GAR	1.05
3	Anthony Boughner	KC	1.44
4	Aaron Trolia	JOL	2.36
5	Kenny Durost	KC	2.65

STRIKEOUTS

Aaron
TROLIA
23



2t	Brett Lawson	F-M	21
2t	Dane Renkert	F-M	21
4t	Billy Phillips	GAR	20
4t	Brian Beuning	WIN	20