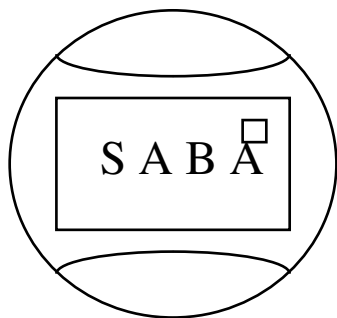
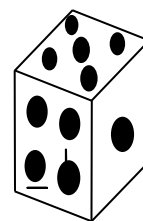




PASTIMES

Newsletter of the Southern APBA Baseball Association



August 10, 2021

Forty-eighth Season

Number 9

Bob Grant (President/Statistician)

Open (Vice-President)

David Wassermann (E. C.)

SUMMIT WINS THIRD STRAIGHT TITLE

The Summit Antelope made it three SABA championships in a row, disposing of their surprise wildcard opponent, the Galveston Grey Sox, in six games. The Antelope pitching staff was better than ever, with Randy Johnson, Pedro Martinez, and Al Leiter all having superb seasons. World Series highlights, as well as summaries of the other playoff series, are included starting on page 3 (edited from the various managers' e-mail accounts)..

DON'T FORGET 2001 ROOKIE DRAFT

Remember that the 2001 SABA Rookie Draft will be held on Saturday, August 14th, starting at 1:30 p.m. Central Daylight Time. Mike Landin will be setting it up on Slack again as he has the last few years. If you are unable to attend the draft, be sure to send me a detailed list of your choices several days in advance of the draft, or get another manager to draft for you.

2000 SABA ALL-STAR TEAM

CAPITOL CONFERENCE

Will Clark (Red Hook)
Ray Durham (Lawrenceville)
*Troy Glaus (Red Hook)
*Alex Rodriguez (Charleston)
*Mike Piazza (Cleveland)
*Richard Hidalgo (Red Hook)
*Barry Bonds (Charleston)
Andrew Jones (Cleveland)
*Todd Helton (Charleston)
Jeff D'Amico (Charleston)
*Robb Nen (Charleston)

POS

1B
2B
3B
SS
C
OF
OF
OF
DH
SP
RP

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

*Carlos Delgado (Dixie)
*Jose Vidro (Dixie)
Travis Fryman (Galveston)
Nomar Garciaparra (Galveston)
Jorge Posada (Walled Lake)
*Darin Erstad (Summit)
Lance Berkman (Green Bay)
Moises Alou (Galveston)
Mark McGwire (Greenville)
*Geff Maddux (Evanston)
Danny Graves (Summit)

* Consensus Choice

HELTON NAMED PLAYER OF YEAR, M V P

Charleston slugger Todd Helton was voted both Player of the Year and Most Valuable Player by SABA managers. Helton hit .343 with 43 homeruns and a league leading 164 RBI. He also hit 55 doubles and had a slugging percentage of .647 and an on-base average of .424. Teammate Alex Rodriguez was second in the voting for both awards. Helton helped lead the Riverdogs to the Continental Division pennant.

MADDUX WINS FIFTH CY YOUNG AWARD

Greg Maddux, the nifty veteran righthander, won his fifth Cy Young Award. The crafty hurler won 24 games, or 41% of the wins by his last place Evanston team. He led the league in ERA, 2.53, complete games, and shutouts. His other Cy Young Awards came in 1992, 1993, 1994, and 1998. Last year's Cy Young Award winner, Randy Johnson of Summit, finished second in the voting. Johnson's teammate, Al Leiter, was third.

RAY KING IS ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

Pitchers dominated the Rookie of the Year voting. Top finisher was reliever Ray King of Lawrenceville. King became the closer for the Leatherbacks, saving 29 games with an ERA of 2.33. Carmel's Rick Ankiel and Oregon's Barry Zito finished second and third.

GEORGE KILMER AGAIN MANAGER OF THE YEAR

Ho-hum. Another World Series championship and another Manager of the Year Award for Summit skipper George Kilmer. It was the third championship in a row for the Antelope.

TRADES

These are the trades I have that affect the draft order. If you have made other trades that need to be added to this list, let me know ASAP.

Mudville trades Jeff Frye to Walled Lake for DC6WA01.

Oregon trades Shane Reynolds to Dixie for DC7DX01.

Mudville trades Cal Ripken, Jr. to Dixie for DC8DX01.

Zukey Lake trades Travis Miller to Red Hook for DC5RH01.

Platte Valley trades Tino Martinez to Mudville for DC3MV01.

Lawrenceville trades DC1LA01 and DC3LA01 to Dixie for DC1DX01 and David Bell.

--WORLD SERIES--

SUMMIT WINS THIRD STRAIGHT TITLE

And so it begins! Galveston has passed every hurdle to reach this challenge and hopes to displace Summit from the summit of the league. It won't be easy, but that's what the dissidents said of the last two series as well. So, here we go

Game 1: Pedro Martinez was given the honor of starting the first game, matching up against Willie Blair. Edgardo Alfonzo got the first hit of the series with a single in the first, and Martinez was uncharacteristically wild, hitting Moises Alou with a pitch to put two aboard. He settled down at that point, however, retiring the next 11 batters before once again allowing two to reach base in the fifth. A double play ended that hope. Blair, meanwhile, allowed a single baserunner in four of the first six innings. Only one of them got as far as second, as the two hurlers matched zeros through six innings. Deivi Cruz's error put Travis Fryman on in the seventh, but the next two batters hit easy flies to left field. Jeff Kent finally moved a runner past second for Summit, leading off the 7th with a big fly that carried just beyond Benny Agbayani's leaping glove. Roberto Hernandez allowed two runners in his inning of work in the 8th, but neither scored. Martinez shut down the Grey Sox bats in the final two frames and the Antelope bounded out in front with the 1-0 thriller.

Game 2: Albie Lopez was selected to try to tie the series against Glendon Rusch, who had been pitching very well throughout the playoffs. Summit struck first with 2 runs in the second inning, and Frank Thomas and Michael Tucker matched solo homers during the next three frames. The Antelope held the 3-1 lead through the sixth, and when Fryman doubled to begin the 7th, Rusch gave the ball to LaTroy Hawkins. The trusty reliever retired 3 straight, and Rick White did the same for the Sox. With one out in the 8th, Jason Kendall drew a walk. Danny Graves was called upon to put out the threat, but he walked the next two batters. Alou smashed a triple, 3 runs scored and suddenly Galveston had taken a 4-3 lead. A lazy fly to left and a popup to short left Alou at third base, and Hernandez was given the ball with a lead to protect, but the fickle finger of fate fluctuated yet again. Gerald Williams' grounder bounced off the heel of Alfonzo's glove for an error, and Hernandez pitched a little too far inside, catching Thomas in the forearm. Thomas walked slowly to first, glowering at Hernandez all the way. Although Hernandez later denied that the imposing stare had bothered him, Kent unloaded on his next pitch, hitting a no-doubter into the upper echelons of the right field stands. Summit regained the lead by a 6-4 count and six batters, six outs later, took the 2-0 lead in the series by that margin.

Game 3: Randy Johnson v. Andy Benes. Galveston started the scoring in the bottom of the 1st when Kendall led-off with a HR. Summit took the lead in the top of the 4th when Williams and Thomas led off with singles and scored on singles by Brad Fullmer and Danny Bautista. The Grey Sox tied the game in the bottom of the 4th on a solo HR by Alou. Galveston's pitching then held the Antelope scoreless the rest of the way, while the home team added a run in the 7th on a solo HR by Fryman, and another in the 8th when Kendall scored on a two-out single by Alou. Final score: Galveston 4, Summit 2.

Game 4: Al Leiter v. Willie Blair. The Antelope took an early lead in the 1st when Kent hit a two out 2-run HR, scoring Thomas. Although Kendall again hit a lead-off HR in the bottom of the first, Galveston only mustered one more run, in the 6th, as Summit trampled the home team 12-2, with 15 hits and 2 HRs by Kent and Fullmer, even though the Antelope hit into 4 double plays. Darin Erstad was injured in the 9th, but was only out for the remainder of the game.

Game 5: Pedro Martinez v. Albie Lopez. Galveston started the scoring in the 1st when Kendall walked, moved to second on a ground out and scored on a single by Nomar Garciaparra. The Antelope tied the score in the 2nd on a solo HR by Ivan Rodriguez. The Grey Sox retook the lead in the bottom of the 2nd on a lead-off HR by Rondell White. Rodriguez helped Summit retake the lead in the 4th with his second HR--a two-run blast that scored Kent. Later in the inning, Mike Lowell hit a foul strike that hit Kendall and injured him through Game 6. In the bottom of the 5th, A. J. Pierzynski, who replaced Kendall, reached first on a lead-off error by Kent, moved to second on a ground-out by Alfonzo, and to third on a wild pitch by Martinez; then, with two outs, Alou walked and Fryman hit a 3-run HR to make the score 5-3. In the 7th, the Grey Sox added 2 more runs, when Alfonzo walked (Martinez gave up 5 walks!) and moved to third on a double by Garciaparra, and both scored on a two-out single by White. The Antelope added 2 runs in the 8th off Hernandez, when Thomas walked and scored on a triple by Kent, who scored on a SAC fly by Rodriguez (his 4th RBI of the game). Armando Benitez then shut down Summit in the 9th after giving up a lead-off double to Cruz. Final score: Galveston 7, Summit 5 (Martinez took the loss even though 3 of the runs were unearned.)

Game 6: Two surprise visitors in the Summit clubhouse were Brian McRae and Paul Assenmacher. The two had been part of the Antelope's championship team of 1998, and had both retired from SABA prior to the 99 campaign. Game 6 starter Glendon Rusch said, "Although I never had the pleasure of playing with either of them, their enthusiasm for the game and the team made me want even more to go out and give it my best shot." The Grey Sox, however, had incentive of their own. . . .

In each of the first two innings, each team put a runner aboard; three of the four were left on base, the fourth was erased in a double play. Jose Valentin got his first hit of the series with a bomb to lead off the third, Alfonzo walked and Garciaparra tripled him in. Garciaparra then scored on Fryman's sac fly, and Galveston held a 3-0 lead. Summit loaded the bases in the bottom of the 3rd, and Kent hit a lazy fly to right to end the threat. Benes stranded 6 Antelope runners, through 4 innings, aided by 2 double plays. Three straight singles in the 5th brought in the first run for the defending champions, and Thomas' double drove in two more to tie the score. Kent walked, but Benes did not let the next two batters get the ball out of the infield. The bullpens took over in the 7th and kept the score tied at 3. Alou doubled with one out in the 8th, and Pierzynski's 3rd single of the game drove in the go-ahead run. Hernandez held the lead in the bottom of the frame, Mike Fetters retired 3 in the 9th, and Benitez confidently took the mound. Cruz hit a double into the gap in right center, but Lowell struck out. Erstad drew a walk to put the winning run aboard, but Williams popped out to right field. Thomas dropped a single into left to drive in the tying run and move Erstad to third, and Kent fouled off four pitches before finally drawing a walk to load the bases. Bases loaded, 2 out, tied game. . . nowhere to put Rodriguez, so Benitez had to pitch to him. Pudge smashed the ball into right field for what would have been extra bases, but was only credited with a single as Erstad trotted home with the winning run. A great ending to a fantastic series.

FIRST ROUND PLAYOFF SERIES

GALVESTON UPSETS RIVERDOGS

In the series opener Charleston started Jeff D'Amico (18-2, 3.10 ERA) versus Albie Lopez (15-6, 4.60). Charleston got on the board early with a double by Alex Rodriguez in the bottom of the first, followed by a two run homer from Barry Bonds. The Grey Sox tied it in the third on an RBI triple by Edgardo Alfonzo and a sac fly by Nomar Garciaparra. The Riverdogs played small ball in the bottom of the third as Johnny Damon singled, stole second, moved to third on a groundout and scored on Bonds' sac fly. Charleston added two more in the 5th on an RBI triple from Damon, who scored on Todd Helton's base hit, to give the Riverdogs a 5-2 lead. Garciaparra brought Galveston within two with a solo homer in the 6th, but Charleston answered when Alex Rodriguez drilled a three run homer, ending Lopez' night. Michael Tucker homered in the 7th to make it 8-4, but Ricky Rincon threw two shaky but scoreless innings and Charleston claimed a 1-0 series lead.

Game 2: Charleston's 19-game winner Andy Pettitte got the start against Andy Benes. This time, Galveston struck early. Jason Kendall and Alfonzo singled to start the game and after an error filled the bases, Moises Alou emptied the bases with a grand salami, and the Grey Sox were up 4-0 before most fans had found their seats. The teams traded single runs and Galveston took a 5-1 lead into the bottom of the fourth. Charleston roared back with solo homers by Helton and Aaron Boone, followed by singles by David Segui and Greg Zaun before Damon doubled both home to tie the game at 5. In the bottom of the fifth, the roof caved in on Benes. Following a walk to Bonds, Helton hit a two run blast for his second homer in as many innings. A single, a double and a walk then loaded the bases. With Benes downgraded, Rick Aguilera took the mound and Greg Zaun greeted him with a two run double. Another run scored on a sac fly by Damon and Charleston was up 10-5. The Riverdogs added two more in the 7th, as Helton doubled home two runs to give him five RBIs and Charleston took game 2, by a score of 12-5.

When the Grey Sox came home, they completely turned the tables on Charleston. Galveston changed their lineup for Game 3, substituting Olmedo Saenz at DH for Jose Valentin. The change paid off as Saenz started the scoring in the 2nd with a solo HR. Although Charleston outhit Galveston, another HR by Alonzo in the 5th, and RBIs from Mark Grace and Rondell White was all that was needed. Charleston hit into two double plays and the big bats, except for Helton, were silent. Charleston did score on singles by Helton and Segui in the 4th, on an error by Garciaparra and a triple by Helton in the 5th scoring Rodriguez, and a single by Segui scoring Dye in the 6th. Final score: Sox 4, Riverdogs 3.

Neither team scored until the 4th inning of Game 4, when Helton hit a solo HR, and Garciaparra drove in Jason Kendall. Charleston took the lead in the top of the 6th with a solo HR by Damon. The Riverdogs increased their lead to 4-1 in the top of the 8th, when Damon reached on an error and scored on a 2-run HR by Helton. But the Grey Sox responded in the bottom of the 8th, scoring 4 runs to take the lead 5-4. Armando Benitez saved the victory for Galveston.

The Grey Sox completed their home sweep with a 9-3 pasting of the Continental Division champions in Game 5. They started the scoring in the bottom of the 3rd, tallying 5 runs off 3 HRs by Michael Tucker, Garciaparra and Travis Fryman. They increased the lead to 6-1 after five. The Riverdogs tried to make a comeback, scoring two runs in the 6th on a Helton base-hit, but Kendall's 2-run HR in the bottom of the salted the game away.

Charleston returned home for Game 6 down three games to two. They sent Jarrod Washburn to the mound to face Willie Blair. The Grey Sox struck first on a two run homer by White in the top of the second, but Charleston answered with a three-run shot by Jermaine Dye in the bottom half of the frame. The Riverdogs extended their lead when David Segui cracked a two-run homer in the 4th. With Rick Aguilera on the mound for Galveston, Charleston plated two more in the fifth with RBI singles by Dye and Todd Walker. The Riverdogs added two more in the 6th on a solo homer by Aaron Boone and later, on an RBI single from Helton. After seven innings, and with a 9-2 lead, Washburn tired and Eddie Guardado was brought in to finish up. But Galveston finished Guardado, with three singles and an error to make it 9-4. Enter Jim Mecir, who gave up a walk to load the bases, bringing up Jose Valentin, who

cleared the bases with a double, bringing the Grey Sox within two. Charleston again extended its now precarious lead, as Barry Bonds cracked a two run homer in the bottom of the 8th. Robb Nen worked a scoreless ninth to preserve Charleston's 11-7 victory, as the series moved to a decisive seventh game.

For the third time, the matchup was Jeff D'Amico (MG 15, pitching as an 'A') for Charleston and Albie Lopez (MG 8, but pitching as a 'B') for Galveston. Charleston got on the board in the first on a single by Boone and an RBI double by Rodriguez. Galveston could do nothing with D'Amico through four innings, but despite one out doubles in both the third and fourth innings, Charleston could not extend the lead. With two outs in the top of the fifth, Tucker doubled and Valentin tripled him home to tie the game at 1. D'Amico settled down after that, while Galveston turned to the bullpen, with Rick White pitching a scoreless 7th and Roberto Hernandez a scoreless eighth. In the top of the ninth, Normar Garciaparra drew a walk. Moises Alou doubled into the gap in left center, scoring Garciaparra to break the tie. Then Travis Fryman cracked a two run homer to give the Grey Sox a 4-1 lead. Armando Benitez was called on for the save, and he delivered a one-two-three ninth inning as Galveston claimed a 4-1 victory to take the Round One series in seven games.

WALLED LAKE OUTLASTS RED HOOK

Great Lakes Division champion Walled Lake was pushed to the limit by Red Hook, but the Walleyes moved on to the second round after downing the Turtles in 7 games, with the final game going eleven innings.

The opener matched Ryan Dempster for Walled Lake with Red Hook's Jeff Weaver. Despite rolling only a 12 for his grade, Weaver outpitched Dempster for the first four innings, scattering three singles and striking out 8. Dempster loaded the bases in both the third and fifth inning, but managed to pitch out of both jams without giving up a run. The Walleyes finally got on the board in the 5th with three singles, chasing Weaver. Ryan Kohlmeier (Grade A) came on in relief, but had even less success. He loaded the sacks and then gave up a bases clearing double to Billy Spiers. Walled Lake added back-to-back homers by Jeff Bagwell and J D. Drew in the 7th. Dempster took the shutout into the 9th, but needed relief help from Felix Rodriguez, when he gave up a walk, two singles and a double. A wild pitch, an error, and a stolen base added to Dempster's grief.

The Turtles greeted Walled Lake starter Frank Castillo harshly in Game 2, scoring two runs in both the first and second innings. The Walleyes got three of the runs back in their second on homeruns by Drew and Chris Richard. After three innings the score was 8-4. The Walleyes used several other pitchers, but none of them could stop the Red Hook barrage. Jason Giambi and Will Clark added homeruns as the Turtles took an easy 17-9 win.

Moving to Red Hook, Game 3 started with a bang. Bagwell's 2-run homer gave Walled Lake a quick lead, but the Turtles answered with three runs in the bottom half of the inning. Jim Edmonds singled in Brian Giles, who had doubled, and Richard Hidalgo cleaned up with a homerun. Red Hook added two more runs in the fourth. Walled Lake didn't score again in the game. Each team only managed 5 hits, but Red Hook had six walks and Walled Lake had seven walks. Red Hook won 5-2.

Game 4 was a wild affair as Red Hook took a 2-0 lead in the first on rbis by Giambi and Clark. Walled Lake tied the game 2-2 on solo homers by Jorge Posada and Richard. Walled Lake took a 7-2 lead with five runs in the 3rd inning. The inning started with four straight singles, scoring three runs, and a two-run homer by Richard. Red Hook made a comeback in the bottom of third with three runs, on a run scoring double by Troy Glaus and a two-run homer by Giambi. In the fourth a walk to Spiers and a double by Jeter made it 8-5 Walled Lake. Not giving up, Red Hook tied the score in the bottom of the fourth on a three run homer by Glaus. In the top of fifth Walled takes a 9-8 lead, as Justice doubles, moves to third on a fly out, and scores on a wild pitch. Both bullpens shut down the other team and the scoring ended, giving Walled Lake a 9-8 win.

Through the first four innings of Game 5, both teams got a solo home run, Richard for Walled Lake and Giambi for Red Hook. In the bottom of the fifth Red Hook took a 3-1 lead as Renteria singled, Eric Young walked and Jim Edmonds scores both on a double. A two-run homer by Drew in top of sixth ties the score at 3-3. Red Hook gets another solo homer by Giambi in the bottom of the sixth to take the lead back 4-3. In the top of the seventh Walled Lake tied the score on a Justice homer. Red Hook took a 7-4 lead in the bottom of the seventh on a three-run homer by Edmonds. Walled Lake rallied to tie the score at 7-7 on a two run homer by Drew and solo homer by Posada. The game was tied going into the bottom of the ninth.

Rich Garcés struck out Edmonds to start the inning, but gave up a double to Hidalgo. Felix Rodríguez (AXY) entered the game and gave up two walks to load the bases with one out. Clark then hit a long fly to center and Hidalgo scored the winning run on the SF. Red Hook won 8-7 and took a 3-2 series lead. Red Hook scored 8 runs on 6 hits, but 9 walks.

In Game 6 Red Hook took the lead in the 2nd on Glaus' solo HR and added another run in the 3rd on three singles. A sacrifice fly by Drew got WA on the board in the 3rd. Red Hook starter then loaded the bases and walked Richard to tie the score. Walled Lake really got going in the 4th with 2 doubles and three straight walks. David Justice cleared the bases with another double before Todd Van Poppel stopped the rally. The teams traded some additional runs, but Walled Lake eased to a 10-4 win.

The decisive 7th Game was a rematch of Weaver vs Dempster. Red Hook took the early lead off a wild Dempster, who walked the bases loaded, but gave up only one run on a sacrifice fly. The Walleyes tied it up in the 4th on Posada's run scoring double. Red Hook reclaimed the lead on solo homeruns leading off the 6th and 7th inning. Walled Lake retied the game in the 7th on Jon Nunnally's two-run triple. With the game tied, it went into extra innings. Finally, in the 11th, Walled Lake's Justice walked and was doubled home by Richard for the hard-fought series victory.

CLEVELAND EDGES DIXIE

The series opened with an exciting game. Both starting pitchers were upgraded, Bartolo Colon to an A, Cal Eldred to a B. Dixie struck first, with walks and an error giving them a 2-0 lead going to the bottom of the 4th. Mike Piazza got the Spiders within one with a HR and the score stayed 2 to 1 until the bottom of the 8th. Colon pitched extremely well through 7, but the W became a liability in the late innings, so Dixie went to the bullpen. Tim Worrell walked a batter in the 8th and Adrian Beltre followed with a homerun giving Cleveland a 3-2 lead. Mike Myers was within one out of a save in the 9th when Ken Griffey, Jr. tied the game with a long homerun. Mariano Rivera got safely through the 10th inning and Greg Swindell tried to mirror him. He retired the first two batters, but Beltre singled and Piazza ended the game with a walk-off 4-bagger.

Game Two featured 19 runs and 18 hits. Cleveland led 2-1 when the Chiefs struck for 8 runs, sending 12 batters to the plate. The Spiders began chipping away at the 9-2 Dixie lead, scoring two runs in the 5th on a Beltre homer and 3 in the 6th on a 3-run blast by Jay Bell. Going to the 9th with a 9-7 advantage, the Dixie reliever, this time Mike Fyhrie, again got the first two men out. Mike Cameron cut the lead to a single run with another homerun. After Beltre walked, Piazza again came up. Dixie considered walking Piazza after all the damage he had done so far in the series, but Gary Sheffield, another slugger, was on-deck. The Chiefs pitched to Piazza and the veteran catcher slugged another walk-off homerun.

As often happens, things changed when the playing site changed to Dixie. The Chiefs got off to a hot start in Game 3 and continued it throughout the game. Cleveland went hitless until the ninth inning. Meanwhile, John Vander Wal was on fire. He hit three homers in consecutive innings against three different pitchers. Vander Wal hit a 2-run bomb deep to center in the 3rd, an ICBM to left with two men on in the 4th, and a blast in the 5th way over the left centerfield fence with a man on. Dixie shortstop Rich

Aurelia added to the carnage with a 3-run and a 2-run homer. Jose Mercedes lost his bid for a no-hitter when pinch-hitter Gabe Kapler ripped a line drive to right and hustled it into a double. Cleveland eventually scored two runs, but the final score was 20-2 Dixie.

Cleveland started off Game 4 with back-to-back 1st inning bombs by Gary Sheffield (1 on) and Kevin Millar (solo). Dixie answered with a 1st inning solo shot by Carlos Delgado and a 2nd inning solo shot by Ken Griffey Jr. Dixie's shoddy infielding continued in the 4th with 2 errors and were compounded by a bases loaded walk to Piazza by Colon. The Spiders now led 6-2. In the 5th Eldred issued his own bases loaded free pass to Vander Wal. Dixie took the lead in the 5th with a 2 rbi triple by Aurilia and a 2 rbi double by Jose Vidro, both off Curt Leskanic. Jay Bell tied it up with a 2 out rbi hit in the 7th. With the Score 7-7, the game went into extra innings. Mike Myers and Mariano Rivera threw the final 5 innings for the Spiders while the Chiefs went with Worrell, Swindell and Fyhrie. The end came in the top of the 11th. With two on and no outs Swindell was brought in to pitch to the LH Travis Lee. Cleveland countered with the right handed Gabe Kapler. Kapler came through with a deep opposite field homer. a clutch 3-run blast to which Dixie couldn't respond. Cleveland took a 10-7 victory.

The Spiders struck first in Game 5, as they tried to eliminate Dixie. In the 1st inning they scored a run on three singles and a sacrifice fly by Sheffield. The Chiefs would not go down easily, however, and responded with three 2nd inning runs. Larry Walker and Vidro each had two-out rbis. Dixie added three more runs in the third on five hits, including homers by Scott Rolen and Griffey. Cameron and Piazza both homered in the 5th to cut Dixie's lead to 6-3. Aurilia drilled another 2-run homer in the bottom of the 5th and Sheffield tacked on a solo shot in the 8th, making the final score 8-4 Dixie.

Walks, walks, walks plagued Game 6. Cleveland's Jamey Wright walked the bases loaded in the first, leading to three runs on a SF and two singles by Griffey and Vidro. Mercedes was equally giving, walking four in a 5-run Cleveland first. The Spiders added a run in the 2nd on yet another Piazza homerun. Dixie tied the game in the 4th when Rolen doubled in three runs, including two who had walked. The Chiefs take the lead for good in the 8th as Vander Wal and Griffey slam two-run homers. This time the Dixie bullpen is solid, preserving the 10-6 win.

The 7th Game matched Bartolo Colon (A) for Dixie and Cal Eldred (C) for Cleveland. Both pitchers had W's, so walks could again play a part in the outcome. The Spiders took the early lead on a Cameron solo shot. Dixie tied the game in the 2nd when Rolen, who had doubled, scored on a ground out. In the 3rd, after Cameron hit another homerun and Piazza doubled in the third, Colon lost his control and walked the next four batters, resulting in a 5-1 Cleveland lead. Both teams scored in the 4th, with the Chiefs getting two runs with a Griffey triple the big blow and Cleveland scoring once on yet another Piazza homerun. Dixie pulls Colon for Swindell, but he has no more success, loading the bases on two singles and a walk, then giving up a 2-run single to Beltre. Cleveland just keeps scoring. Kevin Millar muscled the ball out of the Spider domicile in the 6th. In the 7th, Dixie intentionally walked both Piazza and Sheffield to load the bases with two out to pitch to Millar. Millar argued the first pitch and was ejected, leading to him being replaced by Gabe Kapler. The Chiefs' strategy failed as Kapler singled in two runs. With the score now 11-3, Dixie was desperate. Carlos Delgado hit an 8th inning homerun, but the hill was too high to climb. The Chiefs loaded the bases off Mariano Rivera in the 9th and scored two more runs when Sheffield misplayed Delgado's long fly, but that was all they could manage. The Cleveland Spiders won the game 11-6 and the series 4-3.

SUMMIT SWEEPS LAWRENCEVILLE

As Summit began a quest for a three-peat, Lawrenceville launched a plan to overthrow the current champions. For that to be successful, Mike Sirotko would need to challenge Randy Johnson in the opening game. For three innings, the two matched out for out; Frank Thomas' walk and Alex Gonzalez's double represented the only two runners. Johnson blinked first, with a walk and a single putting two aboard with 2 out in the 4th. Luis Gonzalez found the right-field bleachers and the Leatherbacks took a

3-0 lead. Summit responded immediately, as Jeff Kent followed Thomas' second walk with a homer of his own. Johnson and Sirotko reasserted their control in the fifth, and Johnson pitched out of trouble in the sixth. Darin Erstad led off the home half of that fateful inning with a single, stole second on the second pitch to Gerald Williams, and took off for third on the next pitch. Ausmus rifled the ball to Charlie Hayes, who tagged out the runner but fell to the ground. Replays were unclear whether he tripped over the bag or over Erstad's leg, but whatever the cause had been, he had to be helped off the field. The report from the clubhouse later was that he would not be able to play for the rest of the series. Although Thomas walked for the third time, Sirotko got out of the inning. Pudge Rodriguez led off the 7th with a solo blast to tie the game, and the bullpens were given responsibility for the game in the 8th. Hawkins walked a batter but he was unable to advance past first. Derek Lowe strolled confidently to the mound in the bottom of the 8th, and that confidence seemed assured when he struck out Mike Lowell. But Erstad then hit a long, long, long ball to take the lead, and Williams followed with a double into the right-field gap. Thomas walked for the 4th time, but Lowe struck Kent out. Pudge blasted one out of the park to give the Antelope a 4-run lead, and Hawkins hung on (with some adventure, as he put 2 on base in the 9th) to the 7-3 win.

David Wells was shaky from the start in game 2, walking Erstad and giving up a single to Williams. Thomas got his first hit of the series with a 2-run double, and Kent's single put a second runner on base with no outs. Wells retired the next 3 however, and Manny Ramirez parked a Pedro Martinez fastball into the bleachers to cut the lead to 2-1. Deivi Cruz led off the 2nd with a single, Lowell doubled and Erstad walked to load the bases, Williams cleared them with a triple and Thomas singled him in to take a 6-1 lead. Wells got three consecutive infield grounders to finish the inning, but he was sent to the showers after that. The Leatherback bullpen kept Summit in check until Cruz added a solo homer off Derek Lowe in the 8th. Magnificent Pedro, meanwhile, faced only 22 batters over the last 7 innings. Ausmus reached base on Bautista's error, but 12 of the 22 struck out. With the 7-1 win, Summit takes a 2-0 lead as the series heads to Lawrenceville.

The Leatherbacks came home with a sour taste in their mouth, losing their first 2 games on the road. They were looking to check that win box for Game #3.

Game #3 had Summit's Al Leiter vs. L'ville's Bruce Chen. Chen was scratched from Game #2 due to stomach bug and was hoping to have a good night. The Antelopes jumped on Chen's shakiness immediately and tagged him early. After a flyout for Erstad and a strikeout to Williams, Thomas was walked on four straight balls. Kent made Chen pay for that with a strong shot to left center field for the game's first 2 runs. Ivan Rodriguez slapped a double to right field but Brad Fullmer failed to bring him around. 2-0 Summit. Lawrenceville tried to keep it close by scoring one in the first from a double by Reggie Sanders and an RBI single by Ray Durham. Alex Gonzalez slapped a solo HR in the 2nd inning. After that, both pitchers settled down for a few innings. The Antelope started getting things going again in the 6th inning with an RBI double by Thomas scoring Williams and scoring 2 more in the 7th inning. 5 -2 Summit. That was it for Chen. He was done for the night. Summit scored 2 more in the 7th inning for a 7-2 lead. Summit's Leiter had it in cruise control and finished out smooth for the win. Final Score 7-2 Summit.

Game #4 had Curt Schilling going for the Leatherbacks. He was the final barrier to prevent a sweep by Summit. The Antelope had Glendon Rusch on the mound. Summit struck first with 2 runs in the 2nd inning from a crushing drive into the right center field stands bringing in Snow who was on 1st base from an error by L'ville's thirdbaseman. (Tatis). Rusch got into a groove and was mowing down the Leatherback batters. They had no answer to his variety of pitches. Summit scored 3 more in the 4th inning and 1 more in the 5th inning for a commanding 6-0 lead. Lawrenceville tried coming back in the 8th inning with a 3-run HR by Ryan Klesko. At this point, the Summit manager took the ball from Rusch and let Danny Graves close things out, which he had no difficulty doing. Final Score 6 -3 Summit

Unfortunately, Lawrenceville came into the playoffs limping and they left the playoffs limping. They provided little to no speed bump for the Summit Antelope. Good luck to the Antelope and their next opponents. The opponents are going to really need it.

SECOND ROUND PLAYOFF SERIES

ANTELOPE RETURN TO WORLD SERIES

Coming off a thrilling first round victory, the Cleveland Spiders hoped to continue spinning a web of mastery against the threatening Antelope at Summit. Jon Lieber was called upon to challenge Randy Johnson in the series opener. With two out in the bottom of the first, Lieber stared at the plate in disbelief when the ump called ball 4 for Frank Thomas and, apparently still upset, hung a curve for Jeff Kent to high-5 (33 on his APBA card) into the stands. Summit was up 2-0 early. Gary Sheffield blasted a solo HR in the fourth to cut the lead to a single run, but Kent singled and Pudge Rodriguez 66'd the first pitch to put the Antelope ahead 4-1. Darin Erstad doubled and Thomas walked in the 7th, causing Cleveland to bring in Curt Leskanic to pitch. Kent greeted him with a snake-eyes roll that reached the bleachers in left field. Mike Fetters and Antonio Alfonseca closed out the game for Summit, as the disheartened Spiders walked away from the 7-1 loss. Summit had 11 hits, including 3 each from Erstad, Kent and Rodriguez.

Cal Eldred took the mound to face Al Leiter in game 2, promising reporters a different result. Eldred set out to make his promise come true, but Leiter had other ideas. Both teams threatened in the early innings, but neither was able to score until Brad Fullmer launched a solo homerun to right field in the 4th and Summit grabbed a 1-0 lead. Andruw Jones hit his second double to lead off the fifth and Mike Piazza singled him in to tie the score. Fullmer untied it with his second homer in the sixth and the Antelope were once again ahead by a single run. Julio Lugo led off the lucky seventh with a double but Jones was tired of 2-base hits, so cleared the center field fence instead. Cleveland led for the first time in the series, and when Deivi Cruz walked in the bottom of the seventh, Mike Myers was called upon to hold on to the lead. Mike Lowell thwarted that thought with a double, and Erstad came to bat with 2 on and no outs. Myers uncorked a fastball that escaped Piazza, and Cruz trotted home with the tying run. Erstad singled Lowell in and Summit was once again in front. Myers prevented any further scoring, and Hawkins shut down the Spiders in the 8th. Still ahead 4-3, Graves was entrusted with the ball in the 9th. He immediately walked Bell to put the tying run aboard with no outs. Lugo struck out, as did Jones. Down to their last out, Piazza hit a long drive to right field. . .which Williams caught at the wall to end the game. The Antelopes tail-whisked the somnolent Spiders off their rumps, mashing them with their powerful hoofs once landing on the savannah ending their pitiful existence.

Game 3 moved the series to Cleveland. Despite Pedro Martinez carrying a no-hitter into the 6th, Jamie Wright amazed the home crowd by allowing only two runs (#1 - Thomas, HR, 4th inning; #2 - singles by Gerald Williams and Thomas, Kent FC) before Myers relieved in the 7th and escaped damage when the 'Lopes uncharacteristically lumbered into their third DP. However, after one out in the 8th, Myers loaded the bases (a walk to Williams, a single by Thomas, and a free pass to Kent). Mariano Rivera relieved to end the control lapse and K'd Cruz. Lowell promptly pounded a grand slam to crush the hopeful carapaces of any remaining Spider fans. Steve Reed dramatically started the 9th by getting two outs in a row! Alas, alack, then Erstad singled, scored on Williams' triple, who scored on Thomas' 4th hit of the game, making Summit's lead 8-0. With the game well under control, Arthur Rhodes slammed the trap on the Spiders with a 1 - 2 - 3 9th inning.

Cleveland scored first in Game 4 when Piazza doubled and Derrek Lee homered in the first inning. Summit evened the score with four hits and two runs (Erstad RBIs) in the 2nd. The Antelope took their normal lead in the 3rd with Kent doubling and Rodriguez homering. Spiders starter Jon was replaced by

David Weathers, who finished the inning with no more damage. Cleveland scored two in the 4th inning on a D. Lee double and an Andre Beltre homer, tying the game at 4-4. After Danny Bautista homered in the 5th to give Summit a 5-4 lead, no more scoring took place until the 9th. Both bullpens were sharp. Three outs away from another 4-game sweep, Antelope closer Danny Graves got two quick outs on ground outs by Beltre and Cameron. Jay Bell refused to scurry away, cracking a double to keep home town hopes hopping. Gabe Kapler pinch-hit for Julio Lugo and tied the game with a dramatic single, sending the game into extra innings. Cleveland broke the tie and won the game in the 11th inning.

With the two "Bigs (Hurt and Unit)" facing the Spiders in Game 5, the fans in Cleveland were hoping for the best, but planning for the worst. Cleveland scored first on an Andruw Jones homerun. They tacked on a second run in the 2nd on a sacrifice fly hit by Kapler. The Spiders called on Leskanic in the 6th, but after walking Thomas, he gave up a 2-run homer to Kent, tying the game. The score remained at 2-2 going into the 9th inning. Rivera retired the Antelope in order while Johnson was still on the mound for Summit. After intentionally walking Piazza and Sheffield, Johnson got Adrian Beltre to ground into a double play, leaving Piazza at thirdbase with two outs. Kevin Millar came to the plate. He scanned the crowd for inspiration, and, with a seemingly anemic swing, bapped the first pitch (44-8) just over 2nd base. Piazza crossed home plate. Spiders win 3-2.

With two consecutive late-inning rallies behind them, the Spiders returned to Summit. Neither Jamey Wright nor Al Leiter appeared to be in their best form, and both teams seemed to have anxieties as the game began. With one out, Cruz bobbled Andruw Jones' grounder and Leiter followed by walking Piazza. Sheffield hit the ball sharply to Kent, who began the 4-6-3 double play. Summit had at least one runner in each of the first four innings, but none of them could reach the promised land of home plate. Leiter surrendered his first hit of the game in the 4th inning, and his second immediately after, as Jones and Piazza hit back-to-back homers. Williams singled in the 9th, and Erstad took his place on a fielder's choice. Pudge Rodriguez tied the game with a blast to the grandstands. With the score tied, Leskanic replaced Wright on the mound, but Bautista foiled the plot with a big fly of his own as the Antelope lurched into the lead. Leiter escaped trouble in each of the sixth and seventh innings, and the bullpen took over for the 8th. Jones was once again the recipient of a gift when Kent could not handle his ground ball, but Piazza hit into a double play. Hoping for more of the magic he had displayed in the previous two games, Rivera came on to pitch the 8th for Cleveland. Frank Thomas greeted him by poking one out of the park for an insurance run, and Graves retired 3 in the 9th to preserve the 4-2 score (and 4-2 victory in the series).

GALVESTON WINS WORLD SERIES BERTH

Walled Lake, the Great Lakes Division champion, hosted Galveston for a spot in the SABA World Series. Game 1 was a pitching duel with Ryan Dempster for the Walleyes facing Albie Lopez for Galveston. Dempster was a little shaky early, allowing 1-2 baserunners in each of the first six innings, but giving up only one run on back-to-back doubles by Mark Grace and Michael Tucker in the 4th. Lopez gave up solo homers to Jon Nunnally in the 3rd and Jorge Posada in the 4th. Felix Rodriguez closed out the 9th allowing just a walk for a 2-1 victory.

Walled Lake outhit Galveston in Game 2, but a costly error by Jeff Bagwell to start the 4th and too many free passes cost Frank Castillo, as three walked runners scored. The Walleyes took the early lead on David Justice's 2nd inning 2-run homer. The 4th inning proved to be the difference as Galveston went E3, walk, single, double for two runs, and two ground outs scored a 3rd run. Walled Lake tied the game in the 5th when the first two batters walked and J. D. Drew singled in a run. The Grey Sox took the lead for good when Nomar Garciaparra socked a 3-run homer in the 7th. The Walleyes got a late solo homerun from Bagwell, but that ended the scoring, with the final score 6-4 Galveston.

With the series moving to Galveston, Game 3 was the definition of a pitcher's duel, as neither team scored through the top of the 7th. Lopez had held the Walleyes to 5 hits through the 7th, aided by two timely double

plays , while James Baldwin held the Grey Sox to 4 hits through six. In the bottom of the 7th, Tucker reached on an error by Drew (his second of the game) followed by a single by Jose Valentin who stole second after Tucker had moved to third. Then, Drew committed his third error of the game, allowing Tucker to score. Garciaparra hit a one-out 3-run HR to make the score 4-0. Lopez held the Walleyes hitless and scoreless in the 8th and 9th to capture a complete game shutout. Final score: Galveston 4, Walled Lake 0.

Walled Lake opened the scoring in Game 4 in the 3rd inning, when it brought 10 hitters to the plate and scored four runs. With one out, Bill Spiers doubled and scored on a 2-run HR by Quilvio Veras; Jeff Frye and Derek Jeter walked, and Bagwell was beamed, to load the bases; Drew and Posada walked in Frye and Jeter, before Galveston could get the final two outs. The Grey Sox got 2 runs back in the 5th on a double by Rondell White followed by a 2-run HR by Grace. The home team narrowed the deficit to 4-3 in the 6th when Garciaparra doubled and scored on a single by Travis Fryman. In the 9th, the Walleyes added 2 runs on a 2-run HR by Bagwell, scoring Jeter who had reached on a double. Although White hit a solo HR in the bottom of the 9th, it was not enough to catch the visitors. Final score: Walled Lake 6, Galveston 4.

The Walleyes started the scoring again in Game 5 when Frye reached on a single in the 1st and scored on a 2-run HR by Bagwell. Galveston scored one run in the 2nd when Tucker hit a two-out single to score Fryman, and then tied the score in the 3rd off doubles by Garciaparra and Moises Alou. Walled Lake retook the lead in the 4th when Drew walked and scored on a 2-run HR by Posada. The Grey Sox got a run back in the bottom of the inning, when White walked and moved to second on a wild pitch, then scored on a single by Grace. The score remained 4-3 in favor of the visitors until the 7th, due in part, to 3 timely double plays hit into by Justice, Becker and Veras. In the bottom of the 7th, Alfonzo led off with a double and scored on a single by Alou to tie the game; then, Alou moved to second on a ground-out and came home on a double by Olmedo Saenz, to give Galveston the lead. Both bullpens shut down the offenses the rest of the way. Final score: Galveston 5, Walled Lake 4.

In Game 6, back at Walled Lake, Galveston jumped out to an early lead in the 1st on Fryman's two out 3-run homer and threatened to add to it in the 2nd when Grace led off with a double and Tucker followed with a single. Grace, however, was out at the plate after Tucker stole second, and Lopez struck out the next two batters to end the threat. Bagwell's 3-run homer tied the score in the third. Then Posada, Justice, and Becker all walked to load the bases and Spiers delivered a 2-run single. Things were quiet until the bottom of the 6th. After the 1st two were out, the Walleyes went double, homer, homer, walk, single, making the score 8 – 3. Tucker led off the 7th with a homer, but that was the end of the scoring. Walled Lake 8-4.

In the decisive Game 7, Galveston took an early 1-0 lead in the 2nd inning. Bagwell belted a 2-run homer in the 3rd to give the Walleyes a 2-1 advantage. The Grey Sox responded with two on a 4th inning homer by Tucker. Galveston scored two more in the 7th when Valentin led off with a walk then Kendall doubled him home and scored all the way from 2nd on Alfonzo 's slow roller to short. Tucker led off the 9th with his 2nd homer of the game to finish the scoring as Walled Lake only managed to get 3 walks and one single after the third. Galveston wins 5-3 and advances to the World Series.