Not only are the Indians back in action, but the Indians full-season minor league affiliates in Buffalo, Akron, Kinston, and Lake County get ready to kick off their seasons on Thursday. And, with the minor league season kicking off, look out for the return of Tony's popular "Minor Happenings" weekly articles every Thursday which recap the news and developments in the Indians farm system. With that, onto the first preview, the Indians Triple-A affiliate the Buffalo Bisons.

With the start of the minor league baseball season two weeks away, we kick off our previews of the Indians four full-season affiliates today. The first stop, Triple-A level Buffalo.

Last year, Buffalo finished 73-68 and in 4th place in the North Division of the International League. It was a disappointing season all around for the Bisons, especially after making the playoffs in 2005 and 2004 with the league's best record over that two-year span, and winning the League Championship in 2004.

Much like the parent club, the Bisons did not live up to expectations and several key prospects had down years. Also, when the Indians raised the white flag on their season, several of the players who were playing well at Buffalo were called up, which left very little ammunition for Buffalo to compete with.

This season, the Bisons roster will be loaded with holdovers from last year and many of the Indians best prospects. With an abundance of talent now in the upper-levels of the minors, the Indians Triple-A affiliate will benefit, especially with so many players repeating. The Bisons roster is loaded with players at virtually every position in the lineup and in the pitching staff who can help the Indians this season, which is something you could not really say last year.

And, there are several players not listed here who figure to get a lot of action in Buffalo this year. Injuries to players at the major league level opened the door for right-hander Fausto Carmona and right-hander Tom Mastny to start the year with the Indians, and others like infielder Joe Inglett and outfielder Franklin Gutierrez are currently on the disabled list.

Minor League Affiliates

Buffalo Bisons (AAA)

Akron Aeros (AA)
Kinston Indians (High A)
Lake County Captains (Low A)
Mahoning Valley Scrappers (Short Season A)
GCL Indians (Rookie)

Buffalo Bisons Coaching Staff

Manager: Torey Lovullo
2nd season as Buffalo manager, 7th season in Indians organization

Hitting Coach: Dave Meyers
1st season as Buffalo hitting coach, 1st season in Indians organization

Pitching Coach: Scott Radinsky
1st season as Buffalo pitching coach, 3rd season in Indians organization

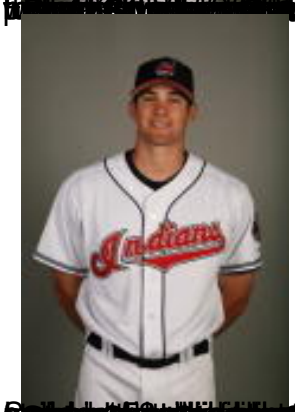
Starting Lineup & Rotation

(estimated batting order)
1. Ben Francisco CF
2. Shin-Soo Choo LF
3. Brad Snyder RF
4. Keith Ginter 3B
5. Mike Rose C
6. Jason Cooper DH
7. Ryan Mulhern 1B
8. Hector Luna SS
9. Luis Rivas 2B

#1 Starter: Adam Miller
#2 Starter: Brian Slocum
#3 Starter: Rafael Perez
#4 Starter: Jason Stanford
#5 Starter: Jeff Harris

Players to Watch

Ryan Mulhern - First Base
Age: 26 Height: 6'2" Weight: 205 Bats: Right Throws: Right



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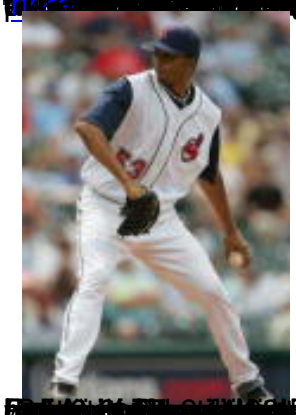

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