



# BLEACHER CREATURE

Baseball Monthly for Fans of the New Orleans Zephyrs

ISSUE # 124

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

AUGUST, 2004



Photo: Eugene Witek



Photos: Eugene Witek



Two big run producers for the 2004 Zephyrs: Mike Coolbaugh (left) and Royce Huffman

## Down the Stretch with the Zephyrs

## Several Threats in Middle of Zs Lineup

By Bill Catalanello

In a month that saw New Orleans' coaches Jim Hickey and Gary Gaetti promoted to work with newly hired manager Phil Garner in Houston, the Zephyrs struggled to a record of 10-17 in July. Despite the club's sub-.500 record, the middle of the Zs' lineup has emerged as consistently productive and fun to watch.

AUG / SEPT

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1 At Fresno	2 At Fresno	3 At Fresno	4	5 Portland 7:05	6 Portland 7:05	7 Portland 6:05
8 Portland 5:05	9 Tacoma 7:05	10 DH Tacoma 6:05	11 Tacoma 7:05	12 OFF	13 Oklahoma 7:05	14 Oklahoma 6:05
15 Oklahoma 5:05	16 Oklahoma 7:05	17 At Colo. Spgs.	18 At Colo. Spgs.	19 At Colo. Spgs.	20 At Colo. Spgs.	21 Iowa 7:05
22 Iowa 5:05	23 Iowa 7:05	24 Iowa 7:05	25 At Nashville	26 At Nashville	27 At Nashville	28 At Nashville
29 At Nashville	30 Albuq. 7:05	31 Albuq. 7:05	1 Albuq. 7:05	2 Albuq. 7:05	3 At Colo. Spgs.	4 At Colo. Spgs.
5 At Colo. Spgs.	6 At Colo. Spgs.					

### 2004 Zephyrs' Leading Run Producers

Player	Through August 2				
	AVG.	R	HR	RBI	SLG.
Chris Burke	.324	70	13	41	.518
Jason Alfaro	.324	42	12	55	.486
Royce Huffman	.302	61	9	48	.446
Mike Coolbaugh	.269	48	20	52	.563
Phil Hiatt	.232	59	25	61	.480

Source: Zephyrsbaseball.com

## THIS MONTH

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SEE YOU AT THE BALLPARK!

Second baseman Chris Burke, in his first season at the Triple-A level, has put up impressive numbers through July. Burke looks like a cinch to get a look from the Astros very soon. As August began, Burke led the club with 190 total bases, and he did much of that as manager Chris Maloney's lead-off hitter. 41 of his 119 hits were for extra bases. Burke's 28 stolen bases led the Zephyrs by a wide margin, and his infield play has been very steady—only eight errors as the everyday second baseman. When Burke joins Jason Alfaro at shortstop, Mike Coolbaugh at third and Royce Huffman at first, the four of them form perhaps the hardest-hitting infield in the Pacific Coast League.

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## A Great New Local Baseball Website

NewOrleansBaseball.com is the slick new website for “all things baseball” in and around our city. The website is beautifully designed, easy to navigate, and full of informative and enjoyable stuff, if you love the game like we do.

The “Articles” page contains some charming little nuggets of baseball lore, yours for the downloading. The “Links” page contains links to all local college baseball programs, several high school baseball web pages, SABR and the Baseball Hall of Fame. You can even download the *Bleacher Creature*, free and easy.

The “History” page presents a local baseball chronology from the earliest exhibitions played here in the nineteenth century to the modern day New Orleans Zephyrs. The “Photos” page displays an amazing array of local baseball players, managers, ballparks, and memorabilia. It’s the creation of S. Derby Gisclair, the author of the popular new pictorial history *Baseball in New Orleans*. Gisclair, a SABR member, has also initiated an equally handsome local SABR chapter website (linked on NewOrleansBaseball.com). He is currently working on a history of the New Orleans Pelicans.

—Bill Catalanello

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Photos courtesy New Orleans Zephyrs



## Carlos Hernandez Dazzles

New Orleans Zephyrs southpaw starter Carlos Hernandez had quite a streak of dominant pitching in July, and it carried right on into August. The 24-year old from Guacara, Venezuela, missed the entire 2003 season recuperating from surgery on his left shoulder. Through August 3, Carlos was sporting a record of 8–4, with a 3.74 ERA, but the numbers don’t really tell how sharp he’s been lately.

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## BLEACHER CREATURE

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*Bleacher Creature* is a conversation among baseball fans. It has been published monthly eleven times a year, since 1993. It is independent of the New Orleans Zephyrs ballclub and is made possible by our wonderfully loyal subscribers, supporters, contributors and friends.

## Johnny Powers Holds All-Time N.O. Single Season HR Mark

Phil Hiatt of the Zephyrs, having hit 25 home runs through July, has an excellent chance of breaking the New Orleans Zephyrs' season home run record held by Daryle Ward, who hit 28 in 1999.

The all-time New Orleans single season home run record was established by New Orleans Pelicans slugger J.C. "Johnny" Powers, who hit 39 homers in 1956.

Powers' season began as anything but a big home run year. As the month of May ended, Powers had hit only 9 homers. He hit 5 more in June. Then he began a home run famine between June 27 and July 23—four weeks without a round-tripper. He hit well during the home run drought, however, batting .302 in 23 games, with zero homers.

As July, 1956 came to a close, Powers rediscovered his home run stroke, hitting four in the last week of July. He then went on a tear, blasting 14 in the month of August, 12 of them in road games.

Powers entered the season's final series in Memphis with a total of 34 homers, but on September 3, he homered in both games of a doubleheader. The following day Powers had his only three-homer game of the year, to bring his season total to 39.

The five home runs in the series were the only ones Powers hit in Memphis all season.

He hit one home run for every 14.7 at-bats for the '56 season (39 homers in 574 times at bat).

Curiously, only 10 of his 39 home runs were hit in his home ballpark, Pelican Stadium. He had six multi-homer games, all of them on the road. Powers played briefly in the majors with four different clubs, but produced only 6 major league homers in 215 at-bats.

### Johnny Powers' Home Run Log – 1956

Date	HR	Opponent	HR#
April 16	1	Mobile	1
April 19	1	Mobile	2
April 25	2	at Nashville	4
April 28	1	at Chattanooga	5
May 3	1	Atlanta	6
May 9	1	at Atlanta	7
May 11	1	at Birmingham	8
May 20 (1st game)	1	Chattanooga	9
June 3 (2nd game)	1	at Nashville	10
June 9	1	Atlanta	11
June 16 (1st game)	1	at Birmingham	12
June 17	1	at Atlanta	13
June 26	1	Chattanooga	14
July 24	2	at Chattanooga	16
July 26	1	at Chattanooga	17
July 29	1	at Nashville	18
August 5 (1st game)	1	Atlanta	19
August 6 (1st game)	2	at Birmingham	21
August 6 (2nd game)	1	at Birmingham	22
August 8	1	at Birmingham	23
August 11	1	at Atlanta	24
August 14 (2nd game)	1	Chattanooga	25
August 21 (2nd game)	2	at Montgomery	27
August 22 (1st game)	1	at Montgomery	28
August 23 (1st game)	2	at Montgomery	30
August 24 (2nd game)	1	at Mobile	31
August 25 (2nd game)	1	at Mobile	32
Sept. 1	1	Mobile	33
Sept. 2 (1st game)	1	Mobile	34
Sept. 3 (1st game)	1	at Memphis	35
Sept. 3 (2nd game)	1	at Memphis	36
Sept. 4	3	at Memphis	39

Compiled by Arthur Schott

## CATCH THE ZEPHYRS GAMES

Home and Away  
Broadcast LIVE

on

**WTIX 690-AM**

with

**TIM GRUBBS & RON SWOBODA**

# Local Baseball Heroes Honored at Zephyr Field



Photos: Bill Catalanello

On July 17, 2004, the New Orleans Zephyrs saluted the New Orleans Pelicans and other former professional ballplayers in the area. Upper left photo shows three local natives who played major league ball: (left to right) Mel Parnell, George Strickland and Lenny Yochim. After the on-field pre-game ceremony, the autograph tables were busy during the ballgame as fans flocked to the former players for greetings and autographs. In the upper right photo, former Pelicans player Cobb Jarvis (center), who hit the last home run at old Pelican Stadium, signed for the fans.

## Zephyrs continued from page 1

Alfaro is an aggressive hitter. In 333 at-bats through August 2, he had collected just 14 walks, but his 55 RBIs was second on the club. A solid defensive infielder, Alfaro can play third base or shortstop. Jason blossomed as an RBI man in 2002 with Round Rock, where he batted .314 with 16 homers and 74 RBIs in only 124 games. He produced for New Orleans after being called up to Triple-A during the 2003 season, hitting .296 for the Zs and knocking in 49 runs.

Huffman, a good all-around athlete, has hit well in every season in his professional career, which began in 1999. Through early August, Huffman led the club in hits (121), doubles (27), and walks (55).

Coolbaugh has been very efficient in the New Orleans lineup when he has been called upon. In just 274 at-bats, the 32-year-old veteran had 20 home runs and 52 RBIs.

In general, the 2004 Zephyrs have been a more offensive-oriented team than in recent season, and the changes in the ballpark configuration has helped. In



**Chris Burke and Jason Alfaro are two of the Zephyrs' hitting leaders**

the hitting-friendly PCL, however, the Zs still rank near the bottom in most offensive categories. Most players will tell you that, while Zephyr Field is certainly a better park to hit in than it was last season, it is still very much a pitcher's ballpark.

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# Too Much Monkey Business At Old Pelican Park

by S. Derby Gisclair

IN ONE OF THE MOST DRAMATIC turnarounds of the 2002 season, the Anaheim Angels went from being 10 1/2 games behind in April to being 3 1/2 games back at the All-Star break.

In June of 2002, the Anaheim fans were introduced to the Rally Monkey who would appear on the ballpark's scoreboard and exhort the crowd to cheer and clap their thunder sticks together. It worked. In September the Angels posted an American League record of 20 straight wins, finally clinching a wild card berth, the franchise's first post-season appearance in 16 years. In the World Series, they would go on to defeat Barry Bonds and the San Francisco Giants in seven games. The Rally Monkey became a nationwide celebrity.

The 1909 New Orleans Pelicans had a monkey for a mascot, a large adult chimpanzee named Henry, that was kept in a pen behind the home team's dugout in old Pelican Park, located on South Carrollton Avenue between Banks Street and Palmyra, across from present-day Jesuit High School.

During a game between the Pelicans and the Mobile Sea Gulls on July 18th at Pelican Park, the game was interrupted in the seventh inning when Henry became agitated at the constant jeering from the Mobile players and broke free. Henry chased the Mobile players from the vicinity, and then took off into the crowd of over 6,000 in the grandstand. Spectators threw programs and pop bottles at the enraged chimp. Many fans became frightened and headed for the exits, with several being injured and nearly trampled in the ensuing melee.

Henry returned to the playing field, causing umpires Fitzsimmons and O'Brien to call the game until the simmering simian could be captured. After a brief chase, Henry was subdued and the game resumed. The chimp's antics did not help the Pelicans, however, as Mobile won the game, 5 - 3, on first baseman Charley Dexter's three-run homer in the ninth inning, spoiling pitcher George "Piggy" Paige's debut with the Pelicans. The loss left the Pelicans in 5th place, seven games behind the Atlanta Crackers.

The incident was widely reported across the country, receiving coverage in the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, and the *Washington Post*.

*Bleacher Creature* welcomes a new contributor. **S. Derby Gisclair** is the author of the fine pictorial history *Baseball in New Orleans*, from Arcadia Publishing, available now everywhere. —B.C.

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## HERNANDEZ,

continued from page 2

On July 18, Hernandez pitched seven innings of no-hit ball against Colorado Springs at Zephyr Field. He was lifted by manager Chris Maloney with the no-hitter intact. The Zs' bullpen went on to allow 4 ninth-inning runs to lose the game and give Hernandez a no-decision for his spectacular effort.

On July 23, in his next start, Hernandez pitched seven more innings of shutout ball, allowing only three hits and one walk at home against Memphis. This time, the Zephyrs prevailed, 4-0, as Russ Springer pitched a scoreless 8th and 9th inning to preserve the 7th victory of 2004 for Hernandez.

Carlos struggled with his command in a start he made in Sacramento on July 28, surrendering 4 runs in just over 4 innings. He was tagged with his fourth loss.

Hernandez bounced right back from a rough outing with another strong performance on the road. On August 2, he shut out Fresno on three hits for seven innings in a 9-1 Zephyrs victory. It was the 8th win of the year for Hernandez.

The Houston front office has been very cautious bringing the 24-year-old lefthander back. They are apparently watching the pitch count of Hernandez and the radar gun, which shows the crafty lefty throwing not quite at the velocity he did pre-surgery.

Regardless of strength and velocity issues, Carlos Hernandez has been the Zephyrs' most effective starter in 2004.

## 1908: Ed Reulbach's Twin Bill Shutout

On September 26, 1908, Chicago Cubs righthander Ed Reulbach pitched himself into the major league record book when he shut out Brooklyn in both ends of a doubleheader, becoming the only pitcher in modern major league history to throw two shutouts in one day. The historic twin bill was played at Brooklyn's Washington Park, before a crowd of 12,000.



Offensive support came once again from Kling, who made two of the Cubs' five hits off Pastorius, who also pitched a fine game. Pastorius

### September 26, 1908 Washington Park-Brooklyn, NY

#### First Game

	R	H	E
Chicago	0	0	0
Brooklyn	0	0	0

#### Second Game

	R	H	E
Chicago	0	0	0
Brooklyn	0	0	0

In the first game, Reulbach was opposed by Brooklyn righthander Kaiser Wilhelm. Reulbach and Wilhelm matched goose eggs for the first four innings, before the Cubs broke on top, 1-0, in the 5th inning. Catcher Johnny Kling's two singles, a double and two stolen bases led to some insurance runs in the late innings, and Chicago coasted to a 5-0 win. The game was played in one hour and forty minutes.

Chicago Cubs player/manager Frank Chance, impressed with Reulbach's performance in the first game, sent the righthander back to the mound to pitch the nightcap. Reulbach's opposing pitcher in game two was Brooklyn lefthander Jim Pastorius.

Reulbach was just as sharp in the second game. He yielded only three hits and struck out four on his way to his second shutout of the day.

gave up only five hits, but was victimized by some poor fielding support. Incredibly, the second game of the doubleheader was played in just one hour and twelve minutes. In 18 innings of pitching, Reulbach allowed no runs, eight hits, one walk and eleven strikeouts. The combined playing time of the two games was just 2 hours and 52 minutes.

Former big league pitcher Bob Emslie served as one of the umpires in this historic twin bill.

Ed Reulbach finished up the 1908 season with a record of 24-7, .774. That was good enough to lead the National League in winning percentage. He finished with 25 complete games, an ERA of 2.07 and 7 shutouts for the pennant winning Cubs. Chicago defeated the Detroit Tigers in the World Series that October, four games to one.



*Only  
One Month  
Left to Go  
in the  
2004  
Season...*

*Let's Get  
Out to the  
Park  
and Support  
Zephyrs  
Baseball!*

*See You  
at the  
Ballpark!*

## In a Tough Season, She Admires Effort of Craig Biggio

Dear Bleacher Creature,

Whatever happens the rest of the Astros' season, I'll have to admire what I've seen this year of the player who's been here the longest, Craig Biggio. In his 17th Astros season, Craig was having one of his best offensive years while transitioning (once again) to a new position, left field.

Craig's always been a hard-nosed competitor, known for doing whatever it takes to win. Sometimes that means getting on base the hard way. In his career (which has been exclusively with Houston), Craig has been hit by pitches 253 times (last time I looked.) He's played several positions: catcher, second base, center field and now left field. At 38, he plays just as hard as he ever did, and nobody wants to win more than Craig.

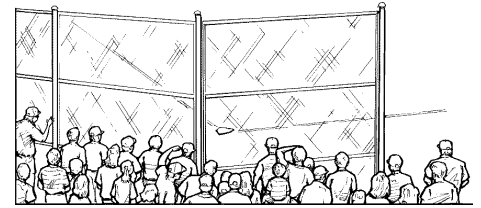
By any measure, it's been a disappointing season for us here in Houston. Our team's record is hovering around the .500 mark when the talent on the field suggests that they should be winning and in contention for a championship. In spite of that, watching Biggio's positive approach to the game every day has been a delight to us fans, and, no doubt an inspiration to his younger teammates. I haven't given up on the 2004 Astros despite the setbacks, and I know they haven't given up on themselves, not with guys like Biggio and Roger Clemens and now Phil Garner in the clubhouse. These are guys who know how to win, and like Yogi said, "It ain't over..."

My husband Louis, as you know, is a Yankee fan through and through. Having grown up in New York city, he has it in his bones. Louis likes to say that it isn't easy rooting for the Yankees. The local media back in New York build up everyone's expectations so high that nothing short of a World Series win is thought to be acceptable.

Sure, Louis has experienced some great moments rooting for his team; they've won it all for their fans several times. However, there have been some bitter disappointments in recent years as well. A seventh game World Series loss to Arizona in 2001, a crushing playoff defeat to the Anaheim Angels in 2002, and last year, in perhaps the most painful loss, being defeated by Florida on their home field in the 7th game of the World Series. Of course, there were also the triumphs of 1996, the incredible victory totals of 1998 and the ultimate satisfaction of beating the Mets in the 2000 Series. Whatever the outcome of the season, manager Joe Torre is looked upon as a saint among the vast Yankee nation.

I guess my point is that pre-season expectations in March often determine whether a season is a success or failure. We here in Houston are not accustomed to expecting to get to the World Series, but that's exactly where we felt our team could go this year. There are 30 major league teams, and only two can play in the World Series.

These are what are known as



the "dog days" of August. With the heat and humidity here in Houston, you have to get up early in the morning to avoid the stifling, heavy air. Betsy and I are getting up earlier for our morning walk now that the summer heat is bearing down on us. Despite starting out at 6:30 a.m., by the time we reach the end of our three-and-a-half mile trek, we're both flushed and sweaty. Betsy talks almost continuously now as she rides in the stroller. I listen.

An older lady who we see out walking in early mornings stopped to chat with us last week, and I mentioned that we were going to Minute Maid Park for an Astros game.

"My husband Sidney played baseball as a young man," she said, her face lighting up at the memory of it. "He was quite an athlete. He passed away in 1995, and I think of him as a young man in his baseball uniform very often," she told us. I could see in her face that she loved him very much.

Baseball, it seems, still helped to console her almost a decade after losing the love of her life. That thought made me feel good about being a fan with my husband and daughter.

More later,

Rose

# BLEACHER CREATURE

is the region's only all-baseball monthly. We've been at it since 1993, supporting Zephyrs baseball and exchanging stories about the game and its players, past and present. We're also into the wit and wisdom, heroes and villains, and facts and fables about professional baseball. On-line newsletters are fine, but we offer real paper and ink. Sign up today to receive 11 monthly issues by First Class Mail. A subscription to the *Bleacher Creature* is only \$10 a year!

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