

# BLEACHER CREATURE

A Monthly Conversation Among Baseball Fans

Issue # 139

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

MAY, 2006

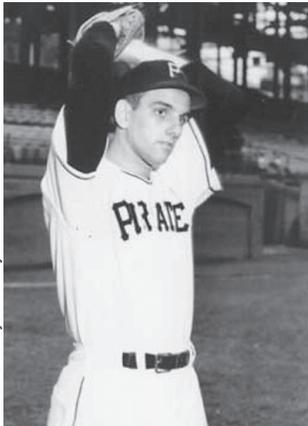


Photo courtesy S. Derby Gisclair

Lenny Yochim

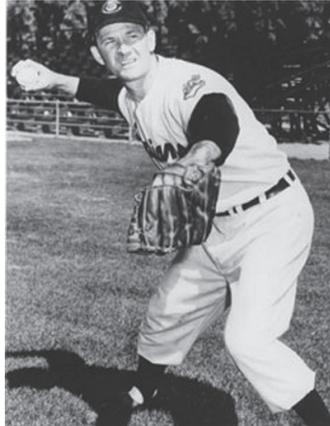


Photo courtesy Jay Gauthreaux

George Strickland

## Streaky Zephyrs Scuffle In Season's First Month

By Bill Catalanello

The season is only a month old as I write this, but already since opening day, the New Orleans Zephyrs have had a 7-game winning streak and an 11-game losing streak.



Photo by Eugene Witek

Zephyrs reliever Travis Hughes

## 4 Inducted into New Orleans Pro Baseball Hall of Fame

By Bill Catalanello

The New Orleans Professional Baseball Hall of Fame welcomed four new members for 2006.

**George Strickland** – A former major league infielder, he had a solid, ten-year career with the Pittsburgh Pirates and Cleveland Indians. The smooth-fielding Strickland played shortstop on manager Al Lopez' 1954 Cleveland club that won 111 games on the way to the A.L. pennant. Throughout his career, he was able to play all infield positions. After his playing career, Strickland stayed in baseball as a coach, as a manager, and as a scout. George is a native New Orleanian (S. J. Peters High School) and long-time resident of the city.

**Lenny Yochim** – Former lefthanded pitcher and long-time scout in the Pittsburgh Pirates organization, he remains very active in the local baseball community. Yochim pitched briefly for the Pirates, but during his minor league career he spent most of five seasons pitching for the New Orleans Pelicans. Raised in

*Continued on page 2*

That 11-game losing streak was a franchise worst. After the seven-game winning streak put their record at 7–1, the Zs lost 15 of their next 18 games, including a distasteful 0-8 homestand to end the month of April.

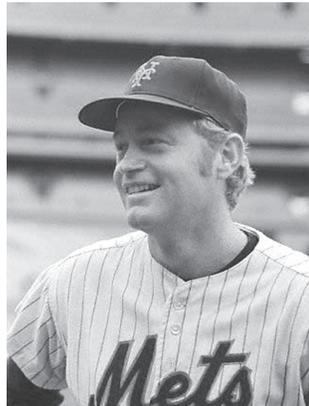
Those who have attended the early-season games have seen some of the improvements to the ballpark, most notably the new scoreboard and video screen, which gives the Zephyrs cameraman the opportunity to put images of fans having fun on the big board.

*Continued on page 5*

New Orleans, Lenny was a high school baseball star at Holy Cross.

**Abner Powell** – A 19th century player and later a Pelicans manager in the early years of the Southern Association. See Arthur Schott’s article on page 3 for much more on Powell.

Those three were honored at Zephyr Field on April 29, as New Orleans Zephyrs Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Ron Maestri introduced them at the Zephyrs game against Nashville. The fourth, Rusty Staub, will be honored at the ballpark on July 14.

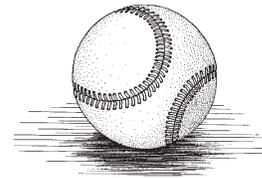


**Rusty Staub**

**Rusty Staub** – A New Orleans native and a graduate of Jesuit High School, Staub made his major league debut at age 19 with the Houston Colt .45s. It was the beginning of a 23-year major league career with several teams. Rusty totalled 2,716 hits and 1,466 RBIs in his big league career. In 1973, in his only

World Series, Staub hit .423 (11 for 26) for the Mets against the Oakland Athletics. He was an All Star in his days as an everyday player and later gained notoriety as a dangerous pinch-hitter from the left side. Throughout his long career, Staub earned his reputation as a “pure hitter.”

This year’s New Orleans Professional Baseball Hall of Fame inductees join the charter members who were honored in 2005: **Zeke Bonura, Larry Gilbert, A.J. Heinemann, Mel Ott, and Mel Parnell.**



## Joy in Mudville

By Johnny Bowlin

Ah sweet springtime! The skies are blue and the cars are yellow. We have started tee-ball season two at the Bowlin home. My daughter is playing in a different league this season and this league uses MILB apparel. Our team this season is the Charleston (SC) Riverdogs. Why can’t we be the mini Zephyrs? Someone needs to do research into this matter, but let me not chase that rabbit. Our season started with an opening day parade. You have not experienced life until you’ve ridden in the back of a truck with 10 three and four-year-old kids wearing cleats and throwing out candy with “Who Let the Dogs Out?” blasting from the speakers. Our first game was April 8th and we will play until the end of May. I really enjoy little league for a lot of different reasons. I think the tie-in with minor league baseball with the uniforms is a good connection.

The symbolism of kids who in many cases are chasing their dreams are just like the young men who play minor league baseball for a living. The nicknames and logos are cool. Let’s be honest: Charlie the Riverdog is not, nor ever will be Boudreaux D Nutria, but is still pretty sharp. My favorite uniform besides our gear would have to be the Biscuits. The blue and gold combo looks great with the smiling Biscuit hat. Of course, the Biscuits were toast after they faced the Dogs, but I am not a proud parent or anything like that. Also, it is a fun atmosphere from the kids to the parents and to the coaches. I see a lot of smiles at practice and at the games. Bill Veeck one time said, “Baseball is a game to be savored rather than taken in gulps.” We as parents and grandparents should savor these moments of fun with our kids enjoying the game of baseball. We as baseball fans can get some caught up in the negative aspects of baseball at the major league level and forget the simple joys that drew us to the game to begin with. Little league should draw us back to those good times of our youth and the present good times enjoying the game with our kids.

## BLEACHER CREATURE

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

## Abner Powell: Pelicans Player, Manager And Baseball Innovator

Editor's Note: *The following is an excerpt from the book 70 Years With the Pelicans, Arthur Schott's anecdotal and statistical history of the New Orleans franchise in the Southern Association. This bio on Abner Powell was originally published in 1957. Powell was one of the four 2006 inductees into the New Orleans Professional Baseball Hall of Fame.*

**A**BNER POWELL was born in 1860 in Shenandoah, Pennsylvania, the son of a Welch coal miner. But coal mining was not for Abner. Baseball was to be his meat.

In all, Powell played in eight leagues: National, Union, Western, International, Pacific, Pennsylvania, Texas and Southern. He made it to the major leagues while playing with Providence, in the old National League, in 1883.

He first appeared on the New Orleans scene in 1887, coming here from Baltimore. He managed the Pelicans, on and off, from 1888 until 1903—including the first two years of the twentieth century that are generally accepted as the first years of New Orleans with the Southern Association.

During those early days, Powell was later to claim, that he inaugurated many a first in baseball circles. One of his proudest claims was that he originated Ladies Day, and the press of the day did point out that on April 29, 1887, the Pelicans lost to Charleston, 0-1, after giving the ladies “a delightful taste of the sport men relish so much.”

Abner Powell was the Pelican pitcher, too for that auspicious game, giving up only four hits in a game that was played in one hour and 25 minutes.

The press of the day points out that several hundred ladies attended:

“They came in carriages, buggies, in street cars and on trains, charming in their spring attire, and made the cozy grandstand a bower of beauty.”

However, baseball records show that Ladies Day games were held in the National League the same year.

Powell is also generally given credit for the invention

***Powell was a minor league pitcher, but perhaps his greatest talents were in management and innovation.***



Photo courtesy S. Derby Giscclair

### ***Fast Facts on Abner Powell***

- Born: December 15, 1860 in Shenandoah, PA
- Died: August 7, 1953 in New Orleans, LA
- Listed as 5' 7" and 160 lbs.
- Batted: Lefthanded
- Threw: Righthanded
- Pitched for the 1884 Washington Nationals
- Was manager of 19th century Pelicans
- Claimed to have introduced Ladies Day
- Is credited with invention of the “rain check”
- As manager, he once replaced his entire team
- Had a 2-year ML career pitching record of 8-18

Source: BaseballReference.com

of the rain check, a detachable stub on the general admission ticket that remains useful in case the game is postponed. Powell was the originator of the idea to cover the infield with a tarpaulin in case of bad weather. Powell later said that he got the idea from watching stevedores cover cotton bales on the waterfront with tarpaulins, and that he adapted the idea to the baseball field.

After managing the Pelicans through the 1902 season (a third-place finish), Powell left New Orleans and went to Atlanta, where he became manager in 1903 and continued in 1904. Following the 1904 season, he left the active baseball field as player or manager and turned to other business activities.

Powell died in New Orleans on August 7, 1953, at the age of 93.

# MLB Selling Nationals to Lerner Group for \$450 Million

Major League Baseball recently announced that it had selected a buyer for the Washington Nationals, the New Orleans Zephyrs' major league affiliate. The Nationals have been owned and run by Major League Baseball since early 2003. The following announcement was released by Major League Baseball.



Baseball Commissioner Allan H. (Bud) Selig recently announced that he has selected a group led by real estate developer Theodore N. Lerner as the new owner of the Washington Nationals and will forward his selection to Major League Baseball's owners for their vote.

Major League Baseball is expected to vote on Commissioner Selig's recommendation at its next owners' meeting, which will take place in New York on May 17th and 18th. The purchase price for the franchise was set at \$450 million.

"We had eight very capable and qualified groups bidding for the Nationals," said Commissioner Selig, "and choosing one was extremely difficult. I thank those that were not chosen for their interest and for the great amount of time, energy and patience they devoted to the process.

"I am very excited about the Lerner family and what they will bring to the Washington Nationals, the community and Major League Baseball. From the very beginning of the process they have been committed to the goals of stable yet innovative ownership, diversity within the ownership group, and solid baseball management.

Throughout the long application period, they have not varied from those goals and have scrupulously followed our procedures.

"In the end, I determined that family ownership and major investment by a central person has served baseball well in the past and will continue to serve the game well in the future. Accountability is critical in a situation where teams must compete on the field but be partners off the field and in the community. I am confident the Lerner family will be accountable to their fans and to baseball.

"Family ownership has long been a model for baseball. The O'Malleys with the Dodgers,

the Fetzers with the Tigers and the Galbraiths with the Pirates are several historical examples that had great success in the game. And, among the successful family-operated teams today are the Wilpons with the Mets, the Pohlads in Minnesota, and the Moores family in San Diego. I believe the Lerner family will be another excellent example and I look forward to working with them."

As part of the process, Major League Baseball has emphasized the need for strong local and diverse ownership, a requirement that was met by the Lerner Group. Ted, his son Mark, were born and raised in the Washington, D.C. area, while his sons-in-law, Edward L. Cohen and Robert K. Tanenbaum, are long-time residents. Nearly all of the Lerner Family business as well as their personal and philanthropic interests are local. For more than 50 years, they have developed, operated and managed real estate projects that Washingtonians use - from shopping centers to offices to homes.

This is not Ted Lerner's first foray into baseball. In the mid-1970s, several years after the Senators departed Washington, D.C. for Texas, he contacted then-Commissioner Bowie Kuhn about returning a team

*continued on the next page*

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**Major League Baseball is expected to vote on Commissioner Selig's recommendation at its next owners' meeting, which will take place in New York on May 17th and 18th.**

to the D.C. area. He also had tried to purchase the Baltimore Orioles.

Former Atlanta Braves President Stan Kasten is part of the Nationals' ownership as are a diverse group of local business leaders that includes:

- Paxton K. Baker, Vice President and General Manager of BET Digital Networks;
- Sports broadcaster James T. Brown;
- Faye F. Fields, founder of Integrated Resource Technologies, Inc.;
- Alphonso Maldon, Jr., Senior Vice President and Senior Relationship Management Officer for Government Banking Services in the Corporate Banking Department at the PNC Financial Services Group;
- B. Doyle Mitchell, Jr., President and CEO of Industrial Bank, NA;
- George Munoz, Principal of Munoz Investment Banking Group, LLC;
- Raul R. Romano, President and CEO of Alliance Consulting Group, LLC;
- Rodney E. Slater, Partner, Patton Boggs LLP, and former U.S. Secretary of Transportation; and
- Jarvis C. Stewart, Chairman and Managing Partner of Stewart Partners LLC.

The Lerner's cannot take full control of the Nationals until their acquisition is approved by the Major League clubs and the sales process closes. Until that time, the Lerner group may consult with current club President Tony Tavares and his front office to ensure a smooth transition of ownership. The Lerner's, however, are expected to be immediately involved in the detailed stadium planning process to move that forward as rapidly as possible.

"I also want to thank Tony Tavares, Jim Bowden, Frank Robinson and the entire Nationals' staff for their continuing hard work on our behalf," said Commissioner Selig. "Everyone in the industry is grateful for their efforts."

**Irvin "Kaiser" Wilhelm Pitched 1906 Perfect Game in Southern Association**

By Jay Gauthreaux



Irvin "Kaiser" Wilhelm, a right-handed pitcher who had a nine-year major league career, pitched a perfect game in the old Southern Association, 100 years ago this summer. The 32-year-old Wilhelm had 85 games of major league experience under his belt when he took the mound for Birmingham on July 9, 1906. Wilhelm threw strikes, but did not overpower the Montgomery batters, collecting just three strikeouts in the game, which was played in one hour and 35 minutes.

Wilhelm made it back to the major leagues with Brooklyn in 1908, where, despite a stellar ERA of 1.87 in 332 innings pitched, he posted a won-loss record of 16-22. His major league pitching career was essentially over after the 1914 season, when he won 12 games at age 40 for the Baltimore Terrapins in the Federal League. He did appear in four games out of the bullpen at age 47 for the Philadelphia Phillies in 1921.

Wilhelm managed the Phillies for about a season and a half in 1921-22, but had very little success, compiling a career big league managerial record of 83-137.

Boxscore from Montgomery, Alabama – July 9, 1906

Birmingham					Montgomery							
AB	R	H	PO	AB	R	H	PO	AB	R	H	PO	
Molesworth,cf	4	1	1	1	Houtz,lf	3	0	0	3			
Smith,rf	5	1	0	1	Busch,ss	3	0	0	1			
Alcock,ss	5	2	2	1	Schwartz,2b	3	0	0	3			
Meeks,1b	5	1	3	15	Apperius,cf	3	0	0	3			
Gear,lf	4	0	0	0	Mullaney,1b	3	0	0	9			
Walters,2b	3	1	2	1	McCann,rf	3	0	0	0			
Montgomery,3b	5	0	3	2	Perry,3b	3	0	0	2			
Matthews,c	5	1	0	5	Hausen,c	3	0	0	6			
WILHELM,p	4	0	2	1	Maxwell,p	2	0	0	0			
Totals	40	7	13	27	*McAleese	1	0	0	0			
						27	0	0	27			

Birmingham	0	1	0	1	2	0	1	0	2	-	7		T - 1:35
Montgomery	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0		* Batted for Maxwell 9t

Assist - Alcock 2, MeeksBusch 2, Walters 4, Montgomery 4, Wilhelm 4, McCann, Perry 2, Hausen, Maxwell 5. Error - Houtz, Schwartz,Perry, Hausen. 2B - Walters, Montgomery, SB - Meeks.

Pitching

Birmingham					Montgomery				
IP	K	BB	H	IP	K	BB	H		
WILHELM (W)	9	3	0	0	Maxwell (L)	9	4	4	13

Umpire: Mr. Pfenninger

Boxscore-Jay Gauthreaux

**Zephyrs...continued from page 1**

As the long season turns into its second month, Zs fans would do well to remember that all Triple-A ballclubs will have their ups and downs in the long season. The Zephyrs have had some of theirs in the first two dozen games of 2006. Manager Tim Foli and his coaches will find a way to get their players to achieve some consistency.

## A Major League Rarity: 100 or More Games at 4 Positions

Since 1876, approximately 19,000 position players have seen action in the major leagues. Included in this group are major league handymen who had the ability to play multiple positions. The list below has only 39 names on it: players who played 100 or more games at four different positions. In this select group you'll find several journeymen utility players, but you'll also find Hall of Famers, such as Johnny Bench and Jackie Robinson. The earliest player to accomplish the feat, in fact, John Montgomery Ward, is in the Hall of Fame.

*For the purposes of the chart below, the three outfield positions are combined and are represented as OF. A player's total games is not necessarily the sum of the Breakdown numbers on the right half of the chart, due to the fact that many of the players on the list played games at additional positions not in the Breakdown. Our statistical source was The ESPN Baseball Encyclopedia. Players are listed alphabetically.*

Name	Years	Games	Breakdown
Bill Almon	1974-1988	1236	SS-616, 3B-212, OF-161, 2B-102
Bob Bailor	1975-1985	955	OF-425, SS-250, 2B-160, 3B-143
Johnny Bench	1967-1983	2158	C-1742, 3B-195, 1B-145, OF-111
Jack Doyle	1889-1905	1569	1B-1048, C-176, OF-133, 2B-127
Jimmy Dykes	1918-1939	2282	3B-1257, 2B-722, 1B-148, SS-140
Buck Ewing	1880-1897	1315	C-1636, 1B-253, OF-235, 3B-127
Duke Farrell	1888-1905	1565	C-1004, 3B-290, OF-109, 1B-106
Bernie Friberg	1919-1933	1299	3B-479, 2B-434, OF-195, SS-123
Billy Goodman	1947-1962	1623	2B-624, 1B-406, 3B-330, OF-111
Ray Hartzell	1906-1916	1290	OF-550, 3B-440, SS-155, 2B-112
Woodie Held	1954-1969	1390	SS-539, OF-448, 2B-179, 3B-132
Charlie Hickman	1897-1908	1081	1B-394, OF-290, 2B-152, 3B-140
Denny Hocking	1993-2005	975	2B-287, SS-285, OF-237, 3B-121
Greg Jefferies	1987-2000	1465	1B-380, OF-369, 2B-346, 3B-277
Bob Johnson	1960-1970	874	SS-201, 2B-167, 3B-166, 1B-107
Jimmy Johnson	1911-1926	1377	3B-448, OF-354, 2B-293, SS-178
John Knight	1905-1913	767	SS-316, 3B-211, 1B-124, 2B-104
Red Kress	1927-1946	1391	SS-835, 3B-170, 1B-162, OF-124
Mark Loretta	1995-2005	1230	2B-593, SS-328, 3B-171, 1B-160
Steve Lyons	1985-1993	853	OF-334, 3B-229, 2B-118, 1B-115
Felix Mantilla	1956-1966	969	2B-326, SS-180, OF-156, 3B-143
Dennis Menke	1962-1974	1598	SS-841, 3B-420, 2B-233, 1B-162
Eddie Miksis	1944-1958	1042	2B-382, OF-219, 3B-179, SS-137
Don Money	1968-1983	1720	3B-1025, 2B-192, SS-165, 1B-108
Keith Moreland	1978-1989	1306	OF-677, 3B-220, C-169, 1B-160
Phil Nevin	1995-2005	1088	3B-483, 1B-305, C-108, OF-119
Tony Phillips	1982-1999	2161	OF-786, 2B-777, 3B-428, SS-294
Joe Quinn	1884-1901	1769	2B-1304, SS-135, OF-124, 1B-120
Jackie Robinson	1947-1956	1382	2B-748, 3B-256, 1B-197, OF-162
Jerry Royster	1973-1988	1428	3B-634, 2B-416, SS-187, OF-153
Pete Rose	1963-1986	3562	OF-1327, 1B-939, 3B-634, 2B-628
Chico Salmon	1964-1972	658	2B-164, SS-137, 1B-130, OF-122
Howie Shanks	1912-1925	1665	OF-702, 3B-485, SS-235, 2B-159
B.J. Surhoff	1987-2005	2313	OF-995, C-704, 3B-316, 1B-158
Darrell Thomas	1971-1985	1597	2B-608, OF-542, SS-339, 3B-116
Bobby Valentine	1969-1979	639	SS-161, OF-128, 2B-120, 3B-106
Randy Velarde	1987-2002	1273	2B-630, 3B-293, SS-262, OF-112
John Ward	1878-1894	1827	SS-826, 2B-493, P-293, OF-214
Rollie Zeider	1910-1918	941	2B-335, 3B-307, SS-162, 1B-106

## Girls Just Wanna Have Fun...

Dear Bleacher Creature,

As I send you this, the Zephyrs are playing poorly. Nevertheless, Louis, Betsy and I plan to visit New Orleans and Zephyr Field later this month. It will be our second visit already this year, having enjoyed Mardi Gras with you. Later this summer we'll take two other baseball-related trips. One will be to visit the Dell Diamond in Round Rock. The second will be our annual drive up to see the Texas Rangers at Ameritrust Field in Arlington.

Since my daughter Betsy was born in October, 2001, she and I have been virtually inseparable. Oh, I take the occasional weekend away with Louis, leaving Betsy with my mother, but more often than not, she travels with us.

This August, Betsy will start kindergarten, and she'll get her first exposure to the world outside, away from Mom and Dad. I'm looking forward to it and dreading it at the same time. We've always tried our best to be positive influences on her, encouraging her to be creative,

and praising her efforts. When she's at school for several hours a week she'll be away from the influences of Louis and me, and under a variety of other influences, some good and some not so good.

Don't worry. I'm not obsessing about all this yet. What I do intend to do is to enjoy this summer with Betsy as much as I can, because its the last summer I'll be able to consider her my baby. We're going to have lots of fun this summer, and when it's time for us to start spending our days apart, I intend to go back to work.

As you know, we love to shop, we love to travel, and we love to go to baseball games. So, when a girlfriend asks how we're going to spend our summer months, those are the three activities I mention. Betsy will be at my side until it's time for school. Although I'll no doubt shed a few tears when it happens, that day will close this chapter in my life, and begin a new one. We're looking forward to seeing you all in just a couple of weeks at the Shrine on Airline. For those who asked, my e-mail address is: **BleacherCreatureRose@hotmail.com**

-Rose

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from Pasadena Rose to Lenny Yochim.

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# MAY 2006

	<b>1</b> At Memphis 7:10	<b>2</b> At Memphis 7:10	<b>3</b> At Memphis 1:10	<b>4</b> At Memphis 7:10	<b>5</b> At Nashville 7:00	<b>6</b> At Nashville 6:00
<b>7</b> At Nashville 2:00	<b>8</b> At Nashville 10:30	<b>9</b> Fresno 7:00	<b>10</b> Fresno 7:00	<b>11</b> Fresno 7:00	 <b>12</b> Fresno 7:00	<b>13</b> Sacramento 7:00
<b>14</b> Sacramento 7:00	<b>15</b> Sacramento 7:00	<b>16</b> Sacramento 12:00	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> At Colo. Springs 8:05	<b>19</b> At Colo. Springs 8:05	<b>20</b> At Colo. Springs 8:05
<b>21</b> At Colo. Springs 2:05	<b>22</b> At Salt Lake 7:30	<b>23</b> At Salt Lake 11:30	<b>24</b> At Salt Lake 7:30	<b>25</b> At Salt Lake 7:30	 <b>26</b> Oklahoma 7:00	<b>27</b> Oklahoma 6:00
<b>28</b> Oklahoma 2:00	<b>29</b> Oklahoma 7:00	<b>30</b> At Omaha 7:05	<b>31</b> At Omaha 7:05	 - Postgame Fireworks		

# JUNE 2006

				<b>1</b> At Omaha 12:05	<b>2</b> At Omaha 7:05	<b>3</b> At Memphis 6:10
<b>4</b> At Memphis 2:10	<b>5</b> At Memphis 7:10	<b>6</b> At Memphis 7:10	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> Nashville 7:00	 <b>9</b> Nashville 7:00	<b>10</b> Nashville 6:00
<b>11</b> Nashville 6:00	<b>12</b> Iowa 7:00	<b>13</b> Iowa 7:00	<b>14</b> Iowa 12:00	<b>15</b> Iowa 7:00	<b>16</b> At Round Rock 7:05	<b>17</b> At Round Rock 7:05
<b>18</b> At Round Rock 7:05	<b>19</b> At Round Rock 7:05	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> At Oklahoma 7:05	<b>22</b> At Oklahoma 7:05	<b>23</b> At Oklahoma 7:05	<b>24</b> At Oklahoma 7:05
<b>25</b> At Oklahoma 2:05	<b>26</b> Iowa 7:00	<b>27</b> Iowa 7:00	<b>28</b> Iowa 7:00	<b>29</b> Iowa 7:00	 <b>30</b> Oklahoma 7:00	

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