

1994 Kane County Cougars



Location: Geneva, IL

Team Record: 71-68 .511

Result: 6th in Midwest League - Northern Division

Affiliate: Florida Marlins

Manager(s): Lynn Jones

Stadium: Elfstrom Stadium

Attendance: 417,744

Ehler Pitches

Staff Report, April 18, 1994

Dan Ehler (2-0) went six innings, allowing his first earned run of the season, as the host Kane County Cougars defeated Clinton 6-1 in a Midwest League game Sunday before 4,387 fans. Second baseman Ralph Milliard went 2 for 4, scoring twice to lead Kane County (5-4). -- Triple-A Edmonton: John Massarelli tripled with two outs in the top of the 11th, then scored on Fred Costello's wild pitch as the Trappers (6-4) defeated the host Firebirds 4-3 in 11 innings in Pacific Coast League play at Scottsdale (Ariz).

Minor leagues with two hrs

April 23, 1994 | Staff Reports

PORT CHARLOTTE -- Class A Kane County (Thursday's late game): Dave Berg hit a three-run home run, his first of the season and Ralph Milliard added three hits as the Kane County Cougars (8-4) defeated the Burlington Bees (Expos) 12-5.

Valdes Stifles Rockford

Staff Reports, May 4, 1994

Marc Valdes (3-2) pitched 7 2/3 innings, allowing three hits and a run, while striking out nine to lead the Kane County Cougars to a 7-1 victory over the Rockford Royals Tuesday. Ralph Milliard went 4 for 5 with two doubles and an RBI for the Cougars. Mike Redmond went 3 for 4 with an RBI. Single-A Brevard: Dan Robinson drove in two runs Edgar Renteria went 3 for 4 with an RBI to lead the Brevard Manatees to a 6-4 victory over the visiting St. Petersburg Cardinals in a Florida State League game.

Valdes Not Alone

GORDON EDES On the Minor Leagues In Raising Kane May 15, 1994 | GORDON EDES

Pitcher Marc Valdes, the top draft choice in 1993, may be the player watched most closely at Kane County (Ill.), but the Marlins' Class A team in the Midwest League has some other prospects worth tracking.

Another Cougar who has impressed has been second baseman Ralph Milliard, the native of Curacao signed by Marlins scout Tim Schmidt, who discovered him playing in the Netherlands.

"He's made more big-league plays at second base than you can imagine - four of them Friday night," Jones said of the 20-year-old Milliard, who last season batted .234 for the Gulf Coast Marlins but was batting .318 entering the

weekend. "His range is great, his accuracy is good, and he turns the double play as well as anybody.

"He's a tough kid. He's been a sweet surprise," Jones said.

"We knew he could play defense, but he's been very consistent at the plate. He doesn't get fooled a whole lot."

Cougars Use

Staff Reports, May 15, 1994

Ralph Milliard, Glenn Reeves and former Miami Hurricane Dave Berg each hit solo home runs to power the Kane County Cougars past visiting Madison Hatters 5-3 in Class A Midwest League play Saturday. Milliard's solo home run in the bottom of the first tied the score at 1 and Reeves' home run in the third put the Cougars up 2-1. Berg closed the scoring for Kane County in the fifth with his third home run of the season. -- Double-A Portland: Third baseman Andy Fox went 2 for 4, a triple and a home run, with three RBI and two runs scored to lead the Albany-Colonie Yankees past the Sea Dogs 8-5 in Double-A Eastern League play in Portland, Maine.

Kingman Single Lifts Kane County Past Clinton

Staff Report, June 29, 1994

Kane County's Brendan Kingman singled home Ralph Milliard in the top of the eighth inning to give the Cougars a 4-3 win over the Clinton Limber-Kings Tuesday. Billy McMillon hit his 10th home run for the Cougars. Class A Brevard: The host Daytona Cubs defeated the Brevard Manatees 3-1 in a FSL game. -- Double-A Portland: Portland split a doubleheader with Trenton (Tigers), losing the first game 3-2 and winning the second 6-3. -- FSL: The West Palm Beach Expos defeated the visiting Vero Beach Dodgers 5-4. -- Triple-A Edmonton (late Monday)

Cougars Overrun

Staff Reports, July 3, 1994

After scoring 11 runs Friday, the Kane County Cougars were held to six hits and fell to the visiting Quad City River Bandits (Astros farm team) 2-1 Saturday in Class A action. Glenn Reeves and Ralph Milliard had two hits each for the Cougars. -- Double-A Portland: Marc Valdes (3-1) took his first loss since joining Portland, giving up five runs in six innings as the host Sea Dogs fell to New Haven (Rockies) 9-1. -- Class A Brevard: The host Clearwater Phillies swept a doubleheader from the Manatees, winning 4-1 and 8-0. -- Triple-A Edmonton (Friday's late game)

MINOR LEAGUES West Palm Swept By Yankees

July 6, 1994 | Staff Report

Class A Kane County: The visiting Cougars lost both games of a doubleheader to Appleton, 8-1 in the first game and 2-1 in eight innings in the second. Jesus Marquez and Fred McNair homered in the opener for the Foxes and

Ralph Milliard led off the second game with a home run for the Cougars.

Kernels Clip

Staff Report, July 15, 1994

Tony Moeder and Todd Takayoshi each went 4 for 4 with a home run to lead the Cedar Rapids Kernels to a 6-3 victory over the Kane County Cougars in a Class A game Thursday. Ralph Milliard had a two-run double for the Cougars. Glenn Reeves added an RBI double. Paul Thornton (4-9) took the loss for the Cougars Class A Brevard: Doug Hecker went 2 for 4 with 3 RBI to lead the Sarasota White Sox to a 8-3 victory over the Brevard Manatees. Jeff Suppan (7-6) pitched struck out seven in seven innings for the win. Lou Lucca went 2 for 4 with a double and an RBI for the Manatees.

Iatarola, Kernels

Staff Reports, July 17, 1994

Aaron Iatarola singled, doubled and tripled and drove in five runs as the Cedar Rapids Kernels outslugged the Kane County Cougars 12-7 in Single-A action Saturday. Tony Moeder also went 3 for 5 with three RBI for the Kernels. Ralph Milliard hit a 3-run homer and an RBI single for the Cougars. -- Double-A Portland: The host Albany-Colonie Yankees defeated the Sea Dogs 4-3. -- Single-A Brevard: Dean Peterson (4-3) threw a five-hitter, struck out eight and walked one, and Andy Abed hit a three-run homer as the host Sarasota White Sox blanked the Manatees 8-0. -- FSL: Mark Charbonnet doubled in Jesus Campos in the 12th inning to lift the West Palm Beach Expos over the visiting Lakeland Tigers 3-2. Charbonnet also had a pinch-hit RBI double in the eighth inning to score John Mahalik.

Journey to the Minors: Game Goes On, Always

Chicago Sun-Times August 12, 1994 | Jay Mariotti
SOUTH BEND, Ind. The only strike in sight is the one Tom Fordham, a pitcher who makes \$950 a month and drives a Ford Probe, throws to begin the night. Baseball doesn't stop just because a few hundred major-leaguers stop. The game goes on without them, as it will for eternity.

It goes on in places like The Cove, a lovely little ballpark of blue and gray, tucked in a hollow beside Claeys candy factory and a railroad trestle on the industrial side of town. "Cove" is short for Stanley Coveleski, the Hall of Fame pitcher who grew up locally, but it conveniently applies to the sunken effect. They still name ballparks after civic heroes in minor-league towns, one of the charms of escaping chaos in the big time, escaping Donald Fehr and Richard Ravitch, escaping owners and players who forgot their roots once the millions started pouring in. Here in the Midwest League, a reserved seat is \$4 and a 16-ounce beer is \$2. They play Sly Stone's "Everyday People" over the speakers during batting practice. They tag their teams with nicknames such as Silver Hawks, the emblem for the Studebakers they used to make across the

street, and hang hawk-shaped balloons around the park. When players are asked for interviews by reporters, their eyes light up. In fact, big-city reporters, sometimes treated like bums at home, are real celebrities around here.

"Sir?" a Silver Hawks employee asked, actually addressing me. "Would you like to sing for the crowd during the seventh-inning stretch?"

"Uh, I'm on a frantic deadline," I said, lying.

The scene is so refreshing and light, you're almost glad the big leagues are on strike, allowing an opportunity to rediscover the innocence of it all. With the White Sox and Cubs out of service, we had a chance Thursday night to watch Chicago's two replacement teams. The visiting Kane County Cougars will be adopted by many, as they are based only 40 miles from the Loop. But the Silver Hawks, though 50 miles farther, are the Class A affiliate of the Sox and breeding ground of such current South Side heroes as Jason Bere and Roberto Hernandez. If Jerry Reinsdorf is smart, he'll dispatch Hawk and Wimpy down here at once. As dusk settled over the heartland, it occurred to 2,200 fans that the scoreboard and new messageboard were on strike. "What a nightmare," gasped John Tull, the South Bend general manager, fretting because many out-of-town media were in the house. Somehow, the malfunction was perfect. You didn't want to see exploding scoreboards here. You wanted the fuse to blow because these were the minors and stuff happens.

Certainly, the players weren't complaining. By their standards, The Cove is a palace, with padded outfield walls and water fountains in the dugouts. They are merely kids trying to make it, trying to catch a scout's eye. They share small apartments, scrimp to buy groceries. Kevin Millar, the Kane County first baseman and a nephew of former Sox player Wayne Nordhagen, drives a 1978 Olds. Happy to have a uniform, happy to be here, most of them seemed mystified about the strike. Kane County's Ralph Milliard, a hot-prospect second baseman who grew up in the Netherlands, doesn't understand. He feels fortunate just to have been spotted by a Florida Marlins scout last year, while playing for the Dutch national team. "How much money do they need to live on?" he said. "They're making millions and millions of dollars. I don't see the big deal of fighting for more. Money isn't everything in life. I love playing the game of baseball. They pay me \$975 a month, and I'll take it."

The South Bend first baseman, like the Comiskey Park first baseman, is named Thomas. While Frank Thomas was packing boxes Thursday, saying, "I'm a ballplayer, not a lawyer," Juan Thomas was shaking his head and smiling when asked his view of the strike. "It's kind of hard for me to relate how they could be giving up so much money and walking away," said Thomas, who is just as large as Big Hurt, at 6-5 and 265. "I just hope I have the chance someday to make nearly that kind of money."

Perhaps because he grew up in a baseball family, Millar has a stronger loyalty to the players. "Fans don't understand why they're going on strike. They don't see it's a huge entertainment business," he said. "They see some stars getting \$7 million a year, but you know how much

they're giving (Arnold) Schwarzenegger for his new movie? Something like \$65 million.

"I know why they're going on strike. They're doing it for us, the guys in the minors, the guys who will be up there in the future. I appreciate what they're doing."

We'll learn more about these lads in coming days and weeks. The playoffs are ahead, understand. The player I'm

adopting, you should know, is a pitcher for the Cougars. Remember Mordecai "Three-Finger" Brown? Meet Antonio "Five-Finger" Alfonseca. Yep, he was born with five fingers on each hand.

Without a strike, how would we ever have known that?

Website Portland Sea Dogs

1994: Ralph Milliard MWL All-Star