

1998 NORFOLK TIDES



Location: Norfolk, VA

Team Record: 70-72 .493

**Result:** 3rd in International League - Southern Division

Affiliate: New York Mets

Manager(s): Rick Dempsey

Stadium: Harbor Park

Attendance: 479,222

## **Baseball: Yankees get Knoblauch from twins**

*The Boston Globe (Boston, MA) February 7, 1998*

Completing months of negotiations, the Minnesota Twins finally traded All-Star second baseman Chuck Knoblauch to the New York Yankees yesterday. Knoblauch, a four-time All-Star, had asked for the trade, not wanting to play for a low-salaried team with little chance of winning.

Minnesota gets \$3 million and four minor league prospects: pitchers Eric Milton and Danny Mota, outfielder Brian Buchanan, and shortstop Cristian Guzman.

Knoblauch, 29, hit .291 last season with 117 runs, a career-high 62 steals, 10 triples, 9 homers, and 58 RBIs. He also won his first Gold Glove Award. Knoblauch earns \$6 million a season and has four years remaining on a five-year contract . . . The Florida Marlins traded pitcher Al Leiter and infielder Ralph Milliard to the New York Mets for three minor league prospects. Leiter, 32, was 11-9 with a 4.34 ERA in 27 starts last year. The lefthander, who pitched the Marlins' first-ever no-hitter in 1996, was on the disabled list twice in 1997 because of a bone bruise in his right knee and a pulled groin muscle. The Mets gave up lefthanded starter Jesus Sanchez, who led the Eastern League in victories and strikeouts while pitching for Double A Binghamton last season, Single A outfielder Robert Stratton, and Single A righthanded pitcher Allan Burnett

## **Baseball yanks get Knoblauch; Mets land Leiter**

*Seattle Post-Intelligencer February 7, 1998*

In a busy trading day for both New York teams, the Yankees finally got All-Star second baseman Chuck Knoblauch from the Minnesota Twins while the Mets acquired pitcher Al Leiter from the Florida Marlins. The Marlins have now shed 12 players from their 25-man team that won the World Series. Florida got three minor leaguers for Leiter and infielder Ralph Milliard. Leiter, 32 ((age)), was 11-9 with a 4.34 ERA in 27 starts last year. The left-hander was 0-1 with no saves in the postseason. He made two appearances in the World Series, going 0-0 with a 5.06 ERA against Cleveland.

## **Marlins Send Leiter To Mets**

*By DAVID O'BRIEN Staff Writer, February 7, 1998*

President Clinton will probably still be in the White House Feb. 17, but Al Leiter probably won't be there to meet him.

The Marlins finally traded the veteran left-hander Friday, sending Leiter and second baseman Ralph Milliard to the New York Mets in exchange for three prospects including a former No. 1 draft pick. The World Series champions are scheduled to visit the President at the White House on the second day of spring training, but 12 members of that team have been either traded, released or lost in the expansion draft.

## **Finally on top, Elway will give it another go**

*Chicago Sun-Times February 7, 1998*

Leiter sent to Mets as Marlins' firesale continues In yet another move to dismantle the World Series champions, the Florida Marlins traded left-hander Al Leiter to the New York Mets. The Marlins, who have gotten rid of 12 players from the 25-man championship roster in a salary purge, acquired three minor-league prospects for Leiter and infielder Ralph Milliard. Leiter, 32, was 11-9 with a 4.34 ERA in 27 starts last season. "It's unfortunate that so soon after winning the championship that they had to disassemble it," Leiter said.

## **Arena: sports briefing Baseball**

*Rocky Mountain News (Denver, CO) February 7, 1998*

### **Marlins trade Leiter to Mets**

The Florida Marlins traded pitcher Al Leiter to the New York Mets on Friday. The Marlins, who have gotten rid of 12 players from the 25-man championship roster in a salary purge, acquired three minor league prospects for Leiter and a minor leaguer. New York also receives second baseman Ralph Milliard while sending left-handed pitcher Jesus Sanchez, right-hander A.J. Burnett and outfielder Robert Stratton to Florida

## **Baseball transactions**

*The Washington Post*

February 12, 1998

Colorado Rockies -- Agreed to terms with 1B Todd Helton on a one-year contract. Los Angeles Dodgers -- Agreed to terms with IF Juan Castro, IF Tripp Cromer, C Henry Blanco and C Angel Pena on one-year contracts. Montreal Expos -- Agreed to terms with OF F.P. Santangelo, LHP Rick DeHart, RHP Mike Johnson, LHP Steve Kline, LHP Trey Moore, RHP Jeremy Powell, RHP Mike Thurman, RHP Javier Vazquez, C Bob Henley, IF Orlando Cabrera, IF Jose Fernandez and OF Terry Jones on one-year

contracts. New York Mets -- Agreed to terms with 2B Ralph Milliard on a one-year contract. Philadelphia Phillies -- Agreed to terms with RHP Ricky Bottalico on a one-year contract.

## Transactions

*Rocky Mountain News (Denver, CO) February 14, 1998*  
BASEBALL

NEW YORK METS - Agreed to terms with RHP Dave Mlicki on a two-year contract and OF Rich Becker on a one-year contract. Assigned INF Mike Bell outright to Norfolk of the International League. Agreed to terms with 2B Ralph Milliard on a one-year contract. Agreed to terms with RHP Dave Mlicki on a two-year contract.

## Stides report

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) February 15, 1998*  
Coming over to the organization on the tail end of the Al Leiter trade with the Florida Marlins is Ralph Milliard, a shortstop who's played at Harbor Park prior when with the Charlotte Knights. Milliard could add pop to the lineup, if Norfolk is his destination.

## Starting over

*Chicago Sun-Times February 17, 1998*  
The Marlins' comings and goings this winter: GONE: Pitcher Kevin Brown (\$4.8 million in 1998), outfielder Moises Alou (\$5 million), reliever Robb Nen (\$4 million), outfielder Devon White (\$3.5 million), starter Al Leiter (\$3 million), reserve Jeff Conine (\$3 million option), reliever Dennis Cook (\$850,000), infielder Kurt Abbott (\$750,000 in probable arbitration), reliever Ed Vosberg (\$600,000 in probable arbitration), infielder Alex Arias (\$450,000), pitcher Tony Saunders (\$400,000). OBTAINED: First baseman Derrek Lee and pitcher Rafael Medina (from San Diego in Brown trade), pitchers Oscar Henriquez and Manny Barrios (from Houston in Alou trade), pitcher Eric Ludwick (from Oakland in Kurt Abbott trade), infielder Brandon Cromer (signed off waivers from Pittsburgh), second baseman Ralph Milliard and three low minor-leaguers (from Mets for Leiter).

## Mets 5, Expos 2

*AP Online March 4, 1998*  
JUPITER, Fla. (AP) \_ Paul Wilson hit a solo homer and pitched three innings for the victory as the New York Mets beat the Montreal Expos 5-2 Tuesday. Wilson (1-0) led off the second with a homer off loser Shawn Boskie. The Mets right-hander struck out four and walked one while allowing two runs and two hits. Relievers Rick Trliceck, Mark Mimbs and Efrain Valdez held the Expos hitless until Mel Rojas gave up a hit in the ninth but struck out the side. Boskie (0-1) took the loss in relief of starter Matt Wagner, allowing three runs and four hits and walking two in two innings. Ralph Milliard was 2-for-2 for the Mets, and Craig Paquette was 1-for-2 and drove in two runs.

Despite stranding 10 runners to Montreal's two, New York broke open a 2-2 game with single runs in the fourth, fifth and eighth.

## Cardinals 3, Mets 2

*AP Online March 11, 1998*

PORT ST. LUCIE, Fla. (AP) \_ Tom Lampkin drove in two runs and right fielder Wayne Kirby threw out the potential tying run at the plate in the ninth inning Wednesday as the St. Louis Cardinals beat the New York Mets 3-2. Lampkin had three hits, including an RBI double in the seventh off Turk Wendell and a run-scoring single in the ninth off Mark Mimbs. John Mabry had two singles and scored twice.

Winner Todd Stottlemyre allowed one hit and struck out six in four shutout innings. Braden Loooper got four outs for the save. Craig Paquette, hitting .355 for the spring, was 2-for-4 for the Mets, homering in the seventh. Ralph Milliard's two-out single for New York in the ninth scored Tim Spehr from third but Kirby threw out Rick Parker trying to score from second. Mets starter Bobby Jones, the loser, gave up one run - unearned - and three hits in five innings. New York had won six straight.

## Paquette not Met yet

*The Record (Bergen County, NJ) March 18, 1998 | T.J. QUINN, Staff Writer*

JUPITER, Fla. -- In the winter of 1993-94, Craig Paquette and his wife, Jessica, found a sweet two-bedroom apartment outside of Oakland, Calif., where he had just broken into the major leagues.

After starting at third base for the A's in 100 of the final 110 games of the previous season, Paquette thought he should get settled.

And then, on the last day of spring training 1994, Paquette was sent down to Class AAA Tacoma. "We lost all of those deposits," he said. "It was a lot of money."

So one might understand why Paquette, fighting for a utility job with the Mets, hasn't looked for a place in New York just yet.

Paquette and eight other position players still in camp are fighting for the final three spots on the club, the jobs without safety nets. Whoever doesn't make it drops straight to the minors or the great baseball beyond.

They are journeymen -- Joe Orsulak, Jim Tatum, Shawn Gilbert, Rick Parker -- and youngsters -- Matt Franco, Chad Fonville, Luis Lopez, Ralph Milliard -- trying to prove to the Mets that their services are essential. Some have speed, some can hit, some are glove men. Some offer a combination. If the Mets carry three catchers and 11 pitchers, there will be three utility jobs available. And should the Mets trade for a catcher and decide to carry two, the other roster spot would probably go to a 12th pitcher.

## Weekend Sports Transactions

*AP Online March 23, 1998 | The Associated Press*

NEW YORK METS-Placed RHP Jason Istringhausen on the 60-day disabled list. Placed C Todd Hundley and LHP Hector Mercado on the 15-day disabled list. Optioned LHP Bill Pulsipher, C Vance Wilson and 2B Ralph Milliard to Norfolk of the International League. Reassigned C Pedro Grifol and LHP Efrain Valdez to their minor-league camp.

## Future gets a bit shaky for fonville

*The Record (Bergen County, NJ) March 23, 1998 | T.J. QUINN*

**Column: METS SPRING TRAINING NOTEBOOK**

After Dodgers starter Ramon Martinez hit Luis Lopez and Tim Spehr with pitches, Mets starter Brian Bohanon responded by nailing Martinez in the back. And after Shawn Gilbert was picked off at first base in the sixth, first base coach Mookie Wilson was tossed for arguing with umpire Greg Gibson. Manager Bobby Valentine finished the game in the coach's box.

**BLOOP SINGLES:** Just more than a week to go until opening day and Carlos Baerga still doesn't have an extra-base hit. . . . Pitcher Efrain Valdez and infielder Ralph Milliard were sent to the minor league camp, leaving 34 players in the major league camp.

## The newest mine for baseball talent: the Dutch Caribbean

*AP Online April 7, 1998 | ROMULO IRAUSQUIN  
Associated Press Writer*

ORANJESTAD, Aruba (AP) \_ Major league baseball scouts searching Latin America and the Caribbean for talent are adding a new stop to their travels: the Dutch islands of Aruba and Curacao. Baseball was the islands' best-kept sporting secret until Atlanta's Andruw Jones hit two homers in the first game of the 1996 World Series against the Yankees at age 19.

Now there's a talent chase on the islands, known to tourists for crystal-clear scuba diving. In the last couple of years, 26 players from Aruba and Curacao - population 240,000 - have signed with major league teams.

"To me it's been pretty much a gold mine. The players that come out of there are excellent athletes," said William Clark, the Atlanta Braves' international scouting supervisor. "Now you can't go to Curacao without climbing over scouts."

Aruba and Curacao have produced Randall Simon (signed by the Braves), Calvin Maduro (Phillies), Anthony Meulens (Diamondbacks), Ralph Milliard (Mets) and Eugene Kingsale (Orioles), among others.

Last year, Diegomar Markwell, a 16-year-old left-handed pitcher from Curacao, signed with the Toronto Blue Jays for \$750,000.

This year, scouts are lining up for another 16-year-old, 6-foot-5 lefthander Roberto Albertus of Aruba. At least 12 U.S. ballclubs have checked out Albertus, who already throws an 84-mph fastball.

"Everyone will line up to make bids on July 2," when Albertus can sign under major league rules, Clark said. The scouts' interest in such out-of-the-way places as the Dutch islands off Venezuela reflects a keen global competition for international baseball talent - and the American game's enduring popularity abroad. At one point, 10 players on the Braves' 40-man roster this year were from abroad, and six of them were under 22.

Baseball was introduced in Aruba and Curacao in the 1930s by political refugees from Venezuela and by Venezuelans, Dominican and U.S. workers at Curacao's giant oil refinery. Over the years, youth leagues formed, and satellites began beaming Cubs and Braves games nightly to the islands on television. Today, the sport rivals soccer as the most popular in the Dutch Antilles.

"I guess the talent has been here for some time, but people were concentrating on other territories," said Giovanni Viceisza, who, when he isn't running Curacao Welding and Industrial Supply, devotes his time to representing Jones, Simon, Albertus and other local players.

"I found Jones and Simon, and now we have a bunch of scouts here," said Viceisza, who worked for the Braves before becoming an agent.

The game is so popular among youngsters that parents often complain that their children can't find places on youth teams. Viceisza's annual baseball clinic attracted 750 kids in February, up from 150 in 1992. Jones, from Curacao, struggled last year and during spring training this year, while some of the other local big names - Maduro, Milliard - were sent to the minors to pick up more experience.

No matter. The Dutch islands have found their way onto baseball's map, and the spotlight should shine again when Albertus' signing date comes. "He's got the mechanics. He's a very down-to-earth guy, very quiet. He'll sit and contemplate his game. I'd compare him maybe to Steve Carlton," Viceisza said. For Atlanta's Clark, the trip to Aruba and Curacao no longer is an anonymous venture. "It used to be you'd go down there and no one would pay attention to you," he said. "Now you get there, get into your hotel and look at the newspaper and it's saying, 'The Braves are here, The Braves are here.'"

## Tides: mix of youth, experience

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) April 8, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

NORFOLK -- The Norfolk Tides, heavy on veteran players a year ago, have some young, fresh faces to trumpet this year, meaning their prospects for the upcoming season are riding on ... prospects. Preston Wilson, a rangy, 23-year-old outfielder with loads of power, is moving from rightfield to center, where he's projected to eventually start for the parent-club New York Mets.

Vance Wilson, 25, will be behind the plate and the Mets want to see enough of him that they've instructed manager Rick Dempsey to start Wilson ahead of Todd Pratt, who played for the Tides and Mets last season. Pratt will be used mainly as a designated hitter.

The Wilsons are not related. But Mets general manager Steve Phillips will be keeping very close tabs on both of them now that they've reached Triple-A. As for Norfolk, the youth movement doesn't stop with the Wilsons.

The Tides will open Thursday night with 12 players - or more than half the 23-man roster - who are 26 years old or younger, including the entire opening-day outfield. Wilson will be flanked by 26-year-olds Brent Bowers and Benny Agbayani.

Among the other young turks are second baseman Ralph Milliard, 24, first baseman Jay Payton, 25, infielder Mike Bell, 23, infielder Dennis Colon, 24, and pitchers Derek Wallace, 26, Mark Guerra, 26, Scott Sauerbeck, 26, and Bill Pulsipher, 24.

Pulsipher, a former major leaguer who is in his second season of rehabilitating a surgically-repaired arm, is expected to be looked at closely too. He will be the Tides' opening night pitcher. As for the pitching staff, it's lefthanders followed by righthanders.

Four of the five designated starters are lefties, including Pulsipher. Five of the six relievers are righthanders.

It's not the most opportunistic setup. It won't allow the Tides to pit lefthanded pitcher against lefthanded hitter often in late innings. But Dempsey accepts that fact.

The Tides also have an unbalanced assortment of hitters. Of the dozen position players who will open on the roster when Norfolk meets Durham Thursday night at Harbor Park, only two - Bowers and reserve infielder Dennis Colon - bat lefthanded.

That leaves 10 righthanded bats. "That doesn't bother me too much," Dempsey said. "I'd rather be overloaded with righthanders. They're more adept at hitting righthanders than lefthanders are against lefthanders."



Ralph Milliard of the Norfolk Tides waits for the sky to clear at Harbor Park before the season opener against the Durham Bulls. The sun set on these circular moving storm clouds just before the game started. The Tides lost 5-4, Norfolk, April 9, 1998

## Durham storms past Tides with 3 home runs

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) April 10, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

NORFOLK -- The Norfolk Tides and starting pitcher Bill Pulsipher would like a do-over.

On opening night at Harbor Park, the Durham Bulls treated Pulsipher much the way the weather treated South Hampton Roads Thursday: they rocked him right out of the blue. It wasn't as if Pulsipher had to weather a hurricane. It was just a series of flash thunderstorms and surprise twisters that did him in.

In the game's first four innings, Durham's Tim Laker homered twice and Brooks Kieschnick drilled a two-run homer that bounced on top of the scoreboard in right, leading the Bulls to a 5-4 victory in their first game at the Triple-A level.

While the Bulls, until this season a Class A franchise, were in a new arena of play, it wasn't the first Triple-A game for many of their players. In fact, it was Laker's 254th and Kieschnick's 343rd.

Nor was it Pulsipher's. The former New York Met was a phenom in Triple-A three years ago, but was back in Norfolk last season after arm surgery and struggled woefully with his control, walking 38 in 24 2/3 innings for the Tides.

He was similarly wild for three other Mets minor-league clubs. This year, he has a better grasp of his location. And that was a bright spot in the eyes of manager Rick Dempsey. "He got some fastballs up to the wrong guys," Dempsey said. "But from a positive standpoint he got the ball across the plate. And how often do you see the wind blowing out here?"

Pulsipher went five innings walking two, striking out six and giving up seven hits, five runs, four earned.

"It seemed with every mistake, they capitalized," said Pulsipher, who was near masterful in spring training giving up only two earned runs in 35 innings of work between the Mets and Tides camps. "And Kieschnick must have been looking for that pitch because he walloped it."

Actually, Kieschnick was looking for exactly what he got, a curve ball. "I beat a first-pitch fastball into the ground my first time up, so I thought he might throw something off-speed," Kieschnick said. "That's by far the best ball I've hit this spring from the time I reported in February." Norfolk carved into the Bulls' cushion with a solo home run by Craig Paquette in the fifth. It was the only run allowed by Durham starting pitcher Jason Johnson, who went six innings, walked none and struck out eight. The only other hits he allowed were bloop singles by Paquette and Ralph Milliard.

The Tides had a bit more success against Durham's bullpen, scoring two unearned runs against Santos Hernandez in the seventh. Paquette reached on a throwing error by third baseman McClain with one out, Preston Wilson doubled to the gap in right, Brent Bowers' sacrifice fly to center scored Paquette and Todd Pratt's bloop single to right scored Wilson to make it 5-3.

In the eighth, Norfolk scored again when Benny Agbayani doubled off the fence in right with one out to score Milliard, who had singled up the middle to lead off. Jay Payton then reached on an infield single, leaving runners at the corners.

Sidearm specialist Mark Eichhorn, who went 1 2/3 innings for the save, then came on in relief of Josias Manzanillo and struck out Paquette. Preston Wilson then laid down an unsuccessful bunt attempt to end the inning.

## **Tides are stymied by Durham again Eichhorn gets his second save in as many nights as Norfolk falls to 0-2.**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) April 11, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

NORFOLK -- Maybe the weekend will be better for the Norfolk Tides.

Straight-jacketed for the second consecutive night by a sharp Durham Bulls starting pitcher, the Tides fell 10-7 on a chilly Friday night at Harbor Park. Durham lefthander Matt Ruebel allowed one hit over six innings - a grounder through the right side by Todd Pratt in the second inning - before giving way to his bullpen. Durham's relief corps then bumped its way home like Jed Clampett's truck, somehow making it safely to the finish without Granny falling off.

Things got flaky in the final three innings and Norfolk actually sent the potential winning run to the plate in the ninth when Craig Paquette stepped in against Mark Eichhorn with two out and the bases loaded. But Eichhorn got Paquette swinging and the Tides have yet to lead in the first 18 innings of the season.

It was Eichhorn's second save in as many nights; he preserved a Jason Johnson victory Thursday.

"I know we're going to hit," Tides manager Rick Dempsey said. "But we've got to put a more consistent attack together earlier."

The Bulls scored three in the fourth and the primary trouble spot for Tides starting pitcher Mike Fyhrie was a pair of back-to-back walks in the middle of the inning. After Russ Morman's one-out double off the top of the wall in left - he now has three doubles in two games - Scott McClain worked Fyhrie for a full-count walk and Tim Laker walked on five pitches to load the bases.

Francisco Matos, who went 5 for 5, singled sharply up the middle and Tides centerfielder Preston Wilson booted the ball as two runs scored. After Dave Silvestri walked, Jim Buccheri grounded a ball up the middle. It deflected off Fyhrie's foot, and second baseman Ralph Milliard lost his footing and was unable to recover in time to turn a double play, allowing the third run.

The Bulls pushed the lead to 4-0 in the sixth when Matos singled with one out off reliever Mark Guerra, stole second, then scored on Buccheri's two-out single.

As they did in the season opener the previous night, the Tides got within one run, scoring three runs in the seventh when they put together a single by Benny Agbayani, a run-

scoring triple off the wall in left by Paquette and run-scoring doubles by Wilson and Pratt.

But the Bulls answered with six runs in the top of the eighth, a rally that began with Laker's third home run in two nights. By inning's end, both Guerra and Derek Wallace had been roughed up and the Tides trailed 10-3. Randy Winn also had a two-run triple in that inning.

"We've got to start putting up straight numbers instead of big crooked ones," Dempsey said.

A two-run home run to left by Paquette in the eighth cut Durham's lead to 10-5.

In the ninth, Brad Pennington became Durham's third reliever behind John LeRoy and Ryan Karp to have his troubles. Pennington gave up a single and three walks before Eichhorn came on with one out and the bases loaded.

Eichhorn struck out Agbayani before Jay Payton drove in a run with a swinging bunt. Then Eichhorn coaxed Paquette into chasing a third strike off the plate to end it.

## **Tides' Milliard ringing in '98 in grand style**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) April 12, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

Norfolk Tides second baseman Ralph Milliard received a curious FedEx package on opening day at Harbor Park Thursday. It was insured for \$2,500 and seemed to have a box inside. When Milliard saw the return address was the Florida Marlins, he knew the contents. "At the beginning of spring training, they asked me for my ring size," Milliard said. "Then I got traded."

Not to fear. A lot of Florida Marlins were traded in the off season following the team's World Series win. Milliard came to the New York Mets organization as part of the trade for starting major league pitcher Al Leiter. Milliard received the ring for playing in eight games for Florida early in the season. By late May, after being optioned to the Marlins' Triple-A affiliate Charlotte Knights, Milliard's season was on a downslide following elbow surgery. Does the ring make up for an otherwise disappointing campaign? Not necessarily. "It doesn't make up for '97 or '96," said Milliard, who has been a solid minor-league second baseman, hitting a career .274, but has floundered in his two trips to the majors, batting .173. "I still feel I haven't done anything. I have to prove myself again. I've got to make stuff happen."



## **Tides rally for 1st win of the season Agbayani's 2-run home run in the 8th proves to be the cure for an 0-3 start**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) April 13, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

NORFOLK -- The Norfolk Tides' hottest bat provided the team with its biggest hit of the young season Sunday afternoon at Harbor Park.

Benny Agbayani delivered a two-run home run to left in the eighth inning as the Tides finally won on their fourth try against the Durham Bulls, 5-4. It was the Hawaiian native's sixth extra-base hit of the four-game series and he's hitting .412, a team-high. He also did all of that with a host of New York Mets roving instructors and front-office types in attendance for the Tides' season-opening series. The Tides continue their seven-game, season-opening homestand tonight against the Charlotte Knights.

Agbayani's home run was his second in as many games and he sparked both Tides rallies Sunday.

Agbayani ended what was turning into a pitchers' duel when he laced a two-strike double off Rick White to the gap in right in the fourth inning. Payton then singled to move Agbayani to third and Agbayani raced home on a wild pitch.

After Craig Paquette walked, Preston Wilson delivered a run-scoring single up the middle. Brent Bowers then reached on a sacrifice bunt-fielder's choice that loaded the bases when Durham's Scott McClain pulled off third early while taking White's throw.

Vance Wilson then grounded into a double play that scored a run as the Tides went up 3-0.

Tides lefthanded starter Mark Mimbs retired the first 11 Bulls he faced and was cruising along until the sixth inning when Randy Winn drew a leadoff walk. Francisco Matos then drilled a ball down the third base line that Paquette was unable to glove cleanly. McClain singled to right to score Winn and Russ Morman singled to left, loading the bases.

The Tides then got a break when Brooks Kieschnick grounded back to Mimbs to start a home-to-first double play. But after Tim Laker was walked intentionally, Dave Silvestri doubled to the gap in right, clearing the bases and putting the Bulls up, 4-3.

“Mark made that one bad pitch and it cost him three runs,” said Tides manager Rick Dempsey. “Silvestri just got the ball up into that jet stream that's going to right.”

Mark Guerra, the last pitcher added to the Tides' roster coming out of spring training, came on in relief and pitched 2 1/3 scoreless innings. Then Agbayani's home run gave Guerra his first Triple-A victory.

Agbayani drilled an inside pitch into the picnic area beyond the leftfield wall after Ralph Milliard had drawn a leadoff walk against reliever John LeRoy.

Derek Wallace pitched the ninth inning to earn the save and got two superb defensive plays from Paquette at third after Jim Buccheri had singled and stole second to move into scoring position.

Guerra had been working out with the New York Mets' Double-A club and figured he was returning to Binghamton this spring. Then three days before camp broke he found himself back with the Tides.

“And he gets our first win,” Dempsey said. “That's just how it happens. A guy just makes the club and then he's your best pitcher to start the season.”

Off to an 0-3 start, Agbayani's 2-run HR in 8th inning breaks the spell for Norfolk.

Agbayani's 2-run home run in the 8th proves to be the cure for an 0-3 start.

## **Tides' bats are held to a whisper**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) April 14, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

NORFOLK -- Defense was the buzz word Monday night as the Norfolk Tides met the Charlotte Knights at Harbor Park.

Offense, however, was hard to find. The Tides, who are batting a combined .217 after five games, were shut down by Charlotte starter Rey Mendoza and reliever Donn Pall in a 2-0 loss. Norfolk managed just six hits, all singles. The Tides were left to groan about misfortune for another night.

No opportunity was greater than in the eighth inning, when Shawn Gilbert led off with an infield single and Todd Pratt laced a line drive . . . directly at Charlotte second baseman Luis Castillo, who doubled Gilbert off at first. The Tides (1-4) still ended up with two runners in the inning after Ralph Milliard and Benny Agbayani walked with two out. But Jay Payton grounded to short to end the threat.

Similar circumstance surrounded the Tides' half of the seventh. After Preston Wilson lined a single to left, Brett Bowers hit a sharp grounder up the middle. Wilson, however, had momentarily started toward second on the pitch, coaxing Charlotte shortstop Alex Gonzalez into the ball's path for the start of another double play. Norfolk managed to move a runner to third only once, when Bowers reached on an infield single and Vance Wilson singled up the middle with two out in the second inning. But Gilbert, the only Tide to collect two hits on the evening, made his only out of the night on a called third strike.

The Knights' only runs came in the fifth against Tides starter Scott Sauerbeck. Mendoza led off with a single up the middle and Castillo walked. Both moved up on a wild pitch and both scored on a double to the gap in left by former Tide Brian Daubach. Otherwise, Sauerbeck was able to pitch out of jams with the aid of some sterling play in the field by the Tides in the second and third innings. In the second, catcher Vance Wilson stymied Mendoza's attempted sacrifice bunt with runners at first and second and one out by cutting down Gonzalez at third.

In Charlotte's half of the third, John Roskos doubled with two out and appeared ready to score the game's first run on a single up the middle by Lou Lucca. But centerfielder Preston Wilson cut down Roskos at the plate with an impressive throw. And in the fifth, Daubach was out at the

plate on a single by Roskos that leftfielder Benny Agbayani quickly got to relay man Craig Paquette. Relievers Efrain Valdez and Jeff Tam combined to keep Charlotte (2-3) scoreless over the final four innings. Extra innings: The New York Mets have signed infielder Robert Eenhoorn to a free agent contract. Eenhoorn worked out with the Tides Monday. No word on when he might be activated, however. . . .

## **Mimbs' arm, Tides' bats prove to be too much for Columbus**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) April 18, 1998 | Portzline, Aaron*

COLUMBUS, OHIO -- Norfolk's Mark Mimbs usually throws a good deal of change-ups, but Friday night he had no need to.

Armed with a sharp, darting sinker, Mimbs pitched the Tides to a 10-1 victory over the Columbus Clippers before 4,811 at Cooper Stadium. Mimbs allowed one unearned run and one hit while striking out eight over seven innings. He didn't allow a hit until the sixth, when Columbus' Chris Singleton popped a bunt over his head and in front of second baseman Ralph Milliard.

Norfolk relievers Mark Guerra and Derek Wallace each followed with a perfect inning. The Tides' offense did the rest.

Norfolk totaled a season-high seven extra-base hits, including three doubles in the seventh inning to fuel a four-run charge which sealed the game. Benny Agbayani doubled with one out and scored when Preston Wilson lined a double down the third base line. Todd Pratt brought Wilson home with a double to right-center and Robert Eenhoorn followed with a single to left, scoring Pratt. Eenhoorn, a former Clipper, took second on a wild pitch and scored on Vance Wilson's single, giving Norfolk a 10-1 lead.

Agbayani was 2 for 3, raising his batting average to .450. Eleven of his 15 hits have been for extra bases.

Norfolk manager Rick Dempsey said Agbayani is a better hitter than he was last season, which is no small claim. Agbayani batted .310 last year.

## **Caled-down Marlins preparing for the worst**

*Rocky Mountain News (Denver, CO) April 21, 1998 | Ringolsby, Tracy*

As far as victory tours go, the Florida Marlins' has been a bust.

But, then, there aren't many victors remaining in Marlins uniforms to enjoy the spoils of last year's unprecedented world championship, which Florida won in its fifth year of franchise existence, three years faster than any expansion predecessor.

The Rockies fly to Florida today for a three-game series against the Marlins, a team more aptly described as devastated - not defending - world champions.

Only 13 of the 25 players who appeared in the World Series last year are still with the Marlins. It wasn't their choice but that of owner H. Wayne Huizenga, who spent what it took to buy a championship, then moaned about losses in excess of \$30 million on his way to a championship celebration. So before the champagne stains were removed from the clubhouse at Pro Player Stadium, the nucleus had been removed from the Marlins roster. And so had their hope for '98.

The Marlins knew it would be tough this season. But this tough?

They already have suffered an 11-game losing streak - the worst in franchise history. They are off to their worst start ever. They are on pace for the biggest fall ever for a defending champion, potentially replacing the 1991 Cincinnati Reds, who went 74-88 after a sweep of Oakland in the 1990 World Series. "Nobody thought it would be this bad," outfielder Cliff Floyd said after a recent misadventure. "Nobody wants to struggle like this the whole season." But that's life in Florida, circa 1998.

The foundation for last year's championship was a pitching staff anchored by closer Robb Nen (now in San Francisco) and a rotation built around Kevin Brown (now in San Diego), Al Leiter (now with the New York Mets) and Alex Fernandez (wondering if he will ever pitch again after rotator cuff surgery).

The frustrations for this year's Marlins begins with a 12-man pitching staff that includes eight rookies - four in the rotation - and only two pitchers will a full year of big-league experience - relievers Jay Powell and Felix Heredia. There is hope for the future, however. The Marlins have one of the deeper farm systems in baseball, and they stockpiled young talent when they unloaded the old talent in the winter. The present, however, isn't pretty. The Marlins' pitching rotation went into Monday with an earned-run average of 5.69 - higher than any other NL team except Colorado - and nearly two runs higher than last year's 3.76, fourth-best in the NL.

And the inexperience of a rotation on which Livan Hernandez is the veteran (he started 17 games in '97), has created an extra load on the inexperienced bullpen, which is averaging 4 1/2 innings a game - five outs more per game than required of it a year ago.

"Last year, our starters would get us to the sixth inning and we could mix and match from there," manager Jim Leyland said. "When your starters can't do that, and you have to start mixing and matching in the fourth inning, that's when you get in trouble."

And that's where the Marlins are - in trouble.

Their situation was best summed up when the Marlins embarked on their initial trip of the season to Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.

Nobody from the front office went along. General manager Dave Dombrowski caught a flight to the West Coast. His assistant, Frank Wren, headed for Chicago. While the '98 Marlins were stumbling their way into oblivion, Dombrowski stopped in San Francisco, where he presented the World Series rings to Nen, and Moises Alou, now with Houston, then drove across the Bay Bridge to give one to Kurt Abbott, now with Oakland. Dombrowski then flew to

San Diego to give rings to Brown and Ed Vosberg, both Padres, and Devon White, now with Arizona. Wren stopped by Wrigley Field to give rings to Leiter and Dennis Cook, in town with the Mets, and went to Comiskey Park to make the presentation to Tony Saunders, visiting with his new teammates in Tampa Bay.

#### INFOBOX

New-look Marlins

.. The Marlins have unloaded 12 of the 25 players on their World Series roster:

Player, pos.....Move

Kurt Abbott, SS.....Traded to A's for RHP Eric Ludwick

Dennis Cook, LHP.....Traded to Mets for OF Fletcher

Bates and RHP Scott Cormer

Kevin Brown, RHP.....Traded to Padres for 1B Derrek Lee and RHP Rafael Medina

Alex Arias, INF.....Released; signed with Phillies

Jeff Conine, 1B.....Traded to Royals for RHP Blaine Mull

Ed Vosberg, LHP.....Traded to Padres for RHP Chris

Clark

Tony Saunders, LHP...Taken by Devil Rays in expansion draft

Devon White, CF.....Traded to Diamondbacks for for LHP Jesus Martinez

Robb Nen, RHP.....Traded to Giants for RHPs Joe

Fontenot, Mick Pageler and Mike Villano

Moises Alou, OF.....Traded to Astros for RHPs Oscar

Henriquez and Manuel Barrios

Darren Daulton, OF...Released

Al Leiter, LHP.....Traded to Mets with INF Ralph

Milliard for LHP Jesus Sanchez, RHP A.J..Burnett and

RHP Brandon Villafuerte

## **Tides blanked by Mud Hens, ending their first road trip 2-4**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) April 23, 1998 | Hughes, Clyde*

MAUMEE, OHIO -- The Norfolk Tides looked for a split in their annual spring swing through Ohio but ended with a quiet thud Wednesday against the Toledo Mud Hens.

Norfolk managed five hits off Toledo starter Seth Greisinger (2-0) as the Tides fell to the Mud Hens 4-0 at Ned Skeldon Stadium. The loss prevented Norfolk from finishing its first road trip at .500. Instead it went 2-4.

"We're just not hitting the ball at all right now," Norfolk manager Rick Dempsey said. "One day we're hot and the next two days we're not. It's too early to panic but I'm always concerned. To have the lineup we have and not score a run concerns me."

Greisinger scattered five hits against the Tides. Norfolk didn't get back-to-back hits until the eighth inning, when Vance Wilson and Ralph Milliard had consecutive two-out singles.

But Greisinger struck out Jay Payton to end that threat. Brent Bowers doubled to left with one out in the first inning, but Benny Agbayani and Craig Paquette followed with two soft grounders to first to finish the inning.

Norfolk's Robert Eenhoorn fouled a ball off his foot during his second-inning at-bat. Eenhoorn singled to left on the next pitch but could not run and had to leave the game.

"He didn't realize how bad it was until he started to run," Dempsey said. "He banged it up pretty good. It's a good thing that we have an off day. He may be able to get right back into the lineup."

Shawn Gilbert went 1 for 2 in his place, getting a single to right to lead off the fifth inning, but the next batter, Rick Parker, hit into a double play.

## **Missed chances haunt Tides again two blown sacrifice opportunities sends Norfolk to third straight loss and a sluggish 5-9 start**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) April 25, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

RICHMOND -- With the Norfolk Tides off to a sluggish start, manager Rick Dempsey offered to pitch optional batting practice on their off day Thursday and had so many takers that "we went for 2 1/2 hours." But after a 2-1 loss to the Richmond Braves Friday night at The Diamond - the Tides' third straight setback - Dempsey isn't so sure the figurative oil change was what the team needed.

Now he's toying with inserting a new spark plug.

"We don't have many lefthanded bats in our order and opposing pitchers are finding a rhythm against our righthanders," Dempsey said. "I've got to find a way to get Dennis Colon in the lineup."

Colon, a backup infielder, is one of only two lefthanded bats among the Tides' position players. And the other, rightfielder Brent Bowers, is batting .156 after 14 games. Is Dempsey grabbing for straws because of this 5-9 start?

Or trying to be the straw that stirs the drink?

If he wanted to be in the second classification, he opted out when asked about two blown sacrifice opportunities Friday when he replied by saying "Ask about something else before I say something I'll regret."

The first bunt opportunity came in the fifth inning after Ralph Milliard reached on an infield single. But pitcher Mark Mimbs, attempting to move Milliard to second, missed on the first pitch, then bunted into a double play started by Richmond catcher Fausto Tejero.

The other opportunity presented itself in the eighth when Jay Payton drew a leadoff walk, only to be out at second when Bowers bunted too hard to Braves relief pitcher Adam Butler.

The Tides' only run came when Benny Agbayani doubled to the gap in right with one out in the sixth, then scored on Craig Paquette's single through the right side on a hit-and-run play. It was Agbayani's International League-leading eighth double and 13th extra-base hit.

But it was a ripped line drive into the glove of Richmond shortstop Jose Olmeda that Agbayani and others were harping on in the clubhouse.

Agbayani drilled that shot with runners at second and third and two out in the third after Mimbs drew a one-out walk, Jay Payton doubled to the gap in left and Bowers struck out for the inning's second out.

Richmond (10-5) got its runs off a third-inning solo home run by Marty Malloy and a sacrifice fly by Tejero in the fourth after Olmeda tripled with one out. Anthony Briggs went six innings for the victory and former Tide Rudy Seanez pitched the ninth for the save, his third.

## **.156 hitter helps Tides win in 11th bowers, who earlier drove in 2 runs with a single, scored the winning run after he hit leadoff double**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) April 28, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

NORFOLK -- Brent Bowers dragged a .156 batting average into Harbor Park Monday night much like a schoolboy does a bookbag containing a lousy report card. But he came away from the Norfolk Tides' 3-2 victory in 11 innings with passing marks.

The rightfielder drove in two of the Tides' runs with a bases-loaded single in the third, then scored the winning run after drilling a leadoff double to the gap in right in the 11th. Benny Agbayani plated Bowers with the game-winner when he bounced a single into rightfield.

The lefthanded hitting Bowers' 2-for-5 night upped his average to .180, but at least it was a start.

Agbayani hit the first pitch he saw from David Cortes, a fastball that Richmond catcher Fausto Tejero said was "two feet outside."

"I didn't think he was going to swing at it," Tejero added. Maybe it was the bat that allowed Agbayani to reach it.

From the sixth inning on, Agbayani was swinging borrowed lumber. "It was Mike Bell's," he smiled.

The Tides improved to 7-10 with their second straight win. And pitching was as much a reason as anything.

Starter Mike Fyhrie went seven innings, with his only mistake coming when he gave up a two-run home run by Ricky Magdaleno with two out in the second. Efrain Valdez, Jeff Tam and Derek Wallace combined to hold Richmond at bay, with Wallace gaining the victory.

The Tides tied it in the third when Braves starter Paul Byrd became momentarily wild and let the bottom of the Tides order take a bite.

Vance Wilson and Ralph Milliard each walked on five pitches. Fyhrie, faking bunt, then chopped one over first baseman Randall Simon's head, loading the bases.

After Tides leadoff man Jay Payton popped out to short, Bowers punched a grounder through the left side, scoring Wilson and Milliard.

"I got jammed," Bowers said. "But the way things have been going, I'll take it."

## **Whatever could go wrong does as the Tides absorb a beating**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) May 1, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

NORFOLK -- If one play typified the Norfolk Tides' performance Thursday night, it came in the top of the eighth inning.

With one out and a runner at first, Columbus outfielder Bubba Carpenter popped up to shallow center. Tides second baseman Ralph Milliard drifted out while outfielders Shawn Gilbert and Dennis Colon drifted in. When the ball fell harmlessly between all three, Colon still had a chance to force lead runner Gabby Martinez at second. But he threw wide of second and everybody was safe.

Gilbert was charged with the error for letting the ball fall. Martinez eventually scored.

By then, it didn't really matter. The Tides were well on their way to a 7-0 loss to the Clippers.

The experience left Tides manager Rick Dempsey punch-drunk. "How's Newton's Law go?" Dempsey asked.

"Anything that can go wrong will go wrong. Oh yeah, that's Murphy's Law."

Little has gone right offensively for the Tides, who are last in the International League in hitting with a .229 team average.

Norfolk fell to 8-12 and has scored one run or less in half their losses.

The depth of the Tides' offensive woes can be summed up in one boggling statistic: Columbus starting pitcher Wilson Heredia entered with a 0-3 record and a 12.05 earned-run average. His numbers improved dramatically when he went seven innings and gave up just three hits.

Oh, and the Tides committed as many errors as they collected hits.

Tides starting pitcher Scott Sauerbeck, who fell to 0-3, must be getting used to this treatment. He's been on the short end of two of the Tides' three shutout losses, and he had one run to work with in his other loss.

The Tides were shut out only five times a year ago.

"I'm trying to stay as positive as I possibly can," Dempsey said. "But this team is pressing, and it's really having an effect on them. Nobody is being patient, from me to the coaches to the players."

The Clippers raced to a 4-0 lead in the second inning. Ricky Ledee singled and Mike Figga and Martinez doubled to start the inning. Carpenter sacrificed Martinez to third and Gomez reached on a fielder's choice when Tides first baseman Jay Payton threw wide trying to get Martinez at home on a grounder. Gomez stole second and moved to third on Scott Pose's infield single, and Clay Bellinger drove in Gomez when he grounded out to short. The Tides had their one great opportunity to score in the second when they loaded the bases with one out on a double by Todd Pratt and walks to Colon and Mike Bell. But Heredia escaped by striking out Milliard and coaxing Eric Christopherson into flying out.

## **Tides' fill-in catcher delivers game-winning rbi in the 9th Eric Christopherson got his chance after Todd Pratt was promoted to the Mets**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) May 6, 1998 | Lusk, Lacy*

DURHAM, N.C. -- After the Norfolk Tides went from having too many catchers to having too few, Eric Christopherson had his chance to play Tuesday night. He made the most of it by doubling in the go-ahead run in the top of the ninth inning of the Tides' 3-2 victory in front of 4,454 fans at Durham Bulls Athletic Park. Christopherson entered the game at 0 for 6 this season, but he earned the start after Todd Pratt was promoted to the major leagues to replace injured New York Mets catcher Tim Spehr.

Tuesday night, both teams' pitchers consistently worked out of jams. The International League South-leading Bulls (17-10) left 11 runners on base, while Norfolk (11-14) left 12. The Tides' last run scored after a leadoff single from Ralph Milliard. Two passed balls from Durham's Tim Laker moved Milliard to third, and he scored on Christopherson's no-out double off Ryan Karp (0-2). Norfolk had trailed, 2-1, until Dennis Colon's double scored Preston Wilson in the eighth inning. That run prevented Durham starter Matt Reubel, the IL's wins leader, from improving to 6-0.

## **Colon's hit in 10th lifts tides to 3rd straight win.(sports)**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) May 12, 1998 | Daignault, Louis*

OTTAWA -- The Norfolk Tides posted a season-high third consecutive victory Monday night with a 2-1 comeback victory in 10 innings over the Ottawa Lynx. Dennis Colon drove home the winning run, slicing a two-out single to leftfield. Tides pinch-hitter Rick Fyhrie had opened the 10th with a single to right off reliever Joey Long (0-3). After Rick Parker grounded out, Todd Haney was walked intentionally, setting the stage for Colon.

The star of the game for the Tides was starting pitcher Scott Sauerbeck who had his best outing of the season but received no offensive support. He left after seven innings trailing 1-0. He allowed only four hits, walked three and struck out four.

Monday's victory was the first time the Tides won in Sauerbeck's six starts. In his three defeats, Sauerbeck's teammates have manufactured one run and been shut out twice.

It didn't help Sauerbeck's cause that his mound opponent, Carl Pavano, is one of the hottest minor league pitching prospects. The Montreal Expos, parent team of the Lynx, traded Cy Young Award-winner Pedro Martinez to Boston for Pavano.

In his second start since returning from a shoulder injury, Pavano, on a 100-pitch count, handcuffed the Tides hitters, allowing only four hits and one walk and striking out four in 6 2/3 innings.

The Tides tied the game in the top of the ninth as reliever Ben Fleetham walked in the tying run. Haney had opened the ninth with a double to extend his hitting streak to six games and Fleetham walked Scott Hunter, Brent Bowers and Ralph Milliard.

## **Decker has 3 hits in his debut to lead Tides**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) May 13, 1998 | Daignault, Louis*

OTTAWA -- Catcher Steve Decker made an impressive debut with the Tides, going 3 for 4 with a home run to help Norfolk down Ottawa 4-3 Tuesday night. The Tides (15-16) extended their season-high winning streak to four games and for the second straight night rallied to beat the Lynx (11-19)

Following Decker's blast which made it 3-1, Robert Eenhoorn singled and Ralph Milliard, hitting .157 entering the game, rocked Morel on another blast over the leftfield fence to tie the game 3-3. It was Milliard's first homer of the season. "Milliard had the big hit of the game," said Tides manager Rick Dempsey. "He's doing an outstanding job on defense, making a lot of great plays. This kid, even though he's not hitting much, is keeping himself in the lineup by playing great defense." The Tides scored the winning run in the seventh. After one out, Rick Parker walked and Todd Haney singled to left for his third hit of the game to extend his hitting streak to seven games. After the Lynx replaced Morel with reliever Rick DeHart, Dennis Colon grounded to first baseman John Pachot who threw wildly to second in an attempt to start a double play. Parker went to third and scored on Scott Hunter's RBI grounder to third.

## **Tides' win streak ends in slugfest with Lynx**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) May 15, 1998 | Daignault, Louis*

OTTAWA -- Two of the weakest hitting teams in the International League put on an offensive show Thursday as the Ottawa Lynx snapped the Norfolk Tides' five-game winning streak 11-8. Outfielder Allen Battle led the Lynx outburst with two home runs and six RBI's. For Tides manager Rick Dempsey, it was mission accomplished with his team winning three of four games this week to string together their most successful stretch this season.

"I'll take three of four coming here considering the way we'd been playing," said Dempsey. "We finally put the bat on the ball tonight and maybe that will give us some backwind for the next game. The players on both teams were more relaxed at the plate."

Tides shortstop Robert Eenhoorn, a .209 hitter this season, drove in five runs to double his RBI season total from five

to 10. He went 2 for 4 with a two-run double in the first and a three-run homer in the third. Second baseman Ralph Milliard added a solo shot in the sixth while third-baseman Todd Haney extended his hitting streak to nine games, going 2 for 4. Haney ended the series 9 for 18 at the plate and is currently batting .391 (16 for 46) since joining the Tides in late April. "We know Eenhoorn can pop the ball better than he has so far this season," said Dempsey. "He's like everybody else. He needs enough at-bats up there to get comfortable." Tides starter Rigo Beltran allowed four runs but lasted only 1 1/3 innings due to stiffness in the back of his shoulder, an injury which has bothered him the past couple of starts. Dempsey said he'll likely miss his next start. Mark Guerra (2-1), Wednesday's winning pitcher in relief, replaced Beltran and took the loss. He gave up five runs on five hits in 2 1/3 innings. Steve Falteseik (3-3) got the win despite allowing eight runs on eight hits in six innings. Tom McGraw pitched the final three innings for his first save. Norfolk opens a four-game series with the Rochester Red Wings at Harbor Park beginning tonight at 7:15.

## **Mimbs and Tides reel in the Red Wings**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) May 16, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

NORFOLK -- Mark Mimbs had a day all to himself Thursday and spent it fishing. "Didn't catch a thing, which is a little unusual," Mimbs said. The crafty lefthanded pitcher then saw a repeat of sorts Friday night. However, this time Mimbs was the fish that the Rochester Red Wings couldn't hook.

The Norfolk Tides' starting pitcher baffled the Red Wings for eight innings, giving up just two hits as the Tides won 4-0 to start a four-game homestand at Harbor Park. The only Rochester player to reach on hits was Bo Dodson, who doubled twice off Mimbs, then singled off reliever Derek Wallace in the ninth.

That didn't mean the Red Wings weren't swinging. In fact, they flailed unsuccessfully much of the night and three Red Wings - Dodson, Willis Otanez and Derek Lee - were fooled so badly on Mimbs' change-ups that they let their bats fly on the follow-throughs. Otanez's went 12 rows into the stands on the third-base side in the sixth; he then watched a called third strike, one of six strikeouts recorded by Mimbs to go with two walks.

Mimbs was the beneficiary of an extra day's rest and an early trip home from Ottawa - Norfolk regularly flies its starting pitcher home a day early prior to the beginning of a homestand.

"I got home Thursday, ran a few errands and dropped a line in the lake behind my apartment," Mimbs said. "I usually can get a catfish or something."

One line that did drop with significant results was Mimbs' earned run average. His eight scoreless innings lowered his ERA to 1.79, which leads the International League for those with a minimum of 25 innings pitched.

Mimbs, who improved to 3-2, retired the last seven Red Wings he faced on Otanez's strikeout and six consecutive groundouts, but wasn't second guessing when manager Rick Dempsey went to the bullpen in the ninth. "Complete-game shutouts don't mean a thing in the minor leagues," said Mimbs, whose only complete-game shutout as a pro was with Albuquerque two years ago. The Tides (17-17) got an early run when designated hitter Phil Plantier, in his first game with the Tides, lifted a soft single over the outstretched glove of Rochester second baseman P.J. Forbes, scoring Brent Bowers from second for a 1-0 lead in the second inning. Norfolk added a run in the third when Todd Haney, who is hitting .380 and extended his hitting streak to 10 games, singled through the left side to plate Ralph Milliard, who had doubled off the glove of Otanez at third, then moved to third on a flyout to right by Jay Payton. Then Milliard homered for the third time in four games, lifting a towering shot to left for a 3-0 lead in the fifth, and catcher Steve Decker, acquired by the Tides earlier this week, hammered his own homer into the Rochester bullpen in left-center in the eighth for Norfolk's final run.

## **Tides squeezed out of win when suicide bunt backfires norfolk manager Rick Dempsey: "that (failed squeeze) was the story of our day."**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) May 18, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

NORFOLK -- With base hits hard to come by, the Norfolk Tides tried to squeeze out a victory Sunday against the Rochester Red Wings.

But their squeeze play in the bottom of the eighth inning was squashed in what would be a 4-3 loss at Harbor Park. Tides manager Rick Dempsey called for a suicide squeeze bunt by Rick Parker with Robert Eenhoorn on third after doubling and advancing on a sacrifice bunt by Ralph Milliard.

However Rochester reliever Steve Montgomery's pitch was high and tight and it was all Parker could do to not get hit in the head; catcher Charlie Greene then ran down Eenhoorn, who had no choice but to try to scurry back to third, unsuccessfully.

The Tides had the bases loaded three times, twice in the third inning and again in the fifth. But they only scored two runs out of those situations and stranded three runners at third on the afternoon. Rochester had a bit more success in that department, particularly in the fourth inning when some momentary control problems on starting pitcher Bill Pulsipher's part led to three runs.

Pulsipher walked Bo Dodson, Willis Otanez singled to right and Pulsipher hit Johnny Isom with a pitch to load the bases. The Red Wings' first run came when Jesus Tavarez grounded into a fielder's choice play to short; the

second run when Scott Lydy grounded out to second. And Rochester took a 3-1 lead when Mitch Simons singled to center.

The Tides (18-18) scored in the third on a Steve Decker sacrifice fly with the bases loaded. Norfolk cut into Rochester's lead in the fifth. First they loaded the bases on a walk to Dennis Colon, a single by Decker and a walk to Brent Bowers that chased Kevin Gallaher in favor of Richard Kelley. Eenhoorn's hustle to stay out of a double play plated a run and cut the Red Wings' lead to 3-2. Jay Payton's leadoff homer in the seventh to left-center tied the game at 3-3.

But Rick Steed, making his first appearance for the Tides out of the bullpen, gave up a leadoff walk to Otanez in the eighth, followed by a one-out single to right by Tavaraz and a two-out, run-scoring single to center by Simons that plated the winning run.

## **.182 hitter comes through for Tides Christopherson's single drives in the winning run for Norfolk with 2 outs in the ninth inning**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) May 19, 1998 | Brinkley, Robin*

NORFOLK -- The proverbial seeing-eye single was the difference Monday between a four-game split with Rochester and a third straight series victory for the Tides. Tides catcher Eric Christopherson, batting .182, slapped a 3-2 slider through the hole into right with two outs in the ninth inning to drive in Preston Wilson with the winning run in a 7-6 victory before a Businessperson's Special crowd of 7,339 at Harbor Park.

Ricky Otero gave Rochester a 4-3 lead in the seventh with his second home run of the season. The Tides rallied to retake the lead with three runs in the bottom of the seventh. Ralph Milliard singled and Dennis Colon and Steve Decker, who was 2 for 3 and reached base four times, walked to load the bases. After Wilson struck out, Parker hit a 2-run pinch hit single to right and Robert Eenhorn [sic] delivered a sacrifice fly.

## **Tides fall by allowing two runs in 9th inning**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) May 20, 1998 | Barger, Rick*

FORT MILL, S.C. -- The Mendoza line wasn't a pretty one for the Charlotte Knights on Tuesday night, but the hitters came through, scoring twice in the ninth to pull out a 5-4 International League victory over the Norfolk Tides.

It was the first time the Knights had erased a ninth-inning deficit and won this season. And they did it off Derek Wallace, too.

Norfolk's closer came in with a 2-0 mark and 2.20 ERA in 16 1/3 innings.

The ninth started innocently enough with a long flyout by Lionel Hastings. But Luis Castillo battled Wallace for a walk, stole second and took third when catcher Steve Decker's throw sailed into centerfield. Alex Gonzalez followed with a sinking liner that just eluded a sliding Brent Bowers in right and resulted in a triple to tie the game. After Brian Daubach was intentionally walked, John Roskos laced a deep fly to center to score Alex Gonzalez and deliver Charlotte's second victory in four meetings with the Tides.

The sacrifice fly capped a big night for Roskos, who was optioned to Charlotte from the Florida Marlins on Friday. The first baseman went 3 for 4 with three RBIs. That's one more RBI than he had in 13 previous games in Charlotte this season.

The uprising made a winner of Ken Grundt (1-0), who pitched a perfect ninth against the top of Norfolk's lineup. He got Jay Payton and Shawn Gilbert to fly out to center around a popup to third by Ralph Milliard.

## **Base-running blunder fuels frustration as Tides lose**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) May 22, 1998 | Olson, Stan*

FORT MILL, S.C. -- The play that ended the game left one manager grimacing and the other grinning.

Charlotte's Fredi Gonzalez was the smiling one, because the play might have saved the Knights' 6-2 victory over Norfolk Thursday night at Knights Stadium.

It came with two Tides on base and two outs in the ninth inning. Norfolk's Preston Wilson slapped a shot in the hole that shortstop Alex Gonzalez reached but couldn't make a play on. Base hit, and the bases would be loaded with the tying run at the plate. Uh, not quite. Tides second baseman Ralph Milliard, who had been on second, rounded third a bit too far. Gonzalez, seeing Milliard stray, sprinted toward the base. Milliard, a former Knight, did the same. Both players dove for the bag. Out. Game over.

"We work on that play," said Fredi Gonzalez, his smile getting wider. Over in the other manager's office, Norfolk's Rick Dempsey wasn't smiling. "That's not good heads-up baseball right there. We're down four runs, and . . . you know . . . it's just the way things have really kind of sputtered along with us."

## **Tides reap another loss as bats stay fallow Richmond's Paul Byrd, who had been 1-4, shuts them out for 8 2/3 innings**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) May 24, 1998 | Brinkley, Robin*

NORFOLK -- The Tides must wait for another night to be perfect. And that's about how their pitchers must be to win now that the offense has taken another hiatus. Richmond's Paul Byrd shut out Norfolk on four hits for 8 2/3 innings Saturday night as the Braves took an 8-1 victory at Harbor

Park in the first of a three-game series. Byrd entered the game 1-4 with a 5.11 ERA.

No matter. The Tides are in another of their batting funks - they've scored four runs in the last three games, all losses - and that has manager Rick Dempsey more concerned than another bad outing by starting pitcher Mark Fyhrie.

Fyhrie allowed seven hits and seven runs - six earned - in three innings.

The game began promisingly enough when Jay Payton doubled into the leftfield corner and Ralph Milliard walked. Todd Haney then grounded sharply to third and Payton was thrown out at the plate. "Just a mistake by the baserunner," Dempsey said. "Jay got over-anxious. The ball goes by him. The thing is if he tries to go back to third he probably ends up getting tagged out. He has a half second to make a decision. We're not making the right ones."

The Tides wouldn't threaten again until the ninth when Brent Bowers doubled over the head of centerfielder Mike Warner with two outs and Shawn Gilbert singled him home to spoil Byrd's shutout bid.

Between the first and the ninth the Tides moved only two runners past first. Haney reached base on a fielder's choice and went to third on a two-base error by catcher Mike Mahoney, who accidentally dropped the ball in the Tides' dugout while fielding an overthrow.

Payton singled and stole second with one out in the fifth. It was already 7-0 at that point.

Richmond took a 1-0 lead in the second on a double by Wes Helms and a single by Jose Olmeda, who was 4 for 4 with 4 RBIs.

The Braves broke it open in the third. Warner reached on a one-out error by Haney and scored on Mike Malloy's double. After Damon Hollins grounded out, Randall Simon walked. Helms singled home Malloy. Gabe Whately singled home Simon and Olmeda drove in Helms and Whately with a double. Mike Mahoney's single scored Olmeda before Byrd made his second out of the inning.

## **Dempsey rips Tides after another loss**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) May 25, 1998 | Brinkley, Robin*

NORFOLK -- Suddenly the slump-ridden Norfolk Tides have a bigger problem than just losing. Manager Rick Dempsey, who carved out a 24-year major league career by caring more deeply about the game than anything else, lashed at his players for their lack of enthusiasm after Sunday's 3-2 loss to Richmond at Harbor Park. Three Richmond pitchers combined on a 4-hitter as the Tides dropped their fourth game in a row. Norfolk has scored only six runs in that stretch.

The Tides wasted a strong start by Scott Stewart, who held Richmond to four hits and struck out eight in seven innings. His only mistake was a home run ball to catcher Fausto Tejera in the second that gave the Braves a 2-0 lead.

The Tides tied it in the fourth with two runs off former William and Mary standout Adam Butler, who was making only the second start of his career. Ralph Milliard walked, stole second and scored on Todd Haney's single to center. After Steve Decker flied out, Shawn Gilbert lined a double into the leftfield corner. Haney, who was running on the pitch, scored easily.

Gilbert stole third, but was stranded when Robert Eenhorn flied to shortstop and Rick Parker struck out looking. The Tides got only three other runners as far as second, the last time when Steve Decker reached on a two-base throwing error in the eighth. Gilbert was walked intentionally, but with Eenhorn up Tejero picked off Decker from second to end the inning.

Richmond scored the game-winner in the ninth off Jeff Tam. With runners on first and third and one out, Tam threw an 0-2 fastball to Jose Olmeda who took it the opposite way to left for a RBI-single. Olmeda was 2 for 3 Sunday and is 6 for 7 with 5 RBIs in the two games of the series, which switches to Richmond tonight.s

## **Cougars outlast River Bandits Pitchers' duel goes home team's way in the end**

*Daily Herald (Arlington Heights, IL) May 26, 1998 | Bush, Joe*

There was a first time for just about everything in Kane County's 1-0, 10-inning win over Quad City Monday at Elfstrom Stadium in Geneva. Kane County faced the River Bandits (24-20) - the first-place team in the Midwest League's Western Division - for the first time this season in the first matchup of an eight-game homestand. Cougars right-hander A.J. Burnett made his first start not only of the season, but also for the Florida organization which got Burnett in an off-season deal for Al Leiter and former Cougar Ralph Milliard.

## **Tides enjoy rare offensive rally**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) May 26, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

RICHMOND -- The Norfolk Tides are still a long way from being mistaken for an offensive juggernaut - they collected just six hits Monday afternoon - but they did find ways to score runs in a Memorial Day Special, beating the Richmond Braves 8-2 at The Diamond.

A five-run fifth inning, highlighted by Jay Payton's bases-loaded double, was more than enough for Tides starting pitcher Mark Mimbs, who solidified his position among the International League's leading pitchers while improving his record to 5-2.

The Tides' five-run rally for a 6-1 lead was helped tremendously by some unusual control problems on the part of Braves starting pitcher Jon Ratliff (6-3). Ratliff grooved a fastball that Robert Eenhoorn ripped to center with one out to start a Norfolk parade around the bases. Dennis Colon then walked and Mimbs, who was squaring to sacrifice bunt on every pitch, drew a walk off a full

count to load the bases. Payton's base-loaded delivery was one of two by the Tides on the afternoon; Ralph Milliard singled with the bases full in the eighth. Milliard also homered to get the Tides on the board in the second inning. "I hope this was a step in the right direction," said Tides manager Rick Dempsey, who had verbally dressed down his team for its lackluster play following Sunday's game. "Two base hits with bases-loaded situations is something we haven't had in a long time. "But one day doesn't make it all better," Payton said. And what does it say when a 175-pound second baseman hitting .221 leads the team with five home runs? That's what Milliard is doing. The Tides evidently still have a ways to go offensively. "We still need a better attitude in these types of ball games," Dempsey said. "But we won and right now I'll take them any way I can get 'em."

## **Parker's rare power surge carries Tides outfielder slams 2 home runs as Norfolk posts its fourth straight win**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) May 30, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

NORFOLK -- When Rick Parker took part in a home-run contest prior to the Norfolk Tides' exhibition game Thursday night against the New York Mets, it left more than a few onlookers scratching their heads. Never in his career had Parker been mistaken for a power guy. The best muscle season of his 14-year career came last year when he hit six homers for Albuquerque in the Pacific Coast League, a league known for small parks and light air.

With Ralph Milliard's sixth homer coming in the seventh inning, the Tides equalled their team high of three homers in a game this season. "Maybe hitting is contagious," said Milliard, who is batting .224. That might not seem like much, but he was down to .111 a month ago. "At the beginning, I think I was afraid of failure. I just blame myself. But this whole team seems to have come out of (the slump) together."

Parker hit a 2-1 pitch for a leadoff homer in the first inning off Pawsox spot starter Carlos Valdez.

The Tides got another run in the first when Shawn Gilbert reached on a fielder's choice, moved to second on Steve Decker's single to left, went to third on a passed ball and scored on a wild pitch.

Pawtucket momentarily retook the lead when Andy Abad blasted a two-run home run to right-center off Tides starter Mike Fyhrie, who then walked Jimmy Hurst. Hurst stole second and moved to third and home on back-to-back flyouts by B.J. Waszgis and Gavin Jackson.

But Norfolk tied the game at 3-all in the bottom of the second, again the result of a Parker-batted ball. This time, with runners at second and third, Parker's hard grounder was booted by Jackson at short, who collected it and threw home too late to get Robert Eenhoorn.

In the fourth, Parker lifted a two-run homer, with Dennis Colon, who had singled to start the inning, scoring ahead

of him. That gave the Tides a 5-3 advantage. Parker also drove in a run in the Tides' three-run fifth as Norfolk bolted to an 8-3 lead.

Pawtucket scored single runs in the sixth and ninth on bases-loaded infield grounders. Fyhrie (2-4) ended up pitching 5 1/3 innings for the win and Jeff Tam pitched 3 2/3 innings for his third save.

## **Tides make it easy for Mimbs by scoring a season-high 12 runs**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) June 1, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

NORFOLK -- For most of this season, Norfolk Tides pitcher Mark Mimbs has made it easy for his team to win games.

Sunday afternoon at Harbor Park, the tables were turned. Clean-up hitter Steve Decker popped a three-run home run in the first inning and the Tides added three more in the fifth and six more in the eighth on the way to a 12-2 victory as Norfolk took three out of four from the Pawtucket Red Sox.

The run total was the Tides' highest of the season as they won for the fifth time in six outings.

Decker's home run barely cleared the wall in left, so close was it that Pawtucket manager Ken Macha came out to dispute its legitimacy with third base umpire Lazaro Diaz, who explained that it had cleared the wall and bounded back into the field of play after hitting a short retaining fence that protects picnicking fans. Decker's blast, his fifth in three weeks with the Tides, plated Rick Parker, who had walked, and Gilbert, who had reached on a bloop double to right.

The Tides (25-24) added three runs in the fifth when Pawtucket starting pitcher Juan Pena lost track of the strike zone. First, Eric Christopherson homered to left-center, then Pena walked four of the next five batters, allowing the inning's second run when Ralph Milliard watched a 3-2 pitch off the plate. Brent Bowers' fielder's choice grounder scored the inning's third run as the Tides went up 6-1.

The Tides added six more runs in the eighth, turning it into a laugh. Gilbert singled with the bases loaded, Decker walked with the bases still loaded and Ralph Milliard then doubled to the gap in left to drive home two more runs. When Pawtucket second baseman Arquimedez Pozo threw the ball into the Tides' dugout on a routine grounder by Todd Haney, the last two runs scored.

The only speed bumps Mimbs' ran over came in the third and sixth innings. Trot Nixon singled, Cole Liniak doubled and Billy Ashley drove in Nixon with a one-out groundout to third. In the sixth, Andy Abad hit a one-out home run that, like Decker's just cleared the wall in left.

Brian Maxcy, signed as a free agent last week, pitched two scoreless innings for the Tides to close it out.

## **Tides win for 6th time in 7 games playing pepper before batting practice has helped Norfolk add spice to its hitting game**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) June 2, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

NORFOLK -- The Norfolk Tides, in need of some spice for their offense, found it in what is commonly defined as a simple table condiment: pepper. In baseball, however, it's one of the game's oldest time-killers. Four or five guys stand about 20 feet from a batter and pitch to him while trying to snag the balls he hits back at them. The hitter tries to make contact and spray the ball everywhere but in the fielders' gloves.

"We've all been playing pepper for the last few days before batting practice and look what it's done for us," said Brent Bowers, who singled, tripled and drove in two runs Monday night as the Tides beat the Toledo Mud Hens 7-3 at Harbor Park. "We get 15 hits in one game, score 12 runs in another, 11 hits tonight. (New York Mets manager) Bobby Valentine is big on pepper and we played a lot of it in spring training. Now, every time somebody gets a hit or scores run, everyone on the bench hollers 'Pepper!'" "The Tides (26-24), who have now won six of their last seven, pieced together enough little innings to win, but when they came up with the big inning in the sixth they erased most doubt in this one's outcome.

Leading 4-3 in the sixth, Norfolk scored three runs, with Todd Carey delivering a run-scoring double over the head of Toledo centerfielder Juan Encarnacion and Mud Hens third baseman Gabe Alvarez committing a costly two-base error. Carey's double followed Rick Parker's single down the third base line. Shawn Gilbert then walked and Steve Decker smoked a grounder into the hole on the left side that looked as if it would get through. Alvarez, however, knocked it down, then ill-advisedly attempted to throw out Decker, who was going to beat the throw easily. When the throw was low and scooted away from Toledo first baseman Tim Belk, Carey came home and Gilbert scooted all the way around to score as Norfolk went up 7-3.

The Tides had four other one-run innings.

In the first, Carey scored after singling, moving up on a wild pitch, taking third on a groundout and scoring on a wild pitch by Toledo starter and loser Matt Drews (3-6). Norfolk scored again in the second when Ralph Milliard was hit by a pitch, stole second and eventually scored after the Tides loaded the bases and Eric Christopherson delivered a sacrifice fly to left. In the third, Decker singled with two out and Brent Bowers tripled down the first base line. And in the fifth, Gilbert doubled, moved to third on a groundout and scored on a single by Bowers.

Toledo's runs came in the first on a homer by Alvarez, his league-leading 16th, in the second on a double by Belk and eventual run-scoring single by Luis Garcia, and in the fifth on a single by Garcia and a one-out run-scoring single by Trey Beamon.

## **Parker's three hits, three runs scored and two rbis lead tides**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) June 3, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

NORFOLK -- Rick Parker's insertion into the Norfolk Tides' leadoff spot was not by plan. He is filling a void created when Jay Payton strained a hamstring a week ago. Parker, however, has taken the top spot and wrung out some fairly impressive droplets. Last Friday, he walloped two home runs, the first time in his 14-year career that he'd had a multi-home run game.

Tuesday night at Harbor Park, he had what he termed an even more impressive night. Parker went 3 for 4, scored three runs, drove in two and contributed to each of the Tides' four scoring innings in a 7-4 victory over the Toledo Mud Hens.

The Tides, who at 27-24 are three games above .500 for the first time this season, are 6-1 with Parker in the No. 1 spot and have won seven of their last eight. Parker will remain in the leadoff spot for awhile, according to Tides manager Rick Dempsey. It appears Payton is still a couple weeks from returning to the lineup.

The Tides scored two runs apiece in the first, second and third innings as they bolted to a 6-3 lead.

In the first, Parker and Todd Carey singled to open, Brent Bowers walked with two out to load the bases and Ralph Milliard delivered a two-run single through the left side. In the second, Dennis Colon singled with one out, Parker followed with a double to the gap in right and Carey delivered a two-run single up the middle. In the third, Bowers walked to lead off, then Robert Eenhoorn and Colon drew two-out walks to load the bases. Parker then delivered a two-run single to center.

Parker got things started again in the sixth when he walked after nearly homering, pulling a long shot just foul in left. After stealing second, Parker came home on a single up the middle by Carey, who also had a three-hit night and drove in three Tides runs.

The early run support eased matters for lefthander Bill Pulsipher, who went six innings giving up six hits and three runs.

Toledo scored twice in the second as Tim Belk doubled with one out, Raul Casanova walked with two out and both came home on Pedro Swann's double to left. It appeared that shortstop Robert Eenhoorn's relay throw would get Casanova at the plate, but Tides catcher Steve Decker couldn't handle the one-hopper.

## **Double-play combo is a Dutch treat for Tides**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) June 4, 1998 | By Tom Robinson*

NORFOLK -- They're giving superb Double Dutch exhibitions at Harbor Park this season, but it has nothing to do with little girls singing songs and jumping ropes. As performed by the Norfolk Tides, the Double Dutch goes like this: shortstop Robert Eenhoorn, a native of Rotterdam, Netherlands, vacuums up a ground ball and

flips to second baseman Ralph Milliard, a resident of Amsterdam, Netherlands, who fires to first to complete a silky smooth double play. "I've managed five years in the minors," Tides manager Rick Dempsey says, "and I've never seen a double-play combination better than what we have here." If there is none better in the minors (or in much of the majors, according to Dempsey), there certainly is none more unique.

After all, Dutch-speaking middle infielders aren't exactly falling out of the trees. The improbability of having two of them dressing side by side in the clubhouse, patrolling the same infield and showing off the same super-smooth defensive skills has been nothing short of, well, a Dutch treat for Dempsey.

"Without them we'd probably be 10 games back right now," says Dempsey, whose second-place club is 27-25 after Wednesday's 8-1 loss to Toledo. "They've saved us a lot of big innings, a lot of extra outs."

Great glove work has been each player's meal ticket since before they made the unusual leap from the Dutch National Team to American pro ball. Eenhoorn, 30, pulled it off first, in 1990 when he was the Yankees' second-round draft pick after one year at Davidson College.

Milliard, 24, arrived two years later, signing with the Florida Marlins as a free agent. Since then the Dutch duo has made a special kind of history.

In '94, Eenhoorn became just the third native Dutchman to play in the major leagues, joining Win Remmerswaal of the '79-80 Red Sox and Rikkert Faneyte of the '93 Giants.

Milliard, who was born on the island of Curacao and moved to the Netherlands when he was 11, joined Hensley Muelens as the only big-leaguers from Curacao when the Marlins called him up for a brief look in '96. Milliard didn't feel like discussing his travels before Wednesday afternoon's game. But to Eenhoorn, his journey wasn't as unlikely as you might think. There's a lot of baseball played in Holland, but in interest, participation and importance it ranks far below soccer.

"That's all people want to read about," says Eenhoorn, who broke from soccer at age 14 to pursue baseball.

"They'd show the World Series once in a while, but the major leagues were something that was real far away for me. "My focus wasn't on that at all. The more realistic goal was to play for the (Dutch) national team."

That led him to Davidson College - the same man coached both teams - which led to the annual amateur draft with stunning swiftness. "My first week of college, Baseball America came around and wrote that I was one of the best players in the country," Eenhoorn says. "I said, 'Wow.' " Yet for all his defensive excellence, Eenhoorn's played only 37 big-league games in parts of four seasons with the Yankees and Anaheim Angels, who waived him at the end of spring training. The Mets snatched him up in April, two months after trading for Milliard, who has 32 big-league games on his resume.

"I've played with a lot of second basemen," Eenhoorn says, "and Ralph's probably the best I've played with, especially turning the double play. I think that's what you should rate second basemen on."

Also, says Eenhoorn, the comfort of working with a countryman on something as subtle as a double-play combination can't be underestimated. It's especially useful when they want to discuss strategy, or even dinner plans, with a runner on second. "We can speak to each other in Dutch and the runner has no idea what we're talking about," he says. In any language, you could call it a universal truth that the Tides' Double Dutch double play is schitterend. Or as they say in this country, brilliant.

## 2nd-inning grand slam leaves Tides Buffaloed

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) June 5, 1998 | Vogl, John*

BUFFALO, N.Y. -- The Norfolk Tides got to see the best the Buffalo Bisons had to offer Thursday night. Manager Rick Dempsey hopes he doesn't have to see it again soon. The Tides, making their first visit to Buffalo since 1991, lost to the Bisons 8-1 in front of 6,883 at North AmeriCare Park. Bisons leftfielder Richie Sexson, who set a Buffalo record by hitting 31 homers last season, led the home team's hit parade Thursday, going 3 for 5 with five RBIs, with most of the damage coming on a grand slam in the second inning.

The decisive second inning, which saw Buffalo score six runs, began with a one-out single by James Betzold. After back-to-back doubles by Einar Diaz and Brandon Wilson, and a bunt single by Jolbert Cabrera, Tides starter Scott Stewart walked second baseman Enrique Wilson to load the bases.

Norfolk's only run came in the seventh inning, courtesy of two Buffalo errors. Ralph Milliard hit a ground ball to short and the throw to first pulled Phil Hiatt off the bag. When Hiatt tried to tag Milliard, the ball flew out of his glove and landed in rightfield, allowing Milliard to go to second. Brent Bowers then hit a grounder to third which was misplayed by Torey Lovullo, advancing Milliard to third. He then scored on a passed ball by Diaz.

Norfolk managed only six hits for the game and designated hitter Todd Haney was the only player to have more than one, going 2 for 3.

## Tides use 8 doubles, 15 hits to rout Buffalo

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) June 6, 1998 | Vogl, John*

BUFFALO -- Lefthander Mark Mimbs won his fifth consecutive start and Robert Eenhoorn went 4 for 4 as the Norfolk Tides defeated the Buffalo Bisons 11-5 in front of 12,514 at North AmeriCare Park Friday night.

The Tides broke out the lumber with 15 hits, including a season-high eight doubles. Designated hitter Todd Haney went 3 for 4 with two RBIs and three runs scored. Haney, who entered the series mired in a 3-31 slump, now has five hits in his last eight at bats. "I was definitely in a big slump, but I'm happy to have come out of it," Haney said. "I was not having much fun at all. It's good to get back in the groove a little bit and be able to contribute."

Norfolk scored four runs in the third inning to take a 7-2 lead. A double by Ralph Milliard sent Steve Decker, who walked, to third. After Decker scored on a ground ball by Brent Bowers, Haney doubled home Milliard. Eenhoorn then hit the first of his two doubles of the night to drive Haney home.

“Tonight we came out quick and got a few runs and then we were just able to continue to put things together,” Haney said. “We just were fortunate to get a lot of timely base hits which always puts runs on the board.” Mimbs improved to 7-2 despite having a rough outing. He allowed a season-high five runs on nine hits. He had allowed only five earned runs in his previous five starts. Norfolk jumped to a 2-0 lead after its half of the first. The first run came when Decker lined a 3-0 pitch from Bisons starter Jason Rakers (2-2) off the top of the wall in left for a double scoring Shawn Gilbert. Decker came home on a double to right by Keith Wilkins. The Tides broke a 2-2 tie in the second on a two-out single off the end of Todd Carey's bat, scoring Haney from second. Shawn Gilbert scored in the sixth on a sacrifice fly by Wilkins. In the seventh, Eenhoorn's second double of the night drove in Haney. Eenhoorn then came home on a sacrifice fly by Gilbert. The final run came on a one-out double by Haney in the eighth, driving home Milliard. Norfolk's leadoff batter reached base in seven on nine innings.

## **Sauerbeck, two homers, help Tides beat Buffalo**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) June 7, 1998 | Vogl, John*

BUFFALO -- The Norfolk Tides defeated the Buffalo Bisons 7-4 Saturday as starting pitcher Scott Sauerbeck worked eight solid innings to pick up his third straight victory. Norfolk got home runs from Rick Parker and Shawn Gilbert to lead the offense.

Parker, who went 3 for 5, led off the third inning by homering off Bisons starter Jason Jacome for his fifth round-tripper of the year. His blast gave the Tides a 3-1 lead. Third baseman Todd Haney continued to torment Buffalo pitching by going 3 for 3 with an RBI and one run scored. Haney is now 8 for 10 in the series and has reached base 10 times.

Gilbert's homer, his second of the season, led off the fifth inning and gave the Tides a 5-2 lead. The drive hit the foul pole in left.

Sauerbeck, who improved his record to 3-4, gave up five hits and two runs while striking out five. The lefty, who lost his first four decisions this season, has received plenty of offensive support in his three victories with 19 runs. Norfolk started the scoring in the second when a triple by designated hitter Rick Wilkins, his first of the year, drove in Steve Decker. After second baseman Ralph Milliard struck out looking, Haney doubled home Wilkins.

Tides reliever Rick Trlicek nearly let the Bisons get back in the game during his brief appearance in the ninth inning. The righthander didn't retire a batter and allowed two runs,

including a solo homer by Richie Sexson. Derek Wallace relieved Trlicek and earned his ninth save of the season. The two teams conclude their series today at 2 p.m. with Bill Pulsipher (6-3) scheduled to face Buffalo's Mike Matthews (3-2).

## **OTANEZ'S 3 RBIS LEAD ROCHESTER PAST TIDES**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) June 9, 1998 | Bump, Lary*

ROCHESTER, N.Y. -- The expected and the unexpected combined to give the Rochester Red Wings a 4-3 victory over the Norfolk Tides on Monday night. It was predictable that Rochester's Willis Otanez, the International League leader in runs batted in, would be the hitting star. His three RBIs brought his season total to 54 in 54 games. The surprise was Steve Montgomery, making just his second start after nearly four years as a closer. Montgomery (2-3) limited the Tides to one run on six hits over seven innings.

Todd Haney led off the top of the third inning with a double, went to third on Robert Eenhoorn's bunt single and scored on Todd Carey's one-out hit. But Montgomery retired Norfolk's No. 3 and 4 hitters, Shawn Gilbert and Steve Decker, on a fly ball and a fielder's-choice grounder. Over the next four innings, the righthander allowed just two singles by Rick Wilkins.

The Tides' “flurry” came against the bullpen. Decker led off with a single. Ralph Milliard tripled him home, then scored on a wild pitch. Pinch-hitter Benny Agbayani hit a one-out single, but Norfolk's rally died suddenly when Haney grounded into a double play started by Otanez. Otanez blooped a two-out, two-strike single to drive in Ricky Otero with the game's first run in the first inning. His big blow, his 15th home run this season, came with P.J. Forbes on first base in the fifth. It was a 400-foot shot inside the leftfield line.

The Tides had held Otanez in check in a four-game series at Harbor Park in May. Norfolk won three of those games. The current four-game series concludes the teams' meetings this season.

## **Tides' mimbs shuts down Rochester once again**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) June 11, 1998 | Bump, Lary*

ROCHESTER, N.Y. -- Lost and not found. For the Rochester Red Wings Wednesday night, it was a game lost, 2-0 to the Norfolk Tides.

Not found, after 17 innings, was their first run this season against Tides lefthander Mark Mimbs. He is 2-0 against Rochester, with just five hits allowed. But then, the entire International League has had trouble scoring against Mimbs (8-2), who took over the league lead in earned run average at 2.08 and tied Syracuse's Shannon Withem for the lead in wins. Also not found - yet - has been Mimbs' first visit to the major leagues. Dodson had both Rochester

hits when Mimbs threw eight shutout innings in a 4-0 victory at Norfolk May 15, and one of the Tides' three singles Wednesday night. So he wasn't upset that he let Dodson walk on a 3-2 pitch in the ninth.

Rochester starter Terry Burrows gave up only an unearned run in five innings in his first start this season. And that was accomplished through aggressive baserunning by Steve Decker, who scored on a foul popup by Ralph Milliard in the fourth.

## **Tides strand 12 runners and fall to Rochester**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) June 12, 1998 | Bump, Lary*

ROCHESTER, N.Y. -- Sometimes it's hard to put your finger on a lost baseball game. That wasn't the case Thursday night for Norfolk Tides manager Rick Dempsey. "We left 12 people on base," he said after Norfolk's 5-1 loss in the final game of a four-game series against the Rochester Red Wings. "That's what the problem was." Nine hits - at least one in every inning but the sixth - five walks and a hit batsman put plenty of Tides on the bases. But aside from Ralph Milliard's two-out solo home run in the fourth inning, and two runners wiped out by Rochester double plays, those men stayed on base. Six of them were in scoring position.

On the other hand, the Red Wings' offense was a model of efficiency. They put only eight runners on base (four hits, four walks) - but six of them were in the second inning, and five of those scored against losing pitcher Scott Sauerbeck (3-5). "Scottie pitched pretty good after that second inning," Dempsey said, "but you can't walk the bases loaded."

That's what Sauerbeck did. With one out, he walked Bo Dodson, Mel Rosario and Derek Lee in succession. Orlando Miller followed with a two-run double inside first base. With two out, P.J. Forbes looped a two-run single to left and Ricky Otero doubled down the leftfield line. 5-0 Rochester.

Robert Eenhoorn hit two balls over third base that hit the corner and bounced back to the shortstop. So instead of two doubles, Eenhoorn had two singles. When told those were the first times such bounces had occurred in the two-year history of Frontier Field, Dempsey merely shook his head.

The biggest play came in the seventh inning. With one out, the bases were loaded. Gavin Osteen relieved starting pitcher Steve Ontiveros (1-0). On the first pitch, Steve Decker hit the ball back to Osteen, who threw home to start an inning-ending double play.

## **Beltran's arm, bat help the Tides roll pitcher drives in 3 with 2 singles as Norfolk matches a season-high 15 hits**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) June 14, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

NORFOLK -- Norfolk struck for three runs in the first as they pieced together five singles, with Steve Decker, Rick Wilkins and Ralph Milliard delivering run-scoring singles. Wilkins' was the most unusual. He drilled a Mike Grace offering to the fence in right and Darren Burton went high to glove it, but couldn't corral it. In the third, the Tides broke out the big lumber and made Grace's first start for the Red Barons since demotion from the Philadelphia Phillies a miserable one.

Decker popped the first pitch into the Barons' bullpen beyond left. Brent Bowers capped the five-run outburst with a monster home run to right-center. In between, Wilkins doubled down the line, Milliard walked and Beltran helped his own cause with a sharp two-run single to the gap in left.

The Barons' only run against Beltran came when they loaded the bases in the fifth on a pair of walks sandwiched around a Dan Held double to left. Marlon Anderson then chopped a ball over Beltran's head for a run-scoring infield single. In the bottom of the fifth, Beltran singled home Robert Eenhoorn, who had tripled. Scranton scored four more in the eighth, with all the runs coming with two outs. After Tides reliever Brian Maxcy struck out the first two Barons in the inning, Scranton loaded the bases and Anderson doubled down the first-base line to clear the bases. Jon Zuber drove home Anderson with a single to right.

Derek Wallace came on to pitch the final 1 1/3 innings for his 10th save of the season and the Tides' Todd Carey hit a three-run homer in the eighth for the final count.

## **Down 10-3, Tides rally in last 3 innings but fall short**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) June 15, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

NORFOLK -- Give the Norfolk Tides this much: They made it interesting Sunday afternoon at Harbor Park. Trailing 10-3 at one point, the Tides rallied ferociously in the last three innings, only to come up one run short in a 10-9 loss to the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Red Barons. After a two-run homer by Ralph Milliard cut the Barons' lead to 10-5 in the seventh inning, Norfolk strung together five hits with one out in the ninth, the biggest being a two-run double by Benny Agbayani to the gap in right that pulled Norfolk within one.

Agbayani's double followed singles by Milliard, Dennis Colon, Jay Payton and Brent Bowers. But the Tides (32-32) couldn't get the game-tying run they needed as Todd Carey grounded out to short, Steve Decker walked and Rick Wilkins grounded out to second to end it. "That

seems to be the story of our season," Agbayani said. "One run short, one hit short, one out short, one pitch short." While it was timely, Agbayani's rip of relief pitcher Matt Whiteside's first offering wasn't his hardest hit ball of the game.

Neither was his two-run homer to right in the third inning off Calvin Maduro that stopped at the bank of the Elizabeth River.

Nor was his towering homer that landed under the scoreboard in left in the sixth.

Agbayani's hardest hit ball of the game was a monster blast that landed 425 feet from home plate and cleared the concession stand beyond leftfield in the fourth inning.

Third base umpire Jim Reynolds ruled that the ball had curved foul. Tides manager Rick Dempsey?

"I beg to differ," he said afterward. Dempsey pleaded his case to no avail with Reynolds.

"When that ball went out of the stadium it had to be two or even three feet fair," Dempsey said. "That wasn't a very good call."

Said Agbayani: "I didn't hook that ball. I hit that ball."

Agbayani would have been the first player in Harbor Park history to hit three homers in a game. Agbayani finished 3 for 3 with five runs batted in and walked in each of his other three plate appearances, including after the long "foul" ball.

## Decker's homer in 10th lifts

### Tides

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) June 16, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

NORFOLK -- It's a shame Steve Decker wasn't with the Norfolk Tides to begin the season. Chances are, if he'd had an extra month's worth of at-bats, he'd be a serious candidate for the Triple-A All-Star Game. He has certainly played like an All-Star since joining the Tides on May 10, and he came up with another huge hit Monday night, drilling a 2-0 pitch from Scranton/Wilkes-Barre's Matt Whiteside into the picnic area beyond leftfield as the Tides won 4-3 in 10 innings. Decker, who is hitting .364 since signing up with the Tides as a free agent, said it was the one pitch on which he felt comfortable swinging for it all.

While Decker may not get the nod from the voters for the All-Star team - media ballots are due in six days - one Tide who should earn the call is Mark Mimbs, who once again turned in a strong performance but, for the first time in seven starts, didn't get the victory.

Mimbs went 7 1/3 innings, scattering four hits, walking two and striking out six. He remained the International League leader in earned-run average at 2.11, and his record held at 8-2.

Mimbs gave up a solo homer to Gary Bennett in the fifth, but otherwise cruised through seven innings.

The Tides, meanwhile, scored three in the fifth. Ralph Milliard started the inning by doubling down the line in left and Dennis Colon drew a walk. After Mimbs bunted into a forceout at third, Jay Payton rifled a run-scoring

single to left-center. Todd Carey then singled hard to left to load the bases. Benny Agbayani watched ball four to force in the Tides' second run. Decker then lifted a sacrifice fly to left for the third run. Pinch-hitter Jon Zuber's bases-loaded sacrifice fly in the eighth brought the Red Barons within 3-2.

Derek Wallace was called on to close it out in the ninth, but he yielded a one-out home run to Darren Burton, forcing extra innings.

After giving up a leadoff single to Doug Angeli in the 10th and a sacrifice bunt, Wallace struck out Zuber and David Doster to set the stage for Decker.

## Tides lose Agbayani and game

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) June 17, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

NORFOLK -- Benny Agbayani will remember the night he was finally called up to the major leagues for quite some time.

Oh, the game itself wasn't much to remember. The Tides were beaten soundly, 9-3, by the Buffalo Bisons Tuesday night at Harbor Park. A trio of errors made all but two of the Bisons' runs unearned. But the backdrop was surreal. A rainstorm that looked like something out of a Steven Spielberg movie sent everybody scurrying just two outs into the first inning.

The tarp crew was so overwhelmed with the rain's ferocity and high winds that it was only able to cover half the infield before the weight of the water held the tarp down tightly. The result was a 73-minute delay as the grounds crew dried the home plate and first base areas.

At least they worked under a full rainbow that framed the field, starting somewhere over Chesapeake and landing somewhere near Norfolk International Airport, spanning the nearby Elizabeth River.

Once the teams retook the diamond, the Bisons polished off their half of the first inning with Phil Hiatt's run-scoring single to center. It followed Enrique Wilson reaching on an error by Tides third baseman Todd Carey, Alex Ramirez's single, a run-scoring balk committed by Tides starter Scott Sauerbeck, a two-run homer by Torey Lovullo and a double by Jeff Manto.

Buffalo added a fifth run in the second when David Miller singled to center, Jolbert Cabrera reached on Carey's second error in as many innings and Wilson delivered a run-scoring single to right.

The Bisons then went up 6-0 in the fourth on three consecutive singles by Cabrera, Wilson and Ramirez. Norfolk (33-33) cut the lead in half in the bottom of the fourth on three singles by Steve Decker, Todd Haney and Ralph Milliard, a sacrifice fly by Brent Bowers and a two-run double by Dennis Colon that Buffalo leftfielder Richie Sexson nearly gloved for what would have been the inning's third out.

But the Bisons added two more runs in the eighth. Cabrera reached on an error by shortstop Todd Haney, Alex Ramirez drilled a triple to the fence in center and Sexson followed with a run-scoring single to center. In the ninth,

Cabrera lifted a bases-loaded sacrifice fly to right for the Bisons' last run.

## **Controversial call at 2nd base proves pivotal in Tides' defeat**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) June 19, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

NORFOLK -- The neighborhood got a little smaller around second base Thursday night and it cost the Norfolk Tides a game against the Buffalo Bisons. You don't know the neighborhood? That's the area where a second baseman is sometimes - wink-wink - given the benefit of the doubt as to whether his foot was actually on the bag during the pivot-and-throw portion of a double play.

Second base umpire C.B. Bucknor failed to wink Thursday, ruling that Tides second baseman Ralph Milliard had pulled away a little too early during a crucial play in the ninth inning.

With Torey Lovullo on first after an inning-opening single off Tides reliever Derek Wallace, Jeff Manto hit a lazy hopper that shortstop Jesus Azuaje gloved and flipped to second. It wasn't a perfect throw, it sailed a bit to the shortstop side of the bag, and Lovullo was called safe.

Phil Hiatt sacrificed the two runners over and Einar Diaz delivered a two-run single to center as Buffalo won 4-3 at Harbor Park.

Tides manager Rick Dempsey was irate enough to argue the call initially, then was thrown out of the game by plate umpire Dan Iassogna when he continued to yell after Diaz's single.

“How do you make a call like that?” Dempsey said afterward. “Everybody else in this league makes that play and gets the call. But the way things are going right now, it doesn't surprise me.” It was the third consecutive loss for the Tides (33-35) and overshadowed solid performances by starting pitcher Octavio Dotel and outfielder Todd Haney.

Dotel, making only his second Triple-A start, went six strong innings, giving up five hits, walking two and striking out three. Only one of the two runs he allowed was earned.

Haney, who jumped into the International League's top 10 in hitting at .315 coming into the game, upped that average to .325 with a 3-for-4 night and was involved in every scoring play for the Tides.

Norfolk struck first in the second inning when Haney, who had singled with one out, scored from first on a hit-and-run double down the third-base line by Rick Parker.

Buffalo scored in the fourth when Alex Ramirez reached on an error by Norfolk third baseman Todd Carey, went to third on a single by Richie Sexson and scored when the Tides opted to throw out Sexson at second on a double steal.

In the bottom of the fourth, the Tides retook the lead when Haney singled to center and moved to third on back-to-back groundouts before Eric Christopherson walked. With runners at the corners, the Tides attempted their own

double steal and it worked when Haney broke from third on the throw and scored.

Norfolk added another run in the fifth when Milliard reached on a drag bunt, went to second on a single by Steve Decker, took third on a flyout by Rick Wilkins and scored on Haney's sharp single to left-center.

The Bisons cut the margin to 3-2 in the sixth as Enrique Wilson singled to center, advanced to second on a wild pitch, then scored on a one-out single by Sexson.

Notes: Catcher Todd Pratt, who began the season with the Tides and was called up to the New York Mets on May 5, has begun a 20-day major league rehabilitation stint with the St. Lucie Mets. Pratt will likely join the Tides at some point next week to continue his rehab for nerve damage in his shoulder. . . . Centerfielder Jay Payton was removed after the second inning Thursday after feeling a twinge in the same hamstring that put him on the disabled list for a month earlier this season.

## **Buffalo finishes series sweep as Tides end homestand at 2-7 Dempsey: “We're in a horrible funk right now but we're not this bad.”**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) June 20, 1998 | Brinkley, Robin*

NORFOLK -- Pawtucket is supposed to be nice this time of year. Syracuse, too. Not that Tides manager Rick Dempsey is choosy.

Minot, N.D., would be more appealing right now than Norfolk's Harbor Park.

Buffalo's Phil Hiatt hit two home runs, one a grand slam, and drove in seven runs as the Bisons completed a four-game sweep of the Tides with an 11-3 victory Friday night at Harbor Park. “It hasn't been too friendly, I know that,” Dempsey said of his team's 2-7 homestand. “We've been horrible with men on base. It's disheartening not to drive in a run from third with less than two outs. But that's what these guys are here for. To identify what they can do.”

One thing the Tides can't do is hit with the bases loaded. They were 0 for 9 in the series against Buffalo. Friday's victim was Todd Carey who bounced to pitcher Jason Grimsley with two outs in the seventh and Norfolk trailing 5-2. That seemed to suck the life out of the Tides. Buffalo sent 10 men to the plate and scored six runs off Mark Fyhrie and Brian Maxcy in the eighth. The big blow was Hiatt's grand slam to left off Maxcy.

The Bisons loaded the bases on two walks and a single off Fyhrie when Dempsey brought in Maxcy to face Hiatt. Hiatt had staked Buffalo to 4-0 lead in the second with a three-run homer off Tides starter and loser Scott Stewart. Three Buffalo pitchers limited the Tides to seven hits, marking the first time in seven games Norfolk failed to reach double digits.

Rick Wilkins hit a pair of doubles and scored twice and Ralph Milliard hit his ninth home run to provide the highlights for Norfolk.

“We’re in a horrible funk right now but we’re not this bad,” Dempsey said. “We need to get on the road and get some new scenery.”

Next stop, Pawtucket.

## **Meltdown in ninth sets Tides up for another loss**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) June 21, 1998 | Brown, Rick*

PAWTUCKET, R.I. -- If anyone wanted to know just how badly the Norfolk Tides are struggling, all they had to do was watch Saturday's game against Pawtucket at McCoy Stadium. The Tides let the Red Sox score four runs in the bottom of the ninth after two were out, sending the game into extra innings. In the 10th, Norfolk reliever Brad Clontz was touched for a leadoff homer by Pawtucket third baseman Cole Liniak. The blast gave the Red Sox an 8-7 win and the Tides had their fifth straight defeat.

It was only the second time this season that Norfolk has lost when leading after eight innings (28-2). The Tides dropped to 4-2 in extra-inning games and 33-37 overall. With a victory seemingly in their grasp, the Tides began their two-out collapse when Norfolk closer Derek Wallace allowed a three-run homer to Jimmy Hurst, bringing the Pawsox within a run.

Still leading by a run, Dempsey brought in Clontz for his second appearance with the Tides. But the former Atlanta Braves reliever couldn't do the job either, allowing a solo shot to Andy Abad on a 3-2 count, tying the game 7-7 and forcing extra frames.

“It was only Clontz's second outing for us. Abad just had a good swing against him and that was that,” Dempsey said. Pawtucket's ninth-inning rally ruined Mark Mimbs' chances of getting his ninth win of the season. Still, the Tides' lefty turned in another stellar outing, allowing three runs on six hits while striking out seven over seven innings.

Mimbs was staked to an early three-run lead thanks to an RBI single from Dennis Colon in the second and a two-run single from Rick Wilkins in the third. Ralph Milliard hit a three-run homer in the the fifth, extending his hitting streak to 11 games.

“Milliard keeps getting better and better,” Dempsey said.

“He started the season 4 for 60 but has gotten his average up .260.”

## **Bad breaks still haunt Dempsey and the Tides**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) June 22, 1998 | Bradford, Rob*

PAWTUCKET, R.I. -- The majority of Rick Dempsey's 48 years have been involved in baseball in some form, so he knows that teams inevitably go through the kind of stretch through which his Norfolk Tides are currently suffering.

But after Sunday's 3-2 loss to the Pawtucket Red Sox before a crowd of 6,800 at McCoy Stadium, even the Tides' manager is conceding that things are getting a bit ridiculous. “I've seen this kind of thing happen before, but for an awfully long time now we've been getting the bad breaks,” said Dempsey, whose team has lost a season-high six straight games and has won only two of its last 10.

The Tides managed only two runs - on Brent Bowers' two-run home run in the fifth inning - and six hits against a struggling Double-A pitcher. Jared Fernandez was making his first start of the season for the PawSox after compiling a 1-4 record with a 5.49 ERA with Trenton.

As a result, they wasted a fine outing by Scott Sauerbeck.

The Tides' lefty went eight innings, giving up just seven hits while striking out six and walking two. Other than a first-inning double by Pawtucket's Cole Liniak, the PawSox didn't hit Sauerbeck hard at all. But, true to form for Norfolk, the decisive play was a little hopper through the middle from Liniak in the fifth, scoring Richie Borrero with the winning run. “I thought that was the best game (Sauerbeck) threw all season,” Dempsey said. “Liniak just hits that 500-hopper up the middle . . . what can you do? We hit the ball hard, but it's always right at people.”

The Tides' threatened in the eighth, when Todd Pratt's bunt moved runners to second and third with one out. But a Steve Decker grounder back to Hudson and a grounder to third by Ralph Milliard snuffed out the Tides' threat.

“We bunted, hoping one of those guys would get at least one run in, but it didn't happen,” Dempsey said. “The worst thing that could have happened did, we had a grounder back to the pitcher. It's just part of the luck we've been having lately.”

## **Tides end skid, lose Pulsipher to the mets**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) June 23, 1998 | Sutcliffe, John*

PAWTUCKET, R.I. -- When you're at the Triple-A level, the big league club can hurt you by taking away your most valuable players.

But, by the same token, you can also get unexpected help when a major leaguer is sent to you for a rehabilitation assignment.

That was the case Monday with the Norfolk Tides, who saw lefthander Bill Pulsipher called up, outfielder Benny Agbayani sent down - and Todd Pratt go 4 for 4 in a 6-2 win over the Pawtucket Red Sox that snapped a season-high six-game losing streak.

Pratt, who is on a 20-day rehab stint from the New York Mets, drove in four of those runs.

“We needed a win in a big way tonight and we got a good combination of hitting and pitching to get it,” said Norfolk manager Rick Dempsey, who will have the services of another major leaguer, slugger Rueben Sierra, tonight after the Mets signed the veteran over the weekend. “Pratt really carried us tonight. We were determined to get a win.”

Pratt hit a solo home run in the second inning and a two-run, bases-loaded single in the third to stake Norfolk

starter Rigo Beltran to a 3-0 lead. He also added an RBI single in the ninth inning for the Tides, who totaled 11 hits.

Beltran used the cushion to even his record at 4-4, giving up five hits and one run in five innings. The southpaw struck out seven and walked just two to improve his strikeout-to-walk ratio to an impressive 64-to-21.

Brad Clontz, who blew a four-run lead in the ninth inning against Pawtucket two nights earlier, gained a little redemption with two innings of two-hit, one-run ball. Jeff Tam earned his fourth save by pitching two perfect innings. The three pitchers combined for 12 strikeouts.

“The pitching was excellent tonight,” Dempsey said.

“Rigo really gave us a quality start, and our bullpen was able to keep them off base and save the win.”

Pawtucket's Peter Munro (4-2) was the loser after allowing five runs on seven hits.

After Pawtucket got on the board in the third on a solo home run by Cole Liniak, Norfolk added two runs in the top of the fourth on Brent Bowers' sacrifice fly and Ralph Milliard's infield single.

The Tides will try to salvage a split of the four-game series tonight at 7 when they send Octavio Dotel (0-1, 2.70) to the mound to face Brian Rose (0-0, 1.80) who, ironically, is on a rehab assignment from the Boston Red Sox.

Pulsipher had a 7-5 record with a 3.96 ERA in 14 starts for the Tides. He was put to work right away, pitching a shutout inning in relief in the Mets' 7-2 loss to Baltimore on Monday night.

## **First 3 Tides hit hrs and Mimbs gets his 9th win**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) June 27, 1998 | Gonser, Ed*

SYRACUSE, N.Y. -- Baseball is a strange game and you never know what to expect. Friday night in front of 5,836 fans, the Norfolk Tides started off with back-to-back-to-back home runs that led to a 5-1 win over the Syracuse SkyChiefs at P&C Stadium.

Norfolk's Mark Mimbs (9-2) tied losing pitcher Shannon Withem for the league lead in wins.

Brent Bowers took the first pitch of the game from ex-Tide Withem and sent it over the rightfield wall. “He threw me a slider,” Bowers said. “Syracuse has a good offensive team and Withem settled down and threw well, so it's a good thing we had those three.”

Ralph Milliard took a ball inside before launching the third pitch of the inning, also to right, for his team-leading 11th homer of the year.

Benny Agbayani waited until he had a two-ball, one-strike count before he made it a trio to right.

A thunderstorm was moving into the area with winds blowing out and they helped the balls carry. “Three home runs in a row and we hadn't got to the big guy (Ruben Sierra) yet,” Tides manager Rick Dempsey said. “Sierra, all he did was hit a little single to right.”

Syracuse tried to get into the home-run derby but could only come up with a solo homer by Jose Cruz Jr. in its half of the first.

“Mimbs pitched an outstanding game for us, again,” Dempsey said. “That is vintage Mimbs. That's why I consider him to be the best pitcher in this league right now.” Withem may have been a little too pumped in facing his former team but settled down after the first inning and didn't allow another hit until Jesus Azuaje singled with one out in the fifth.

As strange as it is to start with three home runs, it wasn't the first time in Tides history. General manager Dave Rosenfield said that on June 28, 1977, the Tides had three consecutive home runs in the first inning in a game at Columbus but he could not confirm that it was the first three batters of the game, nor was he able to name the players.

Agbayani scored again in the sixth on a single by Todd Haney. Haney continued to pound the ball and remain among the league's batting elite by doubling home Sierra in the eighth.

Sierra was 2 for 3 and was all over the right side of the outfield, tracking down seven SkyChiefs' fly balls.

Withem and Mimbs had to cope with three rain delays that totaled an hour and 22 minutes.

## **Tides win as Sauerbeck, Beltran toss 5-hit shutout**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) June 28, 1998 | Gonser, Ed*

SYRACUSE, N.Y. -- The Norfolk Tides made it two in a row over the Syracuse SkyChiefs Saturday afternoon, winning 5-0 as Scott Sauerbeck and Rigo Beltran combined for a five-hitter at P&C Stadium. Norfolk has won four of its last five with all four wins coming in different fashions. “That's the great thing about baseball,” said the Tides' Steve Decker, who had a pair of RBIs despite saying he hadn't hit the ball all that well. “It's better to be lucky than good.”

Todd Carey had a pair of doubles. Decker joked that Sauerbeck (4-7) needed an early lead. “If we don't put up runs for (Sauerbeck) in the first inning he doesn't win.” Sauerbeck had eight strikeouts in eight innings. “I just tried to get ground balls and have the guys make the plays for me,” Sauerbeck said. “When I start to struggle I slow down and fall out of a groove. The last couple games I've gone out and not quick-pitch people but just get the ball back and go, not giving them a chance to breathe.”

It was Sauerbeck's first win in four starts. His last win came June 6, at Buffalo. The Tides have suffocated Syracuse's chances the last two games and have outscored the SkyChiefs 10-1. Norfolk has finally figured out how to score men from third with less than two outs.

“We did that today, it was good to see,” said Tides manager Rick Dempsey. “We haven't been doing a lot of that when we really need to. We had hits when we needed them and a little help with walks at the right time. We had people on base so that a ground ball or a fly ball can help you.” Rightfield in Syracuse has been a favorite for Tides' hitters. Norfolk scored three in the second and two in the third. Ruben Sierra led off the second with a single to right and scored on Decker's' double to right that was just inside

the line. Decker scored on Carey's first double, also to right.

Todd Haney walked and scored on a Syracuse error. In the third Syracuse starter Roy Halladay beamed Ralph Milliard and Benny Agbayani. Rick Wilkins and Decker hit fielder's choices to score the pair. The Tides will try to take the series today but will have to do it without reliever Jeff Tam. Tam was recalled by the New York Mets Saturday morning to fill in for the injured Al Lieter. Norfolk will start Mike Fyhrie (2-5, 6.04 ERA) today and Syracuse will counter with Kelvin Escobar (1-0, 3.18).

## **Decker rescues Tides with two homers, fielding gem first baseman starts key double play as Norfolk escapes jam, turns back Durham**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) July 2, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

NORFOLK -- Whether it was with his glove, arm or bat, Norfolk Tides first baseman Steve Decker was on his game Wednesday night and the result was a 5-3 victory for the Tides over the Durham Bulls at Harbor Park. Decker's two homers - a two-run shot in the second and a solo shot in the eighth - highlighted the Tides' offensive output. But the key play of the game may have come in the sixth inning, when starting pitcher Rigo Beltran's tank appeared to be emptying and the Tides needed a pick-me-up. Following a sharp double down the leftfield line by Durham's Dave Silvestri, Dan Donato drilled a line drive just to the right of Decker.

The Tides' first baseman gloved it cleanly, snaring it just inches off the infield dirt, then doubled off Silvestri at second with a crisp throw to shortstop Robert Eenhoorn. When Beltran (5-4) struck out Cesar Devarez, the Tides had escaped the inning with their 4-3 lead intact.

Decker was his typical humble self after the game, heaping praise on Eenhoorn for beating Silvestri to second base on the double play and chastising himself for popping out to second with the bases loaded in the third. Forget the two homers, Decker said, there were runs to be had that he didn't get home.

Decker's homers brought his total to 10 in his two months with the Tides and he went 3 for 4 to up his average to .331.

It didn't appear the Tides (39-41) were on their way to a win when they trailed 3-0 after Cesar Devarez led off the second inning with a homer to left. Former Tide Scott McClain had belted a two-run home run, his 17th of the season, in the first inning. But Decker pulled the Tides within 3-2 when he clocked a Matt Ruebel fastball in the bottom of the second. The Tides got another run in the third when Todd Haney doubled and scored on a Ruben Sierra double. Norfolk then took the 4-3 lead in the fourth when Eric Christopherson singled with two out, Haney followed with another double, Ralph Milliard drew a walk

and Todd Carey delivered a run-scoring single when he slapped a 2-2 pitch to left.

Note: Norfolk's lineup Wednesday featured only one player, second baseman Ralph Milliard, who was in the opening-night lineup.

## **Sauerbeck not sharp and the Bulls go wild all-star pitcher gives up 6 runs in 1st and Tides suffer most lopsided loss of '98**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) July 3, 1998 | Brinkley, Robin*

NORFOLK -- Scott Sauerbeck tried to match power against power Thursday night and found out what he already knew.

Sauerbeck, the Tides' only representative in next week's Triple-A All-Star game, earned that nod by using his curve and changeup early in the count to set up his fastball. But on a night when he couldn't get the offspeed stuff over the plate, he was forced to change his approach. The result was a too brief outing and a shock to his ERA.

Durham rocked Sauerbeck for six hits and six runs in the first inning and 10 hits and eight runs overall. The 15-3 bloodletting was the Tides' most lopsided loss of the season and dropped them eight games behind the Bulls in the IL South.

Sauerbeck lasted only 3 2/3 innings, matching his shortest stint of the season. That also came against Durham, but he escaped the first time with a no-decision.

Sauerbeck (4-8) has pitched with bad luck all season and this game was no different. Rightfielder Todd Landry misplayed Greg Blosser's first-inning fly ball into a double that put runners on second and third. Scott McClain followed with a sacrifice fly that should have been the third out. But rather than pitching through adversity, Sauerbeck cracked.

Bubba Trammell followed McClain with a two-run homer into the picnic area in left, the first of five straight hits by the Bulls.

"If I had had a good feel for my pitches I would have thrown him a changeup and got an easy groundout," said Sauerbeck, whose ERA jumped from 3.01 to 3.64. "But I tried to throw a fastball down and in and left it up and over."

Russ Morman and Dave Silvestri followed with singles and Steve Cox knocked them in with a double into the rightfield corner. Cesar Devarez then singled off the glove of shortstop Robert Eenhoorn to drive in Cox.

The Tides capitalized on Brad Pennington's wildness to score two runs in the second. With two outs Eenhoorn, Landry and Eric Christopherson walked, loading the bases. Todd Haney delivered a two-run single to left but Ralph Milliard popped out to end the inning. It was 10-2 before the Tides got another runner in scoring position.

Every Durham starter had at least one hit, led by McClain and Cox with three each. They combined for four doubles and six RBIs.

Trammell had a two-run single in addition to his home run and drove in four runs.

The Tides loaded the bases with no outs in the eighth off Mike Duvall, but failed to score when Rick Wilkins struck out and pinch-hitter Jesus Azuaje hit into a double play.

## **Tides strand 11, fail again at home**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) July 4, 1998 | Brinkley, Robin*

NORFOLK -- Chapter 82 of what has become an utterly predictable story for the Tides saw Richmond's Marty Malloy crack a game-winning bases-loaded double and Norfolk's Eric Christopherson strike out with two outs and the bases loaded in the bottom of the ninth.

The R-Braves' 7-5 victory concluded another gloomy homestand before a season-high crowd of 12,237 Friday night at Harbor Park.

The Tides travel to Richmond for games tonight and Sunday before breaking for the Triple-A All-Star Game. Norfolk is 3-13 in its last 16 home games.

The Tides out-hit Richmond 11 to 7, but left 11 runners on base, six in scoring position. Two errors on one play by first baseman Steve Decker contributed to two Braves' runs in the fourth.

And then there was the pitching.

The Tides took a 5-3 lead into the sixth and appeared to have things under control when reliever Brad Clontz retired the first two hitters.

Then Wes Helms singled and Rick Holifield sliced a fly ball to left that Todd Haney nearly ran down, only to crash into the fence.

Helms scored and Holifield pulled into second with a double. Clontz intentionally walked Mike Mahoney, a .198 hitter, to get to the pitcher's spot.

Andy Tomberlin pinch hit for Jason Bullard. Clontz got ahead of him 0-and-2 and then drilled him in the back to load the bases.

Derek Wallace replaced Clontz and Malloy ripped his second pitch into the gap in right-center for a 3-run double and a 7-5 lead.

The Tides had two chances to catch up after that. But Ralph Milliard popped up with two on and two in the seventh.

The Tides loaded the bases with one out in the ninth on walks to Haney, Decker and Rick Wilkins. But Milliard again popped up and Christopherson, batting for pitcher Rich Turrentine, struck out.

## **Power pitching lets tides enjoy easy win**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) July 5, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

RICHMOND -- With pitcher Octavio Dotel mowing down the Richmond Braves like a brand-new John Deere in high grass, all the Norfolk Tides needed was one solid offensive inning. They got just that with a five-run fourth.

Dotel and newly acquired reliever Josias Manzanillo did the rest - delaying Richmond's Fourth of July fireworks until after the game - for a 5-1 Tides victory Saturday night at The Diamond.

Dotel, a 22-year-old fireballer making his fifth start for Norfolk (40-43), struck out a dozen and likely would have had more were it not for an inflated pitch count that limited him to six innings. The only run he allowed was unearned; he walked two and gave up four hits.

This, it seems, was the Dotel that was advertised when he was brought up from Double-A three weeks ago sporting a 4-2 record, a 1.97 earned-run average and 82 strikeouts in 68 2/3 innings.

Too bad this performance came on the road. It was an example of the kind of positive energy the Tides are capable of displaying. If Dotel (2-2) wasn't doing a side-cross shuffle and hopping over the third-base foul like a cricket after every inning, relief pitcher Josias Manzanillo was sprinting into the dugout after his innings.

Combined with Manzanillo's four strikeouts, the Tides struck out the Braves 16 times, a season high and the most strikeouts by a Braves squad in more than five years.

"They've got a little flair," Tides manager Rick Dempsey said of Dotel and Manzanillo. "Let's just hope they don't go overboard."

Dotel's been doing the dance all season. But the more effective he was, the more evident the jig.

"I'll dance off the field when they're killing me or when I'm striking them out," he said. "It keeps me, you know, loose."

Things got tight in the Braves' half of the fourth, however, when Richmond loaded the bases on two walks sandwiched around a Gene Schall single. But Dotel, whose fastball was clocked in the mid 90s all night, struck out Wes Helms, Gabe Whatley and Mike Mahoney, all three swinging.

"Big, big inning for us," Dempsey said. It was just as big in the Tides' half.

Trailing 1-0 with the threat of a rain-shortened evening, the Tides broke up Jon Ratliff's no-hitter, pieced together five hits and scored five runs. Brent Bowers started things with a soft single to center. Todd Haney, who now leads the International League in hitting with a .350 average and has an 11-game hitting streak, grounded a single through the left side on a hit-and-run to get Bowers to third. After Steve Decker popped out to short, Ruben Sierra punched a two-strike single to left to score Bowers.

Rick Wilkins followed with a run-scoring double to the gap in left. The inning hit a bump when Ralph Milliard swung on a full-count fastball that was up and out of the strike zone. But Todd Carey worked Ratliff for a walk to

load the bases and Robert Eenhoorn delivered a bases-clearing double to the gap in left.

“Eenhoorn's hit was clutch,” Dempsey said. “It kept this from being a nip-and-tuck game.”

Richond's run came in the third when Whatley tripled to the gap in right and Mahoney's grounder went under Carey's glove at third.

## **Nunnally's 2-run homer in the 11th trips Tides Hundley is 0 for 5 with three strikeouts in last game before rejoining the Mets**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) July 11, 1998 | Henderson, Brian*

INDIANAPOLIS -- No matter how they pitched him, the Norfolk Tides had no answer for Jon Nunnally.

The Indianapolis Indians' rightfielder capped a 4-for-5 evening with a one-out, two-run home run in the bottom of the 11th inning Friday night to beat the Tides 4-2. The loss dropped Norfolk to 42-44 while Indianapolis improved to 51-33.

The offensive stars shone dimly for Norfolk. Four-time American League All-Star Ruben Sierra hit a home run, made a spectacular leaping catch at the leftfield wall and threw out a potential go-ahead run at the plate, but only managed one hit in five at-bats. And two-time National League All-Star Todd Hundley was silent Friday night in his final game before returning to the Mets today, going 0 for 5 with three strikeouts.

Norfolk jumped on top in the second inning after Matt Franco walked and Ralph Milliard drove a single to left. Indianapolis leftfielder Tony Tarasco made the play at home close, but catcher Guillermo Garcia dropped the ball on the tag and the Tides went up 1-0. Milliard advanced to second on the throw home, but Robert Eenhoorn grounded to short to end the inning.

Indianapolis came back in the bottom of the inning. Roberto Petagine walked to lead off the second and scored on Tarasco's double to right. Tarasco took third on Jon Nunnally's double to right but was held up by Indians third base coach and manager Dave Miley. The move played to the Tides' advantage.

Tides starting pitcher Josias Manzanillo snagged Jason Williams' grounder, then struck out Garcia and Indians starter Jesus Martinez to end the threat. Then, leading off the third, Sierra hit his home run over the leftfield fence to give the Tides the 2-1 advantage.

After Indianapolis scored the tying run in the eighth inning when Garcia drove in Nunnally, Sierra prevented the go-ahead run from scoring by throwing out Jason Williams at the plate for the second out of the inning. Derek Wallace struck out Indians shortstop Damian Jackson with runners on second and third to end the threat.

## **Tides suffer 2nd straight road loss, falling to Redbirds Geoff Jenkins drives in 3 runs as Louisville rolls to its 3rd consecutive victory**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) July 12, 1998 | Grant, Mike*

LOUISVILLE, KY. -- The Norfolk Tides ran into a team that is no stranger to fast starts. The Louisville Redbirds improved to 3-0 since the All-Star break by knocking off Norfolk 5-2 at Cardinal Stadium Saturday night. The Birds (44-43) vaulted over .500 and have strung together three consecutive victories for the first time in almost a month. The Tides (42-45) have dropped two straight. Louisville opened the season 5-0 en route to a 9-1 start.

The common thread in the recent success? Good pitching and clutch hitting. Saturday night, Louisville's Robert Ellis provided the former by pitching into the sixth before tiring and Geoff Jenkins provided the latter, going 3 for 4 with three RBIs. The Birds raced out to a 4-0 lead after four innings and didn't let the Tides back in - even when Norfolk finally broke through in the sixth.

Ellis, a big righthander, was cruising right along when he lost control of the strike zone, issuing consecutive bases-loaded walks to Todd Carey and Ralph Milliard. Ellis walked five batters - three in the sixth.

Ellis left the game with the bases loaded and two outs. Reliever Al Sadler ended the threat by getting Robert Eenhoorn to line out.

Norfolk has a veteran squad with four players in Saturday's starting lineup 30 or older - Todd Haney (32), Rueben Sierra (32), Steve Decker (32) and Eenhoorn (30). Those veterans all had hits but none for RBIs.

The New York Mets' Matt Franco, on major league rehabilitation for a right foot injury, went 1 for 3. One of the few youngsters, pitcher Octavio Dotel, was touched up for four runs in four innings. Jenkins had RBI single off the 22-year-old and a two-run double in the fourth.

## **Tides end five-game slump with shutout over Syracuse a trio of Tides pitchers combined to lift Norfolk to a rare home win**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) July 16, 1998 | Brinkley, Robin*

NORFOLK -- The Tides rediscovered their winning touch at Harbor Park Wednesday night in a time-honored fashion.

Good pitching - Josias Manzanillo, Rigo Beltran and Derek Wallace combined on a five-hitter - and timely hitting - Benny Agbayani slugged a two-run, eighth-inning

homer - were the major ingredients in a 2-0 win over Syracuse. The victory halted a five-game losing streak - four straight at home - as the Tides remain alone in second place in the IL South, one game ahead of Charlotte. Agbayani, who was optioned back from the Mets on Tuesday, drilled a 3-2 pitch from D.J Harris deep into the picnic area in left to break up the scoreless pitching duel. The home run, which came with Ralph Milliard on second, occurred on the one-week anniversary of his marriage at Harbor Park. "I was just trying to drive in Milliard, that's my job," Agbayani said. "But he hung one and I got the big part of the bat on it." The hit couldn't have come at a better time for the Tides, who were 1-10 in their last 11 home games.

"We needed this," Tides manager Rick Dempsey said. "There aren't a lot of good moods on the club right now." The home run made a winner of Beltran, while Wallace got the last two outs in the ninth for his first save since June 23. Manzanillo, making only his second start for the Tides since getting his release from Durham, scattered three hits, walked four and struck out five in six innings. He warmed up for the start of the seventh but was relieved by Beltran before throwing a pitch.

"Beltran needed a little more time to warm up so we sent Manzanillo back out there," Dempsey said. Both teams wasted great scoring opportunities in the seventh. Syracuse put runners on first and second with one out and loaded the bases, helped by two walks, with two outs. But Beltran escaped by getting Santiago Henry to ground out to second.

In the Tides' half, Steve Decker led off with a single - his third hard-hit ball of the game - but was cut down by Tony Phillips attempting to stretch it into a double. After Rick Wilkins popped to third, Rick Parker doubled to the fence in left-center and Todd Carey was intentionally walked. But Eric Christopherson flied to left.

## **Barker's slam is another blow to tides' fading playoff hopes**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) July 18, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

NORFOLK -- WANTED: Team leader for Triple-A baseball club. Those interested should inquire to Norfolk Tides field manager Rick Dempsey at Harbor Park. Is that what the Tides are missing? A guy who growls when they lose, hollers at those not pulling their weight and shows everybody how a winner is supposed to perform? This much is certain: The Tides definitely are missing something. And they are sure to miss the playoffs if they don't turn this season around soon.

Like in the upcoming week. The Tides fell again Friday night, this time 7-3 to the Louisville Redbirds at Harbor Park after Kevin Barker's grand slam in the sixth inning gave the visitors a 6-1 lead.

Just so everybody's on the same page, the International League's four-team playoff pairings follow the major league system: Three division winners and a wildcard entry make it.

We point this out because there are just over seven weeks remaining in the season and the Tides trail the Pawtucket Red Sox by eight games. Buffalo, Louisville and Columbus also are in front of the Tides (43-49) in the wildcard race.

"We were only five in back of Pawtucket last week, now we're eight," Dempsey said. "This is what happens to teams that aren't clicking, teams that lack chemistry. We need somebody to start hitting homers. We need to get guys in from third.

"I feel like this clubhouse hasn't had a leader in it since Todd Pratt was called up midseason last year. I know it's a rarity to find a guy like that, but we need to find one." Friday night's game didn't get out of control until the sixth inning.

New York Mets pitcher Armando Reynoso, who is rehabilitating with the Tides following arm surgery, breezed through the first five innings relatively unscathed. The sixth inning then blew up on him and reliever Brad Clontz like a trick cigar.

With the game tied 1-1, Mike Kinkade punched a soft one-out single over the outstretched glove of second baseman Ralph Milliard. Geoff Jenkins singled to left and Brian Banks followed with a run-scoring single to right to chase Reynoso.

Clontz came on in relief, only to walk Eric Owens and then give up Barker's grand slam. It was Barker's 15th home run of the season and capped a five-run rally.

Norfolk had taken a 1-0 lead in the first on a run-scoring single by Steve Decker. Louisville had tied it in the second when a potential inning-ending double-play grounder by Eddy Diaz skipped off Reynoso's glove with a runner at third for a run-scoring infield single.

The Tides scored twice in the bottom of the sixth on RBI doubles by Benny Agbayani and Decker.

Louisville added an insurance run in the ninth when pinch-hitter Derrell Nicholas walked, stole second and took third on an errant pickoff attempt by Luis Arroyo, and scored on a drag-bunt single by Greg Martinez.

NOTES: The Tides have lost righthander Rich Turrentine, probably for the season, to a torn ligament in his pitching elbow that popped on the last pitch of Sunday's game in Louisville. Arroyo, a lefthander, was promoted to the Tides Friday from Double-A Binghamton, while outfielder Todd Landry, who was hitting .063, was demoted. The Tides also expect a roster addition from the Mets' ranks this weekend after New York activates lefthander Al Leiter from the disabled list.

## **Tides' Dotel sends message to the Mets: hey, I'm ready**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) July 19, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

NORFOLK -- Armando Reynoso or Octavio Dotel?

The New York Mets, still in the playoff hunt and in need of a pitcher with innings to spare, have some business to ponder today.

With a slew of doubleheaders upon them, the Mets need someone who will likely start Game 2 of a twin bill against

the Milwaukee Brewers on Wednesday. Reynoso will fly today to New York, where he will throw in the bullpen and be evaluated by the Mets' coaching staff. Reynoso started for the Norfolk Tides on Friday night and pitched well in defeat.

During his rehabilitation stint following arm surgery, Reynoso is 0-2 with an inflated 10.61 earned-run average. But Reynoso, 32, is a "been there-done that" guy, with a 39-35 career record in the majors. He also has picked off 30 base runners since 1993, tops among active pitchers during that span.

Dotel? He's all of 22 and all smoke. In 36 innings with the Tides, he has struck out 47 batters. At Double-A Binghamton in the early part of the season, he whiffed 82 in 68 2/3 innings. And he was as good as he gets on Saturday night as the Tides beat Louisville 7-4 at Harbor Park.

In five scoreless innings of work, Dotel (3-3) struck out 11 while walking one and allowing just three hits. He struck out the side in the fifth and would have gone farther were it not for a limited pitch count. In other words, if there's a possibility he could make his major league debut on Wednesday, he better leave some gas in the tank.

"But if Reynoso's ready, he's the guy they want," Tides pitching coach Ray Rippelmeyer said. "I think a young guy's ready to go when he shows consistency, and Dotel hasn't shown that yet. "You gotta be good three out of five times in the majors to pitch there, and four out of five times to be good. He's not doing that here yet. Octavio was held to a pitch count as a precaution, just in case Armando comes back sore."

Dotel departed after 75 pitches with a 6-0 lead. Louisville didn't score until the eighth and ninth innings, long after Dotel had thrown on his tennis shoes to watch the final outs.

The Tides batted around in the second inning, scoring five times without the benefit of an extra-base hit. Singles by Benny Agbayani, Brent Bowers, Robert Eenhoorn, Eric Christopherson and Rick Parker sparked the inning. In addition, Louisville pitcher Rod Henderson misplayed Dotel's bunt and Ralph Milliard drew a bases-loaded walk. But the key to the inning was the Tides' ability to stay out of the double play on two occasions.

First, Agbayani was running when Steve Decker grounded to short, leaving Louisville's Pablo Martinez with one option. Then, Martinez wasn't crisp in relaying Todd Haney's grounder to second baseman Ronnie Belliard with the bases loaded, forcing Belliard to rush the throw to first, which was wide.

## **Bats are silent as tides fall again**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) July 20, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

NORFOLK -- It seems the dog days of August have arrived a month early, but that's not to say the Norfolk Tides are dogging it. To the contrary. There were enough defensive gems turned in by the home team Sunday night

at Harbor Park to fill an instructional video. Just don't ask them to speak at any hitting clinics anytime soon.

The Tides managed only four hits against a foursome of Louisville pitchers, and that wasn't nearly enough as Norfolk absorbed a 5-2 loss.

It was Norfolk's seventh setback in the team's last nine games. The Tides are now six games below .500 at 44-50. "You can't win games with four hits," Tides manager Rick Dempsey said. "Ralph Milliard homers in the third inning to put us up 2-0 and that's all we get. We just don't have any big thumpers in our lineup."

As evidenced by the fact that Milliard, a second baseman, leads the Tides with 12 home runs. Milliard's shot into the leftfield picnic area following a Rick Parker triple marked the only time any Tides got beyond second base.

And after Milliard's homer, Robert Eenhoorn's fourth-inning single was the Tides' final hit of the night.

Louisville starting pitcher Paul Wagner and relievers Al Sadler, Frankie Rodriguez and Rick Greene combined to sit down the last 13 Tides batters in order.

The lead evaporated - and more - in the sixth when the Redbirds kept getting runners in scoring position and pushing them across with timely singles off starter Scott Sauerbeck. Mike Kinkade started the inning with a single to center and Eric Owens walked one out later. Brian Banks then delivered a single to left to score Kinkade and both runners advanced on the throw home.

Eddy Diaz then singled to center to plate two more runs.

But Benny Agbayani put an end to the scoring by throwing out Diaz at the plate when he tried to score on an Eddie Zosky single to left.

Lost in the loss were three double plays turned by the Tides, a sterling piece of glove work by Todd Haney in the sixth to keep the inning from becoming more lethal and two assists by Agbayani in left, both times throwing out runners at home.

"Defense can only carry you for so long," Agbayani said.

"They got the timely hits and the bloop that we're not getting." Seeing how the Tides have now lost 16 of their last 21 games at Harbor Park, Dempsey was asked if his team was built to play here. "This is probably the toughest park in the International League to hit home runs in and we don't have much home-run output at all," Dempsey said.

"If you can't get it out of this park, then you should have a team with speed to play here. We don't have enough speed.

"But nobody builds a minor-league team for a ballpark.

That's the pickle you're in at this level. We're just here to tune guys up for the majors."

## **Nunnally goes deep to defeat Tides again his two-run blast in the third inning stands up as Indy overcomes Norfolk's early power surge**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) July 22, 1998 | Denny, Dick*

NORFOLK -- Jon Nunnally broke the hearts of the Norfolk Tides again Tuesday at Victory Field. Back on July 10, the lefthanded hitting outfielder homered with a man aboard in the 12th inning to give the Indianapolis Indians a win over the Tides. On Tuesday, Nunnally came up with another big hit against the Tides, as his two-run homer in the third inning gave Indianapolis a 5-4 win before a crowd of 13,473 that enjoyed an early display of power hitting as well as the antics of the Famous Chicken.

With the Indians trailing 4-3 in the third inning, Nunnally drove an 0-1 pitch from Josias Manzanillo some 380 feet to rightfield. The ball sailed into the grassy picnic area for Nunnally's fifth homer of the season. Former Tide Roberto Petagine scored ahead of Nunnally and the Indians' 5-4 advantage held up the rest of the way.

The teams played longball through the first three innings before the contest settled into a pitchers' duel. But unfortunately for the Tides, who lost their third straight International League contest, Nunnally's big hit proved decisive.

Before that, Norfolk got home runs from shortstop Robert Eenhoorn (his seventh of the season) and second baseman Ralph Milliard (13th) to take a 4-3 lead.

Eenhoorn's blast drove in Brent Bowers to complete a three-run second inning for Norfolk. Milliard's 390-foot solo shot over the leftfield wall came in the third. Both starting pitchers, Manzanillo and the Indians' Rod Bolton, settled down after the third.

Bolton, who won his ninth game in 16 decisions for Indianapolis, retired 12 straight batters from the third inning to the seventh.

Manzanillo, whose record fell to 7-7, set down eight straight in one stretch. Despite the lusty hitting early, the Indians, who lead the IL's Western Division with a 55-40 record, left only two men on base. The Tides (44-52) stranded four.

Mike Walker and Todd Williams blanked Norfolk in the eighth and ninth innings. For Williams it was save No. 21, tops in the league.

The two teams meet again this afternoon at Indianapolis.

## **Shorthanded tides rally to defeat indianapolis**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) July 23, 1998 | Denny, Dick*

INDIANAPOLIS -- Rick Dempsey's beleaguered Norfolk Tides played two hours and 52 minutes of gritty baseball Wednesday afternoon at Victory Field. The Tides then had to wait out a one-hour, 40-minute rain delay that started with one out in the top of the eighth inning before escaping with a 6-3 victory over the Indianapolis Indians. The game was called at that point.

"Sometimes your backs are against the wall and you have to play that much harder," said Dempsey, the Tides' manager.

"We're down to eight position players. If we were an American League team, we would have to DH a pitcher.

But it's fun to come back like we did. Our guys played great."

How shorthanded were the Tides, who rallied from a 3-1 deficit to end a three-game International League losing streak?

Dempsey had to let starting pitcher Mike Fyhrie bat with the bases loaded and two outs in the seventh inning. Fyhrie struck out swinging, and Derek Wallace relieved him in the bottom of the seventh.

Norfolk's complement of position players dwindled to eight after centerfielder Brent Bowers and Dempsey exchanged angry words.

"We had a difference of opinion and it escalated into a little more than that," said Dempsey of his run-in with Bowers, who was released from the team. "It was just an accumulation of things. He's been released and it's a shame. He's a good kid and I liked him. We'll get a couple more players Thursday."

Bowers was called out on strikes to end the Tides' first inning, then argued with plate umpire Mike Billings. In the fourth inning, Bowers bunted for a hit leading off. He advanced to third after Indians pitcher Brian Keyser threw wild to first, and scored on Todd Carey's groundout to second. Rick Parker and Ralph Milliard had home runs for the Tides. Parker hit the first pitch of the game for his seventh of the season and Milliard homered for the second day in a row.

The Tides' unsung hero was Fyhrie, who entered the game with a 2-5 game and 5.84 ERA. He made 44 pitches in the first inning, when Indianapolis batted around and scored all of its runs. But Fyhrie wound up the winner, going six innings while yielding five hits, five walks and striking out three.

## **Redbirds top Tides for 5th straight win Sauerbeck is raked for seven runs in four innings to fall to 4-11**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) July 25, 1998 | Cunningham, Michael*

LOUISVILLE, KY. -- Scott Sauerbeck has struggled lately, and on Friday night the Louisville Redbirds were definitely not the cure.

Sauerbeck lost his fourth straight start as Norfolk fell to the Redbirds 8-4 at Cardinal Stadium. Louisville, the International League's hottest team, has won five straight and is 13-2 since the All-Star break.

Sauerbeck (4-11) lasted just four innings, allowing seven runs on nine hits. He has surrendered 23 earned runs during his losing streak.

Louisville jumped on Sauerbeck early, scoring four runs in the first. Brian Banks hit a two-run double, and Scott Krause brought him in with his 16th home run of the season.

Back-to-back RBI doubles from Eric Owens and Eddy Diaz in the fourth put Louisville ahead 7-0 and ended Sauerbeck's night.

The Tides finally figured out Louisville lefthander Kelly Wunsch's awkward sidearm delivery after he allowed just two hits through five innings. Wunsch, making his Triple-A debut, gave up a two-run home run to Jay Payton in the sixth, a solo homer to Steve Decker to lead off the seventh, and an RBI double to Ralph Milliard later in the inning. Al Sadler came on for Wunsch and got Parker to fly to right.

## **Columbus catcher labors on basepaths**

*The Record (Bergen County, NJ) July 26, 1998 | PAUL DOTTINO*

NOWHERE TO TURN -- Norfolk manager Rick Dempsey said last week he is losing patience with his club's inability to manufacture runs. The Tides have fallen nine games under .500, lacking the power and speed required to remain competitive.

Second baseman Ralph Milliard leads the Tides with 14 home runs and first baseman Jay Payton (.257, 5 HR, 16 RBI) paces the club with 11 steals in 16 tries. Outfielder Brent Bowers (.244, 14 SB) was released Wednesday after an argument with Dempsey.

"If you can't hit it out of this park [Harbor Park], then you should have a team with speed to play here. We don't have enough speed," said Dempsey. "But nobody builds a minor league team for a ballpark. That's the pickle you're in at this level. We're just here to tune guys up for the majors."

## **An old story for tides: lead, lose**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) July 27, 1998 | Portzline, Aaron*

COLUMBUS, OHIO -- Norfolk manager Rick Dempsey was understandably disappointed, but he may have been distraught if he hadn't seen this several times before. The Tides, fresh off an impressive doubleheader sweep of Columbus on Saturday, blew an early lead and wasted a choice opportunity to rally in the ninth inning Sunday. With a deep sigh of relief, the Columbus Clippers escaped with an 8-6 victory before 4,296 at Cooper Stadium. "We gave the game away. We gave it away," Dempsey said. "This is why we get beat in close games. Stupid plays."

Norfolk starter Mark Fyhrie (3-6) took a 4-1 lead into the sixth inning and seemed to be in good shape, having retired nine straight batters. But the Clippers mounted their first offensive uprising of the three-game series, sending 10 batters up and scoring five runs.

Scott Pose lined a leadoff single to right, Fyhrie hit Ricky Ledee with a pitch and Shane Spencer lined an RBI single to right. Fyhrie then walked the next batter, Ivan Cruz, to load the bases. "You can't walk guys in that situation," Dempsey said. "That's what killed the inning right there." An out later, Mike Figga lined an RBI single to center, cutting the lead to 4-3 and signaling the end for Fyhrie. Brian Maxcy relieved and gave up RBI single to the only

batters he faced, giving Columbus a 5-4 lead. Chris Singleton made it 6-4 with a sacrifice fly off reliever Luis Arroyo. Perhaps even more distressing for Dempsey was the Tides' ninth.

Columbus reliever Scott Brow walked the first three batters - Wayne Kirby, Ralph Milliard and Todd Haney - on a total of 15 pitches, bringing Tides' clean-up hitter Benny Agbayani to the plate as the winning run. Within mere seconds, the game was over. Agbayani struck out on three pitches - strike three was outside the strike zone - and Jay Payton grounded into a game-ending double play on the first pitch. Kirby scored from third before the final out was recorded.

"We had the bases loaded with nobody out. That's a prime chance, that's all you can ask for being down three runs," Dempsey said. "Four pitches later, the game is over. You learn this kind of stuff in Class A ball. You don't come to Triple-A and play ball like that."

## **Plethora of ingredients contribute to Tides loss**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) July 28, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

NORFOLK -- The cap belonging to Norfolk Tides manager Rick Dempsey laying in the middle of his office floor said it all.

Better the cap take some punishment. "Because if I decided to beat my head against the wall, I'd be dead by now," Dempsey said.

The Tides found another way to let a baseball game slip away Monday at Harbor Park, this time falling 3-2 to an Indianapolis Indians squad that managed just four hits. The magnifying glass will expose the eighth inning this time, when the league's best control pitcher got just wild enough for the Indians to score the game-winning run. Relief pitcher Jeff Tam, who was sent down by the New York Mets over the weekend after losing out in a roster crunch, did something he hadn't all season: walked back-to-back batters. Roberto Petagine and Mark Johnson received the free passes with two out after Tam had allowed only four walks all season in 50 1/3 innings of previous action for the Tides.

Ozzie Timmons then delivered a bleeding, run-scoring single over the outstretched glove of second baseman Ralph Milliard.

That magnifying glass could focus in on a couple other plays that hurt the Tides' chances.

Like Rigo Beltran's balk in the sixth inning that allowed Aaron Boone to move to third following a leadoff double. Boone would then score on a sacrifice fly by Jason Williams as Indianapolis tied the game at 2-2. Another Pepto-Bismol moment came when Benny Agbayani overslid third base in the seventh inning on an attempted double steal with none out.

And what Dempsey saw as a botched call in the eighth - he and just about everybody in the park believed Milliard had beaten out an infield single with one out and Todd Carey at second - didn't help either. "A little bit of offense, a little bit of defense and a little bit of umpiring and that's all we

need to lose right now," Dempsey said. The Tides (47-56) are now 21-29 at home and have dropped 18 of their last 23 at Harbor Park. The Tides took a one-run lead in the first inning, courtesy some shoddy defense by Indianapolis shortstop Damian Jackson.

Jackson muffed a routine grounder by Todd Haney with two out, then made his second error of the inning when he went into the hole between second and third and flipped wildly to second on a grounder by Agbayani, allowing Haney to reach third. Jay Payton then delivered a run-scoring single to left. The Indians tied matters in the third as Jackson tripled to the gap in right, then scored on a sacrifice fly to center by Indianapolis pitcher Brian Keyser. Norfolk retook the lead in the bottom of the third.

Agbayani beat out an infield single up the middle, Payton singled again to left and the pair pulled off a double steal. Agbayani then scored on a groundout by Steve Decker to short.

The Tides finished with nine hits, all of them delivered by three players: Agbayani (4 for 5), Payton (3 for 5) and Wayne Kirby (2 for 3).

## **Veterans Kirby and Haney key Tides' 8th-inning rally**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) July 29, 1998 | Brinkley, Robin*

NORFOLK -- Any victory at home is cause for the Tides to celebrate these days.

But Tuesday night's 4-3 win over Indianapolis was even more special than usual because of the circumstances surrounding the Tides' comeback. The Tides managed only four hits while committing three errors that led to two unearned for the Indians.

So when Norfolk trailed 3-2 after 7 1/2 innings, it appeared the Tides were about to waste another sterling effort by young Octavio Dotal and drop to 10 games under .500 for the first time this season. That's when a pair of the Tides' beleaguered veterans stepped forward. Wayne Kirby, a 34-year-old outfielder from Tabb, led off the bottom of the eighth with a slow roller up the middle.

It barely eluded shortstop Damien Jackson and rolled past second baseman Jason Williams into centerfield for a hit. Kirby took a glance at the ball as he approached first base and kept going, barely beating the throw to second. Ralph Milliard sacrificed Kirby to third and Jay Payton walked. When Benny Agbayani struck out, both managers went to their benches.

The Tides brought in Todd Haney to pinch hit for Todd Carey and the Indians countered with reliever Todd Williams, the league leader in saves.

Haney hit Williams' first pitch into the leftfield corner for a 2-run double and the lead. "He's a great closer," Haney said. "He threw me a sinker, but I don't think it sunk as much as he wanted." Luis Arroyo replaced Dotal to start the ninth and gave up a leadoff single to Tony Tarasco. He stole second as Arroyo struck out Mark Johnson. Derek Wallace then came on for Arroyo and sandwiched a strikeout and a ground out around a walk to pick up his 14th save. That made a winner of Dotal, who scattered five

hits, walked three and struck out nine. He gave up a home run to James Davis leading off the fifth, but errors on first baseman Rick Parker in the fifth and leftfielder Agbayani in the eighth contributed to the Indians' two other runs.

## **Tides leave 15 aboard in soggy loss**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) July 31, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

NORFOLK -- The Tides left 15 runners on base, setting a season high for futility on the basepaths, and that played a major part in their 6-2 loss to the Ottawa Lynx at Harbor Park in a game that dragged on for three hours and 18 minutes following a 41-minute rain delay on a ridiculously humid night.

About the only bright spot for the Tides on Thursday was the extension of Ralph Milliard's streak for reaching base. The 24-year-old second baseman, who went 1 for 3 with an eighth-inning single and drew two walks, has reached safely in 43 consecutive games. His streak, which stretches back to June 11, is the best this season at the Triple-A level and it is one shy of the season's best streak in the minors, set July 17 by Jose Macias of Double-A Jacksonville.

After that, this game offered little to cheer about for the announced crowd of 7,136.

Ottawa struck first when Jose Vidro singled with one out in the second, stole second and scored when starting pitcher Melvin Burch singled sharply to left. The Tides evened matters in the bottom of the second when Robert Eenhoorn and starting pitcher Josias Manzanillo drew back-to-back walks on eight pitches from Bunch, and Wayne Kirby followed with a run-scoring double to right. Ottawa, however, retook the lead for good in the third when Ray Holbert singled with two out and runners at first and second for a 2-1 advantage.

Ottawa scored again in the fourth when Hiram Bocachica doubled to left with one out, Dave Post singled up the middle and Allen Battle doubled hard off the wall in left to plate Bocachica for a 3-1 advantage.

The Tides cut into the lead in the sixth when Todd Haney drew a bases-loaded walk with two out. But the bases were left loaded when Benny Agbayani struck out on three pitches.

Ottawa then bumped the lead to 5-2 in the seventh when Holbert hit a two-run home run to left, his first of the season.

Vidro paced Ottawa's 14-hit attack by going 3 for 5 with a triple and scoring three runs. Vidro's triple led off the ninth and he later came home on an infield single by Holbert, who went 3 for 4 and drove in four runs.

The Tides left at least two runners on base in six different innings and left a runner at third in four of those innings. And they failed to capitalize on an Ottawa pitching staff that issued nine walks in the game's first six innings.

## **Players come, players go, and Tides spin their wheels again Norfolk strands 12 runners - for 27 in 2 games - and gets blown away**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) August 1, 1998 | Brinkley, Robin*

NORFOLK -- Another major shake-up in the Tides on Friday was followed by another major defeat. Ottawa scored seven runs in the fourth inning and went on to trounce the Tides 13-4 at Harbor Park. The loss dropped the Tides nine games under .500, equaling their worst standing of the season, and featured many of the same earmarks that have plagued them all season. They left 12 men on base one night after stranding 15.

Maneuvering by the Mets, who called up Benny Agbayani and Vance Wilson and left only one healthy position player, Wayne Kirby, on the bench didn't help. But it didn't have to hurt so much either, Tides manager Rick Dempsey said.

“In six years of managing, every time somebody goes up and down, everybody goes into a funk,” Dempsey said.

“It's amazing how often it happens. Everybody starts thinking about themselves.”

That's unnatural considering Friday was the deadline for making trades without having to clear a player through waivers.

If the Tides weren't thinking about it before the game, they got a sharp reminder when Ottawa's Hiram Bocachica was removed in the second inning and packaged with Montreal's Mark Grudzielanek and Carlos Perez in a trade with the Dodgers.

One Tide who had hoped to be moving up before now was former All-Star Ruben Sierra, who homered and doubled and drove in three of the Tides' four runs. Sierra was placed on the suspended list after leaving the Tides on July 18 to attend to personal problems at home in Puerto Rico. The two extra-base hits were only his sixth and seventh in 79 at-bats with the Tides.

The Lynx's seven-run fourth was the biggest outburst against the Tides this season. Catcher Alberto Castillo was charged with two passed balls in the inning, one on a third strike to Jose Vidro that led to four unearned runs.

With the score 5-2, Johnny Ruffin relieved Rick Steed with one out and the bases loaded and fanned Trace Coquille. But Ruffin walked Ray Holbert, his league-leading 61st base on balls, to force in a run and then gave up a bases-clearing double to John Pachot.

Pachot was 4 for 4 with 4 RBIs. Scott Samuels, who replaced Bocachica, had three hits, as did former Tide Chris Saunders.

Notes: Ralph Milliard's fifth-inning walk extended his streak of reaching base by hit or walk to 44 games, equaling Jacksonville's Jose Macias for the longest streak in the minors this year

## **Tides manage 17 hits in bizarre loss Ottawa scores 7 in first, then holds on to defeat Norfolk in a game that saw several odd plays**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) August 2, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

NORFOLK -- The Ottawa Lynx went 80 yards on 15 plays, all on the ground, on their first possession and went on to post a 10-7 victory over the Norfolk Tides Saturday night at Harbor Park. Oops, wrong sport.

Actually, Ottawa scored seven runs on seven hits in its first at-bat and the Tides couldn't make up the deficit, although they made a great effort in trying to do so.

Norfolk scored four runs in the bottom of the ninth, long after many of the fans had bolted. The inning's biggest blow was a three-run homer by Ruben Sierra. The game ended with the bases loaded when Robert Eenhoorn flew out to right.

Ottawa's Rick DeHart came on to get the final out and earn a save. It was a suitably bizarre finish to a game that was anything but boring.

In fact, three plays transpired that many in the crowd of 8,324 had possibly never seen before.

In the Tides' half of the first, Sierra struck out on a pitch in the dirt and was thrown out at first by Ottawa pitcher Jake Benz, who fielded the ball after realizing catcher John Pachot had no clue where it was. The ball had bounced near the Tides' on-deck circle, and Sierra stayed near the plate also trying to locate it.

In the third, Norfolk's Benny Agbayani decided to run the bases backward. Agbayani was on third when Sierra's bat flew from his hands and landed on the leftfield foul line just inside the outfield grass. Pachot attempted to throw Agbayani out at third and would have - the Tides' runner strayed almost 30 feet toward second - had time not been called by home plate umpire Marty Foster.

Then in the fifth, Eenhoorn fielded a routine ground ball to short by Ottawa's Dave Post and threw the ball nine rows into the stands behind first when the ball completely slipped from his usually sure-handed grasp.

As for Ottawa's first inning, the Lynx sent 12 men to the plate. Tides pitcher Mike Fyhrie hit one batter, issued a bases-loaded walk, gave up six singles and a leadoff double by Post, who also singled later in the inning.

Not all was sour for the Tides. Second baseman Ralph Milliard extended his streak of games reaching base safely to 45 with a single to left in the fifth inning. That is the best such streak in the minors this season, one better than Jose Macias of Double-A Jacksonville had earlier in the year.

And Mike Kinkade made his debut with the Tides after coming over from the Milwaukee Brewers organization in Friday's trade for former Tides pitcher Bill Pulsipher, who'd been with the Mets for the last month. Kinkade, a 25-year-old third baseman who hit a minor-league best .385 for Double-A El Paso last year, went 3 for 5 with two

RBI and is hitting .314 after spending all season to this point with the Louisville Redbirds.

## **Milliard survives bumpy ride to give Ottawa some new lumps Tides infielder extends his on-base streak to a season-best 46 games**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) August 3, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

NORFOLK -- It appears it's going to take a lot more than a totaled vehicle to knock Ralph Milliard off his game. The Norfolk Tides second baseman slammed into a retaining wall on Interstate 264 on his way to Harbor Park on Sunday afternoon, destroying the Toyota Corolla he was driving. When the car came to a stop after connecting three times with the wall that separates the traffic lanes from ongoing construction, Milliard saw that every window in the car was bashed in. Then he looked at his seat belt, which he was wearing, and thought, "Thank God I'm not hurt."

"I got cut off by another car and had no choice but to take it into the wall," Milliard said. "The rescue workers had to pry my door open."

His tardiness to the ballpark excused, Milliard took his usual position in the Tides' starting lineup and extended what has become the best streak for reaching base in minor league baseball this season. He singled and scored in the third inning, then doubled home the Tides' go-ahead run in the fourth as Norfolk defeated the Ottawa Lynx 8-2 to end a three-game losing skid. It stretched Milliard's streak for reaching base safely to 46 games, dating back to June 11. That's two games better than the streak Jose Macias of Double-A Jacksonville compiled before it was snapped July 17. "I didn't know the streak existed until three days ago," Milliard said. "Then Rick Dempsey told me about it."

Dempsey, the Tides' manager, said he thought his team was much more at ease Sunday. They couldn't have been much more on edge than in recent days. A war of words between Tides pitcher Mike Fyhrie, Milliard and first baseman Steve Decker on Saturday night after Ottawa scored seven first-inning runs left teammates separating the heated souls in the dugout, in plain sight of half the Harbor Park crowd. "Total miscommunication between the parties involved," Dempsey said. Nonetheless, Dempsey banished from the clubhouse the favored play toy of the team - a ping-pong table that the Tides players purchased two months ago.

But Todd Haney wasn't so sure that the mounting tension wasn't just the result of bad timing, exacerbating by the passing of the major league trading deadline. The Tides are loaded with veteran players and, as Haney said, it's just human nature to watch the deals that unfold and wonder if you'll be next. "As much as you don't want to think about the trade deadline, all of us do," said Haney, who hit a three-run homer in the sixth and drove in four runs. "All

of us want to get back to the bigs and realize that it takes one trade, one phone call, for it to happen."

Wayne Kirby's leadoff homer in the fifth bumped the Tides' lead to 3-1. Then Haney homered for the second time in the past week, a shot into the Tides' bullpen beyond right field.

Tides starting pitcher Octavio Dotel made it through 6 1/3 innings but tired in the seventh, leaving with the bases loaded after walking in a run. Dotel hadn't walked anyone through six innings, other than the 11 Lynx who had walked back to their dugout after striking out. But he issued three walks in the seventh before Rigo Beltran came on to relieve. Beltran struck out Ottawa's Jose Vidro and got Chris Saunders to ground into a force play to escape the inning without further damage.

The Tides added two unearned runs in the eighth for the final margin.

## **Unhappy huskey goes on dl**

*The Record (Bergen County, NJ) August 4, 1998 | T.J. QUINN*

NEW YORK -- Butch Huskey wasn't happy about it, but the Mets placed the outfielder and his strained left hamstring on the 15-day disabled list. To take Huskey's place on the roster, the Mets recalled catcher Todd Pratt, who had been optioned to Class AAA Norfolk on Friday. Pratt was furious when the Mets sent him down even though they explained the move was made because of the rules, not because of his play. Pratt was the only player with minor league options, and the Mets had to make room on the roster for their Friday night trades.

MINOR ACCIDENT: Minor league infielder Ralph Milliard totaled his car on a Virginia interstate Sunday, but was well enough to play in that night's game and double home the go-ahead run as Norfolk won. Milliard said he slammed into the retaining wall on I-264 when a car cut him off.

## **Tides down Durham again behind Kirby's bat, Manzanillo's arm Norfolk gets within 8 games of the first-place Bulls, with 32 left in the season**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) August 5, 1998 | Brinkley, Robin*

NORFOLK -- The beginning of a sterling stretch run? Or too little too late? The Tides beat Durham 6-1 Tuesday night behind eight strong innings from Josias Manzanillo and four hits from Wayne Kirby. It was the Tides' second straight victory over Durham and moved them to within eight games of the first-place Bulls with 32 games to play. Notes: Ralph Milliard extended his streak of reaching base by hit or walk to 48 consecutive games with a second-inning walk

## **Tides yield homer in 9th, then leave bases full the 2-run, 2-out blast spoils Dotel's 12-strikeout effort**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) August 8, 1998* By RICH RADFORD\ STAFF WRITER

NORFOLK -- Charlotte Knights cleanup hitter Brian Daubach had flirted with a home run for most of the night. On his final at-bat, flirtation became a full-blown romance when Daubach drilled a two-run homer into the Norfolk Tides' bullpen with two out in the ninth inning, propelling the Knights to a 3-2 victory at Harbor Park.

It also ruined a dominating pitching performance by Norfolk's Octavio Dotel while handing the Tides their first loss in six games.

Daubach had struck out three times, but he hadn't looked all that bad doing it. In fact, he'd looked quite dangerous. On his first at-bat, in the second inning, he dented an air-conditioning unit sitting atop the Hits at the Park restaurant down the rightfield line. On his next at-bat, in the fifth, he drilled a 2-1 fastball from Dotel that curled just foul before clearing the fence in right by about 60 feet. After whiffing again in the seventh, Daubach's chance at redemption arrived in the ninth with Tim Hyers aboard following an infield single that ended Dotel's night.

But what a night.

Dotel tied a season high by striking out 12 batters, walked none and gave up just four hits in 8 1/3 innings. And he'd been perfect through 4 2/3 innings before John Roskos lollypopped a 1-2 fastball on the outside corner into centerfield. Dotel left after Alex Gonzalez bounced a ball up the middle that Dotel got a glove on but couldn't stop. In came the lefthanded Beltran to face back-to-back lefthanded hitters.

Beltran nearly got out of the ninth when Tim Hyers bounced to short, but it wasn't hit sharply enough for the Tides to turn the double play. Daubach then hit his 24th homer of the season on a first-pitch slider. The Tides had taken a 1-0 lead in the first when Ruben Sierra delivered a run-scoring single to right. It drove in Mike Kinkade, who had reached second when Charlotte second baseman Chris Clapinski threw wildly into the Tides' dugout trying to complete a double play. Charlotte tied it in the sixth when starting pitcher Reid Cornelius doubled to the gap in right with one out and Gonzalez doubled to the gap in left with two out.

The Tides didn't go down without scaring the Knights in the ninth.

Cornelius was relieved after walking Jay Payton on four pitches with one out. Reliever Archie Corbin then walked Steve Decker and Ralph Milliard on eight pitches, struck out pinch-hitter Todd Carey, then walked home a run with pinch-hitter Benny Agbayani at the plate. Gabe Gonzalez then came on and got pinch-hitter Vance Wilson to ground out to third to end it.

## **Sauerbeck's blistering pitching leads tides**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) August 9, 1998* | Radford, Rich

NORFOLK -- The Norfolk Tides reclaimed a dugout habit they recently thought to be useless down the stretch run of this season: scoreboard watching. Winners of six of their last seven following a 5-1 decision over the Charlotte Knights Saturday night, the Tides have climbed back into the playoff race and now trail the Durham Bulls by seven games in South Division standings.

For those scoreboard hounds in the Tides dugout, the Bulls scored four in the ninth at Indianapolis to win 11-10. Oh well.

It was still a terrific way for the Tides (55-60) to begin the last month of the International League season, which ends Sept. 7.

The Knights got only one runner past second the entire game. That happened in the fourth when Lionel Hastings scored off a Lou Lucca RBI double. Other than that, Sauerbeck cruised, walking three and striking out seven. But it wasn't as easy as it seemed. A blister on the middle finger of his pitching hand had to be popped in the sixth inning, making it painful for him to throw his fastball. Norfolk struck for three runs in the fourth, with Ruben Sierra getting the inning started with a crisp single up the middle. Benny Agbayani followed with a run-scoring double, and Jay Payton knocked in Agbayani with a single. The Tides got their third run of the inning when Wayne Kirby reached on an infield single deep into the hole at shortstop with runners at second and third, scoring Payton. Norfolk upped the advantage to 5-1 in the sixth. Agbayani drew a leadoff walk against fresh reliever Hector Ramirez, then stole second and went to third on catcher Bob Natal's throw in the dirt. Payton singled to score Agbayani, went to third on a hit-and-run single by Vance Wilson and scored on Eenhoorn's sacrifice fly to right.

Note: Ralph Milliard's streak of reaching base safely ended at 51 games Saturday night when he went 0 for 4, flying out, striking out and twice grounding out.

## **Steed's seven shutout innings help Tides paste Indianapolis**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) August 12, 1998* | Denny, Dick

INDIANAPOLIS -- Like his Norfolk teammates, Tides pitcher Rick Steed is a road warrior. The 27-year-old righthander took the mound against Indianapolis Tuesday night with a 13.50 ERA against the Indians. But by the time Norfolk manager Rick Dempsey sent in Todd Carey to bat for his starter in the eighth inning, Steed had shut out the Tribe over seven innings. Steed wound up with his third victory against five losses as Norfolk handed the Indians their sixth straight International League defeat, 11-1.

The win boosted the Tides' road record to 29-27 (56-61 overall). Steed's road mark improved to 3-1. He is 0-4 at home, where the Tides are 27-34.

Norfolk wasted little time in putting the Indians in a deep hole, where they have resided the last month. Indianapolis has lost 22 of its last 29 games to fall 5 1/2 games behind Louisville in the IL's Western Division.

The Tides scored four runs in the first inning, one in the second and two more in the third before a crowd of 12,091 at Victory Field.

Norfolk finished with a flourish, scoring four runs in the ninth inning as Indianapolis lost its fifth in a row at home for the first time since moving into its new downtown park three years ago. Every Tides player in the starting lineup had at least one hit, including Steed, whose triple to right drove in both of Norfolk's third-inning runs.

Former Indian Todd Haney had three hits for the Tides, scored twice, drove in one run and stole a base. Ralph Milliard also had three hits, scored twice and drove in a pair. Jay Payton collected two hits, scored three runs and drove in two for the Tides.

In the ninth, catcher Alberto Castillo finally crashed the hit party for Norfolk, tripling with the bases loaded for three RBIs.

The Indians got their only run in the ninth off reliever Derek Wallace.

Steed yielded only two hits over seven innings, walked five and struck out two. He hit Damian Jackson, who led off in the first inning, but soon picked him off.

Indianapolis' Roberto Petagine, a former Tide who was 0 for 4 Tuesday and saw his league-leading average fall to .331, was recalled by the Cincinnati Reds after the game. Petagine also leads the IL with 109 RBIs.

## **Tides rout Louisville for 4th win in a row the Todds - Pratt, Carey and Haney - combine for 7 rbis**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) August 15, 1998 | Cunningham, Michael*

LOUISVILLE, KY. -- The Louisville Redbirds have been the hottest team in the International League. Now the Norfolk Tides are making a run at that title. Norfolk's 10-2 victory Friday night at Cardinal Stadium was its fourth straight and the 10th in its last 12 games. Meanwhile, the Redbirds lost their fourth straight, all at home. "Another 24 (wins) and we'll be all right," manager Rick Demspey said. "We're playing really well right now. I'm very happy with the way we are finally starting to put it together." The Tides got clutch hitting, led by the three Todds - three RBIs from Todd Pratt and two apiece from Todd Carey and Todd Haney. Scott Sauerback (6-11) got the win, while Louisville ace Rod Henderson (8-5) took the loss. Pratt's RBI single in the first was matched by the Redbirds in the bottom of the inning. Pratt's second RBI, a single that drove in Mike Kinkade in the fourth, put the Tides ahead 2-1. Sauerback escaped a bases-loaded jam in the fourth by getting Jorge Brito to fly out and striking out Henderson. Carey's two-run double in the sixth chased Henderson and put Norfolk up 4-1. Reliever Joe Hudson's first pitch was drilled for a double by Ralph Milliard,

scoring Carey and making it 5-1. Norfolk added two runs in the seventh on RBIs by Pratt and Jay Payton and three in the eighth, highlighted by Haney's two-run double.

## **Columbus' Jerzembeck slams door on the Tides the pitcher's four-hitter over six innings snapped Norfolk's 5-game winning streak**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) August 17, 1998 | Brinkley, Robin*

NORFOLK -- Lost seasons aren't reclaimed in one game, even games that are delayed two hours by rain and run into the 11 o'clock news. None of that bothered Columbus pitcher Mike Jerzembeck Sunday night. The 26-year-old righthander, in his first start since being returned by the Yankees, shut out the Tides on four hits over six innings in a 12-0 romp at Harbor Park.

The loss snapped the Tides' 5-game winning streak, their longest of the season, and prevented them from reaching .500 for the first time since June 16. Mike Lowell gave Jerzembeck all the support he needed with a 3-run homer off Rick Steed in the third. Chili Davis had three hits, scored two runs and drove in one run in what is expected to be his final rehab outing before rejoining the Yankees today in Kansas City. Chris Singleton added two singles and a triple as the Clippers raked four Tides pitchers for 17 hits.

Jerzembeck began the season as one of the Yankees' top pitching prospects after going 9-6 with a 3.13 ERA last year with Columbus. But he is only 4-7 this season and hadn't won since June 13.

Jerzembeck retired the first seven Tides batters and didn't allow a leadoff man to reach until Todd Pratt singled to center in the seventh.

Jerzembeck then walked Benny Agbayani and Columbus, taking no chances with an 8-0 lead, brought in Ray Ricken. He struck out Jay Payton, Ralph Milliard and Vance Wilson in succession and finished the game for his first save. Wilson had two hits for the Tides.

Todd Haney, who entered the game as the IL's leading hitter at .334, was 1 for 4.

NOTES: Tides shortstop Robert Eenhoorn announced his retirement Sunday and will return to coach in his native Netherlands. Eenhoorn was batting .233 with 7 home runs and 38 RBIs

## **Indianapolis tops tides to end slide**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) August 18, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

NORFOLK -- With three weeks remaining in the regular season, the Norfolk Tides looked at the International League standings Monday and had two questions: How much longer can the Durham Bulls keep winning? And

how much longer can the Indianapolis Indians keep losing?

The Bulls were of importance because they are the team the Tides trail in the South Division race. The Indians? They came to Harbor Park on a 10-game losing streak. As has been the case much of the 1998 season, things didn't go well for the Tides on either front.

The Bulls stretched their winning streak to 10 games with a 7-6 win over Louisville. And the Indians cut their losses with a 10-5 pasting of the Tides, who now trail Durham by 10 games with 21 to play, meaning it's magic number time. Durham's is now 11.

“Unfortunately, we've got to get some help from somewhere, and that's a bad situation to be in,” Tides shortstop Todd Haney said.

“If we can't catch Durham, I'd like to catch Pawtucket or Buffalo or somebody for the wildcard,” Tides manager Rick Dempsey said. “But they're winning too, and we've just got to worry about our own house right now.”

The Tides' homefront was unkempt Monday as Paul Wilson (2-1), making his third start since joining Norfolk, got ripped, with his earned-run average going from 0.00 to 4.20. Wilson gave up seven hits and seven runs in four innings of work.

Doing the most damage for the Indians was Tony Tarasco, who contributed mightily to Indy's first two rallies.

In the first, Tarasco jumped all over an 0-2 pitch, depositing a two-run home run into the Tides' bullpen beyond rightfield. It was his 11th homer of the season.

The Indians upped the advantage to 3-0 when Guillermo Garcia singled to left, then scored on Mark Johnson's double to the gap in right.

The Tides cut the deficit to 3-1 in the second when Benny Agbayani reached on an infield single, stole second, moved to third on a groundout by Jay Payton and came home on Steve Decker's single to right.

In the fourth inning, the Indians loaded the bases for Damian Jackson, who blooped a run-scoring single to center. Tarasco then followed with a bases-clearing double to the gap in right.

Norfolk scored twice in the bottom of the fourth. Payton and Decker hit back-to-back doubles into the gap in left, with Decker advancing and then scoring on groundouts to the right side of the infield by Ralph Milliard and pinch-hitter Todd Carey.

Then, in the sixth, it was more of Tarasco, who doubled to the gap in right again after Jackson walked and then stole second with two out for an 8-3 lead. Tarasco finished 3 for 5 with two doubles, a homer and six runs batted in.

## **Pratt's ninth-inning error spells disaster for Tides Durham's magic number over second-place Tides falls to 9 games**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) August 20, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

NORFOLK -- The saddest part about outfielder Todd Pratt's ninth-inning three-base error Wednesday night was

that he made a heck of an effort just to get to the ball. But tracking down Steve Gibraltar's long, hard-hit fly into the leftfield gap at Harbor Park was only half the task. Hauling it in proved too much, the ball tipping off Pratt's glove at the warning track with two out, allowing two go-ahead runs to score. That miscue, the game's only error, was followed by a towering two-run homer to right-center by Mark Johnson as the Indianapolis Indians beat the Norfolk Tides 5-1 on a cool August night by the Elizabeth River. With the loss, the Tides' playoff hopes took another hit. But at least South Division-leading Durham's winning streak ended at 11 games in an 8-4 setback at Toledo. Durham's magic number - any combination of Tides losses of Durham wins - is now nine games with just over two weeks left in the International League's regular season. The chances of a miracle comeback by the Tides (61-64) to win the division and make the playoffs are quite long. So what focus will the Tides take into the stretch run? Well, those who are on the New York Mets' 40-man roster - like Pratt - can stay sharp and look for that early September call-up when rosters expand for the final month of the season. And those who aren't can jockey for position in case the Mets scratch someone from the 40-man to make room for a hot bat. For instance Todd Haney, Benny Agbayani, Steve Decker, Wayne Kirby or Mike Kinkade. “I'm sure it's in the back of everybody's minds, especially those who are doing well,” said Pratt, who provided the Tides' only run with a sixth-inning, 412-foot home run to center. “And a lot of players are going to be judged by how they finish and what they are doing at the end.”

Indianapolis got on the board in the fourth inning when Johnson led off with a single to center that was followed by a run-scoring double down the leftfield line by Kevin Baez. However, Tides shortstop Ralph Milliard alertly cut off Pratt's throw back to the infield and picked Baez off at second after he'd rounded the bag too aggressively. After Kinkade flew out to deep center, Pratt homered, unloading a blast that when last seen was headed for the nearby Boathouse, a popular music club on the waterfront. The Tides loaded the bases in the eighth on a Pratt double and walks to Agbayani and Milliard, but Alberto Castillo struck out to end the threat. Then in the ninth, Decker delivered a pinch-hit single and Kinkade a two-out single, but Pratt flew out to the gap in left. Ironically, his ball was caught mere steps from where he'd made the fateful error.

## **Tides still at .500 after split with Toledo**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) August 26, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

NORFOLK -- Seeing how the Norfolk Tides were .500 heading into Tuesday night's doubleheader at Harbor Park, it seemed a sure thing they'd split with the Toledo Mud Hens. So the Tides (65-65) followed script by following up a 4-1 loss with an 8-1 victory in the nightcap.

Playoff chances that have been long at best for a month for the Tides remain just that. The South Division-leading Durham Bulls won Tuesday to lower their magic number for clinching over the Tides to four games with 13 games left.

Norfolk scored in the first inning of Game 2 when Todd Haney was hit by a pitch, then took third on Mike Drumright's wild pickoff throw and came home on Mike Kinkade's single. The Tides added another run in the third. Todd Pratt singled, went to third on third baseman Paul Faries' wild throw to first on a grounder by Benny Agbayani and then crossed home as Drumright uncorked a wild pitch.

Norfolk struck for four runs in the fourth, much of that due to Drumright's continued control problems as he walked Todd Carey and Vance Wilson to start the inning. After Melvin Mora sacrifice bunted the runners up, Wayne Kirby delivered a two-run single, then stole two bases. Haney then rapped a run-scoring single and Kinkade drove in Haney with a double for a 6-0 lead.

Scott Sauerbeck (7-11) went five scoreless innings to earn the win.

Toledo's only run came when Kimera Bartee homered to lead off the sixth.

Norfolk added two runs in the sixth on an Agbayani home run that wasn't. Agbayani's drive to the gap in right cleared rightfielder Pedro Swann's glove, but definitely didn't clear the fence. First-base umpire Dan Iassogna ruled it was a homer, however, much to the chagrin of Toledo manager Gene Roof.

Game 1 was the typical Tides loss at Harbor Park, marked by pitching that was good but not good enough, plus a lack of timely hitting.

Tides pitcher Rick Steed saw his record fall to 3-7, which includes 0-6 at Harbor Park. Steed was effective right up to the point when Swann clocked a two-out, two-run homer over the Tides bullpen beyond right field in the sixth, giving the Mud Hens a 3-0 lead.

Toledo had scored in the fifth on back-to-back doubles by Swann and Tim Belk. But Steed looked like he would escape the sixth with a 1-1 deadlock when Jason Wood chopped a grounder up the middle. The ball, however, cleared Steed on the mound and second baseman Ralph Milliard was unable to make a play, setting the stage for Swann.

Norfolk cut the deficit to 3-1 in the bottom of the sixth in this seven-inning game when Haney led off with a single, moved up on a groundout and scored on a sharp single to center by Pratt.

The Tides would load the bases on a bloop single by Agbayani and a walk to Jay Payton, but Milliard flew out to center to end the inning.

“We never seem to get the big hit when we need it,” Tides manager Rick Dempsey said. “And Steed pitched great for five innings, gave up little more than a couple of flairs, then gets that one pitch up to the lefty.”

## **Kirby gets 4 hits, but Tides lose to Charlotte. Norfolk rallies for 2 runs in the ninth inning but leaves the bases loaded**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) August 28, 1998 | Olson, Stan*

FORT MILL, S.C. -- Before he reached the major leagues, and long before he was a Norfolk Tide, Wayne Kirby was a Charlotte Knight.

Maybe that had something to do with his Thursday night explosion at Knights Stadium; maybe he was just comfortable back in his old park. Problem was, Kirby's success didn't rub off on his teammates. Despite Kirby's homer, three singles and a walk out of the leadoff spot, the Tides fell to Charlotte 7-5.

The loss dropped Norfolk to 65-66, further dimming the Tides' playoff chances. Charlotte, already eliminated, improved to 62-70.

There could be something to that comfort theory: Norfolk second baseman Ralph Milliard, another former Knight, had a triple, a walk and an RBI. No one else, though, was able to do much against Charlotte righthander Ryan Dempster.

That could be explained by the Tides' hectic schedule. Due to Hurricane Bonnie, they didn't arrive at the ballpark until 5:45 p.m., missing batting practice.

None of which affected Kirby, a 34-year-old veteran who hit .289 in a short stint with the Knights before being promoted to the big leagues by Cleveland. Kirby opened the game with a single, only to be erased in a double play. In the third inning, he singled again, but failed to score. So he did it all in the fifth, smacking a solo home run to right, his fifth since joining the club. He walked in the seventh and singled in the ninth, when the Tides, entering the inning down 7-3, suddenly made things exciting.

Norfolk, which trailed 7-0 at one point, loaded the bases with one out in the ninth on three straight singles, chasing Charlotte reliever Gabe Gonzalez. Oscar Henriquez wild-pitched home a run, and then Mike Kinkade's sacrifice fly cut the margin to two.

After Todd Pratt struck out, Benny Agbayani walked to reload the bases. But Henriquez got Jay Payton to bounce back to the mound to end the game.

Tides starter Josias Manzanillo was drilled for two runs in the first inning, another in the second and knocked out of the game in the third.

Manzanillo appeared to be settling down in the third, getting a ground-out and then striking out Knights slugger Preston Wilson, a former Tide. But catcher Vance Wilson couldn't hold onto strike three, and Wilson reached first. After Manzanillo hit Brian Daubach with a pitch, John Roskos singled home a run. Johnny Ruffin entered the game only to yield RBI singles to Tim Hyers and Bob Natal to make it 6-0.

## **Charlotte completes series sweep of Tides**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) August 31, 1998 | Cannon, Keith*

FORT MILL, S.C. -- It should've gone a lot better this weekend for the Norfolk Tides in hitter-friendly Knights Castle, manager Rick Dempsey said. Brian Daubach hit a three-run home run and the Knights killed a promising Norfolk rally with a bases-loaded double play in the seventh inning Sunday as Charlotte beat the Tides 8-4 to sweep a four-game series.

The Tides (65-69) finished the season 4-12 against Charlotte, including a 1-7 performance at the Knights' ballpark. Norfolk dropped into a tie with the Knights for second place in the International League's South Division. "Our hitters should have been happy to come here and play, but we could hardly get it out of the ballpark," Dempsey said. "We had been playing pretty well, but we just couldn't get any momentum here." Tides infielder Ralph Milliard, a former Knight, was 2 for 4 with a home run and a double and Todd Haney was 3 for 5 with a pair of doubles. But Norfolk failed to capitalize on its best chance to win the game.

With Norfolk trailing 6-3, Milliard blasted his 15th homer of the season leading off the seventh against Charlotte reliever Brandon Villafuerte. Singles by Vance Wilson, Wayne Kirby and Haney loaded the bases with one out. But Villafuerte got Mike Kinkade to bounce into an inning-ending double play. "If that doesn't happen, we probably go on to at least tie the game up," Dempsey said. Instead the Knights escaped the inning with a 6-4 lead. They tacked on two more runs in the eighth with the help of a pair of Tides errors. The Knights led 5-0 after three innings, sparked by Daubach's 31st home run of the season in the third off Norfolk starter Scott Sauerbeck. The Tides fought back, scoring two runs in the fifth and one in the sixth. Wilson had an RBI single in the fifth and Steve Decker hit an RBI double in the sixth. "We had some chances," Dempsey said. "We hit some balls pretty good, but couldn't get the big hit we needed."

## **Payton, Milliard among five recalled by Mets**

*The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, VA) September 2, 1998 | Radford, Rich*

The Norfolk Tides lost five players to the parent New York Mets Tuesday as major league teams expanded their rosters for the final month of the regular season.

The Mets, in a heated race for the National League's wildcard playoff spot, called up outfielder Jay Payton, second baseman Ralph Milliard and pitchers Jeff Tam, Brad Clontz and Rigo Beltran, who will all be used as relievers. To help shore up the pitching, the Tides have called up Derek Aucoin from Double-A Binghamton and signed Carlos Pulido, who was pitching for Somerset in the independent Atlantic League.

## **Met farmhand eager to see what crops up**

*The Record (Bergen County, NJ) September 2, 1998 | T.J. QUINN, Staff Writer*

SAN DIEGO -- Ralph Milliard might not have a single at-bat the rest of the season, but that's all right with him. He and the rest of the September call-ups will spend the next month dressing in a major league clubhouse, staying in major league hotels, and wearing a major league uniform. "I always wanted to be here, but I never thought it could happen," Milliard said.

Actually, the middle infielder came up with the Florida Marlins at the end of the 1996 and 1997 seasons, but any time a player spends the season in Class AAA, he covets a chance to play in the majors.

Milliard was one of five players to arrive in San Diego on Tuesday and put his Norfolk Tides bag into a major league locker. Milliard might be the best-suited of the bunch for major league play. He played strong defense all season and led the Tides with 15 homeruns. But pitchers Jeff Tam, Brad Clontz, and Rigo Beltran are more likely to get playing time.

## **Phillips' HR gives Mets win**

*Chicago Sun-Times September 6, 1998*

Tony Phillips made up for a rough sixth inning with a two-run homer in the eighth Saturday, leading the New York Mets over the visiting Atlanta Braves 5-4. In the sixth, Phillips failed to come up with Greg Colbrunn's fly to left that turned into a two-run double as the Braves took a 4-2 lead. Also in the sixth, Phillips left the bases loaded with an inning-ending flyout.

But in the eighth, Phillips made up for both. With New York trailing 4-3, pinch-hitter Matt Franco walked against Rudy Seanez (4-1) and Ralph Milliard pinch-ran. Phillips then hit an 0-1 pitch over the fence in right-center for his second homer since joining the Mets on July 31. "These guys have been carrying me the last few weeks," Phillips said. "I pulled my own weight for a change."

Turk Wendell (5-1) struck out two in the eighth, and John Franco finished for his 32nd save. Franco moved past Dennis Eckersley into second place on the career list with his 391st save, 87 behind Lee Smith.

"I got the ball," Franco said. "I'll add it to my collection and maybe some day my son will cherish it."

John Olerud hit a two-run homer for the Mets, who trail the Cubs by one game in the NL wild-card race.

## **Phillips Bounces Back To Push Mets Ahead**

*The Washington Post September 6, 1998*

Tony Phillips made up for a rough sixth inning with a two-run homer in the eighth yesterday, leading the New York Mets to a 5-4 victory over the visiting Atlanta Braves. In the sixth, Phillips failed to catch Greg Colbrunn's fly ball to left field, turning it into a two-run double and giving the Braves a 4-2 lead. In the bottom of the inning, Phillips

couldn't deliver with the bases loaded, hitting an inning-ending flyout. But in the eighth, Phillips made up for his poor play. With the Mets trailing 4-3, pinch hitter Matt Franco walked against Rudy Seanez (4-1). Ralph Milliard pinch ran. Phillips then hit an 0-1 pitch over the fence in right-center field for his second homer since joining the team on July 31. "These guys have been carrying me the last few weeks," Phillips said. "I pulled my own weight for a change."

Turk Wendell (5-1) struck out two in the eighth and John Franco finished for his 32nd save. Franco moved past Dennis Eckersley into second place on the career list with his 391st save. He is 87 saves behind Lee Smith.

John Olerud hit a two-run homer for the Mets, who beat the Braves Friday for the first time in six games. New York leads the majors with 31 one-run victories.

## **Phillips rallies Mets past**

### **Braves**

*Rocky Mountain News (Denver, CO) September 6, 1998*  
*By Associated Press*

NEW YORK - Tony Phillips made up for a rough sixth inning with a two-run homer in the eighth Saturday, leading the New York Mets to a 5-4 win over the Atlanta Braves. In the top of the sixth, Phillips had failed to come up with Greg Colbrunn's fly to left that turned into a two-run double as the Braves took a 4-2 lead. In the bottom half, Phillips couldn't deliver with the bases loaded, hitting an inning-ending flyout. But in the eighth, Phillips atoned. With New York trailing 4-3, pinch hitter Matt Franco walked against Rudy Seanez (4-1). With Ralph Milliard in as a pinch runner, Phillips hit a 0-1 pitch over the fence in right-center for his second homer since joining the Mets on July 31. John Olerud hit a two-run homer for the Mets, who remain one game behind Chicago in the race for the National League wild-card playoff berth.

## **Mets post win on Alfonzo's special delivery**

*The Buffalo News (Buffalo, NY) September 8, 1998 | From News Wire Services*

Neither rain nor lightning nor extreme gusts of wind could prevent the Mets from tying the Cubs on Monday. After Mark McGwire did his job, a slightly smaller player hit an equally important, if not historic, home run for the Mets. Edgardo Alfonzo's two-out, two-run homer in the eighth inning gave them a come-from-behind 8-7 win over the Braves at Shea and a share of the wild-card lead.

After the Mets wasted all of a four-run lead and gave the Braves a 7-6 edge, Alfonzo drove a 3-2 cut fastball from

Braves reliever John Rocker off the front of the left-field bleachers to put the Mets ahead.

After a replay of Mark McGwire's 61st home run was shown, the 22,953 Shea fans stood and applauded. Thirteen minutes later they were sent in search of cover as day turned to night and fierce winds whipped around the stadium.

The umpires waited a few seconds before calling the groundskeepers. Valentine and coaches Bruce Benedict and Bob Apodaca and rookies Mike Kinkade and Ralph Milliard were on their hands and knees trying to keep the blue tarp and themselves from flying loose.

They "could've been human kites," Valentine said.

After a 1:48 rain delay, the Mets blew to a 4-0 lead built on homers by Tony Phillips and Lopez and Brian McRae's run-scoring single. But the lead soon evaporated as the Braves batted around in the sixth and scored five runs off Rigo Beltran and Turk Wendell to take a 7-6 lead.

## **Memories of Harry dominate Hall of Fame night**

*Daily Herald (Arlington Heights, IL) September 25, 1998*  
*| Scoggins, Chip*

He was remembered in the opening remarks. They prayed for him in the invocation. And they recalled funny stories about him throughout the night. The Chicagoland Sports Hall of Fame inducted 17 new members Thursday night, but it was mostly a night to remember the late Harry Caray, the former Cubs and White Sox announcer who died Feb. 15.

The ceremony began with a five-minute video, featuring Caray's early days as a broadcaster as well some of his zany Budweiser commercials. The video, narrated by NBC's Bob Costas, included memorable moments like President Reagan filling in as the Cubs play-by-play man. "You know in a few months, I'm going to be out of work," President Reagan told Caray in 1988. The crowd cheered when Caray's famous call of "Holy Cow!" filled the room. Some choked back tears when Caray told Costas in an interview, "What a wonderful way to make a living. I truly, genuinely love baseball." The crowd gave Caray's wife Dutchie a standing ovation when she accepted the honor on his behalf.

"You don't know how hard it is for me to be up here," Dutchie said. "I am petrified in front of the microphone." The other members inducted into the Hall of Fame were Mark Aguirre, Tom Carey, Howie Carl, John Fitzgerald, Dorothy Gaters, Dan Hampton, Marv Levy, Ralph Milliard, Pete Mannos, Don McAuliffe, Bill Melton, Ken Panfil, Bob Pulford, Denis Savard, Stan Szukala and Isiah Thomas.