



**GAMEDAY**

**JUNE 2025**



# ***LETTER FROM THE TEAM***

Hillcats Fans,

Thank you for your continued support of the Lynchburg Hillcats.

When we purchased the team in October of last year, we knew there was work to be done to get the fan experience up to our standards. Fortunately for us all, we inherited a dedicated staff that shares our goal of making our team the best family-friendly entertainment available to the 434.

During this season, you'll begin to notice small improvements and changes to the fan experience. These will include more affordable food and concessions offerings to our community, new artwork around the stadium, and a reimagined game area for fans of all ages. At the completion of the 2025 season, we will embark on a major stadium renovation made possible by the dedicated efforts and support of the Lynchburg City Council.

Along first-base, we plan to add a second floor covered bar and lounge stretching down the concourse, a new picnic area along the right field foul line, and a new carousel and carnival area beyond that. Along the third-base concourse, we plan to add a new two-tier bar and over-21 lounge area. Finally, we will replace all of our bleachers with food and drink rail seating and add new cabanas in the main seating bowl. As you can see, the scope of our project is expansive and we hope you become as excited as we are to see it completed before the start of the 2026 season.

Our family has had roots in Lynchburg for three generations and we are very fortunate to help write the next chapter of baseball in Lynchburg.

Warmly,

Dylan, Holly, Abby, Olivia, and Ivy Narang



# CLARIK







## ***JOGLY GARCIA NAMED APRIL PITCHER OF THE MONTH***

The Lynchburg Hillcats Jogly Garcia was awarded the Carolina League Pitcher of the Month for April.

Garcia posted a 1-0 record, with a 2.16 ERA. He also collected 34 strikeouts in just under 17 innings. Across the whole month, he only allowed four runs on seven hits.

His strongest outing came while on the road, with the Hillcats taking on the Salem Red Sox. Garcia threw four innings of no-hit, scoreless relief, propelling Lynchburg to the 4-1 victory.

His ERA was comfortably under one heading into his last start of the month against Fayetteville on the 29th. Regardless, he struck out the first five batters he faced that night, before being roughed up in the third inning.

Garcia, a Venezuelan native, is in his first full season with Lynchburg. He spent a little over a month in the Hill City in 2024, struggling to an 0-2 record with an ERA over eight.

For the month of April, Garcia is the lone representative from the Cleveland Guardians organization to win a monthly award.

Fans can purchase their tickets to catch Jogly Garcia and the rest of the Hillcats in action by visiting [Lynchburg-Hillcats.com](https://lynchburg-hillcats.com).





# THARP

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# ***A COMPETITIVE BOND NEVER BROKEN***

Sean Matson played field hockey growing up, but only once.

“I didn’t make it through the first thirty minutes,” Matson said. “My back hurt, my core was toast. My hips, I could barely walk the next day. Those balls are way too hard.”

Matson, now a stalwart out of the bullpen for the Lynchburg Hillcats, decided that field hockey was best left to his sister, Erin, who now serves as the head coach of the University of North Carolina Field Hockey program.

“That’s funny,” Erin said. “That’s one of the things he remembers, and I’m like, yep, just another workout.”

Their competitive spirit was passed down from their parents. Their father, Brian, played collegiate baseball at the University of Delaware, and their mother, Jill, played both field hockey and softball at Yale.

For both Erin and Sean, it was their parents who introduced them to the sports they fell in love with. For Erin, she learned from her mother, a goalie for the Bulldogs, giving her a talented keeper to practice with. For Sean, he learned from his father, who helped him fall in love with the game at a young age.

“I got into tee ball early on,” Sean said. “There was always baseball merch, baseball sheets, baseball pictures in the room. I was born into falling in love with baseball.”





Despite the separate sports, competition thrived in the Matson household. Everything became a competition between the two kids. For some time, Erin had the upper hand in all their battles as the older sister, but it was only a matter of time before Sean caught up.

“We would play a lot of games in the basement where we would try to beat each other,” Sean said. “It would get way too competitive. We’d start throwing things at each other, no rules, just whoever could win.”

“We’d come upstairs all sweaty, with rug burns all over us,” Erin said. “There was always a competition in everything we did.”

“There was a long time when I was the stronger, bigger, faster one,” Erin said. “And then one day, he just turned into a man. I probably didn’t like that at the time. So, then, I was like, ‘Bye, Sean, I don’t want to lose any more than I have to, so you go have fun by yourself.’”

Despite the natural sibling rivalry and the extreme differences in sports, their father found a way to combine both their passions into improving each other.

Brian would take his children to a local turf field and chuck rollers toward Erin, who would receive them with her field hockey stick as if they were a pass. Then, she’d turn to Sean and fire grounders toward her younger brother to field and flip back to Brian, who would stand waiting with his glove.

This triangular system served as their family training, providing a way for their parents, amid busy schedules, to invest in both kids’ athletic journeys.

“It was the perfect setup,” Erin said. “I would get a rocket thrown at me, and I’d receive it like it was a pass. I’d have to accurately pass it to someone, but to Sean, it was fielding a ground ball, and he was getting his reps in as well. It was kind of the perfect combination.”







As their kids grew, so did the demands of their athletic endeavors, with both Sean and Erin traveling across the globe playing their respective sports. Erin began playing with the U.S. National Team at 17, but she had already been traveling competitively, including internationally, for several years prior.

Sean's travel, though not as widespread, was still demanding and involved their parents making sacrifices to their own careers to make the situation manageable.

Brian, who was working as a physical therapist at the time, scaled back his hours to a more conventional schedule to help with the kids' athletic demands. Jill, a businesswoman in New York City, halted her career growth to ensure she could be around the family more and invest in their children.

"I'll have to ask them one day when I think about how they did it with both of us," Sean said. "But I'm obviously extremely fortunate that they prioritized us and gave us what we needed to succeed."

For the Matsons, the investment in their children went beyond the field and into the classroom and the community as well. There were countless times when homework was done on the rides to practice, or one of the kids was sent back to one of their rooms to finish up their schoolwork before they could play.

"Our parents instilled in us that academics come first," Erin said. "They were always making sure that our academics came first and never took a hit, and we could always excel on the playing field."

Their sacrifices paid off. Erin would go on to a successful career with the UNC Tar Heels, winning four national championships as a player and then one more after being named the head coach in 2023. She has been dubbed the "Michael Jordan of Field Hockey," and a picture with her collection of championship rings gained widespread attention several years back.

With Erin at college, Sean was able to invest more time into his baseball journey as he wrapped up high school. He decided to attend a baseball camp at Harvard University in Boston, where he immediately fell in love with the campus.

Despite his mother having played at the Crimson's arch-rival, Sean knew that was where he belonged.

"I didn't know I was going to love it as much as I did until I got there," Sean said. "The coaches were unbelievable. I just knew it was a good fit personality-wise and kind of allowed me to pursue multiple things."

Sean was recruited as a two-way player for Harvard. His dad taught him as a switch-hitter, but when getting to college, the coaching staff decided he was best suited to join the pitching staff.

He pitched well for the Crimson in his three seasons in the Ivy League. Sean finished his career with a record of 9-11, boasting a 4.42 ERA and 185 strikeouts.



“I came into college a little bit more on the shy side, but college in general helps out with that, giving you the confidence to walk into a room and meet new people,” Sean said. “Then Cookie set that tone in summer ball, and I learned from him.”

Cook, who also spent time in the Cleveland Indians minor league organization back in the early 2010s, remembered a time when Francisco Lindor was drafted and entered the clubhouse excited to build relationships with every one of the guys. He used that as an example of the type of person Sean has become.

“That combination of talent and humanity is deeply important, and when you can find it — Derek Jeter, Franky Lindor, Sean Matson — it’s incredible, and people respond to it,” Cook said in a press release after Matson was drafted.

“I don’t like to have foes or any such thing,” Sean said. “I think it just builds a better team when everybody’s working together, respecting each other, and pushing each other to be better. So, for me, I don’t want to sound cocky, but it comes naturally, just treating each other with respect and being a good guy.”

Matson was drafted by the Cleveland Guardians in the 9th round of the 2024 MLB draft. His parents and girlfriend came up to Massachusetts, where the Cape Cod League is located, to spend the day and wait for the phone call.

“I was a little worried,” Sean said. “Towards the end of day two, then I got the call, and it was just a lot of emotions, a lot of hugging, a lot of thank yous, and, yeah, I was just ready to go.”

Though his sister could not be there, Sean said she was waiting near the phone on standby for the moment he was drafted. Having just transitioned from her collegiate playing days to viewing the sport as a job, Erin was able to provide advice for her younger sibling.

“Just being able to share with him that there’s nothing like going after a dream of yours and whether or not it works out, you never want to live in that state of ‘what if’ and regret not chasing it and going after it,” Erin said. “I can relate, after three years in, with already experiencing success. It’s all about staying present and trusting in our values and our preparation and how we were raised.”

Beyond advice, it was the example that Erin set that helped Sean get to this point in his journey.

“I think just the way she carried herself,” Sean said. “Obviously, you saw with the coaching job and as a player, like the way she carried herself. It was less advice and more stuff I had learned from her, just from being out there and watching her play and seeing how she carries herself and the confidence on the field.”

The success for Sean has come quickly at the professional level. As of May 26, in his first season with the Hillcats, he has posted a 2.08 ERA with 37 strikeouts across 13 appearances. He said he’s never been in such a unified clubhouse as what he has seen from the Guardians organization.

Sean has bigger aspirations in his professional baseball career. He wants to pitch at the Major League level, and at 23 years old, he has the backing of the Guardians organization.

However, as both Sean and Erin looked back on their journeys, they were reminded of how important it was having a sibling to challenge, inspire and encourage them.

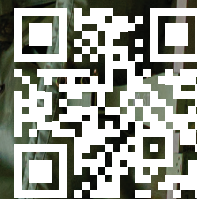
“I think we’ve both seen success in our own ways, but we’ve also celebrated it together,” Erin said.

“She was the hardest worker I’ve ever known, and it taught me what I needed to do to succeed at a high level,” Sean said. “Her achievements have inspired me even more to reach for that next step and not settle. So, I think just overall, she’s shown me a path to follow, and I’ve learned a lot from her success and her mistakes, and she’s taught me what I need to do, and I still learn from her to this day.”

“Now, it’s my turn to set the same example for our family and the Matson name.”







# WE KNOW WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A WINNING TEAM

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## ***GUARDIANS TOP 30 PROFILE: #28 LUIS MEREJO***

Merejo was born in Florida and grew up there before moving to the Dominican Republic late in his high school career and signing for \$340,000 in 2023. He followed up a strong pro debut in the Rookie-level Dominican Summer League by coming to the United States at age 18 last year. After beginning the season in the Rookie-level Arizona Complex League, he concluded it by batting .282/.372/.466 in the final month Single-A as one of the Carolina League's youngest players.

Unlike most of the Guardians' international signings, Merejo stands out more for his power than his hitting ability. His physicality and the bat speed in his right-handed stroke produce plus raw pop, and he taps into most of it by concentrating on driving balls in the air to his pull side too. He has some feel to hit and is willing to take walks, though he'll have to tone down his approach because it leaves him vulnerable to non-fastballs.

Most of Merejo's value will come from his bat. Though he stole 11 bases in 77 games last year, he's a below-average runner who's probably limited to first base. He committed 10 errors in 53 starts there in 2024 while also getting time on the outfield corners, where he displayed solid arm strength but substandard range.

Courtesy: MLB Pipeline







## ***A NEW ERA OF MEMORIES***

The Lynchburg Hillcats are thrilled to announce several new changes coming to the ballpark for the 2025 season.

With single game tickets on-sale today, fans can explore all the new additions to the organization, from our ownership down to our gameday operations.

New to the club this year is Dylan K. Narang, who has taken over ownership of the team. Narang is no stranger to professional baseball, having served as a minority owner of the Albuquerque Isotopes before selling his stake at the start of 2024.

A Virginia native, after graduating from UVA's School of Commerce in 2002, Narang enlisted in the U.S. Army. After his active service he pursued an MBA from Georgetown University and earned a commission in the U.S. Army Reserve. In 2011, he completed an MFA from Chapman University, coinciding with the creation of his own media production company, Foggy Bottom Pictures.

Narang, who currently resides in Washington, D.C., purchased the club from the Elmore Sports Group, who concluded a nine-year run as owners of the Hillcats.

The sale of the organization ushers in a new era of baseball in the Hill City, with a renewed focus towards creating a family friendly atmosphere. New for 2025, the organization is proud to announce a large-scale reduction in concessions prices to make Lynchburg baseball affordable with an eye on families.

Furthermore, summer nights at the ballpark just became a lot cooler, with the installation of a new soft serve ice cream machine. Fans can enjoy cups each night throughout the season.

Finally, the Hillcats are installing a new in-house dining option serving Mexican cuisine.

Beyond the concessions stand, the Hillcats are building the best promotional calendar in team history. This season, the schedule includes nearly 20 giveaways and a dozen fireworks shows. Giveaways include jersey and t-shirt giveaways, campfire mugs, and multiple hat giveaways.



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## ***VOTE FOR PLAYER OF THE YEAR***

The Lynchburg Hillcats are excited to bring back one of the traditions from our past this season.

Lynchburg and Arthur's Jewelry are teaming up to bring back the Hillcats Player of the Year! Fan's in attendance at Bank of the James Stadium will have the opportunity to place their vote for which Hillcats's player they believe deserves the award.

As part of the award, both the player and one of the fans that voted for them will receive a free watch, courtesy of Arthur's Jewelry. The award and the watch will be handed out at Fan Appreciation Night on August 31st.

Arthur's Jewelry is a family owned and operated jewelry store located in Bedford, Virginia. Located at 111 N Bridge St., Arthur's Jewelry is the community's home for engagement rings, fine jewelry, and diamonds.

Fans can cast their vote for Player of the Year by visiting the promotions booth located on the concourse during any of the Hillcats home games in 2025.

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# **HILLCAT ALUMNI**

## **SPOTLIGHT:**

### **ANGEL MARTINEZ**

No organization loves their utility players more than Cleveland.

Angel Martinez only spent one season in a Hillcat uniform during the 2021 season. In 97 games, he left his mark.

Though not as dominant at the plate as he would be in future seasons of his Minor League career, he still finished with a respectable .241/.319/.701 slash line. In addition, he also racked up over 30 extra-base hits.

However, his most important role was that of being in the field. For Lynchburg, he dominated across the infield, proving solid at both shortstop and second.

MLB Pipeline had this to say following his one season in the Hill City...

“He’s a capable defender at shortstop who’d have a better chance to stick there if he improves his arm strength, though Cleveland has many options at that position. He may fit best at second base, where his quick hands help him turn the double play well, and he also has seen action at third base.”

Upon leaving Lynchburg, he made the trek up the Minor League system, ultimately making his Major League debut in 2024 for the Cleveland Guardians.

He has been up-and-down at the Major League level, but in 2025, he’s started to show why he was such a highly touted prospect. As of May 27, Martinez boasted a .271 batting average and was bouncing around both the infield and the outfield, getting regular reps in the lineup.

He’s the son of a former Major League catcher in Sandy Martinez, who spent much of his professional career with Toronto. He would bounce around the majors, even spending one short stint in Cleveland, where he only appeared in one game the season before retiring.

However, Angel has a chance to follow in his footsteps at the Major League level. With such a versatility to switch positions, he’s found a role with the Guardians that has set him ahead of other prospects and has kept him in the lineup on a regular basis.

Sometimes, all it takes is the willingness to say yes, and the doors will open. Angel Martinez just keeps saying yes.





# **1ST HALF PROMO RELEASE**

**4/8 OPENING NIGHT**

**4/11 VINTAGE T-SHIRT GIVEAWAY**

**4/13 VINTAGE PENNANT GIVEAWAY**

**4/25 K9 & WINE NIGHT**

**4/26 YOUTH LEAGUE NIGHT + FIREWORKS**

**4/27 YOUTH HAT GIVEAWAY**

**5/2 MENTAL HEALTH NIGHT**

**5/3 CINCO DE MAYO CELEBRATION + FIREWORKS**

**5/4 HILLCATS' PILLOWCASE GIVEAWAY**

**5/16 MARGARITAVILLE NIGHT + HAWAIIAN SHIRT GIVEAWAY**

**5/17 AUTISM AWARENESS + JERSEY AUCTION**

**5/18 MATCHBOX CAR GIVEAWAY**

**5/30 PICKLEBALL NIGHT + PICKLEBALL PADDLE GIVEAWAY**

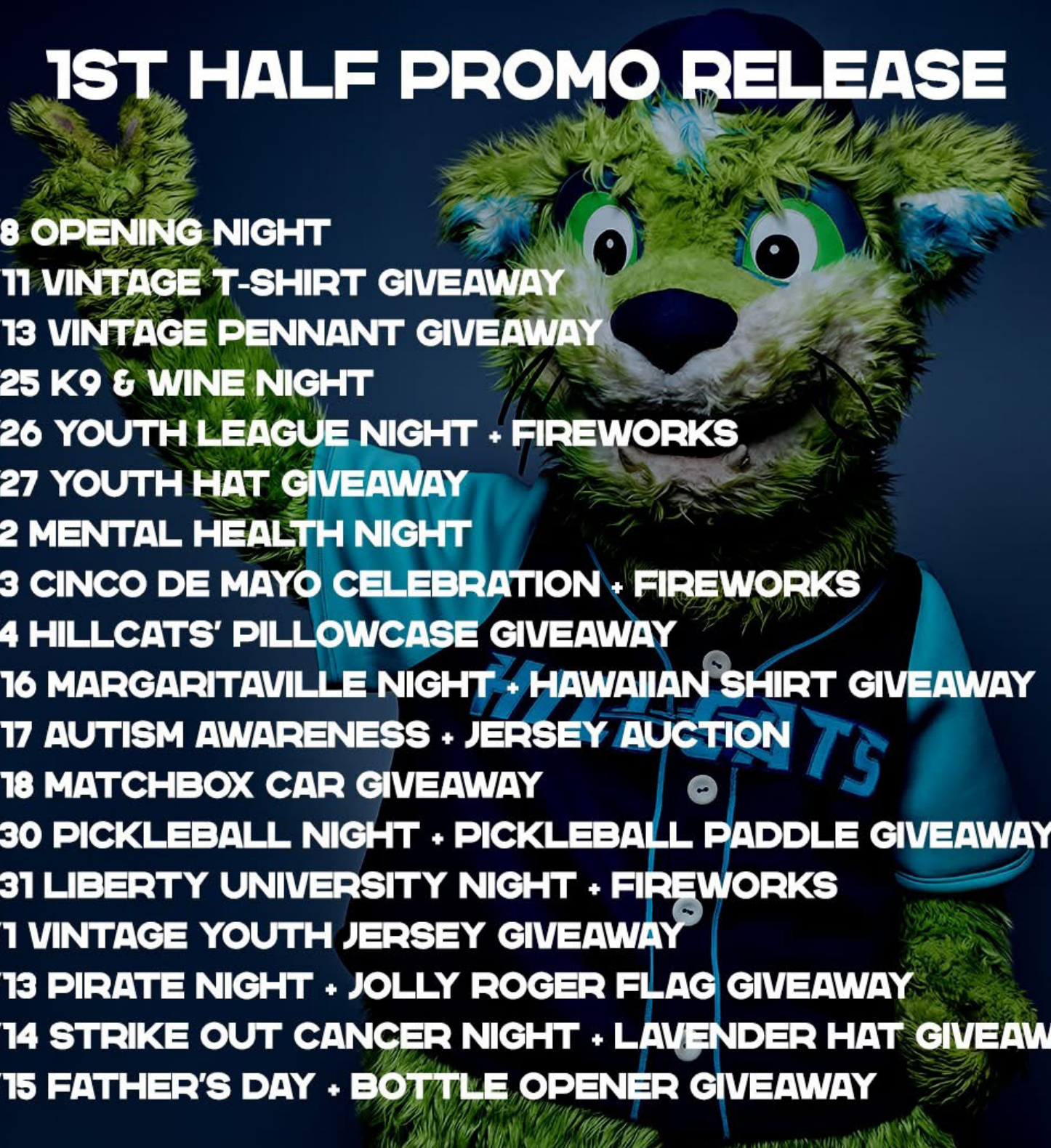
**5/31 LIBERTY UNIVERSITY NIGHT + FIREWORKS**

**6/1 VINTAGE YOUTH JERSEY GIVEAWAY**

**6/13 PIRATE NIGHT + JOLLY ROGER FLAG GIVEAWAY**

**6/14 STRIKE OUT CANCER NIGHT + LAVENDER HAT GIVEAWAY**

**6/15 FATHER'S DAY + BOTTLE OPENER GIVEAWAY**



# ***HILLCATS STATEMENT ON FORMER MANAGER TONY MANSOLINO***

Former Lynchburg Hillcats manager Tony Mansolino has been named the interim manager of the Baltimore Orioles.

Mansolino is the last Hillcats skipper to lead the team to a Carolina League Championship, which he did during his lone season at the helm in 2017. That season, he led Lynchburg to a record of 87-52 while defeating the Frederick Keys to claim a share of the league crown. The Championship series against Down East was cancelled due to Hurricane Irma, and both teams were named co-champions.

In addition, Mansolino was named the Carolina League Manager of the Year for his performance.

“Although Tony was with the Hillcats for just a season, his impact was great,” Hillcats owner Dylan Narang said. “In his only year with the Hillcats, Lynchburg finished with the best record in the Carolina League - a feat the Hill City had not seen since 1992. Additionally, the Hillcats were Co-Champions of the league and that honor is no doubt due to Tony who was also named Carolina League Manager of the Year. We wish him great success as he takes another step forward as interim manager of the Baltimore Orioles.”

Following Lynchburg, Mansolino would continue to climb the ranks with the Cleveland Indians organization (now named the Cleveland Guardians), culminating in serving as their interim third-base coach during the 2020 season.

Following the season, he was hired by the Orioles, becoming their full-time third-base coach, where he remained until this season.

“I’m excited to see Tony take on this new opportunity with the Baltimore Orioles,” Ryan Henson, the Hillcats clubhouse assistant in 2017, said. “After spending a season in the clubhouse with him in 2017, I saw his work ethic and drive on full display. He was easy to work with and well deserving of his new role.”

Mansolino replaces Brandon Hyde, who was fired following a slow start to the season from the Orioles. He now has the chance to guide young stars such as Gunnar Henderson, Jackson Holliday, and Adley Rutschman in their professional journeys.

The Lynchburg Hillcats are proud that his journey to the majors began within the confines of Bank of the James Stadium.







## ***NEW FOR 2025***

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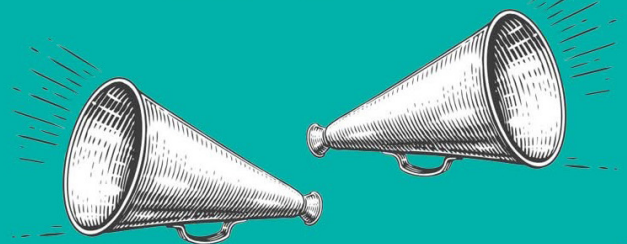
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**BASEBALL BINGO**

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**AT AMERICA'S GRAND OL' BALLYARD**



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**BANK OF THE JAMES STADIUM**



## ***COOPERSTOWN FEATURE: 'C' STANDS FOR 'COMPETITOR'***

By Sweeny Murti

CC Sabathia had the rare distinction of making all-time great impacts on three different organizations.

In Cleveland, where he was drafted in the first round (20th overall) in 1998, Sabathia was one of the great power pitchers of the early 2000s. He was runner-up to Ichiro Suzuki for the 2001 AL Rookie of the Year Award, a three-time All-Star and the 2007 AL Cy Young Award winner.

"Cleveland is obviously special to me because I felt like I grew up there," Sabathia said. "So that place always holds a special place in my heart."

In Milwaukee, where he played the final three months of the 2008 season, he became a legend in only 17 starts. After being traded in July, Sabathia went 11-2 with a 1.65 ERA, seven complete games and three shutouts to lead the Brewers to the postseason for the first time in 26 years.

"Milwaukee has left a huge impression on me. Some of those guys are lifelong friends. The time I spent in Milwaukee was very special."

And in New York, where he signed as a free agent prior to the 2009 season, Sabathia became a World Series champion and a Hall of Famer.





# COOPERTOWN



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Head for Home

“The impact that city has had on me, I don’t know if I can put it into words.”

The final 11 of Sabathia’s 19 major league seasons were spent in the famous pinstripes. Five years after he retired, Sabathia was named on 86.8 percent of ballots in the Baseball Writers’ Association of America Hall of Fame election to earn a spot in Cooperstown.

“The Hall of Fame is exactly for people like CC Sabathia,” said Derek Jeter, his Yankees teammate from 2009-14. “You speak to anyone who played with him or against him, and they’d say he was by far one of the best pitchers during that era.”

Carsten Charles Sabathia’s road to Cooperstown began as a youth in Vallejo, Calif., and the decision to join the Yankees completed his journey. He helped make the Yankees champions again at a crucial turning point in the franchise’s history.

And it all began with that amazing run in Milwaukee to close out the 2008 season. He made each of his final three starts on three days’ rest. Taking the ball — in fact, demanding it — resonated deeply with his teammates. “What he did those three months for that city was something special,” said former Brewers catcher Jason Kendall. “He was a god in Milwaukee for those three months because he picked our whole team up, put us on his shoulders.”

“When he came into the clubhouse in 2008, it changed our room,” said former Brewers infielder Craig Counsell. “Very few people can do that.”

His three-month stint was so impressive that he finished fifth in the NL Cy Young Award voting and sixth in the NL MVP balloting.

Meanwhile, the Yankees had missed the postseason entirely in 2008 for the first time in 14 years. They were looking to bolster both their rotation and their clubhouse leadership and loved what they saw in Sabathia during that magical run with Milwaukee.

“I saw what he did with Milwaukee, and I just remember thinking, ‘Man, give me that dude — bring him aboard with us,’” said former Yankees pitcher Andy Pettitte.

That winter, the Yankees signed Sabathia to a seven-year contract and made him the highest-paid pitcher in the game.

“I thought it instantly made us a World Series contender coming off the year that he had in Milwaukee and seeing how much he loved to compete,” said then-Yankees manager Joe Girardi.

“You can’t win a championship unless you’ve got a true number one,” Pettitte added. “When we signed him, we got that.”

“He helped solidify our staff,” Jeter said. “It gave all of us confidence to know that here we are, we missed the playoffs (last year), and it just added a level of confidence to our team.”

Off the field, Sabathia brought a unifying personality that was hard to deny. It was the other big part of why the Yankees wanted him, believing he could heal a clubhouse that had lost some of its cohesiveness from the dynasty years of the previous decade.



“Going into that offseason, I heard all the stuff that was going on, all the turmoil in the Yankees clubhouse,” Sabathia said. “I had come from Cleveland and Milwaukee, where that was the most important thing, and it just didn’t seem like it was that important [in New York].”

The Yankees convinced Sabathia that was the reason they wanted him in New York: To bring that same energy and team-building spirit he was known for. He quickly became the team social director and made sure that everyone on the team was included.

“He rented out suites to playoff basketball games, he rented out boats on the Fourth of July; it was just who he was,” Girardi recalled. “I had heard he was a great teammate. I think you could ask people that played with him and the consensus would be that he’s the best teammate they ever played with.”

The old-guard Yankees were noticing his impact as well.

“CC did a great job of always getting the guys together and building chemistry,” Pettitte said. “He’s one of those bigger-than-life personalities. He comes into a room and people gravitate to him.”

Mark Teixeira was another big-name free agent who joined the Yankees after 2008. He immediately noticed Sabathia’s clubhouse leadership.

“I thought that team was really close, and part of the reason was even though we had a bunch of new guys, it took somebody like CC to kind of say, ‘Hey, no more cliques. We’re all hanging out together,’” Teixeira said.

The 2009 Yankees won 103 games in the regular season to easily capture the AL East division title. Sabathia won a league-best 19 games and led the Yankees with 34 starts, 230 innings pitched and 197 strikeouts. He would finish fourth in the AL Cy Young Award voting, but there was a bigger prize at stake.

Sabathia drew the Game 1 assignment in all three postseason rounds for the Yankees. What was the feeling like of sending Sabathia to the mound in Game 1?

“You have the utmost confidence,” Jeter said. “It’s the position you want to be in when you get to the postseason. We have CC. Who do you have?”

Sabathia won his first three starts of the postseason, including two in the ALCS, where he was named series Most Valuable Player and helped send the Yankees to the World Series for the first time in six years. By the time the Yankees beat the Phillies in six games to win the 2009 World Series, Sabathia had made five starts and pitched to a 1.98 ERA.

It was one of the most successful first years anyone ever had in New York, where expectations can weigh heavily on even the best players.

“He was a huge and instrumental part of us being able to make that run and win another championship,” Pettitte said. “He delivered, and he was everything that the club expected him to be. That’s hard to do in your first year in New York. CC was able to do that and had no problems adjusting.”

“Playing in New York is different than playing anywhere else. CC just lived up to the perception of what he was,” Jeter said.

His presence and aura were noticeable from the other side of the field, too.

“That’s one of the things from the other dugout that shined through,” said Hall of Famer Joe Mauer. “You could tell that he commanded the respect from his teammates. It was almost like they played harder for him. He went out there and wanted to win every night. He did everything he could to give himself the best chance, and I think that’s why guys loved playing with him.”

Over the next 10 years, Sabathia added accolades and accomplishments and cemented his Hall of Fame legacy. He won a career-high 21 games in 2010 to become the 14th member of the prestigious Black Aces and started a run of three straight All-Star selections.

Sabathia also established himself as one of the most durable and reliable pitchers of his time. During his 19-year career from 2001 to 2019, nobody in baseball won more games (251), made more starts (560), pitched more innings (3,577.1), struck out more batters (3,093) or threw more pitches (55,774).

He made 11 Opening Day starts and started Game 1 of a postseason series nine times.

In 2019, he passed the 250-win and 3,000-strikeout plateaus, making him one of just 15 pitchers in history to reach both milestones.

Among pitchers whose careers started in 1970 or later, he ranks 11th in wins and ninth in strikeouts.

With credentials like that, it’s no wonder teammates and opponents would often describe Sabathia as a work-horse.

“You knew there was something a little bit different in there that on game day he took it very seriously,” Hall of Famer and former Cleveland teammate Jim Thome said. “He was ready to go on the day that he pitched, and it really showed. He had this incredible presence, and he was dominant.”

“He was just someone you always trusted when he was going out there that he was going to compete at the highest level,” Girardi said. “Even in the back end of his career, I felt great when he took the mound.”

Over his last several seasons, Sabathia’s adjustment to decreased velocity due to age and injuries only added to the admiration.

“He just changed his arsenal and anybody that does something like that, it’s really the desire that gets it done and the competitiveness and the will to win,” former Yankees pitching coach Larry Rothschild said. “And CC was very much about winning games. He wasn’t much about making it look good; it was about winning no matter what.”

“CC is one of the fiercest competitors that I played with, and I played with a lot of great ones,” Pettitte said. “I’d put him right up there with Roger (Clemens), the way he competed. Roger was one of the greatest competitors I had ever seen, and CC was cut out of the exact same mold.

“When he took the mound, he just kind of transformed into a different person, would take the ball no matter what. He’s a warrior, he’s a Cy Young Award winner, he’s a world champion, and he’s a true, true number one ace on any staff that he was pitching with.”

And now, you can add one more title to CC Sabathia’s résumé: Hall of Famer.

Sweeny Murti is a senior contributor for MLB Media.

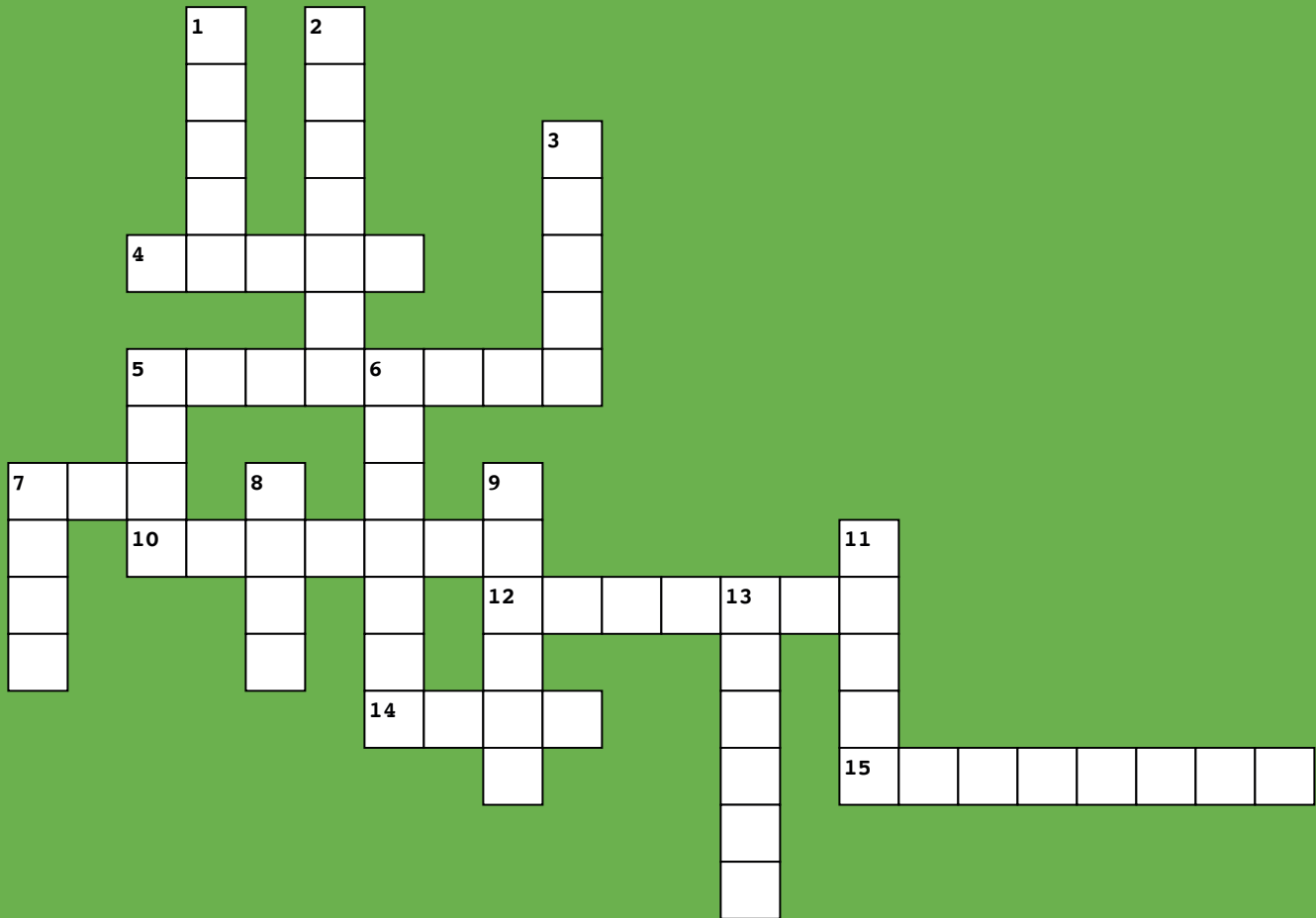
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# ***SOUTHPAW'S FUN ZONE***



## **Across**

- 4.** to toss a ball
- 5.** the grassy area of the playing surface
- 7.** what you use to hit the ball
- 10.** "Bank of the James \_\_\_\_\_"
- 12.** the player on the mound
- 14.** what the infield is made of
- 15.** the mascot of the Hillcats

## **Down**

- 1.** the manager of the Hillcats
- 2.** to win the game on the final swing
- 3.** where the pitcher stands
- 5.** three of these in each inning
- 6.** the dirt area of the playing surface
- 7.** the thing thrown
- 8.** the thing players stand on
- 9.** the person who calls balls and strikes
- 11.** what the outfield is made of
- 13.** the person who swings the bat



# Limonadas

DE HILL CITY

