**RIVERTOWN DEFEATS WEST PENN, 4 GAMES TO 3,**

**TO WIN 2019 NABC WORLD SERIES!**

 This newsletter contains series and game summaries for the 2019 NABC World Series and other playoff series. The box scores and playoff statistics are all available in the final C-file that I distributed by e-mail. Congratulations to manager Rick Christianson and the #5 seeded Rivertown Otters, who prevailed in an exciting 7 game series over manager Brian Lebeck and the #3 seeded West Penn Bats, in a series that saw the visiting team win all 7 games. The Otters won the first 2 games and the last 2, while the Bats took the middle 3 games. This was only the second matchup of #3 and #5 seeds in the World Series since seeding began in 2000, and the first time that the #5 seed prevailed. The previous match-up occurred in 2013, when #3 Danbury Dirt Dobbers defeated #5 Wyandotte Falcons in 6 games. The WS games were played online via phone as all playoff games were contested either face-to-face or via a phone connection, again this season. Thanks to all playoff managers for completing the games promptly.

 For Rivertown manager Rick Christianson, this was the 7th playoff appearance in his 8 seasons in the NABC, and his 2nd World Series appearance and 2nd championship. Rick’s most recent previous championship was in 2014. The Rivertown franchise has made 25 playoff appearances in 43 seasons, and now has 8 championships (to tie San Antonio’s record) in just 10 WS appearances.

For West Penn manager Brian Lebeck, in his 16th NABC season, this was his 6thplayoff appearance, and his first time in the finals. The West Penn franchise now has 17 playoff runs in 43 seasons overall, plus 1 World Series title in 4 appearances, with the only previous championship in 1988, as the Southfield Swatters, under the guidance of current Livonia Lynx manager Tom Kusch.

 Over the course of the post-season, Rivertown’s offense was led by J.D. Martinez (24-72, 5hr, 5-2b, 10r, 14rbi), Adrian Beltre (15-52, 3-2b, 6rbi), Robinson Cano (12-51, 4-2b, 9rbi) and Asdrubel Cabrera (7-21, 2hr, 3rbi). Rivertown pitchers posted a sparkling 2.17 ERA overall, with only 1 hurler above the 3.15 mark. Trevor Story (23-83, 3hr, 12-2b, 14r, 14rbi), Max Muncy (14-67, 7hr, 16rbi), Yoenis Cespedes (8-28, 2hr, 9rbi) and Adam Jones (15-53, 4-2b, 9rbi) keyed the Bats, but the pitching couldn’t keep up, as a staff 3.54 team ERA ultimately led to defeat in the final series. In the post-season, Rivertown out-scored their opponents 60 to 51, while West Penn scored 80 runs, but allowed 81 in total.

 ***Congratulations to both Rick and Brian for making it to the finals, and thanks to all NABC managers for another great year!***

**PLAYOFF RESULTS:**

First Round: Rivertown Otters over Saginaw Aces, 4 games to 2.

 West Penn Bats over Buffalo Bison, 4 games to 3.

Second Round: West Penn Bats over San Antonio Spartans, 4 games to 3.

Rivertown Otters over Livonia Lynx, 4 games to 2.

**World Series: Rivertown Otters over West Penn Bats, 4 games to 3.**

**WORLD SERIES – Rivertown 4, West Penn 3 (Played via phone, by Rick Christianson and Brian Lebeck, highlights from Rick Christianson)**

The #5 seeded Otters took the final 2 games, overcoming a 3-2 deficit to win their second NABC title. The #3 seeded Bats, in manager Brian Lebeck’s first WS appearance had rallied to win the middle 3 games to set up the disappointing finish. Rivertown outscored West Penn 29 to 20 overall, but most of the difference came in the 8-0 victory in game 6. West Penn did lead in home runs, 5 to 4. Robinson Cano (8-28, 3-2b, 7rbi), J.D. Martinez (8-28, 1hr, 4r, 5rbi), Joey Votto (9-24, 5-2b, 4rbi) and Jurickson Profar (7-29, 3-2b, 6r) led the Otters on offense. Mike Clevinger won both his starts with a 1.05 ERA, including a shutout in game 6 to keep the Otters alive. Trevor Story (10-27, 6-2b, 2hr, 5r, 4rbi) and Adam Jones (9-18, 1hr, 5rbi) led the way for the Bats.

**Game 1: Rivertown (Chris Sale) at West Penn (Edwin Jackson)**

 **Final Score: Rivertown 5 West Penn 3**

Both team managers admit to being very surprised that their teams made it to the World Series.  So we both feel that just getting to this point is an unexpected surprise.

 At West Penn  (played in a stadium that looks very much like Citzens Bank Park in Philly)

*Bottom 3*Tucker Barnhardt walks.  Trevor Story doubles to left, Barnhardt rounds third.  The throw from Nelson Cruz is IN TIME, but Yadier Molina drops the ball!  He scores on a E2   West Penn leads 1-0

*Bottom 6*            Gregory Polanco walks, Yasiel Puig singles.  Both come around to score on Adam Jones single!  Bats 3, Otters 0

*Top 8*                 Yadier makes up for his error with a solo homerun.  West Penn still leads 3-1

*Top 9*                Jose LeClerc in to try and close it out.  But Teoscar Hernandez walks, Adrian Beltre (who has announced he will retire after the series) doubles him to thrid.  Harrison Bader pinch runs for Beltre.  The potential tying run is in scoring position with no outs!  LeClerc gets Pete O'Brien to ground out, runners hold.   Asdrubel Cabrera hits an SF, one run scores, Bader to 3rd..  Two down, the Bats are just one out away from taking game one with their high graded stopper on the mound.  Jurickson Profar up...Bader breaks for the plate!...SAFE.  Bader **steals home** to tie the game with two outs in the ninth inning!

*Top 10*            Joey Votto doubles.  Nick Martini pinch runs.  JD Martinez singles, 1st and 3rd,  Nelson Cruz bloops a hit into right scoring Martini with the go ahead run.  Later, with 2 own, JD scores on a PB by Christian Vazquez.  Both teams have had a rough time in the field as that is the 3rd unearned run of the game.

*Bottom 10*        Tony Sipp puts the Bats down.

The Otters scored all their runs in the last three innings of the game and steal this one right out from under the Bats' noses.  They lead the series 1 game to zero.

**Game 2: Rivertown (Mike Clevinger) at West Penn (Garrett Richards)**

 **Final Score: Rivertown 4 West Penn 2**

*Top 3rd*            Otters score first on an error, then an RBI FC grounder by Votto.  JD then singles in another.  Both runs are unearned.  Rivertown leads 2-0

      both pitchers settle in and allow nothing for inning after inning.

*Bottom 6th*        Story homers for home nine.  Otters 2, Bats 1

*Bottom 8th*        The stadium erupts as Story homers again!   Tie game 2-2

*Top 9*Richards has not allowed an earned run so he's still in there (now grade 20).  Robinson Cano singles.  Then for the second day in a row Beltre hits a key ninth inning RBI double (he is really going out of the game with a bang!).  Molina singles him home.  Otters take a two run lead.

*Bottom 9*            With one out and a man on, Sean Doolittle comes in and closes out the game.

    Led by Adrian Beltre, Rivertown has now won two game with late inning heroics!  6 of their 9 runs have come in the 9th or 10th innings of these games.

The series moves to Rivertown with the Otters leading two games to zero.

**Game 3: West Penn (Rick Porcello) at Rivertown (Wade Miley)**

 **Final Score: West Penn 4 Rivertown 3**

*Bottom 3*Teoscar Hernandez breaks the ice with a solo homerun 1-0 Riv

*Top  5* Story doubles home the tying run. Max Muncy then smacks a two run homer and the Bats take a 3-1 lead.

*Bottom 6*Molina scores on G. Polanco’s error.  It’s a one run game.

*Bottom 7*Votto doubles home Profar with the tying run!  3-3

*Top 9*  Freddy Galvis doubles, former Otter Melky Cabrera singles  him home and West Penn takes the lead

*Bottom 9*LeClerc comes in and strikes out the side and West Penn takes the game

Rivertown leads the series 2 games to 1

**Game 4: West Penn (Masahiro Tanaka) at Rivertown (Zack Greinke)**

 **Final Score: West Penn 5 Rivertown 4**

*Bottom 4*JD Martinez singles home the first run on the game.  Then Cano launches a three run shot and the Rivertown crowd is rockin’!  Otters lead 4-0

*Top 7*Greinke is cruising with a shutout through 6, but Galvis singles, Vazquez forces him at 2nd. Scooter Gennett singles, Story doubles Vazquez home.  Muncy walks.  Sipp comes in to pitch…Polanco drives in the 2nd run of the inning with a SF.   Then Puig comes up and doubles in two runs.  Just like that it’s a tie game!  4-4

*Top 8*Mike Moustakas homers and the Bats have come all the way back *and*take a late lead!

*Bottom 9*LeClerc comes in again.  PH O’Brien walks.  PH A. Cabrera singles!  But LeClerc gets PH Martini then Profar to end the threat and the game.

The series is tied at 2 games apiece.

**Game 5: West Penn (Jackson) at Rivertown (Sale)**

 **Final Score: West Penn 4 Rivertown 0**

*Top 5*Adam Jones launces a two run homer!  West Penn is in front 2 zip

*Top 6*Puig doubles in Polanco.  Adam Jones (again!) drives in Puig with a  single.  The Bats are up by 4

              Jackson goes 6 2/3 shutout innings.  Petit comes in to get him out of a jam in the 7th

*Bottom 9*Pedro Strop is in this time.  He gives up a hit and a walk, but escapes with no damage.

*Note: thus far we are mirroring the “real life” World Series as all victories are by the road team*

West Penn was down 2 games to 0, but…we now return to West Penn for game six with the Bats needing just one win to claim the title.

**Game 6: Rivertown (Clevinger) at West Penn (Richards)**

 **Final Score: Rivertown 8 West Penn 0**

Clevinger will try and keep the Otters alive.  Richards will strive to put this series away for West Penn

*Top 1*Votto walks.  JD walks.  With two outs, Cano doubles them both home.  Riv has an early 2-0 lead

*Top 2*Beltre walks, Molina singles, Profar singles Beltre home.  Votto’s SF  scores Molina.  Otters 4, Bats 0

*Top 4*Votto doubles in one run.  JD Martinez lines a SF that scores another.  Score is now 6-0

   Top 5  Muncy and Barnhardt collide are both are injured (5 days) they are both done for the series!   West Penn loses their best hitter and their #1 catcher!

   Also Top 5  Molina is hit by pitch and injured (11 days).  He is done for the year.

    Top 6                 Nelson Cruz is hit by a pitch and injured (1 day). He, too, is finished for the season.

*Top 6*Cano doubles home two (including Bader PR for Cruz).  Otters are now ahead by 8.

Top 9  OK.  This is getting out of hand.  Back-up C Martin Maldonado is plunked and injured (5 games) out for the season

West Penn has lost Muncy and Barnhardt.  Riv has lost Nelson Cruz, Molina and Maldanado  (third string C Rene Rivera is pressed into duty)  And they lost Kendrick in LDS series last week!

The only real laugher of the series…and it’s hard to laugh when so many  are injured!

The series is tied 3 games each.  One game to rule them all…

**Game 7: Rivertown (Miley) at West Penn (Porcello)**

 **Final Score: Rivertown 5 West Penn 2**

*Bottom 1*Polanco singles in a run but is out trying to stretch it.  Puig’s SF makes it 2-0 and West Penn has an early lead.

*Top 3*JD Martinez launches a game tying two run homer!

*Top 4*Teoscar Hernandez triples in a run, then scores on Rene Rivera’s (!!) SF.  Otters lead 4-2

             The Otters have a lot of innings left in their pen.  Doolittle has 2.1.  and he comes in with one out in the 4th inning.

*Top 6*In the second to last at bat of his great MLB career, Adrian Beltre doubles in a run.  Riv leads 5-2

*Bottom 7*            Morrow comes to try for a three inning save…

      Bottom 8  Again the firstbaseman and Catcher collide…this time it is with Rivertown in the field.  Profar and Rivera are both injured.  The Otters have to get creative….they now have only nine healthy positon players,  and they can move folks around to cover first base, but Rivera was their last catcher.

(note: in the last game and a half, FOUR catchers were injured…one for West Penn and three for Rivertown).

  So in game seven of the World Series, **Harrison Bader** dons the catching gear for the first time of his life (he may have caught once in Little League?).

*Bottom 9*Morrow still in there.  Bader hasn’t gotten hurt (yet).  Puig grounds to Cabrera at 2nd.  Moustakis pops up but Riddle drops the ball in foul territory for an error.  Them Morrow K’s Moose.  Adam Jones doubles.    But Rondon grounds out to end the game, the Series, and the season.

**NOTE: Every game in the World Series was won by the visiting team!**

***Rivertown wins the World Series in seven games!***

The celebration in the clubhouse looks a bit odd, as SIX Otters are either in wheelchairs on cructches!

There are several players on both teams that distinguished themselves in this series.  Edwin Jackson was great for West Penn and Adam Jones was incredible in a part time role.  For Rivertown, both Clevinger and Votto stood out.  So it was a close vote, but the World Series **MVP goes to Robinson Cano**  who did virtually nothing in the first three games but really came on after that.  For the series he hit .285/.333/.500 but he also scored three times and drove in seven runs.

**PLAYOFF SUMMARIES**

**Second Round – West Penn 4, San Antonio 3 (Played via phone, by Larry Bond and Brian Lebeck, highlights from Larry Bond)**

In an exciting 7-game series, the #3 seeded West Penn Bats pulled a major upset by defeating the #1 seeded and defending NABC champion San Antonio Spartans, managed by Larry Bond, outlasted the Rick Christainson’s #4 seeded Rivertown Otters. The series bounced around for 5 games, with the Spartans up 3 games to 2, before the San Antonio offense was held to just 1 run over the final 2 West Penn victories. Overall, the Spartans outscored the Bats, 26 to 25 and led in home runs, 9 to 6. Max Muncy (7-25, 4hr, 5r, 10rbi) and Trevor Story (8-29, 3-sb, 5r, 5rbi) led the Bats offense, while Jose LeClerc saved 3 of the 4 wins for West Penn. Tommy Pham (8-23, 3hr, 7r, 4rbi) and Xander Bogaerts (9-25, 3-2b, 3hr, 6r, 4rbi), while Charlie Blackmon drove in 6 runs. Also, Jacob deGrom tossed complete game shutouts in both of his starts allowing just 10 hits, with 23 K’s and 2 walks in 18 innings, but it wasn’t enough No carryover injuries for West Penn in the World Series.

For San Antonio manager Larry Bond, this was the 25th playoff appearance in his 40 NABC seasons with the Spartans. Larry has led the Spartans to 13 World Series and 8 championshipos, including their most recent title in 2018. Before Larry took over the franchise had played 3 years with no playoff appearances..

**Game 1: West Penn (Edwin Jackson) at San Antonio (Jacob deGrom):**

 **Final Score San Antonio 4 West Penn 0**

Jacob deGrom notched a 3-hit shutout. Spartans pecked away with single runs in the 1st, 3rd, 5th & 6th innings, on an RBI single by Charlie Blackmon, an RBI double by Alex Bregman, and solo homers by Tommy Pham & Ben Zobrist.

**Game 2: West Penn (Masahiro Tanaka) at San Antonio (Hyun-Jin Ryu):**

 **Final Score West Penn 6 San Antonio 4**

Bats roared back against Hyun-Jin Ryu, striking first with a Max Muncy 2-run HR in the 1st. A solo shot by Xander Bogaerts got one back in the bottom of the 1st. The Bats extended their lead to 5-1 on a 6th inning solo HR by Muncy and 7th inning RBIs by Scooter Gennett (single) and Trevor Story (double). The Spartans attempted an 8th inning comeback, scoring 2 on an Adam Jones fielding error and a Blackmon RBI double. The teams traded single runs in the 9th, on a Story RBI single and a Steve Pearce RBI double. Jose Leclerc was shaky but earned the save.

**Game 3: San Antonio (Justin Verlander) at West Penn (Rick Porcello):**

 **Final Score: West Penn 5 San Antonio 2**

It was Rick Porcello besting Justin Verlander in this matchup. Porcello allowed a pair of solo HR's by Bogearts, but nothing else. Muncy again came up big with a 1st inning 2-run HR. After Bogaerts briefly tied it 2-2 in the top of the 6th with his 2nd HR, Yoenix Cespedes smacked an RBI single and Javier Vazquez followed with a 2-run double. Leclerc easily nailed down the save opportunity.

**Game 4: San Antonio (Jon Lester) at West Penn (Garrett Richards):**

 **Final Score: San Antonio 9 West Penn 7**

The Spartans scored 6 in the 1st off Garrett Richards and staked Jon Lester to a 7-0 lead in the 3rd inning, but the Bats sent Lester to the showers with a 4-run 3rd that featured a Gregory Polanco 2-run HR. A 2-run shot by David Freese in the 7th made it a 9-4 game, but the Bats promptly plated 3 runs in the bottom of the inning, thanks to another Muncy bomb off RP Jese Chavez. Blake Treinen was called upon for 2 scoreless innings, and recorded the save.

**Game 5: San Antonio (deGrom) at West Penn (Jackson):**

 **Final Score: San Antonio 6 West Penn 0**

deGrom pitched his 2nd shutout of the series, while the Spartans struck early against Jackson with 3 runs in the 1st. Solo runs were added in the 3rd, 4th and 7th innings. Pham & Blackmon went deep for the Spartans.

**Game 6: West Penn (Tanaka) at San Antonio (Ryu):**

 **Final Score West Penn 2 San Antonio 1**

Spartans struck first on a 2nd inning RBI single off Tanaka by J.T. Realmuto, but as it turned out, that was to be their last run all series. Ryu cruised along until the 5th, when Mike Moustakas followed a Yasiel Puig triple with a Texas League single to tie it up. Then in the 8th, manager Lebeck called upon PH Franmil Reyes, who deposited a Ryu offering into the cheap seats. Leclerc again mowed down the Spartans for the save.

**Game 7: West Penn (Porcello) at San Antonio (Verlander):**

 **Final Score West Penn 5 San Antonio 0**

It was a disappointing end to the season for the Spartans, who flailed away meekly against the mighty Porcello. Muncy (him again....) got the Bats rolling in the 1st with an RBI single, then the Bats cemented their victory with a 4-run 4th inning barrage off of the hapless Verlander and reliever Will Smith. Jones & Galvis smacked RBI singles, then Story capped the rally with a 2-run double. It was all Porcello the rest of the way, as he conceded only 2 hits.

**PLAYOFF SUMMARIES**

**Second Round – Rivertown 4, Livonia 2 (Played via phone by Tom Kusch and Rick Christianson, highlights by Rick Christianson)**

The #5 seeded Rivertown Otters, managed by Rick Christainson defeated manager Tom Kusch’s Livonia Lynx, in 6 games again featuring all tightly played and relatively low scoing games. The Lynx twice went up a game at 1-0 and 2-1, before the Otters pitching shut down the Livonia attack in the final 3 games. Livonia outscored the Otters, 16-15 but Rivertown enjoyed a 9-4 edge in home runs. J.D. Martinez (8-21, 3hr, 4r, 4rbi), led the offensive attack for Rivertown, while Asdrubal Cabrera (5-12, 2hr) and Nelson Cruz (4-20, 2hr) added power. Wade Miley posted 2 wins with a 1.80 ERA as the Otters staff had a 2.21 ERA. Jesus Aguilar (4-16, 1hr, 4rbi) led the disappointing offensive show for Livonia, as the team had an anemic .175 batting average, while Lynx pitchers had a 2.60 team ERA. Based on earlier injury carryover, Howie Kendrick of Rivertown is not available to play in the World Series.

This was the twenty-fourth playoff appearance in 36 NABC seasons for Livonia manager Tom Kusch, and his 13th playoff in 19 years at the helm of the Livonia franchise. Mgr. Kusch has 4 World Series wins in 10 appearances with the Lynx, with their most recent championship in 2017. Mgr. Kusch also has 5 WS wins in 13 appearances, overall.

**Game 1: Rivertown (Chris Sale) at Livonia (Corey Kluber):**

 **Final Score: Livonia 4 Rivertown 1**

At Livonia (playing in a stadium that looked remarkably like old Tiger Stadium)

*Bottom 1*    Lorenzo Cain hits Chris Sale's first pitch of the night into the seats.  Jose Altuve smacks the second pitch into the gap for a double.  And Jose Ramirez lines third pitch of the game for Sale for another double scoring Altuve.  3 pitches by Sale, 3 extra base hits.  Livonia leads 2-0

*Bottom 4*An error by Jurickson Profar at first allows Ramirez to score the Lynx third run of the game.

*Top 5*Martin Maldanado (he's playing to try and somewhat neutralize Livonia's famous running game) doubles in a run.  Livonia 3, Rivertown 1

*Bottom 5*    Altuve bunts and squeeze's home Aaron Hicks.  4-1

      Both pitchers go the distance and there are no more seriouus threats.  Kluber wins this battle of the aces.

Livonia leads the series 1 game to 0

**Game 2: Rivertown (Wade Miley) at Livonia (Jameson Taillon):**

 **Final Score: Rivertown 3 Livonia 1**

*Top of 1st*A two out double by Robinson Cano scores Joey Votto and JD Martinez.  Riv leads 2-0

*Top of 4th*    JD launches one.  Otters 3, Lynx 0

*Bottom 5*Manny Machado singles in Cain to bring Livonia to within 2.

   Once again, pitching takes over.  Livonia’s bullpen is flawless, but Miley goes the distance and allows no more runs.

The series moves to Rivertown tied up at one game each.

**Game 3: Livonia (Trevor Williams) at Rivertown (Mike Clevinger):**

 **Final Score: Livonia 5 Rivertown 1**

At Rivertown (in a stadium that looks a lot like Target Field)

*Bottom 1*    Profar leads off with a triple...he tries to score on a one out grounder by JD, but Machado guns him down at the plate.  no scoring.

*Bottom 4*Teoscar Hernandez doubles, Adrian Beltre singles him home.  1-0 Riv

*Bottom 5*    No scoring but Profar is hbp.  Injured out for 4 days.

    Note: Clevinger has a no hitter going through five innings...then...

*Top*6          Mallox Smith singles to end the no-no.  And Jesus Aguilar launches a two run homer.  Livonia jumps in front 2-1

Top 7          Aguilar doubles in two (that's 4 RBI's in two innings) and scores on an error by replacement 1B Pete O'Brien.  Lynx 5, Otters 1

*Bottom 9*Hernandez doubles.  Beltre is HBP, injured out for 5! (the second HBP injury to a Riv infielder this game!).  Lynx relievers Roenis Elias, Seth Lugo, and Craig Kimbrel snuff out the rally.

Livonia leads in the series 2 games to 1

Rivertown's roster is getting limited...3 guys are now injured (Kendrick from the series vs Saginaw, and now Profar and Beltre).  The Otters now have ZERO back up options at second, short and third base.

**Game 4: Livonia (Rich Hill) at Rivertown (Zack Greinke):**

 **Final Score: Rivertown 3 Livonia 2**

The pitchers are both on to start this one.  Zero after zero go up on the board.

*Bottom 6*    Nelson Cruz breaks the ice with a solo homer  1-0 Riv

*Bottom 7*    Asdrubal Cabrera puts one in the seats. 2-0 Riv

*Top 8*Francisco Cervelli homers to put Livonia on the board.  Michael Brantley homers and ties the game.  2-2

*Bottom 8*    O'Brien doubles.  Harrison Bader comes in to PR.  Teoscar singles and Bader scores putting the Otters back in front.

*Top 9*Brandon Morrow puts the Lynx down in order.

series is now tied at two games each

**Game 5: Livonia (Kluber) at Rivertown (Sale):**

 **Final Score: Rivertown 4 Livonia 2**

A repeat of the game one battle of the aces...Kluber vs Sale

*Bottom 3*    Asdrubal Cabrera smacks another homer.  1-0 locals

*Bottom 4*JD homers,  Cruz homers.  Rivertown 3, Livonia 0

*Top 6*Altuve reaches on Cabera's error, Ramirez doubles him home.  Otters 3, Lynx 1

*Bottom 8*Votto homers.  Rivertown now has 5 hits...but four of them are solo homers!   4-1

*Top 9*Sale still in there (he has not allowed an earned run..grade 20).  Ramirez walks.  Machado doubles him home.  Brantley lines a shot, but Cano snares it and doubles Manny off second killing the potential rally.

The series moves back to Livonioa with Rivertown holding a three wins to two lead.

**Game 6: Rivertown (Miley) at Livonia (Taillon):**

 **Final Score: Rivertown 3 Livonia 2**

*Bottom 1*    Cain walks, takes 2nd on a hit and run grounder and scores on Ramirez's single.  Livonia leads 1-0

*Bottom 4*Cervelli singles, Miley walks two.  Cain grounds into a FC, but Cervelli scores.  Lynx 2, Otters 0

*Top 5*Cano singles.  JD ties the game with a two run homer.  O'Brien homers...Otters go back to back and quickly take a 3-2 lead.

    After that the bullpens take over again.

*Bottom 8*    With two outs, Brantley doubles, but Sean Doolittle K's Cervelli to end the threat.

*Bottom 9*Morrow comes in and puts the Lynx down 1-2-3.

***Rivertown wins the series four games to two and advances to the World Series!***

**PLAYOFF SUMMARIES**

**First Round – Rivertown 4, Saginaw 2 (Played via phone by Rick Christianson and John Dashner, highlights from Rick Christianson)**

The Rivertown Otters, the #5 seed, defeated the #4 seeded Saginaw Aces in very tight and low-scoring series. There were 5 1-run decisions and 1 2-run game, with 4-3 being the highest scoring game. The Aces won the first 2 games at home, but the Otters came back to notch 4 straight games to win the series. The Otters outscored the Aces just 16 to 15, overall for the 6 games. J. D. Martinez (8-23, 3-2b, 5rbi), Adrian belter (9-19, 3rbi) and substitute Pete O’Brien (6-15, 3rbi) paced the Otters offense to 14 home runs, while the Rivertown pitchers posted a 2.21 ERA. Justin Turner (5-20, 2hr, 3rbi) and Kurt Suzuki (6-15, 2rbi) were the only consistent hitters for the Aces, while Freddie Freeman added 2 solo homers, as the Saginaw pitching staff recorded a 2.36 ERA. Rivertown has a carryover injury to Howie Kendrick for 30 days from 10-9, so Kendrick will miss the remainder of the playoffs.

For manager John Dashner of Saginaw, this was the 3rd playoff appearance in his 24 years leading the Aces. John has 1 World Series appearance and 1 championship, which occurred in 2002. The Saginaw franchise now has 15 playoff appearances in 43 seasons, with 4 World Series played and 1 titles.

**Game 1: Rivertown (Chris Sale) at Saginaw (C.C. Sabathia):**

 **Final Score: Saginaw 2 Rivertown 0**

Bottom of 4th   Aaron Judge doubles.  Justin Turner grounds to Jurickson Profar who boots it, Judge scores.  Joc Pederson doubles Turner home.  Saginaw takes a 2-0 lead and that is IT for the scoring in this one.  Both pitchers throw a complete game three-hitter.  C.C.'s is a shutout!  Saginaw leads the series one game to zero.  Note: this 2-0 game will prove to be the biggest "blowout" of the series!

**Game 2: Rivertown (Wade Miley) at Saginaw (Madison Bumgarner):**

 **Final Score: Saginaw 4 Rivertown 3**

*Top of 3rd*    Nelson Cruz smacks a solo homer and Rivertown takes a 1-0 lead

*Top 4th*Adrian Beltre homers.  Otters lead 2-0

*Bottom 5th*Kurt Suzuki's two run shot ties it up.

*Bottom 6th*    Aces take the lead as Judge doubles and scores on a single by Turner.  Aces 3, Otters 2

*Bottom 8th*    Freddie Freeman homers for an insurance run.

*Top of the 9th*    Xavier Cedeno pitching...Cruz singles, Howie Kendrick singles. with two outs, Beltre singles Cruz home.  It’s a one run game, first and third two outs, Brad Peacock comes in to pitch.  The Otters have already used much of their bench...Harrison Bader pinch hits for Martin Maldanado.  Peacock strikes him out to end the threat and the game! Saginaw takes a 2 games to none series lead.

**Game 3: Saginaw (Clay Buchhoz) at Rivertown (Mike Clevinger):**

 **Final Score: Rivertown 3 Saginaw 2 (10 innings)**

Top of 2nd    Turner parks one and the Aces are ahead 1-0

Bottom 3      Profar doubles with two outs, Joey Votto singles to right, Profar beats Judge's throw to the plate.  Game is tied 1-1

Bottom 4    Buchholz beans Kendrick...Howie is done for the year (injured 30 days)!  no scoring this inning.

Bottom 6      Votto gets his third hit of the game.  J.D. Martinez doubles, Votto to third.  Cruz is intentionally walked.  Peacock comes in to pitch.  Bader K's.  One out.  Teoscar Hernandez up...grounder to short, but all they get is one and Votto scores on the fielders choice.  Otters, 2, Aces 1.

Top 7        Marcus Semien grounds to J.T. Riddle (SS 9), he throws it away!  Semien takes second.  And scores the tying run on Joe Mauer's single!  Sag 2, Riv 2

Top 8      Nico Goodrum singles, takes 2nd on a ground out.  Brandon Morrow comes in to pitch...and he gets Mauer to strikeout to end the theat.

  note: Sag uses four relievers who put zero after zero on the board.

EXTRA INNINGS

Top 10    Judge leads off with a single and takes 2nd on error by J.D.  Freeman pops out, Morrow K's Turner, Tony Sipp comes in to face Pederson...he pops out and Judge is stranded.

Bottom 10  Nick Martini come in to PH, Blaine Hardy comes in (Aces 6th pitcher of the night).  He has the Lefty vs lefty advantage...but Martini singles.  Riddle sacrifices him to 2nd.  One out.  Profar pops up, two outs.  Votto (another lefty) up...he doubles to the gap in left center and Martini comes around to score the walk off run! Saginaw leads the series 2 games to 1

**Game 4: Saginaw (Chris Bassitt) at Rivertown (J.A. Happ):**

 **Final Score: Rivertown 2 Saginaw 1**

Pitchers start out strong...no scoring through three

*Bottom 4*J.D. singles, with two outs Pete O'Brien (playing because both Cano and Kendrick are injured) doubles...Martinez rounds third...Pederson's throw...not in time!  Otters lead.  Teoscar walks.  Beltre singles over 2nd, Judge comes up throwing, but O'Brien scores.  Rivertown 2, Saginaw 0

*Top 4*Semien walks, steals second, and scores on Joe Mauer's double!  Otters 2, Aces 1

Bullpens take over...four come in for Sag, three for Riv, but the no more runs cross the plate!

Series is tied up 2 games each

**Game 5: Saginaw (Sabathis) at Rivertown (Sale):**

 **Final Score: Rivertown 4 Can-Am 3**

*Bottom 2*    Pete O'Brien homers   1-0 Riv

*Bottom 3*Votto reaches on Suzuki's error (he drops a pop up).  J.D. Martinez triples him home.  Otters lead 2-0

*Top*4       Turner homers and the Aces are on the board.

*Top 5* Suzuki singles, Goodrum singles, Semien doubles down the RF line, Suzuki scores, Goodrum heads home...Teoscar's throw...OUT!  They cut off the lead run!  Game tied 2-2

*Top 7*Sale still in.  Pederson piles into one and sends it over the RF wall!  Saginaw takes a 3-2 lead!

*Bottom 8*PH Bader walks, steals 2nd.  Cedeno comes in to try for a mulit inning save (6th pitcher for Sag tonight).  He K's Riddle to end the threat.

*Bottom 9*    Cedeno still in.  Profar K's.  Votto walks.  Martini pinch runs for him.  J.D. doubles...runers on 2nd and 3rd one out.  Nelson Cruz is walked intentionally.  Pete O'Brien up...he singles to right...Martini scores (tie game!), their waving J.D. around third...Judge's throw...OUT!  Otters tie the game but Judge guns down the potential winner!  Two down. Teoscar grounds one to second...and Goodrum boots it!  Cruz scores the winning run on a two out error! Otters take the lead in the series 3 games to 2

**Game 6: Rivertown (Miley) at Saginaw (Bumgarner):**

 **Final Score: Rivertown 4 Can-Am 3**

*Bottom of the 4th*Freeman homers and the Aces fans go nuts!

Bumgarner is steller...5 one-hit shutout innings.

*Top of the 6th*Profar singles.  J.D. launches one.  Rivertown takes the lead 2-1

*Bottom of the 7th*PH Josh Donaldson walks, is erased on a fc but Semien reaches.  With two outs, Mauer is hit by the pitch, Goodrum runs for him.  Morrow comes in to face Judge...Judge smacks a double, both runners score!  Aces take the lead 3-2!

*Top of the 8th*Molina doubles, Martini pr.  With one out Profar walks, Votto flies out.  Kyle Crick comes in to face J.D.  But Martinez doubles both runners home and the see-saw tips back to Rivertown's way!  4-3

*Bottom of 9th*    Sean Doolittle came in last inning and he stays in to try and close it out.  Jason Castro Ks.  Cesar Hernandez flies to center.  And Doolittle strikes out Semien to end the game and the series!

 Saginaw wins the first two games of the series, but the Otters carry on and eventually...

***Rivertown wins the series 4 games to 2.***

Note: after game one (2-0) Every game in the series was won by one run!

Though there were several worthy players on both sides, my vote for series MVP would be JD Martinez, who was silent early, but pretty much single-handedly won the final deciding game.

Congratulations to Dashman on an great season!  This was an incredibly fun series and John and I had several wonderful moments playing it!

**PLAYOFF SUMMARIES**

**First Round – West Penn 4, Buffalo 3 (Played via phone by Brian Lebeck and John Duke, write-up by John Duke)**

The #3 seeded West Penn Bats won the final 2 games to oust the the #6 seeded Bufalo Bison in an exciting and tightly-played 7 game series, as West Penn outscored the Bison, 35-26, overall. Yoenis Cespedes (7-21, 2hr, 8rbi), Scooter Gennett (7-28, 3hr, 6r, 5rbi) and Franmil Reyes (5-11, 2hr) led the powerful Bats attack. Garrett Richards posted 2 victories with a 0.64 ERA in 14 innings over 2 starts. David Peralta (10-28, 4hr, 6r, 9rbi) was nearly a one-man show for the Herd, while Luke Voit (3hr, 5rbi) and D.J. Lemahieu (2hr, 5rbi) added needed power along the way. Trevor Bauer won both of his starts and posted a 3.38 ERA. No new carryover injuries for West Penn, but Yasiel Puig must still sit out game 1 of the second round series.

For Buffalo manager John Duke, this was the 28th playoff appearance in his 41 NABC seasons at the helm of the Bison. Buffalo has 4 NABC titles in 8 World Series appearances under manager Duke, with the most recent title in 2012.

**Game 1: Buffalo (Trevor Bauer) at West Penn (Edwin Jackson):**

 **Final Score: Buffalo 6 Danbury 5**

The Bats jumped to a 3-0 lead in the frist frame, but the Bison shipped away and finally tied the game at 5 in the 8th, before scoring the winning run off reliever Pedro Strop in the 9th inning. Max Muncy hammered a 2-run HR in the first, then Gregory Polanco doubled and then scored on an RBI single by Yoenis Cespedes. D.J. Lemahieu hit a 2-run HR in the 3rd to bring the Herd within 1, but Polanco doubled and scored on another Cespedes RBI single in the 6th and Scooter Gennett added a solo shot in the 7th to put the Bats up, 5-2. The Bison scored 3 times in the 8th against reliever Dellin Betances, as David Peralta singled home PH Hernan Perez, who had walked, and Luke Voit smacked a 2-run home run to tie the game at 5. In the 9th, Eric Thames doubled and eventually scored on a SF by Carlos Gonzalez for the winning run.

**Game 2: Buffalo (Clayton Kershaw) at West Penn (Rick Porcello):**

 **Final Score: Buffalo 9 Danbury 5**

The Bison slammed 5 home runs off starter Rick Porcello and long reliever Ryan Borucki to win going away. Peralta and Voit hit 2 homers each good for 3 RBI each and LeMahieu added a 3-run bomb to account for all 9 Buffalo runs. Kershaw went 8.2 innings to notch the win, despite allowing a pair of 2-run home runs to Muncy and PH Cespedes.

**Game 3: West Penn (Garrett Richards) at Buffalo (Dereck Rodriguez):**

 **Final Score: West Penn 7 Buffalo 0**

The Bats turned the tables on the Bison as Richards spun a masterful 2-hit shutout with 9 K’s and just 1 walk. The Bats took the lead in the 1st on a bases loaded GIDP by Polanco, then added 3 more in the 3rd, keyed by a 2-run single from Cespedes. PH Ji-Man Choi added a 2-run homer in the 7th to complete the scoring for the bats. Scooter Gennett had 3 hits and Adam Jones contributed 2 RBI for West Penn. Mike Moustakas will miss game 4 after absorbing an HBP.

**Game 4: West Penn (Masahiro Tanaka) at Buffalo (Carlos Carrasco):**

 **Final Score: West Penn 6 Buffalo 4**

West Penn and Buffalo both hit 2 home runs in the game, but the Bats blasts came with runners on, while the Herd’s did not. The Bats took a 2-0 lead on Gennett’s 2-run HR in the 3rd, but the Bison chipped away with single tallies in the 3rd, 4th and 5th to take a 3-2 lead on Peralta’s solo shot in the 5th frame. Cespedes slammed a 2-run circuit clout in the 6th to retake the lead at 4-3 for West Penn and Trevor Story doubled home 2 more tallies in the 7th to extend the lead to 6-3. Marwin Gonzalez added a solo HR for the Bison in the 8th off RP Storp, but Jose LeClerc slammed the door in the 9th for the save.

**Game 5: West Penn (Jackson) at Buffalo (Bauer):**

 **Final Score: Buffalo 3 West Penn 1**

Bauer held the Bats to just 1 run and 3 hits, while striking out 12 and walking 1 over 8 innings before T.J. McFarland retired all 3 hitters in the 9th for the save as the Bison went up 3 games to 2 in the series. Carlos Gonzalez walked in the 1st inning, LeMahieu doubled him to 3rd and he scored on an SF by Peralta. In the 3rd frame, Peralta doubled in front of Nolan Arenado’s 2-run home run to put the Herd up 3-0. The only run for West Penn came in the 4th, as Story doubled and scored on Polanco’s RBI single.

**Game 6: Buffalo (Kershaw) at West Penn (Porcello):**

 **Final Score: West Penn 6 Buffalo 2**

Porcello help the Herd to 1 run over the first 5 innings, while his mates ran up a 4-1 lead on Kershaw. Reyes popped a solo blast in the 2nd for a 1-0 lead for the Bats. The Bison evened the score at 1 in the 2nd on Peralta’s RBI single. In the Bats 3rd, Gennett walked, then Story smacked a 2-run hiomer for a 3-1 WP lead. In the 5th, Freddy Galvis doubled and scored on an SF by Story. Gennett added a 2-run homer for the Bats in the 8th, before Thames smashed a meaningless 9th inning solo HR for the final Bison tally.

**Game 7: Buffalo (Rodriguez) at West Penn (Richards):**

 **Final Score: West Penn 5 Buffalo 2**

Richards again silenced the Bison bats, holding the Herd to 1 run over the first 5 innings, as West Penn took a 3-1 lead and costed home behind their deep bullpen. The first 3 runs for West Penn were unearned as the sloppy Bison committed 3 errors overall. In the Bats 2nd inning, Reyes singled and tried to score on a double by Cespedes. He would have been out, but Lucroy dropped the ball on the tag for an E-2. In the 3rd, Muncy reached on a Brandon Crawford E-6, then Polanco poled a 2-run HR for a 3-0 Bats lead. Perlata narrowed the margin to 3-1 with a 4th inning solo HR for the Bison, but Reyes hit a solo in the 6th to retore a 3-run margin for West Penn. Adam Jones doubled home Polanco in the 8th fro the Bats, while Buffalo’s Danile Palka cracked a solo HR in the 9th to complete the scoring.

**2020 NABC DRAFT MEETING**

 **Please don't forget to mark your calendar for Saturday, March 14th, 2020, for the annual NABC rookie draft and league meeting.**