

THE

WAVE



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WEST MICHIGAN WHITECAPS

OFFICIAL 2021 YEARBOOK



A young boy with short dark hair is smiling at the camera. He is wearing a baseball uniform that is orange and navy blue. The word "WHITECAPS" is written in blue with a white outline across the front of his orange jersey. The background is a blurred baseball field with a person in a white cap and headset visible in the distance.

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WHITECAPS BASEBALL

BETTER THAN YOU REMEMBER

FEATURE

A R T Í C U L O

WELCOME TO LMCU BALLPARK!

PÁGINA 6 | PAGE 6

*New year,
new partnership!
Welcome to LMCU Ballpark!*

A YEAR WITHOUT BASEBALL

PÁGINA 10 | PAGE 10

*After 622 days,
fans return to baseball*

WHITECAPS GET CALLED UP!

PÁGINA 57 | PAGE 57

*With the reorganization of MiLB,
the Whitecaps move to High-A*

PÁGINA 20 | PAGE 20: Whitecaps new manager **Brayan Peña** | PÁGINA 45 | PAGE 45: **Copa de la Diversión**

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OFFICIAL 2021 YEARBOOK

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WEST MICHIGAN WHITECAPS 2021 SCHEDULE



MAY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
		FW	FW	FW	FW	FW
9	10	11 GL 6:35	12 GL 6:35	13 GL 6:35	14 GL 6:35	15 GL 6:35
16 GL 2:00	17	18 WIS	19 WIS	20 WIS	21 WIS	22
23	24	25 LC 6:35	26 LC 6:35	27 LC 6:35	28 LC 6:35	29 LC 6:35
30 LC 2:00	31					

JUNE

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
		1 GL	2 GL	3 GL	4 GL	5 GL
6 GL	7	8 LAN 7:05	9 LAN 7:05	10 LAN 7:05	11 LAN 7:05	12 LAN 7:05
13 LAN 2:00	14	15 LC	16 LC	17 LC	18 LC	19 LC
20	21	22 DAY 7:05	23 DAY 7:05	24 DAY 7:05	25 DAY 7:05	26 DAY 7:05
27 DAY 2:00	28	29 PEO	30 PEO			

JULY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
				1 PEO	2 PEO	3 PEO
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PEO		DAY	DAY	DAY	DAY	DAY
11	12	13 FW 7:05	14 FW 7:05	15 FW 7:05	16 FW 7:05	17 FW 7:05
18 FW 6:00	19	20 LAN 7:05	21 LAN 12:05	22 LAN 7:05	23 LAN 7:05	24 LAN 7:05
25 LAN 6:00	26	27 GL	28 GL	29 GL	30 GL	31 GL

AUGUST

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
1 GL	2	3 DAY 7:05	4 DAY 7:05	5 DAY 7:05	6 DAY 7:05	7 DAY 7:05
8 DAY 2:00	9	10 LC	11 LC	12 LC	13 LC	14 LC
15	16	17 FW 7:05	18 FW 7:05	19 FW 7:05	20 FW 7:05	21 FW 7:05
22 FW 2:00	23	24 LAN	25 LAN	26 LAN	27 LAN	28 LAN
29	30	31 PEO 7:05				

SEPTEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
			1 PEO 7:05	2 PEO 7:05	3 PEO 7:05	4 PEO 7:05
5 PEO 6:00	6	7 GL 7:05	8 GL 7:05	9 GL 7:05	10 GL 7:05	11 GL 7:05
12 GL 2:00	13	14 LAN	15 LAN	16 LAN	17 LAN	18 LAN
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
LAN						
26	27	28	29	30		

HIGH-A CENTRAL LEAGUE

BEL	Beloit Snappers (Marlins)
CR	Cedar Rapids Kernels (Twins)
DAY	Dayton Dragons (Reds)
FW	Fort Wayne TinCaps (Padres)
GL	Great Lakes Loons (Dodgers)
LAN	Lansing Lugnuts (A's)
LC	Lake County Captains (Indians)
PEO	Peoria Chiefs (Cardinals)
QC	Quad Cities River Bandits (Royals)
SB	South Bend Cubs (Cubs)
WIS	Wisconsin Timber Rattlers (Brewers)



HOME AWAY



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A MESSAGE FROM WHITECAPS CEO JOE CHAMBERLIN

WELCOME BACK TO BASEBALL, WHITECAPS FANS!

As the 2021 Whitecaps season gets underway it has now been more than 20 months since we have heard those two magical words, “play ball,” echo through the stadium. As we all continue to manage through the pandemic, our organization could not be more excited to help our West Michigan community begin getting back to normal as the summer progresses. A lot has happened around the ballpark since we last welcomed fans through the gates for a Whitecaps game and we know the 2021 season of Whitecaps baseball will be better than you remember!

In December 2020, the Detroit Tigers promoted the Whitecaps to be their High-A affiliate. That means more experienced ballplayers and more exciting baseball, more top prospects, and the reality that all Whitecaps players are now one step closer to their dream of playing down the road at Comerica Park. This change is going to be fun to watch!

Welcome back also takes on a whole new meaning in 2021 as we welcome fans to LMCU Ballpark for the first season of a historic naming rights partnership with Lake Michigan Credit Union. We are enjoying this new truly local partnership and you are going to enjoy what the new relationship brings to you, the fan. A new look and feel around the park, wonderful benefits for our fans and their members, and two homegrown organizations partnering to improve our community.

Perhaps most importantly, I want to welcome our fans back to the Whitecaps brand of fun, community, experiences. Welcome back to our unique and delicious ballpark food, the sounds of baseball and laughter, that look of awe when a young fan walks through the gate for the first time, the action of the game, enjoying group outings with friends and family, the ooohs and ahhhhs, the beauty of the field, the music, the long-time familiar voice of our master of ceremonies, Bob Wells, and of course, welcome back to the FUN.

As you hopefully heard, or saw on WhitecapsBaseball.com, we are taking seriously the COVID-19 health and safety recommendations from state and local agencies, and from MLB. You likely saw the signs on the way into the ballpark, heard the announcements, and spoke with other fans about the changes. The Whitecaps believe in providing safe and socially-distanced fun for all our fans to enjoy. Fan safety is a top priority for our organization this summer and we ask that while at the ballpark you do your part to help us run our business safely so all fans can enjoy every fantastic inning of Whitecaps baseball.

Finally, I would like to say Thank You to West Michigan for your support over the last year. **You have encouraged our organization to stay strong, to keep working toward a new season, and to save you a seat knowing you would be back. Thank you, you truly are the best fans in baseball.**

WELCOME TO LMCU BALLPARK! LET'S PLAY BALL!



JOE CHAMBERLIN
CEO
West Michigan Whitecaps



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WELCOME TO



Written by Michael Zuldema

After more than 26 seasons, 3,400 games and 10.5 million fans, there's no question that the West Michigan Whitecaps are firmly established as a pillar of the greater West Michigan community.

With more than 50 locations, 1,400 employees and 480,000 members, the same could be said about Lake Michigan Credit Union.

So, it only made sense for the two organizations to agree to a 10-year partnership this past offseason and bring a whole new ballgame this summer to the Whitecaps' newly named stadium, LMCU Ballpark.

"There are a lot of people here in West Michigan that are going to

benefit from these two organizations joining forces," Whitecaps President Steve McCarthy said. "It's only going to grow from here and add value to the entertainment offerings we have."

It's not the first time the ballpark has undergone a name change. The stadium debuted as Old Kent Park in 1994 and remained that way until 2000, when it was renamed Fifth Third Ballpark. And it remained that name for another 20 years until the Whitecaps and Fifth Third Bank decided to amicably part ways at the end of their most-recent sponsorship term.

In stepped LMCU, the largest credit union in Michigan, which previously had expressed an interest in growing its partnership with the Whitecaps.

"Fifth Third was a wonderful partner, the timing just aligned" McCarthy said. "This partnership is going to springboard us to being in a good place as we work with LMCU and get the two teams working together on new promotions and ideas that will continue to make it fun for fans to come out to the ballpark."

The partnership is an extension of LMCU's focus on community involvement and support, which has been part of the organization's culture since it was founded in 1933. LMCU participates in hundreds of volunteer opportunities annually, and teaming up with the Whitecaps is another way to increase its community support.

In a statement, LMCU President



and CEO Sandra Jelinski said she is thrilled to have two well-known and well-respected organizations partner up in West Michigan.

“The positive impact the Whitecaps have on our community is something that I have admired for the last 27 years, certainly from a business perspective but also as a longstanding member of the community,” Jelinski said. “We value the ongoing success of the Whitecaps as a premier entertainment and community-focused organization and are exceptionally pleased to partner with them for all of their banking needs. From one homegrown organization to another, we see this as a perfect fit for both of our teams, and we are excited about the future opportunities this partnership holds.”

“We were incredibly excited to cement this partnership,” Whitecaps CEO Joe Chamberlin said. “It took a lot of work, but the naming rights continue the momentum we enjoyed this past off-season and will help carry us through 2021.”

The Whitecaps’ front office staff has spent months working hard to update all of their marketing materials, including business cards, advertisements, souvenirs, social media content and, of course, the giant sign thousands of commuters see on a daily basis near Exit 91 on U.S. 131.

It may take fans a little while to get used to the stadium’s name change, but McCarthy is confident that fans will make the adjustment quickly.

Especially as LMCU Ballpark continues to host hundreds of events annually, including baseball games, concerts, outdoor festivals, high school and college sports, fundraisers, corporate outings, weddings and more.

“Publicly, it’s the name on a facility. But it also becomes an association with experiences,” McCarthy said. “When you go to a baseball game or a concert or have a company picnic, what comes to mind is a location. When you think of the ballpark, that’s your destination.

“LMCU is a community-focused organization. They believe in what the Whitecaps do, and we want to partner with them for years to come. We are going to make this a true community partnership.”



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WEST MICHIGAN H O M E 2020 S C H E D U L E

THE YEAR WITHOUT BASEBALL...

By Michael Zuidema

West Michigan Whitecaps Vice President and General Manager Jim Jarecki has planned his summer schedules for decades using nothing more than a small, fold-up 3x3 pocket calendar. He knew when the Whitecaps would play at home, when they would be on the road, what time they would play, and even when he could enjoy a rare day off.

But he had an idea that might need to change on March 11, 2020. Jarecki, who has been with the Whitecaps since their 1994 debut, was enjoying dinner at HopCat with his wife, Christine, and son, Carson, when they noticed a scroll on ESPN announcing that the NBA had suspended their season due to coronavirus concerns. Other sports, like college basketball, the NHL, and PGA, would do the same.

The Whitecaps were less than a month away from their scheduled season-opening date on April 9 with the

Lansing Lugnuts, but Jarecki and the rest of this staff continued preparing for the season opener with cautious optimism.

Of course, no one knew then exactly how massive and wide ranging the impacts of COVID-19 would be on everyone's lives.

"Nobody had answers, nobody knew what to say. It was such an unknown at that point," Jarecki said. "Maybe it will be a couple weeks, maybe a month or so. Then, as it started adding up, we knew it wasn't good.

"I'll be honest, when they said that on April 1 we're not going to have Opening Day, that's when we knew there was trouble."

As the days continued to pass, the Whitecaps held out hope that they would be able to play baseball at some point

in 2020. Jarecki did his best to remain transparent with the staff working remotely, keeping everyone informed during meetings held via Zoom and Microsoft Teams, and communicating regularly with the parent club Detroit Tigers. But it was difficult to answer questions because no one seemed to have any clear answers.

"We were very fortunate; we have a very strong staff. There were a lot of positive attitudes right from the get-go," Jarecki said. "People got frustrated because we weren't able to deliver on what we do best. But I give credit for the staff on how they handled themselves. There was no playbook for this. This was truly the unknown."

One answer finally came on June 30, when Major League Baseball announced that teams would not be providing players to minor league affiliates, effectively cancelling the entire 2020 season.

APRIL

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MAY

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31						

JUNE

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28	29	30				

JULY

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19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

SEPTEMBER

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THU	FRI	SAT

“These are unprecedented times for our country and our organization as this is the first time in our history that we’ve had a summer without Minor League Baseball played,” Minor League Baseball President and CEO Pat O’Conner said in a statement at the time.

For the Jarecki family, it was especially disappointing. Carson had planned spend the summer working on the grounds crew, joining his dad and his siblings, Addison and Alex, at the ballpark.

To top it all off, Jarecki later did some research and discovered that the Whitecaps would have had only one rainout all season. After 27 years, it was difficult to process all the emotions.

“It’s the experiences you miss. You miss the sounds of music playing in the ballpark, the opening of the gates, the fans rushing in,” Jarecki said. “You miss seeing people leaving on a Saturday night feeling good and knowing you had a hand in those experiences.”

It would have been easy for the Whitecaps to let their disappointment carry through the entire summer. Instead, they started brainstorming ideas for how they could use the ballpark to host events that could provide an escape and a sense of normalcy during an uncertain time. The Whitecaps have long hosted a variety of outdoor events, from concerts and festivals to weddings and picnics, but the pandemic forced the organization to put in a little extra work.

The Whitecaps contacted the Kent County Health Department in an effort to keep everyone as safe as possible. Then, in late July, the team started hosting family movie nights with a variety of safety measures put in place. The Whitecaps enforced strict social distancing guidelines and mask requirements. Capacity was limited to only 8 percent. Food transactions went cashless. Temperature checks were conducted prior to entry.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 12)



Empty stands but a full field for Moovies From The Mound in 2020

They also regularly interacted with fans via social media and hosted virtual fundraising events. They talked with other teams to find new ideas. Anything to maintain their connection with the West Michigan community.

“What I’ll remember is working with the staff to continually reinvent what we were doing,” Whitecaps President Steve McCarthy said. “Movie nights, small picnics, ways to have activities in whatever form or fashion we could. It was unusual because we’re used to inviting half a million people into our home each summer and that was the one thing we couldn’t do.”

“I’m incredibly proud of this organization and team of people,” Whitecaps CEO Joe Chamberlin said. “There aren’t a lot of clubs that have the

staff that we have, who would have been able to pull through the way that we did.”

Through it all, though, the organization was eager to host baseball games again.

Finally, in early January 2021, Major League Baseball informed all Double A and Class A affiliates that the 2021 season would be delayed, but it was being planned. On Feb. 18, MLB announced Class A teams would play a 120-game schedule starting in May.

At that point, more than 600 days had passed since the Whitecaps last played in front of their home fans, a 1-0 loss to the TinCaps, way back on Tuesday, August 27, 2019.

No matter how the 2021 season

ultimately plays out, everyone in the Whitecaps organization is going to appreciate spending time once again at LMCU Ballpark.

“The ballpark has always been one of those places people come to have fun. I don’t know anybody who has come to the ballpark and didn’t leave happy. Whether it’s the grandpa bringing a grandson to their first game, or businesses getting together for an outing, you know it’s a fun place to be. That’s what we we’re going to bring back.”

“I think coming out of last year, we feel confident about our ability to get through just about anything,” Chamberlin said. “In a weird way, it’s a confidence booster. But it’s not one I would recommend anyone going through again.”



Top Left: CEO Joe Chamberlin announces the cancellation of the 2020 season
Top & Bottom Right: Whitecaps staff members practice new health and safety guidelines during Moovies From The Mound
Bottom Left: Whitecaps staff meets regularly via video conference to make sure we are READY for when baseball returns!



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Losing a child is heartbreaking...

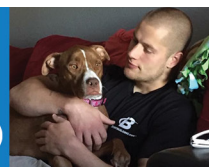
On January 7, 2016, we lost our 25-year-old son Jamie Lee Scranton. He was a beautiful young man with his whole life ahead of him. Jamie had a smile that could light up a room, and he gave the greatest hugs in the world. He loved to spend time at his grandparent's home, sharing childhood memories and stories with the whole family. Jamie was his father (Kirk's) buddy and companion for so many amazing life adventures and events. When they were together, their love for one another filled the room. The jokes they shared were funny for others before the punchline, as their infectious laughter spread to all those in their presence. Kirk was Jamie's idol, and Jamie was his shining star.

Losing a child is heartbreaking, and the pain is unimaginable. The facts state that suicides are not rational, and questions will remain unanswered for a lifetime. When a parent loses a child to suicide, they are forced to move forward on their life's journey with heaviness in their hearts and a hole that will never be filled.

As parents of a tragic suicide and the loss of our son, we are vowing to talk, walk, run and protest to bring community awareness and push for mental health resources to be more readily available to those in need. We want open discussions and conversations using "Jamie's Voice," to bring awareness to mental illness, depression, addictions, and suicide. Our goal is to help prevent lives from ending tragically; and to bring a voice of hope to those who suffer in silence.

Jamie's Parents,
Kirk and Patti

If you or someone you know is struggling with mental illness, depression, addiction, or thinking about suicide, please reach out to i understand, love heals @ iunderstandloveheals.org, Mental Health Foundation of West Michigan at benice.org, or call Suicide Prevention Hotline @ [1.800.273.8255](tel:18002738255)



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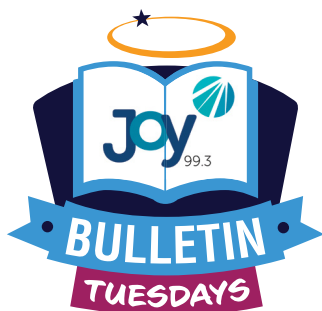


WEST MICHIGAN WHITECAPS

WEEKLY PROMOTIONS

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Get half-off a box or reserved seats when you show a worship or community bulletin at the box office.* *Limit 8 tickets per bulletin.*



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*IN 2021, five Whitecaps players will be hitting for non-profit organizations.
Throughout the season, every hit from these players will result in
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BRAYAN PEÑA

MANAGER

In November 2019, former Detroit Tigers catcher Brayan Peña was named the 14th manager in West Michigan Whitecaps history. The 38-year old will look to return the club to the playoffs after missing the Midwest League postseason for the first time in six seasons last year. Peña arrives in West Michigan to lead the team beginning in 2021 after managing the short-season 2019 Connecticut Tigers of the New York-Penn League. In 2018, Peña made his managerial debut as the skipper of the Gulf Coast League Tigers-West team and led the club to Detroit's first-ever GCL Championship. Peña replaces Lance Parrish, who spent two seasons as Whitecaps manager before being reassigned as a Special Assistant to Tigers Executive Vice President, Baseball Operations and General Manager Al Avila.

The native of Havana, Cuba, played for five different Major League teams and was part of the 2013 Tigers Central Division Championship roster. Peña broke into the big leagues in 2005 as a member of the Atlanta Braves before joining the Kansas City Royals for four seasons before his Tigers arrival. Peña's 2013 season in Detroit was punctuated by a .297 batting average – the highest in his Major League career while playing in 71 games as the backup to former Tigers and Whitecaps catcher Alex Avila. In his final game as a Tiger, Peña took over for an injured Avila in Game 5 of the American League Championship Series against the Boston Red Sox, going 1-for-3 with an RBI-single. After leaving Detroit, Peña spent the next two seasons as the primary catcher with the Cincinnati Reds in 2014 and 2015 before playing his final big-league season with the St. Louis Cardinals in 2016.

Upon the start of the 2018 season, Peña returned to the Tigers as a Minor League free agent but quickly transitioned into a role in coaching. Later that summer, he was named the manager of the Tigers West Gulf Coast League squad.

Peña currently resides in Miami, Florida during the off-season with his wife, Lina and their children Brayan Jr., Javy, and Isabella.



WILLIE BLAIR

PITCHING COACH

Former Tigers pitcher and 12-year MLB veteran Willie Blair returns for his second season as pitching coach. He previously spent three seasons in the same role for Detroit's Double-A Erie affiliate – two of which he served under former Whitecaps manager Lance Parrish. Blair arrived with Midwest League ties, having made a start with West Michigan during a Major League rehab assignment back in 1997, and serving as pitching coach for the Fort Wayne TinCaps for two seasons in 2011 and 2012. His 1997 season saw him achieve a career-best 16–8 record and an earned run average (ERA) of 4.17. In 1999, Blair was the starting pitcher for the final Opening Day in Tiger Stadium history, where he threw eight shutout innings of three-hit baseball.

The native of Paintsville, KY, went to the postseason in 1996 as a member of the San Diego Padres, throwing two innings in relief during the National League Division Series against the St. Louis Cardinals.

Resides in Richmond, KY in the off-season with his wife Trina, daughter Paige and sons Taylor and Jaxson

2021 WEST MICHIGAN WHITECAPS

COACHING STAFF



BILL SPRINGMAN

HITTING COACH

Springman returns for his fourth year in the Tigers organization, serving as the hitting coach at High-A West Michigan in 2021. If not for the COVID-19 pandemic, he would have held the same role with Single A Lakeland in 2020, following his time as hitting coach at Short-Season Connecticut in 2019.

In 2018, he served as the hitting coach for the Gulf Coast League Tigers West, after spending 2017 as the hitting coach for the Uni-Lions of the Chinese Professional Baseball League. Prior to coaching in the Chinese Professional Baseball League, he spent the 2015 season as an advisor to player development and senior hitting advisor for the Kansas City Royals. He previously spent 14 seasons in the Minnesota Twins organization serving in various including as a Minor League hitting coordinator and mental skills coach (2006-14), Triple A coach (2005) and Triple A Salt Lake hitting coach (1997-2000). Springman also served as a scout for the Chicago Cubs (1995-96) and Milwaukee Brewers (2001-02). Originally drafted by the California Angels in the seventh round of the 1978 draft, the former infielder played three seasons in the Angels Minor League system.



KEVIN GUTHRIE

DEVELOPMENTAL COACH

Brown University graduate Kevin Guthrie joins the Whitecaps for his first season in 2020 and first in the Tigers system after two years in Minor League Operations for the Pittsburgh Pirates. The Ivy-leaguer spent his collegiate days at Brown University, playing in 91 career games. As a two-way player, the native of Sarasota, Florida, posted a .309 on-base percentage as a first baseman while pitching in 25 contests. He also serves as a Director for Diamond Diagnostics Baseball - a company that offers hitting and pitching lessons integrating advanced, professional technologies.

Guthrie's father is longtime Major Leaguer Mark Guthrie, who pitched parts of 15 seasons for eight MLB teams, including the 1991 World Series Champion Minnesota Twins. Kevin's brother Dalton played college baseball for the University of Florida and became a sixth-round selection of the 2017 MLB Draft by the Philadelphia Phillies.

ADDITIONAL STAFF

- Athletic TrainerCody Derby
- Strength and Conditioning CoachRyan Maedel
- Baseball Information Assistant / Trackman Operator Miles Semetis and Sam Nalli

BRAYAN PEÑA

TAKE NOTHING FOR GRANTED



BRAYAN PEÑA

TAKE NOTHING FOR GRANTED

By Michael Zuidema

Brayan Peña has no problem climbing out of bed when his alarm goes off at 5:30 a.m. each morning.

Not because he's healthy, happy and has a beautiful family. Not just because he was lucky enough to parlay a 12-year Major League Baseball career into a nascent coaching career that now includes his first season as manager of the West Michigan Whitecaps. It's because he knows just how far he's come – and how far he still wants to go.

And if he can help a few young ballplayers realize their own dreams, even better.

"I wake up every single day telling myself, 'Take nothing for granted,'" he said. "After everything that I went through and everything that is going on now, you can't take anything for granted."

In baseball circles, Peña's story is well known. In a first-person column published online by The Players Tribune in 2016, Peña described in detail how he defected to the United States in 1999 as a 16-year-old playing for the

Cuban national team. With nothing but the clothes on his back during a tournament in Venezuela, he climbed out an open window in a hotel bathroom – a security guard was waiting for him right outside the door – and sprinted to a waiting car, where a friend helped ferry him to Costa Rica.

He had no money and no passport. No one in his family had any clue he was leaving. What he had, though, is what he called his "window of opportunity."

"It was my dream to play in the big leagues, but it wasn't like I was some big star and had an MLB team waiting to sign me to a million dollar contract. I was just a chubby 16-year-old catcher from Havana who was a pretty decent ballplayer," he wrote. "If I got caught trying to defect, the consequences would be devastating."

Fortunately, he made it safely to Costa Rica and quickly was signed by the Atlanta Braves as an amateur free agent in 2000. He debuted in the

majors in 2005 and went on to spend time with the Kansas City Royals, Detroit Tigers, Cincinnati Reds, St. Louis Cardinals. While his career numbers may appear modest – 468 hits, 164 RBIs, .259 average – his value as a backup catcher and role player was undeniable.

"I was a grinder. A grinder with all capital letters: GRINDER," Peña said. "I went out there and gave it my all, 100 percent. The good and bad moments, I enjoyed every single one of them. I respected the jersey I was wearing and, most important, I showed that anything is possible."

"I believe in the American Dream because I'm one of those guys. I came from Cuba, I didn't have anything and America gave me an opportunity to be a citizen, which has been one of the



(Continued on page 23)



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most important things in my life. It's something I'm very proud and honored to be part of."

The 2013 season Peña spent with the Tigers arguably was the best of his career, with a career high .297 batting average and .713 OPS. It also marked his lone postseason appearance, and he was honored to play alongside stars like Miguel Cabrera, Torii Hunter, Victor Martinez, Max Scherzer and Justin Verlander during the Tigers' run to the American League Championship Series.

"It was a blessing to be a part of that team," Peña said. "We came up short, but we enjoyed each other, we respected each other, we learned a lot from each other and that's what it's all about."

Following the 2017 season, the Tigers signed Peña to a minor league contract with an invitation to spring training. He was released on June 11, 2018 and announced his retirement one week later. He wasn't idle for long, though, as he immediately stepped into a managerial position with one of the Tigers' two Gulf Coast League teams. That summer, Peña led his team to a 37-16 record and its first-ever league championship.

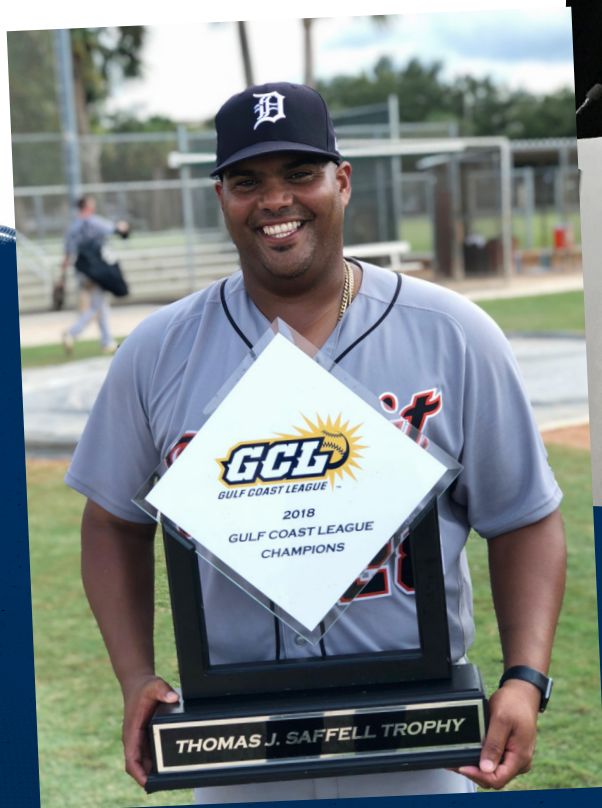
Then, in November, the Whitecaps announced that the 38-year-old would be the team's 14th manager in franchise history, replacing Tigers legend Lance Parrish, who had been reassigned as a special assistant to Detroit General Manager Al Avila.

Peña paid his first extended visit to West Michigan this past January as part of the Tigers' Winter Caravan, but he said the Whitecaps' reputation as a prominent minor league franchise preceded that trip.

"It's very famous because they treat everybody like big leaguers. That's their motto," Peña said. "Everybody was always talking about that. 'The fans will treat you like a big leaguer, the front office treats you like a big leaguer, the press, everybody.'"

Now Peña is focused on carrying on the winning tradition of the Whitecaps, who have won six Midwest League

(Continued on page 25)



Left: Brayan Peña holds the 2018 Gulf Coast League Championship Trophy after leading the team to their first-ever league championship.

Above: Whitecaps On-Field Host Bob Wells and Vice President and General Manager Jim Jarecki present new Whitecaps Manager Brayan Peña with a custom Whitecaps jersey and hat at the Winter Banquet in January of 2020.

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championships in franchise history and have served as a steady pipeline to the majors in Detroit. To help him, Peña will rely on the lessons he learned playing for legendary managers that have won World Series titles: Jim Leyland, Bobby Cox and Ned Yost.

“My goal is always to put our players in position to be successful. With that being said, I understand that this is a very tough game,” Peña said. “I want to give them everything that I know, all my experiences, everything that I learned along the way from great managers.

“I love players who hustle hard. I love the players who go out there and represent not just themselves, but represent our organization and what the Detroit Tigers are all about. I’m a very aggressive manager. I love to handle the bullpen in the right way because I believe that you need to know how to handle your pitching staff to be in position to win close games.”

Peña can relate to the experience of his players since he went through the

same situations as a young catcher. Even though his playing days aren’t that far in the past, Peña isn’t dwelling on the end of his career or longing for one last at-bat at Comerica Park. He wants to help new players feel grateful and appreciative for every day spent at the ballpark.

“Honestly, I’m great with my decision. What I mean by that, is the day that I decided to put my spikes to the side and I left my gear in my garage, that’s something I have no regrets about,” he said. “It was time for me to continue my baseball career, but on a different path. I always knew I wanted to be a manager one day, I always knew that I wanted to pass along everything I learned along the way and give back to the game. Every single moment, every single opportunity on the field, I gave it my all. But I don’t miss it at all. I was very happy, very humbled, to accept this assignment.”

Peña’s story of risking it all and overcoming the odds to become both an American citizen and Major League

ballplayer isn’t lost on the current generation. He said that whether rookies are drafted out of high school or college or signed as free agents from countries such as Dominican Republic or Venezuela they are immediately researching their new coaching staff. Along the way, they are bound to learn about the inspirational path Peña took to West Michigan.

“And that’s OK. That’s creating that relationship and that’s what we want as an organization,” he said. “Remember, we’re not just coaches. We are friends, brothers, fathers, sometimes financial advisors, sometimes we are psychologists. We are the closest thing our players have to a family. A lot of them are far away from home and that’s a lot of responsibility, making sure they trust you and they believe in you.

“I was blessed to be able to play at the highest level for so many years. Now, I have an opportunity to give back to the game.”



“I was blessed to be able to play at the highest level for so many years. Now, I have an opportunity to give back to the game.”

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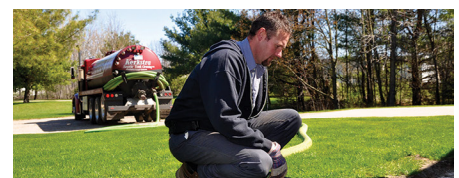
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THE ROAD TO DETROIT

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Complex League (R) (Two Teams)

Manager: Gary Cathcart / Ryan Minor
Hitting Coach: Rafael Gil / Tim Garland
Pitching Coach: Santiago Garrido / Mike Alvarez
2125 N. LAKE ST. LAKELAND, FL 33805



LAKELAND FLYING TIGERS

Low-A Southeast

lakelandflyingtigers.com

Manager: Andrew Graham
Hitting Coach: John Murrian
Pitching Coach: Carlos Bohorquez
2125 N. LAKE ST. LAKELAND, FL 33805



WEST MICHIGAN WHITECAPS

High-A Central

whitecapsbaseball.com

Manager: Brayan Pena
Hitting Coach: Bill Springman
Pitching Coach: Willie Blair
4500 WEST RIVER DR. COMSTOCK PARK, MI 49321



ERIE SEAWOLVES

Double-A Northeast

seawolves.com

Manager: Arnie Beyeler
Hitting Coach: Adam Melhuse
Pitching Coach: Mark Johnson
110 E. 10TH ST. ERIE, PA 16501



TOLEDO MUD HENS

Triple-A East

mudhens.com

Manager: Tom Prince
Hitting Coach: Mike Hessman
Pitching Coach: Doug Bochtler
406 WASHINGTON ST. TOLEDO, OH 43604



DETROIT TIGERS

American League (MLB)

tigers.com

Manager: AJ Hinch
Hitting Coach: Scott Coolbaugh
Pitching Coach: Chris Fetter
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DETROIT TIGERS TOP TEN PROSPECTS



Indicates a former West Michigan Whitecaps Player

Information provided by
minorleagueball.com

1.

**SPENCER
TORKELSON**

3B

DOB: 8/26/1999 **HT:** 6'1" **WT:** 220 **DRAFTED:** RD 1 (2020)
SCHOOL: Arizona State University **THROWS:** R **BATS:** R

2.

**RILEY
GREENE**



OF

DOB: 1/28/1998 **HT:** 6'3" **WT:** 200 **DRAFTED:** RD 1 (2019)
SCHOOL: Paul J. Hagerty H.S. (FL) **THROWS:** R **BATS:** L

3.

**MATT
MANNING**



RHP

DOB: 1/28/1998 **HT:** 6'6" **WT:** 190 **DRAFTED:** RD 1 (2016)
SCHOOL: Sheldon H.S. (CA) **THROWS:** R **BATS:** R

4.

**DILLON
DINGLER**

C

DOB: 9/17/1998 **HT:** 6'3" **WT:** 210 **DRAFTED:** RD 2 (2020)
SCHOOL: Ohio State University **THROWS:** R **BATS:** R

5.



JOEY WENTZ  **LHP**

DOB: 10/6/1997 **HT:** 6'5" **WT:** 220 **DRAFTED:** RD 1 ATL (2016)
SCHOOL: Shawnee Mission East H.S. (KS) **THROWS:** L **BATS:** L

6.



ALEX FAEDO  **RHP**

DOB: 11/12/1995 **HT:** 6'5" **WT:** 225 **DRAFTED:** RD 1 (2017)
SCHOOL: University of Florida **THROWS:** R **BATS:** R

7.



PARKER MEADOWS  **OF**

DOB: 11/02/1999 **HT:** 6'5" **WT:** 185 **DRAFTED:** RD 2 (2018)
SCHOOL: Grayson High School (GA) **THROWS:** R **BATS:** L

8.



DANIEL CABRERA  **OF**

DOB: 9/5/1998 **HT:** 6'1" **WT:** 196 **DRAFTED:** RD 2 (2020)
SCHOOL: LSU **THROWS:** L **BATS:** L

9.



FRANKLIN PEREZ  **RHP**

DOB: 12/06/1997 **HT:** 6'3" **WT:** 197 **DRAFTED:** HOU (2014)
THROWS: R **BATS:** R

10.



BRYANT PACKARD  **OF**

DOB: 10/6/1997 **HT:** 6'3" **WT:** 200 **DRAFTED:** RD 5 (2019)
SCHOOL: Sheldon H.S. (CA) **THROWS:** R **BATS:** L

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- No throwing of objects or jumping off equipment
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- No food or drink allowed on the playground equipment
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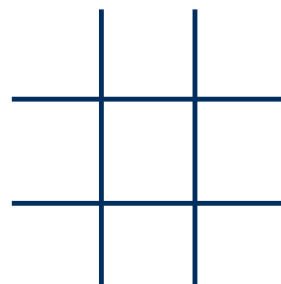
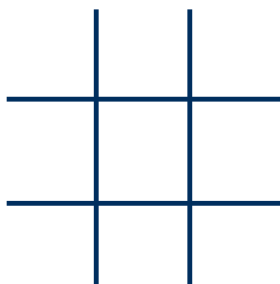
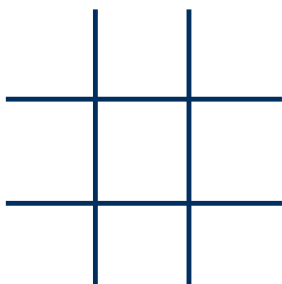
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FIND THESE WORDS IN THE WORD SEARCH!

(Hint: Some words are backward!)

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BASEBALL	BAT
DIVE	STRIKE
SLIDE	BUNT
STEAL	GLOVE
HOME RUN	FOUL
TRIPLE	CATCH
DOUBLE	

TIC-TAC-TOE



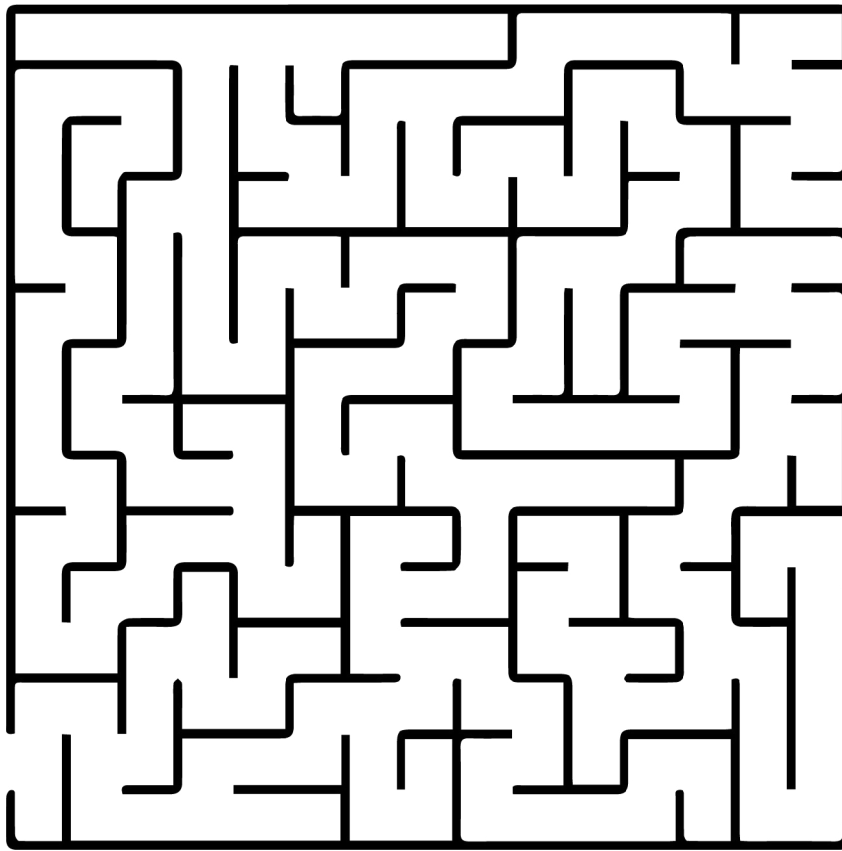
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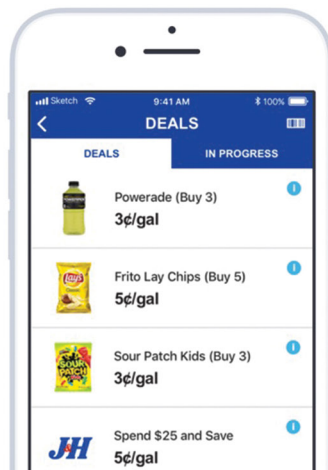
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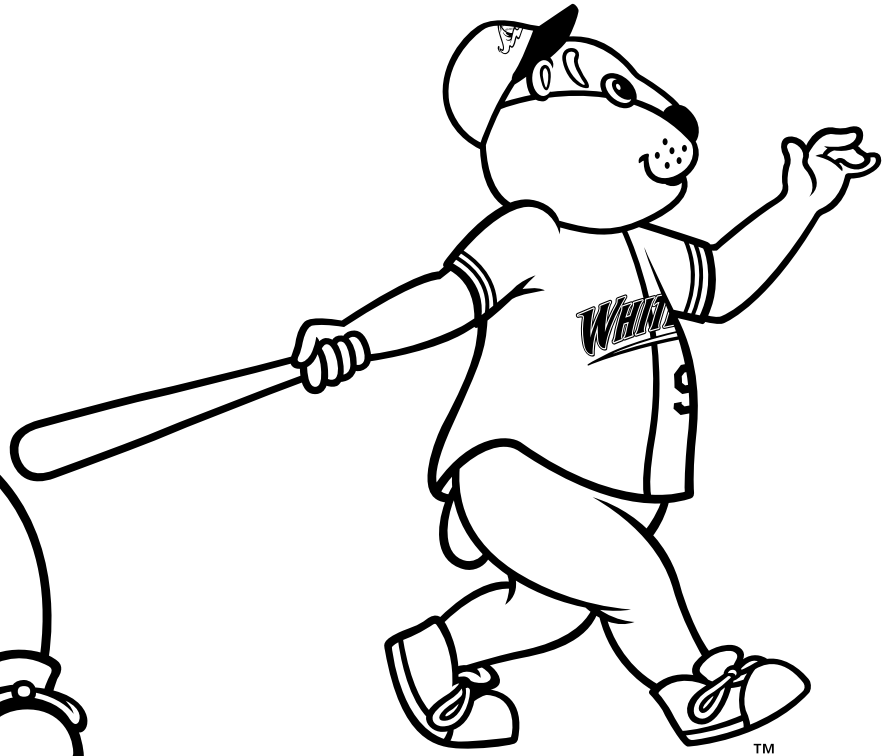
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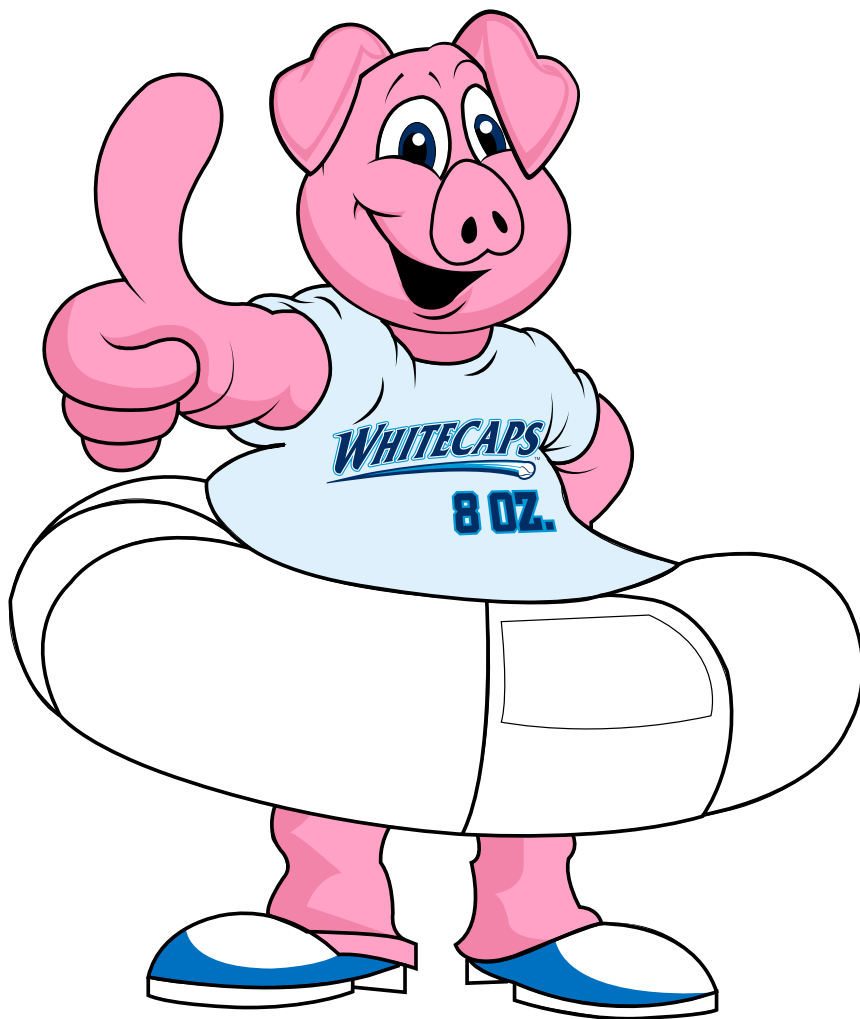
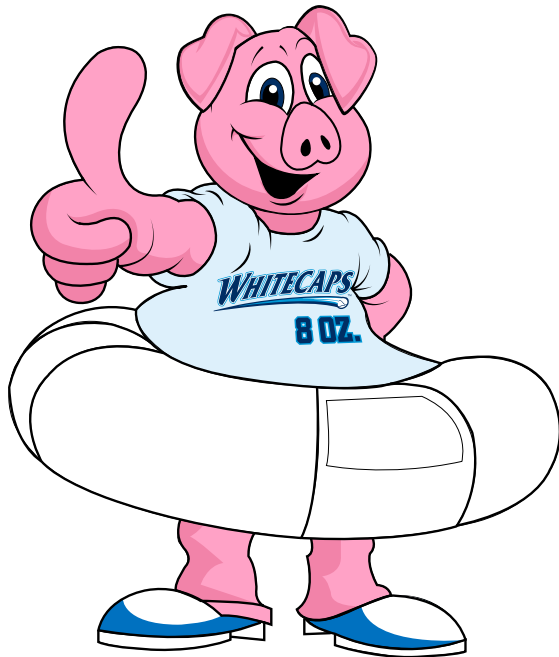
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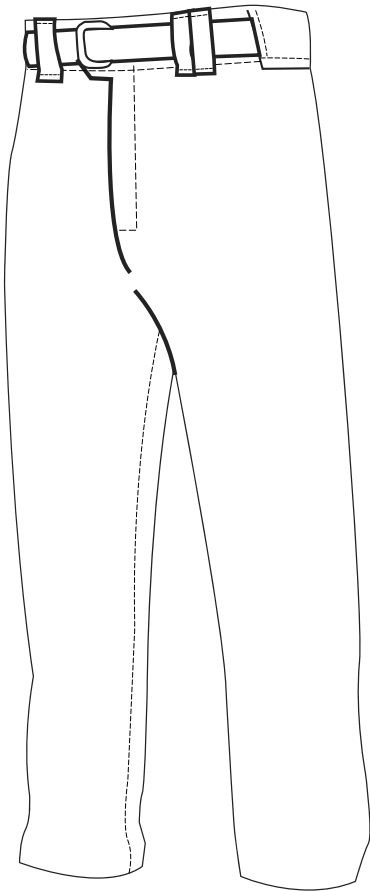
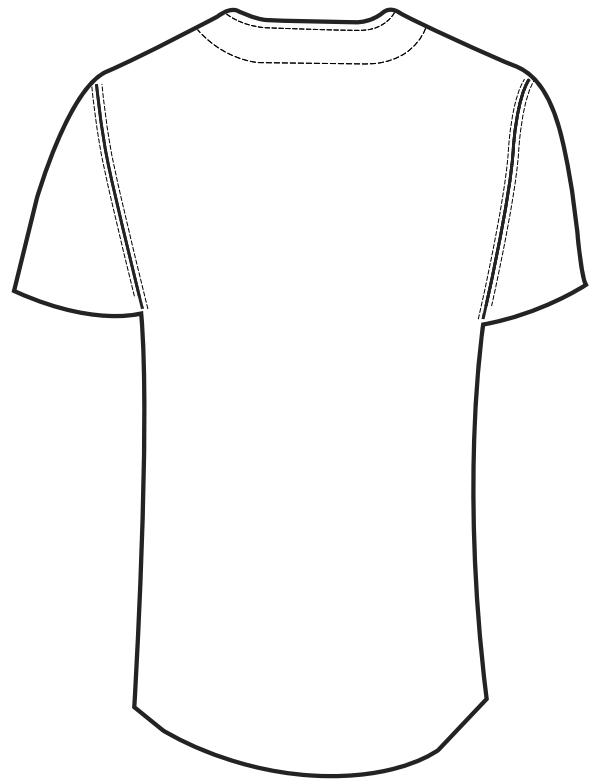
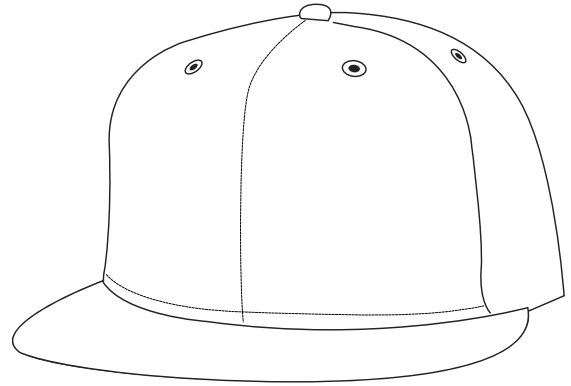
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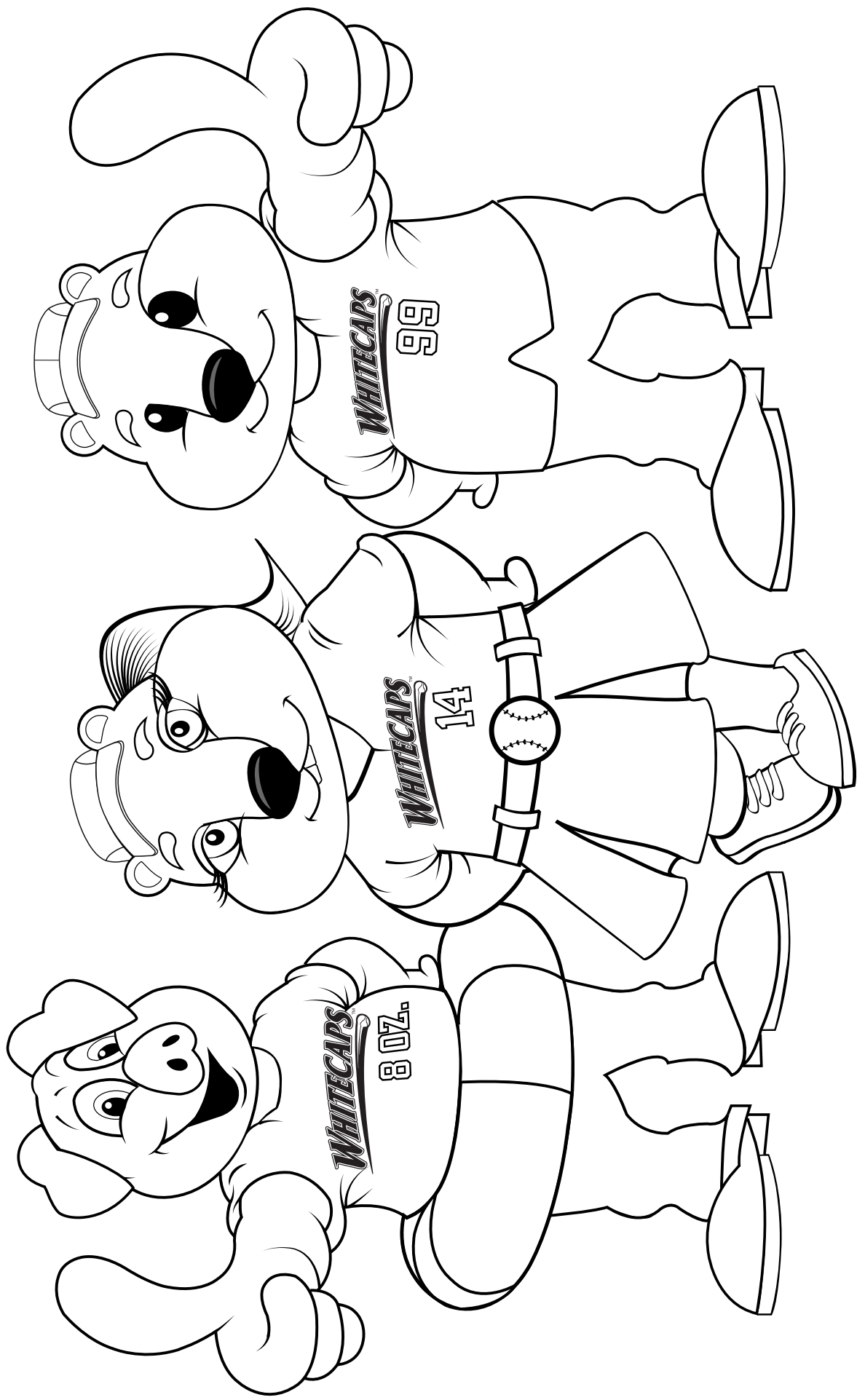
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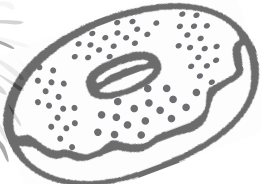
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READING CLUB

This is an incentive based program for kindergarten through sixth grade students that provides materials to help promote reading during the month of March. Students who complete 15 minutes of reading per day during the month of March will receive two free tickets to a Whitecaps home game! 700,000 tickets have been donated since 2003 with over 67,000 students participating in 2019.

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Boys and girls ages 8-12 get the opportunity to practice at LMCU Ballpark with the West Michigan Whitecaps coaches and players during a two-day clinic.



PINCH HITTER PROGRAM

Mission: Working to ensure that everyone can experience the fun and excitement of Whitecaps baseball! The Pinch Hitter Program runs from monetary donations from corporate partners and other donors which are then turned into tickets and matched to a group so that the group can attend a game at no cost.

TED RASBERRY YOUTH LEAGUE

Since 1995 the Ted Rasberry Youth League has helped more than 28,000 children ages 8-15 build self-esteem and teamwork through the summer thanks to 135 volunteer coaches. More than \$700,000 has been pledged to this program which takes place in four neighborhood parks in the inner cities of Grand Rapids.



50/50 RAFFLES

We hold 50/50 raffles as one of our primary fundraising events throughout the summer. Half of the funds raised go to the winner while the other half goes directly to the programs within the Whitecaps Community Foundation. Without volunteers, 50/50 raffles would not be possible. If you are interested in volunteering your time, please visit our website.

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UTILIZAN EL PROGRAMA DE LA COPA DE LA DIVERSIÓN PARA UNIRSE A SU CIUDAD HERMANA EN MÉXICO

COPA DE LA DIVERSIÓN TO BUILD RELATIONS WITH GRAND RAPIDS SISTER CITY IN MEXICO

Por Steve VanWagoner | Traducido por Chanel Zapata
By Steve VanWagoner | Translated by Chanel Zapata

Desde la primera temporada de los Whitecaps en West Michigan en el 1984, los Whitecaps se han comprometido a brindar un ambiente inclusivo para su comunidad en donde reina la diversión y las magníficas experiencias para los aficionados.

Como parte de este compromiso, los Whitecaps se unieron a otros setenta y dos equipos de Las Ligas Menores de Béisbol en el 2019 para participar en el programa de la Copa de la Diversión. En donde durante tres partidos, los Whitecaps adoptaron la identidad de las Calaveras de West Michigan.

Durante estos partidos se enfocaron en celebrar la cultura Hispana de la mano de su nueva identidad. Además, rindieron honor a la influencia de los Hispanos en el deporte del béisbol, a su vez los fanáticos pudieron experimentar distintos refrigerios Hispanos, obsequios y música.

Motivados a dejar una huella con su participación en la Copa de la Diversión, el equipo comenzó a reunirse con líderes comunitarios, así como sus socios para encontrar una manera de contribuir a la comunidad.

Durante una de sus primeras reuniones con la Cámara de Comercio Hispana de Grand Rapids (en inglés, Grand Rapids Hispanic Chamber of Commerce) los Whitecaps tuvieron la

Since the West Michigan Whitecaps' inaugural season in 1994, the team has been committed to being an inclusive and welcoming community asset. The Whitecaps are about fun, community and fan experiences.

As part of this commitment, the Whitecaps joined a group of 72 Minor League Baseball teams during the 2019 season participating in the Copa de la Diversión initiative. For three games, the Whitecaps adopted the identity of Las Calaveras de West Michigan.

The games focused on celebrating the Hispanic culture and its influence on America's pastime, including adding new Hispanic food options, creating a culturally relevant persona and focusing on fun giveaways.

Motivated to make their Copa de la Diversión participation count, the Whitecaps began meeting with community leaders and business partners to find out how they could make the biggest impact.

During an initial meeting with the Grand Rapids Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Whitecaps were introduced to several local leaders along with representatives visiting from Grand Rapids' sister city of Zapopan, Mexico. The meeting

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oportunidad de conocer a varios embajadores de su ciudad hermana en Zapopan, México. Precisamente, esa reunión era para finalizar los detalles de un viaje a la ciudad de Zapopan con el fin de fortalecer las relaciones entre ambas ciudades.

“Entendemos que el béisbol cruza fronteras sin discriminar acerca de clases sociales o estatus económico y sabíamos que había una oportunidad para ayudar,” dijo Dan Morrison, vicepresidente de ventas para los Whitecaps.

“Comprendimos que, para empezar el programa de beisbol en Zapopan, se necesitaba equipo como bates, pelotas, cascos y guantes,” dijo Morrison. “Desafortunadamente sabíamos que no podíamos proveerle a cada niño que quisiera jugar, pero pudimos obsequiarles el equipo a los administradores del programa y al departamento de la policía para que se quedara en los parques de pelota.”

En fin, se le proveyó suficientes cascos, bates, guantes y pelotas para que se pudieran jugar cinco partidos a la vez y lo cual quiere decir que cualquier niño que desee jugar puede participar.

Los Whitecaps han desarrollado relaciones con su ciudad hermana más allá del terreno de juego, cuando en agosto el embajador de la ciudad de Zapopan, Benjamín Hernández

was aimed at finalizing details surrounding an upcoming trip to Zapopan by Grand Rapids representatives to strengthen relations between the cities.

“Understanding baseball crosses borders without discriminating based on demographic or economic class, we knew we could play a role in some way,” said Dan Morrison, Vice President of Sales for the Whitecaps.

“We understood there was a need for equipment such as gloves, bats, helmets and baseballs for the city of Zapopan to start its baseball program,” Morrison said. “Knowing we could not provide equipment to every kid who wanted to play, we decided instead to give the equipment to the administrator of the program and the local police department so it would stay at the fields.”

By providing enough equipment to have five games run simultaneously on separate fields, all kids who wanted to play baseball could participate.

The Whitecaps’ desire to play a part in helping build relations with their sister city came full circle when Benjamin Hernández, a diplomat from Zapopan, was in attendance at an August game to see Las Calaveras de West Michigan take the field at LMCU Ballpark. He brought with him custom sugar



Players from Las Calaveras De West Michigan display their native countries' flags at during the Copa de la Diversión.



Mayor Rosalynn Bliss of the City of Grand Rapids visits with members of its sister city in Zapopan, Mexico. (2019)

dijo presente durante el partido de las Calaveras de West Michigan en el parque de LMCU Ballpark. Benjamín trajo consigo calaveras directamente desde México y estas le rinden tributo a su identidad para la Copa de la Diversión. Luego en octubre, la alcaldesa de la ciudad de Grand Rapids lideró a la delegación de Grand Rapids en su visita a la ciudad hermana y presentaron el regalo de los Whitecaps ante el alcalde de Zapopán.

“Sentimos que somos parte de algo más grande para la sociedad,” dijo Jenny Garone, la gerente de relaciones a la comunidad. “No solo dejamos una huella para los niños en Zapopán, si no que demostramos nuestro compromiso en nuestra comunidad con nuestras actividades en el parque de pelota. Durante cada partido, disfrutamos de locutores en español y de música autentica todo esto con el fin de que nuestra comunidad local hispana y los aficionados se sintieran bienvenidos. Definitivamente el programa de la Copa de la Diversión de Las Ligas Menores de Béisbol nos ha ayudado a continuar con nuestra misión de proveerle a la comunidad diversión y experiencias.”

skulls that paid tribute to the Whitecaps' new “Calaveras” identity. The Grand Rapids delegation, led by Mayor Rosalyn Bliss, visited Zapopan in October and presented its mayor with the Whitecaps' equipment donation.

“We feel like we're part of a much bigger collective,” said Jenny Garone, Community Relations Manager for the Whitecaps. “Not only did we make an impact on children in Zapopan, but our commitment extends to our ballpark activities. We make announcements in Spanish at each game and play authentic music as part of our commitment to our fans and the local Hispanic community. MiLB's Copa de la Diversión initiative has helped in our mission of fun, community and experiences.”



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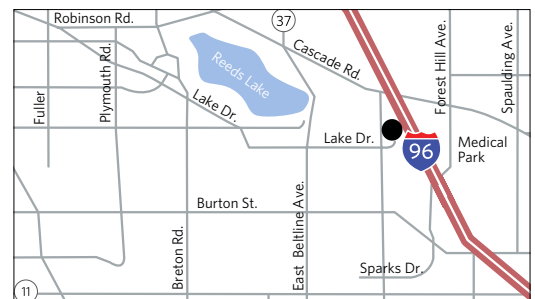
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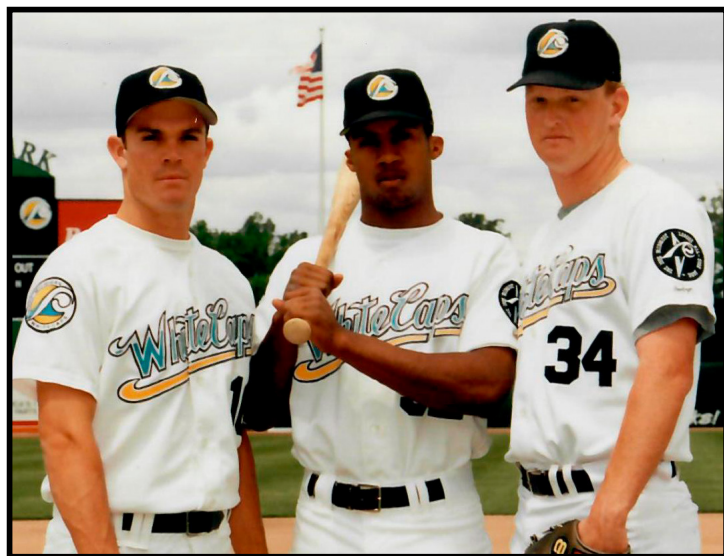
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In 1947, six baseball franchises were established as the Class D Illinois State League. However, the league didn't stay exclusive to Illinois for long. When the Marion Indians relocated to Paducah, KY in 1940, the league's name changed to the Mississippi-Ohio Valley League, in recognition of its expanding boundaries.

The Mississippi-Ohio Valley League expanded to include two teams from Iowa in 1954, resulting in the circuit's moniker, the Midwest League. The league's membership increased significantly in 1961 after the collapse of the Class B Illinois-

Indiana-Iowa League. The following season, the defunct leagues Appleton, Burlington, and Cedar Rapids franchises joined the Midwest League. One year later, after a reorganization of the Minor League categorization system, the Midwest League was classified as a Class A league, a designation that remains until 2020.

In 1982, the league expanded to 12 teams by adding the Beloit Brewers, Danville Suns, Madison Muskies, and the Springfield Cardinals. The league expanded to 14 teams in 1988 with the addition of franchises in South

Bend, Indiana and Rockford, Illinois. During the 1990s, several teams changed cities: Kenosha, Madison, Rockford, Springfield, Waterloo, and Wausau lost teams during the '90s, while Battle Creek, Dayton, Fort Wayne, West Michigan, Kane County, and Lansing gained teams. The 2010 season brought the addition of two more teams to the league: the Bowling Green Hot Rods and the Lake County Captains. Both teams were members of the South Atlantic League before bringing balance to the Eastern and Western Divisions of the Midwest League.

The Fort Wayne TinCaps are currently the oldest franchise in the league. The Tincaps started as the Mattoon Indians in 1947 and played in Keokuk, IA, Wisconsin Rapids, WI, and Kenosha, WI before moving to Fort Wayne in 1993. The Clinton Lumber Kings hold the distinction of being in one city the longest, having played in Clinton from 1954-2019.

Beginning in 2021, the Midwest League is known as High-A Central after Major League Baseball's reorganization of MiLB.

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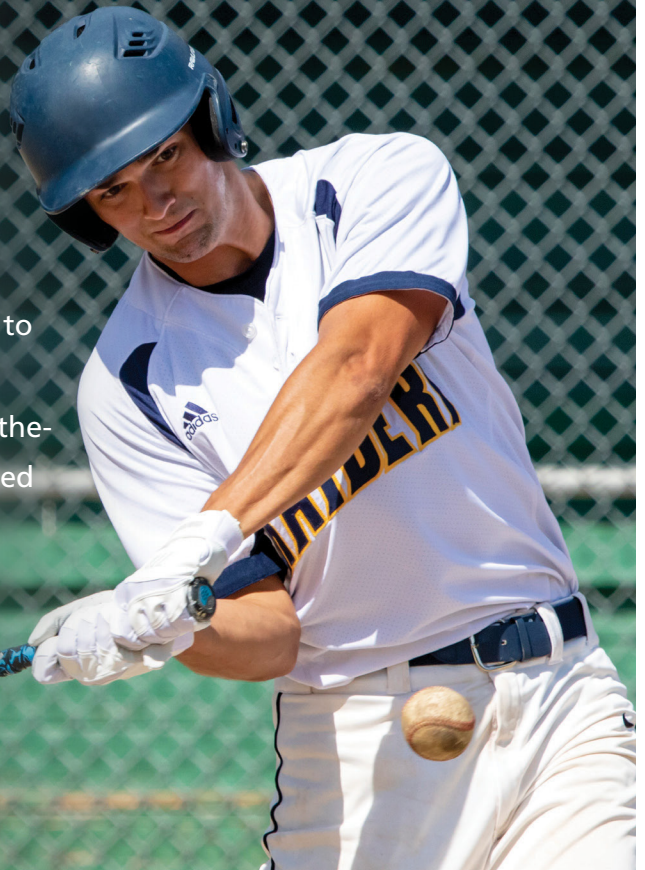
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HIGH-A CENTRAL LEAGUE



BELOIT SNAPPERS BELOIT, WI



Affiliation:Marlins (2021)
Website:snappersbaseball.com
Stadium:Pohlman Field
Manager:Mike Jacobs
Hitting Coach:Matt Snyder
Pitching Coach:Bruce Walton

DAYTON DRAGONS DAYTON, OH



Affiliation:Reds (2000)
Website:daytondragons.com
Stadium:Day Air Credit Union Ballpark
Manager:Jose Moreno
Hitting Coach:Daryle Ward
Pitching Coach:Brian Garman

GREAT LAKES LOONS MIDLAND, MI



Affiliation:Dodgers (2007)
Website:loons.com
Stadium:Dow Diamond
Manager:Austin Chubb
Hitting Coach:David Popkins
Pitching Coach:Ryan Dennick

LANSING LUGNUTS LANSING, MI



Affiliation:Athletics (2021)
Website:lansinglugnuts.com
Stadium:Jackson Field
Manager:Scott Steinmann
Hitting Coach:Javier Godard
Pitching Coach:Don Schulze

QUAD CITIES RIVER BANDITS DAVENPORT, IA



Affiliation:Royals (2021)
Website:riverbandits.com
Stadium:Modern Woodmen Park
Manager:Chris Widger
Hitting Coach:Andy LaRoche
Pitching Coach:Steve Luebber

WEST MICHIGAN WHITECAPS COMSTOCK PARK, MI



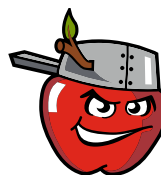
Affiliation:Tigers (1997)
Website:whitecapsbaseball.com
Stadium:LMCU Ballpark
Manager:Brayan Peña
Hitting Coach:Bill Springman
Pitching Coach:Willie Blair

CEDAR RAPIDS KERNELS CEDAR RAPIDS, IA



Affiliation:Twins (2013)
Website:kernels.com
Stadium:Veterans Memorial Stadium
Manager:Brian Dinkelman
Hitting Coach:Bryce Berg
Pitching Coach:Mark Moriarty

FORT WAYNE TINCAPS FORT WAYNE, IN



Affiliation:Padres (1999)
Website:tincaps.com
Stadium:Parkview Field
Manager:Anthony Contreras
Hitting Coach:Jonathan Mathews
Pitching Coach:Jimmy Jones

LAKE COUNTY CAPTAINS EASTLAKE, OH



Affiliation:Indians (2003)
Website:captainsbaseball.com
Stadium:Classic Park
Manager:Greg DiCenzo
Hitting Coach:Grant Fink
Pitching Coach:Kevin Erminio

PEORIA CHIEFS PEORIA, IL



Affiliation:Cardinals (2014)
Website:peoriachiefs.com
Stadium:Dozer Park
Manager:Chris Swauger
Hitting Coach:Joey Hawkins
Pitching Coach:Rick Harig

SOUTH BEND CUBS SOUTH BEND, IN



Affiliation:Cubs (2015)
Website:southbendcubs.com
Stadium:Four Winds Field
Manager:Michael Ryan
Hitting Coach:Paul McNulty
Pitching Coach:Tony Cougoule

WISCONSIN TIMBER RATTLERS APPLETON, WI



Affiliation:Brewers (2009)
Website:timberrattlers.com
Stadium:Neuroscience Group Field
Manager:Matt Erickson
Hitting Coach:Nick Stanley
Pitching Coach:Hiram Burgos

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Prior to many Whitecaps games, you'll notice a unique, and often remarkable, moment in the ballpark called "Hometown Hero." Ashley Homestore provides this opportunity to spotlight a military veteran in West Michigan.

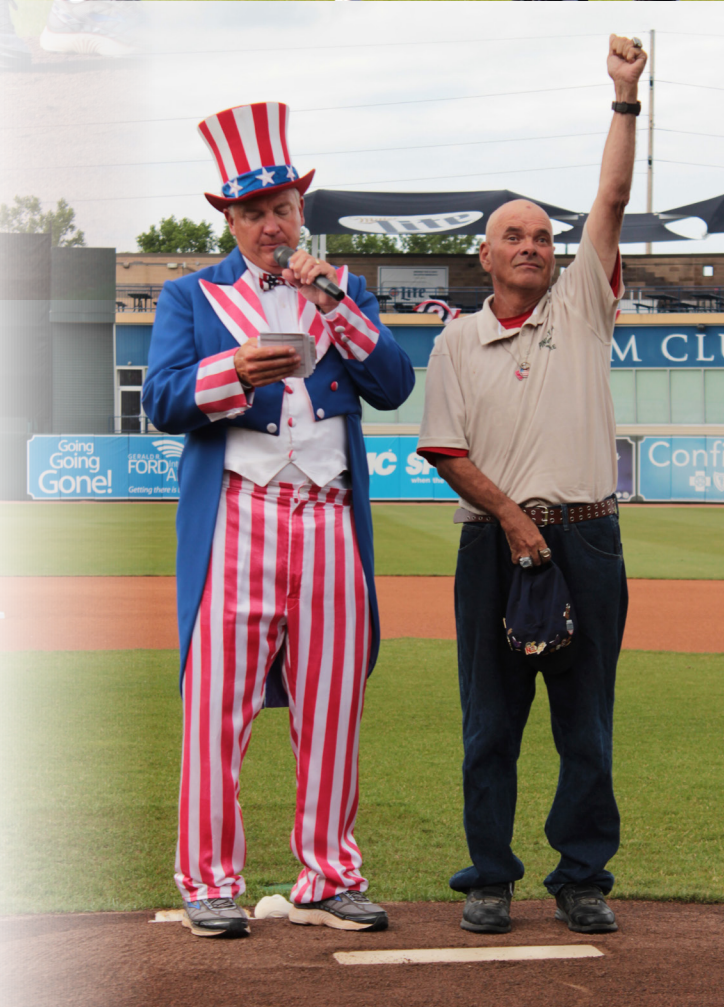
The Ashley Homestore family and family of stores, has a history of military service. "My father was an Army missile technician and my brother Ben served as a Ranger tabbed 10th Mountain Infantryman," said Mitch Monnin of Ashley Homestore. "I served with the 1st Ranger Battalion myself, so we decided that no one deserved our respect and assistance more than our Veterans."

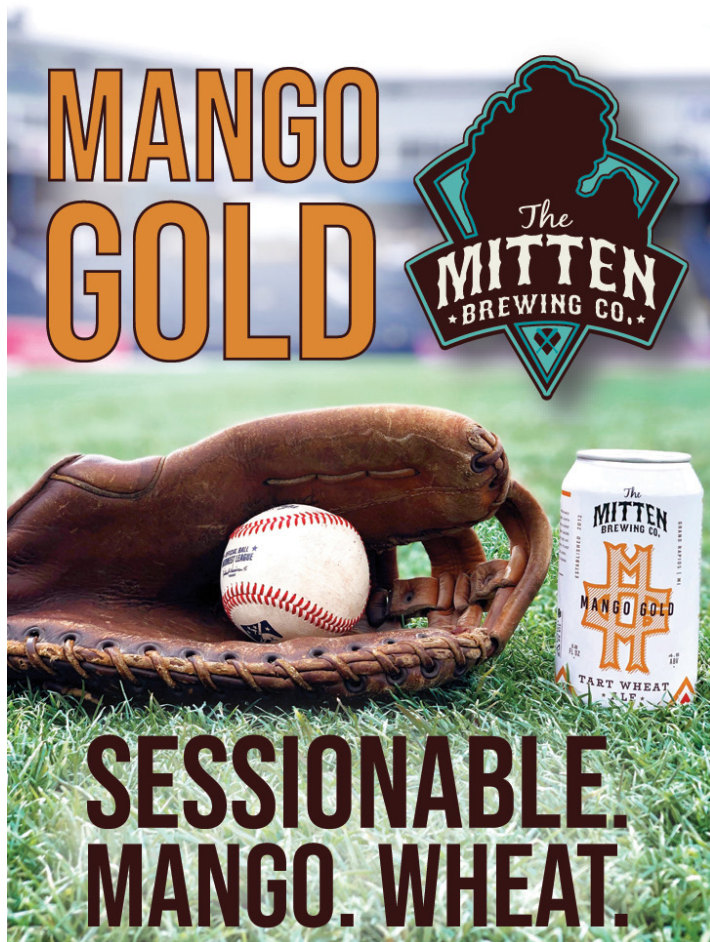
Outside LMCU Ballpark's season-long salute to Veterans by Ashley Homestore, you'll also notice a special in-store experience when you visit any of their locations. "When a Veteran rings a gong, all staff members come to thank them," Mitch added. "That Veteran is presented with a challenge coin, receive free red carpet delivery, and their photograph is placed on our, 'Wall of Honor'"

The respect and assistance doesn't stop there. There is an Ashley Homestore annual Veteran's Celebration held at each store. The veterans are provided a great meal and entertainment. Ashley Homestore also generously gives tens of thousands of dollars of furniture to Veterans each year.

"It is truly an honor to be able to give back to those men and women who gave so much to us," Mitch said. Ashley Homestore and the West Michigan Whitecaps trust that the spotlight on veterans during "Hometown Hero" inspires you, and our Veterans.







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WEST MICHIGAN WHITECAPS GET CALLED UP!

By Michael Zuidema

Many of the Detroit Tigers' top prospects probably had to pack a little differently at the start of this season.

In the past, most of Detroit's first and second-round draft picks likely would have stayed in Florida when spring training ended and played for the Lakeland Tigers. However, when the parent club Tigers announced in December that the West Michigan Whitecaps would be their new High-A affiliate, that meant rookies probably needed to bring a few extra layers to deal with the unpredictability of spring in Michigan rather than Florida.

And that actually was probably just fine with them.

"I think a lot of the guys were looking forward to it, to be honest," Whitecaps Vice President and General Manager Jim Jarecki said. "The way the draft works, a lot of the top guys would go down to the Florida State League, where it's 92, 93 degrees and humid, and it's not the most ideal conditions to play in."

In addition to a generally cooler climate, the Whitecaps offer plenty of additional incentives for young players chasing their major league dreams, including:

- A long track record of success, with six Midwest League titles
- Top tier baseball facilities at LMCU Ballpark,
- Closer proximity to coaching staff and front office personnel in Detroit
- The opportunity to regularly play in front of thousands of loyal fans.

"I love this level of baseball. We kind of operate and approach what we do much closer to what a Triple-A or Double-A team would do anyway," Whitecaps CEO Joe Chamberlin said. "We think this is a great fit. Grand Rapids is truly one of the best markets out there, and the fans are going to appreciate the change."

"The Whitecaps have been standout partners for us, and do a great job ensuring our players are in the best position for growth and development to become impactful contributors to our organization," Al Avila, Tigers Executive Vice President of Baseball Operations and General Manager, said in a press release.

Since their debut in 1994, the Whitecaps' mission



(Continued on page 58)

has been to provide affordable family entertainment options, which have been enjoyed by nearly 11 million fans and counting, and that won't change. The minor league promotion only enhances West Michigan's already strong relationship with the Tigers, which dates back to 1997, and raises the level of talent fans see on the field.

"This is a meaningful promotion," Chamberlin said. "Going from Low-A to High-A is a big jump in development. From a prospect perspective, it was not uncommon for us to miss those top-tier prospects as they kind of skipped Low-A and went right to High-A. Now, we'll likely see every top-tier prospect playing in West Michigan and they'll be one step closer to playing at Comerica Park."

Lakeland is now Detroit's Low-A affiliate, while the Tigers' Triple-A and Double-A teams remain in Toledo and Erie, respectively. The Tigers also have rookie teams in the Gulf Coast and Dominican leagues.

The promotion was one of a number of changes

that affected baseball at all levels this past off season. Approximately 40 teams lost their affiliations when Major League Baseball announced that each parent club would have one team at each of the four levels of the minor leagues for a total of 120 clubs. Major League Baseball also announced new minor league alignments, which placed the Whitecaps in the High-A Central League that is made up of teams that were formerly in the Midwest League with West Michigan.

While former opponents like the Burlington Bees, Clinton LumberKings and Kane County Cougars did not join the newly formed league, the Whitecaps never felt like they were in danger of losing their connection with the Tigers or minor league baseball.

"This was part of the larger restructuring and shifting of the minor league baseball footprint that has been underway for quite some time. We knew there were lots of possibilities, but we never had to sweat it," Chamberlin said. "The No. 1 driver of who was going to remain an affiliate was the opinion of the big league



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club. We have a great relationship with the Tigers, and we feel like we are on really solid ground with them. We felt really good about where we were, but we weren't worried about being on the outside looking in."

It's a testament to the continued support of the fans, who have been eager to return to the ballpark after missing the entire 2020 season due to the Coronavirus pandemic. The affiliation promotion also further enhances the status of minor league sports in West Michigan. That's one reason why Grand Rapids/

Comstock Park was named "Top Minor League Market" in the United States by Street and Smith's Sports Business Journal in 2019.

"From a community pride perspective, I don't think the promotion happens if we're averaging 750 fans a game," Whitecaps President Steve McCarthy said. "The Tigers know that West Michigan has a great fanbase and they aren't hesitant of moving us up a level, and that's a credit to our fans."





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 Ashley Mesman Food & Beverage Assistant
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 Mitch Hooten Head Groundskeeper
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 Kevin Guthrie Developmental Coach
 Cody Derby Athletic Trainer
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 Miles Semetis Baseball Information Assistant
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 Sam Reatini Clubhouse Manager
 Jeff Baar Assistant Clubhouse Manager
 Dan Hasty Play-by-Play Broadcaster
 Mike Coleman Color Commentator
 Nate Wangler Press Box/Media Assistant
 Michael Newell PA Announcer
 Bob Wells On-Field Host
 Joey Sutherlin Official Scorer
 Aaron Sgraves Official Scorer
 Jaime Villarreal Stats Platform Manager
 Jeff Cortright Manual Scoreboard



4500 West River Dr. | Comstock Park, MI 49321 | 616-784-4131
 whitecapsbaseball.com | lmcuballpark.com

2021 LMCU BALLPARK A-Z GUIDE

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES: The West Michigan Whitecaps administrative offices are open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. On game days our ticket office is open from 10:00 a.m. until after the game and can be reached at (616)784-4131.

ALCOHOL MANAGEMENT: In compliance with Michigan state law, anyone under the age of 21 will not be served alcohol at LMCU Ballpark. If customers wish to consume alcohol while at LMCU Ballpark, they must have their hand stamped. Customers can get their hand stamped at any alcohol sales location. Violators of the law will be removed from LMCU Ballpark. As part of our alcohol management policy, the Whitecaps offer free cab rides.

ALTOGAS BARBEQUE AREAS: Enjoy a pre-game or in-game barbeque on the first or third base Altogas Grill Area. Let the Whitecaps serve your group dinner and then head to a reserved seating section with your group to watch the game.

APPEARANCES: On pause until further notice.

ATM: A LMCU Bank ATM is located behind home plate at Gate A.

AUTOGRAPHS: Until further notice, autographs will not be permitted in 2021.

AUTOMOBILE ASSISTANCE: Fans who encounter vehicle troubles while visiting LMCU Ballpark may receive assistance from Whitecaps staff. If your vehicle won't start or you need some help, simply lift the hood of your car or contact a Whitecaps representative.

BABY CHANGING STATIONS: Changing stations are located in all restrooms along the concourse, CapSized Shop, behind the Pioneer State Mutual Insurance Deck, Founders Rooftop, as well as in the DTE Suite Level restrooms

BAG CHECK: LMCU Ballpark security reserves the right to inspect and confiscate any package or container coming in the ballpark. Purses, backpacks, and diaper bags are permitted but are subject to search.

BARRIER-FREE SEATING AND PARKING: The Whitecaps provide wheelchair accessible and companion seating in the 4Tops, premium box, box, and reserved seating areas. All of our group hospitality areas, including the DTE Suite Level, feature easy wheelchair accessibility. Elevators are located on either side of the ballpark to take fans to the box seat level. LMCU Ballpark has handicapped reserved parking spaces in all lots. Proper identification is required to use these spaces.

BIRTHDAYS: Fans wishing to purchase a Whitecaps Marge's Donut Den Birthday Party Package should contact the Group Sales Department at (616) 784-4131. Birthday messages will be scrolled on the video board during the middle of the 4th inning. The best way to get your announcement made is to fill out the Birthday Announcement page on our website or call 616-784-4131 x 1160 and leave a message 24 hours in advance on the birthday hotline answering machine, which is checked daily.

CANADIAN LAKES LANDING: The Canadian Lakes Landing is located along the third base side next to the visitor's bullpen. This area has a mix of soft seating and swivel chairs along the field that can seat up to 65 people. For more information, contact the Whitecaps Group Sales Department at (616) 784-4131.

CAPSIZED SHOP: CapSized Shop, the Whitecaps souvenir shop, can be found on the concourse behind home plate of LMCU Ballpark. CapSized is open on game-days at 10 a.m. The shop closes two hours

before game time and opens up again when the gates open.; Fans will be accommodated during normal business hours, Monday - Friday 10:00am to 5:00pm. Off-season store hours are Monday - Friday 10:00am to 3:00pm.

CENTENNIAL SECURITIES DECK: The Centennial Securities Deck is located just behind the left field wall and can accommodate groups of 40-60 people. Groups can rent the upper, lower, or entire deck depending on its needs. For more information, contact the Whitecaps Group Sales Department at (616) 784-4131.

CONCESSIONS: LMCU Ballpark's concessions are located all along the concourse and Pioneer State Mutual Insurance Deck, with main concession areas located near the main entrance on either side of home plate and satellite concessions located throughout the concourse.

DTE SUITE LEVEL: Luxury suites may be available for game rental. For more information, contact the Whitecaps Group Sales Department at (616) 784-4131 ext. 0.

E-MAIL: Whitecaps administrative staff member E-mail addresses consist of the first name and last initial @ whitecapsbaseball.com. For example: JoeC@whitecapsbaseball.com for CEO Joe Chamberlin. The general E-mail address is playball@whitecapsbaseball.com. Whitecaps players do not have individual E-mail addresses through the team.

FAN MAIL: Player fan mail may be sent care of the Whitecaps Clubhouse, P.O. Box 428, Comstock Park, MI 49321.

FAN SUGGESTIONS: Fans with a comment or suggestion may express it in person or by filling out the suggestion form at the Michigan Paving Guest Services on the concourse behind home plate.

FIRST AID: The First Aid station is located on the concourse level behind home plate. The first aid station is staffed by certified personnel from Spectrum Health.

FOOD AND DRINK: Coolers, cans, bottles, or food will not be permitted in the ballpark, with exceptions for baby products and medical necessities.

FOUL BALLS: Fans may keep any ball that is hit or thrown into the stands. However, any ball or bat thrown can be potentially dangerous - please stay alert at all times. Those leaving the park to retrieve a ball will need to show their game ticket for re-entry and bags are subject to search.

FOUNDERS ROOFTOP: The Founders Rooftop is located along the 1st baseline above the administrative building. Private bar area, picnic table seating and partially covered seating. Perfect for groups 80-100.

GATES OPEN: On game days, LMCU Ballpark will open its gates for the public one hour and fifteen minutes before game time.

GENERAL RV CAMPGROUND: The General RV Campground is reserved for private parties and is located near the Whitecaps Bullpen on the first baseline. It accommodates groups up to 60. For more information, contact the Whitecaps Group Sales Department at (616) 784-4131.

GROUP OUTINGS: Groups of 20 or more may book outings through the Whitecaps Group Sales Department. Please call (616) 784-4131 for more information.

SORT IT OUT, FANS!



BE THE CLEAN-UP HITTER

Empty food and drink from bottles, cups and trays at the ballpark!



WATCH FOR SIGNS

Recycling bins are located next to trash bins on the main concourse and around the ballpark.



SWING FOR THE FENCES

Put all empty bottles, cups and trays into recycling bins.



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KIDS MEALS: The LMCU Ballpark concessions stands offer a Kids Meal. The meal consists of a regular hot dog, chips, cookie and small drink.

LOST AND FOUND: Lost and found items can be taken to and retrieved from the Michigan Paving Guest Services, located on the concourse behind home plate.

MEIJER HOMETOWN PLAYGROUND: The Meijer Hometown Playground is just past the first base lawn area and open until the eighth inning. The Whitecaps provide attendants but cannot be held responsible for the actions of children in the playground. Parents are strongly encouraged to monitor their children.

MILLER LITE HOUSE DECK: The Miller Lite House Deck provides a rooftop atmosphere and can accommodate 150 people. It is located just behind the right-centerfield wall and above the Pepsi Stadium Club. For more information, contact the Whitecaps Group Sales Department at (616) 784-4131.

NATIONAL ANTHEM SINGERS: Those interested in performing the National Anthem prior to a Whitecaps game should send an email and audio file of your "a capella" version of the National Anthem to Ben Love at BenL@whitecapsbaseball.com

PAGING: The public address system at LMCU Ballpark will be used for paging in extreme cases only. Those needing to page someone should report to the Michigan Paving Guest Services located on the concourse behind home plate.

PARKING: Parking is just \$7.00 at LMCU Ballpark for cars and \$10.00 for buses and RVs. Motorcycle parking is also available for \$7.00

PEPSI STADIUM CLUB: The Pepsi Stadium Club is located behind the right-centerfield wall and provides a plush, climate-controlled area for up to 100 people. The Pepsi Stadium Club also offers eleven flatscreen televisions, private restrooms and an exclusive bar/buffet. The Pepsi Stadium Club is available for rent year round. For more information, contact the Whitecaps Group Sales Department at (616) 784-4131.

PIONEER STATE MUTUAL INSURANCE DECK:

The Pioneer State Mutual Insurance Deck is located behind the right field wall and is reserved for private parties. The Pioneer State Mutual Insurance Deck seats up to 100 people and is equipped for food and drink service before and during the game. For more information, contact the Whitecaps Group Sales Department at (616) 784-4131.

PROMOTIONS: The promotions schedule is available on our website in the "Schedule & Promotions" drop down menu.

PUBLICATIONS: The Whitecaps publish a free full-color program with scorecard for each series of games.

RADIO: Listen to all 120 Whitecaps games on our flagship station The Ticket 106.1FM/1340AM

RAIN CHECKS: In the event that 5 innings of one game are not played, except when the Whitecaps are in the lead at the end of 4 1/2 innings, any ticket from that game will be good for exchange for the same price ticket to any regular season Whitecaps home game or playoff home game this season. All exchanges are subject to availability. There are no cash refunds for tickets for a rainout game. Also, any rainout tickets purchased from Tickets.com may be exchanged at the Whitecaps Ticket Office only.

RESTROOMS: Restrooms are located on the concourse level on the first and third base sides, as well as on the DTE Suite Level and behind the Pioneer State Mutual Insurance Deck. All of the restrooms at LMCU Ballpark are wheelchair accessible.

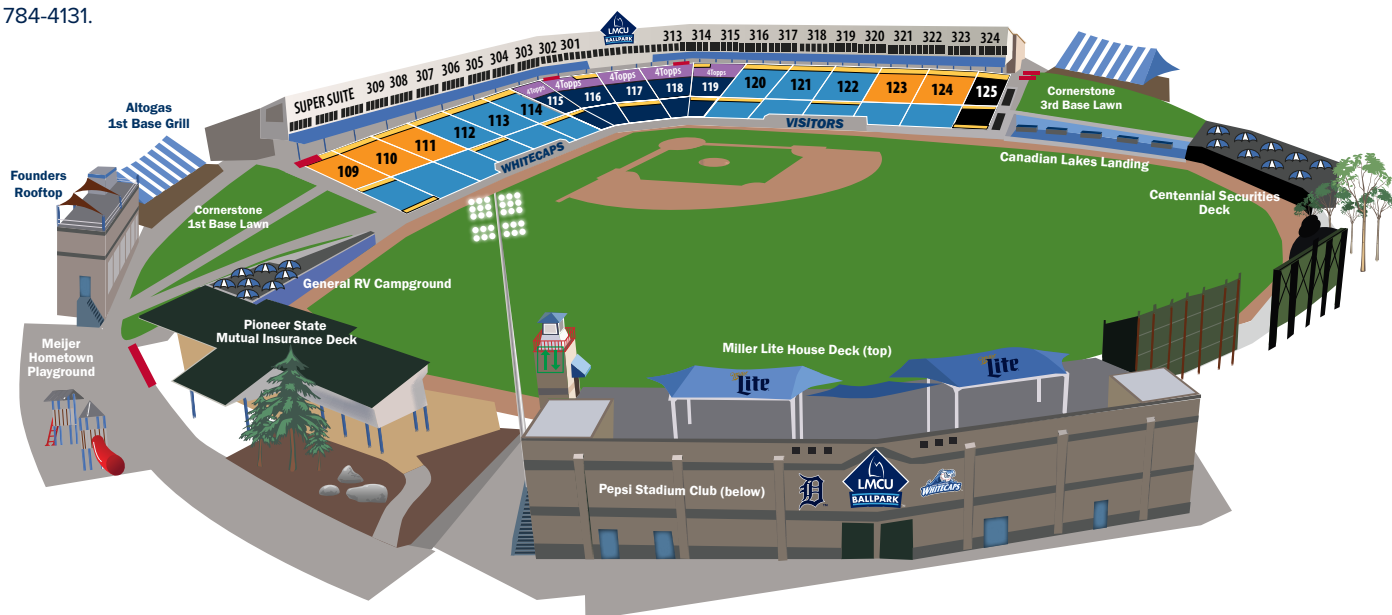
SECURITY: The Whitecaps have several security personnel at each game. In the event of a security problem, notify a member of security, a member of the Whitecaps staff, or report to the Michigan Paving Guest Services booth located on the concourse behind home plate.

SMOKING: LMCU Ballpark is a smoke-free facility (including e-cigarettes and vaping). You may smoke outside of Gate C, however, a ticket is required for re-entry.

SPEAKERS BUREAU: Organizations seeking a speaker from the Whitecaps should contact the Community Relations Department at (616) 784-4131 ext. 1154.

TAILGATING: Tailgating is not allowed at LMCU Ballpark.

TICKET OFFICE HOURS: The Whitecaps Ticket Office is open during the season Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and during all home games. On weekend home dates, the advanced ticket sales window opens at 10:00 a.m. and closes after the game.





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(616) 949-8974

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4555 Wilson Ave. SW
(616) 249-8490

Jenison
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(616) 457-4443

Kentwood
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(616) 281-1011

Kentwood (South)
6143 Kalamazoo Ave.
(616) 554-7775

Knapp's Crossing
2000 East Beltline NE
(616) 608-0466

Plainfield (North)
5429 Northland Dr. NE
(616) 365-7600

Plainfield Twp.
4022 Plainfield Ave. NE
(616) 363-1868

Rockford
507 E. Division St.
(616) 866-3933

Walker
3576 Alpine Ave. NW
(616) 784-4999

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\$13.95 Oil Change!
**OR \$26.95 Oil Change &
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*synthetic oil extra
and up to 5 qts of oil

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HOMETOWN HANDMADE GOURMET

**2 LARGE PIZZAS
*up to 3 items &
1 ORDER OF BREAD STIX
\$27.99**



Locations Offering Coupons
will be Belmont, Lowell, and
Greenville. Cannot be
combined with other offers.
Limit 1 per customer.
Expiration Date: 10/1/2021



B.C. PIZZA
HOMETOWN HANDMADE GOURMET

**1 LARGE PIZZA
*up to 3 items &
1 SMALL CHEESE BREAD
OR CHICKEN WINGS
\$17.99**



Locations Offering Coupons
will be Belmont, Lowell, and
Greenville. Cannot be
combined with other offers.
Limit 1 per customer.
Expiration Date: 10/1/2021



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10%**

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Coupon cannot be doubled
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Expires September 30, 2021



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Only valid on Fastlane, not redeemable in store.
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\$3**

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Meat Department
purchase of
\$20 or more
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with yes

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FAMILY FARE.

Expires September 30, 2021



Enter code **18244** on
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**SAVE
\$1**

on Open Acres
Premium Craft
Beer Brats 18 oz.
with coupon
with yes

Coupon cannot be doubled
or used in conjunction with
any other coupon offer.
Limit one coupon per family.

FAMILY FARE.

Expires September 30, 2021



Enter code **18245** on
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Only valid on Fastlane, not redeemable in store.
Limit one time use.

**SAVE
\$1**

on Open Acres
Freshly Made Pizza
12 Inch
with coupon
with yes

Coupon cannot be doubled
or used in conjunction with
any other coupon offer.
Limit one coupon per family.

FAMILY FARE.

Expires September 30, 2021



Enter code **18246** on
SHOPTHEFASTLANE.COM

Only valid on Fastlane, not redeemable in store.
Limit one time use.

**SAVE
50¢**

on Our Family
Ice Cream 48 oz.
with coupon
with yes

Coupon cannot be doubled
or used in conjunction with
any other coupon offer.
Limit one coupon per family.

FAMILY FARE.

Expires September 30, 2021



Enter code **18247** on
SHOPTHEFASTLANE.COM

Only valid on Fastlane, not redeemable in store.
Limit one time use.

**SAVE
50¢**

on Our Family
Ketchup 19.5-34 oz.
or Mustard 14-20 oz.
with coupon
with yes

Coupon cannot be doubled
or used in conjunction with
any other coupon offer.
Limit one coupon per family.

FAMILY FARE.

Expires September 30, 2021



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Limit one time use.

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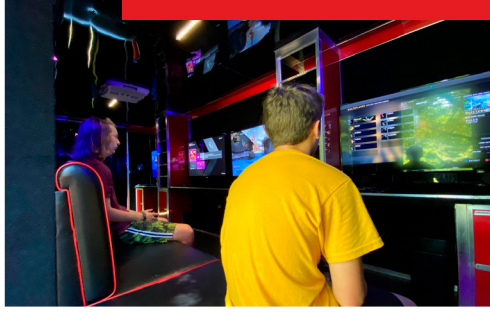
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