



# DUNEDIN BLUE JAYS™

## 2018 1<sup>ST</sup> HALF PROGRAM





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JIM GOINS, MICHELLE PRADA



Dear Fans:

On behalf of Minor League Baseball and the Dunedin Blue Jays, I want to welcome you to Dunedin Stadium. It is great to see you at the ballpark for another exciting season of Minor League Baseball!

The 2018 season will see the opening of a new ballpark in North Augusta, South Carolina, and based on the success of a program launched in four cities in 2017, this year we are introducing the “Copa de la Diversión,” or “Fun Cup,” a season-long event series between the 33 teams that have adopted Spanish-language identities in an effort to be more representative of their community.

While you may see some new logos and team identities this spring and summer, what remains the same is the quality, affordable family entertainment in a clean and safe environment that is a staple of Minor League Baseball across the country.

With 20 leagues and more than 250 clubs, Minor League Baseball is where you will find the next wave of baseball’s brightest stars on their way to the big leagues. The next Mike Trout, Jose Altuve or Kris Bryant just might be playing in the game you are watching now!

Minor League Baseball also remains an integral part of the sports landscape, and of the communities it represents. Last season, Minor League Baseball’s philanthropic endeavors included donating almost \$40 million in cash and value in kind contributions to local and national charities. We are proud to support our National Charity Partners: The ALS Association, the American Cancer Society, Big Brothers Big Sisters, The BairFind Foundation and Ed Randall’s Fans for the Cure, as well as other worthy initiatives and causes.

In 2017, a remarkable 41.8 MILLION fans attended Minor League Baseball games and I am certain that with your continued support, Minor League Baseball will continue to prosper for many years to come. As stewards and fans of the game, it is our responsibility to build, nurture and protect this great game for the future generations of fans.

Thank you again for your passionate support of Minor League Baseball, and most importantly the Dunedin Blue Jays. I wish you a healthy and enjoyable season of baseball. Let’s play ball!!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pat O'Conner".

Pat O’Conner  
President & CEO  
Minor League Baseball





## FLORIDA STATE LEAGUE

OF PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL CLUBS, INC.

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EMAIL: ken.carson@floridastateleague.com  
office@floridastateleague.com

**KEN CARSON**  
CHAIRMAN/PRESIDENT/TREASURER

### 2018 Baseball Season

Dear Baseball Fans:

This marks the 99<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Florida State League, and we welcome you to the 2018 baseball season. The League once again had great attendance in 2017. We thank you, our fans, for your attendance in making this a great baseball league.

The Florida State League will again bring you family entertainment at a reasonable cost and we look forward to you joining us for a fun time at the ballpark.

We invite you to attend as many games as possible to allow our baseball staffs the opportunity to provide you with a great experience.

The 2018 All Star Game will be played in Tampa, hosted by the Tampa Tarpons, on Saturday, June 16, 2018.

Remember, this is "Where the Major League Stars of Tomorrow Play Today."

Sincerely,

Ken Carson, President  
**FLORIDA STATE LEAGUE** of  
Professional Baseball Clubs, Inc.

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\$2.50 Wings, Sliders, & Tall Boys  
Live Entertainment 7-10pm

WEDNESDAY (5-10PM)  
Craft Burger Night, \$4 Fat Tire

THURSDAY (6-10PM)  
\$4 Crafts on Draft  
50% off Select Appetizers

FRIDAY & SATURDAY (8-11PM)  
Live Entertainment

SUNDAY FUNDAY  
(11AM-7PM)  
\$5 Mimosas, Bloody Marys  
& Screwdrivers



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[theDunedinSmokehouse.com](http://theDunedinSmokehouse.com)

# 2018 DUNEDIN BLUE JAYS SCHEDULE

## APRIL

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5 CLR 7:00	6 CLR 6:15	7 CLR 6:30
8 CLR 1:00	9 PMB 6:30	10 PMB 6:30	11 PMB 6:30	12 PMB 6:30	13 STL 6:30	14 STL 6:30
15 STL 1:42	16	17 FTM 6:30	18 FTM 6:30	19 FTM 6:30	20 DAY 6:30	21 DAY 6:30
22 DAY 1:00	23 LAK 6:30	24 LAK 10:30 AM	25 LAK 6:30	26 CLR 6:30	27 CLR 6:30	28 CLR 6:30
29 CLR 1:00	30					

## JUNE

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
					1 TAM 6:30	2 TAM 6:30
3 TAM 1:00	4 CHA 6:35	5 CHA 6:35	6 CHA 6:35	7 CHA 6:35	8 FTM 7:00	9 FTM 6:00
10 FTM 4:00	11 CHA 6:30	12 CHA 6:30	13 CHA 6:30	14 CHA 6:30	ALL-STAR BREAK	
17	18 STL 6:30	19 STL 6:30	20 STL 11:00 AM	21 CLR 7:00	22 CLR 6:15	23 CLR 6:15
24 CLR 1:00	25	26 FLA 6:31	27 FLA 6:31	28 FLA 6:31	29 BRD 6:30	30 BRD 6:30

## AUGUST

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
			1 LAK 6:30	2 LAK 6:30	3 CHA 6:30	4 CHA 6:30
5 CHA 1:00	6 DAY 7:05	7 DAY 7:05	8 DAY 7:05	9 CHA 6:35	10 CHA 6:35	11 CHA 6:05
12 CHA 12:35	13 JUP 6:30	14 JUP 6:30	15 JUP 6:30	16 JUP 6:30	17 STL 6:30	18 STL 6:30
19 STL 1:00	20	21 CLR 7:00	22 CLR 7:00	23 CLR 7:00	24 BRD 6:30	25 BRD 6:30
26 BRD 1:00	27 PMB 6:30	28 PMB 6:30	29 PMB 6:30	30 PMB 6:30	31 DAY 6:30	

## MAY

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
		1 BRD 6:30	2 BRD 6:30	3 BRD 6:30	4 CLR 6:15	5 CLR 6:15
6 CLR 1:00	7 BRD 6:30	8 BRD 6:30	9 BRD 11:00 AM	10 FTM 6:30	11 FTM 6:30	12 FTM 6:30
13	14 TAM 6:30	15 TAM 6:30	16 TAM 6:30	17 TAM 6:30	18 DAY 7:05	19 DAY 7:05
20 DAY 5:35	21 FLA 6:30	22 FLA 6:30	23 FLA 6:30	24 LAK 6:30	25 LAK 6:30	26 LAK 6:30
27 LAK 1:00	28	29 FLA 6:31	30 FLA 6:31	31 FLA 6:31		

## JULY

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
1 BRD 1:00	2 TAM 6:30	3 TAM 6:30	4 FTM 7:00	5 FTM 7:00	6 STL 6:30	7 STL 6:30
8 STL 12:00	9 CLR 6:30	10 CLR 6:30	11 CLR 6:30	12 CLR 6:30	13 TAM 6:30	14 TAM 6:30
15 TAM 1:00	16 FLA 6:30	17 FLA 11:00 AM	18 FLA 6:30	19 TAM 6:30	20 TAM 6:30	21 TAM 6:30
22	23 LAK 6:30	24 LAK 6:30	25 LAK 6:30	26 JUP 6:30	27 JUP 6:30	28 JUP 5:30
29 JUP 1:00	30	31 LAK 6:30				

## SEPTEMBER

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
						1 DAY 6:30
2 DAY 12:00	3	PLAYOFFS				

### NORTH DIVISION

CLR - CLEARWATER THRESHERS  
TAM - TAMPA TARPONS  
LAK - LAKELAND FLYING TIGERS  
FLA - FLORIDA FIRE FROGS  
DAY - DAYTONA TORTUGAS

### SOUTH DIVISION

CHARLOTTE STONE CRABS - CHA  
FORT MYERS MIRACLE - FTM  
BRADENTON MARAUDERS - BRD  
ST. LUCIE METS - STL  
PALM BEACH CARDINALS - PMB  
JUPITER HAMMERHEADS - JUP

 HOME  AWAY

GAME DATES AND TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.







# 2018 EVENT AND



# PROMO SCHEDULE

## APRIL

- 7 OPENING NIGHT  
FIREWORKS & MAGNET SCHEDULE GIVEAWAY
- 20 CHAMPIONSHIP T-SHIRT GIVEAWAY &  
2017 CHAMPIONSHIP RING RAFFLE
- 28 BARK IN THE PARK  
BENEFITTING SUNCOAST ANIMAL LEAGUE

## MAY

- 9 EDUCATION DAY - 11AM
- 10 WING NIGHT
- 12 MASCOT NIGHT
- 24 FISHING NIGHT
- 26 BARK IN THE PARK  
BENEFITTING DUNEDIN DOGGIE RESCUE

## JUNE

- 2 SUPERHERO NIGHT  
SPONSORED BY TD BANK
- 14 FATHER'S DAY DUAL BOBBLEHEAD GIVEAWAY  
VLADIMIR GUERRERO SR./JR.
- 20 CAMP DAY - 11AM
- 29 BEER, BACON, & FIREWORKS
- 30 PRINCESSES & PIRATES

## JULY

- 1 CANADA DAY  
HOCKEY PUCK GIVEAWAY
- 3 HOMETOWN USA - FREE EVENT  
FIREWORKS | PRESENTED BY BUDWEISER
- 12 SPECIALTY DUNEDIN JERSEYS  
& CHARITY AUCTION
- 17 CAMP DAY - 11AM
- 21 BOWLING TOURNAMENT

## AUGUST

- 4 LADIES NIGHT
- 18 BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT  
FIREWORKS & BACKPACK GIVEAWAY

## SEPTEMBER

- 1 FAN APPRECIATION NIGHT

VISIT OUR WEBSITE THROUGHOUT THE SEASON  
FOR UPDATES TO THE PROMOTIONAL SCHEDULE.

ALL EVENT AND GIVEAWAY DATES ARE  
SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

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# 2017 SEASON RECAP

The 2017 season was truly one for the record books for the Dunedin Blue Jays. After four decades of near misses and heartbreaking playoff losses, the team captured its first Florida State League championship in franchise history, defeating the Tampa Yankees in a thrilling three-game set to capture the North Division Championship and a share of the league's title in a hurricane-shortened post-season.

From the beginning, the season looked to be a special one, with the Blue Jays opening the new year with seven of Toronto's top 30 prospects on their roster including starting pitchers **T.J. Zeuch**, **Ryan Borucki**, and **Angel Perdomo** and a potential-packed catching duo of **Max Pentecost** and **Danny Jansen**.





The team opened the season strong, finishing the month of April with a .542 winning percentage. Paced by Jansen's .402 average in the month, the team led the FSL with a .291 batting average. On the mound, Zeuch was brilliant, finishing April with a 1.62 ERA in 16.2 innings.

The offense stumbled in May, with the team hitting just .231, but stellar pitching performances and timely hitting allowed the team to post an even better (.551) winning percentage than in April. **Jordan Romano** and Borucki headlined the Jays rotation, combining to post a 1.74 ERA in 57.0 innings. The Blue Jays bullpen received standout performances from **Tom Robson** (0.90 ERA), **Philip Walby** (1.54 ERA), **Jared Carkuff** (2.31 ERA), and **Ryan Cook** (2.84 ERA). The strong bullpen work made up for the team's lack of offense, allowing the Jays to win nine one-run ballgames during the month.

The Jays entered the month of June in first place, looking to lock up the North Division's first half title and an automatic playoff bid. A disastrous 9-game losing streak to open the month tumbled the Blue Jays from first place to fourth and left the Jays with their worst monthly record of the season (8-16). The bright spot of the month was the selection of Pentecost, Jansen, and **Andrew Guillotte** to the Florida State League's All-Star game.

After their disappointing finish to the first half, Dunedin's fortunes quickly turned around in the second half. After making mechanical adjustments at the plate, **Connor Panas** went from sluggish to slugger. After hitting .248 with four homers in the first half, Panas led the league in homers (14), hits (70), runs (39), extra base hits (30), runs batted in (43), slugging (.590) and on-base plus slugging (.978) from July 1 through the end of the season.

Alongside Panas' breakout second half, Dunedin's offense gained two of the game's top prospects, with **Vladimir Guerrero Jr.** and **Bo Bichette** joining the team from A-Lansing in early July. The 18-year-old Guerrero Jr. hit .333 and powered 14 extra base hits for Dunedin, leading the FSL with a .450 on-base percentage in the second half. After hitting an incredible .384 in Lansing, the 19-year-old Bichette hit .323 and stole 10 bases for Dunedin, finishing the year with a .362 cumulative batting average, the best in all of Minor League Baseball.

With their rejuvenated offense, the Blue Jays had their most successful month of the season in July, posting a .633 winning percentage. Panas hit .443 with 6 homers in the month while Guerrero Jr. and Bichette hit .413 and .400, respectively. With their closer **Andrew Case** promoted to AA-New Hampshire, the Dunedin bullpen received standout performances from mid-season call-ups **Kirby Sneed** and **Jackson McClelland**. A formidable lefty/righty combination, the left-handed Sneed saved eight games and posted a 1.36 ERA for Dunedin while the righty McClelland saved seven and pitched to a 1.07 ERA down the stretch.

The additions of Guerrero Jr. and Bichette also created one of the most compelling storylines in Minor League Baseball during the season's second half. Guerrero Jr., the son of Vladimir Guerrero, and Bichette, the son of Dante Bichette, combined with **Cavan Biggio**, the son of Craig Biggio, to give the Blue Jays an All-Star pedigree-packed infield. Their fathers combined to make 20 All-Star teams and win 13 Silver Slugger awards during their Major League careers.

While Dunedin's famous sons captured headlines, the Blue Jays received strong performances up and down their roster. With Borucki in AA and Zeuch and

Perdomo on the DL, the Blue Jays turned to **Josh DeGraaf** to stabilize their rotation. Despite holding a 5.40 ERA as a reliever for Dunedin, DeGraaf excelled in the rotation, going 7-4 with a 3.01 ERA in 15 starts. **Conor Fisk**, who was 3-8 with a 4.83 ERA in the first half, also excelled in the second half, going 5-3 with a 3.02 ERA in 14 outings. Switch-hitting infielder **Juan Kelly** slashed .303/.370/.449 in the second half and drilled 7 homers while **D.J. Davis** hit .283 and finished the season second in the FSL with 32 steals.

Despite their strong second half, the Blue Jays were unable to catch the Tampa Yankees, who boasted the league's best overall record (85-50), in the standings for the second half title. With a Wild Card spot as their only path to the playoffs, the Blue Jays locked up a post-season birth on September 1 against Clearwater, using a pair of homers from Connor Panas (including an inside-the-parker) and an emphatic 9th inning blast off the bat of Vladimir Guerrero Jr. to defeat the Threshers, eliminate them from contention, and secure the Wild Card.

With Hurricane Irma's scheduled landfall just days away, the Florida State League elected to cancel its championship series and crown the winners of condensed divisional title games as league Co-Champions. In a rematch of the 2016 North Division championship, the Blue Jays squared off against the Yankees, the winners of both the season's first and second halves.

### **Championship Game 1:**

The Blue Jays offense came out swinging in Game 1 of the championship series at home at Florida Auto Exchange Stadium. After an RBI single by **Michael De La Cruz**, Connor Panas launched a three-run home run to put the Blue Jays up 4-0. After Cavan Biggio walked, **Jake Thomas** doubled to extend Dunedin's early lead to 5-0.

Second half star Josh DeGraaf held the Yankees to two runs over 6.0 innings and struck out 7. With his pitch count approaching 100, DeGraaf handed a 5-2 lead over to a strong Dunedin bullpen.

The Yankees talented offense, the second highest scoring squad (behind Dunedin) in the North Division, would not go down quietly. A pair of homers in the 7th inning pulled the Yankees within a run and they tied the game on an RBI single in the 9th. With the Blue Jays unable to score, the game went to extras. The Yankees scored three times in the 10th to take an 8-5 lead. The Blue Jays scored once in the bottom of the inning, and left the tying runs on base, but fell 8-6.

### **Championship Game 2:**

After their heartbreaking Game 1 loss at home, the Blue Jays headed to Tampa needing to win both games of a day/night doubleheader on the road against the team with the most home wins in the Florida State League to claim the North Division Championship.

With the season on the line, Jordan Romano took the mound for Dunedin and delivered a gem, allowing just one run over 6.2 innings. Cavan Biggio backed Romano's performance by driving in three runs, two on a 4th inning single and a third on a solo home run in the 7th. Romano handed the ball off to Kirby Sneed in the 7th, who proceeded to throw 2.1 shutout innings of relief to close out the game and set up a dramatic winner-take-all Game 3.



### Championship Game 3:

On just three days rest and in just his second start since rejoining the Blue Jays from the disabled list, T.J. Zeuch took the ball in the deciding game of the championship series. The towering righty was stellar, allowing just one hit over 4.0 innings.

With the game tied at 0-0, Connor Panas gave Dunedin an early lead by launching his second home run of the series in the 3rd inning. The Yankees evened the score in the 4th on an unearned run.

Making his first relief appearance since Opening Day in April, Conor Fisk entered in the 5th. After allowing a solo homer to the second batter he faced, Fisk settled in and threw 3.1 innings of relief, allowing just the one run on 4 hits.

With the Blue Jays trailing 2-1 in the 7th, Connor Panas stepped to the plate and drilled his second home run of the game (*pictured above*), this time not just clearing the outfield wall, but sending the ball sailing out of George M. Steinbrenner Field to even the score.

The score remained tied entering the 9th inning. With one out in the top of the inning, Juan Kelly worked a walk. An out later, **Edward Olivares** singled to left. Jake Thomas followed with a single of his own to score Kelly and put Dunedin up 3-2. D.J. Davis added crucial insurance to the Jays' lead, dropping a two-run double into shallow left field to put Dunedin up 5-2 and leave them just three outs from their first championship in franchise history.

The Yankees did not go down without a fight. A leadoff double followed by a one-out RBI single cut the lead to 5-3 and brought the tying run to the plate. With the title on the line, reliever **Zach Jackson** induced two fly outs to end the game, the season, and the championship series.

## AFFILIATES



Website: [www.bisons.com](http://www.bisons.com)

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Owner & President: Rich Entertainment Group, Melinda R. Rich

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Pitching Coach: Bob Stanley

Hitting Coach: Corey Hart

Position Coach: Devon White

Trainer: Bob Tarpey

Strength and Conditioning: Brian Pike

### **Buffalo Bisons** *International League (AAA)*

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One James D. Griffin Plaza

Buffalo, NY 14203

Phone: (716) 846-2000 • Fax: (716) 852-6530

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Website: [www.nhfishercats.com](http://www.nhfishercats.com)

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Strength and Conditioning: Ryan Maedel

### **New Hampshire Fisher Cats** *Eastern League (AA)*

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Website: [www.dunedinbluejays.com](http://www.dunedinbluejays.com)

Director of Florida Operations: Shelby Nelson

General Manager: Mike Liberatore

Manager: Casey Candaele

Pitching Coach: Mark Riggins

Hitting Coach: Donnie Murphy

Coach: Michel Abreu

Trainer: Dan Leja

Strength and Conditioning: Kyle Edlhuber

### **Dunedin Blue Jays** *Florida State League (Advanced A)*

**Dunedin Stadium**

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## **Lansing Lugnuts** *Midwest League (A)*

### **Cooley Law School Stadium**

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Lansing, MI 48912

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President: Tom Dickson

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Pitching Coach: Tony Caceres

Hitting Coach: Matt Young

Position Coach: Dave Pano

Trainer: Caleb Daniel

Strength and Conditioning: Aaron Spano



## **Vancouver Canadians** *Northwest League (Short-Season A)*

### **Scotiabank Field at Nat Bailey Stadium**

4601 Ontario Street

Vancouver, British Columbia V5V 3H4

Phone: (604) 872-5232 • Fax: (604) 872-1714

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Web: [www.canadiansbaseball.com](http://www.canadiansbaseball.com)

Principal Owner & Managing General Partner: Jake Kerr

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Pitching Coach: Jim Czajkowski

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Trainer: Michael Rendon

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## **Bluefield Blue Jays** *Appalachian League (R)*

### **Bowen Field**

2003 Stadium Drive

Bluefield, WV 24701

Phone: (304) 324-1326 • Fax: (304) 324-1318

Email: [babybirds1@comcast.net](mailto:babybirds1@comcast.net)

Website: [www.bluefieldjays.com](http://www.bluefieldjays.com)

President: George McGonagle

General Manager: Rocky Malimisura

Manager: Dennis Holmberg

Pitching Coach: Adan Bernero

Hitting Coach: Carlos Villalobos

Position Coach: Chris Schaeffer

Trainer: Luke Greene


Strength and Conditioning: Justin Batchner

(As of 4/3/2018)

Coaching Staff						
11 Casey Candaele - Manager						
8 Donnie Murphy - Hitting Coach						
12 Mark Riggins - Pitching Coach						
28 Michel Abreu - Coach						
Dan Leja - Athletic Trainer						
Kyle Edlhuber - Strength and Conditioning						
#	Pitchers			#	Position Players	Pos
29	Travis Bergen	LHP		23	Riley Adams	C
22	Justin Dillon	RHP		1	Ivan Castillo	IF
13	Josh DeGraaf	RHP		6	D.J. Davis	OF
27	Connor Eller	RHP		5	Yeltsin Gudino	IF
14	Nick Hartman	RHP			Bryan Hudson	OF
21	Juliandry Higuera	LHP		20	Bradley Jones	IF
	Justin Maese	RHP		35	Nash Knight	IF
52	Jackson McClelland	RHP		19	John La Prise	IF
25	Patrick Murphy	RHP		44	Alberto Mineo	C
15	William Ouellette	RHP		3	Rodrigo Orozco	OF
24	Nate Pearson	RHP		7	Josh Palacios	OF
16	Tayler Saucedo	LHP		4	Eduard Pinto	OF
18	Kirby Snead	LHP		10	Andres Sotillo	C
32	TJ Zeuch	RHP		2	Logan Warmoth	IF

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### MANAGER

#### CASEY CANDAELE

2018 is Casey Candaele's first season managing an affiliated baseball team. As a player, Candaele played 18 seasons in professional baseball, including nine in the Major Leagues with the Montreal Expos, Houston Astros, and Cleveland Indians. He finished 4th in National League Rookie of the Year voting in 1987, hitting .272 in 138 games in his first full season. During his career, he was known as a hard-nosed versatile player who appeared at every defensive position besides catcher and pitcher in the Major Leagues. He retired as a player in 2000 after over 2,100 games in the Majors and Minors. For the past two seasons, he has been the Seattle Mariners' First Base Coach and worked previously in the Texas Rangers' system as a Field Coordinator and Infield and Base Running Coach.



### PITCHING COACH

#### MARK RIGGINS

Mark Riggins returns for his second season in Dunedin in 2018. A former Florida State League All-Star as a player, he retired and began coaching in 1984, ascending through the St. Louis Cardinals minor league affiliates before being named their Major League pitching coach for the 1995 season. From 1996-2007, he was the Cardinals minor league pitching coordinator. He took the same position with the Chicago Cubs from 2008-2010 and served as the Cubs Major League pitching coach in 2011. From 2012-2015, he was the minor league pitching coordinator for the Cincinnati Reds and was named their Major League pitching coach to begin the 2016 season.

The advertisement features a circular logo for Dunedin Brewery on the left. The logo is blue with a white anchor in the center. The text 'Florida's Oldest Microbrewery' is written in a curve at the top, and 'Dunedin Brewery' is written in a curve at the bottom. The background of the ad is a textured grey with a large, stylized red baseball seam running diagonally from the top right to the bottom left. To the right of the logo, the text 'Handcrafted Ale & Lager. Bar Food. Live Music.' is displayed in a serif font. Below this, the address '937 Douglas Ave in Downtown Dunedin' is written in a smaller, sans-serif font.

*Handcrafted Ale & Lager.  
Bar Food. Live Music.*

937 Douglas Ave  
in Downtown Dunedin



## HITTING COACH

**DONNIE MURPHY**

Donnie Murphy joins Dunedin as the team's Hitting Coach in 2018. Like Candaele, Murphy played nine seasons in the Major Leagues as a player, appearing with the Kansas City Royals, Oakland Athletics, Florida Marlins, Chicago Cubs, and Texas Rangers between 2004 and 2014. Murphy retired as a player in 2015 and served as the A-Lansing Lugsnuts Hitting Coach during the 2016 and 2017 seasons. In 2017, Murphy guided Lansing hitters to a first place finish in the Midwest League in on-base percentage (.351) and the second-best ranking in average (.268), runs (685), and on-base plus slugging (.742).



## COACH

**MICHEL ABREU**

Coach Michel Abreu begins his second season coaching in Dunedin in 2018 following a 13-year playing career in the minor leagues and foreign leagues. An accomplished hitter, Abreu won the 2006 Eastern League (AA) batting championship (.332), the 2009 Puerto Rican League MVP, the 2012 Mexican League batting title, and the 2013 Japanese Pacific League homerun crown. Across 13 professional seasons, Abreu hit .309 with 239 home runs.



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**TRAINER**

*DAN LEJA*

Trainer Dan Leja joins Dunedin in 2018 from the Vancouver Canadians where he served as Athletic Trainer for the past two seasons. Prior to his work in the Blue Jays system, Leja worked for the Tampa Bay Rays (2015) and Arizona Diamondbacks (2013). He holds a Bachelor Degree from Grand Valley State University and a Master's from the University of North Carolina at Pembroke.



**STRENGTH COACH**

**KYLE EDLHUBER**

2018 will be Kyle Edlhuber's fourth season coaching a Blue Jays affiliate. Edlhuber played collegiate baseball at the Wisconsin Lutheran College and graduated with undergraduate degrees in Kinesiology and Exercise Science and Business Administration. He received his Master's from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse in 2015 in Human Performance. A former collegiate coach, he has served as Strength and Conditioning Coach for the Blue Jays Gulf Coast League Affiliate since 2015.

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## TIM MAYZA

MLB DEBUT: AUGUST 15, 2017  
vs TAMPA BAY RAYS

### How did you find out you were being called up to the Major Leagues?

We were on a bus from Toledo back to Buffalo. It was pretty late, probably around midnight or 12:30. Coach Bob Stanley called me on the bus from the other bus and said I was going up. At the time, it was a rush. It's a little bit surreal when you get that call. You question 'Is this happening?'. There was a lot of excitement and really just filled with happiness and overjoyed that I got the call.

### Who did you call first with the news?

I called my parents and my fiancé. They were excited. For my mom, it was a long day. My sister had just left to go play professional basketball in Denmark, so she was waiting for her to land over there and then I call them with that information. It was definitely an exciting couple days for my parents. It was awesome that they were able to come up and see my debut.

### From the time you were notified until you arrived in the clubhouse, take us through your first day as a Major Leaguer.

The bus got back and they gave me the details for the car service that was going to pick me up in the morning at the stadium in Buffalo and drive me up to Toronto. I actually slept pretty good, considering. I felt pretty comfortable. I was able to sleep because I knew some of the guys that were up there from the Spring Training before. It eased my mind when the call came knowing that there were some familiar faces that I was going to see the next day. In the morning, I got in the car and drove about an hour and a half, two hours to the hotel in Toronto until they called and gave me the okay to head down to the clubhouse.

### What was it like watching your first game from the Toronto bullpen in the Rogers Centre?

It's hard to describe. You put it in the perspective that it's just a game, as much as you can, and that it doesn't differ from anything else you've done along the way in the minors. The only difference is bigger stadiums and more people. That's what I tried to think about during that time.

### What advice did the bullpen pitchers give you before you headed to the mound?

Make sure you take a chance to take it in. Don't get too excited, take the experience in, but realize that there's still a job to be done.

### When your whirlwind first day as a Major Leaguer ended, was there one memory that stuck out that made your debut extra special?

The people that were there to experience it with me: my parents, my siblings, my college coach was able to be there, my fiancé was able to be there. To be able to share that moment with them and see the excitement and joy on their faces, that's what made it all special to me.

# FIRSTS



## ANTHONY ALFORD

MLB DEBUT: MAY 19, 2017  
AT BALTIMORE ORIOLES

### **How did you find out you were being called up to the Majors?**

My manager told me. We were on a bus, on a road trip from New Hampshire to Reading, Pennsylvania. We made it to Reading and it was like midnight. He pulled me off the bus and told me I was going up. I really thought he was talking about going to Buffalo. When he told me I was going to meet the big league team in Baltimore, I almost fainted. I thought I was in a dream.

### **Who did you call first with the good news?**

My wife. At first, she thought I was just joking with her. When I finally got her convinced that I was serious, she actually got emotional. She started crying and told me how happy she was for me. She knows how tough of a journey I've been on with the injuries and all since I started my baseball career full-time. She was really emotional, but she was really excited.

### **From the time you were notified until you arrived in the clubhouse, take us through your first day as a Major Leaguer.**

I didn't go to sleep until about three-thirty in the morning. I couldn't sleep because my emotions were running crazy. I was thinking about what the next day was going to be like, trying to imagine what it would be like. I got up early in the morning and got a shuttle over to Baltimore from Reading. I got there and started my normal routine, but I was numb that whole day. It felt like the whole day was a blur.

### **How did it feel to jog out to your position in the outfield for the first time in front of 30,000 fans?**

I was actually nervous because batting practice got rained out, so I didn't get to take fly balls or hit on the field. Everything was in the cages. I wasn't necessarily worried about my hitting. I felt like that would come along. I was more worried about defense, how the ball was going to fly, hoping the ball wouldn't get lost in the lights. I just wanted to play good defense that night and do what I could do to help the team win.

### **When your whirlwind first day as a Major Leaguer ended, was there one memory that stuck out that made your debut extra special?**

The best memory I had was when I was going out to warm up. Adam Jones was out there in the outfield and he looked at me and said "Congrats on your debut, kid. Good luck." with a smile on his face. That made my moment. He's a guy that I look up to. I like the way he plays the game. I like the way he goes about his business on the field and how he carries himself off the field. That was a special moment for me.



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Make today's Blue Jays game a lasting memory by keeping score of all the action on the field! The best part about keeping score is that it's easy! All you need is a pencil, the scorecard on the next page, and a few simple abbreviations.

**1<sup>ST</sup>** every player on the field is assigned a number based on their position:

1-Pitcher 2-Catcher 3-First Baseman  
4-Second Baseman 5-Third Baseman  
6-Shortstop 7-Left Fielder  
8-Center Fielder 9-Right Fielder  
DH-Designated Hitter

**2<sup>ND</sup>** you can combine the position numbers with simple abbreviations to record the action on the field:

Single: 1B Double: 2B Triple: 3B Home Run: HR  
Strikeout: K Strikeout Looking: X  
Fielder's Choice: FC Passed Ball: PB Double Play: DP  
Hit By Pitch: HBP Stolen Base: SB Error: E

Every time a batter comes to the plate, use the numbers and abbreviations above to indicate how he reached base or how he was retired.

For example, if a player hits a fly ball to the center fielder for an out, you would write: F8. If a batter hits a ground ball, put the numbers for who he hit the ball to and who it was thrown to. So, if a player hits a ground ball to the shortstop who throws it to the first baseman for the out, write: 6-3.

If a player gets a hit, draw a line along the diamond to indicate what base he reached. For example, if a player hits a single, draw a line to first base and note 1B next to it so you know the player singled. If the player advances, simply draw a line to the base he reaches. If he scores, fill in the diamond to indicate a run scored.

## SAMPLE SCORE SHEET

Toronto Blue Jays	#	Pos	8	9
R. Henderson	24	7		
D. White	25	8		F7
P. Molitor	19	DH		
J. Carter	29	9	F7	
J. Olerud	9	3		
R. Alomar	12	4	3U	
T. Fernandez	1	6		
E. Sprague	33	5	/BB	
P. Borders	10	2	F4	

8th inning:

Carter flies out to the left fielder (F7)  
Olerud walks (BB)  
Alomar grounds out to the first baseman, unassisted (3U)  
Fernandez hit by pitch (HBP)  
Sprague walks (BB)  
Borders flies out to the second baseman (F4)

9th inning:

Henderson walks (BB)  
White flies out to the left fielder (F7)  
Molitor singles (1B)  
Carter homers (HR)

Blue Jays Trivia: What important Blue Jays game is shown on the scorecard?

Answer: Game 6 of the 1993 World Series

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	AB 10	R 11	H 12	RBI 13	
1														
2														
3														
4														
5														
6														
7														
8														
9														
TOTALS														
PITCHERS	DEC	IP	H	R	ER	BB	K	BF	HB	WP	BK	SB	CS	

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## MEET THE PLAYERS



6'4" | 225 | R/R C | #23  
**RILEY ADAMS**  
DOB 6/26/1996 HOMETOWN ENCINITAS, CA  
2017 TEAM(S) VANCOUVER  
ACQUIRED 3<sup>RD</sup> RD, 2017 DRAFT



6'1" | 205 | L/L LHP | #29  
**TRAVIS BERGEN**  
DOB 10/8/1993 HOMETOWN McDONOUGH, GA  
2017 TEAM(S) BLUEFIELD  
VANCOUVER  
ACQUIRED 7<sup>TH</sup> RD, 2015 DRAFT



5'9" | 173 | S/R C | #1  
**IVAN CASTILLO**  
DOB 5/30/1995 HOMETOWN SANTIAGO, DR  
2017 TEAM(S) LYNCHBURG (A+)  
AKRON (AA)  
ACQUIRED MINOR LEAGUE RULE 5 DRAFT, DEC 2017



6'1" | 180 | L/R OF | #6  
**D.J. DAVIS**  
DOB 7/25/1994 HOMETOWN WIGGINS, MS  
2017 TEAM(S) DUNEDIN  
ACQUIRED 1<sup>ST</sup> RD, 2012 DRAFT



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6'4" | 195 | R/R RHP | #13

**JOSH DeGRAAF**

DOB 1/28/1993 HOMETOWN MORRIS, IL  
2017 TEAM(S) DUNEDIN NEW HAMPSHIRE  
ACQUIRED 31<sup>ST</sup> RD, 2015 DRAFT



6'3" | 225 | R/R RHP | #22

**JUSTIN DILLON**

DOB 9/5/1993 HOMETOWN PLACERVILLE, CA  
2017 TEAM(S) VANCOUVER  
ACQUIRED 10<sup>TH</sup> RD, 2017 DRAFT



6'2" | 195 | R/R RHP | #27

**CONNOR ELLER**

DOB 1/23/1994 HOMETOWN NORTH LITTLE ROCK, AR  
2017 TEAM(S) LANSING DUNEDIN  
ACQUIRED 22<sup>ND</sup> RD, 2016 DRAFT



6'0" | 150 | R/R IF | #5

**YELTSIN GUDINO**

DOB 1/17/1997 HOMETOWN MARACAY, VEN  
2017 TEAM(S) LANSING  
ACQUIRED INT'L FA, JULY 2013



6'2" | 180 | R/R RHP | #14

**NICK HARTMAN**

DOB 10/24/1994 HOMETOWN HOUSTON, TX  
2017 TEAM(S) LANSING DUNEDIN  
ACQUIRED 9<sup>TH</sup> RD, 2016 DRAFT



6'1" | 180 | L/L LHP | #21

**JULIANDRY HIGUERA**

DOB 9/6/1994 HOMETOWN FALCON, VEN  
2017 TEAM(S) VANCOUVER LANSING  
ACQUIRED INT'L FA, SEPT 2012



6'1" | 180 | R/R IF | #20

**BRADLEY JONES**

DOB 6/12/1995 HOMETOWN TRAVELERS REST, SC  
2017 TEAM(S) LANSING DUNEDIN  
ACQUIRED 18<sup>TH</sup> RD, 2016 DRAFT



6'0" | 195 | S/R IF | #35

**NASH KNIGHT**

DOB 9/20/1992 HOMETOWN DENTON, TX  
2017 TEAM(S) LANSING DUNEDIN  
ACQUIRED FA, JUNE 2015



MEET THE PLAYERS



6'2" | 180 | L/R IF | #19

**JOHN LA PRIESE**

DOB 8/24/1993 HOMETOWN DOYLESTOWN, PA

2017 TEAM(S) DID NOT PLAY (INJURED)

ACQUIRED 19<sup>th</sup> RD, 2015 DRAFT



6'5" | 220 | R/R RHP | #52

**JACKSON MCCLELLAND**

DOB 7/19/1994 HOMETOWN CHERRY VALLEY, VA

2017 TEAM(S) LANSING DUNEDIN

ACQUIRED 15<sup>th</sup> RD, 2015 DRAFT



5'10" | 170 | L/R C | #44

**ALBERTO MINEO**

DOB 7/23/1994 HOMETOWN GORIZIA, ITALY

2017 TEAM(S) SOUTH BEND (A)

ACQUIRED MINOR LEAGUE RULE 5 DRAFT, DEC 2017



6'4" | 220 | R/R RHP | #25

**PATRICK MURPHY**

DOB 6/10/1995 HOMETOWN CHANDLER, AZ

2017 TEAM(S) BLUEFIELD LANSING DUNEDIN

ACQUIRED 3<sup>rd</sup> RD, 2013 DRAFT



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5'11" | 155 | S/R OF | #3

**RODRIGO OROZCO**

DOB 4/2/1995 HOMETOWN PANAMA CITY, PAN  
2017 TEAM(S) LANSING  
ACQUIRED INT'L FA, JULY 2012



6'1" | 195 | R/R RHP | #15

**WILLIAM OUELLETTE**

DOB 6/30/1993 HOMETOWN FULLERTON, CA  
2017 TEAM(S) VANCOUVER DUNEDIN  
ACQUIRED FA, JUNE 2016



6'1" | 193 | L/R OF | #7

**JOSH PALACIOS**

DOB 7/30/1995 HOMETOWN BROOKLYN, NY  
2017 TEAM(S) LANSING  
ACQUIRED 4<sup>TH</sup> RD, 2016 DRAFT



6'6" | 245 | R/R RHP | #24

**NATE PEARSON**

DOB 8/20/1996 HOMETOWN ODESSA, FL  
2017 TEAM(S) BLUEFIELD VANCOUVER  
ACQUIRED 1<sup>ST</sup> RD, 2017 DRAFT

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# MEET THE PLAYERS



5'11" | 150 | L/L OF | #4

**EDUARDO PINTO**

DOB 10/23/1994 HOMETOWN VALENCIA, VEN  
2017 TEAM(S) DOWN EAST (A+)  
DUNEDIN  
ACQUIRED TRADE W/ TEX  
JULY 2017



6'5" | 185 | L/L LHP | #16

**TAYLER SAUCEDO**

DOB 6/18/1993 HOMETOWN HONOLULU, HI  
2017 TEAM(S) LANSING  
DUNEDIN  
ACQUIRED 21<sup>ST</sup> RD, 2015 DRAFT



6'0" | 200 | L/L LHP | #18

**KIRBY SNEED**

DOB 10/7/1994 HOMETOWN ALACHUA, FL  
2017 TEAM(S) LANSING  
DUNEDIN  
ACQUIRED 10<sup>TH</sup> RD, 2016 DRAFT



5'11" | 180 | R/R C | #10

**ANDRES SOTILLO**

DOB 12/28/1993 HOMETOWN TUCUPITA, VEN  
2017 TEAM(S) LANSING  
DUNEDIN  
NEW HAMPSHIRE  
ACQUIRED INT'L FA, JAN 2012



6'0" | 190 | R/R IF | #2

**LOGAN WARMOTH**

DOB 9/6/1995 HOMETOWN ORLANDO, FL  
2017 TEAM(S) BLUEFIELD  
VANCOUVER  
ACQUIRED 1<sup>ST</sup> RD, 2017 DRAFT



6'7" | 225 | R/R RHP | #32

**T.J. ZEUCH**

DOB 8/1/1995 HOMETOWN MASON, OH  
2017 TEAM(S) BLUEFIELD  
DUNEDIN  
ACQUIRED 1<sup>ST</sup> RD, 2016 DRAFT

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## **Bradenton Marauders (70-62 in 2017, 3rd in FSL South)**

MLB Affiliate: Pittsburgh Pirates  
 Stadium: LECOM Park (Opened 1923, 8,500 Capacity)  
 Florida State League Championships: 1 (2016)  
 At Dunedin Stadium: May 7-9, June 29-July 1



## **Charlotte Stone Crabs (69-66 in 2017, 4th in FSL South)**

MLB Affiliate: Tampa Bay Rays  
 Stadium: Charlotte Sports Park (Opened 1987, 7,670 Capacity)  
 Florida State League Championships: 3 (1989, 2002, 2015)  
 At Dunedin Stadium: June 11-14, August 3-5



## **Clearwater Threshers (67-71 in 2017, 3rd in FSL North)**

MLB Affiliate: Philadelphia Phillies  
 Stadium: Spectrum Field (Opened 2003, 8,500 Capacity)  
 Florida State League Championships: 2 (1993, 2007)  
 At Dunedin Stadium: April 7-8, April 26-29, July 9-12



## **Daytona Tortugas (53-80 in 2017, 5th in FSL North)**

MLB Affiliate: Cincinnati Reds  
 Stadium: Radiology Associates Field at Jackie Robinson Ballpark (Opened 1914, 4,200 Capacity)  
 Florida State League Championships: 9 (1948, 1953, 1981, 1995, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2011, 2013)  
 At Dunedin Stadium: April 20-22, August 31-September 2



## **Dunedin Blue Jays (72-66 in 2017 2nd in FSL North)**

MLB Affiliate: Toronto Blue Jays  
 Stadium: Dunedin Stadium (Opened 1990, 5,509 Capacity)  
 Florida State League Championships: 1 (2017)  
 At Dunedin Stadium: ALWAYS



## **Florida Fire Frogs (48-81 in 2017, 6th in FSL North)**

MLB Affiliate: Atlanta Braves  
 Stadium: Osceola County Stadium (Opened 1984, 5,300 Capacity)  
 Florida State League Championships: None  
 At Dunedin Stadium: May 21-23, July 16-18



**Fort Myers Miracle** (75-60 in 2017, 1st in FSL South)

MLB Affiliate: Minnesota Twins

Stadium: Hammond Stadium at CenturyLink Sports Complex (Opened 1991, 9,300 Capacity)

Florida State League Championships: 7 (1969-1972, 1978, 1985, 2014)

At Dunedin Stadium: April 17-19, May 10-12

**Jupiter Hammerheads** (67-68 in 2017, 5th in FSL South)

MLB Affiliate: Miami Marlins

Stadium: Roger Dean Chevrolet Stadium (Opened 1998, 6,871 Capacity)

Florida State League Championships: None

At Dunedin Stadium: August 13-16

**Lakeland Flying Tigers** (62-66 in 2017, 4th in FSL North)

MLB Affiliate: Detroit Tigers

Stadium: Publix Field at Joker Marchant Stadium (Opened 1966, 8,500 Capacity)

Florida State League Championships: 6 (1924, 1954, 1976-77, 1992, 2012)

At Dunedin Stadium: May 24-27, July 31-August 2

**Palm Beach Cardinals** (74-60 in 2017, 2nd in FSL South)

MLB Affiliate: St. Louis Cardinals

Stadium: Roger Dean Chevrolet Stadium (Opened 1966, 8,500 Capacity)

Florida State League Championships: 4 (1974, 1991, 2005, 2017)

At Dunedin Stadium: August 27-30

**St. Lucie Mets** (63-75 in 2017, 6th in FSL South)

MLB Affiliate: New York Mets

Stadium: First Data Field (Opened 1998, 7,000 Capacity)

Florida State League Championships: 5 (1988, 1996, 1998, 2006)

At Dunedin Stadium: June 18-20, August 17-19

**Tampa Tarpons** (85-50 in 2017, 1st in FSL North)

MLB Affiliate: New York Yankees

Stadium: George M. Steinbrenner Field (Opened 1996, 11,000 Capacity)

Florida State League Championships: 9 (1920, 1925, 1957, 1961, 1994, 2001, 2004, 2009, 2010)

At Dunedin Stadium: June 1-3, July 2-3, July 19-21



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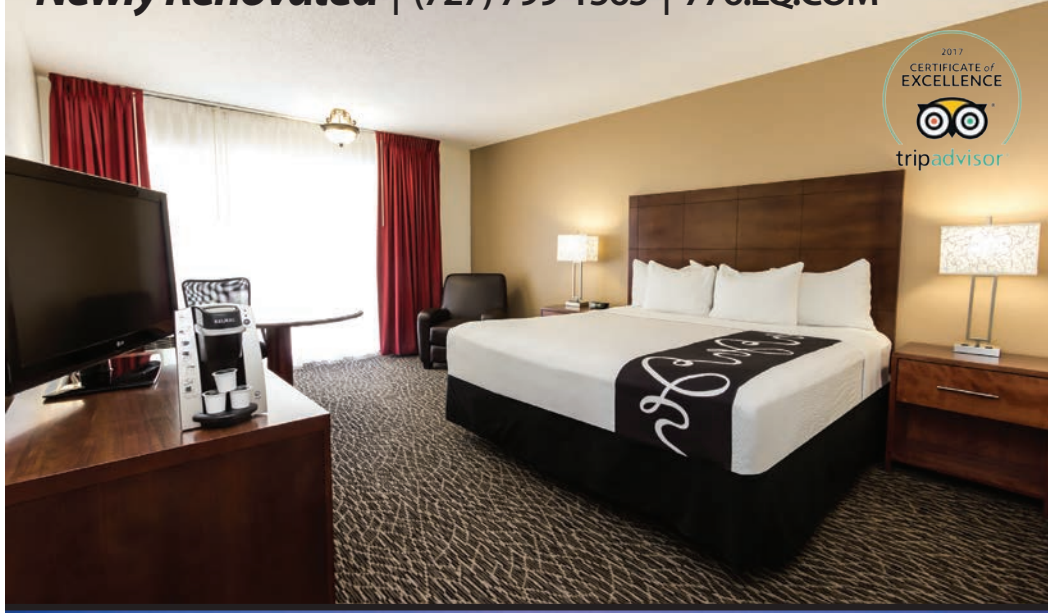
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# JOSH DEGRAAF

## DUNEDIN BLUE JAYS COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENT

Dunedin Blue Jays starting pitcher Josh DeGraaf had a memorable 2017 season on the field, establishing himself as Dunedin's ace in the second half and helping to pitch the team to a share of the Florida State League's Championship. While his impact was great between the white lines, DeGraaf made many more memories for members of our local Dunedin community off the field. For his continued efforts to support the local community, DeGraaf was honored as the Dunedin Blue Jays 2017 Community Service Award winner and the Toronto Blue Jays R. Howard Webster Award for Community Service.

Throughout the 2017 season, DeGraaf represented the Blue Jays in the community through numerous appearances away from the ballpark, supporting and encouraging local children, students, and families.

"We could always count on Josh. Hands down, no one was more eager to participate and help out throughout the season," Blue Jays Community Relations Manager Kathi Beckman said about DeGraaf. "He was a leader and an advocate for our programs in the clubhouse all year. He was so personable with fans and the community and was an absolute natural with children and students."

DeGraaf helped lead the 2017 Blue Jays Bookin' It To The Ballpark Reading Program, the largest community outreach program in the franchise's history, reaching five hundred elementary school students in 14 Pinellas County schools. DeGraaf visited local elementary schools to support the program and promote literacy, reading to local students, answering their questions, and encouraging them in their studies. Over the course of the six-week program, local students read for 146,035 minutes, over 101 full days of reading.

DeGraaf was also active at the 2017 Blue Jays Bowling Tournament, an event that raised \$12,820 for Ronald McDonald House Charities of Tampa Bay. Prior to the event, he volunteered to paint pottery to be raffled at the event and then helped raise nearly \$1000 selling raffle tickets to fans at the event.

DeGraaf also took to the shopping mall to help out local families, participating in the Blue Jays Here We Grow and Toys For Tots Shopping Drives. During the Here We Grow Shopping Spree, he helped purchase school supplies and clothing for local students in need. During the Toys For Tots drive, he joined teammate Ryan Cook in selecting \$1000 worth of toys and presents to be given to local children during the upcoming holiday season.

Reflecting on the myriad of events he participated in throughout the year, DeGraaf noted the time he spent with local students during the Reading Program as particularly memorable.

"I loved the kids' questions. They always had really funny questions and sometimes very surprisingly good questions about baseball, about reading, and about life. It was fun hearing those and laughing with them. They may have been early mornings, but I enjoy working with kids."



# LOGAN WARMOTH

2017 1st round pick Logan Warmoth had an exciting professional debut in 2017, hitting .302 between Bluefield (R) and Vancouver (Short-A) and helping lead Vancouver to the Northwest League title. After turning heads with his steady play at shortstop and plus hit tool, he'll skip A-Lansing and begin the 2018 season in Dunedin.

1. Favorite player growing up:

Derek Jeter

2. Most excited for in 2018:

Experiencing my first full season. It's going to be long and a grind and I'll get a better understanding of that.

3. Biggest lesson learned last season:

How to get over good days and bad days. You play everyday and it's a long year. It's a marathon, not a sprint.



4. Best clubhouse prank:

Throwing freezing cold water on someone in the middle of their shower.

5. Guilty pleasure:  
I'll admit it gladly.  
I'm addicted to Fortnite.



6. Pets:

I have a dog, a Bijon, named Lucky.



7. Favorite baseball movie:  
Rookie of the Year

8. Best ballpark food:

Chicken tenders and fries

9. Preferred social media:

Instagram

10. If you could have dinner with a celebrity:

Mila Kunis



11. Superstition:

If something's going good, I keep wearing the same stuff...clothes, arm sleeve, tape. I wash it though!

12. If you could be in a TV show:

Riverdale. That's my favorite show out right now.

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A photograph of a baseball catcher, Alberto Mineo, in a blue and white uniform, crouching on a field. He is wearing a blue helmet and chest protector, and holding a baseball glove.

## ALBERTO MINEO AIMS TO MAKE HISTORY FOR ITALY



Baseball is truly a global sport.

Fifty-seven different countries outside of the United States have sent a player to the Major Leagues, making baseball easily the most ethnically diverse of American major sports. Every big league team positions scouts around the world, leaving no stone unturned globally in the search for talented ballplayers. Multiple countries around the world have sent hundreds of players to Major and Minor League rosters.

Italy is not one of those countries. At least, not yet.

Despite the success of numerous players of Italian descent (Joe DiMaggio, Yogi Berra, Craig Biggio, Roy Campanella, Mike Piazza to name a notable few Italian-American ballplayers), the game has never found popularity within Italy. Only seven players born in the country have ever played a game in the Major Leagues. Just one of those, Alex Liddi of the Mariners, actually grew up in Italy.

Dunedin Blue Jays catcher Alberto Mineo hopes to change that.

Born and raised in Gorizia, Italy, a town of just over 35,000 in the northeastern corner of the country near the border with Slovenia, Mineo has taken the scenic route to Dunedin Stadium.

"I used to play soccer. I started playing soccer when I was five. But, my dad used to play in the Italian Baseball League. One day, he asked if I wanted to go watch a practice. I went, and the next day I was practicing," Mineo said of his beginnings in the game. "I was lucky because in my hometown, baseball is actually pretty famous. It's a big city for baseball even though it's a small town. We had a field and I was always able to go there and practice."

Despite growing up in a town with a ball diamond, finding other kids his age to play with him was always a challenge.

"I've always been the only guy in my classroom that played baseball," Mineo said. "It's one of the last sports. It's very small."

Because so few kids play the game in Italy, finding stores that carried equipment also posed challenges for Mineo growing up.

“For equipment, you have to go online and get it from the United States and ship it.”

Although he was the only student in his class that played the game, he stuck with it. When he was 14, he stopped playing soccer and focused on baseball full-time. Soon after, he was rewarded with the opportunity to try out for the MLB Europe Academy.

“The European Academy is just like a camp that goes the whole month of August. It’s where the scouts go. I was 15 when I got invited to play at the Academy and I played there when I was 15 and 16.”

Playing alongside players from countries across Europe, Mineo’s skills behind the plate caught the attention of the Chicago Cubs area scout Bill Holmberg, who had watched Mineo work with pitchers while serving as the pitching coach for the Italian National Team. He offered Mineo a contract and a plane ticket to Australia to gain experience playing in the Australian Baseball League.

Australia was just one of the many flights Mineo would take early in his career.

“My first two years, I went to Spring Training with the Cubs for 2 weeks and then went back home to finish school. Then I’d come back in June for the season.”

He continued this routine, flying to the United States for Spring Training, flying back home to attend high school, and then turning around and returning to America to play more ball until 2013 when he graduated.

“It took me a little bit to get comfortable. It was a little bit difficult,” Mineo said of his first summers in the United States. “The food, of course, I wasn’t used to it. Baseball-wise, the game was just so much of a higher level.”

Developmentally, he was behind his counterparts in the United States and struggled early in his career. In 2012, his debut in America, he hit just .157 in the Arizona League (Rookie). The next year, his average crawled up to .222. He hit .241 in 2014, his third year in the Arizona League, but saw his average fall back down to .200 in 2015 in his A-ball debut.

He made strides in 2016, his first season in full-season ball, hitting .243, but still averaged more than a strikeout per game at the plate. The rigors of a full season of baseball were difficult to adjust to.

“In a season [in Italy], we’d play 40 games. It was hard. But, once you get to know your body better and what your body needs to recover, it gets easier. The good thing, playing a lot, is that you can get in a good rhythm. It’s hard for a part, but easier on the other side.”

In the off-season, he knew he had to get better offensively. Even though he was well-regarded with his glove, he would have to improve at the plate to reach the majors.

“I worked a lot with the coaches, especially on my hitting. That was the thing I really needed to work on at the time.”

His hard work paid off. In 2017, his batting average jumped over 40 points to .278. His on-base percentage climbed even more dramatically, from .291 to a strong .374 as he cut down on strikeouts and took more walks.

“Last year was my first year I really got a lot of at-bats and the chance to play every day. That really helped me, because I was able to make adjustments from day to day.”

Seeing his improvement, the Cubs offered him a Minor League contract extension in the off-season. However, the Cubs weren't the only team that was impressed with his play.

“I go back to Italy in the off-season. I was actually hitting in the cage and I see a call from Chicago. I thought, “Wow, that's weird”, so I picked it up. It was a guy from the Cubs saying “Hey, the Blue Jays picked you up in the Rule 5 Draft.” About five minutes later, Gil Kim [Blue Jays Director of Player Development] called me. My legs were actually shaking for a little bit because it was so crazy.”

Thanks to all of the moving around he did early in his career, Mineo was prepared to quickly acclimated to his new home in the Blue Jays organization and his new teammates.

“It was like my first year all over again. I was lucky, because in South Bend we'd played against Lansing so I knew some of the guys. It was crazy getting to know all the guys all over again. It's been fun and didn't take too long because the guys here are great teammates. That made it easy.”

One thing that has helped him adjust and make friends quicker is his ability to speak multiple languages, allowing him to fit in seamlessly both with English-speaking and Spanish-speaking teammates.

“I speak Italian, Spanish, and English. Spanish is similar to Italian. I was listening to the Latin players talking and I could pick up words here and there. So, I started hanging out with them, and that's how I learned it. It helps a lot as a catcher.”

Entering the 2018 season, Mineo recognizes the opportunity he has to make history for his home country. Currently, he can count on one hand the number of Italian-born players in affiliated baseball, a number that he hopes will increase as more players have success in the game.

“It makes it even more exciting for me to work harder and harder every day and try to make it and represent my country at the highest level of baseball in the world.”







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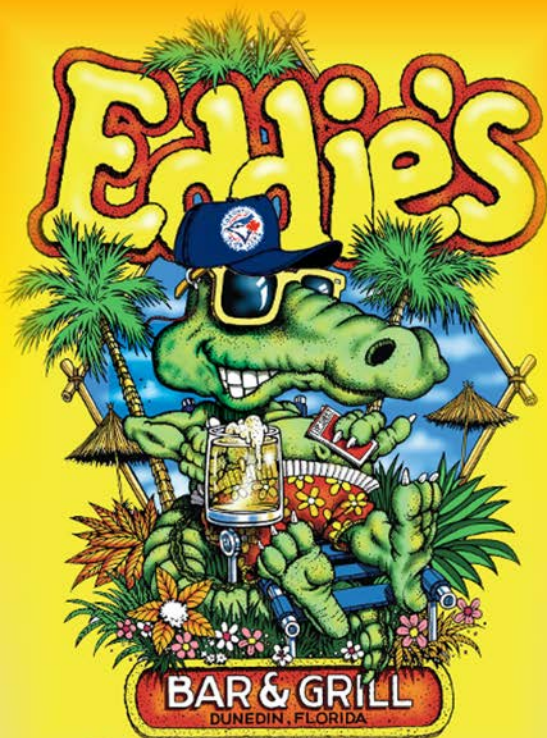
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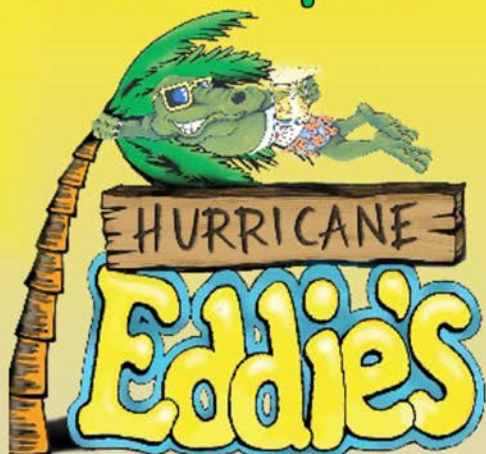
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**Autographs:** For your safety, fans are asked to please stay off the dugout tops when seeking autographs.

**Beer Sales:** Beer is available at Dunedin Stadium during all Florida State League games. Florida law prohibits the sale of alcoholic beverages to minors. The City of Dunedin and the Blue Jays reserve the right to refuse the sale of alcoholic beverages and may evict from the ballpark any person deemed intoxicated.

**Blue Jays Administrative Office:** The main office is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. For information please call 727-733-9302.

**Disorderly Conduct:** Will not be tolerated and is cause for immediate ejection. If your enjoyment of the game is infringed upon due to profanity or disorderly conduct, please notify a Blue Jays staff member if such aid is needed.

**First Aid:** If you need first aid or are aware of a medical emergency, an usher or security personnel will assist you. Please notify an usher or security officer if such aid is needed.

**Foul Balls:** Fans are permitted to keep balls that land in the seating area as souvenirs. However, fans are not allowed on the field to retrieve a ball or interfere with a ball in play. FOUL BALLS MAY BE DANGEROUS, PLEASE BE ALERT AT ALL TIMES AND BE AWARE OF THE POTENTIAL HAZARDS.

**Gates Open:** The gates at Dunedin Stadium will open one hour prior to the scheduled first pitch.

**Handicapped Accommodations:** Dunedin Stadium is handicap accessible. Wheelchair seating is available through the ticket office, and a wheelchair ramp is located down the left field line. An electric wheelchair lift is located down the right field line. Handicap parking is available in Dunedin Stadium's main lot on a first-come, first-serve basis.

**Jays Shop:** Game days only: 1 hour prior to game time until end of 7th inning

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**Outside Food and Drink Policy:** Guests are permitted to bring one 20 oz. factory-sealed, non-alcoholic beverage in a plastic bottle into the stadium. Individually portioned food is also allowed. In compliance with City of Dunedin policy, no other bottles, coolers, or cans may be brought into the stadium. These items must be disposed of before entering the gates.

**Parking:** Free parking in the main stadium lot is available to fans on a first-come, first-serve basis on game days.

**Rain Check Policy:** In the event a game is not played or does not progress to or beyond a point of play constituting a regulation game under Official Baseball Rule 7.01 (formerly 4.10) on the date specified on the ticket, fans may exchange their ticket at the Stadium Box Office for a ticket to any regular season Dunedin Blue Jays home game within 365 days of the cancelled game date.

**Restrooms:** Restrooms are located on the main concourse down the first base line. Additional restrooms are located adjacent to the Johnsonville Grill Tent directly behind home plate.

**Security:** Please note that in response to a league mandated initiative to enhance security and safety, fans attending games at Dunedin Stadium will be required to pass through metal detectors when entering the gates. The safety of our fans is of the utmost importance.

**Smoking Policy:** Dunedin Stadium has been designated a "smoke free" stadium. Absolutely no smoking is allowed in the concourse, seating bowl, or anywhere else inside the stadium's gates, including e-cigarettes.

**Tickets:** Tickets for Blue Jays games are available at the Blue Jays ticket office, by phone (727-733-0429 or 1-888-525-5297) and online at DunedinBlueJays.com.

**Trespassing:** Any fan venturing onto the playing field before, during, or after a game or event will be subject to criminal prosecution under the criminal code. Any guest who re-enters the stadium after being removed or ejected will also be issued a trespass notice and possible further prosecution.

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