

2008 SEASON RECAP

TIGERS GO EXTRAS TO BEAT DEVILS -- The Albion Tigers have enjoyed solid starting pitching all season long from the likes of Mike Nanstad, Ben Everson, Casey Schmeling, and others. But a new face joined that crowd on Thursday night in Jefferson when Josh Eastman, in his first Albion starting assignment, threw 5+ innings and allowed only 2 runs on 5 hits and left the game with the lead in the sixth inning. He was relieved by Nanstad, who threw three scoreless innings to earn the win in relief when the Tigers were able to rally for a 3-2 victory in 8 innings. Jefferson took a 1-0 lead in the third on three straight singles, but Albion bounced back in the sixth and took the lead on four straight walks to Ethan Vaade, Marty Johnson, Pete Millar, and Jesse Appel. Both runs (Vaade, Johnson) actually scored on wild pitches during that stretch. Jefferson was able to tie the game in the bottom of the sixth, and it stayed that way until the top of the eighth, when Johnson led off with a single and was sacrificed to second by Millar. After Brian Towns reached on an error, Corey Vickers promptly singled to rightfield, scoring Johnson and giving the Tigers a 3-2 lead. Nanstad closed the door in the bottom half to preserve the Albion victory. The win closes out the season for Albion, which finished 13-11 overall, including a 7-3 record against HTL and NL playoff teams.

ALBION DEFEATS EVANSVILLE 3-0 -- On Sunday, the Evansville Jays were playing for home-field advantage throughout the playoffs. But the Albion Tigers were playing for pride, and were able to come away with a 3-0 victory behind the pitching of Mike Nanstad and some timely offense. Nanstad went the distance for his fifth complete game win of the year, shutting out the Jays on three hits while striking out seven. Albion got on the board in the first inning when Aaron Laskowski doubled, was sacrificed to third by Jesse Appel, and eventually scored on Pete Millar's sacrifice fly to deep left. The Tigers tacked on two more in the fifth on Appel's sacrifice fly was followed by a throwing error by the Jays. Marty Johnson chipped in some offense with two hits, and Aaron Manogue raised his team-leading batting average to .357 by going 2x3 and scoring a run.

TIGERS WIN NL GAME AGAINST SWINGERS -- Aaron Laskowski made good on his first appearance as a starting pitcher for the Albion Tigers, and also hit a two-run double for good measure in leading the Tigers to an 8-4 Eastern Night League win against the Whitewater Swingers on Thursday night in Edgerton. Laskowski went the distance for the Tigers, striking out eight while allowing only four hits and three earned runs. His teammates did the rest, answering every Whitewater rally with one of their own. Whitewater got the scoring started in the top of the third with two runs, but Albion bounced back in the bottom of the inning when Laskowski laced a bases-loaded double to left field that scored two runs easily, while the third run was able to score when the Whitewater leftfielder bobbled the ball. Laskowski then scored himself when Leif Thronson singled him in to give Albion a 4-2 lead. After Whitewater evened the score in the top of the 4th, Albion responded with a three-run bottom half on RBI singles by Corey Vickers, Dan Millar, and Jake Rusch. Dan Millar capped the Albion scoring when his third hit of the game drove in Mike Nanstad in the sixth inning.

NANSTAD PULLS DOUBLE DUTY AGAINST DEVILS -- Mike Nanstad added a little offense to his game on Sunday and became a one-man gang in leading the Albion Tigers to a 6-3 victory over the Jefferson Blue Devils. Nanstad went the distance on the hill and struck out ten, while at the plate he reached base in all four plate appearances and scored a key run in the Tiger's decisive four-run eighth. The Tigers took a two-run lead in the first inning when Pete Millar had an RBI single and took advantage of a throwing error to score the second run. Jefferson tied the game with single runs in the sixth and seventh, but the Tigers blew it open with a four-run eighth. Millar singled again to lead off the inning, and Brian Towns reached on a bunt that was misplayed. After Casey Schmeling laid down a perfect sacrifice bunt, Nanstad was intentionally walked to set up Aaron Manogue, who promptly laced the first pitch to right field for his second hit of the game and two RBIs. Aaron Laskowski hit the next pitch off the right-field wall for a two-run triple to provide all the scoring Nanstad would need.

TIGERS UPEND UTICA 9-4 TO STAY IN RACE -- The Albion Tigers got an outstanding pitching performance from Mike Nanstad and kept themselves in the playoff race with a key win against the Utica Association on Sunday at Albion Park. Nanstad went the distance, striking out seven and allowing only six hits. After a leadoff single in the fourth inning, the Association was unable to get another base hit as Nanstad settled in and allowed only one unearned run after that point. Jordan Stine led the way offensively and defensively for Albion, going 2x4 and scoring what proved to be the winning run in the fourth when he singled, stole two bases, and scored on a throwing error. He also ended two Utica scoring threats from centerfield, throwing a runner out at the plate in the first inning and catching a two-out, bases-loaded line drive in the second. Ethan Vaade chipped in with two hits and two RBIs for Albion, and Aaron Manogue's leadoff triple keyed a four-run Tiger eighth that put the game out of reach.

MARTY JOHNSON PLAYS IN HTL ALL-STAR GAME

On Sunday Albion's Marty Johnson participated and played in the Home Talent All-Stars against the US Military All-Stars at Warner Park in Madison. Johnson played an errorless 2 innings at third base, recording two putouts in the HTL's 5-2 victory.

TIGERS HANG ON TO BEAT ORIOLES -- The Albion Tigers started out with a bang on Sunday, scoring seven runs in the first inning against visiting Orfordville. But as it turned out, they needed all of those and then some to hold off the Orioles and preserve a 10-9 victory. Jim Eastman and Aaron Manogue each had a two-run single in the Tigers big first inning, which also included RBIs from Brian Towns, Marty Johnson, and Matt Millar. Pete Millar drove in what proved to be the winning run in the eighth inning when he was hit by a pitch with the bases loaded. Ben Everson threw the first five innings for Albion and earned the win, allowing no earned runs. Aaron Laskowski and Mike Nanstad finished up, each throwing two innings in relief. Nanstad struck out four and wriggled out of a ninth inning jam to pick up the save.

TIGERS ROLL OVER KNIGHTS ON "JIM EASTMAN DAY" -- The Albion Tigers hosted the Dodgeville Knights on Independence

Day at Racetrack Park and rode the right-left combo of Mike Nanstad and Jeff Stone to a 5-1 victory. The Albion pitchers combined to allow only three baserunners, while Nanstad struck out nine in earning the win. Brian Towns and Aaron Laskowski each had two hits for Albion, and after Towns' 2-run single in the first inning, the Tigers never looked back. But the real highlight of the day was the recognition of Jim Eastman's 20th season with the Tigers. After the game, the Tigers and HTL president (and Dodgeville manager) Pat Reilly caught Eastman off-guard when they introduced him and presented him with an award recognizing his 20 years of service to the Tigers as a player and manager.

Eastman, who was named HTL Manager of the Year in 2002, started his Albion career in 1989 upon his graduation from Edgerton High School. He started Friday's game in rightfield, just yards behind his son Josh, who started at second base for the Tigers.

NANSTAD, APPEL LEAD TIGERS OVER GENERALS -- The Albion Tigers beat Fort Atkinson 6-0 Sunday behind outstanding performances from two of the best in the Home Talent League's Southeast Section. Mike Nanstad, recognized as last years' dominant pitcher, went the distance, blanking the Generals while allowing seven hits and no walks. 2006 section MVP Jesse Appel drove in three runs on two extra-base hits to lead the Tiger offense. The Tigers staked Nanstad to an early lead with three runs in the second inning with RBIs from Aaron Manogue, Matt Millar, and Ethan Vaade. Appel struck for the first time in the fourth, lining a bases-loaded ground-rule double to the rightfield corner. The Tiger centerfielder then capped the Albion scoring in the sixth with a run-scoring triple.

TIGERS WIN NL GAME AT WATERLOO -- Casey Schmeling pitched four innings for the win and the Albion bats came alive in a 13-8 Night League victory at Waterloo Thursday night. The Tigers exploded for 6 runs in the 2nd inning, highlighted by consecutive hits from Brian Towns, Schmeling, Pete Millar, and Charles Buhrow. The Tigers added five more runs in the 4th, and the rout was on. Seven different Tigers had RBIs in the game, led by Pete Millar who had three RBIs as well as two hits and three runs. Mike Nanstad and Leif Thronson each chipped in with two RBIs, and Jake Rusch contributed 2 hits and an RBI as well. Jeff Stone pitched the final three innings and allowed only one baserunner to earn a save.

TIGERS RALLY TO BEAT ORIOLES, 7-4 -- Jason Millar's two-out, two-run single in the 8th inning broke a 4-4 tie and lifted the Albion Tigers to a comeback victory over the Orfordville Orioles on Sunday. The hit was Millar's second run-scoring hit of the day: he also contributed an RBI single in Albion's 3-run fourth inning. Catcher Matt Millar also had a big day offensively for the Tigers, with three hits and three runs, including the game-tying run that set the stage for his brother's eighth inning single. The Tigers were able to stay in the game thanks to another solid performance from pitchers Mike Nanstad and Ben Everson. Nanstad went six innings and struck out six, while Everson earned the win by throwing three scoreless innings in relief. Everson allowed only one baserunner, and has now thrown fifteen consecutive innings without allowing an earned run.

TIGERS OVERWHELM DEERFIELD -- The Albion Tigers scored nine runs in the second inning on Sunday and never looked back as they cruised to a 13-0 win over the Deerfield Demons. The offense was a twelve-hit balanced attack, with Jesse Appel, Jason Millar, Ethan Vaade, and Marty Johnson each contributing two-RBI performances for the Tigers. Johnson, a Home Talent League All-Star selection, led the way with two RBI doubles in the nine-run second for Albion. On the mound, Ben Everson and Aaron Laskowski combined to throw a one-hitter, each striking out four. Everson got the win by going five innings, allowing only an infield hit and walking none. Laskowski also allowed only one baserunner, on a two-out walk in the sixth.

SCHMELING SHUTS DOWN MCFARLAND -- Just when his team needed it the most, Casey Schmeling turned in the best pitching performance of his young Albion Tigers career and led the Tigers to a 5-1 victory in a Night League game against McFarland on Thursday. On a night when he was the only healthy and available starting pitcher, Schmeling allowed just one run and six hits in a complete game effort, striking out 3 while walking only 2.

Offensively, Marty Johnson led the way with RBIs in the first and fourth innings, and also scored in the fourth on Jim Eastman's RBI single. Jesse Appel and Aaron Manogue added RBIs in the 6th to cap the scoring for the Tigers.

BATS, NANSTAD ROLL AS TIGERS BEAT JAYS -- Mike Nanstad was his usual self on Sunday, striking out ten and allowing only 3 earned runs while gaining a complete game victory. However, the story of the day for the Albion Tigers was the offense - a balanced and consistent attack that led to a 11-4 victory over the host Evansville Jays. The Tigers banded out 13 hits, including 5 doubles. Ten different players had base hits and eight players had RBIs for the Tigers. Marty Johnson, Jason Millar, and Jim Eastman each had two hits and scored two runs for the Tigers, while Jeff Stone chipped with two hits and two RBIs of his own.

TIGERS TAKE NL GAME AT FORT -- The Albion Tigers got back to their winning ways Thursday night with a 5-2 win at Fort Atkinson. The Albion offense started with a bang, scoring three runs in the first inning, highlighted by Jesse Appel's RBI double and Jason Millar's 2-run single. Albion would add another run in the third when Millar led off with a double and eventually scored on Jeff Stone's sacrifice fly. Brian Towns added an RBI single in the sixth to cap the scoring for the Tigers. That would be all the offense needed, as three Tiger pitchers combined to allow only two unearned runs. Starter Aaron Manogue threw three innings, then was followed by lefty Jeff Stone and Mike Nanstad, who each threw two scoreless innings.

TIGERS TAME MUSTANGS -- The Albion Tigers have played by the same rules for several years, and it has served them well: Pitch well, play defense, and wait for a timely hit. In their season opening game Sunday against Mazomanie it was more of the same as the Tigers cruised to an 8-1 victory in a preseason tournament game played at Ashton. Ben Everson, Mike Nanstad, Aaron Manogue, and Jeff Stone combined to allow only one run, while their teammates played nearly flawless defense behind them. Along with the theme of "more of the same," the offense was led by veteran centerfielder Jesse Appel. Appel reached base in all four plate appearances, scored two runs, and hit a home run in the fourth inning that provided all the offense the Tigers needed to hold off the Mustangs. Second-year leftfielder Corey Vickers chipped in with RBIs in the third and fifth innings.