



Texas League Newsletter

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September 12-18, 2011

Missions had plenty to celebrate in 2011

Winning TL title caps a milestone campaign for close-knit group.

By John Whisler, San Antonio Express News, Sunday, September 18, 2011

NORTH LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — First it was gloves and caps that flew through the air. Then came the bodies, jumping up and down.

Seconds after the Missions beat the Arkansas Travelers 10-6 at Dickey-Stephens Park on Friday night to win the Texas League championship, outfielder Jaff Decker was looking around for what has become the standard for on-field celebrations.

“I was hoping for one big dog pile,” Decker said. “But the big boys wouldn't go down.”

It was a rare flaw in an otherwise impeccable season.

The Missions dominated the league from the opening week and finished it with a three-game sweep of the Travelers in the best-of-5 title series.

They went 6-1 in the postseason to finish with 100 victories. Their 94-win regular season was the TL's best in 50 years.

For manager Doug Dascenzo, it was déjà-vu: His 2009 Fort Wayne (Ind.) team, the San Diego Padres' low-Class A affiliate, won 101 games on their way to the Midwest League title.

Many of the 2011 Missions played for Dascenzo in Fort Wayne. The two seasons “were almost identical,” he said, adding that both were equally rewarding. Dascenzo, 47, also won league Manager of the Year honors each of those seasons.

He said not winning the championship in 2011 would have been a disappointment, but it “wouldn't have been a disappointing season.”

“Besides winning, a big part of our job as coaches is to develop players,” Dascenzo said. “I think we did that.”

The Missions sent nine players to the major leagues this season.

Outfielder Daniel Robertson, who had a key hit in the Missions' seven-run sixth inning that blew open Friday's game, said some of the players had come up together at Eugene (Ore.), Fort Wayne and Lake Elsinore (Calif.) before landing in San Antonio.

For full article, go to:

<http://www.mysanantonio.com/sports/missions/article/Missions-had-plenty-to-celebrate-in-2011-2176364.php>

Missions see title series as toughest games of all

Arkansas' pitching concerns S.A. as best-of-5 begins.

By John Whisler, San Antonio Express News, Monday, September 12, 2011

In a season filled with “firsts” and “bests,” no task seemingly has been too tall, no obstacle too great for the Missions.

They've been the talk of the Texas League, sending observers young and old diving for the record book.

You'd think, then, for a team that has won 97 games, including playoffs, winning three more wouldn't be too difficult.

“We're right where we want to be,” second baseman Vince Belnome said. “This is why we play the game. But these last three are going to be the hardest of all.”

The Missions begin their quest for the 12th title in franchise history when they open the Texas League's best-of-5 championship series tonight against the Arkansas Travelers.

The first two games are at Wolff Stadium, with the final three at Dickey-Stephens Park in North Little Rock.

Arkansas, now the Double-A affiliate of the Los Angeles Angels, has its own storied past with seven titles, third in league history behind Tulsa's eight.

The Missions won the first- and second-half South Division titles, then beat Frisco in the divisional playoff round 3-1.

Arkansas (68-69 overall during the regular season) won the first-half title in the North Division, then ousted defending league champion Northwest Arkansas in the divisional round in four games.

The Missions won the season series with Arkansas 8-4. They were 6-0 at Wolff Stadium.

Like the Missions, the Travelers' roster changed dramatically after a rash of midseason call-ups. Two of their top players are now in the big leagues.

For full article, go to:

<http://www.mysanantonio.com/sports/missions/article/Missions-see-title-series-as-toughest-games-of-all-2167568.php>

Travailed Travs playing for title

By Jeremy Muck, Tuesday, September 13, 2011

LITTLE ROCK — The Arkansas Travelers are three victories away from winning the Texas League championship, despite playing for three managers and losing two of their best players to the major leagues during the course of the season.

The best-of-five championship series opens tonight and continues Wednesday at San Antonio's Wolff Stadium before the series shifts to Dickey-Stephens Park in North Little Rock Friday for Game 3. If necessary, Games 4 and 5 would be played on Saturday and Sunday at Dickey-Stephens Park.

Just getting to the postseason was an accomplishment for Arkansas.

Bill Mosiello started the season as the team's manager and guided the Travelers to the first-half North Division championship, then resigned June 24 to become an assistant at the University of Tennessee.

Todd Takayoshi, the roving hitting instructor for the Los Angeles Angels minor league system, filled in for 33 games before giving way on Aug. 1 to Bobby Mitchell, the Angels' minor league base-running coordinator.

On the field, the Travs saw center fielder Mike Trout and right-hander Garrett Richards earn promotions to the Angels. Arkansas lost nine consecutive games after Trout was called up for a second time Aug. 19, and finished six games behind Northwest Arkansas in the second-half North Division standings.

But the Travelers, who finished 68-69 overall, beat Northwest Arkansas 3-1 in the best-of-5 North Division series and are in the Texas League Championship Series for the first time since 2008, when they beat Frisco to win it all.

"They've done a great job," Mitchell said. "We lose Trout and Richards, and they continue on. They play hard, they believe in themselves.

"We're anxious to get started."

San Antonio, which won a league-high 94 games under former major leaguer Doug Dascenzo, also won its division series in four games. Frisco qualified for the playoffs as the secondbest team in the overall South Division standings.

For full article, go to:

<http://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2011/sep/13/travailed-travs-playing-title-20110913/?sports>

Texas League Finals preview

09/13/2011, By Dan Marinis / MLB.com

As the 2011 season winds down, follow along with MiLB.com as the Minors' best teams face off in an attempt to take home their league's crown.

The San Antonio Missions will attempt to put a bow on their outstanding season when they face the Arkansas Travelers in the best-of-5 Texas League Championship series starting Tuesday. The Missions amassed the most wins in the Minors in 2011, comfortably taking both the first- and second-half South Division titles on the strength of the league's stingiest pitching staff.

Arkansas advanced to the finals after eliminating defending champion Northwest Arkansas in four games. The Travelers' success this season has clearly come on the shoulders of their pitching staff as well, as the team finished with the second-best ERA in the league and the lowest team batting average.

**Arkansas (68-69, North Division first-half champion) vs.
San Antonio (94-46, South Division first- and second-half champion)**

San Antonio won the season series, 8-4

Game 1 at San Antonio, Sept. 13 at 8:05 p.m. ET

Game 2 at San Antonio, Sept. 14 at 8:05 p.m. ET

Game 3 at Arkansas, Sept. 16 at 8:10 p.m. ET

Game 4 at Arkansas (if necessary), Sept. 17 at 8:10 p.m. ET

Game 5 at San Antonio (if necessary), Sept. 18 at TBD

San Antonio manager Doug Dascenzo guided the Missions to 94 regular-season wins, the second-most in franchise history behind the 1908 club that won 95. The Texas League Manager of the Year would like nothing more than to top that with a title.

"It would be the perfect cap on a great season," said Dascenzo, a former Major League outfielder. "If we didn't win a championship, it would be a disappointment -- but it wouldn't make the season disappointing."

Home-field advantage could prove pivotal in this year's Championship series. Not only did San Antonio compile a remarkable 55-15 record within the friendly confines of Wolff Stadium, but the Missions also swept the Travelers in all six games they played there.

For full article, go to:

http://web.minorleaguebaseball.com/news/article.jsp?ymd=20110912&content_id=24581534&vkey=news_1109&fext=.jsp&sid=1109

Keuchel Corpus Christi's 2011 Pitcher of the Year **Southpaw among Texas League's elite**

Tuesday, 9/13/2011, Corpus Christi Hooks

CORPUS CHRISTI – Left-handed starter Dallas Keuchel has been selected as the Hooks 2011 Pitcher of the Year. His achievements will be recognized at the eighth annual South Texas Winter Baseball Banquet early next year.

Keuchel, 23, posted the highest win total for a Hooks pitcher over the last two seasons. His nine victories in 2011 were the most by a Corpus Christi pitcher in a single season since Sergio Perez won 11 games in 2009.

Spending the first four months of the campaign with the Hooks, Keuchel finished the year ranked second in the Texas League in WHIP (1.12) and fourth in ERA (3.17). He also posted the fourth-lowest opponents' batting average (.244) among starters and, within that group, stood second in both lowest walks/9 IP ratio (1.90) and fewest base runners/9 IP ratio (10.36).

Keuchel was twice named the Texas League's Pitcher of the Week (April 7-17 and June 6-12). Neither of those weekly accolades covered his performance at Dickey-Stephens Park on May 29 when blanked the Travelers 4-0, tossing the first complete-game shutout by a Hooks pitcher in two years.

A seventh-round selection of the Astros in 2009 out of the University of Arkansas, Keuchel was the only pitcher to get more than three outs in the June 29 Texas League All-Star Game in San Antonio. The southpaw hurled two innings of shutout relief to help the South Stars defeat the North 3-2.

Recognition for Keuchel's efforts in 2011 was also doled out by the Astros' Player Development Department. The organization named Keuchel as Corpus Christi's pitcher of the month in both June (3-2, 2.18 ERA, 5 starts) and July (3-1, 4.23 ERA, 6 starts).

Earning an early-August promotion to Triple-A Oklahoma City, Keuchel finished the season with the RedHawks. At year's end he ranked fourth in the Astros system in ERA (4.12) and was the only pitcher in the organization with as many as 10 wins.

In his 20 starts this year with the Hooks, Keuchel was 9-7 with a 3.17 ERA, with 27 walks and 76 strikeouts in 127.2 innings. Fourteen of his outings met the standard for a "quality start," while the durable lefty pitched a minimum of six innings on 15 occasions.

For full article, go to:

http://corpuschristi.hooks.milb.com/news/article.jsp?ymd=20110913&content_id=24628476&vkey=news_t482&fext=.jsp&sid=t482

Poldberg: Naturals battled all year

By Lane Kramer, Northwest Arkansas Morning News, Sunday, September 18, 2011

SPRINGDALE — The Northwest Arkansas Naturals were unable to defend their Texas League title this year, but they are still batting a thousand in one major department.

The Naturals are a perfect 4 for 4 when it comes to making the playoffs. They have yet to miss out on the postseason since joining the Texas League in 2008.

Naturals Manager Brian Poldberg has guided a wide array of clubs into the postseason every year since he took the job when the Kansas City Royals moved their Class AA affiliate from Wichita, Kan., to Springdale nearly four years ago. This year's team wasn't his best, but Poldberg still appreciated the way it fought during the final week of the regular season to keep its playoff streak alive.

"We peaked in time to clinch the second half," Poldberg said. "Our bats were hot and cold. Our starting pitching got better as the year went on, and that was key for us winning the second half."

After finishing one game behind the first-place Arkansas Travelers in the North Division's first-half race, the Naturals clinched a playoff berth with a 9-2 victory at Tulsa on Sept. 2, their third-to-last game of the season. The Travelers took 3 of 4 games from the Naturals to win the best-of-5 North Division playoffs.

The Naturals also showcased plenty of promising talent, although the team wasn't nearly as loaded as last year's league champion squad.

Four of the Royals' top 10 prospects as ranked by Baseball America and 10 of the top 30 spent time with the Naturals. Last year's team featured seven of the Royals' top-10 prospects, four of whom are now in the majors.

The biggest individual success story for the Naturals this year was Venezuelan catcher Salvador Perez. Just a marginal prospect ranked No. 17 among Royals farmhands when the season began, Perez quickly became the organization's catcher of the present and future as he shot through the system this summer.

Perez, 21, hit .283 with 9 home runs and 43 RBI in 309 atbats and threw out 48 percent of base stealers at Northwest Arkansas, earning a spot in the Texas League All-Star Game. That prompted a promotion to Class AAA Omaha on July 27 and then a trip to Kansas City two weeks later.

For full article, go to:

<http://www.nwaonline.com/news/2011/sep/18/poldberg-naturals-battled-all-year-20110918/?sports-prosports>

Altuve, Buchanan Named Players of the Year Pair to be honored September 24 in Houston

Corpus Christi Hooks, 9/17/2011

HOUSTON – Infielder Jose Altuve and right-handed pitcher Jake Buchanan have been selected as Houston's 2011 Minor League Players of the Year. The announcement was made late Thursday by the Astros Player Development Department.

Altuve, 21, spent an electric seven weeks with the Hooks this season, making enough of an impression to earn a direct call to the big leagues. Buchanan, 21, started 25 games for Lancaster before finishing the season with a sharp performance against Frisco at Whataburger Field on September 1.

“Jose has been a real bright spot for us this year,” said Astros General Manager Ed Wade. “His promotions from High-A to Double-A to the big leagues in one season are a huge accomplishment on his part. Like Jose, Jake has also handled some accelerated challenges extremely well and we're paying close attention to his progress.”

Altuve was named the Astros 2011 Minor League Player of the Year after having a breakout campaign in which he led all full-season minor leaguers with his .389 batting average. In 87 games with the Hooks and the Lancaster JetHawks of the California League, Altuve also produced 22 doubles, 10 triples, 10 home runs, 59 RBIs, 59 runs and 24 stolen bases. His 1.017 OPS (on-base percentage plus slugging percentage) ranked eighth among all full-season players.

In 35 games with the Hooks in June and July, Altuve batted .361 with nine doubles, three triples, five homers and 25 RBIs.

Signed by the Astros as a non-drafted free agent in September of 2006 out of Venezuela, Altuve was selected as Lancaster's offensive player of the month in May (.388-3-22, 7 SBs) and Corpus Christi's offensive player of the month in June (.364-3-18, 5 SBs). He started at second base for the World Team in the XM All-Star Futures Game July 10 in Phoenix, going 2-for-3 with a double.

Altuve was removed from batting practice with the Hooks on July 19 and informed of his call to the major leagues. In 48 games to date with the Astros, Altuve is hitting .278 with two home runs, 12 RBIs and six steals.

For full article, go to:

http://corpuschristi.hooks.milb.com/news/article.jsp?ymd=20110916&content_id=24772896&vkey=news_t482&fext=.jsp&sid=t482

Cardinals Win Field of the Year

September 13, 2011 - Springfield Cardinals

Springfield, MO - The Texas League has announced that Hammons Field has been named the 2011 Texas League Field of the Year.

This marks the second time in Springfield Cardinals' history in which Hammons Field has taken home the award. Hammons Field is now eligible for the Double-A Field of the Year, which the organization won in 2008.

Head Groundskeeper Brock Phipps has been in charge of the playing surface since Hammons Field was built in 2004.

"To know that we were voted Field of the Year in the Texas League is quite an honor and very humbling," said Phipps. "I'd especially like to commend our Assistant Groundskeeper, Derek Edwards, the entire field crew for their superior work and expertise, as well as the entire front office of the Springfield Cardinals, for their immeasurable support throughout the season."

"Brock and the staff are very dedicated to making Hammons Field beautiful for our fans and making the playing surface the very best it can be for the players," said Vice President / General Manager Matt Gifford. "We'd also like to thank Hammons Industries for their continued support in helping to make Hammons Field one of the finest ballparks in all of minor league [baseball](#). We're all very proud to represent the Texas League in receiving this honor."

The Springfield Cardinals wish to once again thank all the Cardinals' fans for a terrific 2011 season. For information on 2012 Season Tickets, please call (417) 863-0395, or visit our website at www.springfieldcardinals.com.

Texas League Championship Series



Arkansas Travelers vs. San Antonio Missions

San Antonio defeats Arkansas 3-0

Tuesday, September 13: San Antonio 5 vs. Arkansas 4 - [Box Score](#)

Wednesday, September 14: San Antonio 5 vs. Arkansas 4 (20 innings) - [Box Score](#)

Friday, September 16: San Antonio 10 @ Arkansas 6 - [Box Score](#)

Game 1

Missions rally in ninth: Four score and two wins to go

Hagerty's bases-loaded walk caps comeback as Missions claim Game 1.

By John Whisler, San Antonio Express News, Wednesday, September 14, 2011

Jason Hagerty had driven in the winning run before and been mobbed by teammates. He'd been part of dramatic comebacks, too.

But never like this. Never on his birthday.

Tuesday night, he was the hero without ever taking the bat off his shoulder.

Hagerty's bases-loaded walk — on four pitches — capped a wild ninth inning as the Missions came back from the dead to pull out an improbable 5-4 victory over Arkansas in the opener of their Texas League championship series at Wolff Stadium.

Trailing 4-1 entering the ninth, the Missions used four walks, a hit-batsman, a single and a home run to score four times and stun the Travelers to take a 1-0 lead in the best-of-5 series.

“Oh, my goodness,” manager Doug Dascenzo said afterward in a jubilant Missions clubhouse. “I don't know what to say, man. These guys, at times, they just seem to will it.”

Just when you thought the Missions' special season couldn't get any more special, it did.

For eight innings, they were shut down — and shocked — by Arkansas starter Matt Shoemaker. The Texas League Pitcher of the Year struck out 10 and allowed only a run on four hits. But he was pulled by manager Bobby Mitchell, a former Missions player, after throwing 96 pitches.

Shoemaker handed it over to his bullpen, which proceeded to implode.

Reliever David Carpenter, who finished the regular season on a 27¹/₃-inning scoreless streak, opened the ninth by hitting Blake Tekotte.

Jaff Decker, whose bat has come alive down the stretch and in the playoffs, then slugged a 3-2 pitch over the wall in right to trim the deficit to 4-3.

Jedd Gyorko walked, signaling the end for Carpenter. Reliever Robert Fish got Vince Belnome to bounce out, but Sawyer Carroll tied the game with a single to left.

Steven Geltz entered and walked the next three batters, including Hagerty for the game-winner.

For full article, go to:

<http://www.mysanantonio.com/sports/missions/article/Missions-rally-in-ninth-Four-score-and-two-wins-2169549.php>

TEXAS LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES:

Travelers walk off with loss

Arkansas wastes 3-run lead in 9th

By The Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Wednesday, September 14, 2011

SAN ANTONIO — Letting go of this one won't be easy.

Arkansas blew a threerun lead in the ninth inning Tuesday night as the San Antonio Missions came back to defeat the Travelers 5-4 in front of 3,018 fans in the opening game of the Texas League Championship Series at Wolff Stadium.

The Travelers led 4-1 going into the bottom of ninth inning but couldn't put it away. Starter Matt Shoemaker, the Texas League Pitcher of the Year, was in line for his second playoff victory after striking out 10 and giving up just 1 run on 4 hits over 8 innings. But things quickly got away from the Travelers once he left the game.

David Carpenter came on in relief and promptly hit Missions leadoff batter Blake Tekotte to open the ninth. He then gave up a home run to the next batter, Jaff Decker, as San Antonio pulled within 4-3.

After Carpenter walked Jedd Gyorko, the Travs turned to Robert Fish, who came in and retired Vincent Belnome on a groundout to first base. But Sawyer Carroll then singled home Gyorko to tie the game at 4-4.

With one out, the Travs turned to Steven Geltz to try to get out of the inning.

Geltz, who had a 3.09 ERA in 32 regular-season appearances, threw only six of his 18 pitches for strikes as he walked Cody Decker, Carlos Sosa and Jason Hagerty to bring in the winning run.

The victory gives the Missions a 1-0 lead in the best-of-5 series. Game 2 will be played at 7:05 p.m. today in San Antonio.

For full article, go to:

<http://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2011/sep/14/travelers-walk-loss-20110914/?sports>

Decker leads Missions to walk-off win

09/14/2011, By Robert Emrich / Special to MLB.com

After the first eight innings of Tuesday's opening game of the Texas League Finals, it appeared the Missions were done for. Then came the final inning, and the Texas League's top offense came through.

Jaff Decker hit a two-run homer in the ninth inning and Jason Hagerty drew a walk-off walk as Double-A San Antonio scored four times in the frame to rally past Arkansas, 5-4 at Nelson Wolff Municipal Stadium.

The Missions had struggled against Travelers starter Matt Shoemaker, as just five runners reached base over the first eight frames. Facing David Carpenter, Blake Tekotte gave the home fans hope, reaching first after being hit by the third pitch of the at-bat. Decker battled against Carpenter before pulling the seventh pitch over the right-field wall to cut the deficit to one.

"It got to a 3-2 count and he threw a slider," said the former first-rounder, who had no doubt it was a homer. "I put a good swing on it and it went over the right-field wall.

"It was a big kind of energy boost in the dugout. Everyone was walking around and no one was sitting."

Jedd Gyorko followed with a walk and Vincent Belnome moved him to second base with a groundout against new pitcher Robert Fish. Sawyer Carroll singled home Gyorko to tie the game with just one out. Reliever Steven Geltz then walked Cody Decker and Carlos Sosa to load the bases, setting the stage for Hagerty's four-pitch base on balls.

"Sawyer Carroll came through with a big single and it rolled from there," Jaff Decker said. "The electricity from the crowd, I don't think anyone was sitting down, and we were all hopped up. The pitcher falling down 3-0 to Hags [Hagerty], we just had that back-of-the-mind thought we were going to pull this one out."

For full article, go to:

http://web.minorleaguebaseball.com/news/article.jsp?ymd=20110913&content_id=24660632&vkey=news_1109&fext=.jsp&sid=1109

Game 2

Missions win a fall classic

By John Whisler, San Antonio Express News, Thursday, September 15, 2011

If it were just another game, one team might have cried "uncle" and thrown in the towel.

But this was no ordinary game. And there was no giving in - by the Missions or the Arkansas Travelers even as Wednesday night turned into Thursday morning.

Finally, after six hours, 20 innings, 43 strikeouts, 13 pitchers and more than 500 pitches, the longest game in Texas League postseason history finally came to an end.

Sawyer Carroll's two-out single drove in Jedd Gyorko in the bottom of the 20th, giving the Missions a 5-4 victory and a commanding 2-0 championship series lead.

The best-of-five series now shifts to Dickey-Stephens Stadium in North Little Rock. Game 3 is Friday and Games 4 and 5 are Saturday and Sunday, if necessary.

The Missions need only one more win to claim the 12th TL title in franchise history.

"Half the team was fighting off cramps out there," said Carroll, moments after getting mobbed by teammates on the field following his game-winning hit. "But we had to win this game. We needed to go up 2-0 heading into their place."

The Missions were 2-4 at Dickey-Stephens during the regular season.

Tuesday, the Missions won Game 1 by the same 5-4 score, rallying for four runs in the bottom of the ninth.

A crowd of 3,887 that included former Spur Bruce Bowen, Missions owner Dave Elmore and the owner of the San Diego Padres, Jeff Moorad, saw the two best teams in the TL this season battle officially for 6 hours, 3 minutes. The game ended at 1:13 a.m.

Previously, the longest Texas League postseason game was 19 innings in 1942.

Missions manager Doug Dascenzo said it was the longest game he's been a part of in his 27 years in the game as a major league player, coach and manager.

For full article, go to:

<http://www.mysanantonio.com/sports/mlb/article/Missions-win-a-fall-classic-2171625.php>

TEXAS LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES:

Travs work extra, have little to show

By Jeremy Muck, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Friday, September 16, 2011

LITTLE ROCK — The Arkansas Travelers would like to forget the city of San Antonio.

The Missions defeated the Travelers 5-4 in 20 innings early Thursday morning in front of an announced crowd of 3,887 fans at Wolff Stadium.

Not only was the game the longest in Texas League postseason history, it also left Arkansas in a 2-0 hole in the best-of-five Texas League Championship Series.

San Antonio right fielder Sawyer Carroll hit the game-winning single off reliever Daniel Sattler in the bottom of the 20th to cap the 6-hour, 3-minute marathon that ended at 1:13 a.m. Central.

The previous longest game in Texas League post-season history was 4 hours, 59 minutes when Corpus Christi beat Wichita 8-7 on Sept. 15, 2006. The longest game by innings was 19 when Shreveport beat Fort Worth 4-3 on Sept. 14, 1942.

The Travelers and Missions used a combined 13 pitchers (seven by Arkansas, six by San Antonio). The teams also combined for 28 hits, 31 runners left on base, 43 strikeouts and 143 at-bats. Arkansas went 4 for 16 with runners in scoring position, while San Antonio finished 5 for 16.

Arkansas Manager Bobby Mitchell said Thursday afternoon that he played in a winter game in the Dominican Republic that went 22 innings, but Wednesday's game was the longest of his managerial career.

The Travelers finished 0-8 this season at Wolff Stadium, with five of their eight losses ending in the final at-bat, including the first two games of the championship series.

"It is frustrating," said Mitchell, whose team left San Antonio at 2:30 a.m. Thursday and arrived in North Little Rock at approximately 1 p.m. "The night before [Tuesday], we should have won. We had a chance to close it out with a 4-1 lead."

In the bottom of the 20th, Sattler struck out Jaff Decker but walked Jedd Gyorko. After Vincent Belnome flew out for the second out, Gyorko stole second base. Carroll then lined a single to Travelers center fielder Matt Long and Gyorko scored as the Missions celebrated in left field.

For full article, go to:

<http://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2011/sep/16/travs-work-extra-have-little-show-20110916/>

Carroll ends Missions' marathon win

09/15/2011, By Robert Emrich / Special to MLB.com

For those Missions fans who stuck it out Wednesday night at Nelson W. Wolff Municipal Stadium, it was the happiest 20th inning they'll probably ever see.

Sawyer Carroll hit a two-out walk-off single to end the longest playoff game in Texas League history and give San Antonio a 5-4 victory over the Arkansas Travelers.

The Missions took a 2-0 lead in the best-of-5 Championship Series and left them one win from their second title in five years.

Jaff Decker, one of the stars of Tuesday's series opener struck out leading off the 20th. Jedd Gyorko, whose only hit tied the game in the bottom of the 14th, walked and -- after Vince Belnome flied out -- stole second base to set the stage for Carroll's big hit.

"It was huge. He got a great jump and was able to steal without much problem," Carroll said. "After that, my whole approach changed. After he stole the base, I was just trying to do anything I could to end the game. I was ready to go home."

Carroll, who finished with three hits, was in the middle of the Missions' ninth-inning comeback in Game 1, delivering a tying single. Just over six hours after Wednesday's contest began, he hit a 2-1 pitch from Daniel Sattler (0-1) up the middle.

"I'm really happy," the 25-year-old outfielder said. "I really don't know how to explain it. Stats don't count as far as your regular-season stats, you're just out there trying to win the game. You don't mind giving yourself up to help win the game. I've been fortunate enough to get a couple of clutch hits. It's a good feeling, for sure."

As the game moved along, more and more records began to fall. After Blake Tekotte grounded out to end the 19th, it became the longest playoff game in league history, breaking a 69-year-old record. When the Travelers' Matt Long hit a comebacker to end the top of the 20th, he eclipsed a playoff record with 10 at-bats.

For full article, go to:

http://web.minorleaguebaseball.com/news/article.jsp?ymd=20110915&content_id=24725430&vkey=news_1109&fext=.jsp&sid=1109

Wild 20-inning win leaves Missions step away from Texas League title

By John Whisler, San Antonio Express News, Thursday, September 15, 2011

With the team bus set to leave for Arkansas in a few hours, Sawyer Carroll was in a hurry to shower, pack and get a little shut-eye.

It figured to be a short night, but a blissful one.

It's not every day you get the winning hit to end the longest playoff game in Texas League history.

"I think this is my first walk-off, high school, college or pro," he said.

Chances are, Carroll will remember it for a long, long time.

The outfielder's two-out single to drive in Jedd Gyorko in the bottom of the 20th inning — that's right, 20th — lifted the Missions to a thrilling 5-4 victory over the Arkansas Travelers in Game 2 of their league championship series Wednesday night/Thursday morning at Wolff ξ Stadium, giving them a commanding 2-0 series lead.

Game 3 in the best-of-5 finals is tonight at Dickey-Stephens Park in North Little Rock, as the Missions go for the sweep.

Games 4 and 5, if necessary, are at Dickey-Stephens on Saturday and Sunday. The Missions were 2-4 there during the regular season.

The Game 2 marathon's bleary-eyed final stats: 13 pitchers combined to throw more than 500 pitches, striking out 43 batters spread over six hours and three minutes.

"It's the longest game I've ever been involved in," said Missions manager Doug Dascenzo, who has spent 27 years at the major league and minor league levels as a player, coach and manager.

"It was a great game. I'm just glad we were able to come out on top."

It was the Missions' second straight, walk-off 5-4 win over the Travelers in as many nights. On Tuesday, catcher Jason Hagerty's bases-loaded walk capped a wild, four-run, ninth-inning rally in Game 1. That game lasted a mere two hours, 45 minutes.

For full article, go to:

<http://www.mysanantonio.com/sports/missions/article/Wild-20-inning-win-leaves-Missions-step-away-from-2173514.php>

Game 3

Sweep puts cherry atop Missions' sweet season

Seven-run sixth inning delivers the clinching win of dramatic series.

By John Whisler, San Antonio Express News, Saturday, September 17, 2011

NORTH LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — There would be no late-game drama, no six-hour, 20-inning marathon on this night.

The best team in the Texas League all season is now champion.

The Missions completed a sweep of the league's championship series with a 10-6 victory over the Arkansas Travelers on Friday night at Dickey-Stephens Park.

Cody Decker and Carlos Sosa homered, and the Missions broke open a close game with a seven-run sixth to earn the 12th title in the franchise's storied history.

"What a way to cap a tremendous season," manager Doug Dascenzo said. "These guys battled us, but we persevered. There was a lot of emotion out there afterward."

After the final out, the team celebrated on the infield, posed for pictures with the Bobby Bragan Trophy and celebrated inside their champagne-soaked clubhouse.

"This is what we set out to do at the beginning of the season," outfielder Sawyer Carroll said. "This is the best team I've ever played on."

The Missions last won it all in 2007.

They finished with 100 victories, including postseason, after winning 94 games in the regular season, the most over a 140-game schedule in the Texas League since 1961.

The Missions won Game 1 on Tuesday at Wolff Stadium, 5-4, with a four-run, ninth-inning rally.

Then in Game 2 on Wednesday, Carroll's run-scoring single lifted the Missions to another 5-4 victory to end a 20-inning marathon — the longest postseason game in TL history.

It was a record-setting season from start to finish. Fittingly, it was the offense that carried the Missions to the championship.

For full article, go to:

<http://www.mysanantonio.com/sports/mlb/article/Sweep-puts-cherry-atop-Missions-sweet-season-2175283.php>

TEXAS LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES:

Poor 6th dooms Travs

By Troy Schulte, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Saturday, September 17, 2011

LITTLE ROCK — Two days after playing the longest game in Texas League Championship Series history, the Arkansas Travelers finally ran out of gas Friday night.

The San Antonio Missions scored seven runs in the sixth inning to take a lead, and the Travs didn't threaten over the final four innings as the Missions wrapped up a three game sweep with a 10-6 victory at Dickey-Stephens Park in North Little Rock.

Once San Antonio's Miles Mikolas got Arkansas' Matt Cusick to ground out to first base to end the series, the Missions formed a huddle just beyond the pitcher's mound to celebrate their Texas League record 12th title overall and first since 2007.

San Antonio entered Friday with a 2-0 lead after winning 5-4 on a bases-loaded walk in the ninth inning of Game 1 and then outlasting Arkansas in a 20-inning marathon to win Game 2 5-4 Wednesday.

"It's not over until it's over, and we saw that in all three games," San Antonio Manager Doug Dascenzo said. "It's been a fantastic season and I'm very proud of them."

Game 3 looked to be heading for a similar close finish, until Travs starter Orangel Arenas exited after allowing a one-out single to Sawyer Carroll in the sixth, which started a string of seven consecutive Missions batters who reached base.

Mike Piazza relieved Arenas, who gave up 3 runs on 6 hits and struck out 2 in 5 1/3 innings. Piazza gave up two singles, a walk and hit Dean Anna with a 1-2 pitch that scored Cody Decker to give San Antonio a 4-3 lead.

That caused Arkansas Manager Bobby Mitchell to pop out of the first-base dugout because, he said later, he thought the ball hit the ground, not Anna's foot.

"My feeling was if it hit him there would be some reaction from him," Mitchell said. "Either, going to first base or, if it hit him hard, he would show some reaction to it. And he showed none."

But Mitchell said home plate umpire Stu Scheurwater told him it knicked his foot during a lengthy, but civil, conversation near home plate. The run stood and the Missions piled on.

Daniel Robertson's double scored two more runs, and Vince Belnome drove in two more with another double when Steven Geltz was a strike away from ending the inning. Carroll drove in one more with a single.

When it was over, the Missions scored seven runs to make it 9-3. Carlos Sosa's home run in the seventh made it 10-3.

For full article, go to:

<http://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2011/sep/17/poor-6th-dooms-travs-20110917/?sports>

Missions sweep to Texas League title

09/17/2011, By Todd Traub / Special to MLB.com

NORTH LITTLE ROCK, Ark. -- Enough with the suspense already.

After two hard-fought games that lasted 29 innings, the San Antonio Missions cruised to the Texas League championship Friday, beating the Arkansas Travelers, 10-6, to complete the sweep before 1,993 at Dickey-Stephens Park.

Arkansas led, 3-2, before San Antonio sent 12 men to the plate in a seven-run sixth inning. The victory gave the Missions their first championship since 2007 and capped a series that featured a four-run, ninth-inning rally in Game 1 and an epic 20-inning victory in Game 2 as the Missions won both 5-4.

"It's never over until it's over, and we've seen that in all three games," Missions manager Doug Dascenzo said. "We're very proud of our guys as well, obviously, and we were in a serious battle with the Arkansas club."

San Antonio tied it, 3-3, on Carlos Sosa's RBI single in the sixth. It took the lead when reliever Mike Piazza hit No. 9 hitter Dean Anna in the foot with the bases loaded, a call Arkansas manager Bobby Mitchell disputed. The Missions tacked on five runs as Daniel Robertson and Vince Belnome delivered two-run singles and Game 2 hero Sawyer Carroll hit an RBI base hit.

Sosa homered over the right-field wall off Robert Fish in the seventh.

The big sixth made a winner of starter Simon Castro (1-1), who struck out 10 over five-plus innings and gave up three runs on seven hits. Jorge Reyes surrendered Matt Cusick's three-run homer in the seventh that got Arkansas within 10-6.

Piazza (0-1) took the loss after failing to retire any of the five hitters he faced.

Mitchell, the Travelers' third manager of the season after Bill Mosiello left for a college job and field coordinator Todd Takayoshi's filled in, said that losing Game 1 in the ninth was costly. The Travelers also had their chances in Wednesday's 20-inning setback.

"We really needed to close out games and we didn't, and tonight they took advantage of our bullpen some," Mitchell said.

Belnome led off the Missions' second with a double down the right-field line. One out later, Cody Decker, who missed three months with injuries, drove a 2-1 pitch from starter Orangel Arenas over the left-field fence, striking a pickup truck parked close to 400 feet away and opening a 2-0 lead.

"It was a three-game sweep, but I think we played a total of 4 1/2 games," said Decker, who reached on an infield single and scored in the sixth. "It was unbelievable. It was truly unbelievable and it was a tough battle the whole way."

For full article, go to:

http://texas.league.milb.com/news/article.jsp?ymd=20110917&content_id=24814500&vkey=news_1109&fext=.jsp&sid=1109

This Week in Texas League History, Sept. 19 - 25

- September 19, 1942 Shreveport's Gordon Maltzberger hurled his second shutout within three days in the Sports playoff series versus Beaumont. After beating the Exporters with a 3-0, three-hitter on the 16th, Maltzberger was even better on the 19th, limiting Beaumont to just two hits in his 4-0 whitewash win.
- September 20, 1920 Bill Whitaker pitched Fort Worth to a 13-2 win over Little Rock in the first ever Dixie Series contest. In front of 8,465 Fort Worth fans, Whitaker walked none and struck out five, while giving up seven hits and no earned runs in the complete game effort.
- September 21, 1946 Dallas clinched the Texas League championship and a trip to the Dixie Series with a 6-3 win over Fort Worth in front of 11,394 boisterous home town fans. The win was the second for Tom Pullig in the five game encounter, he had previously beaten the Cats 7-3 in the opening game of the series. The Rebels would go on to sweep Atlanta in four games, winning their first Dixie title since 1926. Pullig, who won game three of the Atlanta series, was outstanding in the 1946 post-season for Dallas, completing and winning all four of his starts.
- September 22, 1954 Houston ace Willard Schmidt fanned 11 Atlanta batters on the way to a 7-2 win in game two of the Dixie Series. In the complete game effort, Schmidt allowed just five base runners, giving up just two hits, while issuing three walks.
- September 23, 1954 Deciding that they no longer wished to endure the cost of owning the franchise, the Cincinnati Reds sold the Tulsa Oilers to club executive Grayle Howlett.
- September 24, 1936 Proving, once again, that fame is fleeting, Oklahoma City fired manager Bert Niehoff one season after he led the Indians to the Texas League Championship and a win in the Dixie Series. In two years with the Indians, Niehoff was 174-141, but was let go after a disappointing fourth place finish in 1936.

September 25, 1951

In front of 10,711 fans in his home state of Alabama, Houston's Wilmer Mizell struck out 14 during his four-hit, 1-0 win over Birmingham. Houston scored the game's lone run in the top of the first inning when lead-off hitter Ben Steiner singled, went to second on an error, then raced home following a single by Ray Broome.



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