



*Before the 2008 season, the Rochester Red Wings took over operational control of the St. Louis Cardinals New York-Penn League affiliate, the Batavia Muckdogs.*

*The following story was a feature that appeared in the Muckdogs' 2008 yearbook.*

## 2008 Prospect Preview

By: Mike Spier

It will be a "whole new ballgame" for the Batavia Muckdogs with a new crop of draftees to play it.

The draft has brought many good players to the Batavia club in the past, including major league stars Ryan Howard and Chase Utley. Both those players came out of the first five rounds of their respective drafts and those same rounds have brought good players under the St. Louis Cardinals affiliation as well.

The 2008 First-Year Player Draft wasn't any different.

The Cardinals may have gotten the best pure-hitter in the draft, third baseman Brett Wallace, with the 13th overall pick. As a junior at Arizona State, he batted a robust .416 with 17 home runs and 70 RBIs in 50 games.

"Getting drafted by such a great organization like the Cardinals is really exciting," Wallace told ESPN on draft day. "I grew up watching Tony LaRussa coach the A's and now I watch Albert Pujols as well - it's just really exciting."

"He's just a pure hitter that does everything right at the plate," said John Vuch, who is the Cardinals' Director of Minor League Operations. "Our scouts have also seen him play in the Cape Cod League where they use wood. I think that it is important that he's shown power with both wood and aluminum bats."

The Cardinals went college player-heavy with their next four picks as they drafted RHP Lance Lynn out of Ole Miss (No. 39), OF Shane Peterson from Long Beach State (No. 59), SS Ernest Vasquez from Durango H.S. in Nevada (No. 91) and RHP Scott Gorgen from UC Irvine (No. 125). According to Vuch, many of the players out of college will most likely go to Batavia when they

sign, while the majority of the high school players typically are sent to the Rookie affiliate of the Cardinals, Johnson City.

### **Moving on:**

Familiar faces from last year's Muckdogs squad have progressed nicely as well. Clayton Mortensen, the 36th overall pick in the 2007 draft, has already worked his way up to Triple-A Memphis.

"He was a guy we had high expectations for, but looking at what he's done, you really can't expect anyone to progress as quickly as he has," Vuch said.

The other four top picks from 2007 haven't done so bad themselves. Peter Kozma (18th pick) is with Single-A Quad Cities and, though 59 games, was leading the team in walks (27) and stolen bases (7) while batting .279. David Kopp (No. 71) was on the disabled list, as of June 9, due to shoulder soreness. He had 30 strikeouts in 38.1 innings of work.

With Palm Beach, Jess Todd (No. 82) made the Florida State League All-Star team by going 3-0 with a 1.65 ERA. He was then promoted to Double-A Springfield, where he earned a spot in the Texas League All-Star Game as well. Daniel Descalso (No. 112) is currently with Palm Beach and led the team in runs (31) through 63 games. While these players from the 2007 Batavia team have moved on, Vuch thinks the 2008 team has a good chance at success.

"We like the players we drafted and hopefully we're going to have a competitive club there," Vuch said. "It's a great place for the players to be because I know they feel at home in Batavia, and we're excited about having a successful team there."