

Kane County Decade In Review: 2000

David Malamut, OaklandClubhouse.com

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With the turn of the calendar, the Kane County Cougars left behind a successful decade of baseball in the Midwest League. The Low-A affiliate spent the first three seasons of the decade as an affiliate of the Florida Marlins, and the last seven tied to the Oakland A's. Kane County Correspondent David Malamut will take us through the Cougars' decade that was throughout the rest of the off-season.

Another decade of Kane County Cougars baseball has come and gone. The Cougars have actually only been around for 19 years, but it has been an interesting 19 years. They have won one title—granted in a shortened playoffs in 2001—and they have seen 108 former players make it to the majors in that time.

In the last decade, the Cougars have been affiliated with the Florida Marlins for three years and the Oakland Athletics for seven years. It has been a rollercoaster of a ride, but the good part is at least in the first half of most of those seasons the rollercoaster has been going upward. Six times this past decade the Cougars clinched playoff spots during the first half of the season. Five of those times have been with Oakland.

The decade saw 56 former Cougars make it to the majors, from B.J. Waszgis in July of 2000 to [Henry Rodriguez](#) in September of this past season. Some former Cougars have won World Series titles ([Josh Beckett](#), AJ Burnett, [Joe Blanton](#), to name a few). Beckett has also been named World Series MVP. There have been many all stars and award winners.

This decade began with a playoff run during the 2000 season. That season the Cougars were affiliated with the Marlins and they would make the playoffs in the second half by winning the division. Unfortunately, they would ultimately be bounced in the first round of the playoffs by Wisconsin after winning the first game at home in 10 innings.

Notable Performances

That season saw players such as [Chip Ambres](#), Matt Frick, [Kevin Hooper](#), [Matt Padgett](#), [Luis Ugueto](#), [Kelley Washington](#) and [Josh Wilson](#) dot the roster. Scott Goodman led the team in homeruns with 16. Padgett and David Callahan tied for the lead in RBIs with 60.

The starting rotation was good. [Todd Moser](#), [Marc Sauer](#), Gustavo Lopez, [Jorge Cordova](#) and Joe Sargent were the leaders of the staff. The Cougars also had pitching phenom Josh Beckett. He would pitch in 13 games and show a few signs of what was to come. He would also spend a lot of the season on the disabled list for the first time in his career. He only went 2-3, but he had a 2.12 ERA in 13 games for the Cougars.

The bullpen was also solid. Brandon Bowe went 7-3 with a 3.73 ERA and six saves in 61 games. He pitched 80 innings and struck out 89 while giving up 73 hits. Bryan Moore was the Cougars' closer and he went 5-2 with a 3.10 ERA in 58 games. He would set a Cougars' record with 27 saves.

Notable Games

On June 10th in West Michigan, the Cougars were no-hit by the Whitecaps. They would lose 8-0. Beckett started the game and went 2.2 innings, giving up three runs, and would get the loss. The Caps sent out Tommy Marx who had a complete game, he walked six and struck out 10 for the no-hit win.

On July 13th the Cougars played the Michigan Battle Cats at home. The game would go 13 innings and four and a half hours. The Cats would win 7-6, but the Cougars had plenty of chances. They would load the bases in both the ninth and the 10th innings and would not score. There were 34 hits in the game and 27 men left on-base.

In the first game of the playoffs, at home against the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers, the Cougars would win despite some questionable umpiring. They left 13 men on-base and the Cougars' starter Gustavo Lopez was only able to go into the fourth inning because of a pulled muscle in his side.

Wisconsin almost won the game in the top of the 10th when with one out [Justin Leone](#) was "hit by a pitch," even though the ball actually hit the bat. [Chris Snelling](#) then hit into a fielder's choice, which should have been a double play to get the Cougars out of the inning. The ump blew the call because the throw clearly beat the runner, but that's baseball. Ryan Christensen then walked, but Orlando Hernandez hit into a fielder's choice to get out of the inning.

In the bottom of the inning, the Cougars sent Matt Frick up there first and he put one just inside the line in right. The ball

went somewhere down the line and into foul territory and just kept rolling. Frick made it into second. Scott Goodman was then intentionally walked. Francisco Ferrand then came up and hit one over the heads of the outfielders in right centerfield and Frick would come around and score the winning run. That would be the Cougars' only post-season win in 2000.

Game Two was a complete disaster for Kane County, as the Cougars would lose 10-1 in Appleton. Nothing went right, as this time they just couldn't get any base-runners to leave any on. Hector Henriquez had a miserable game, going 1.1 innings in relief, giving up six hits and six runs, although only one of those runs would be earned.

In Game Three, they would face Rattler pitcher [J.J. Putz](#) who threw a no-hitter against the Cougars on April 29th in Appleton in the first game of a double header. In that game the Cougars did get one run, while Putz walked five and struck out four in the win.

This time the Cougars would get three runs and five hits off of Putz in six innings. The problem was that the Rattlers got five runs and seven hits off of Marc Neubauer in four and two thirds innings and the Cougars would lose the game, and the series.

This is the first in a series about this past decade for the Cougars, please read later on in the offseason as I review the other seasons in this rollercoaster of a decade.

About the writer

David Malamut has been a season ticket holder of the Cougars for the past 13 years. He has also been writing a daily website about the team for that long at <http://malamut.net>. David wrote a book about the history of the Cougars in 2005. *Baseball In Kane County*, Arcadia Publishing. For daily updates on the Cougars, stats and game stories please go to David's website, Voice of A Season Ticket Holder, <http://malamut.net>. You can also follow the Cougars on my twitter page, <http://twitter.com/davidmalamut>. Or follow my blog <http://davidmalamut.blogspot.com>.