GRAND STRAND SPORTS

AUGUST 2, 2032 · THE MYRTLE BEACH MERMEN BEAT

No. 1 pick Fisher rakes .306 at Tomball

BY **CRICKET HALLORHAN** · GRAND STRAND SPORTS

Erik Fisher has 11 home runs in 32 games.

He is 21. He was the first player taken in the whole draft in May. He is at Tomball, which is High-A, hitting .306 with a .416 on-base percentage and a .669 slugging percentage, and DSA Reports, in its list dated July 19, has him first. Not first in our system. First in the league.

In May he had not played a game yet. I told you he was the best young hitter this organization owned. I am going to count that one as a win.

I asked Daryl in May why he took a hitter over a pitcher with the first pick, and he gave me the whole answer, so here is the whole answer.

> *"It was a close debate, but in the end my scout just liked Fisher more," Daryl said. "My scout feels like he will dominate the league, and personally, a batter will effect more games then an SP. In the end its a numbers game. I Perfer position players who play everyday, over pitchers who perform once every 5 days."*

Eleven home runs in 32 games is a pretty good start on dominating.

Now the part of this I owe you, because I wrote something in May I have to own.

I told you to come look at this team before the crowds got here. The crowds got here in June and found a 7-19 month.

On May 16 the Mermen were 26-16. They are 49-56 this morning, seventh in the Ruby, 11 games behind Big Horn and five games out of the last playoff spot in the Fire Conference. June was the whole collapse: 7-

19, including six straight losses to close the month.

Daryl saw it coming before I did. His answer to my first question in May:

> *"Definitely still feel like its a retool, But felt like there was small chance the team could compete. So I added a couple Veteran bats and let the magic unfold. Got a couple more young bats coming thru at call up day as well. Not sure we can keep up this pace, but Im definitely gonna remain optimistic. Its been working this far."*

He was right about the pace. And he was right about the young bats.

Bill Sanchez came up. He is 22, a second baseman, and I called him "one phone call from Myrtle Beach" in May. The phone rang. He missed six weeks hurt first, and he has five games up here so far. DSA has him fifth in the league. The league's own top 100 has him 34th.

Andy Hummer came up too, the second-round pick from 2030. He is hitting .255 in 17 games. DSA has him 37th, the league's list 46th.

And it has not been all bad since June. The Mermen are 12-11 in July and 9-6 since the break. They took two of three in Fort Collins and two of three in Denver, one of them in 14 innings.

The lineup is still one of the best in baseball at getting on base. Third in batting average, third in on-base percentage. Felix Alvarez is hitting .314. Jesse Hile is at .302 with a .526 slugging percentage. Trent Erickson has 29 stolen bases. The club has 162 of them, fourth in the league.

It has also hit 91 home runs, the fewest of any team in baseball, which is a lot of singles to string together every night, and some nights they do not string.

Chris Breuninger has been wonderful all year and still is. He is 7-4 with a 2.64 earned run average and 114 strikeouts, and he has allowed four home runs in 109 innings. He makes $4.1 million, and his deal ends this year.

Kenny Cripps has 22 saves and a 2.08.

The rest of the rotation is where the June went. The starters' earned run average is 25th in the league.

So, the deadline. It closes with the next sim, and some of you want this club to sell. A club that just called up two of the best young hitters in the league and has the first overall pick slugging .669 at High-A is not a club that needs to sell anybody. It is a club that needs Breuninger for another few years, and I hope that is a conversation Daryl is having.

Here is what else is coming, because the farm always gets the last word here.

The league's top 100 has six Mermen on it, and only Oahu, Fort Collins and Vancouver have more. Besides Fisher, Sanchez and Hummer, there is Greg Mullins, a 20-year-old pitcher at 15th, who has made one start at Corsicana. There is Melvin Batres, 19, a catcher hitting .344 with five home runs at Seguin, 87th. And Ben Sloan, 18, is 88th. He and Mullins were two of the four teenagers I told you about in May who had not played yet.

Kevin Lindroth, the 24-year-old reliever who missed the spring hurt, got 22 games up here, walked 20 men in 23 2/3 innings, and is back at Austin. He is 24, and that is about all it means.

The affiliates are 12th in the league in combined record, down from first in 2025 and 2027. The records are ordinary right now, and some of the best of the system just got promoted, which is the good kind of ordinary.

Fifty-seven games left, 27 at home, 39 inside the Ruby.

This is not a playoff team yet. The first pick in the draft is hitting .306 in Tomball, and the next good September in this town is going to have his name in it. Come see who arrives next.
