

# Moments of the Decade (2000-09)

The first decade of the 21st Century was a great one for the Boise Hawks Baseball Club - two Northwest League championships, four East Division titles, a bevy of future Major League talent that played on the Memorial Stadium grounds. However, after polling Hawks staff, members of the media, and the fans, it is time to reveal the Top-10 Moments of the Decade for the Boise Hawks.

## 10. 2008 Longest Hitting Streak in Franchise History

Josh Vitters came to Boise with hoopla as the third-overall pick in the 2007 MLB Draft, and he didn't disappoint. The current No. 2 prospect in the Cubs organization earned Northwest League All-Star honors, but was remembered for a stretch of games that would go down in history. Vitters, who hit .328 on the season, had a base hit in Game 4 of a series at Eugene, starting a stretch of 25-straight games with a hit—the longest hitting streak in Hawks history, and the second-longest in the 50-plus year history of the Northwest League (Gary Johnson in 1972 and Anthony Laurenzi in 1982 each had a 26-game stretch). Vitters would get a hit in his first at bat in 16 of the games, finally ending his run with an 0-for-5 performance against Spokane on August 20. Vitters went on to have a banner season in 2009 at both Peoria and Daytona, earning Midwest League All-Star honors and has is a Non-Roster Invitee to Chicago Cubs Spring Training in 2010. [\(LISTEN TO VITTERS FIRST PROFESSIONAL HOME RUN\)](#)



## 9. 2001 D-Train makes his Boise debut

When Dontrelle Willis earned the nod from skipper Steve McFarland to open the 2001 season, fans in Boise knew it was going to be something special. What the ever-grinning left-hander with the herky-jerky motion did was go 8-2 with a 2.98 ERA for the Hawks, teaming with fellow future big-leaguers Sergio Mitre, Angel Guzman, and Carmen Pignatiello to form a formidable rotation that led the Hawks to an East Division title in their first season as a Cubs affiliate. The D-Train went on to earn National League Rookie of the Year honors in 2003, helping the Florida Marlins to a World Series title, while being selected to the NL All-Star Team in 2003 and 2005. He currently is a member of the Detroit Tigers.

## 8. 2006 Home Run Record Rewritten

In two previous minor league seasons, Russ Canzler had hit a total of two home runs in Arizona League action in 81 career games, but when skipper Steve McFarland talked prior to the season about the first-baseman's pop, he felt that number would rise. Rise it did, as the native of Pennsylvania hit long balls in each of his first two games with the Hawks, but records were not on his list when Canzler entered August with just seven homers. However, Canzler hit a home run in each game of a three-game home series with Spokane, propelling him through a month in which he hit nine bombs - the last coming on Aug. 30, a two-run shot in the fourth inning off Spokane's Jeremiah Haar, that broke Todd Greene's Boise record of 15 homers, set in 1993. Canzler was named to the NWL All-Star Team following the season and spent last year between Advanced-A Daytona and AA Tennessee.





## 7. 2006 A Shark Sighting

Typically, a fifth-round pick making his debut in Boise does not get much fanfare. When it is Jeff Samardzija, it is a bit different. Heading into his senior season with the Notre Dame football team, Samardzija was signed by the Cubs and sent to Boise, where he made a pair of starts on the road - drawing fans and TV camera's everywhere he went. It was the same in Boise on July 6, when "The Shark" allowed just one run in four innings of work in a Hawks 5-1 victory. Samardzija would make two more appearances with Boise, along with a pair at Class A Peoria, before returning to Notre Dame—where he would finish his football career with 179 receptions and 27 touchdowns. He would make his major league debut with the Cubs in 2008 and split time between Iowa and Chicago last year.

## 6. 2004 An Expensive Goat

Over the years, the Hawks have had innovative promotional nights - from "Digging for Diamonds" to "Napoleon Dynamite Night" to the wedding of Dina and Ryan Hembree. But one of the most memorable was on Aug. 13, when Boise hosted the first Reverse the Curse Night, handing out bobbleheads of a Billy Goat— a replica of Billy Sianis' goat that was not allowed into Wrigley Field during the 1945 World Series. The Hawks allowed fans to bring goats to the park (nine were admitted), but it was the coveted bobblehead that had fans waiting in line three hours before the game. Since it was the first of its kind, Cubs aficionados around the world wanted one (only 1,250 were made), and paid for it - as the bobbleheads were sold that night on Ebay for between 50 and 100-dollars. Today, you can still buy the original bobblehead, if you want to pay \$79.99 plus shipping. [\(LISTEN TO RYAN HARVEY'S MONSTER HOME RUN—AND CONVERSATION ABOUT GOATS FROM THE GAME\)](#)



## 5. 2004 Harvey Leads Hawks to NWL Title

Fans at Memorial Stadium still talk about the home runs that Ryan Harvey hit during the 2004 season. Tape-measure shots in Eugene, Yakima, and Tri-City, along with a drive over the Memorial Stadium scoreboard on July 30 of the season—a night after setting a NWL record for strikeouts in a game. However, it was that season's League Championship Series that Harvey truly came through, hitting four home runs and knocking in six in a three-game sweep of the Vancouver Canadians [\(INCLUDING THIS HOME RUN FROM GAME 2 OF THE SERIES\)](#). In the Game 3 clincher at Nat Bailey Stadium in Vancouver, Harvey broke his bat on a 1-2 pitch from lefty Ryan Ford. When he went to the dugout, he was out of bats—so he grabbed the black bat of Alfredo Francisco and on the next pitch, smacked an opposite-field two-run homer, providing the winning runs in a 5-3 victory. Harvey is currently part of the Colorado Rockies organization, having spent last year with their Double-A affiliate in Tulsa.

## 4. 2000 Cubs Come to Boise

For eleven seasons, the California/Anaheim Angels were the parent club of the Boise Hawks, with fans having the opportunity to see some future All-Stars come through Boise - Garret Anderson, Troy Percival, and John Lackey to name a few. However, the winds of change came through town on Aug. 7 of 2000, when Diamond Sports announced that they were selling the club to Horizon Broadcasting Group. The new owners (who would own the club through 2003) startled fans in December of the year, as the Chicago Cubs signed a Player Development Contract with Boise—beginning the Cubs era in the City of Trees.





### 3. 2005 Hawks Make ESPN Appearance

It's not often that the Boise Hawks find themselves on ESPN, especially the night after a 16-9 loss to Everett on July 6. However, in the ninth inning of the contest, the Aquasox got

the first two runners aboard against reliever Nick Thompson. However, J.B. Tucker followed with a sharp line drive to Jonathan Mota a short for the first out, flipping to second baseman Scott Hode for the second out, with the throw to first baseman Elvin Puello completing the rare triple play ([WATCH THE PLAY](#)). The video from Fiberpipe's online coverage of the game, along with the audio from KTIK, was forwarded to the Worldwide Leader of Sports, with the Hawks gracing the No. 1 spot the following evening on Sportscenter's Top-10 plays.

### 2. 2002 Hagerty Gem Completes Sweep of Everett

A year after losing in the NWL Championship Series to Salem-Keizer, the Boise Hawks claimed the East Division pennant again with a 49-27 record—thanks to the pitching of future Major Leaguers Andy Sisco, Ricky Nolasco, Rich Hill, and Jae Kuk Ryu. Boise headed to Everett for the opening two games of the 2002 LCS, with Game 1 ending with a bang, as Gary Banks (who went on to have a fabulous football career at Troy) threw out the potential tying run at home plate in the bottom of the ninth inning of a Hawks 3-2 win. The Aquasox could not recover, and it was Luke Hagerty who shut them down in the clincher in Boise. The big lefty, who went 5-3 with a 1.12 ERA during the regular season, went eight innings in front of the Memorial Stadium, allowing just one hit and striking out nine in the Hawks 8-1 win - the first of two titles with the Cubs organization.



### 1. 2006 A Night to Honor Kotch

He was the face of Boise Hawks baseball for over a decade. Tom Kotchman skippered the Hawks throughout their days as an Angels affiliate from 1990-2000, compiling a 501-334 all-time record in Boise - including four NWL championships and never having a losing season. He has continued to manage in the Angels system, leading both the Provo Angels and the Orem Owlz of the Pioneer League since leaving town - with 1,584 career victories. However, on July 22, a night in which Orem had an off day, Kotchman returned to Boise to receive the highest honor - becoming the first Boise Hawk to have his number retired. A sellout crowd watched a moving pregame ceremony and to this day, a No. 11 flag waves proudly in right center field to commemorate what Tom Kotchman brought to the diamond, day in and day out.

Many other moments failed to crack the Top-10 - including Tyler Colvin hitting home runs in five-straight games in 2006, Andy Sisco (2002) and Rich Hill (2003) fanning 13 batters in one game, Syketo Anderson flirting with .400 in 2001, a 2003 rotation that featured four future MLB players (Rocky Cherry, Billy Petrick, Sean Marshall, Rich Hill), and a benches clearing event in 2009 that saw manager Casey Kopitzke go nose-to-nose with Everett skipper, John Tamargo.

Here's to another outstanding decade of Boise Hawks Baseball

