



NEWS

For Immediate Release:

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Tarrant County Blue Thunder of Continental Baseball League Names Ex-Texas Ranger Curtis Wilkerson As Team Manager *~Season Begins May 25; Tryouts Set in Lewisville, Texas on March 30-31, 2007*

Tarrant County, Texas, March 7, 2007 -- Who says you can't come back home and return to where it all began?

Curtis Wilkerson, who played five full seasons for the Texas Rangers some 20 years ago, is returning to the area as the manager of Tarrant County's pro baseball team, Blue Thunder. The announcement was made today by Blue Thunder president **Larry Faulkner**. The 46-year-old Wilkerson played for five teams during his 11 seasons in the major leagues before retiring with the Kansas City Royals after the 1993 season.

"Curtis brings to the team his experience and knowledge of the game. He has roots in this area (he resides with his wife Brenda and three children, Brandon, 18, Christopher, 16, and Briana 13 in Arlington, TX) which is consistent with our desire to be a hometown team. Curtis will be a tremendous asset to our organization as we put professional baseball on the map in Tarrant County," said Faulkner. "Curtis knows the hard work it takes to get to the major leagues, and I know his attitude and work ethic will rub off on some of the young players who will make up our team."

This is not the first coaching assignment for Wilkerson, who was drafted by the Texas Rangers in the 4th round of the 1980 amateur draft, and who coached in the minor leagues for both Kansas City and Pittsburgh upon his retirement from the big leagues. Wilkerson has four years of minor league experience as a hitting coach, and three as a manager.

Wilkerson was raised in Petersburg, VA, also known as the home of former NBA star and Hall of Famer Moses Malone. The 5-9, 159-pound middle infielder played in 153 games his rookie year, batting .248 with 120 hits and was named the Rangers Rookie of the Year. Wilkerson played in 972 games during his career and finished with a batting mark of .245. He also played in the National League Championship Series twice, in 1989 with the Chicago Cubs and in 1991 with the Pittsburgh Pirates.

Wilkerson was a highly regarded utility man during his MLB career, and played third base, shortstop, second base, the outfield and even appeared as a designated hitter.

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“During my years in the bigs, I had a chance to study a lot of managers,” said Wilkerson. “Doug Rader was my first manager with the Rangers, then Bobby Valentine. When I was in Chicago I played for Zim (Don Zimmer), and then spent one season with Jim Leyland in Pittsburgh and two years with Hal McRae in KC. When you don’t play every day, but have to be ready to play at any moment, you really are into the game and watch what is going on. I learned a lot about the little things that make for a successful manager watching those men.”

“Having a former big leaguer such as Curtis Wilkerson is an incredible asset for our league,” noted **Ron Baron**, the league’s CEO and president. “With Curtis in Tarrant County, and Tom Goodwin recently hired by the Lewisville Lizards, we have two field managers who are well known in Texas circles, and who young ballplayers can look up to and learn from because both guys had long careers in the major leagues.”

Goodwin was named manager of the Lewisville Lizards on Monday. Goodwin played for the Rangers from 1997-99 and batted a lifetime .268 with 369 stolen bases in 14 seasons. Like Wilkerson, Goodwin also makes his home in Texas.

“Curtis is going to bring some excitement to Tarrant County because of his enthusiasm and respect for the game,” noted CBL director of baseball operations and communications **Bob Ibach**, who watched Wilkerson play in the National League during his days as Chicago Cubs PR director between 1981-89. “He is a guy who respects the game and the way it is played. He will serve as a great role model to the young men who play for and against him in our league.”

CBL Tryouts: Players interested in trying out for the Continental Baseball League should contact the CBL office at 214-234-0018 or visit www.CBLproball.com to sign up. Tryouts will be held in Lewisville, at the MAC, 200 Continental Drive, Lewisville, TX 75067 from 9 a.m-5 p.m. on March 30-31. Registration is \$25 per player.

Blue Thunder Tickets: Fans interested in season ticket plans, individual tickets or sponsorship opportunities for the upcoming season should contact the Blue Thunder offices at 1-800-533-5445.

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