



NEWS

For Immediate Release

Contact: Bob Ibach (214) 234-0018/cell:(847) 922-6686 or Ron Baron (214) 234-0018/cell (214) 641-9450

Independent League Brings Family Affordable Baseball to Area

Continental Baseball League Selects Alexandria

As New Franchise for 2009 Season

Aces Will Feature Local Ownership Group

Alexandria, LA, January 17, 2009 – There's a whole new brand of professional baseball coming to the area beginning in May, and this time around it will have local ownership.

The Continental Baseball League (www.CBLproball.com) announced today it is adding the Alexandria Aces, formerly of the United League, to its independent league headquartered in Dallas and which enters its third season of operation in 2009. **Ron Baron**, the league commissioner and CEO, and **Bob Ibach**, director of league operations, confirmed the announcement today.

Former Aces pitcher **Eric Moran** will be a part of a local ownership group that will unveil more details about their plans at a 3 p.m. press session at Spirit Food & Friends on Monday. "Our ownership group is proud to be able to keep pro baseball alive and in the hearts of our community," said Moran, who pitched for the Aces from 1994-99. "Being part of the Aces on the field for many years, I know what this franchise means to the local fans, and this organization will become more fan friendly in 2009 and will strive to improve on the quality-of-life in Central Louisiana."

"Our league was founded on having local ownership and offering fans family style entertainment at affordable prices. I'm pleased to see that Alexandria's group supports that concept as well," said Baron. "We have seen the players in our league become hometown heroes over the past two seasons, working hard within the community to ensure that local youngsters really get involved and enjoy pro baseball year round."

The CBL plays a 60-game regular season schedule, and presently has franchises in Texarkana, Bay Area (Texas City, TX), McKinney and Corpus Christi. There are plans to expand to several more cities in the very near future, and both Baron and Ibach, a former executive with the Chicago Cubs, indicated this may still happen before the season begins in early-May.

"We have been in negotiations with several communities during the past few months," said Ibach, "and I know Ron is working very hard to bring a few of these cities on board for the 2009 season and beyond. We should know more in a few weeks."

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The Tarrant County Blue Thunder, which relocated to McKinney last season, won the league's first championship in 2007 under manager Curtis Wilkerson, who played in the major leagues for many seasons, including with the Texas Rangers. The league championship is named after Hall of Fame pitcher Ferguson Jenkins. This past season, the Bay Area Toros of Texas City, TX captured the league title.

Both Baron and Ibach are both proud of the level of play offered by the CBL, as well as its fan-friendly atmosphere. Said Ibach: "We had five of our ballplayers sign with affiliated teams this past season, and I anticipate that number to continue to grow as more of the big league teams and their scouts become familiar with our league and the caliber of play.

"Our group has some great relationships with many of the big league teams and their scouting directors and general managers, and we are always keeping in contact with them about our ballplayers."

Baron, who like Ibach was raised in New York City, and went to Mets games as a youngster, said, "one of the reasons I got involved with the CBL was to bring affordable baseball to families, with an emphasis on creating a fun time at the ballpark for youngsters of all ages. Ticket prices at the major league level have climbed dramatically, whereas it costs more than \$300 for a family of four to attend a game. In our league, a family of four can come to a game for under \$50.

"I am very appreciative that Eric and his local group of owners share this same feeling, and I know they will do their very best to surpass the already-strong community involvement with the Aces. The CBL believes in holding lots of youth clinics and allowing youngsters to meet their favorite ballplayers after all of our games so that they come away with a very personal and up-close experience. In the CBL, it's all about families being together and having fun—and at the same time watching a good brand of professional baseball."

The league will again have a free-agent camp in late March in Dallas. Specific dates will be announced shortly. Moran indicated that season ticket packages and sponsorship plans are being formalized and will be announced by the Aces in the next few weeks.

For more information on the Continental Baseball League, visit the league's website at www.CBLproball.com.