

Former Red Translates Success on Eaton Ballfield to Success on the Major League Ballfield

Reds' Graduate Running the Top Minor League Baseball Program in America

'88 Graduate Marc Gustafson Developed the Young Heroes that Earned the Colorado Rockies the National League Championship, and the Title as Organization of the Year by Baseball America

Let's be honest, if the Colorado Rockies' historic winning streak last September and October wasn't one of the most exciting times in your life, then you've had one heck of an exciting life. For the rest of us, the Rockies' winning streak that propelled them to the World Series was a time that will not be forgotten. The Rockies became the first team in over 100 years of Major League Baseball history to win 21 of 22 games at the end of the season and into the postseason, taking them from near the bottom of the division and nearly 5 games back from multiple teams in the Wild Card standings, all the way to a one-game playoff against the San Diego Padres to get into the postseason. Following that 13-inning victory, the Rockies went on to sweep the 2nd hottest team in baseball at the time, the Philadelphia Phillies, and then complete a sweep of the division-winning Arizona Diamondbacks, capping off the most amazing winning streak in Major League baseball history.

And the Rockies didn't do this with players they had traded for or signed through free agency; they did it through the homegrown talent in their minor league system. How many people actually knew of Troy Tulowitzki, Ubaldo Jimenez, Manny Corpas, and Franklin Morales prior to last season? One man certainly did: 1988 Reds' Graduate Marc Gustafson had been scouting and working with them for many years before they became stars last fall, propelling the Rockies to the National League Pennant.

Marc "Gus" Gustafson has been with the Rockies since they were founded in 1993. After completing his sports science degree at CSU in 1992, Gus became the trainer for the Colorado Rockies' Rookie level team during the Rockies' first year of existence in 1993. By 1994, Gus was promoted to be the trainer for the Single A team, and by 1995 he was moved up to the Double A team. Gus then was given the opportunity to move into the front office for the Rockies, and took that promotion in 1997. He spent a few years as the Assistant Director of the Minor League System, and in 2006 was promoted once again

to oversee the entire Minor League system, with the title of Director of Player Development. Gus oversees all aspects of the Rockies minor league system and spring training. He also oversees the organization's operations in the Dominican Republic and Venezuela.

In 2007, Gus was noted by numerous baseball insiders and journalists for his role in developing the Rockies into the National League Champions, and getting the Rockies named Baseball America's Organization of the Year. At age 38, Gus is one of the youngest executives in Major League Baseball. The Denver Business Journal recently named Gus one of the 40 Under 40 Award Recipients.

Prior to all of this success at the Major League level, Gus was an Eaton Fightin' Red, and a very fine one at that. Marc was one of the top defensive infielders in the history of Eaton, posting a lifetime fielding average of .935 and leading the middle infield in this category as a junior and senior. Gus was a guy that as soon as you saw the ball near him, you looked to the on-deck circle to see who the next batter was, as this player was certainly out. That dependence on defense is something that helped propel the Rockies as well, as Colorado set the all-time Major League Baseball record in fielding percentage in 2007. Clearly Gus knew how to win games as a player, and what to look for in others to put together a winning team.

Gus was also a fine hitter and reached base as well as anyone on his Reds' team. Gus was a lifetime .366 hitter, ranking 3rd on the team as a junior with a batting average just shy of .400. Due to an injury during his senior year, Gus missed much of the season, but being a team guy, changed his role into that of a mentor and vocal leader for the squad. Gus had to root for the Reds from the dugout during the wildest game in Reds' history, when Eaton had to come back from a 22-17 deficit to win the game 23-22. This wild victory would only be a sign of things to come though, as Marc would play a major role in developing the young players that would win 21 of 22 games to lead the Rockies to glory 19 years later.

From a Kid that Strived to Play Defense and Reach Base in Your Mold:

Congratulations on all Your Success Gus, and Thank You for all that you have done for Eaton Baseball and for every Baseball Fan in Colorado

Marc's success, and a recap of the Rockies' magical season, is written about on the pages that follow:



Friday, March 7, 2008

Forty under 40 winner

Marc Gustafson

Denver Business Journal

Kathleen Lavine | Business Journal



Marc Gustafson

Title: Director of player development

Company: **Colorado Rockies Baseball Club**

Age: 38

Key civic affiliation: Colorado Rockies Charities

Marc Gustafson doesn't hesitate at all when asked what's been the most gratifying part of his career so far: "Advancing to the World Series in 2007."

He goes on to note that on the Colorado Rockies' playoff roster, 16 of the 25 players had been scouted, signed and developed within the organization.

"These guys grew up together in the minor leagues and love playing for each other," Gustafson said.

But what you won't hear from Gustafson is him taking credit, even though those who know him say his work has helped make the Colorado Rockies one of the best teams in the National League.

As one of the youngest player-development directors in Major League Baseball, his feats in developing the club's minor league system are well-known and recognized by many baseball experts and trade publications.

Gustafson joined the Rockies in 1993 and was promoted to his current position, director of player development, two years ago. He oversees the operation of the club's six minor league affiliates and the Latin American programs in the Dominican Republic and Venezuela.

However, you will hear Gustafson talk about others. "Team success is much more important than individual accomplishments," he said. "We have a great staff. There's no way an organization can be successful without the work of many."

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<http://wichita.bizjournals.com/denver/stories/2008/03/10/focus21.html?q=marc%20gustafson%20colorado%20rockies>

Baseball America®

Organization Of The Year

Rockies Ride Winning Streak To The World Series

By Tracy Ringolsby

December 6, 2007

DENVER—The statement was made on Opening Day.

The Monfort Brothers, Dick and Charlie, managing general partners of the Rockies, announced two-year contract extensions for general manager Dan O'Dowd and manager Clint Hurdle.

The announcement produced a knee-jerk reaction among many members of the media, aghast that a franchise which had enjoyed only one winning season (and that was an 82-80 slate) in nine years, and had not been to the postseason in 11 years, would reward its leadership with job security.

The Monforts, however, were looking at a bigger picture. They were looking at a transition that O'Dowd and Hurdle had led. They were seeing the results of an emphasis that had been placed on scouting and player development, including an expansion into Latin America. Instead of disappointments in the past, they saw hope for the future.

The reward came sooner than they anticipated.

A Rockies team that was a consensus pick to finish in either four or fifth place in the National League West for a 10th consecutive season instead played well all season with an overwhelmingly homegrown squad, then put on the strongest season-ending push in baseball history. Colorado won 14 of its last 15 regular season games, then beat the Padres in a one-game playoff to win the NL wild card, knocked off the Phillies in a Division Series and then swept the Diamondbacks in the NL Championship Series. A week off seemed to dent their momentum, and the Rockies' dream season ended by getting swept by the Red Sox in the World Series. That didn't take any luster off the year, though. And the Rockies did it the old-fashioned way.

"We don't have any hired guns," first baseman Todd Helton said.

The Rockies are a homemade success story. And the crowning moment comes with the franchise being selected Organization of the Year by Baseball America.

"This is more fulfilling than any award any of us could have won," O'Dowd said. "It affirms the efforts of the entire organization. It is recognition of the work everyone in the organization has done, from the business side to the baseball side.

"This is what our organization is about, the sum of the parts, not one individual."

It's also notable that the folks who created the organization that won the Organization of the Year are the folks who are being recognized for the work they have done. This isn't an organization that has gone through upheaval, with a new administration reaping the rewards of work done before they got here.

The folks in Colorado are the ones who have felt every bump in the road on this journey to success. They are the ones who were the targets of the critics. But they ultimately got the chance to see their project through.

"What has happened in the last six, seven months proved that the people we have in place have the capability we knew they did," Charlie Monfort said. "When we announced the extensions for Dan and Clint, it reached farther than the manager and general manager. The farm system was good. The scouting was good. We knew Clint could bring them together at the big league level. This is gratifying not for ownership, but to know that after the slings and arrows that everyone in our organization took, maybe we did know what we were doing.

"You have to realize that when you get rid of one person in baseball you get rid of the organization. Dan O'Dowd is (scouting director) Bill Schmidt and (vice president baseball operations) Bill Geivett and (farm director) Marc Gustafson. Consistency is what you need. You want people to feel they can do their job and not look over their shoulder after every loss. Consistency is what you need and we've had a system in place for eight years. Stability is any business is good."

Steady As She Goes

O'Dowd is now fifth among general managers in terms of tenure with his current franchise. And the four who are ahead of him? Kevin Towers with the Padres, Billy Beane with the Athletics, Brian Sabean with the Giants and Brian Cashman with the Yankees. The Twins' Terry Ryan and Braves' John Schuerholz had been ahead of O'Dowd before they stepped down this offseason, but both of those front offices also feature remarkably little turnover.

With the notable exception of the Yankees, these are teams that have to keep an eye on the bottom line but have found success through stability, which is where the Rockies fit in baseball's big picture.

"I would like to think (the extensions were) important to the people who work for us," O'Dowd said. "The people who work for you are the heartbeat of the organization."

The Organization of the Year goes much deeper than big league success, and that's why the Rockies fit so well. The Rockies' success came from within.

Of the 25 players on their World Series roster, 16 originally signed with the Rockies. And in the final games of the World Series, second baseman Kaz Matsui was the only player in the starting lineup who wasn't homegrown.

When holes developed during the season, the Rockies brought up homegrown players instead of shopping for veterans.

When the team decided veteran lefthanded backups Steve Finley and John Mabry weren't doing the job in May, the Rockies recalled outfielders Ryan Spilborghs and Cory Sullivan from the minors as reinforcements. When the rotation was hit by injuries, the Rockies called up Ubaldo Jimenez and Franklin Morales.

What's more, the players wanted it that way.

"We believe in what we can do, in what we have in our organization," said outfielder Brad Hawpe, whose time in the organization tracks O'Dowd's tenure. Hawpe was an 11th-round pick in the 2000 draft out of Louisiana State, while O'Dowd was hired in September 2000.

They've both been part of the long-term challenge to not only build from within, but to create a confidence that the team can win with its own talent.

Since 2000 the Rockies have emphasized scouting and player development, and in particular have made major strides in Latin America. In the pre-O'Dowd era the organization would spend less than \$100,000 a year in Latin America, but in the past year alone Colorado has invested \$1.9 million in signing bonuses, not to mention the expenses of their staff and complex.

Rolando Fernandez, who oversees the Latin program, has started to bring in position players, but his first splash came with a group of strong arms, including closer Manny Corpas, and starters Jimenez and Morales. That gave Schmidt flexibility in the draft to focus on impact position players, like shortstop Troy Tulowitzki.

Unfinished Business

Still, though, the Rockies don't feel like they've reached a final destination. They have attained success with a homegrown nucleus, but they want more. And while the farm system has produced plenty of big leaguers, there are still more to be harvested.

"You can't be surprised that the Rockies are a good team," said Dick Egan, a 47-year veteran of pro ball and currently a special assistant to the general manager in Detroit. "The Rockies' kids didn't crumble. The Rockies' guys reached the big leagues and just kept getting better. And the biggest thing is they are going to get better."

The organization thinks one of the reasons for that is an emphasis on makeup along with ability.

"When you go into our clubhouse, there is evidence of old-school values, which is a tribute to the scouting and player-development programs," Hurdle said. "We knew when we started this it was going to take patience, and patience takes courage. A lot of people were upset with it, but I think (the pennant) is a tangible sign that we are headed in the right direction."

So Tulowitzki not only established himself as an elite shortstop in his rookie season, but also as a clubhouse leader.

"The key is having the right people in place," O'Dowd said. "With Bill Schmidt, Bill Geivett, Jeff Bridich and **Marc Gustafson**, we have strong leadership in scouting and player development. With people like that, the commitment we had from ownership, there's no way it won't work. You are going to go down at times on the way up. The hill is high, but you have to keep going, and you can't do that unless your owners are committed and you have the right people making the right decisions."

It's easy to remember the bottom of the hill, when a spending spree for pitching put the organization in a huge hole. It was December 2000, right after O'Dowd was hired, and the Rockies went on a spending spree. They gave Mike Hampton a seven-year, \$121 million deal, the biggest ever signed by a pitcher, and shelled out \$55 million for five years to Denny Neagle.

But one of the worst times in franchise history provided the spark for what became the best. The Rockies haven't gone after a highly touted free agent since.

"I said when we (traded Hampton) that it was the turning point for our organization," Charlie Monfort said. "We realized we had to do things within our market and we had to do things right. We aren't a small-market team. We are mid-market and we have to do some things different than teams in New York or Chicago or Los Angeles.

"We have to scout and develop talent. We can never back off in those areas. We aren't going to find quick fixes. We have to have a long-term plan."

Learning that lesson, O'Dowd said, made things easier because "we identified the club we are, the club we are trying to build, and the club we want to maintain. First and foremost we have to focus on scouting and development as the basis for our organization. We want to look to give our players an opportunity when we think that they are ready . . . It was painful at times, but it was the best thing that happened to us. Hampton and Neagle taught us a lot of what we have to be as an organization."

The lesson has been learned. And the initial grade has been turned in. The Rockies are the Organization of the Year.

<http://www.baseballamerica.com/today/majors/features/265315.html>



PRESS RELEASE

01/06/2006 5:53 PM ET

Marc Gustafson named Director of Player Development

DENVER -- The Colorado Rockies announced today that the organization has promoted Marc Gustafson to Director of Player Development. The club has also promoted Zach Wilson to Manager of Scouting and hired Jon Weil as Manager of Minor League Operations. The moves were effective on January 1.

Gustafson, 36, has been in the organization since 1993 and a member of the baseball operations staff since 1997. He will oversee all aspects of the Rockies minor league system and spring training. His responsibilities include budgeting and operation of all minor league affiliates, in addition to duties with the organization's operations in the Dominican Republic and Venezuela. A 1992 graduate of Colorado State, Gustafson is originally from Eaton, Colorado.

www.coloradorockies.com

03/19/2008 10:00 AM ET

Rockies built for more excitement

A deep farm system has Colorado ready to climb into the playoffs again

By Lisa Winston / MLB.com

The future success of every Major League team lies in its Minor League system. With that in mind, each preseason, MLB.com takes a top-to-bottom look at all 30 organizations, from top prospects to recent draft picks.

There are few organizations that have given their fans more excitement in the past year than the Colorado Rockies, and they have their largely homegrown young lineup and pitching staff to thank for that.

Dubbed "Generation R," the club returns a young nucleus that should only get better. And there is more on the way, though where to put those prospects may be a pleasant dilemma.

The system has depth at nearly every position but none more so than middle infield.

Keep an eye on the Double-A Tulsa Drillers club this year where, at least to start the year, several of the organization's most exciting young prospects will converge to form what may be one of the best teams in the Minors this year.

10 Spot

Ten prospects to watch out for in 2008:

Dexter Fowler, OF

Still filling out his lanky 6-foot-4, 175-pound frame, the former high school basketball star has tantalized the organization since they drafted him in the 14th round of 2004 out of high school in Alpharetta, Ga.

Blessed with tremendous speed, athleticism and makeup, he suffered injuries the last two years which have hampered his climb, including a broken hamate bone that limited him to 65 games at Class A Advanced Modesto in 2007. He still hit .273 with 20 steals there, however, and made up for some lost time in the Arizona Fall League.

The switch-hitting Fowler, who fell in the draft due to a baseball commitment to Miami and marked interest from several Ivy League schools for his basketball skills, is healthy this spring and has been opening big league eyes in camp.

He heads to Double-A Tulsa this April where he will be the starting center fielder and hit somewhere in the middle of what should be a loaded lineup.

Hector Gomez, SS

The 20-year-old Gomez, a South Atlantic League All-Star hitting .266 with 11 homers, 61 RBIs and 20 steals at Class A Asheville last year, moves up to Modesto to start '08 and brings with him his sparkling defensive skills, strong arm and speed on the bases.

ON THE VERGE

Here's a player on the brink of breaking into the Major Leagues:

• **Franklin Morales, LHP** -- The 22-year-old southpaw from Venezuela is on the verge of making the Rockies' starting rotation. He has the stuff with a mid 90s fastball and two, count 'em two curveballs. He has put up the numbers the last two seasons, leading the Cal League with 179 strikeouts in 2006 and cruising from Tulsa to Colorado in '07, posting a 3.43 ERA in eight big league starts. The one thing he needs to harness is his composure, as he wears his

In his first stateside season at short-season Casper in 2006 he hit .327. The Rockies will be looking for him to work on consistency at the plate against the more advanced Cal League pitchers.

"He has enough power, he doesn't have to try to hit homers all the time," said **Marc Gustafson**, the Rockies' Director of Player Development. "He's very, very talented and for him it's just a matter of working on his on-base average and getting playing time."

Brandon Hynick, RHP

Two pro seasons, two league Pitcher of the Year awards for Hynick, an eighth-round pick in 2006 out of Birmingham Southern. Will he be able to go for the trifecta in the Texas League?

Don't rule out the 23-year-old whose fastball barely touches 90 but offsets it with command of a splitter, changeup and curveball.

His 182 innings led the Minors last summer at Modesto, where he went 16-5 with a 2.52 ERA and walked just 31. At Casper in his pro debut he posted a 2.39 ERA in 12 starts, walking eight while fanning 70 in 64 innings.

And his big league camp debut opened even more eyes than his remarkable stats did, if that's possible.

"I can't say enough about this kid," **Gustafson** said. "He's very mature, he prepares himself well, he has great composure and he doesn't get rattled. He has pinpoint control which you don't see often with young guys."

Joe Koshansky, 1B

When he hit 36 homers at the Asheville bandbox in 2005, some wondered if Koshansky's power was legit. It was. And is.

The sixth-rounder from 2004 out of Virginia shared infield real estate with Ryan Zimmerman and Mark Reynolds. He moved up to Tulsa to hit .284 with 31 homers and 109 RBIs and then Colorado Springs where he added another 21 homers, drove in 99 runs and batted .295.

Unfortunately, he is solely a first baseman and they have this guy Todd Helton there in Denver. So for now, Koshansky either sits behind Helton or returns to Colorado Springs to work on his defense and continue to refine that power stroke.

Mike McKenry, C

A seventh-rounder out of Middle Tennessee State in 2006, McKenry has emerged as the organization's best defensive catcher in his first full season, hitting .287 with 22 homers and 90 RBIs at Asheville while flashing excellent strike zone discipline.

He continues to improve his mechanics behind the plate while working with roving instructor Marv Foley, and was a late keeper in big league camp to continue that development.

"He used to be my sleeper but now scouts are taking so much notice of him I can't say that anymore," **Gustafson** said.

Chris Nelson, SS

One of a glut of talented middle infielders with special tools across the board, the first-rounder from 2004 enjoyed a breakthrough year at Modesto as he hit .289 with 19 homers, 99 RBIs and 27 steals.

heart on his uniform sleeve. "He's excitable, that's just who he is and how he's wired," **Gustafson** said.

- **Jayson Nix, 2B** -- A first-round pick by Colorado in 2001, Nix still awaits his big league debut. It could come as the club's starting second baseman at the end of the month. An outstanding defensive infielder who starred for Team USA this past fall, he remains very much in the mix for that job and is out of options. He hit .292 with 11 homers and 24 steals at Colorado Springs in '07.

- **Ian Stewart, 3B** -- Stewart is the club's third baseman of the future but when that future is remains to be seen, as they have a pretty good third baseman right now in Garrett Atkins. However, after hitting .304 with 15 homers, 65 RBIs and 11 steals at Colorado Springs in '07, the Rockies will have to find room for the 2003 first-rounder before long. "He's going to be a superstar," **Gustafson** said. "We can't push it, but it's going to happen."

He takes his plus speed, arm and makeup to Tulsa where he will add a spark to an already explosive lineup.

Greg Reynolds, RHP

The club's top pick out of Stanford in 2006 and the second pick overall that summer, the 6-foot-7 Reynolds saw his 2007 Tulsa campaign cut short due to a rotator cuff injury. He was 4-1 with a 1.42 ERA in eight starts there at the time and had been limiting Texas League hitters to a measly .180 average.

Throwing his low 90s fastball, plus curveball and solid changeup, Reynolds probably moves up to Colorado Springs once he gets the green light. That could come when camp breaks if all continues to go as planned.

Casey Weathers, RHP

The club's top pick last summer out of Vanderbilt, where he closed out games for overall No. 1 pick David Price and staff, Weathers is one of those rare closers who will stay a closer for the duration. He has the attitude and the stuff for the role and should head to Tulsa to start the season.

With a mid 90s fastball and plus slider, he makes the jump past Class A Advanced after getting his pro feet wet in 13 innings at Asheville last summer where he struck out 19 batters and posted 1 4.61 ERA.

Corey Wimberly, 2B

The 5-foot-8 listed for Wimberly may be generous but his small muscular stature certainly hasn't hurt his hitting. After leading NCAA Division I players in hitting with a .462 in 2005 and was drafted in the sixth round out of Alcorn State, he went on to win the Pioneer League batting crown that summer with a .381 mark.

The switch-hitting top-of-the-lineup guy missed some time at Tulsa with nagging hamstring and leg issues, hitting .268 with 36 steals in 92 games, before making up for lost time by winning the batting crown in the Arizona Fall League with a .407 mark.

He returns to the Drillers where he will be paired with friend and running mate Eric Young Jr. Since both hit leadoff and play second base, look for Wimberly to see some time at the hot corner as well.

"He's a sparkplug who can change the game with his speed and his defense is getting better," **Gustafson** said.

Eric Young Jr., 2B

His dad is a Colorado Rockies legend, having homered in his very first at-bat in the leadoff spot in the team's first-ever Major League game. Junior is a similar player, one who runs like the wind, has great makeup and can hit for average.

A 30th-round draft-and-follow from New Jersey signed in 2004, the 22-year-old will stay at second base for now but a move to the outfield is not out of the question somewhere down the road.

His 87 steals in 2006 led the Minors while his 73 last year ranked him second. The switch-hitter batted .291 with eight homers and 63 RBIs at Modesto and has hit .292 in four pro seasons. He moves up to join Wimberly and Nelson in the middle infield at Tulsa.

What's the Minor League record for stolen bases by a team? We may find out in 2008.

Under the Radar

Daniel Mayora, 2B

The 22-year-old Venezuelan prospect has slid over from shortstop to second base after hitting .312 with 14 homers, 78 RBIs, 26 steals and 42 doubles at Asheville in 2007.

He moves up to Modesto where he should combine for a formidable double play combination with Hector Gomez.

"He's not going to blow you away with power or speed but he's just a good player, a good hitter and a good fielder," **Gustafson** said.

Juan Morillo, RHP

There had been rumor that Morillo was out of options but since he actually has one remaining, the Rockies have the luxury of sending him back to Colorado Springs one more time to try to refine his command.

His arm is absolutely electric as he regular throws 100 MPH and has been clocked as high as 104. But his command is inconsistent at best. The 24-year-old posted a 2.35 ERA in 46 games in relief at Tulsa last summer, striking out 59 in 57 innings.

"With the arm he has we're just forcing patience and have to remain that way because you don't see an arm like that, ever," **Gustafson** said. "It can get frustrating because you want to hug him and love him and kick him in the butt. He's a wonderful kid. We just need him to find his comfort level."

Chaz Roe, RHP

A first-round supplemental pick out of high school in Kentucky in 2005, Roe joins the Tulsa staff this year and could get on the big league radar in a hurry with his low 90s fastball and plus curveball.

At Modesto last year he was 7-11 with a 4.33 ERA in 170 innings.

Esmil Rogers, RHP

One of two intriguing converted shortstops, Rogers went 7-4 with a 3.75 ERA n 19 starts at Asheville last summer, striking out 90 in 117 innings in his first full season. He throws a lively fastball in the low 90s, has three above average pitches, and now moves up to Modesto to join the rotation there.

Seth Smith, OF

Smith hit .625 in his brief big league debut and was on the post-season roster all the way through the World Series, but the glut in the Major League outfield could force him back to Colorado Springs for the time being.

The second-round pick from 2004 is used to being under the radar, as he spent three years at Mississippi State as quarterback Eli Manning's backup.

At Colorado Springs, the 2004 second-rounder hit .317 with 17 homers and 82 RBIs and has batted .311 over four pro seasons.

"He's a great player and he belongs in the big leagues," **Gustafson** said. "And he's going to get there."

Pedro Strop, RHP

Like Rogers, Strop is a converted shortstop but his projected role is in the back end of the bullpen.

The 22-year-old has a true power arm with a mid-90s fastball and great slider but continues to work on refining his newfound mechanics.

He'll head to Tulsa where he should be setting up Casey Weathers, after striking out 75 in 54 innings of relief at Modesto in '07.

2007 Draft Recap

OF **Brian Rike** (second round) out of Louisiana Tech hit .296 with four homers, 29 RBIs and seven steals at Tri-City and has a plus arm. ... C **Lars Davis** (third round) was a volleyball star in high school in Canada and played his college ball at Illinois. ... LHP **Isaiah Froneberger** (fourth round) is a 5-foot-8, 200-pound southpaw out of high school in Georgia who threw a handful of innings at Casper. ... RHP **Connor Graham** (fifth round) was drafted out of Miami (Ohio). The 6-foot-7 hurler posted a 2.37 ERA in 19 innings at Tri-City with a plus fastball, changeup and curveball. ... RHP **Cory Riordan** (sixth round) has a fastball in the low 90s and struck out 65 in as many innings with a 4.25 ERA. He is a Fordham product. ... 3B **Darin Holcomb** (12th round) hit .303 with 12 homers and 51 RBIs at Tri-City. ... OF **Bruce Billings** (30th round) hit .297 at Casper.

Predictions

Organizational Player of the Year -- Eric Young Jr.

"Little EY" led the Minors in steals in 2006 and was second in 2007, topping the 70-plateau both seasons. In a Tulsa lineup packed with exciting players with a ton of speed, look for manager Stu Cole to employ a high energy running game and for Young to be one of his best utilizers.

Organizational Pitcher of the Year -- Brandon Hynick

Pitcher of the Year in the Pioneer League in 2006. Pitcher of the Year in the Cal League in 2007. Can he hit the trifecta? It wouldn't surprise us one bit.

Comeback Players of the Year -- Greg Reynolds and Dexter Fowler.

One pitcher, one hitter. Both missed the second half of the season with arm trouble. Both are back and healthy at Tulsa. Both have tons of talent.

Top Candidate for NL Rookie of the Year -- Franklin Morales.

If he can channel his emotions into his brilliant arm, the sky is the limit for this exciting young rookie hurler. (Not that we expect or want a Mr. Roboto, mind you.)

Quotable

"Chris Nelson is more of a middle-of-the-lineup guy with his power potential and Dexter Fowler will be that as well when he fills out but both Eric Young Jr. and Corey Wimberly are top-of-the-lineup guys so (manager) Stu (Cole) could flip flop them." -- Player Development Director **Marc Gustafson** looking ahead at the challenges Cole will have with so many speedy hitters in his Tulsa Drillers lineup.

***Lisa Winston** is a reporter for MLB.com. This story was not subject to the approval of the National Association of Professional Baseball Leagues or its clubs.*

http://www.minorleaguebaseball.com/news/article.jsp?ymd=20080315&content_id=360781&vkey=news_milb&fext=.jsp

Friday, October 19, 2007
Updated: October 21, 10:02 PM ET

Recapping the Rockies' run to the World Series

ESPN.com

When the [Colorado Rockies](#) woke up on the morning of Sept. 16 and looked at the National League wild-card standings, they trailed wild-card leader San Diego by 4½ games, and Philadelphia and the L.A. Dodgers each by three games. Plus, the Rockies were in the midst of a three-game losing streak in which they'd been outscored 29-12.

In other words, the Rockies were an afterthought, a playoff contender mathematically, but not realistically. Only a streak of historic proportions could propel them into the postseason.

Today, the Rockies are, unbelievably, the National League champions as winners of 21 of 22 games -- not only getting to the playoffs with a 14-1 run but also sweeping Philadelphia and Arizona in the first two rounds to join the 1976 Cincinnati Reds -- more famously known as "The Big Red Machine" -- as the only teams to win the first seven games of any postseason.

How did the Rockies do it? Check out a synopsis of each game, with help from ESPN researcher Mark Kelly. The wild-card standings indicate the records at the close of play on each date listed.

SEPT. 16 ROCKIES 13, MARLINS 0

[RECAP](#) | [BOX SCORE](#)

The Rockies entered the final game of their three-game series against Florida trying to avoid a sweep against the last-place Marlins. Only 19,161 came to see them play at Coors Field. **Todd Helton** hit his 300th career home run, and the Rockies collected four home runs and 20 hits overall to back the pitching of **Franklin Morales**, who allowed three hits over six innings as the Rockies blew out Florida.

STREAK: 1 OF 1

NL WILD CARD		
TEAM	REC	GB
SDG	81-67	--
PHI	80-69	1.5
LAD	79-70	2.5
COL	77-72	4.5

SEPT. 18 ROCKIES 3, DODGERS 1 (Game 1)
ROCKIES 9, DODGERS 8 (Game 2)

[RECAP](#) | [BOX SCORE](#)

In the first game of a doubleheader at Coors Field, **Jeff Francis** struck out 10 batters, the most by a Rockies pitcher since 2003, and he set a franchise record for left-handed starters with his 16th victory of the season. Pinch hitter **Joe Koshansky** had an RBI double in the seventh for his first major league hit, and **Todd Helton** and **Matt Holliday** added RBI singles.

STREAK: 2 OF 2

[RECAP](#) | [BOX SCORE](#)

The Rockies were down to their last strike in the nightcap, but **Todd Helton** hit a two-run walk-off home run against Dodgers closer Takashi Saito to give the Rockies a 9-8 win. A Russell Martin solo HR in the eighth gave the Dodgers a 8-5 lead, but **Ryan**

NL WILD CARD		
TEAM	REC	GB

Spilborghs' two-run homer in the bottom of the inning and Helton's homer in the ninth completed the doubleheader sweep. "It's one of my favorite moments ever just watching him come around third," teammate **Matt Holliday** said referring to Helton's home run.

STREAK: 3 OF 3

SEPT. 19 ROCKIES 6, DODGERS 5

[RECAP](#) | [BOX SCORE](#)

The Rockies faced a tough task in the person of Dodgers starter Brad Penny, who entered the game 12-2 in his career against the Rockies, including winning his last seven decisions against them. It looked like that would improve to 13-2 until **Brad Hawpe** hit a two-run home run in the eighth off Jonathan Broxton to give the Rockies the win. "This is special," Hawpe said.

STREAK: 4 OF 4

SEPT. 20 ROCKIES 9, DODGERS 4

[RECAP](#) | [BOX SCORE](#)

Matt Holliday's 11th home run in his 12 games highlighted a six-run second inning as the Rockies pounded the Dodgers to complete the four-game sweep. "This is what it's all about, playing meaningful games in the last 10 days of the season," Colorado third baseman **Garrett Atkins** said.

STREAK: 5 OF 5

SEPT. 21 ROCKIES 2, PADRES 1

[RECAP](#) | [BOX SCORE](#)

With the Rockies leading 1-0 entering the ninth inning, **Manny Corpas** allowed a solo home run to Adrian Gonzalez to lead off the inning. The blown save was Corpas' first in 17 save chances. However, **Brad Hawpe's** home run in the 14th inning gave the Rockies a 2-1 win, clinching their first winning season since 2000. "It's another beautiful swing," manager **Clint Hurdle** said.

STREAK: 6 OF 6

SEPT. 22 ROCKIES 6, PADRES 2

[RECAP](#) | [BOX SCORE](#)

Brad Hawpe starred again, going 4-for-4 as the Rockies won their seventh straight game. Four Colorado relievers combined to give up one hit in 4 2/3 innings. Rookie **Ryan Speier** (2-1) got the win, striking out three of the five batters he faced. "It was a huge win for us," Speier said.

STREAK: 7 OF 7

SEPT. 23 ROCKIES 7, PADRES 3

[RECAP](#) | [BOX SCORE](#)

Jeff Francis held the Padres to two runs and seven hits in eight innings to tie the franchise record with his 17th win of the season. The Rockies also set the team record for most wins -- winning their 84th game of the season -- and completed a three-game sweep of the Padres.

STREAK: 8 OF 8

SEPT. 25 ROCKIES 9, DODGERS 7

SDG	83-67	--
PHI	82-69	1.5
LAD	79-72	4.5
COL	79-72	4.5

NL WILD CARD

TEAM	REC	GB
SDG	84-67	--
PHI	82-70	2.5
COL	80-72	4.5

NL WILD CARD

TEAM	REC	GB
SDG	85-67	--
PHI	83-70	2.5
COL	81-72	4.5

NL WILD CARD

TEAM	REC	GB
SDG	85-68	--
PHI	84-70	1.5
COL	82-72	3.5

NL WILD CARD

TEAM	REC	GB
SDG	85-69	--
PHI	85-70	0.5
COL	83-72	2.5

NL WILD CARD

TEAM	REC	GB
SDG	85-70	--
PHI	85-71	0.5
COL	84-72	1.5

[RECAP](#) | [BOX SCORE](#)

Troy Tulowitzki homered to drive in the tying and go-ahead runs while **Todd Helton** had a pair of RBI singles to give the Rockies their ninth straight win, tying a franchise record. "Everyone's just having fun, playing hard, guys are coming up with big hits in big situations, and we're just letting it all hang out," said **Matt Holliday**.

STREAK: 9 OF 9

SEPT. 26 ROCKIES 2, DODGERS 0

[RECAP](#) | [BOX SCORE](#)

Josh Fogg allowed no runs and five hits over 6 2/3 innings and the Rockies scored twice in the third inning in their shutout win over the Dodgers. It was the Rockies' seventh straight win over the Dodgers and their franchise-record 10th straight victory overall.

"We're embracing it and having fun," Fogg said.

STREAK: 10 OF 10

SEPT. 27 ROCKIES 10, DODGERS 4

[RECAP](#) | [BOX SCORE](#)

Garrett Atkins had four hits, including a home run, and **Brad Hawpe** and **Todd Helton** homered as the Rockies beat the Dodgers for the eighth straight time down the stretch and their 11th straight win overall. "We've had good pitching, good hitting, good defense and good luck." Atkins said.

STREAK: 11 OF 11

SEPT. 28 DIAMONDBACKS 4, ROCKIES 2

[RECAP](#) | [BOX SCORE](#)

The Rockies' 11-game win streak was snapped as Arizona ace Brandon Webb allowed two runs over seven innings and outdueled the Rockies' **Jeff Francis**. "It's been a crazy year so far," manager **Clint Hurdle** said. "Maybe the craziness isn't over."

STREAK: 11 OF 12

SEPT. 29 ROCKIES 11, DIAMONDBACKS 1

[RECAP](#) | [BOX SCORE](#)

With their playoff destiny out of their hands, the Rockies got the help they needed. First, **Troy Tulowitzki** hit his first career grand slam, **Matt Holliday** had a two-run double and **Garrett Atkins** drove in two runs to defeat the Diamondbacks. Meanwhile, in Milwaukee, the Padres were one strike away from a victory that would have mathematically eliminated the Rockies. But Padres closer Trevor Hoffman allowed a game-tying triple to Tony Gwynn Jr., and the Padres lost to the Brewers in extra innings to keep the Rockies alive. The Rockies headed into the final day of the season needing a Padres loss and a win of their own to secure a tie for the NL wild card. "Everybody is going to be dreaming about baseball tonight," Hawpe said. "We'll be waking up to baseball dreams."

STREAK: 12 OF 13

SEPT. 30 ROCKIES 4, DIAMONDBACKS 3

[RECAP](#) | [BOX SCORE](#)

The scoreboard verified that the Padres were about to lose to the Brewers, trailing 11-4 in the ninth inning. The Rockies responded

NL WILD CARD

TEAM	REC	GB
SDG	86-71	--
PHI	85-72	1
COL	85-72	1

NL WILD CARD

TEAM	REC	GB
SDG	87-71	--
PHI	86-72	1
COL	86-72	1

NL WILD CARD

TEAM	REC	GB
SDG	88-71	--
PHI	87-72	1
COL	87-72	1

NL WILD CARD

TEAM	REC	GB
SDG	89-71	--
PHI	87-73	2
COL	87-73	2

NL WILD CARD

TEAM	REC	GB
SDG	89-72	--
PHI	88-73	1
NYM	88-73	1
COL	88-73	1

NL WILD CARD

with three runs in the eighth inning, two on a double from **Brad Hawpe**, to snap a 1-1 tie and held on in the ninth inning to force a one-game playoff with the Padres for the wild card. "We still haven't finished it," **Todd Helton** said. "One hundred sixty-three games. It all comes down to tomorrow."

STREAK: 13 OF 14

OCT. 1 ROCKIES 9, PADRES 8

[RECAP](#) | [BOX SCORE](#)

Leading 6-5 with two outs in the eighth inning, **Matt Holliday's** miscue in left field allowed the Padres to score the tying run as he misplayed a Brian Giles fly ball. The two teams then held each other scoreless until Scott Hairston hit a go-ahead two-run home run off **Jorge Julio** in the 13th inning. The Padres then called on Trevor Hoffman to preserve the win. **Kaz Matsui** led off with a double and then scored on **Troy Tulowitzki's** double to get the Rockies within one run. Up stepped Holliday with a chance to redeem himself. Holliday ripped Hoffman's first pitch off the right-field fence, scoring Tulowitzki to tie the game and racing to third on the hit. The Padres elected to walk **Todd Helton** to face **Jamey Carroll** with the winning run on third base. Carroll hit Hoffman's first pitch to right field where Giles caught the ball and threw home to try and cut down Holliday, who tagged up from third. Holliday's head-first slide seemed to freeze in time as umpire Tim McClelland made a delayed safe call, and replays were inconclusive about whether or not Holliday touched the plate with his left hand. The Rockies clinched their first playoff berth since 1995 by winning 14 of their final 15 games. "It's been an incredible run from Game 1 to Game 163," Rockies manager **Clint Hurdle** said. "This is just a snapshot of what we've been through."

STREAK: 14 OF 15

OCT. 3 ROCKIES 4, PHILLIES 2 (NLDS Game 1)

[RECAP](#) | [BOX SCORE](#)

Led by a great pitching performance from **Jeff Francis**, the Rockies defeated the Phillies. Francis allowed two runs and four hits in six innings, and three Rockies relievers allowed just two walks and no hits over the final three innings. The Rockies held the Phillies' MVP trio of Jimmy Rollins, Chase Utley and Ryan Howard hitless in 11 at-bats with eight strikeouts. "Any time you expect a slugfest, you get a pitching duel," Holliday said.

STREAK: 15 OF 16

OCT. 4 ROCKIES 10, PHILLIES 5 (NLDS Game 2)

[RECAP](#) | [BOX SCORE](#)

Kaz Matsui picked the perfect time to hit his first career grand slam as his fourth-inning blast erased a 3-2 deficit. Matsui fell a single shy of being the first player in major league history to hit for the cycle in a playoff game as the Rockies moved within one win of reaching the NLCS. "We believe we're going to win every game," manager **Clint Hurdle** said.

STREAK: 16 OF 17

OCT. 6 ROCKIES 2, PHILLIES 1 (NLDS Game 3)

[RECAP](#) | [BOX SCORE](#)

Jeff Baker hit a two-out single in the bottom of the eighth inning to give the Rockies a 2-1 lead. **Manny Corpas** then retired the side in order in the ninth as the Rockies completed a three-game sweep of the Phillies to advance to the NLCS for the first time in team history. "Every night it's been somebody different. That's what's so special -- we haven't relied on one guy," Baker said. Added Phillies manager Charlie Manuel: "They are on one of the most amazing streaks I have seen a team have at the end of the season."

STREAK: 17 OF 18

TEAM	REC	GB
SDG	89-73	--
COL	89-73	--

NL WILD CARD

TEAM	REC	GB
*COL	90-73	--
SDG	89-74	1

* -- clinched NL wild card



OCT. 11 ROCKIES 5, DIAMONDBACKS 1 (NLCS Game 1)

[RECAP](#) | [BOX SCORE](#)

Jeff Francis scattered 7 hits over 6 2/3 innings and **Brad Hawpe** had two hits and two RBIs. Down 5-1, Arizona put runners at first and second with no outs in the seventh. Augie Ojeda bounced to third baseman **Garrett Atkins**, who threw to second baseman **Kaz Matsui** to start a double play. Justin Upton, running from first base, slid over second base and then rolled his right shoulder into Matsui's left leg, knocking the infielder to the ground. Second-base umpire Larry Vanover immediately called Upton out for interference, resulting in a double play. Said Hurdle: "It looked like a good, aggressive slide going in, and I thought he went out of his way to make contact."



STREAK: 18 OF 19

OCT. 12 ROCKIES 3, DIAMONDBACKS 2 (NLCS Game 2)

[RECAP](#) | [BOX SCORE](#)

The Rockies took a 2-0 series lead and won their eighth straight game dating back to the regular season. **Manny Corpas** was unable to protect a 2-1 lead in the ninth, but a bases-loaded walk to **Willy Taveraz** in the 11th gave the Rockies the lead. "We realize there's more work to be done," **Todd Helton** said. "Denver is going to be a crazy place this weekend."



STREAK: 19 OF 20

OCT. 14 ROCKIES 4, DIAMONDBACKS 1 (NLCS Game 3)

[RECAP](#) | [BOX SCORE](#)

Josh Fogg shut down Arizona's bats in his first postseason start and **Yorvit Torrealba** hit a tiebreaking three-run homer to fuel the Rockies' ninth straight win. The Rockies now stood one game away from reaching the World Series. "Tomorrow we're going to come here just like we have been doing," Torrealba said. "We're going to relax, watch TV, and when it's time to play, we're going to try to get one more win."



STREAK: 20 OF 21

OCT. 15 ROCKIES 6, DIAMONDBACKS 4 (NLCS Game 4)

[RECAP](#) | [BOX SCORE](#)

Matt Holliday's three-run HR capped a six-run fourth inning during which the Rockies turn a 1-0 deficit into a 6-1 lead. All of their runs came with two outs, including a **Kaz Matsui** RBI single and Holliday's HR after an error by Diamondbacks first baseman Conor Jackson. **Manny Corpas** came on to get the final four outs after the Diamondbacks had cut the lead to 6-4. Holliday was named series MVP. "It's unbelievable. I never dreamed I'd have this opportunity," Holliday said. "With this group of guys, I'm so excited to be a part of it. This MVP award goes 24 other directions."



STREAK: 21 OF 22