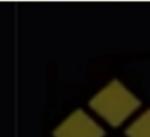




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## *Around the League*

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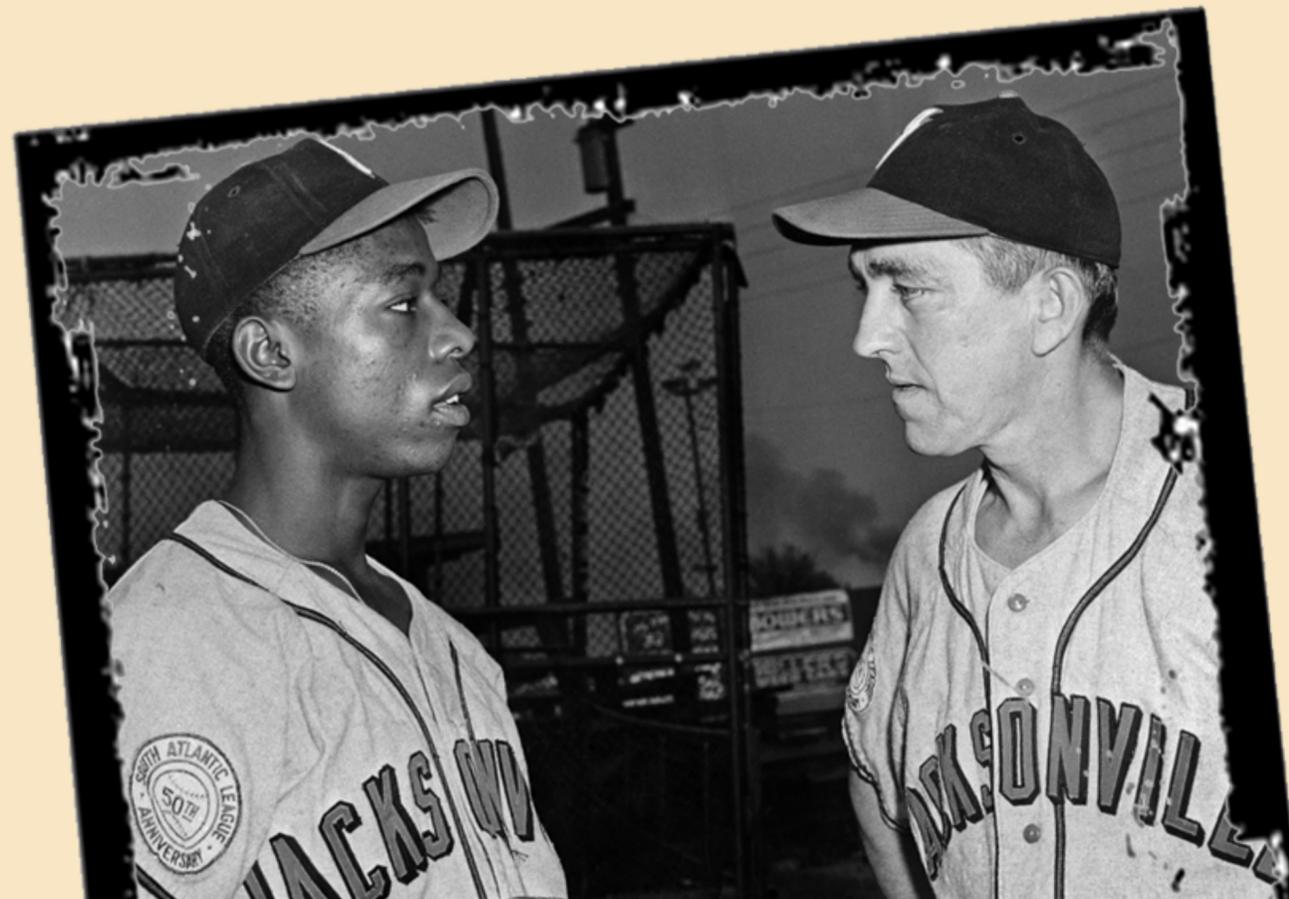
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# *Historic Legacy*



The Southern League has a long and influential history, and no player embodies that legacy more than Hank Aaron. In 1953, Aaron broke barriers in the South Atlantic League, which later became part of the Southern League, paving the way for future generations of players. Facing extreme racial discrimination and adversity, he let his bat do the talking—winning the league MVP title with a .362 batting average and leading the Jacksonville Braves to a championship.

This moment in baseball history was more than just a personal triumph; it was a defining step in integrating baseball in the Deep South. Aaron's success proved that talent transcends race and helped shift public perception of Black athletes in professional sports. His time in the Southern League was just the beginning of an extraordinary career that would see him become Major League Baseball's home run king and a true legend of the game.



# Legacy into Player Development



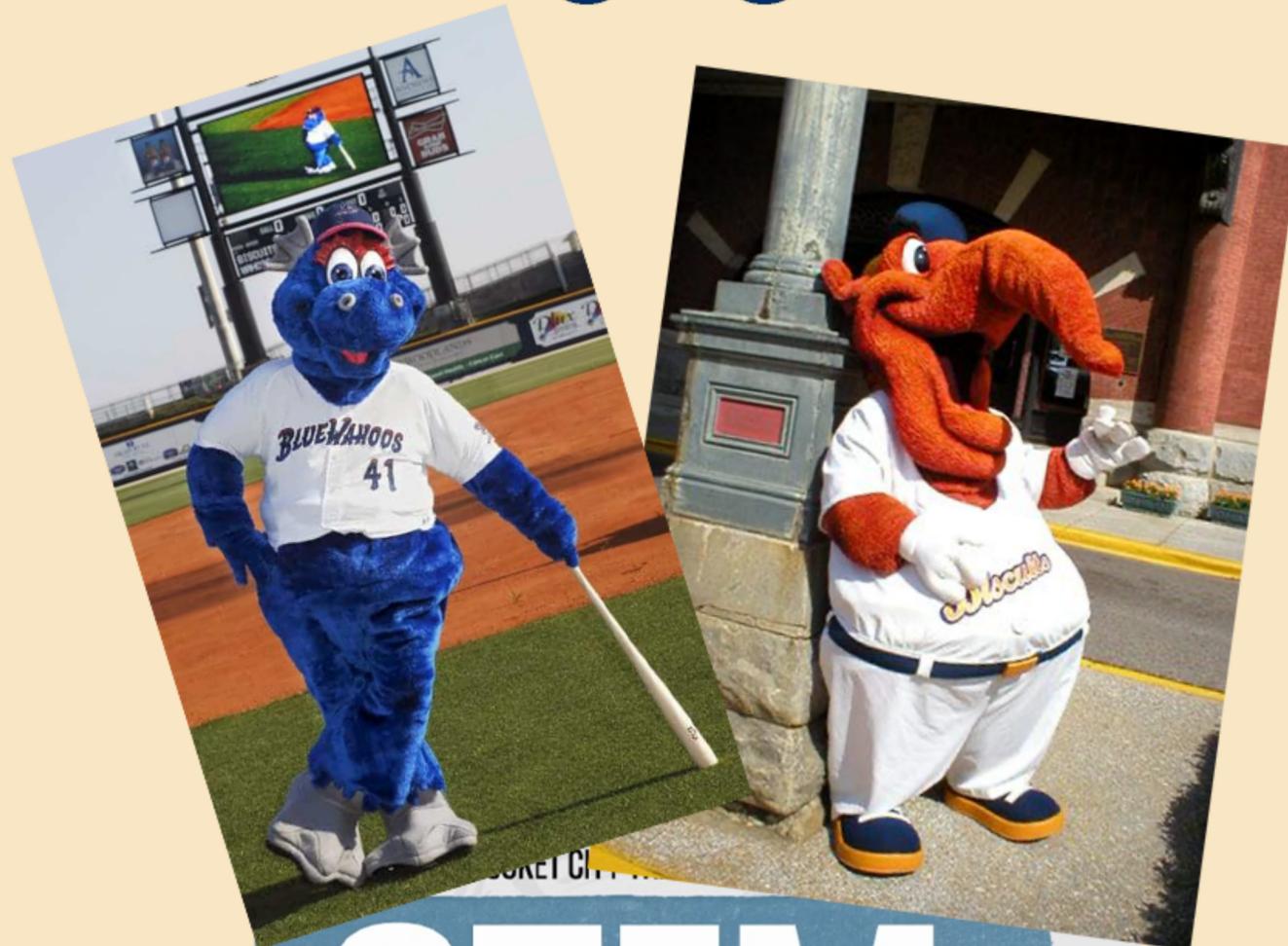
The Southern League has played a pivotal role in shaping future Hall of Famers, with legends like Frank Thomas, Tom Glavine, and Chipper Jones all passing through on their way to Cooperstown.

Frank Thomas, one of the most dominant hitters in baseball history, played for the Birmingham Barons before becoming a two-time AL MVP and a member of the Baseball Hall of Fame. Tom Glavine, a Cy Young Award-winning pitcher, developed in the Southern League with the Greenville Braves before leading the Atlanta Braves to multiple postseason runs. Chipper Jones, another Greenville Braves standout, used his time in the league to refine his switch-hitting ability before earning an MVP award and a Hall of Fame induction.

Their journeys highlight the Southern League's impact as a premier development ground, producing not only All-Stars but some of the greatest players the game has ever seen.



# *Fan Engagement in the Southern League*



Fan engagement is at the heart of the Southern League, where teams create memorable experiences beyond the action on the field. From beloved mascots to interactive theme nights, the league continues to foster strong connections between teams and their communities.

Mascots play a huge role in making the ballpark experience more fun and family-friendly. The Pensacola Blue Wahoos' mascot, Kazoo, is a fan favorite, known for his high-energy antics, crowd interaction, and signature blue fur. Meanwhile, the Montgomery Biscuits' mascot, Big Mo, adds his own unique flair, bringing excitement and humor to every game. These mascots provide an interactive experience for kids and adults alike, leading cheers, taking photos, and making every visit to the ballpark more memorable.

Beyond mascots, theme nights and community-driven initiatives enhance fan engagement. One standout event is STEM Night, hosted by the Rocket City Trash Pandas, which introduces young fans to science, technology, engineering, and math through hands-on activities and on-field demonstrations. This event blends education with entertainment, ensuring that kids leave the stadium not just as baseball fans but also with a deeper appreciation for learning.

The Southern League also features fireworks nights, postgame concerts, and promotional giveaways, ensuring that every game offers more than just baseball. Whether it's Kids Run the Bases, a specialty jersey auction for charity, or community outreach events, the league prioritizes creating an immersive, engaging atmosphere for fans of all ages.

By combining on-field action with off-field entertainment, the Southern League continues to build a loyal fan base, making every game an unforgettable experience.





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# Community Initiatives in the Southern League

The Southern League plays a vital role in supporting local communities by organizing impactful initiatives that extend beyond the baseball field. From job fairs to charitable events like Stand Up to Cancer nights, teams across the league use their platform to create meaningful connections and drive positive change.

One key initiative is the Chattanooga Lookouts' Job Fair, scheduled for February 15, where the team offers local residents opportunities to work within the ballpark in various roles. This event not only helps people find employment but also strengthens the community's relationship with the team, providing hands-on experience in the sports industry. Similarly, the Biloxi Shuckers also host an annual job fair, ensuring that fans and community members have access to seasonal employment opportunities within Minor League Baseball.

Another major community effort is the Stand Up to Cancer Nights, hosted by multiple Southern League teams. These nights raise awareness and funds for cancer research, while also honoring survivors and those affected by the disease. Fans come together in a powerful moment of unity, often holding up signs with the names of loved ones, showing that baseball can be a force for good in the fight against cancer.

Through these initiatives, the Southern League continues to make a lasting impact off the field, proving that minor league baseball is not just about competition, but about building stronger communities. Whether it's through job creation, cancer awareness, or charity partnerships, teams are dedicated to giving back and making a difference.



CHATTANOOGA  
**LOOKOUTS**

**JOB FAIR**

February 15<sup>TH</sup> | 10:00AM - 1:00PM  
at AT&T Field





# Sponsorship and Advertising

Sponsorship and advertising play a crucial role in generating revenue for Southern League teams, offering businesses targeted exposure to local communities and dedicated fan bases. Unlike Major League Baseball, which secures national sponsorships, Southern League teams focus on local and regional partnerships, creating valuable business relationships that drive both brand recognition and community engagement.

One of the most significant sponsorship opportunities in the league comes from stadium naming rights and field signage. For example, the Tennessee Smokies' new stadium in downtown Knoxville is named Covenant Health Park, reflecting a major healthcare provider's investment in the team and city. Similarly, Toyota Field, home of the Rocket City Trash Pandas, was named through a multi-year agreement with Toyota, showcasing how corporate partnerships can shape a team's identity.

In-stadium advertising is another major component of sponsorship revenue. Brands purchase ad placements on outfield walls, dugouts, and scoreboard displays, ensuring constant visibility to fans in attendance. Teams like the Chattanooga Lookouts and Biloxi Shuckers offer rotating digital signage, allowing sponsors to engage with fans in real-time during games.

Beyond the ballpark, Southern League teams integrate sponsors into team broadcasts and digital content. Radio and live-streamed game broadcasts often feature sponsored segments, with companies receiving mentions during pre-game shows, player spotlights, and game recaps. Additionally, social media partnerships allow businesses to connect with fans through branded content, sponsored posts, and team-driven promotional campaigns.





# Relocation and Rebranding

The Southern League has experienced significant changes in recent years, with teams relocating and rebranding to strengthen regional connections, modernize their identities, and improve fan engagement. Two of the most notable examples are the Columbus Clingstones and the Knoxville Smokies, both of which underwent major transformations heading into the 2025 season.



## Knoxville Smokies: A Return to the City

After years of playing in Kodak, Tennessee, the Tennessee Smokies are moving back to Knoxville in 2025 and rebranding as the Knoxville Smokies. Their new stadium, Covenant Health Park, is located in downtown Knoxville, allowing the team to reconnect with the city's history and fan base. While keeping the traditional Smokies colors, the rebrand includes a modernized logo featuring the Henley Bridge and the Great Smoky Mountains, reinforcing the team's strong local identity.

## Columbus Clingstones: A Fresh Start in Georgia

Formerly the Mississippi Braves, this Atlanta Braves Double-A affiliate relocated from Pearl, Mississippi, to Columbus, Georgia, bringing professional baseball back to the city for the first time since 2008. The name Clingstones is a reference to Georgia's famous peaches, particularly the clingstone variety that holds tightly to the pit—symbolizing both the team's determination and its deep-rooted connection to Columbus. The new logo and branding, designed by Studio Simon, embrace the vibrant peach theme, setting the team apart from others in Minor League Baseball.





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