

Twins extend affiliate invitations to four Minor League teams

Club proudly invites the **St. Paul Saints**, **Wichita Wind Surge**, **Cedar Rapids Kernels** and **Fort Myers Mighty Mussels** to partner in the development of tomorrow's stars

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Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN – Taking the next step toward an enhanced player development model, the Minnesota Twins today announced they have invited the **St. Paul Saints** (Triple-A), **Wichita Wind Surge** (Double-A), **Cedar Rapids Kernels** (High-A) and **Fort Myers Mighty Mussels** (Low-A), and their respective communities, to become club minor league affiliates, beginning with the 2021 season.

Should the partnerships come to fruition via Major League Baseball's new player development structure, Twins prospects would gain renowned facilities in St. Paul, Minnesota and Wichita, Kansas; the organization would maintain longtime successful relationships with Cedar Rapids, Iowa and Fort Myers, Florida (including continued utilization of the CenturyLink Sports Complex toward the beginning of the player development journey); and, the club's top three affiliates would be connected within a North-South radius of approximately 775 miles. A potential Twins-Saints association would create the closest geographic relationship between parent club and Triple-A affiliate in Major League Baseball, with Target Field and CHS Field separated by just 10.6 miles.

St. Paul Saints

The St. Paul Saints and CHS Field, which opened in 2015 and served as the Twins' alternate training site during the 2020 season, stand to become the club's new home for Triple-A baseball beginning in 2021. Since their inception in 1993, the Saints have played 28 seasons of Independent Professional Baseball, while becoming a model organization both on and off the field. The Saints would become the 13th all-time Triple-A affiliate of the Minnesota Twins.

St. Paul has led their league in attendance 17 times in their 27 full seasons played (2020 split between Sioux Falls Stadium and CHS Field, with a maximum of 1,500 fans allowed per game in St. Paul due to COVID-19 restrictions). Since moving to their current home, located in the historic Lowertown District of St. Paul, the club has drawn 2,028,402 fans over five full seasons (2015-19), leading the American Association in

each of those years. They have been over 100% capacity 15 times, including a combined 112% capacity in the first five full seasons at CHS Field. In 2019, the Saints led all of Minor League Baseball in percent capacity, were eighth in average attendance (topped only by seven Triple-A teams), and 26th in overall attendance. The club has made the playoffs 16 times and has won five total championships between the Northern League (four) and American Association (one, in 2019). Through the 2020 season, 137 players had their contract sold, with 19 players reaching the major leagues. Notable current and former Twins to have played for the Saints include current left-handed pitcher Caleb Thielbar (2011, 2016-17), 2017 American League All-Star reliever Brandon Kintzler (2009) and St. Paul native Jack Morris, who finished his Hall of Fame career making 10 starts for the club in 1996.

The St. Paul invitation was extended under a shared vision for a collaborative and truly unique Twins-Saints platform focused on player development and rehab, fan engagement, youth baseball and softball, as well as a host of philanthropic initiatives across the region.

Wichita Wind Surge

The Wichita Wind Surge, boasting a state-of-the-art new facility and a proud history of professional baseball dating back more than 130 years, has been invited to join the Twins beginning in 2021 as the club's new Double-A affiliate. Wichita has been home to baseball since 1887 and has been the affiliate of several major league clubs, most recently the Marlins (2020), Kansas City Royals (1995-2007) and San Diego Padres (1987-1994). The Wind Surge are slated to play their home games at the new Riverfront Stadium in downtown Wichita, which broke ground in February of 2019 and features 7,545 seats and an overall capacity of 10,000-plus. Wichita has been invited to become the Twins' eighth different affiliate at the Double-A level.

Cedar Rapids Kernels

A Twins partner for seven successful seasons (2013-19) at the Low-A level, the Cedar Rapids Kernels have been invited to extend their relationship with Minnesota as the club's Single-A Advanced affiliate beginning in 2021. With a continued association, the Kernels would become the Twins' eighth different affiliate at the High-A level.

Fort Myers Mighty Missels

The Twins have invited Fort Myers, which has been home to Minnesota's High-A club for 27 fantastic seasons since 1993, to continue its club affiliation as a Low Single-A club beginning in 2021. The Mighty Missels play their home games at Hammond Stadium and utilize the CenturyLink Sports Complex, the Twins' home for major league spring training since 1991.

Additional Twins Player Development

Under the new Major League Baseball model, the Twins will continue with short-season, rookie-level teams in Florida (based at the CenturyLink Sports Complex in Fort Myers) and in the Dominican Republic (located at the Twins Dominican Academy in Boca Chica).

The Twins have placed a significant emphasis on the development of homegrown talent, including the likes of Luis Arraez, José Berríos, Byron Buxton, Randy Dobnak, Tyler Duffey, Mitch Garver, Ryan Jeffers, Max Kepler, Alex Kirilloff, Jorge Polanco, Taylor Rogers, Miguel Sanó and Cody Stashak – each of whom was on Minnesota’s roster for the 2020 Wild Card Series. Minnesota traditionally boasts one of the top minor league systems in baseball, recently ranked as 12th overall by MLB.com. The Twins have four of the top 100 minor league prospects, led by 2017 first overall pick Royce Lewis at number 10, followed by Kirilloff (No. 33), Trevor Larnach (No. 87) and Jordan Balazovic (No. 93).

WHAT THEY’RE SAYING ABOUT THE TWINS’ AFFILIATE INVITATIONS

On potential Twins affiliations with St. Paul, Wichita, Cedar Rapids and Fort Myers

Twins President of Baseball Operations Derek Falvey: “Quality player development is at the core of a winning baseball organization. These potential affiliations – both new and sustained – put us in prime position to continue to build on our recent major league success. I could not envision a better setup for our club. The tremendous resources and proximity afforded by St. Paul and CHS Field would give us a chance to link our two highest levels of play. The brand new facility in Wichita and what we’ve learned about the rich history and passionate baseball fanbase there creates fantastic new possibilities in Double-A. The ability to continue relationships with the great organizations in both Cedar Rapids and Fort Myers would help to set the foundation for future big leaguers at the early stages of their journeys. We look forward to hopefully collaborating with the ownership groups, management and communities for each of our minor league affiliates as we all together develop future generations of Minnesota Twins.”

On a possible Twins-St. Paul Saints partnership

Twins President & CEO Dave St. Peter: “The Minnesota Twins are ecstatic about the potential to form a partnership with the St. Paul Saints. We have long admired the creative excellence of Marv Goldklang, Mike Veeck and their team in making the Saints one of America’s most successful minor league brands. We are incredibly excited at the thought of Minnesota baseball fans having the opportunity to watch their favorite Twins prospects as they wear the Saints uniform and play at gorgeous CHS Field. Simply put, a Twins-Saints partnership would not only be historic, but a wonderful boon for baseball in the Twin Cities and beyond.”

Saints Chairman Marv Goldklang: “Our ownership Group has enjoyed a special relationship with the Twins, dating back more than 25 years when we owned their High-A affiliate in Fort Myers and helped operate Spring Training for the Major League club. During my conversations with Jim Pohlad and Dave St. Peter leading up to the decision to move forward with our partnership, they emphasized their respect for what the Saints have accomplished and made clear that, with the exception of the players on the field, they don't expect much, if anything, to change in terms of the experience of attending a Saints' game. The opportunity to combine two iconic brands in promoting the game, both on and off the field, was something that was impossible to turn down. I look forward to a special and long-lasting relationship with one of the top organizations in all of Major League Baseball.”

Saints President & Co-Owner Mike Veeck: “Our fans have been the lifeblood of this organization since 1993. Marv, Bill, and I wouldn't have done this deal without their blessing. When we moved into CHS Field they had one ask and that was not to change our identity. We made that promise in 2015 and we're making that promise now. I'm excited for this partnership and I look forward to bringing our irreverent fun to the world of Triple-A Baseball.”

Saint Paul Mayor Melvin Carter: “Our champion Saint Paul Saints have provided all of us with a fun, family-friendly baseball experience like no other for nearly three decades. This incredible evolution benefits our entire community and region.”

On a possible Twins-Wichita Wind Surge partnership

Twins President & CEO Dave St. Peter: “The Minnesota Twins are absolutely thrilled to pursue a partnership with the Wichita Wind Surge. Our organization is excited about the opportunity to build a strong relationship with the Wind Surge ownership group and the broader Wichita community. It would be an honor to have the Wind Surge and the brand-new Riverfront Stadium as part of the Twins player development journey.”

Wind Surge Partner & CEO Jordan Kobritz: “The Wichita Wind Surge are pleased that the Minnesota Twins have invited the team to become one of their Minor League affiliates,” said Jordan Kobritz, Wind Surge Partner and CEO. “The Twins are a first-class organization recognized in baseball circles for having a great minor league system. Our state-of-the-art stadium will provide one of the best fan and player experiences anywhere in Minor League Baseball. After we review the Player Development License, we look forward to finalizing a partnership with the Twins.”

On the potential of a continued Twins-Cedar Rapids Kernels partnership

Twins Director of Player Development Alex Hassan: “From top to bottom, the Cedar Rapids Kernels are a first-class organization. Over the years, they've been tremendous partners to the Minnesota Twins and an integral part of our player development process. We would be thrilled to see that partnership continue for many years to come.”

Kernels President Greg Seyfer: “We are excited to share this news with the Cedar Rapids community and are eager to begin the 2021 season. The Minnesota Twins are an excellent organization and we are thrilled to continue our eight-year partnership with them.”

On the potential of a continued Twins-Fort Myers Mighty Mussels partnership

Twins President & CEO Dave St. Peter: “The Minnesota Twins are ecstatic about the prospect of continuing our long-standing partnership with the Fort Myers Mighty Mussels. We applaud Mighty Mussels owner Andy Kaufmann and the entire organization for their collaboration on player development and ongoing commitment to baseball fans across Lee County and Southwest Florida.”

Mighty Mussels Managing Owner Andy Kaufmann: “The Mussels organization is thrilled to be continuing the long-term partnership with the Minnesota Twins for many years and generations to come. We look forward to witnessing the development of future Twins players and Hall of Famers here at Hammond Stadium, while continuing to bring affordable family fun and entertainment to the great citizens of Lee County. We would also like to thank Lee County for all of their support both historical and present.”