

TWINS NOTES

# AA prospect scores points

By Matt Michael  
Special to the Star Tribune

COOPERSTOWN, N.Y. — Over the years, major league teams have used the annual Hall of Fame Game as a way to get a firsthand look at their best pitching prospects.

**Steve Carlton** in 1966, **Roy Halladay** in 1993 and **C.C. Sabathia** in 2000 are a few of the future major league stars who got their first taste of the big time at Doubleday Field. And if the Twins are lucky, **Scott Baker** eventually will join that list.

The Twins summoned Baker from Class AA New Britain to start Monday's Hall of Fame Game against the Atlanta Braves, and the 6-4 righthander did not disappoint them. Baker gave up two runs and three hits with no walks and eight strikeouts in five innings before the Braves rallied to win 10-7 before an announced sellout crowd of 9,968.

"It's an honor they chose me to pitch," Baker said. "I know it's good for [the Twins] because it gives the big guys a day off."

Baker, 22, is 3-1 with a 2.06 ERA since getting promoted from Class A Fort Myers in mid-May. In his first start for the Rock Cats on May 18, he came within two outs of throwing a seven-inning perfect game in the second game of a doubleheader against Portland.

Baker, a second-round pick from Oklahoma State in 2003, admitted his stomach was doing somersaults when he took the mound Monday.

That was only natural, with Twins manager **Ron Gardenhire** and legend **Harmon Killebrew** watching his work.

"You're expected to go out and perform, so you have to deal with it," Baker said. "It's not hard to get the juices flowing."

Baker surrendered bases-empty home runs to **Andrew Jones** in the second inning and **Dewayne Wise** in the fourth. In the first two innings, while most of the starters were still in the game, Baker retired **Rafael Furcal** on a line out and fanned Atlanta regulars **Nick Green**, **J.D. Drew**, **Julio Franco** and **Eli Marrero**.

Etc.

Trailing 7-4 entering the ninth, the Braves scored six runs against New Britain pitcher **Bobby Korecky**, one of eight minor leaguers the Twins summoned to play in the game. Rock Cats third baseman **Tommy Watkins** went 2-for-3 with a home run and three RBI.

> Twins catcher/first baseman **Matthew LeCroy** won the

pregame home run contest, smacking five in the first round to tie Atlanta's **Johnny Estrada**, and then clubbing two

more on his first two swings of the second round to beat Estrada.

> The Twins arrived in Cooperstown on Sunday night and toured the Hall of Fame.

First-time Hall visitor **Tori Hunter** said he was especially touched by the displays honoring **Jackie Robinson** and **Hank Aaron**. "Those guys are the reason why I'm playing this game today," Hunter said.



LeCroy

## Braves beat Twins 10-7 in HOF game in 2004



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