

Minor League Sports in Baton Rouge

The Good, The Bad and Yes The Ugly

This is the first installment in a series about the struggles of minor league sport teams in Baton Rouge

By Blake Andrews

Do these names ring a bell; The Red Wings, The Baton Rouge Bombers, The Baton Rouge Blaze, The Blue Marlins, The Riverboat Bandits, The Riverbats, The Red Sticks, The Senators, The Cougars, The Louisiana Bayou Beast, The Kingfish,

What about The Louisiana Cajun Pelicans, The Eagles, The Baton Rouge Wildcats.

The first group is just a short list of those minor league sports teams that have at one time been part of the Baton Rouge Sports Scene....the second group are currently active.

Yes there are three minor league teams active in Baton Rouge. Two have completed one season, The Eagle a men's football team and The Baton Rouge Wildcats a women's full contact football team playing in the Independent League of Women's Football.

The Louisiana Cajun Pelicans participate in the American Basketball Association and played the last part of the 2004 season in Baton Rouge. The team set out of the current season due to effects of the hurricanes on the area and other teams in their division.

Why are there so many teams that did not succeed in a sports driven town like Baton Rouge?

Why is Baton Rouge the largest city (even before Katrina) in America that does not have a baseball team with major league affiliation?

After all Baton Rouge has a great climate, is easy to get to, has plenty of support services, a large enough population, a better than average economy, so what is the problem.

Some claim that the sports fans in Baton Rouge are only interested in football and more specifically LSU & Southern Football. Well if this is the case how do explain the large crowds for the first years of the Kingfish who were playing HOCKEY a sport far from the interest of those in the warm climate in Baton Rouge.

Others feel that it takes a wining team. How about more advertising. New and centrally located facilities. Ask 100 people and you'll probably get at least 50 different reason why minor league teams struggle in Baton Rouge.

Next week we'll take a look at the history of minor league baseball in Baton Rouge. Starting back at the turn of the century thru today. Then we'll take a look at the possibilities of tomorrow, while discussing with local minor league experts just what will / does it take to make in Baton Rouge.

And for the record:

The Red Sticks, Cougars, Senators, Blue Marlins and Riverbats were all area baseball teams

The Kingfish were of course our hockey team.

The Baton Rouge Bombers were an indoor soccer team.

The Red Wings and The Riverboat Bandits were traditional football teams.

The Bayou Beast was an indoor football team.

The Baton Rouge Blaze was an arena football team.

Blake Andrews is the host of TOTAL SPORTS RADIO broadcast on The Score 1210 weekdays from 11-noon. He can be reached by e-mail at blake@totalsportsradio.com.