

NEWPORT GULLS BASEBALL

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"RAISING THE BAR IN SUMMER COLLEGIATE BASEBALL"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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2009 NECBL CHAMPIONS KICK OFF 10th ANNIVERSARY SEASON WITH FIRST NEWPORT GULLS HALL OF FAME INDUCTIONS

NEWPORT, RI - The Newport Gulls are kicking off their 10th Anniversary Season by inducting former Red Sox General Manager Lou Gorman and five former Gulls players into the newly established Newport Gulls Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony and Dinner will take place on Saturday, January 16, 2010 at the Hyatt Regency on Goat Island at 6 p.m.

In addition to Gorman as the honorary inductee, the inaugural class includes former players Joel Kirsten (2001), Rafael Lara (2001, 2002), Mike Bergeron (2001, 2002), Chris Iannetta (2003), and Cyle Hankerd (2005).

The Hall of Fame evening will include the ceremony and sit-down dinner, silent and live auctions, video presentations and special guest appearances. Local sports personality and the voice of the Pawtucket Red Sox, Steve Hyder, will return as master of ceremonies for the auction. Tickets must be purchased in advance. Tickets are \$60 per person. Reservation materials may be obtained online at www.newportgulls.com or by calling 401-849-4982. Admission is \$75 per person at the door.

Lou Gorman is currently the chairman of the board for the Newport Gulls. His resume includes stints as both the Seattle Mariners GM (1977-1980) and the Boston Red Sox GM (1983-1993). During his time with the Red Sox, he assembled the team that went to the 1986 World Series.

A pitcher from LA Pierce College, Joel Kirsten, was the winning pitcher in the 2001 NECBL Championship game against the Keene Swamp Bats. Kirsten pitched 57.1 innings in nine games that season while posting just a 1.73 ERA. He ended the season undefeated with a 6-0 record. Kirsten was also selected to the All Division team for the American Division and All-League team for the NECBL. After his Gulls playing days, he was selected in the 2002 MLB Draft by the Texas Rangers in the 25th round.

Both Rafael Lara and Mike Bergeron were important parts of the 2001 and the 2002 Gulls squad that won back to back NECBL Championships. Lara was the 2002 NECBL Defensive Player of the Year and set a NECBL record by playing all positions in a nine inning game. He was also named to the NECBL First Team as well as an All Star in 2002. The second baseman hit .308 while leading the league with 22 stolen bases. Likewise, Bergeron also excelled in his second season with the Gulls. He was named to the NECBL Second Team in addition to winning the Most Improved Player Award in 2002. In the 2002 post season, he started two games while going 2-0 and posting a 0.54 ERA. He pitched complete games in both of those playoff appearances.

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Hailing from Rhode Island and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chris Iannetta, was the first Newport Gull to reach Major League Baseball as he made his debut with the Colorado Rockies in 2006. As a Gull, Iannetta was the Defensive Player of the year as a catcher. He was also selected to the NECBL First Team. After the Gulls, Iannetta played in the Cape Cod League the following season en route to being selected in the fourth round by the Rockies in the 2004 MLB Draft and now is their starting catcher. Iannetta also was selected and played for Team USA in the 2009 World Baseball Classic.

Cyle Hankerd played only one season for Newport but made a big impact as he won MVP of the NECBL while helping the Gulls win their third NECBL Championship. Hankerd was also the NECBL batting champion and Offensive Player of the Year. In the regular season, Hankerd hit nine home runs while he hit .383 and knocked in 36 runs. He collected 12 hits in 24 post season at bats as he hit two home runs in six post season games. He was selected in the 2006 MLB Draft in the third round by the Arizona Diamondbacks. In 2009, he played in 131 games for the Mobile BayBears, the AA affiliate of the Diamondbacks.

Since moving to Newport in 2001, the Gulls have captured the New England Collegiate Baseball League Fay Vincent Jr. Cup four times and have gone to the playoffs all nine years. College baseball players are recruited from the top programs in the United States, and all are prospects for the Major League Baseball draft.

Playing in historic Cardines Field, one of Baseball America's top picks to catch summer baseball, the Newport Gulls provide high quality baseball in a family friendly atmosphere. A 501.c.3 Non-Profit Organization, the Newport Gulls have also contributed more than \$100,000 to the community and local charities through game day 50/50 raffles, summer camp scholarships, auction items and appearances. In 2006 the Newport Gulls also established a scholarship program benefiting male and female athletes from Newport, Middletown and Portsmouth high schools.

The Hall of Fame Dinner and Auction is the primary fund-raiser to support Newport Gulls operations during the off season this year.

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