



Renegades Extra!



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Investing In The Future: Mizzentop Day School Announces Campus Improvement & Expansion Project



Aberdeen ball team hopes to iron out tension with city



Pitcher Trey Gibson has a 1-2 record and a 5.46 ERA with the IronBirds so far this season.

-Photo by Dave Janosz

By Morgan E. Maier

The Aberdeen IronBirds have a 23-year history with Hudson Valley baseball. Elmer Cruz-Rodriguez is the latest in the Yankees era to come from a division rival, as the Boston Red Sox dealt him for catching prospect Carlos Narvaez, to the Hudson Valley's fortune. But who are the Aberdeen IronBirds, the Baltimore Orioles' High-A affiliate?

The IronBirds play in Ripken Stadium, the team, a gift from Baltimore's beloved Cal Ripken Jr. and family. Ripken spent 21 years as an Oriole and will live forever in the hearts of Maryland's most bustling city. The IronBirds were founded by the Ripken family, have existed since 2002 and survived the reclassification of 2021.

Now under new ownership, the IronBirds face an unclear future. Attain Sports became a majority stakeholder in the IronBirds in October 2024, when the Ripken brothers made the sale. The subsequent departure of general manager Jack Graham in March raised further questions about the future of America's pastime in the All American City, according to the Baltimore Sun. Graham left not only Aberdeen but also baseball, taking a position within Major League Soccer with D.C. United.

Attain also owns the Orioles' AA affiliate Chesapeake Baysox. Once named the Bowie Baysox, Attain made

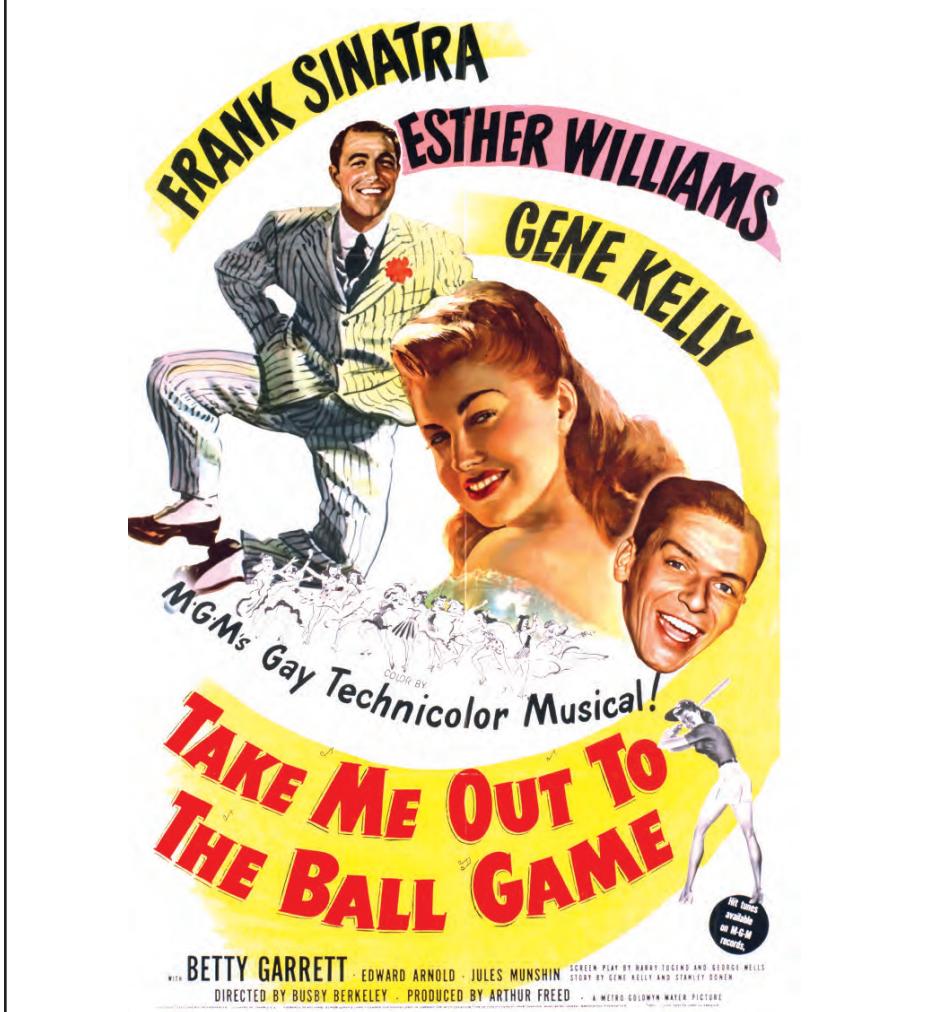
the move to a more regional name, to reflect fans who cross the bay to see their minor leaguers. Such a transformation may be on the horizon for the IronBirds.

With conflict between city officials, state funds for stadium renovations, and the now-uninvolved "Iron Man," Aberdeen and the once-beloved IronBirds seem on the path for a rocky split.

Aberdeen's potential fate is not caused by a lack of production. Top MLB prospects and All-Stars once passed through this club, like 2022 #1 pick Jackson Holliday and MVP Adley Rutschman. The IronBirds won a division championship in 2022 and a plethora of minor league awards since the 2021 season. Should the team relocate, they likely won't move too far from the area. Some theorists see the team shipping up to an already renovated stadium, like the former home of the Trenton Thunder, given the widespreadwaning local interest in the team.

The IronBirds were also the backdrop for Gary Larson's memoir "Clubbie," detailing experiences as an Aberdeen clubhouse attendant in 2012 and 2013. Larson describes Aberdeen as having the best player amenities in the Orioles organization. For now, the Renegades can relish the facilities when they make this season's first visit to Aberdeen, from June 3-8.

Baseball movies offer great entertainment for an off day



The 1949 musical "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" stars Frank Sinatra and Gene Kelly as professional baseball players.

-Courtesy image

By Morgan E. Maier

Some off days are best spent with baseball. And like America's pastime, movies about baseball offer similar refuge from work and life, capturing the attention of all ages for the same duration. Biopics, fictional athletes and feel-good sports features remind audiences that everyone loves an underdog story. The most dedicated marathonists could spend 7 hours and 50 minutes straight of Kevin Costner playing different pro baseball stars. For those who can spare just two hours in front of a screen, here are non-Costner flicks fit for an off day screening.

"Take Me Out to the Ballgame" (1949) – If you don't feel like crowding "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" with a crowd of thousands, sing along with this picture's jaunty opening rendition of the classic song. This 93-minute musical stars Frank Sinatra and Gene Kelly as professional baseball players (and part-time entertainment duo) vying for the affection of their new female manager. Enjoy some bumpy vaudeville tunes with a side of ball playing. This one premiered nationwide on April 13, 1949, five days ahead of Casey Stengel's official debut as the manager of the New York Yankees. Surely Stengel, a man who treated every season like baseball season, caught a showing on the way to his first of five consecutive World Series titles.

"A League of Their Own" (1992) – Madonna is just one beautiful part of this one. This period piece depicts a rivalry especially understood by those with a com-

petitive spirit and a sister. Whether viewers have one, both, or neither, all will enjoy this account of the ladies who (literally) went to bat during World War II. With a post-credit look at the real women of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League as they're immortalized in the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, this film is, in a word, unrivaled.

"Gibsonburg" (2013) – Sometimes, losers win. Meet the Gibsonburg Golden Bears, the only high school baseball team to win a state title with a losing record. At the close of the 2005 season, Gibsonburg's losses tripled their wins, yet they won eight straight games to capture the Ohio state title. Sports nut or not, leave with the words of head coach Kyle Rase: "You never give up, ever, and secondly, believe in yourself and the team."

"Hardball" (2001) – Gambling and baseball are linked since the dawn of the game. The former is top priority for Keanu Reeves' Conor O'Neill, who cares for himself, his debts, and hitting the Chicago Bulls moneyline. Motivated by money, he finds himself leading a Little League team in Chicago's projects. With each practice and division contest, O'Neill learns that the rules of the game transcend fundamentals and infield fistfights. Notorious B.I.G.'s "Big Poppa" is the key melody for this tale of trust, tragedy, and triumph. It's a tearjerker, but the characters' appreciation for one another grows from the second act to the final scene.