

Back In the Mix

by Tom Haudricourt

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MILWAUKEE—**Manny Parra** feels like part of the Brewers organization once again.

An important part, as a matter of fact.

When you're injured and can't pitch, you don't even feel like a spare part. That was the feeling the 24-year-old left-hander had after having rotator cuff surgery in August 2005.

Last season was merely an exercise in rebuilding arm strength, which Parra accomplished with stints at high Class A Brevard County and Double-A Huntsville.

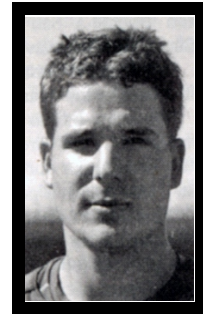
Starting in Huntsville, Parra proved he was past his injury troubles by going 7-3, 2.68 in 80 innings for the Stars.

That performance earned Parra a promotion to Triple-A Nashville, where he pitched a perfect game against Round Rock in his second outing. After going 3-1, 1.73 in four starts for the Sounds, Parra was summoned to the big leagues by the Brewers in mid-July.

Despite a shortened season in the system, the Brewers were so impressed with Parra they named him their minor league pitcher of the year for 2007.

"It was just nice to finally have a healthy season," Parra said, who went 0-1, 3.76 in 26 innings with the Brewers before going on the disabled list with a thumb injury. "That was something different for me. I finally got a chance to pitch every fifth day and the season went well. To be honest with you, it's a season where I can't say too much went wrong. I knew it was a big year for me."

Now, Parra is ready to move on to bigger and better things. Having erased worries that he might never be healthy enough to make it to the majors, he'd like to carve a niche for himself with the Brewers in 2008.



BILL MITCHELL