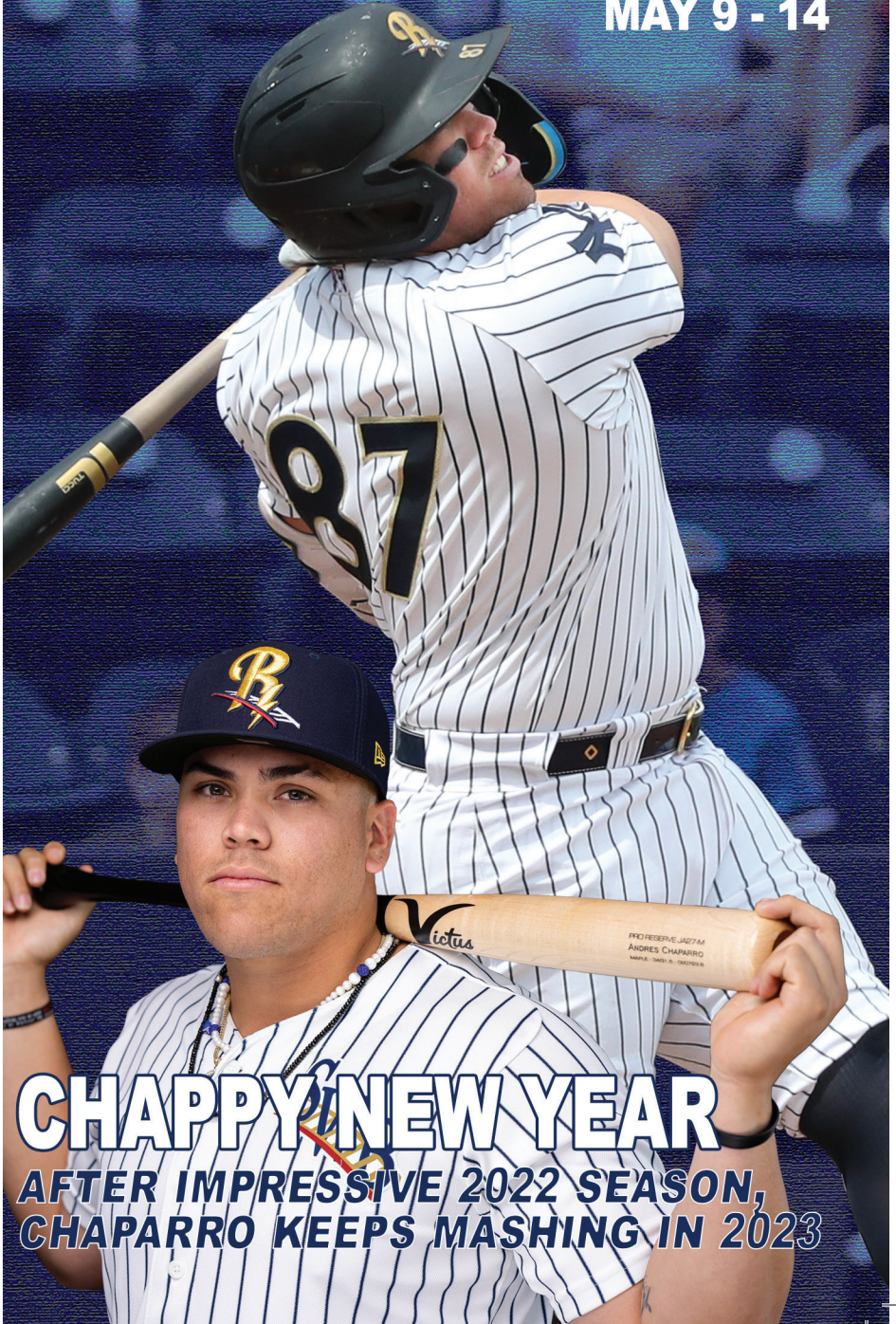




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CHAPPY NEW YEAR

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CHAPPY NEW YEAR: AFTER IMPRESSIVE '22 SEASON, CHAPARRO KEEPS MASHING

Andrés Chaparro got off to a slow start this season, but one swing put him back in the groove from 2022 and now his year is taking off.

by Emily Messina

Andrés Chaparro's first home run of the season was launched at 108.5 miles per hour off the bat. It went 444 feet. While the ball landed in left-center, Chaparro kept it going and going and going.

The 23-year-old was named to the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre RailRiders Opening Day roster. It was his first time in Triple-A after being signed as a free agent on July 2, 2015. Last summer, Chaparro impressed in Somerset. He held a .296 average recording 77 hits in just 70 games. Due to a wrist injury and appendicitis, he missed a chunk of games but made sure to come back with a vengeance. Chaparro hit .324 in August and .346 in September, totaling 17 doubles and 20 homers after it was all said and done.

"Last year was a tremendous season for me even though I missed a little bit of playing time," Chaparro said. "I was glad to come back in good shape and put together the season that I had. And to be in the championship and win, it was amazing."

He also noted how special it was to receive his Eastern League Championship ring.

With a good summer behind him and a lot to look forward to, Chaparro spent the offseason grinding in preparation. He focuses on strength and conditioning to power him through the long summer.

"I believe my work in the off-season has been translating to the game so far. During the season I try to maintain my work ethic and everything, but that work has been done in the offseason."

And it certainly is translating if you look at the stats from the last two weeks. But 2023 did not start that way for Andrés. The Yankees prospect was making hard contact, but could not get a ball to drop in. Chaparro went 0-for-29 to start the season. He did bat in a run and score three of his own with three walks, but that was about it up at the plate.





When asked how it was to remain mentally tough and battle through it, Chaparro noted it was difficult, especially at the beginning of the season.

“I have never been in that situation in the past so coming through that slump was a little tough. I was feeling fine at the plate,” Chaparro remarked. “The thing was it was not going the way that I wanted it to go. I was feeling fine, I just wasn’t getting there.”

Chaparro just kept attacking at the plate and soon enough things did start to go his way. In the final game of the first road trip at Lehigh Valley, after flying out twice, he connected for a third fly ball. This time it sailed many feet further, 444 feet to be exact, for his first home run of the season.

The dugout erupted. Chaparro pumped his fist. He crushed his first hit.

Two days later he recorded his second hit of the season, also a home run. It was one of his hardest-hit balls at the plate, coming off the bat with an exit velocity of 110.5 miles per hour. His next at-bat, one inning later, he smashed another long ball for his third homer in as many hits. A very dramatic spin from where he was at this time the week prior.

The following day, Chaparro made it three consecutive games with a four-bagger under his belt. He led off the third inning with a no-doubter. That was four homers in four hits. In his next two plate appearances, he demonstrated his ability to find space inside the confines of the field. Back-to-back singles helped prove he was finally out of the dreaded slump.

“The approach is still the same, it’s just better results right now,” Chaparro emphasized.

He works his at-bats the same way and has the same mindset going up to the plate.

“It was a grind to try and get out of there, but thank the good Lord, I am out of there,” Chaparro remarked. “I am in a better place right now.”

The needle continued to tick upward for Chaparro. He pounded another pair of home runs a few games later, including one in the ninth inning. A day after he showcased his consistency. Chaparro had his first three-hit contest and scored three runs. He also notched his first double of the year.

Manager Shelley Duncan continues to bat Chaparro fourth in the lineup. With his newfound dominance, he has the potential to be a difference maker in the clean-up spot.

The following is a complete list of his team-leading six homers, alongside Jake Bauers, to begin the season (*as of May 2*):

1. April 8 - 108.5 mph, 444 ft, Sinker, fly ball to left center off of Hans Crouse
2. April 11 - 110.5 mph, 382 ft, Slider, line drive left-center off of Humberto Mejia
3. April 11 - 100.9 mph, 399, Fastball, line drive left-center off of Humberto Mejia
4. April 12 - 101.3 mph, 409 ft, Slider, fly ball to left center off of Tony Dibrell
5. April 14 - 107.9 mph, 389 ft, Cutter, line drive to left off of Alex Valverde
6. April 14 - 104.8 mph, 409 ft, Sweeper, line drive to left off of Jeff Brigham
7. April 21st - 108.6 mph, 427 ft, Cutter, line drive to center off Dereck Rodriguez
8. April 25th - 97.5 mph, 376 ft, Curveball, fly ball to left off of Taylor Broadway

Chaparro also looks to have an impact in the infield as well. The righty plays both corners, spending just a bit more time at third base. He has played both positions in his professional career.

The start to the 2023 season was also not as ideal for Chaparro in the field. In seven games played, he has made five errors at the hot corner. However, he has not recorded a miscue since April 5 thanks to a multitude of practices on the field with defensive coach Jose Javier.

It can be tough to take enough reps in different positions when you play more than one so having added practice can help. You can find Chaparro in the infield pregame when it is not his turn to hit during batting practice. He and his teammates get out there and work with the coaching staff, who do not go easy on them. Balls are being hit with force and chop, some within reach and some that require a dive.

Javier says it is important to get reps in both positions constantly to keep it fresh. The pregame practice can help prepare the body for the coming game.

Javier stated, “Early work is important to prepare the mind and body for the game.”

There is also more to defense than just fielding and throwing the ball cleanly. Chaparro also works with Javier to be set up for a variety of plays and for specific hitters.

“I prioritize third base because that is where I need to continue to work and improve and make sure I’m moving my body and putting my body in a good place to make plays,” Chaparro said.

With the fielding coming together and the hitting powering up, Chaparro is making quite a name for himself.

There is still 90% of the season to be played, so there is plenty of time to make adjustments, both in the field and at the plate. The more repetition you have allows for more things to fall into place, just as they have for him. Andrés Chaparro is one to keep an eye on as an up-and-coming prospect with the New York Yankees.

Photo Credits: Todd Hiller