The Brewers ended the 2009 season with a record of 80-82, finishing in third place in the National League Central behind division champion St. Louis and runner-up Chicago. The season was a tale of two halves for the Brewers, who were alone or tied for first place for 44 days during the first half and were in second place at the All-Star Break with a record of 45-43.

The Brewers experienced a set-back on May 19 when second baseman Rickie Weeks was lost for the season with a torn tendon in his left wrist. During the second half of the season, the pitching staff was riddled with injuries. Starters Dave Bush and Jeff Suppan and relievers Seth McClung and Mark DiFelice all spent time on the disabled list.

Braden Looper led the staff in wins (14), followed by Yovani Gallardo (12), and All-time saves leader Trevor Hoffman increased his career saves mark to 591 after converting 37 saves. Todd Coffey was a workhouse out of the bullpen with 78 appearances, while Mitch Stetter made 71 appearances.

Prince Fielder and Ryan Braun were the best 1-2 punch in the Majors, combining for 78 home runs and 255 RBIs. Newcomer Casey McGehee was right at the top of the Rookie of the Year conversations, batting .301 with 16 home runs and 66 RBIs in 116 games.

Once again the fans turned out to support their beloved Brewers as just over 3 million fans came through the turnstiles, marking the second consecutive season and the second time in franchise history of reaching the milestone.

2009 Accolades

**Ryan Braun:** National League All-Star starter in right field, National League Player of the Week (May 4-10). He joined Albert Pujols as the only two players in Major League history to hit 30 or more home runs in each of their first three seasons. He also became the fourth Brewer in franchise history to record 200 hits (Cooper, Molitor, Yount) and became the second Brewer to record 30 home runs and 20 stolen bases (31-20) in a season (Tommy Harper).

**Prince Fielder:** National All-Star, All-Star Home Run Derby Champion, tied for the National League RBI title (141), set franchise records for RBIs and walks (110)

**Trevor Hoffman:** National League All-Star, National League Pitcher of the Month (May)

**Jeff Suppan:** Named the Brewers 2009 recipient for the Roberto Clemente Award

**Craig Counsell:** Named WE Energies High-Energy Player of the Year

**Casey McGehee:** National League Rookie of the Month for September

**Logan Schafer:** Named Brewers Minor League Player of the Year

**Amaury Rivas:** Named Brewers Minor League Pitcher of the Year
One – On – One with Dave Nelson

INTERVIEW WITH WILLIE RANDOLPH, BENCH COACH

Dave: Tell me a little bit about where you grew up.

Willie: I grew up in Brownsville, Brooklyn, New York. A lot of great athletes come out of Brooklyn, fighters and football players, known mostly for their basketball players. The courts were down in the sandlots but we played baseball there, too. Obviously, the Brooklyn Dodgers were there before my time. Growing up in a tough neighborhood, Brownsville, I played a lot of baseball with the Latin players who formulated the teams that we played back in the days. That is where I learned my chops. I was born in South Carolina but I moved to New York when I was six months old, so I’m a New Yorker at heart.

Dave: At what age did you get interested in baseball?

Willie: It seems like as long as I can remember. My father wasn’t a baseball dad but my mom told me I was always ripping and running around. I guess I started throwing the ball around when I was four or five and then later on I got involved in playing all kinds of ball. I went to Little League and Pony League. Back in our neighborhoods we played a lot of stick ball, punch ball and stoop ball. We would make up any kind of ballgame, anything to do with running and playing ball. I was always very athletic.

Dave: You played high school baseball, when did you know you were good?

Willie: I knew I was good because I always played with guys that were older than me and for some reason my neighborhood had a lot of older mentors. They let me play because they saw my athletic abilities and I love to compete. I could tell I was good because I always gauged it by my competition and every team I played on, I seemed to hold my own with the older guys. I didn’t know where I fit in, but I always knew I could hold my own plus I knew I was pretty good because all of the kids wanted to be on my team.

Dave: Growing up, did you have an idol?

Willie: I was more of a National League fan growing up and my first big idol was Jackie Robinson, the one I could really identify with. The guy had so much class and went through all these obstacles. I read history books about him and I admired the man for who he was. Jackie was really the man where I thought, “wow this is an unbelievable human being.” I was a shortstop when I first came up so players like Lou Aparicio and Roy McMillan, guys people wouldn’t know, it was those types of guys I loved to watch play.

Dave: Growing up in New York, were you a Yankees or Mets fan?

Willie: For me, I was a Mets fan but I learned my chops with the Yankees. The Yankees were the team, even though those were some mean years when I was growing up, but I was just more of a National League fan. I was closer to Brooklyn, that’s where I grew up and even though Ebbets Field wasn’t too far from where I grew up, I was still too young to get to go over there.

Dave: Take me back and talk about the first day you got drafted. When did you find out?

Willie: That’s a weird story because I was in the Parade Grounds which is a famous place in Prospect Park, where they have nicely manicured diamonds where players could play and some of the bird dogs could come and check them out. I was actually playing a game and there was a scout, his name was Dutch Deutsch from the Pittsburgh Pirates, and Dutch wanted to sign me. At the time, I was going between “would I want to go to school or play ball?” I knew I wanted to play ball but I was trying to get a little extra money. I was playing a game and during the game, outside the field was a parking lot. Between games, I was actually in my sweats, I remember I used to click-clack on the concrete going from the dugout into his car negotiating. I would say “Dutch, give me a little bit more” and he would say, “I don’t know” and then I would leave the car and go for another at-bat. After awhile I thought, “who am I kidding, this is my dream.” I had wanted to play baseball since I could remember. I told them to just give me the contract, if you guys want to take advantage of that, that’s fine, I’m going to sign, I’m going to be a ball player. And I signed with the Pirates.

Dave: Did you play in the big leagues with the Pirates?

Willie: I got called up in August of ’75. I was having a good year in Triple-A in Charleston, West Virginia, and I was actually eligible to make the club in the playoffs as the utility guy. I finished up the year because I played a little bit when Rennie Stennett was hurt, but they kept me as an extra because I had good speed as a pinch runner. We actually lost to the Big Machine in 1975, they beat us three straight. That’s when Doc Love had curlers in his hair. I was 21 years old thinking to myself “this is the big leagues,” that guy has curlers in his hair. Then that winter I went to play winter ball in Venezuela and that’s when the news came that I had been traded to the Yankees. I was there for a long time. A lot of championships, they made me captain of the team. That was really special.

Dave: 18 years in the major leagues, 13 with the Yankees, during that time you were a part of seven playoff teams and won two World Series. Tell us what it was like playing for the Yankees.

Willie: It’s like a dream come true. You grow up in New York, you get a chance to play in your hometown in front of your family and friends. It’s surreal. I remember opening day 1976, and I’m thinking to myself, I remember coming here as a kid, rooting for the Mets not knowing I would ever be in the big leagues with the Yankees. Here I am living a dream. Then what made it even more special, the following year in 1977, I made the All-Star team and I ended up playing the game in Yankee Stadium. When I talk to kids, I tell them all the time, you can realize your dream.
That comes from wishing sometimes. Always believe that things can come true. I’m sitting looking around and there is Rod Carew, Reggie Jackson, I’m rubbing elbows with these guys and I used to emulate them as a kid. For me it was just a great experience, getting the chance to experience championships at a young age. My first three or four years in the leagues, we were in the World Series.

Dave: I’m going to throw some names at you. Describe them briefly.

Elston Howard.

Willie: He was one of my first mentors in the big leagues. Elston Howard is a classy individual and he taught me the ropes very young.

Dave: Roy White

Willie: He taught me class because we went to all the fancy restaurants where he would choose the fine wine. He taught me the finer things in life and in baseball.

Dave: Thurman Munson

Willie: The Captain. Thurman was a warrior. He accepted me as a young player, took me under his wing and I learned a lot about how to play the game and his attitude towards winning.

Dave: Chris Chambliss

Willie: Chambliss was my first roommate and he was clutch. Everyone went crazy when he hit that home run in ’76. He got us on our way to a lot of good things.

Dave: Reggie Jackson.

Willie: Again, he’s just Mr. October. When you wanted a big hit or when the pressure was on, you wanted Reggie at the plate. He believes in himself. He’s a winner from the word go. A very true friend but a guy that loved the attention, he wanted to be on stage and New York was the biggest stage you could be on.

Dave: Billy Martin.

Willie: He was a Manager that I would play for today and any day. He taught me how to understand teams and accept teams and play the game. He taught me how to compete and how to understand that when you put the uniform on, that’s what you’re all about. It’s not about the names and the numbers on the back it’s what is on the front of the uniform.

Dave: Joe Torre.

Willie: He is probably the consummate team leader. He understands how to motivate men, how to communicate with men and is just a real intelligent, manipulator of personalities, knowing how to make everyone feel like they are a part of the team. And I just think his communication skills are bar none.

Dave: How was it leaving the Yankees to go across town to manage the Mets?

Willie: It was kind of bittersweet because for me it was my opportunity to manage and it made it even more special because it was in New York. I was actually the first African American manager in New York, which seemed like a long time coming since it was 2003-04. But I was very proud of that because I felt like I was a part of a legacy and I wanted to continue that legacy in some way so it was a proud move for my family and me. I was able to separate the Yankees from the Mets because I played for the Mets in my last year in 1992. Also, being a New Yorker, you felt like you were part of that one city. So it wasn’t that tough for me. I always felt like who I was as a person wasn’t about the uniform, it was about me and what I presented as a person. So I didn’t look at it as being a tough move, I was just very proud to have the opportunity.

Dave: What are you going to take from your experience managing in New York to your next managerial position?

Willie: Well, they always say if you can make it in New York, you can make it anywhere. That’s not always the case, but I think that the experience I gained in New York from knowing how to deal with the media and a real demanding fan base, along with the payroll that is very demanding as far as winning, will help me to understand how to rally 25 men to one cause and unselfishly get the job done. Every situation is different and you never know how you’re going to handle it but I just think that being able to multi-task and handle a lot of pressure will make it a little easier for me in another situation. I think in New York, it’s a different animal. The experience I gained, I know how to deal with the media especially and also the expectations of how to deal with players to understand that winning is the most important thing.

Dave: You had one of your best years as a player in Milwaukee. How has it been being back in Milwaukee as the Bench Coach?

Willie: It’s been fun. I had one of my best years, personally, in 1991 with the Brewers and I love the city. Everyone talks about how Milwaukee is kind of slow; I think to me it’s one of the best cities in the league. And its only because you get a chance to experience what it’s like, the people, the fans, the organization are all class. So for me, coming back had been almost like a reunion type of thing, just coming back home in a way, because I have some good memories here. I feel like I’m a part of here too because my kids were sort of half raised here. They had a great time here and we were always together. So for me coming back it’s been a joy because I get a chance to see it from a different perspective and be able to give kids what I’ve learned over the years, and also to be able to enjoy the fans. They’ve been tremendous.
Cooking Tips from a Pro

Foul a la Brubaker

Submitted by Bruce Brubaker, Milwaukee Brewers 1970

2 Pheasants (Chicken can be substituted if you can’t hit a pheasant)
1/2 cup Sherry Wine
12 oz. heavy whipping cream
1 lb. mushrooms (sliced)
2 Tb. Olive oil
2 garlic cloves (crushed)
1 can chicken broth
Salt & Pepper

De-bone the Pheasants and keep the pieces large but separate the legs and thighs.
Marinate the pieces for a few hours in the salt, pepper and crushed garlic.
Use a deep skillet to heat cooking oil, then add the thighs and legs
Add chicken broth and simmer until half done. Then add the breasts, heavy whipping cream, mushrooms and sherry wine.
Cook until breasts are done
Serve with wild rice and your favorite Chardonnay
Upcoming Events

January 31:  Brewers On Deck

January 31—February 7: Brewers Fantasy Camp

February TBD: Arctic Tailgate

April 5:  Opening Day

May 28:  S.C.O.R.E. for Excellence Day

June 26:  Brewers Block Party #1

July 24:  Brewers Block Party #2

August 9:  Swing with the Legends Golf Outing

August 28:  Brewers Block Party #3

If there is an alumni player you would like to reach, contact Dave Nelson at (414) 902-4533 or via email at dave.nelson@brewers.com. If there is an alumni player you know who did not receive this newsletter, have them contact Dave with their contact information so we can include them on future mailings.