



Laura Enmons Photo

The Shorebirds' Jason White tries to beat the throw to first base in Wednesday game.

# Shorebirds and runs reunite

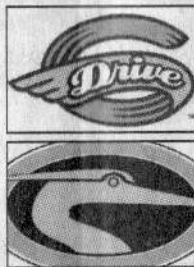
Delmarva finally gets some timely hitting against the Drive

■ Delmarva 3, Greenville 1

By Anthony Spaulding  
Staff Writer

SALISBURY — Runs have been hard to come by lately for the Delmarva Shorebirds. "We've been swinging. We've been swinging," Shorebirds manager Ramon Sambo said. "Some days you are not getting more hits than other days, and the guys have been hitting the ball hard. It's tough luck sometimes."

However, Delmarva's luck turned around, as they drove in enough runs to pull out a 3-1 victory against the Greenville Drive on Wednesday afternoon at Arthur



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W. Perdue Stadium.

Despite averaging seven hits in the first two games against the Drive, the Shorebirds have only produced three runs.

"It's just timely hitting," Shorebirds third baseman Matt Tucker said. "Yeah, seven hits is great, but we need to manufacture runs when it counts. We haven't been doing it lately, but we did it today and came away with the victory."

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The Shorebirds offense got its timing down in the bottom of the third inning when Tucker poked a soft hit-and-run single over the head of Greenville second baseman Kristopher Negron to give them a 1-0 lead. Delmarva had four hits in the inning.

In the top of the sixth, Greenville tied the game at one run apiece on Yamaico Navarro's RBI-double to right field.

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favorites southpaws

By Jim Salter  
Associated Press Writer

ST. LOUIS — David Peters was born left-handed. It took a few raps on the hand by teachers, but like many in his generation, he switched to being a righty.

Maybe that's why Peters, now 61, became a scholar instead of a first baseman.

Peters is an engineering professor at Washington University in St. Louis who happens to be a baseball nut. He

looked at baseball from an engineer's perspective and determined that southpaws have a decided advantage.

"Ninety percent of the human population is right-handed, but in baseball 25 percent of the players, both pitchers and hitters, are left-handed," Peters said.

"Do lefties have an advantage? They definitely do. The statistics bear that out."

Peters' observations were for an article on the university Web site, not a scholarly journal. Still, they drew the interest of experts at the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y., who at the request of The Associated Press crunched the numbers of lefties and righties in the Hall, the first time they had done so.

Of the 61 enshrined pitchers, 13 are left-handed, according to John Odell, curator of history and research at the Hall of Fame. At 21 percent, that's more than twice the percentage of lefties in the general population.

The numbers for hitters were even more startling. Odell said 71 Hall of Fame position players

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# Shorebirds

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However, Tucker responded in the latter half of the inning, hitting a triple off the right field wall. The third baseman would later score on a passed ball, putting the Shorebirds back on top, 2-1. Tucker finished the day going 2-for-4.

"Sambo told me what we were doing when A-Mar (Anthony Martinez) came up," Tucker said. "He said if you see the ball in the dirt and it goes past the catcher, just go home."

Despite a solid outing from Shorebirds starting pitcher Nathan Nery (5 2/3 innings, one earned run on five hits), relief pitcher Cliff Flagello came in the middle of the sixth inning and stopped the Drive's offense cold, giving up only one hit and two walks while striking out four.

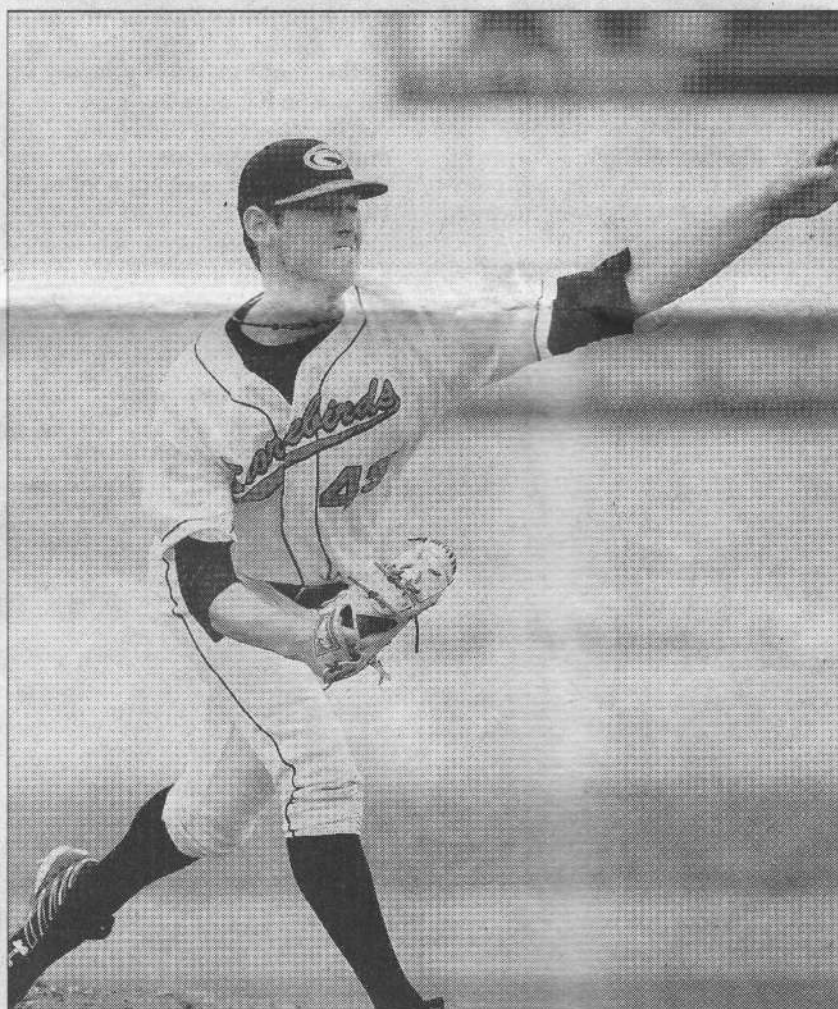
"I was just trying to come in and get an out for Nery," Flagello said. "That's what this job is for is to come in those tight situations and get out of it."

The Shorebirds got some insurance in the seventh inning when Ryan Adams smacked a single to left field to bring teammate Pedro Florimon home, extending Delmarva's lead to 3-1.

Closer Mick Mattaliano relieved Flagello in the eighth inning and picked up his 19th save on the year.

The victory gives the Shorebirds an even record for the second half of the season (10-10) and a 48-41 overall record. Flagello felt good about the team being back at the .500 mark.

"I don't think anyone was on the panic button," he said. "I know we lost five in a row, but we won five in



Laura Emmons photo

**Shorebirds starter Nathan Nery gave up one run on five hits over 5 2/3 innings.**

a row right before that. I think we are going to start falling right back into place where we were in the first half."

Sambo is not worried about the team's record at this point.

"Right now, we just want to continue playing well and winning ball games," he said. "We are not looking right now to be .500 or anything like that. We still have a lot of

games left to play. We just got to go game by game and try to win some ball games."

The two teams will conclude the four-game series tonight. The Shorebirds will send Robert Neigebauer to the mound, while Jose Capellan will pitch for the Drive.

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# Lefties

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batted right-handed, 59 left-handed, and eight were switch-hitters.

"Almost parity there," Odell said. "That's way up over what you'd expect to see if people were playing the way their handedness would suggest."

Among the left-handed hitters are some of the game's greatest names: Babe Ruth, Ted Williams, Ty Cobb, Stan Musial, Barry Bonds and George Brett.

Peters said left-handed hitters are simply taking advantage of a game set up to favor them, starting with the direction the hit-

tum carries him the wrong way — toward third base. A lefty, already standing roughly 5 feet closer to first base, swings and naturally spins in the correct direction.

"And that means the lefty travels the 90 feet to first roughly one-sixth of a second faster than the righty," Peters said. That translates to more hits and a higher batting average.

Because most pitchers are right-handed, the left-handed hitter also tends to have a matchup advantage.

"You see the ball better" as a left-handed hitter facing a right-handed pitcher, Peters said. "You get depth perception. A right-handed batter facing a right-handed pitcher actually has to pick up

You've lost a lot of that split-second timing to pick up the ball."

According to the Web site retrosheet.org, left-handers hit .272 against right-handed pitchers last season. Righties vs. righties hit .261. Against left-handed pitching, righties hit .281, lefties just .251. But there were 122,053 at-bats against right-handed pitchers last season, nearly three times as many as the 45,730 against lefties.

Peters even sees a bias toward lefties in the design of many ballparks that feature shorter distances to right field, where a left-hander pulls the ball. Yankee Stadium is famous for its short porch in Boston.

Musial was so dominant at old Sportsman's Park in St. Louis that Peters, a lifelong Cardinals fan, recalled the team for one season removed a screen aimed at turning cheap homers into doubles. The move backfired: opposing teams hit more homers there than Musial and his St. Louis teammates did, and the next season, the screen went back up.

While many of the left-handed oddities favor hitters, Peters said southpaw pitchers have built-in advantages, too, especially at youth league levels where hitters simply don't see them very often. And, he said, many people think lefties tend to have a natural tail on