



South Bend

*Silver
Hawks*



50 PETE ROSE JR.
THIRD BASEMAN



*The 1995 Midwest League All-Star Game
Tuesday, Aug. 22, 1995 at 10:05 PM (PST)*

June 23, 1995---

COMSTOCK PARK, Mich. - From the time he broke into professional baseball, Pete Rose Jr. has learned to turn the other cheek. During his 1989 rookie season with the Frederick Keys, fans waved dollar bills at him as a reminder of baseball's investigation of his father's gambling activities.

Now the starting third baseman for the South Bend Silver Hawks, Pete Jr. is in the middle of his sixth season of Class A ball. On Tuesday, he played in the Midwest League all-star game, the first midsummer classic of his career. Pete Jr. went 2-for-3 and scored a run as his Eastern Division all-stars beat the Western Division 7-5 before a sellout crowd of 8,483 at the home of the West Michigan Whitecaps.

Pete Jr., 24, was one of the oldest members of the all-star contingent, and it showed. He wore his stirrups high, and his green Silver Sox cap had a low, distinguished military fit. His eyes were focused, except during preliminary skills competition. Standing in front of a dugout, Pete Jr. often turned his head toward the empty box seats behind home plate.

"My dad may come tonight in disguise with sunglasses and long hair," Pete Jr. said at his locker before the game. "He does weird things and shows up in mysterious places. It's a good possibility."

Pete Jr. left two tickets under the Rose name. They were picked up by a female friend, but no one knows whether Pete Sr. was in attendance.

If he was, he was proud.

Pete Jr. played with a stride and a swagger he confessed has been missing from his game. He was flawless in five chances in the field, including a nice backhanded stab of a foul ball in front of the dugout.

His at-bats were greeted with warm cheers. On his first time up, Pete Jr. lined a first-pitch single to left. In his second at-bat, he reached on an error. In his third at-bat, he had a bloop single to right. He finished third in the MVP voting.

"My game has come a long way this year," Pete Jr. said. "I'm hitting .300, I'm driving in runs, I'm batting third and getting some pitches to hit. My offense has come around 100 percent, and that's the only thing I need to work on."

Coming into the game, Pete Jr. was hitting .301 with a home run and 30 RBI. Entering the season, his lifetime batting average was .240 in 1,999 minor-league

at-bats. Pete Jr. credited White Sox hitting guru Walt Hriniak for the turnaround.

"I've got confidence this year," he said. "Walt helped me with that in spring training. I took some of his philosophy (with his swing) and used some of my philosophy. And, of course, my father is there every day if I need him."

Pete Jr. said he was merely looking for an opportunity, even if it meant playing in spring replacement games (he wouldn't answer replacement questions). He did say, "It's amazing when you do well and feel good about yourself how it boosts your career. I've got the cockiness back that I lost somewhere along the way."

And along the way, Pete Jr. has been tutored by an eclectic group of ex-major-leaguers. Besides his father, Hriniak and South Bend skipper Fred Kendall, past managers have included Jerry Narron (Frederick, 1989), Wally Moon (Frederick, 1990) and Bobby Tolan (Erie, 1989).

"Bobby really rubbed off on me," he said. "I was going through a tough time in 1989, and he monitored everything. If this was '89, he'd be right behind your shoulder. Whenever you asked about my father, the interview would be over."

Pete Jr. said he has not put a timetable on what so far has been a not-for-prime-time career.

"If I had a timetable, it would be a whole year at Class AA. If I can't do it, I can't do it. But I've been there (with the Class AA Birmingham Barons of the Southern League) for two weeks earlier this year, and I know I can do it. I hit .390 (actually .385 (5-for-13) in five games). I've seen it."