

A Fan's Guide to the 2008 Cubs Playoffs!

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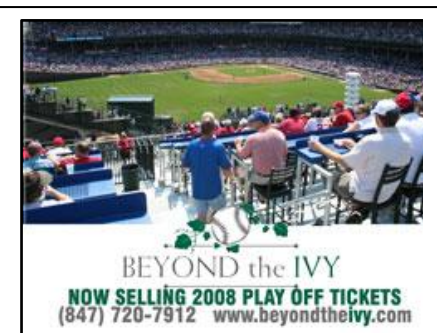
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The Stars of Your 2008 Chicago Cubs

The makeup of the Chicago Cubs team for 2008 started out a little differently than they ended up. To open the season, there was a battle in centerfield between two rookies, Felix Pie and Sam Fuld. Fuld faded quickly in spring training leaving the job to Pie by default. That didn't last long as Pie's slow start landed him back in triple-A to figure out his swing. Cubs GM Jim Hendry reeled in Reed Johnson after he was released by Toronto at the end of spring training. Then in mid-May, Hendry snapped up veteran Jim Edmonds when the Padres released him. These two pickups by Hendry proved him a genius in creating one of the best CF platoons in baseball from two guys who were thought to be done.



The season opened with the closer from last year, Ryan Dempster, in the starting rotation. And a fixture in the Cubs rotation of the past decade, Kerry Wood, in the bullpen as a setup man. A lot of things had to line up for these moves to work out, and indeed they did. Another starter, lefty Rich Hill struggled early and never did make it back to the majors. But this team found itself and went on to become one of the most balanced, complete, best Cubs team since the 1930's.

First Base: **Derrek Lee**

Second Base: **Mark DeRosa**

Shortstop: **Ryan Theriot**

Third Base: **Aramis Ramirez**

Left Field: **Alfonso Soriano**

Center Field: **Jim Edmonds**

Right Field: **Kosuke Fukudome**

Catcher: **Geovany Soto**

Meet the stars of this team...

Ryan Dempster

Uniform: #46
 Position: Pitcher
 Birth date: May 3, 1977
 Birthplace: Sechelt, BC Canada
 Bats/Throws: Left/Right
 Height: 6'2"
 Weight: 215
 MLB Debut: 1998

**2008 Regular Season Stats**

Win-Loss: 17-6
 ERA: 2.96
 Innings: 206.2
 Strikeouts: 187
 Walks: 76
 Opponents Average:

Mark DeRosa

Uniform: #7
 Position: IF, OF
 Birth date: February 26, 1975
 Birthplace: Passaic, NJ
 Bats/Throws: Right/Right
 Height: 6'1"
 Weight: 205
 MLB Debut: 1998

**2008 Regular Season Stats**

Average: .285
 Home Runs: 21
 RBI: 87
 On-Base Pct: .376
 Runs: 103
 Games Played: 149

Jim Edmonds

Uniform: #15
 Position: Center Field
 Birth date: June 27, 1970
 Birthplace: Fullerton, CA
 Bats/Throws: Left/Left
 Height: 6'1"
 Weight: 210
 MLB Debut: 1993

**2008 Regular Season Stats**

Average: .235
 Home Runs: 20
 RBI: 55
 On-Base Pct: .343
 Runs: 53
 Games Played: 111

Kosuke Fukudome

Uniform: #1
 Position: Right Field
 Birth date: April 26, 1977
 Birthplace: Kagoshima, Japan
 Bats/Throws: Left/Right
 Height: 6'0"
 Weight: 185
 MLB Debut: 2008

**2008 Regular Season Stats**

Average: .257
 Home Runs: 10
 RBI: 58
 On-Base Pct: .359
 Runs: 79
 Games Played: 150

Derrek Lee

Uniform: #25
 Position: 1st Base
 Birth date: April 26, 1977
 Birthplace: Sacramento, CA
 Bats/Throws: Right/Right
 Height: 6'5"
 Weight: 245
 MLB Debut: 1997

**2008 Regular Season Stats**

Average: .291
 Home Runs: 20
 RBI: 90
 On-Base Pct: .361
 Runs: 93
 Games Played: 155

Carlos Marmol

Uniform: #49
 Position: Pitcher
 Birth date: October 14, 1982
 Birthplace: Bonao, DR
 Bats/Throws: Right/Right
 Height: 6'2"
 Weight: 180
 MLB Debut: 2006

**2008 Regular Season Stats**

Win-Loss: 2-4
 Saves: 7
 ERA: 2.68
 Innings: 87.1
 Strikeouts: 114
 Walks: 41
 Opponents Average:

Aramis Ramirez

Uniform: #16
 Position: 3rd Base
 Birth date: June 25, 1978
 Birthplace: Santo Domingo, DR
 Bats/Throws: Right/Right
 Height: 6'1"
 Weight: 215
 MLB Debut: 1998

**2008 Regular Season Stats**

Average: .289
 Home Runs: 27
 RBI: 111
 On-Base Pct: .380
 Runs: 97
 Games Played: 149

Alfonso Soriano

Uniform: #12
 Position: Left Field
 Birth date: January 7, 1976
 Birthplace: San Pedro de Macoris,
 Dominican Republic
 Bats/Throws: Right/Right
 Height: 6'1"
 Weight: 180
 MLB Debut: 1999

**2008 Regular Season Stats**

Average: .280
 Home Runs: 29
 RBI: 75
 On-Base Pct: .344
 Runs: 76
 Games Played: 109

Geovany Soto

Uniform: #18
 Position: Catcher
 Birth date: January 20, 1983
 Birthplace: San Juan, Puerto Rico
 Bats/Throws: Right/Right
 Height: 6'1"
 Weight: 230
 MLB Debut: 2005

**2008 Regular Season Stats**

Average: .285
 Home Runs: 23
 RBI: 86
 On-Base Pct: .364
 Runs: 66
 Games Played: 141

Ryan Theriot

Uniform: #2
 Position: Right Field
 Birth date: December 7, 1979
 Birthplace: Baton Rouge, LA
 Bats/Throws: Right/Right
 Height: 5'11"
 Weight: 175
 MLB Debut: 2005

**2008 Regular Season Stats**

Average: .307
 Home Runs: 1
 RBI: 38
 On-Base Pct: .387
 Runs: 85
 Games Played: 149

Kerry Wood

Uniform: #34
 Position: Pitcher
 Birth date: June 16, 1977
 Birthplace: Irving, TX
 Bats/Throws: Right/Right
 Height: 6'5"
 Weight: 210
 MLB Debut: 1998

**2008 Regular Season Stats**

Win-Loss: 5-4
 Saves: 34
 ERA: 3.26
 Innings: 66.1
 Strikeouts: 84
 Walks: 18
 Opponents Average:

Carlos Zambrano

Uniform: #38
 Position: Pitcher
 Birth date: June 1, 1981
 Birthplace: Puerto Cabello,
 Venezuela
 Bats/Throws: Switch/Right
 Height: 6'5"
 Weight: 255
 MLB Debut: 2001

**2008 Regular Season Stats**

Win-Loss: 14-6
 ERA: 3.91
 Innings: 188.2
 Strikeouts: 130
 Walks: 72
 Opponents Average:

No MVP Candidates from the Best Team in the National League?

More so than any Cubs team in recent memory, the 2008 edition of the Chicago Cubs are a complete team. They have held first place from May 11 until the very end, winning the NL Central Division handily. However they are such a team, they do not have a reasonable candidate for NL MVP. I would be hard pressed to name a team MVP as there is no clear winner and too many big contributors.

The Cubs held first place in the NL Central Division for 134 days, from May 11 until September 28, 2008.

When **Alfonso Soriano** and **Carlos Zambrano** each went down twice with injuries, the rest of the team simply filled in and went about their business. Of course the Cubs are better when those two guys are healthy and contributing, but the team didn't shrink away when they were not available.

Derrek Lee has had a solid but unremarkable year. **Aramis Ramirez** has had some very big hits, but so has **Jim Edmonds** and **Reed Johnson**. **Ryan Theriot** has quietly been in the top 10 in league batting average all year. And **Geovany Soto** has certainly had a spectacular rookie year, so much so that there is no contest for him to win Rookie of the Year honors.

Mark DeRosa can arguably be considered the Most Valuable Cub as his versatility and consistency has proven time and again to keep any holes in the lineup filled with quality performances. He has set career highs in home runs, RBIs, walks, and slugging percentage all while playing both corner outfield positions and all four infield positions.

Kerry Wood has been dependable but not perfect in the closer role. **Carlos Marmol** has at times been stellar but had some struggles too. **Ryan Dempster** has been consistently excellent but just doesn't have the numbers to win the Cy Young award. Most everyone else has been – at minimum – serviceable if not better than expected.

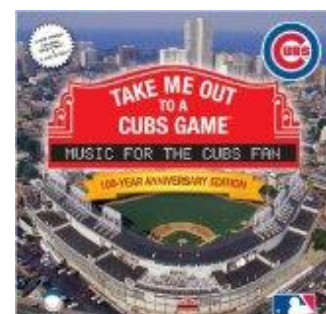
On this team, everyone contributes. Everyone makes big plays. And in the end, this is why the Cubs dominated the National League pretty much all year. But no MVP candidates on this squad.

Where Will You Watch the Playoffs?

Ok, so you have a nice setup at home. A good size HD TV setup, comfy chair, fridge nearby, etc. But where can you go to really feel a part of something special? Here are a few ideas...

There are lots of sports bars out there to choose from. You might have a favorite and that might be familiar. They all have plenty of TVs and good crowd action. However, they make their money on selling you beer and food. If you're on a budget or want to focus more on the game, then a sports bar might not be your best option. **ESPN Zone**, **Champps**, **RealTime Sports**, the **Foundry** in Aurora, and of course the various **Harry Caray's** locations would be the leaders here.

The Wrigley bar scene can be a lot of fun on a clinching night or when the Cubs are playing an away game. I personally think game day at a Wrigley neighborhood



establishment is just too chaotic. But, when in Rome (or Wrigleyville), you'll find **Cubby Bear, Murphy's Bleachers, Sluggers, Sports Corner, Yakzies**, and for the oldschool fans, **Bernies**.

For a truly unique experience, try catching a game broadcast in a movie theatre! I saw the Bears Super Bowl game on the 40-foot screen of the **Arcada Theater** in St. Charles. They brought in a sound system and projected the TV feed on the giant movie theater screen. It was not HD quality, but I have to say it was a great time. Best of all was free admission – they are prohibited from charging admission to a TV broadcast. They make their money at the concession stand so you can manage your cash outlay pretty easily. **Brew & View** at the Vic Theatre in Chicago might be a logical spot for this kind of thing too.

If all else fails, invite some friends over and have a Cubs playoff party at your house. Serve up some hot dogs and beer and gather 'round that HD setup in the family room. It's always more fun to share an event line this with other like-minded, long-suffering, pennant-chasing, die-hard fans of the Chicago Cubs.



Cubs Postseason Results *(since 1900)*

2 World Championships

10 National League Pennants

15 Playoff Appearances

2007: NLDS Loss 3-0 Arizona Diamondbacks
 2003: NLCS Loss 4-3 vs Florida Marlins
 1998: NLDS Loss 3-0 vs Atlanta Braves
 1989: NLCS Loss 4-1 vs San Francisco Giants
 1984: NLCS Loss 3-2 vs San Diego Padres
 1945: World Series Loss 4-3 vs Detroit Tigers
 1938: World Series Loss 4-0 vs New York Yankees
 1935: World Series Loss 4-2 vs Detroit Tigers
 1932: World Series Loss 4-0 vs New York Yankees
 1929: World Series Loss 4-1 vs Philadelphia Athletics
 1918: World Series Loss 4-2 vs Boston Red Sox
 1910: World Series Loss 4-1 vs Philadelphia Athletics
 1908: World Series Win 4-1 over Detroit Tigers
 1907: World Series Win 4-0-1 over Detroit Tigers
 1906: World Series, Loss 4-2 to Chicago White Sox

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