

2013 Kernels anxious to reach Cedar Rapids

Written by Morgan Hawk
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(EDITOR'S NOTE: Morgan Hawk is the radio voice of the Kernels on KMRY-AM 1450. This is the first of two reports by Hawk from Florida.)

FORT MYERS, Fla. - Teams like the Cedar Rapids Kernels are eagerly waiting to get their respective seasons under way, but the players have already been on the field for more than a month here at spring training.

Players in the Minnesota Twins organization report to spring training in Fort Myers, Fla., each February, and now as March comes to a close they are eagerly ready to leave and get to their respective affiliate.

Spring training, just like the regular season, is a grind. Spring training, just like the regular season, is all about routine.

Players stay at the team hotel, get up early, head to the field, have meetings, work out, practice, play games and go home. Repeat, repeat, repeat.

Often, many minor league baseball players break their seasons into three parts: spring training, the season with your affiliate, and instructional league. Phase one of their season is about to conclude, and they are ready to make the trek back north.

Not only must the players make the trek to a colder climate, the bats and balls, training equipment and jerseys must also make the journey.

On Tuesday, a large truck pulled out of the Lee County Sports Complex in Fort Myers and began the more than 1,600 mile trip to Minnesota. It plans to unload at Target Field on Friday in preparation of Twins Opening Day on April 1.

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The big leaguers play games through this Saturday when they wrap up spring training against the Grapefruit League cross-town competitor Boston Red Sox.

The minor leaguers break camp either Sunday or Monday, depending on the level. The 2013 version of the Cedar Rapids Kernels will play games against either the Boston Red Sox or Baltimore Orioles minor leaguers through this Saturday before playing the Twins high-A Fort Myers club on Sunday and Monday.

The Kernels will arrive in Cedar Rapids, along with their equipment, on Tuesday, April 2.

Arrival day will be a day to acclimate themselves into Cedar Rapids with time spent finding a locker, getting fitted for jerseys and hats, meeting the front office staff, and checking out their new home ballpark at Veterans Memorial Stadium and Perfect Game Field.

The Kernels will hold their annual Meet the Players and Media Night at the stadium on Wednesday, April 3.

Thursday, April 4 will be Opening Day as the Kernels host the Beloit Snappers at 6:35 p.m.

Spring training will finally be behind them, but their eyes will still be set on Fort Myers as they try to advance to the high-A level Miracle in their continuing journey toward the major leagues.