

Every Day is a Great Day at a BlueClaws Game!



courtesy of Lakewood BlueClaws

Fans rooting for the home team this season will see returning third baseman Jan Hernandez (left) and left fielder Cornelius Randolph (right) in action.

Summer and the Jersey Shore go hand in hand, yet you might not know one of the shore's best kept secrets: spending a great day at the ballpark with the Lakewood BlueClaws. The single "A" affiliate minor league baseball team of the Philadelphia Phillies (one of seven teams in the South Atlantic League Northern Division) have called the Jersey Shore home for the past seventeen years.

The BlueClaws sets the bar for all-around fun, and other minor and major league ball clubs follow their lead. A BlueClaws game is more than a nine-inning matchup between two baseball teams. "We are all about affordable family entertainment. That's been our major focus since we began in 2001," said Greg Giombarrese, Director of Media Relations. In addition to a game filled with top-notch talent and a concourse filled with food vendors, fans also enjoy on and off field promotions, theme nights, giveaways, and new this year, Saturday night concerts.

The Talent

Looking at the 2017 roster, the Lakewood BlueClaws are excited to welcome new manager Marty

Malloy, who managed the Gulf Coast League Astros for the past three years. He will join pitching coach Brian Sweeney, hitting coach Nelson Prada, and trainer Takayuki Sakurai, all three of whom were with the BlueClaws organization in 2016.

The BlueClaws are three-time South Atlantic League champions, having won the league pennant during the 2006, 2009, and 2010 seasons. 2016 marked the first time since 2010 that the BlueClaws made the South Atlantic League playoffs. Giombarrese stated, "We ended up falling two games short of winning the league title, but we had a great year."

The first overall pick in the 2016 Major League Baseball draft is expected to play right here at the Jersey Shore—the BlueClaws hope Phillies outfielder Mickey Moniak will take the field this season. "That will be very exciting if it works out where we get him," said Giombarrese, highlighting another historic first for the BlueClaws.

As each BlueClaw player takes the field in 2017, fans will be wondering, "Will he be the next one to make it?" Coined "From the Shore to the Show," seventy BlueClaws players have made it from the Jersey Shore

stadium to playing in the majors. "Most of them debuted with the Phillies, but not all of them. One example is Mets catcher Travis d'Arnaud, who played here in 2009," said Giombarrese.

Two Phillies legends (and 2008 World Series Champions) started their careers right here at the Jersey Shore before making it big in the major leagues. Ryan Howard, the BlueClaws first baseman during the 2002 season, was the first player to move up and play at the major league level with the Philadelphia Phillies. He was named the National League Rookie of the Year in 2005 and National League Most Valuable Player for the 2006 season. Howard's BlueClaws jersey number 29 was retired by the team in 2010. Phillies pitcher Cole Hamels, the 2008 World Series Most Valuable Player, also got his start with the BlueClaws in 2003. His BlueClaws number 19 was retired in 2014.

Over the years, BlueClaws fans have seen notable major league players in Lakewood. Some were on a rehab assignment, including Pedro Martinez, Shane Victorino, and Roy Halladay. Others were former BlueClaws minor league opponents, like the Washington Nationals outfielder Bryce Harper, who used to play for the minor league's Hagerstown Suns.

Year after year, the roster is full of hard-working players with outstanding talent. Since 2001, twelve players and two managers have had the honor of being selected for the South Atlantic League Post-Season All-Star Team, while fifty-six players have been chosen for the annual South Atlantic League All-Star Game.

Perhaps the highest honor a player can receive is being selected for the All-Star Futures Game, a special game hosted by Major League Baseball (MLB), which highlights future talent and is a part of MLB's annual All-Star Weekend. Three BlueClaws players were selected for the Futures

Game at the time they were still in Lakewood: former Chicago Cubs second baseman Adrian Cardenas in 2007, current San Diego Padres pitcher Jarred Cosart in 2010, and current Indians pitcher Carlos Carrasco in 2006. Through the 2016 season, a total of twenty-five players with BlueClaws history have appeared in the Futures Game.

Theme Nights, Promotions, Giveaways, & Concerts

Some of the most popular and long-standing traditions are BlueClaws theme nights. Giombarrese explained, “A movie is a movie, or you can go to the boardwalk and play the same games or go to the same shops. We literally make events and memories from scratch, building a new show seventy different times each year. It’s a lot of fun, and it’s something we’re really proud of doing throughout the year.”

Many theme nights feature a special one-time jersey worn by the BlueClaws players. The special theme jerseys are auctioned off following the game with proceeds benefiting over forty non-profit organizations, each a BlueClaws Community Partner and a beneficiary

of BlueClaws Charities. Money raised through the jersey auctions, 50/50 raffles at every home game, and other fundraisers are dispersed through BlueClaws Charities at the end of each year. The team also raises funds for the ALS Association of Greater Philadelphia, the principal charity of the Philadelphia Phillies and their affiliates, by holding a “Celebrity Waiter” event every year where the BlueClaws players and managers take on the roles of servers, bussers, and bartenders.

The organization surprised even themselves with the unexpected success of one of last summer’s theme nights, “Caturday,” where fan’s brought their cats to the game and players wore jerseys adorned with dozens of felines. The Caturday story went viral and was featured on news segments by ESPN, CBS Sports, NBC, The O’Reilly Factor, and other media outlets across the nation. Caturday returns to the stadium this year on May 27, and hopes are high that it surpasses last year’s success.

Another theme night, “Harry Potter Night,” will return for the second consecutive year this season on Friday, May 26. Giombarrese said, “Last year, Harry Potter Night

was one of the best nights we’ve ever done. Fans dressed in costume or wore Harry Potter shirts. We wore the Harry Potter jerseys and sold magic wands and butter beer, which they have in the Harry Potter books and movies. We even dressed up a kid as the Golden Snitch, and he just ran around the stadium all night.” The Golden Snitch is a ball used in Quidditch, a game played in the Harry Potter series, and the goal is for a team’s seeker to catch it before the other team. Giombarrese explained that fans at the ballpark could “capture” the Golden Snitch by taking a photo with him then posting it on social media with a special hashtag. Fan-submitted photos were then displayed on the BlueClaws’ state-of-the-art scoreboard, which was a major 2015 facilities upgrade. This year, Harry Potter Night will include a Magic Mug giveaway and other on-field promotions, along with some special surprises. “It’s going to be a lot of fun,” Giombarrese said.

The 2017 season will also usher in a new tradition to the BlueClaws’ weekly home game promotions: the Summer Concert Series. For the eight scheduled Saturday home games beginning on Memorial Day weekend, gates will open two hours early so fans can enjoy live music from some of the shore’s most popular musicians and bands.

A major goal for the entire BlueClaws organization is to once again lead the South Atlantic League and all other New Jersey minor league and independent ball clubs in attendance, a feat they have accomplished every single year in all sixteen years of their existence. Giombarrese said, “That’s something we and the community have both been very proud of. The fans take it as a piece of great pride when we lead the league [in attendance], and that’s something we’ve been able to do every year.” Additionally, the excitement is building to see who the



courtesy of Lakewood BlueClaw

Mascots Buster and RipTide will be at all home games and many local community events throughout the year.

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BlueClaws “7 Millionth Fan” will be, another unique milestone that is expected to happen sometime in July.

Besides single day tickets, the Lakewood BlueClaws offer a variety of ticketing options, including full, half, and mini-season ticket plans as well as plans for group events and outings. Additional options include luxury suites, the Silver Sluggers Club (the BlueClaws exclusive club for seniors), the BlueClaws Kids Club, and birthday parties.



courtesy of Lakewood BlueClaws

“Harry Potter Night” will return this season on Friday, May 26.

The talent of the Lakewood BlueClaws players, combined with so many entertaining events, make a day spent at the stadium second to none. Head over to FirstEnergy stadium this season for a day filled with affordable fun and lots of memories for the whole family. And keep an eye on the playing field...you just never know which future MLB legends will make a spectacular play right in front of you.

—Jill Ocone

The Lakewood BlueClaws play at FirstEnergy Park, 2 Stadium Way in Lakewood. For more information, call (732) 901-7000. Or visit: www.blueclaws.com; Facebook: www.facebook.com/BlueClaws1; Twitter: @blueclaws.

Office hours: off-season: Mon. - Fri., 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM; in-season on game days: 9:00 AM - end of game; in-season on non-game days: Mon. - Fri. 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM; Sat. 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM.



2017 Theme Nights, Promotions, Giveaways, & Concerts

Theme nights, promotions, giveaways, concerts, and dates may have been added or changed since this magazine went to press. For a current list, please visit www.blueclaws.com.

Tickets: For group sales and ticket package information, please call (732) 901-7000, option 3.

SUNDAY FUNDAY

Kids run the bases after the game plus “Barks & Brews” (bring your dog and \$2. Coronas for adults). Sponsored by ShopRite and Investors Bank.

KIDS EAT FREE SUNDAYS & MONDAYS

With game admission, each child twelve and under receives a voucher for a hot dog, bag of chips, and a soda. Sponsored by ShopRite.

SILVER SLUGGERS TUESDAYS

With game admission, members of the Silver Sluggers Club (the BlueClaws exclusive club for seniors) receive a voucher for a hot dog, bag of chips, and a soda. Sponsored by Harrogate.

THIRSTY THURSDAYS

Visit the Coors Light WRAT Trap for dollar beers and other specials. Ages twenty-one and older.

THROWBACK THURSDAYS

The BlueClaws players wear the original pinstriped uniforms from the 2001-2009 seasons featuring the original logo with Pinchy the Crab.

FIREWORKS FRIDAYS

Immediately following the game, enjoy the boldest and brightest fireworks show at the Jersey Shore. Additional fireworks celebrations will follow the games on Sunday, May 28 (in honor of Memorial Day), Monday, July 3 (to commemorate Independence Day), and Sunday, September 3 (in honor of Labor Day).

SATURDAY SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

Featuring performances from some of the Shore’s most popular bands. Gates open two hours early.

APRIL

4/13: Opening Night. 6:35 game time. Group Leader Appreciation Night. Thirsty Thursday. Sponsored by Jenkinson’s Boardwalk.

4/14: 7:05 game time. Post-game fireworks.

4/15: Double Header (separate admissions). 1:05 game one. Post-game BlueClaws Easter Egg Hunt. 7:05 game two.

4/17: 6:35 game time. BlueClaws Magnet Schedules Giveaway (first 1,500 fans). Kids eat free. Sponsored by U.S. Army and ShopRite.

4/18: 6:35 game time. BlueClaws Magnet Schedules Giveaway (first 1,500 fans). Silver Sluggers Tuesday. Sponsored by U.S. Army and Harrogate.

4/19: 11:05 game time. BlueClaws Kids Day Wednesday.

4/27: 6:35 game time. BlueClaws Magnet Schedules Giveaway (first 1,500 fans). Thirsty Thursday. Sponsored by the U.S. Army.

4/28: 7:05 game time. BlueClaws Magnet Schedules Giveaway (first 1,500 fans). Post-game fireworks. Sponsored by the U.S. Army.

4/30: 1:05 game time. Buster’s Birthday Celebration. Kids eat free. Kids run the bases after the game plus “Barks & Brews” (bring your dog and \$2. Coronas for adults). Sponsored by ShopRite and Investors Bank.

MAY

- 5/10: College Fair Night.** 6:35 game time.
- 5/11:** 6:35 game time. Sports & Entertainment Career Fair. Thirsty Thursday.
- 5/12: Labor Union Night.** 7:05 game time. Post-game fireworks.
- 5/13:** 4:05 game time. Bark in the Park - bring your dog! Sponsored by 95.9 WRAT and 100.1 WJRZ.
- 5/14: Mother's Day.** 1:05 game time. Kids eat free. Kids run the bases after the game plus "Barks & Brews" (bring your dog and \$2. Coronas for adults). Sponsored by ShopRite and Investors Bank.
- 5/15:** 6:35 game time. Kids eat free. Sponsored by ShopRite.
- 5/16:** 6:35 game time. Silver Sluggers Tuesday. Sponsored by Harrogate.
- 5/22: Most Valuable Teacher Day.** 6:35 game time. Silver Sluggers Tuesday. Sponsored by Harrogate and the NJEA.
- 5/24: Education Day.** 11:05 game time.
- 5/25: EMS Night.** 6:35 game time. Thirsty Thursday. Sponsored by Alert Ambulance.
- 5/26: Harry Potter Night.** 7:05 game time. Harry Potter Magic Mug Giveaway (first 1,500 fans). Post-game fireworks. Sponsored by University Radiology.
- 5/27: Saturday - bring your cat!** 2:00 - 4:00: Summer Concert Series - Ted Hammock & the Pickles. 4:05 game time.
- 5/28:** 7:05 game time. Post-game fireworks. Kids eat free. Kids run the bases after the game plus "Barks & Brews" (bring your dog and \$2. Coronas for adults). Sponsored by ShopRite and Investors Bank.



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"Military Appreciation Night" will be held on Thursday, June 15.

JUNE

- 6/6: Education Day #2.** 11:05 game time.
- 6/8: Home Improvement Night.** 7:05 game time. BlueClaws Beach Bags Giveaway (first 1,500 fans). Thirsty Thursday. Sponsored by New Jersey Natural Gas.
- 6/13: Graduation Ceremony Day.** 7:05 game time. Silver Sluggers Tuesday. Sponsored by Harrogate.
- 6/14:** 7:05 game time. Jurassic Ballpark II with Field Station Dinosaurs.
- 6/15: Military Appreciation Night & Troop Supply Drive.** 7:05 game time. Thirsty Thursday. Sponsored by OceanFirst Bank.
- 6/16: Let's Make a Deal Night.** 7:05 game time. Post-game fireworks. Sponsored by Wawa.
- 6/17:** 5:00 - 7:00: Summer Concert Series - live music t.b.a. 7:05 game time. BlueClaws Christmas Story with Leg Lamp Bobble Giveaway (first 1,500 fans). Sponsored by Investors Bank.
- 6/18: Father's Day.** 1:05 game time. BlueClaws BBQ Apron Giveaway (first 1,500 fans). Kids eat free. Kids run the bases after the game plus "Barks & Brews" (bring your dog and \$2. Coronas for adults). Post-game father-children catch on the field. Sponsored by Advance Auto Parts, ShopRite, and Investors Bank.
- 6/26:** 7:05 game time. Kids eat free. Sponsored by ShopRite.
- 6/27: Elvis Night with Frank James.** 7:05 game time. Silver Sluggers Tuesday. Sponsored by Harrogate.
- 6/28: Camp Day.** 7:05 game time.
- 6/29:** 7:05 game time. Thirsty Thursday.
- 6/30:** 7:05 game time. BlueClaws Cooler Backpack Giveaway (first 1,500 fans). Post-game fireworks. Sponsored by NJR Home Services.

JULY

- 7/1:** 5:00 PM - 7:00: Summer Concert Series - Parrot Beach Band and Parrot Head Party. 7:05 game time.
- 7/2: BlueClaws Touch-a-Truck Day.** 1:05 game time. Kids eat free. Kids run the bases after the game plus "Barks & Brews" (bring your dog and \$2. Coronas for adults). Sponsored by ShopRite and Investors Bank.
- 7/3:** 7:05 game time. Independence Day Fireworks Celebration - biggest fireworks show of the year!
- 7/12:** 7:05 game time. BlueClaws Water Bottles Giveaway (first 1,500 fans). Sponsored by Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey.
- 7/13:** 7:05 game time. Maikel Franco "Made the Phillies" Bobblehead Giveaway (first 1,500 fans). Thirsty Thursday. Sponsored by RWJBarnabas Health.
- 7/14: Autism Awareness Night. American Legion Night.** 7:05 game time. Phillie Phanatic appearance. Post-game fireworks.
- 7/15: Country Night with Line Dancing & Mechanical Bull.** 5:00 - 7:00: Summer Concert Series - After the Reign; 7:05 game time.
- 7/16: BlueClaws Golf Day.** 1:05 game time. Kids eat free. Kids run the bases after the game plus "Barks & Brews" (bring your dog and \$2. Coronas for adults). Sponsored by ShopRite and Investors Bank.
- 7/17: Camp Day.** 7:05 game time.
- 7/27:** 7:05 game time. BlueClaws Throwback Pennant Flags Giveaway (first 1,500 fans). Thirsty Thursday. Sponsored by Central Jersey Blood Center.
- 7/28: Italian Heritage Night.** Pre-game performance by Frank James. 7:05 game time. Post-game fireworks.
- 7/29: 10th Annual Bruce Springsteen Appreciation Night.** 5:00 - 7:00: Saturday Concert Series - The E-Street Shuffle in the Coors Light WRAT Trap. 7:05 game time. Sponsored by Kean University.
- 7/30:** 11:00: BlueClaws Kids Expo with rides and games; 1:05 game time. Kids eat free. Kids run the bases after the game plus "Barks & Brews" (bring your dog and \$2. Coronas for adults). Sponsored by ShopRite and Investors Bank.

AUGUST

- 8/3:** 7:05 game time. Women's Expo. Post-game Diamond Dig. Thirsty Thursday. Sponsored by Hershey's and Bentley Diamond.
- 8/4:** 7:05 game time. Post-game fireworks.
- 8/5: Irish Heritage Night.** 5:00 - 7:00: Summer Concert Series - Kilmaine Saints. 7:05 game time. BlueClaws Irish Baseball Cap Giveaway (first 1,500 fans). Sponsored by AJ Perri.
- 8/6:** 1:05 game time. Peppa Pig appearance. Kids eat free. Kids run the bases after the game plus "Barks & Brews" (bring your dog and \$2. Coronas for adults). Sponsored by ShopRite and Investors Bank.
- 8/15:** 7:05 game time. Phillie Phanatic appearance. Silver Sluggers Tuesday. Sponsored by OceanFirst Bank and Harrogate.
- 8/17:** 7:05 game time. RipTide Toothbrush Holders Giveaway (first 1,500 fans). Thirsty Thursday. Sponsored by New Jersey Natural Gas.
- 8/18:** 7:05 game time. Pork Roll Fest & Salute to Pork Roll with Jersey Auction. Post-game fireworks. Sponsored by IHOP.
- 8/19: Battle of the Badges & Augtoberfest Night.** 5:00 PM - 7:00: Summer Concert Series - The Impulsives. 7:05 game time. BlueClaws Beer Stein Giveaway (first 1,500 fans over age 21).
- 8/20:** 1:05 game time. BlueClaws Back to School Binders Giveaway (first 1,500 fans 14 and under). Kids eat free. Kids run the bases after the game plus "Barks & Brews" (bring your dog and \$2. Coronas for adults). Sponsored by the NJEA, ShopRite, and Investors Bank.
- 8/21:** 7:05 game time. Kids eat free. Sponsored by ShopRite.
- 8/29: Summer Reading Night.** 7:05 game time. Silver Sluggers Tuesday. Sponsored by Harrogate and the Ocean County Library.
- 8/31:** 7:05 game time. BlueClaws Wedding Expo. Thirsty Thursday.

SEPTEMBER

- 9/1:** 7:05 game time. Post-game fireworks. Sponsored by Wawa.
- 9/2: Beatles Night.** 3:00: BlueClaws Extravaganza with rides and games and Summer Concert Series - live music t.b.a. 7:05 game time.
- 9/3:** 7:05 game time. End-of-Summer Fireworks Bonanza. Kids eat free. Kids run the bases after the game plus "Barks & Brews" (bring your dog and \$2. Coronas for adults). Sponsored by ShopRite and Investors Bank.
- 9/4: Fan Appreciation Day.** 1:05 game time. Post-game fan photo on the field. Kids eat free. Sponsored by ShopRite.

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