



NEWS RELEASE

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FORMER MVP DALE MURPHY HIGHLIGHTS 17TH ANNUAL RICKWOOD CLASSIC

Barons, Friends of Rickwood, State Farm Insurance and DRASH Celebrate Baseball in Wartime

Hoover, AL — The Birmingham Barons and Friends of Rickwood announced Tuesday the details of the 17th Annual Rickwood Classic presented by State Farm Insurance. Set for Wednesday, May 30, the classic will celebrate War Time Baseball. The 12:30 p.m. contest will showcase the Birmingham Barons against the Chattanooga Lookouts, Double-A affiliate of the Los Angeles Dodgers. Former two-time MVP and Atlanta Braves star **Dale Murphy** will be in attendance and will be available for autographs.

This will be the fourth appearance for the Lookouts in the classic and their second in two years. The Barons have defeated Chattanooga in the three previous contests, in 1997, 12-6, in 2002, 14-4 and in 2011, 4-3. In last years contest, the Barons won on a walk-off home run by Justin Greene in the 11th inning.

The theme of this year's Classic, "War Time Baseball" will focus on baseball's connection to America's war-time history. During World War II and the Korean War, hundreds of baseball players served in America's armed forces including Hall of Famers Ted Williams, Bob Feller and Warren Spahn. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt insisted in a letter to the Commissioner of Baseball that the season should continue during the conflict for the morale of the nation.

The Barons will don uniforms from the early 1940's when they were affiliated with the Cincinnati Reds while the Lookouts will also wear period uniforms. The Barons' uniforms will also feature the Hale America "Health" patch, which was worn by both major league and minor league teams during the era. Hale America was a nationwide fitness program designed to promote national physical well being at the outset of World War II and the Health shield was the organization's logo.

"We are excited to celebrate the 17th installment of the Rickwood Classic by honoring the sacrifices of countless local veterans," said Barons General Manager Jonathan Nelson. "The Rickwood Classic is a very special event in the Birmingham community and over the years has been recognized nationally as a must-attend baseball game. Along with the Friends of Rickwood, State Farm Insurance and DRASH we are looking forward to providing another fun and memorable afternoon at America's oldest ballpark."

"The Friends of Rickwood are excited about the "Baseball in Wartime" theme for this year's Rickwood Classic, and look forward to honoring those ballplayers who contributed so much to the war effort. The game of baseball provided a rallying point on the home front, and we look forward to paying tribute to those players as well as the Barons teams of that era," said Director of the Friends of Rickwood David Brewer. "We believe that Dale Murphy is an outstanding choice for Classic VIP, and we look forward to welcoming him back to Birmingham and Rickwood Field," Brewer noted.

Murphy spent 18 seasons in the Major Leagues including 15 with the Atlanta Braves while also suiting up for the Philadelphia Phillies and Colorado Rockies. A two-time Nation League Most Valuable Player (1982 and 1983), he was also a seven-time all-star while winning five Rawlings Gold Gloves and four Silver Slugger Awards. Murphy was the 1988 recipient of the Roberto Clemente Award, given annually for outstanding service in the community. The Portland, Oregon native finished his career with 2,111 hits and 398 home runs.

This will be the ninth straight year that State Farm insurance has been the title sponsor of the Rickwood Classic.

"Rickwood Field is a rich part of Birmingham's past, present and future cultural heritage, and State Farm is proud to be associated with such a positive community event. We are known as the 'Good Neighbors,' and we trust that our support of the Rickwood Classic and its unique baseball traditions will help demonstrate that commitment to the people of Birmingham," said State Farm Marketing Analyst Cathy Warren.

In 2010, the Rickwood Classic was named Minor League Baseball's Promotion of the Year and in 2009 the event was named the most desirable Minor League Baseball game to attend in a poll on MiLB.com.

Tickets for the 17th Annual Rickwood Classic are currently available on the web, over the phone or by visiting the Regions Park Box Office. As a co-sponsor, DRASH "The Warfighter's Choice", will provide active and former members of the military the opportunity to purchase tickets for a special discounted rate of \$5.00 per ticket. The 2012 Birmingham Barons season begins on Thursday, April 5th against the Jacksonville Suns, Double-A affiliate of the Florida Marlins, with the home opener set for Tuesday, April 10th versus the Huntsville Stars, Double-A affiliate of the Milwaukee Brewers. For ticket information, game schedule, or promotions calendar, call (205) 988-3200 or visit barons.com, facebook.com/birminghambarons and twitter.com/bhambarons.

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