

## MINOR LEAGUE REPORT

Scheer while the audio engineer, Reggie Gibson, mikes him up for an afternoon event with sponsors.

But the *Hard Knocks* formula, now 14 years strong, has at least one aspect that Scheer simply can't match (to say nothing of the fact that the HBO program has something like 15 cameras to Scheer's two): Every season, the star of the *Hard Knocks* is the rookie who makes the team in the season finale. That's just not how life goes in Triple-A, where sticking around long enough to become a familiar face is hardly the goal. Stardom on *Hard Knocks* means success; on *Homegrown*, it's not so simple.

Into this paradox steps Deivi Garcia, the Yankees' top pitching prospect, ready for his close-up. Called up to Triple-A in July after a dominant performance during the All-Star Futures Game in Cleveland, Garcia has the makings of a star. "There is something about him," Scheer says, her producer brain considering the opportunity

his presence late in the season can provide. "I've been wooed." A few rooms over, RailRiders manager Jay Bell strums a similar chord. "On the field, there's a lot to Deivi Garcia," Bell says. "The mound presence that he displays, you can't teach that. It's just who he is."

Telling stories and making stories; it's funny how they can overlap.

**D**eivi Garcia is 20 years old, and 20-year-olds — especially stylish, sharp-dressed 20-year-olds, a club to which Garcia certainly belongs — like fresh sunglasses. That seems like a possible in for Scheer as she gets down to business this weekend.

She arrived at PNC Field with loads more ideas than plans. That's usually how things go. "I never know until the last day," she says, explaining how she outlines each episode. "And even sometimes until I get into the edit room." So, Scheer tries to be in something like 10 places at once. On the

field, where the pitchers are stretching. In the bullpen, where Garcia is chatting with pitching coach Tommy Phelps. In the front office, for general manager Josh Olerud's staff meeting, or maybe in the car running an errand with clubhouse manager Mike Macciocco. Or, of course, in the dugout during the game, when a *Homegrown* regular will get life-changing news. She has the key to just about every locked door in the stadium, and that's good, because there are stories everywhere. A few microphones on booms and lapels can help her hear, but her eyes are more or less limited to what director of photography Mark Doyle and camera B operator Matt Wermes are able to record. She'll drown in footage at the end of the weekend as she works in an editing bay in Connecticut, writing scripts for Gregg Ledermann to read and cutting hours of tape, but she'll still wonder what she missed.

Then there's the reality that the cameras and microphones naturally change the stories. "We're live!" infielder Wendell Rijo screams, running onto the field for batting practice after getting miked up. Wermes says that it's always the players who don't expect to be any good on camera that end up being the best, and Rijo is a natural. He starts off by telling the players he approaches that he's dangerous, and they know what he means, but even when he tries to sneakily make small talk with a bunch of pitchers, they pick up on his scent quickly and send him scurrying off. He's a star throughout the segment, doing his best to stealthily interview as many RailRiders teammates as possible, and listening on headphones, Scheer can't stop laughing. "I'm going to put a reel together for him," she says. "He's going to be working for ESPN Deportes by the time I'm done." But when she removes the microphone so he can hit, catcher Erik Kratz verbalizes what a lot of the players seemed to be thinking. "Thank you, Blayke," Kratz says, "for giving me my friend back."

Ever joyful — notwithstanding his ejection for arguing balls and strikes on Saturday night — Rijo seems exhilarated by the experience. "It's amazing," he says of the whole production. "They want to know everything about us, and that's special for



It's anyone's guess just how much time Garcia will be spending in Triple-A, but RailRiders fans have made sure to capitalize on his time in Northeast Pennsylvania. The 20-year-old pitcher has impressed teammates, coaches and *Homegrown* producers by the ease and maturity he has displayed in all situations.