

WEST PENN BASEBALL PROSPECTS

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Website:

WEST PENN BASEBALL PROSPECTS' website address is www.wpabaseball.com. Please visit and tell me what you would like to see added to the site. Back issues can be downloaded from the website.

Donations:

Donations to West Penn Baseball Prospects, Inc. are tax-deductible. Such donations are used to pay ongoing operating costs and are much appreciated. Donations can be made either by a check payable to West Penn Baseball Prospects, Inc. or through Paypal by using the "button" on the home page of the website.

We greatly appreciate the very generous donation made to West Penn Baseball Prospects, Inc. by the law firm of Kirkpatrick Lockhart Nicholson Graham LLP.

Publication Schedule

Change, change, change. We continue to fine-tune the publication of this newsletter. For the past year, we have been operating on a fixed publication schedule, with issues scheduled for March, June, August and November. The purpose of the August issue was to report on summer baseball happenings and, similarly, the November issue was to report on fall baseball. In addition, those issues allowed us to update our prospect list on a periodic basis.

With monthly prospect updates now appearing on our website and not much information being provided to us on either summer or fall baseball, we are changing to a variable publication schedule. In short, a newsletter will be published whenever we have information to report. I expect that this will result in more frequent, but shorter newsletters.

If anyone has a subject they would like us to address in the newsletter, please let us know via email at wpabaseball@hotmail.com.

Correction

In mid-June we published the results of the June 11 showcase sponsored by WPBP and the WPIAL Baseball Coaches Association. We have discovered an error in the results that were posted. Max Suter, a 2007 grad from Greensburg Central Catholic, was reported as running a 7.1 60. Max registered for the showcase but did not attend and the 60 time we reported was run by another player. Max is actually one of the fastest local players and ran a 6.56 60 at a Duquesne University showcase.

Harry Austin Commits to Elon

Although baseball's early signing period is still a couple of months away, baseball prospects are starting to make their college decisions. The first local decision we have heard about was made by North Allegheny's Harry Austin, a starting OF and All-Section selection for the WPIAL Quad A champs. Harry, who is expected to be one of the top players in the WPIAL in the 2006 season, recently made a verbal commitment to Elon University in Elon, North Carolina. Elon is a Division 1 school that competes in the Southern Conference against such schools as the College of Charleston, Georgia Southern, Western Carolina and The Citadel. Elon posted a 32-25 record in 2005.

Elon Assistant Coach Greg Starbuck first saw Harry at the WPBP/WBCA showcase in mid-June. Harry was certainly one of the standouts of that showcase as he ran 60s in 6.45 and 6.6. After seeing him hit during the PIAA playoffs, Coach Starbuck expressed his interest in Austin to North Allegheny Coach Tim Banner. (NCAA rules prohibit direct contacts with senior players until July 1). On July 1, Harry received a phone call from Elon saying they were very interested in him and that was followed up letters and weekly phone calls (the maximum allowed under NCAA rules).

Elon coaches then saw Austin again at the Team One Showcase in Cincinnati on July 7 through July 10. At that point, Coach Starbuck

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Harry Austin Commits (continued)

told Harry that he needed to see him play one more time before deciding whether to offer a scholarship and that he wanted Mike Kennedy, Elon's head coach, to also see him play. The Elon coaches had the opportunity to see Harry play again at the NABF Championship Series on July 21 through July 24 in Greensboro, NC. Austin played for the Diamond Dog Bulldogs in that Series. Elon University is less than 20 miles from Greensboro, so Harry took the opportunity to visit the campus and really liked it. At that point the coaches offered him a scholarship and Austin accepted shortly thereafter.

Harry told us he liked three things about Elon -- the campus, the opportunity to play as a freshman and the coaches. He was hoping to sign during the early signing period but really hadn't anticipated making a commitment as early as he did. The opportunity presented it, though, and Harry took advantage of it.

Harry's experience underscores the importance of being seen by college coaches. Harry's father told us in an email, "I am positive that the WPBP showcase was a significant contributing factor to these events. That initial look by Elon that day started everything...."

Updated August Prospect Listings

and Bios are now available

on the website!!!!

HIGH SCHOOL PLAYERS!!!!

Please send us information on your summer and fall seasons as well as any updated academic information.

Help us help you.

MLB Draft Update

In the June issue we reported that five local players were selected in the Major League Baseball Draft. Kevin Slowey of Upper St. Clair HS and Winthrop Univ. was selected by the Twins in the 2nd round. Kevin signed with the Twins (for a bonus reported at \$490,000 by Baseball America) and is pitching in Low Class A for the Beloit Snappers. He is off to a good start with a 3-1 record and a 2.34 ERA.

Mike Finocchi of Baldwin HS and Louisburg Junior College was selected by the Indians in the 14th round and subsequently signed with the Indians. Mike is pitching for Burlington (NC) in the Appalachian League (Rookie) and is being used as a relief pitcher. He has a 3.14 ERA with one save in that capacity.

The remaining three local draftees (Gary Bucuren of the Ambridge HS, Stephen Hermann of Penn-Trafford HS and Adam DiMichele of Sto-Rox HS and Oklaloosa Walton CC) did not sign and will play college ball.

WPIAL/District 10 All-Star Game

The first All-Star game between the WPIAL All-Stars and District 10 (Erie, Warren, Crawford, Mercer, Venango and Forest counties) was held on June 25. I was unable to attend the game, but I am told that the Erie Seawolves did a superb job of hosting the event. They provided hats, jerseys and a plaque to each game participant. In the words of one participant, "The Seawolves treated us like gold."

District 10 played an excellent game and beat the WPIAL by a score of 10-3. The highlight for the WPIAL was a towering two-run homer by Jeff Lapkowicz of Carmichaels.

This looks like it may become an annual event, and that would be great for both WPIAL and District 10 baseball. *West Penn Baseball Prospects* supported this year's event by providing bus transportation for the WPIAL team.

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Cory Yokel: Taking the Initiative

One of the messages that keeps coming through loud and clear in talking to local players and parents is the importance of taking the initiative and marketing yourself if you want to play college baseball. The latest example to come to our attention is Cory Yokel, a 2005 graduate of Shaler HS.

Cory had a very productive high school career but was far from the biggest name on a Shaler team that sent two players to Duquesne, another to Gulf Coast Community College and had an underclassman who was voted to the All-Section team. Cory pitched and caught for Shaler and batted .373 as a senior with 19 RBI, while pitching 14 innings and recording 13 strikeouts and a 3.00 ERA. Yokel put up even better numbers in a 45 game Palomino schedule, compiling a .393 average with 40 RBI, 65 strikeouts and only 7 walks in 76 innings pitched and a 1.69 ERA.

Cory was recruited by several local Division 2 and 3 programs, but thought he was capable of playing at the Division 1 level. On his own initiative he contacted several teams in the Northeast to see if they were looking for a pitcher or a catcher.

He received interest from several school in the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) and the Patriot Conference. St. Peter's College (located in Jersey City, NJ) expressed the most interest. Cory's timing in contacting them couldn't have been better. St. Peter's coach Derek England was in his first year and putting together his first recruiting class.

St. Peter's is a Division 1 school playing in the MAAC against such schools as Marist, Manhattan, Siena, Rider, Niagara, Iona and Canisius.

We recently talked to Coach England and he recounted the events that led up to Cory attending St. Peter's. He told us, "We received an email from Cory late in the recruiting season and we

were looking for a catcher. Otherwise, I might not have paid much attention to him. I talked to his high school coach and his Palomino coach. We look for kids who are hard workers and they both said he fit that bill. Cory also sent us a video and it looked like he played pretty well."

In the meantime, Cory and his father visited St. Peters and liked the school and its academic programs. When St. Peter's offered a scholarship, Yokel accepted.

If Cory hadn't sent information to St. Peter's he never would have ended up there. St. Peter's does not typically recruit in the Pittsburgh area (their entire 2004-2005 roster was made up of New York and New Jersey players) and Coach England had never heard of him. This is a lesson that keeps repeating itself when it comes to college baseball recruiting -- with rare exceptions, it is critical that you take the initiative in contacting schools you would like to attend.

St. Peter's is in the midst of rebuilding its program and is coming off a 5-45 2005 record. That should give Cory a great opportunity to earn playing time early in his college career.

College Decisions Update

We continue to get information on college decisions by local 2005 high school grads. Matt Litzinger of Serra Catholic was originally reported as attending Potomac State but was offered by the University of Pittsburgh and will be playing for the Panthers. Other decisions we have heard about since our last issue are:

Adam Biedrzycki	Ambridge	Gannon
Drew Bosco	Blackhawk	LaRoche
Mark Brewer	Blackhawk	Thiel
Todd Campbell	Serra	Notre Dame (OH)
Nate Filip	Brashear	LaRoche
Scott Fraley	Brownsville	Mercyhurst Northeast
Bryson Fleming	Monaca	Penn State - Beaver
Ross Gusky	Allderdice	Tallahassee CC
Adam Liberatore	Blackhawk	Tennessee Tech
Dan Seery	Blackhawk	Case Western
Dan Shusteric	Penn-Trafford	Potomac State
Tim Stash	Serra	Seton Hill
Dustin Taylor	California	California

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Fall Baseball

Although football dominates most of the scholastic sports discussions this time of year in the Pittsburgh area, there is no shortage of athletes continuing their baseball seasons into the fall. Local high schoolers have three basic options for fall baseball:

- Local leagues
- Local travel teams
- Regional travel teams

Local Leagues

There are a number of local fall leagues. Some of these teams also travel to out-of-town tournaments but most of their play is local.

The GPSSD League is a Supercolt league that fields around 10 teams, principally from the South and West Suburbs of Pittsburgh. Teams from Baldwin, Bethel Park, Canon McMillan, Carrick, Mt. Lebanon, Peters, Ringgold, Robinson, Upper St. Clair and West Mifflin are competing this year.

Tom McCarthy, head coach at McKeesport HS and a veteran local coach at both the high school and Federation League level, started a new wooden bat league this year that is expected to include teams from Baldwin, Connellsville, Keystone Oaks, Kiski, McKeesport, Morgantown (WV), and South Park.

The Butler Fall League is another league playing high quality fall baseball. The league includes the BB Rooners (Youngtown, OH), Baseball Training Academy, Burgettstown, East Pittsburgh, Ellwood City, Lyndora, North Allegheny (2 teams), Neshannock, North Hills, Pine Richland, Riverside and Seneca Valley.

A number of players from Lawrence County head over to Youngstown to play fall baseball in the Youngstown Class B League.

Please let us know if we are leaving out any local fall leagues.

Local Travel Teams

Due to the conflict with football season, there are certainly fewer fall travel teams than there are in the summer. There are two local fall travel teams we are aware of -- the Allegheny Pirates and the Baseball Training Academy-- and a third (the Johnstown Jay Sox) that is based in Johnstown but which has several local players. A fourth organization, the Pittsburgh Tigers, traditionally fields a fall team but is not doing so this year as the organization is in the midst of a leadership transition due to Jeff Sadler's moving to Columbus, Ohio. The Tigers will field a team next fall, however.

Allegheny Pirates

The Allegheny Pirates is a premier fall travel team in the Pittsburgh area. We featured them in an article in our November 2004 issue. This year's roster includes:

Mathis Bable, P	Sr	Blackhawk HS
Tony DeStefano, IF	Sr	Latrobe HS
Colin Durborow, IF	Sr	Pine-Richland HS
Jack Greenberg, 1B	Sr	Upper St Clair HS
Austin Homan, C	Sr	State College HS
James Hoover, P	Sr	Eliz-Forward HS
John Karr, P/OF	Sr	Pine-Richland HS
Tim Kearney, P	Sr	Neshannock HS
Erik Kempton, P	Sr	State College HS
Geoff Lang, P/OF	Sr	No. Allegheny HS
Joe Leonard, IF	Jr	Connellsville HS
Tyler Marburger, OF	Sr	Blackhawk HS
Kris McDonough, C	Sr	Upper St Clair HS
Bill Messer, IF	Sr	Slippery Rock HS
Chris Murphy, IF/OF	Jr	Fox Chapel HS
Jacob Shaffer, OF	Jr	Kiski Area HS
Chris Sobota, P	Sr	Homer Center HS
Jordan Steranka, 1B	So	Mt Lebanon HS
Tobias Streich, C	Jr	Ridgeway HS
Justin Thomas, IF	Sr	Shady Side Acad.
Alex Valadja, P	Jr	North Catholic HS
Christian Valeriano, OF	Sr	Riverside HS
Kelly Williams, P	Sr	Meadville HS

The Pirates schedule this fall is as follows:

8/26-27	George Mason Showcase Tournament	Fairfax, VA
9/ 3	Pennsylvania Select	Greentree, PA
9/ 4	Potomac State College	Keyser, WV
9/9-9/11	Winthrop Showcase Tournament	Rock Hill, SC
9/16-9/18	Gene Janni Fall Classic	Allentown, PA
9/23-9/24	UMBC Showcase Tournament	Baltimore, MD
9/30-10/1	Allegheny Pirates Fall Showcase	Slippery Rock, PA
10/9	Baseball Training Academy	Greentree, PA

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Fall Baseball (continued)

Baseball Training Academy

The Baseball Training Academy (“BTA”), based in the Greentree Sportsplex, is fielding a fall travel baseball team for the first time this season. They will also play in the Butler Fall League.

The team is managed by Dave Kirilloff, who is the Director of Baseball Operations with the BTA. Helping Kirilloff with the team is Mark Jackson, former head coach with both Point Park and the University of Pittsburgh, and Denny Eskin, who has over 30 years of baseball and teaching experience.

Kirilloff played for both Point Park and Pitt, was an assistant coach at Point Park and also served as an assistant in the Pirates scouting department. He has been a professional baseball instructor for the past 13 years and offers lessons at the Greentree Sportsplex. This past offseason he worked with Grant Psomas (Keystone Oaks and WVU), who is playing in the New York Mets farm system.

The BTA has fielded summer teams for several years. Their summer team competes in the Great Lakes Division of the SANDLOTT (Select Amateur National Development League for Travel Teams) and plays a very competitive schedule.

BTA decided to expand their activities to include a fall team that includes a relatively small roster and which focuses on player instruction.

This year’s fall schedule includes:

9/4	Coaches Select Games	Laroche College
9/10	Johnstown Jaysox	Johnstown, PA
9/17	Potomac State	Keyser, WV
9/23-9/24	UMBC Showcase Tournament	Baltimore, MD
10/1	Seneca Valley	Zelienople Park
10/8	BB Rooners	Highfield #1
10/9	Allegheny Pirates	Greentree
10/15	East Pittsburgh	Highfield #2
10/16	North Hills	Herb Field
10/22-		
10/23	Coaches Select Games	Shippensburg, PA

At publication time, we had not received a team roster from the BTA. We do know that such players as Rob Baumgartel (2007 grad from Deer Lakes), Gene Franks (2007 grad from Albert Gallatin), Jason Conley (2006 grad from Peters Township) and Zach Jeney (2007 grad from California) will play for the BTA. We will publish a full roster once we are provided with one.

Johnstown Jay Sox

The Jay Sox are a traveling team that plays a schedule comparable to that of the Allegheny Pirates and BTA. Dee Dee Osborn, Johnstown High School coach and a Cleveland Indians Scout, is the General Manager. Osborn also runs a very popular summer camp and showcase. The team is managed by Gary Dudukovich.

Five WPIAL players are on the Jay Sox roster, including:

Sam Flori, 2B/SS	Sr	Hempfield
Mark Henry, 1B/OF/P	Sr	Kiski Area
Ed Lynch, C/OF	Jr	Kiski Area
Dan Mangini, SS/2B	Sr	Burrell
Mike Pereslucha, IF/P	Sr	Kiski Area

Their schedule includes:

8/13-14	Wood Bat Kickoff Weekend	Shippensburg, PA
8/19-21	Bridgewater Showcase	Bridgewater, VA
8/27-28	Baseball Factory Tournament	Baltimore, ND
9/4	Coaches Select Games	Laroche College
9/10-11	Nittany Weekend	Bellefonte, PA
9/16-18	Gadziel Fall Classic	Prince William, VA
9/24-9/25	Canton Tournament	Canton, OH
9/30-10/2	Robert Jones Fall Classic	Norfolk, VA

Regional Traveling Teams

This is the category we probably know the least about, but several local players in recent years have had the opportunity to play for the Atlanta Braves Fall Team. That team is led by Chuck Faris, a scout for the Atlanta Braves who also runs the Faris Baseball School in Herndon, Virginia. Jeff Vincent of Franklin Regional played for the team last season, and it led him to a baseball scholarship at Fairleigh-Dickinson. This year, Tommy Shirley, a junior at Norwin

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Regional Traveling Teams (cont'd)

High School, will be playing for the Braves. Tommy was selected for the team based on his performance at a Faris baseball showcase at Mount St. Mary's college in Maryland.

Fall Showcases

We wanted to inform everyone of a couple fall showcases that will be taking place. Don't forget to check www.wpabaseball.com for announcements regarding showcases, camps and clinics.

Indiana University of Pennsylvania will be hosting a showcase for 2006 through 2009 grads on Sunday afternoon, October 2. The camp is a chance for current high school players to showcase their ability in front of the IUP baseball staff.

The camp will feature skill evaluation and instruction with the IUP coaching staff and players.

For more information, call the IUP baseball office at 724-357-7830 or visit the IUP website at www.iup.edu.

The University of Pittsburgh is conducting a showcase on October 16 for 2006 through 2009 grads. There will be both morning and afternoon sessions.

The Panthers have signed players who attended this showcase in past years and it is an excellent opportunity to perform before the Pitt coaches as well as some Division 2 and Division 3 coaches. Attendees will be instructed on all aspects of the game and be given an evaluation form for their personal use. All baseball "times" will be recorded on evaluation forms such as pitcher's velocity, 60-yard times, bat speed velocity and others.

The showcase will be held at the Cost Center at the University of Pittsburgh. Call 412-648-3825 for more information.

Website Changes

We have made a few enhancements to our website that hopefully will either be useful or informative. Some of these changes are implemented and others are in process and will include:

- ◆ A scrolling headline will appear on the home page and provide the latest local baseball news. Visit the website frequently to keep up with all the latest baseball happenings.
- ◆ You will be able to download all forms used by WPBP to gather information. This includes forms for both coaches and players to submit information by mail or fax to WPBP.
- ◆ We have added the ability to indicate whether SAT/ACT/PSAT being reported are "old" version or "new" version. This is very helpful in providing accurate information to college coaches.
- ◆ We have added a page that will lead you to information about the WPIAL Baseball Coaches Association All-Star Weekend.

Camp/Showcase Survey Form

We would like to include information in our next newsletter about local players' experiences at the camps and showcases they have attended. This will help local players and their parents make informed decisions about attending camps and showcases.

There is a survey form on the next page. Please fill it out and return it to us. We can only provide information to others if you give us your input. Thanks for your help.

WEST PENN BASEBALL PROSPECTS CAMP/SHOWCASE SURVEY

West Penn Baseball Prospects would like to get your input on the quality of camps and showcases you may have attended this summer. This survey will be helpful to other players in the area as they decide which camps or showcases to attend in the future. While we do ask for your name below, your survey will not be shared with anyone, nor will you be quoted by name when we publish the results.

Please complete the survey and return it to Tony Villiotti by U.S. mail (63 Stancey Road, Pittsburgh PA 15220) or by fax (412.200.2299). If responding by fax please send only between the hours of 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. If you would to respond by email, please email me (wpabaseball@hotmail.com) and I will send you a copy of this form.

Rate on a scale of 5 (excellent) to 1 (poor)

Showcase/ Camp	Quality of Instruc- tion	Quality of Facilities	Value	Quality of Showcase	Exposure To College Coaches	Overall Satis- faction	Ranking (1)

(1) If you attended more than one showcase, please rank them in order of your satisfaction.

Comments _____

Name _____

Email address or phone number _____