

# WEST PENN BASEBALL PROSPECTS

Volume 6, Issue 1

March 2009

## Commitments and Signings

A number of student-athletes have made their college decisions and will be playing college baseball. Commitments and signings that we are aware of include:

Steve Anderson, Hempfield	Pitt - Greensburg
Nate Antone, Kiski Area	Pitt
Ben Bechtol, Neshannock	Jefferson State CC
Gus Benusa, Riverview	Duquesne
Nick Berger, Pgh Central Catholic	Duquesne
Phil Bondi, Moon	Radford
Jackson Boyd, North Allegheny	Duquesne
Roberto Capriotti, Upper St Clair	Macalester
Ben Carson, California	George Mason
Mike Cima, Penn-Trafford	Seton Hill
Brad Comport, North Allegheny	Seton Hill
Mitch Elliott, Pine-Richland	Xavier
J C Figueirido, Rochester	West Virginia
Chuck Gasti, Carmichaels	Cleveland State
Tim Giel, Shady Side Academy	Columbia
Nick Kendrick, Seneca Valley	George Mason
T J Kuban, Pine-Richland	St Peter's
Joby Lapkowicz, Carmichaels	Slippery Rock
J R Leonardi, Alderdice	Pitt
David McNeil, OLSH	Potomac State
Philip Morrisette, Pine-Richland	Allegheny
Mike Mroz, West Mifflin	Davis & Elkins
Richie Navari, Plum	Duquesne
Willie Nelson, Kiski Area	IUP
Vinny Nittoli, Pine-Richland	Xavier
Matthew Parnes, Seneca Valley	Penn State - Behrend
Mike Pearson, Blackhawk	St Peter's
Matt Pierpont, Canon McMillan	Winthrop
Ben Rawding, Blackhawk	Mercyhurst
Kyle Sasala, Seneca Valley	Seton Hill
Dylan Schwegler, Hopewell	Cleveland State
Tarran Senay, South Park	North Carolina State
Max Vogel, Hopewell	Winthrop
Cory Wagner, Center	Clarion
Jon Wilson, North Allegheny	Maryland
Austin Wulf, Blackhawk	Tennessee Tech
Cory Young, Ringgold	Lafayette

If we've missed anyone please email me ([wpabaseball@hotmail.com](mailto:wpabaseball@hotmail.com)) and let me know.

**New High School Coaches**

**West Penn Baseball Prospects** welcomes the new coaches in the WPIAL this year. The list includes

Ambridge	Scott McGee
Avonworth	Vince Palladini
Carlynton	Jason Sharp
Charleroi	Brian Corrin
East Allegheny	Ryan Encapera
Gateway	Don Nania
Indiana	Mark Marrow
Mohawk	Kevin Sapp
Mount Pleasant	Tom Hudzema
Our Lady of Sacred Heart	Chuck Rutter
Penn Hills	Carl Seidl
Pittsburgh Central Catholic	Frank LaCava
Ringgold	Brett Grandstand
Sewickley Academy	Jexx Varner
Sto-Rox	Jeff Elias
Thomas Jefferson	Rich Krivanek
Uniontown	Scott Hruby
Vincentian Academy	Buddy McKay
West Greene	Justin Allen

To our knowledge, Canon McMillan is the only WPIAL school with a coaching vacancy at this writing.

**Important 2009 Baseball Dates**

<b>May 8</b>	Last play date for WPIAL playoff teams
<b>May 11</b>	WPIAL Playoffs begin
<b>May 26/27</b>	WPIAL Championships (Washington)
<b>June 12</b>	PIAA Championships (Altoona)
<b>June 12</b>	WBCA Awards Banquet
<b>June 13</b>	WBCA/WPBP Underclassmen Showcase
<b>June 14</b>	WBCA All-Star Doubleheader

**Over 600 Local Student-Athletes Playing College or JUCO Baseball**

We have completed our annual survey of college and junior college baseball rosters and found that 619 WPIAL and Pittsburgh City League student-athletes are currently playing baseball at the college and junior college level as compared to 608 in 2008 and 557 in 2007. This confirms that Western Pennsylvania is an increasingly fertile area for college baseball recruiters.

Student-athletes representing 121 different local high schools are playing baseball for 120 colleges and junior colleges. High schools producing the largest number of players by Class are:

**Class AAAA:** Pittsburgh Central Catholic (19), Seneca Valley (19), North Allegheny (16), Shaler (16) and Gateway (14).

**Class AAA:** Blackhawk (15), New Castle (9), West Allegheny (9), Chartiers Valley (8) and Moon (8).

**Class AA:** Riverside (10), Seton LaSalle (8), Burrell (7), Shenango (7), Center (6), Greensburg Central Catholic (6) and South Fayette (6).

**Class A:** Laurel (11), Geibel (4), Rochester (4), Serra (4), Sewickley Academy (4), Springdale (4) and Union (4).

**Pittsburgh City League:** Brashear (5), Carrick (3), Alderice (2) and Perry (2).

A complete listing of the 619 players can be found at the **West Penn Baseball Prospects** website ([www.wpabaseball.com](http://www.wpabaseball.com)). If we have missed anyone, please let us know.

**Videos**

Player videos are a great tool for increasing your visibility to college coaches. Last year, West Penn Baseball Prospects added the capability of including player videos on its website. To get your video on our site you need to either send us a DVD with your video or direct us to a website (such as youtube) from which we can download the video. There is no charge to players to utilize this feature and no charge to colleges to view the videos.

The video does not need to be a fancy production and home-made videos are fine. If you prefer to have someone else shoot the video, Dan Alderson is one option for your consideration. Dan, who is head baseball coach at Chartiers-Houston, will record and edit your footage. The price is \$150, which includes 5 DVDs and sleeves for mailing. Dan will make additional DVD copies for the cost of the DVDs. If you are interested, contact Dan at [dalderson@chartiers-houston.com](mailto:dalderson@chartiers-houston.com) or [alderson7@verizon.net](mailto:alderson7@verizon.net).

**Recruiting – The Visit**

Most of the recruiting advice offered to student-athletes deals with “how to get noticed”, the importance of academics and injecting a sense of realism into the process. This article focuses on what at least one major college coach is looking for when you make a visit to a school. Typically, you think of a visit as the time for the student-athlete to become familiar with a college and their coaches. Coaches, however, are also evaluating you during that visit.

John Cohen, the head baseball coach at Mississippi State, recently gave a talk at the Pennsylvania Baseball Coaches Clinic and discussed a number of aspects of the recruiting process. Included in his talk was the importance he placed on the off-the-field “make up” of a player. He related a story of how he invited a coveted player to visit with the intention of offering him a substantial scholarship and how Coach Cohen changed his mind because of the player’s lack of respect toward his parents during his visit.

Here are some of the things that Coach Cohen looks for when a player visits:

- The ability to look an adult in the eye
- A firm and confident handshake
- The ability to carry on a conversation or communicate with maturity and respect for elders who are in the room, including parents and siblings (if a player doesn’t treat his parents with respect why should I expect them to treat me with respect?)
- Sitting up straight while in the company of adults
- Asking real questions that are not materialistic or about playing time opportunities (a good player assumes he will be a starter and doesn’t question playing time)

Coach Cohen also related the fact that coaches seldom receive a thank you note for the hospilities extended to them during the visit. He said in talking to a number of coaches only several such notes had ever been received among that group out of the hundreds of recruiting visits they had experienced. Sending a thank you will leave a positive impression with a coach and you should strongly consider doing it. It is customary to send a thank you after a job interview and your recruiting visit is very much like a job interview.

**West Penn Baseball Prospects and Social Networking**

The old fogy who runs West Penn Baseball Prospects has been dragged kicking and screaming into the world of social networking. We are cautiously moving into the use of both Twitter and Facebook as a means of communicating information to those who are interested.

Until four months ago I had never heard of Twitter. According to Wikipedia, Twitter is a social networking and micro-blogging service that allows its users to send and read other users' updates (known as tweets), which are text-based posts of up to 140 characters in length. Updates are displayed on the user's profile page and delivered to other users who have signed up to receive them. Beginning immediately, I will be using Twitter to send

**West Penn Baseball Prospects and Social Networking (continued)**

current baseball information (player commitments, playoff scores, other announcements, etc.) to anyone who cares to receive them. If you belong to Twitter and want to receive these “tweets”, our user name is **wpabaseball**. If you become a follower of **wpabaseball** on Twitter you will receive these updates.

I have been aware of Facebook for a much longer time but never saw how I would ever have any need for it. Upon further reflection it does appear that Facebook may be useful in getting out information in a manner somewhat similar to Twitter. I have started a group in Facebook called **West Penn Baseball Prospects**. I will post current information on that group page as well and I think the use of Facebook also can be used to generate interaction among those in the group. So, if you are interested, please take the time to join that group

We will give both these “newfangled” things a try and then determine whether it is worthwhile to continue using them. Any input on the use of Twitter and Facebook is welcomed.

**All-Star Weekend Announced for June 12, 13 and 14**

The WPIAL Baseball Coaches Association (WBCA) All-Star Weekend will be held this year on June 12, 13 and 14.

All-Star Weekend opens on Friday evening, June 12 with an Awards Banquet for the seniors selected to participate in this year’s All-Star doubleheader. Players, Pitchers and Coaches of the Year, as selected by WPIAL coaches, are also honored at the Banquet. This year’s event will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn at Southpointe. Please email me at [wpabaseball@hotmail.com](mailto:wpabaseball@hotmail.com) if you would like more information about the banquet.

The second event of the weekend is the Underclassmen Showcase which is co-sponsored by the WBCA and **West Penn Baseball Prospects**. The Showcase starts at 9 am on June 13 and is being held once again this year at Burkett Field in Robinson Township. The event is restricted to 2010 graduates who are varsity starters. The Showcase is the premier event in Western Pennsylvania for local high school baseball players. Typically, at least 60 colleges and 12-15 professional teams are represented at the Showcase.

The Showcase has sold out every year so if you are interested please register as soon as possible. The cost to register is \$60 if your coach is a member of the WBCA and \$75 if he is not. A registration form can be downloaded from our website ([www.wpabaseball.com](http://www.wpabaseball.com)).

The Weekend concludes on June 14 with the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual All-Star Doubleheader which features Class A vs. Class AA and Class AAA vs. Class AAAA. Seniors are nominated for the event by their high school coaches with the final choices made by a Selection Committee comprised of coaches from each section. The Doubleheader will start at 1:00 pm and is being played at Burkett Field in Robinson Township.

**Colleges Attending the 2008 Showcase**

At least 63 colleges attended last year's showcase despite an all-day rain. Colleges in attendance included:

**Division I**

Akron	Buffalo	Canisius
Cincinnati	Cleveland State	Cornell
Delaware	Duquesne	Gardner Webb
George Mason	Indiana	Kent State
Lafayette	Liberty	Marist
Maryland	Marshall	Miami (OH)
Michigan State	Penn State	Pitt
Rider	Temple	Tennessee Tech
UNC – Asheville	VMI	West Virginia
Winthrop	Wright State	Xavier
Youngstown State		

**Division II**

California (PA)	Fairmont State	IUP
Mercyhurst	Seton Hill	Slippery Rock
Wheeling Jesuit		

**Division III**

Allegheny	Baldwin-Wallace	Bethany
Case Western	Grove City	Guilford
Heidelberg	Juniata	Marietta
Mt Aloysius	Muhlenberg	Muskingum
Ohio Northern	Penn State – Behrend	Piedmont
Pitt – Bradford	St Andrew's	St Vincent's
Thiel	Washington & Jefferson	Wooster

**NAIA**

Point Park

**JUCO**

Mercyhurst NE	PSU-Greater Allegheny	Potomac State
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**We Welcome a New Board Member**

We are pleased to welcome Mike Berger to **West Penn Baseball Prospects'** Board of Directors. Mike is a Major League Scout for the Toronto Blue Jays and the father of Nick Berger, who is a senior at Central Catholic. Mike joins Bryan Hiles, Bill Marsh, Mark Saghy, Ross Vecchio, Dave Villiotti and Tony Villiotti on the Board of Directors.

**UPMC Sports Performance**

The 5 tools of baseball hitting for power, hitting for percentage, throw velocity, speed and fielding. Excellences in the use of these tools are the areas that pro scouts and college coaches are looking for as everyone knows. The beginning of the season should not be the height of fitness for the player. The beginning of each season should mark the start of a progressive development of the player's performance. Spring baseball season in Western Pennsylvania can be grueling with extremes in weather, multiple make-up games in days, and less than perfect field conditions. Despite some less than favorable conditions, baseball players from this area can and have excelled. With baseball searches for players having become a highly competitive world-wide market, players need to be constantly advancing their skills and athletic abilities.

The performance in the baseball game takes precedence over practice at this time of the year (after all that is what the player has been training to do.) However, other areas of development can not be ignored in order to really progress or excel. Areas such as strength, flexibility, balance, speed and endurance need to be your foundation throughout the season in order to excel in your performance and prevent injury. To further complicate matters, training in baseball needs to be position specific since the physical demands on the player are different at each position. For example, a catcher must maintain his squat for warming up the pitcher, the inning, and pop out of that squat to throw as fast and accurately as he can to second base at any given time. Whereas an outfielder warms-up his arm, then has little movement for a good portion of the inning waiting for the play to come his way. When the ball comes towards the outfielder, he now must sprint into position to catch the ball and throw the ball a considerable distance quickly and accurately to the cutoff or baseman with an arm that is cooling off. The specific characteristics of each position are not going to change but how you prepare and recover can make a huge difference in your overall performance. You must learn to be an active participant in your preparation and performance. **We can teach you how to prepare and perform better!**

At the UPMC Sports Performance centers, we are preparing our athletes for the upcoming season. For some of the athletes, it means being ready to perform their best at a tryout. **"We can help you prepare for tryouts."** For others, it's getting ready for games and the long extended seasons. **"We can help you prepare for the season."** We take into consideration the amount of throwing you are doing and other stresses that accompany the beginning and length of your season. As part of our arm maintenance program, you learn how to strengthen muscles of the shoulder and forearm through a series of "baseball specific" exercises. You'll learn specific exercises with slight adaptations to aid your recover from a tired arm. You will strengthen areas of your body that players commonly report as hindering their performance. You can develop the proper movements and skills to succeed.

You can call, click or visit the UPMC Sports Performance center for your baseball specific screening. This personalized screening is extremely beneficial for players, parents and coaches. You can work on and monitor yourself throughout the season, so that each player, parent or coach can take preventative action against overuse and

## UPMC Sports Performance (continued)

overtraining which will greatly effect performance and predispose the player to a greater chance of injury.

*Real progress and performance excellence in baseball is achievable through proper and lasting preparation. A baseball specific screening at the UPMC Sports Performance center and a manageable training program that addresses individual needs can make a huge difference!*

For more information call Colleen Rosensteel @ (724) 444-8850, click [rosensteelc@upmc.edu](mailto:rosensteelc@upmc.edu) or visit the UPMC Sports Performance center north 1035 Executive Dr. - Gibsonia, PA

For special session and program rates for UPMC Sports Performance only offered through the West Penn Baseball Prospects, please contact Colleen at [rosensteelc@upmc.edu](mailto:rosensteelc@upmc.edu)<<mailto:rosensteelc@upmc.edu>> promotion code: spnwpb309. Offer expires April 30, 2009.

## Using West Penn Baseball Prospects

College baseball recruiting is far different from football and basketball recruiting. As a non-revenue producing sport for most colleges, college baseball programs typically have limited recruiting budgets. While players like Neil Walker get noticed at national showcases and can sit back and wait for offers, the typical high school player who wants to play college baseball must take the initiative to get on the “radar screen”.

The typical player must market himself by writing to colleges, providing videos, attending showcases, etc. **West Penn Baseball Prospects** is a unique resource you should also be using to help get noticed. This resource should be used in combination with all your other marketing activities. We know that college coaches do read our prospect information and we get emails and phone calls from coaches asking about players or whether there are any local prospects to fill their position needs.

So how do you use **West Penn Baseball Prospects**? The most significant thing you can do is to continually update the information shown in our data base. College coaches love “measurables”. If you grow, tell us about it. If you had a good performance at a showcase, tell us about it. When you get your SAT scores, tell us about it. In short, give us all the information that you would like a college to know about you. (By the way, I can’t overemphasize the importance of academic information. Good or bad, give us the information so the “right schools” can be looking at you.)

Another way to use **West Penn Baseball Prospects** to your advantage is to post a video on the site. This was already discussed on page 3 so I will not repeat myself but this is a great way to get college coaches to become familiar with you.

**West Penn Baseball Prospects** is not the total answer for you, but it is one piece of the puzzle.

**Want to be listed in our player database?**

Visit our website at [www.wpabaseball.com](http://www.wpabaseball.com) and visit our “players” page. From there you can submit information about yourself through an on-line form.

**Contact Info**

WEST PENN BASEBALL PROSPECTS is published by West Penn Baseball Prospects, Inc. Correspondence should be directed to Tony Villiotti at [wpabaseball@hotmail.com](mailto:wpabaseball@hotmail.com) or 63 Stancey Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15220. Also feel free to call Tony at 412-429-0546.

**Website**

WEST PENN BASEBALL PROSPECTS’ website address is [www.wpabaseball.com](http://www.wpabaseball.com). Please visit the website and tell us what you think. Back issues can be downloaded from the website.

**Donations**

West Penn Baseball Prospects, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) corporation and donations are tax deductible. All donations are used to pay ongoing operating costs (which does not include compensation of any sort) and are much appreciated. Donations can be made by a check payable to West Penn Baseball Prospects, Inc.

**Thanks to our sponsors**

As always, we would like to extend our thanks to our principal sponsors:

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**UPMC/Centers for Rehab Services**

**WPIAL Baseball Coaches Association**

