



LINE DRIVES
THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE BASEBALL
WRITERS NEWSLETTER
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The President's Message

By NCBWA President Michael "Mex" Carey

Membership:

It's hard to believe that the baseball season is nearing conference tournament time. The season has been a great one so far and things are sure to get more exciting as we get closer to conference tournaments, the NCAA Regionals and the College World Series.

A young Georgetown team in the Nation's Capitol has struggled with some injuries, but the battle for supremacy in the BIG EAST, like many other conferences across the country, are still up for debate.

At the same time, our heartfelt condolences go out to everyone at Virginia Tech after the senseless tragedy that unfolded on the Blacksburg campus recently. I was not the only one, I'm sure, who was horrified by the images and though immediately of our friends who work on the campus. Pete Hughes, one of the great coaches in college baseball who I got to know when he was at Boston College and I worked at St. John's, said it right after the Hokies' 11-9 loss to Miami in the team's first game after the tragedy. "We won before we got to the field today. The scoreboard was insignificant."

The board members of the National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association are in the process of selecting names for yearly awards. Last week, the final list for the Stopper of the Year Award will be announced and right behind that, we will have announcements for All-American nominees. Don't forget the first ballot for All-America voting deadline is 5 p.m. (EDT) Wednesday, Apr. 25, and the initial 64-person Watch List for the Dick Howser Trophy is set for Thursday, Apr. 26.

Thanks for your support, and please remind those interested that they can go to www.NCBWA.com for joining information or can contact Bo Carter (bcarter@footballoundation.com), Russ Anderson (rdanderson@c-usa.org); or Mike Montoro (Michael.montoro@usm.edu).

Reminder to vote and observe those deadlines, and happy diamond play!

Mike "Mex" Carey
NCBWA President
Sports Information Director, Georgetown University

2007 Midseason Stopper of the Year Watch List Denoted

Thirty-five players have been named to the watch list for the third annual National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association Stopper of the Year Award. The award is given to the top relief pitcher in Division I college baseball.

Forty players have been named to the midseason watch list for the second annual National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association Stopper of the Year Award, the association announced Thursday. The award will be given to the top relief pitcher in Division I college baseball.

Of the 40 pitchers who make up the midseason watch list, nine have already reached double figures in saves, including VMI's Kevin Crum, who leads the country with 14 saves in 18 appearances this season. Sam Houston State's Luke Prihoda and USC's Paul Koss have already collected 12 saves apiece to rank second nationally, while seven other pitchers have at least 10 saves.

The 40 pitchers on the mid-season watch list have combined to save over 300 games during the first half of the 2007 season (thru games of April 15) and have converted 89 percent of their save chances as a group. Prihoda, Richmond's Brian Alas and UC Irvine's Blair Erickson are all perfect on the 2007 season in save chances while recording at least 10 saves. Erickson already earned a spot in the NCAA record books earlier this month, breaking the previous mark of 49 career saves set by USC's Jack Krawczyk's in the late 1990s.

The list features players from 20 conferences, including five each from the Atlantic Coast Conference and the Big 12. The Pacific-10 and Conference USA also have four closers on the list, while the Atlantic Sun, Big South, Mid-American, Missouri Valley and Sun Belt Conference all had multiple members of the watch list.

"This is a truly outstanding group of pitchers that cover the landscape of college baseball," said NCBWA 1st Vice-President Shamus McKnight, Assistant Media Relations Director at the University of Nebraska. "The recognition for this award over the last two years has grown immensely as we have seen the increased emphasis on having strong relief pitching in the college game."

Nominations were made by each school's baseball sports information contact and over 80 pitchers were nominated from around the country. A preliminary preseason watch list was released in February. At the end of the regular season, the Division I leader in saves and four other relief pitching standouts will be selected as the award's finalists. These finalists will be released on Wednesday, May 30, just prior to the beginning of NCAA regional play.

From the list of finalists, the NCBWA's All-America Committee will select a winner. The third annual winner will be announced on Wednesday, June 6, two days prior to the beginning of NCAA super regional action. Last year's winner was Don Czyz from Kansas. J. Brent Cox of Texas won the inaugural award in 2005.

The NCBWA, founded in 1962, presents the Dick Howser Trophy to the nation's top player. It also selects a Division I All-America Team, Division I and III Players of the Week, Division I District Players of the Year and Division III Players of the Year.

For more information on the NCBWA Stopper of the Year, contact Shamus McKnight at the University of Nebraska at 402-472-7772.

NCBWA Stopper of the Year Midseason Watch List

Pitcher, School

Daniel Schlereth, Arizona
Kyle Heyne, Ball State
Nick Cassavechia, Baylor
Matt Gorgen, California
David Anderson, Coastal Carolina
Andy Masten, Creighton
Michael Seander, Duke
Shane Mathews, East Carolina
Matt Brinkmann, Evansville
Daniel Edwards, Kansas State
David Mixon, Louisiana-Monroe
Cory Gearrin, Mercer
JD Melton, Navy
Eryk McConnell, NC State
Andrew Carignan, North Carolina
Matt German, Northern Illinois
Garrett Richards, Oklahoma
Chance Chapman, Oral Roberts
Jason Dominguez, Pepperdine
Brian Alas, Richmond

James Hayes, Rider
Luke Prihoda, Sam Houston State
Shawn Sanford, South Florida
Patrick Ezell, Southern Miss
Robbie Elsemiller, Stetson
Sam Demel, TCU
Randy Boone, Texas
Kyle Nicholson, Texas A&M
Link Saunders, The Citadel
Josh Dew, Troy
Daniel Latham, Tulane
Blair Erickson, UC Irvine
Paul Koss, Southern California
Casey Weathers, Vanderbilt
Casey Lambert, Virginia
Luke Pisker, Virginia Commonwealth
Kevin Crum, VMI
Josh Ellis, Wake Forest
Nick Hagadone, Washington
Noah Krol, Wichita State

2007 Pro-Line Athletic NCBWA Division I Players of the Week

Feb. 13: Pedro Alvarez, Vanderbilt (Hitter); Spencer Steedley, Charlotte (Pitcher)
Feb. 20: Jericho Jones, Louisiana Tech (Hitter); James Simmons, UC Riverside (Pitcher)
Feb. 27: Mike Bianucci, Auburn (Hitter); Brian Matusz, San Diego (Pitcher)
March 6: David Doss, South Alabama (Hitter); Sean Urena, Cal State Fullerton (Pitcher)
March 13: Justin Bour, George Mason (Hitter); David Price, Vanderbilt (Pitcher)
March 20: Corey Brown, Oklahoma State (Hitter); Lance Lynn, Ole Miss (Pitcher)
March 27: Matt LaPorta, Florida (Hitter); Eric Rohr, Saint Louis (Pitcher)
April 3: Tony Thomas, Florida State (Hitter); Trey Barham, VMI (Pitcher)
Apr. 10: Travis Jones, South Carolina (Hitter); Rick Zagone, Missouri; Ryan Berry, Rice (co-Pitchers)
Apr. 17: Kellen Kulbacki, James Madison (Hitter); Brad Brach, Monmouth (Pitcher)

2007 Coleman Johnny Bench Award Watch List Revealed

The Greater Wichita Area Sports Commission has announced the official watch list for the **2007 Coleman Company-Johnny Bench Award** delivered by AT&T. Twenty-seven catchers from seventeen conferences were nominated for the award by their coaches. Because the award is given annually to the top division one collegiate catcher, the list will be updated to include other candidates until May 7, 2007.

The watch list will be narrowed down to 10 semifinalists, who will be announced May 17, 2007. A comprehensive biography will be created on each of the semi-finalists and sent to the national voting panel at the end of May for a vote to determine the three finalists. The finalists will be announced May 30, 2007 prior to the NCAA Regionals and Major League Baseball Draft. A final vote among the national committee will occur during the College World Series. All finalists will be brought to Wichita and the winner will be announced at the 10th Annual Greater Wichita Sports Banquet on June 27, 2007.

2007 Coleman Company-Johnny Bench Award delivered by AT&T Watch List

Buck Afenir, So., Kansas; Derrick Alfonso, Jr., Louisville; Billy Alvino, So., High Point; Michael Ambort, Jr., Lamar; JP Arencibia, Jr., Tennessee; Jonathan Batts, Sr., UNC Wilmington; Mitch Canham, Jr., Oregon State; Donald Cheney, Sr., Morehead State; Joel Collins, Jr., South Alabama; Sean Dovel, Jr., Loyola Marymount; Edward Easley, Jr., Mississippi State; Eric Fryer, Jr., Ohio

State; Stephen Herzog, Sr., Charleston Southern; Tom Hill, Jr., Albany; Robert Lara, So., LSU; Blake Murphy, Jr., Western Carolina; Dusty Napoleon, Jr., Iowa; Jon Norfolk, Sr., San Francisco; Petey Paramore, So., Arizona State; Buster Posey, So., Florida State; Rich Prall, Sr., LaSalle; Shea Robin, Jr., Vanderbilt; Matt Smith, Jr., Texas Tech; Josh Thompson, Sr., Mercer; Andrew Walker, Jr., TCU; Tyler Weber, Jr., Wichita State; Matt Wieters, Jr., Georgia Tech.

**Canadian Diamondmen Prominent in 2006 – All-Canada Team;
NCBWA Member Bob Elliott Looking for 2007 Student-Athletes**

Bob Elliott, of the Toronto Sun, is continuing to track Canadians playing south of the border (729 in the spring of 2006). As in other years Elliott is pestering us once again for any Canadians who are new to your school, either freshmen or transfers or those who do not appear on his In College list. He can be reached at bob.elliott@sunmedia.ca

The In College master list:

http://slam.canoe.ca/Slam/Baseball/Canada/college_canadians.html

**The Seventh Annual 2006 All-Canadian Collegiate Team
By Bob Elliott (NCBWA) -- For SLAM! Sports**

€Rightfielder Jonathan Baksh, of the Florida Tech Panthers, was Sunshine State Conference Player of the Year in 2005.

And now he tops all Canadians by gaining the most first-place votes on the seventh annual 2006 SLAM! All-Canadian team. Baksh (junior, Mississauga, Ont.) received 40 first-place votes., tops among the 727 Canadians playing south of the border.

Baksh had three more first-place votes than 3B Mike Gosse (sophomore, Pitt Meadows, BC) and five more than 1B Kevin Atkinson (freshman, Surrey, BC), both of the New Mexico Highlands Thunderbirds. For Baksh the 2006 season was a dream season as he:

- Won the conference batting title with a .469 average, earned First Team All-Sunshine State Conference honors

- First Team All South Region and Division II Rawlings/American Coaches Association Second Team All-America

- In June, the Toronto Blue Jays selected the former Ontario Blue Jays outfielder in the seventh round. Kevin Briand, Canadian director of scouting for the Jays, gave Baksh a signing bonus of \$122,500 (U.S. dollars).

Baksh goes into the books with our previous top vote getters - 1B Karl Amonite (Woodslee, Ont.), of the Auburn Tigers, in 2005. OF Charlie MacFarlane (Lantzville, BC), of the Cumberland Bulldogs, in 2004. C Aaron McRae (Delta, BC), of the LSU-Shreveport Pilots in 2003.

OF Ryan Kenning (North Vancouver, BC), of the New Mexico State Aggies and RP Jesse Crain (Toronto, Ont.), of the Houston Cougars, who shared top honors in 2002. LHP Jeff Francis (North Delta, BC), of the British Columbia Thunderbirds, in 2001. OF Ben Emond (Farnham, Que.), of the Texas Longhorns, in 2000, our inaugural year.

Our first-team features six members from British Columbia, five from Ontario and two from Quebec. Our first, second and third teams combined include 16 players from BC, 15 from Ontario, three from Alberta and one each from Prince Edward Island and Manitoba.

Altogether, including honourable mentions, we have 66 from Ontario, four up from 2005, 40 from BC, 12 from Alberta and seven from Quebec. We had four from Manitoba, three from Saskatchewan two from PEI and one from Nova Scotia. Eight of 10 provinces had representation.

First Team

Left-Handed starter: Shawn Schaefer (sophomore, Pitt Meadows, BC), of the British Columbia Thunderbirds.

Right-handed starter: Dustin Ottens (junior, Maple Ridge, BC), of the Dakota State Trojans.

Reliever: Rob Nalutka (senior, Langley, BC), of the Armstrong Atlantic Pirates.

Catcher: Patrick D'Aoust (sophomore, Riviere Beaudette, Que.), of the Cowley Tigers.

First base: Kevin Atkinson (freshman, Surrey, BC), of the New Mexico Thunderbirds.

Second baseman: Kevin Mailloux (sophomore, Windsor Ont.), of the Kellogg Bruins.

Third base: Mike Gosse (sophomore, Pitt Meadows, BC), of the New Mexico Thunderbirds.

Shortstop: Steve Condotta (junior, Mississauga, Ont.), of the Florida Tech Panthers.
Outfield (tie): Jonathan Baksh (junior, Mississauga, Ont.), of the Florida Tech Panthers; Tim Smith (sophomore, Toronto, Ont.), of the Midland Chaparrals; Chris Emanuele (senior, Mississauga, Ont.), the Northeastern Huskies and Nicolas Boisvert (junior, Laval, Que.), of the Lynn Fighting Knights.

DH: Steve Bell-Irving (junior, Vancouver, BC), of the British Columbia Thunderbirds.

Second Team

Left-hander: Graham Campbell (sophomore, Victoria, BC), of the Jamestown Jimmies.

Right-hander: Chris Kissock (sophomore, Fruitvale, BC), of the Lewis-Clark State Warriors.

Reliever: Chris Toneguzzi (junior, Thunder Bay, Ont.), of the Purdue Boilermakers.

Catcher: Rich Russell (senior, Toronto, Ont.), of the Marshall Thundering Herd.

First base: Jordan Lennerton (sophomore, Langley, BC), of the El Paso Tejanos.

Second base: Jared Schweitzer (junior, Sherwood Park, Alta.) of the Kansas Jayhawks.

Third base: Devery Van De Keere (junior, Barrhead, Alta.), of the Louisiana-Lafayette Ragin Cajuns.

Shortstop (tie): David Cooper (sophomore, Edmonton, Alta.), of the Mount Olive Trojans and Mike Ambrose (senior, St. Thomas, Ont.), of the Charlotte '49ers.

Outfielders: Brad McElroy (sophomore, London Ont.), of the Kellog Bruins; Tyler Williams (senior, Vancouver, BC); of the LSU-Shreveport Pilots; Mike Alati (Woodbridge, Ont.), of the Niagara Purple Eagles.

DH: Matt McGraw (junior, Burlington, Ont.), of the Maine Black Bears.

Third Team

Left-hander: Jon Hesketh (sophomore, Langley, BC), of the Vernon Chaparrals.

Right-hander (tie): Mike Damchuk (junior, Sarnia, Ont.), of the Spalding Pelicans and RHP Doug Grant (junior, Vancouver, BC), of the British Columbia Thunderbirds.

Reliever: Andrew LaFleur (sophomore, Ancaster, Ont.), of the British Columbia Thunderbirds.

Catcher: Joel Collins (sophomore, Richmond Hill, Ont.), of the South Alabama Jaguars.

First base: Jimmy Van Ostrand (senior, North Delta BC), of the Cal Poly San Luis Obispo Mustangs.

Second base: Justin Randall (junior, Sarnia, Ont.), of the Ashland Eagles.

Third base: Rob Webster (senior, Langley, BC), of the Lyon Scots.

Shortstop: Marcel Champagnie (freshman, Bolton, Ont.), of the Kaskaskia Blue Devils.

Outfield: Connor Janes (junior, Vancouver, BC), of the UBC Thunderbirds; Temple Macdonald (sophomore, Charlottetown, PEI), of the Campbellsville Tigers; and Rene Tosoni (sophomore, Port Coquitlam BC), of the Chipola Indians.

DH (tie): Lee Darracott (freshman, Winnipeg, Man.), of the Vernon Chaparrals and Dale Marsden (senior, Sarnia, Ont.), of the Saginaw Valley State Cardinals.

Honorable Mention

Left-handed starters: Chris Lemay (freshman, Winnipeg, Man.), of the New Mexico Thunderbirds; Jason Ermers (sophomore, Welland, Ont.), of the Burlington Barons; Jeff Tobin (senior, Pickering, Ont.), of the UBC Thunderbirds; Mike Radanovic (senior, Surrey, BC), of the Niagara Purple Eagles; Kai Tuomi (junior, Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.), of the Evansville Purple Aces; Drew Taylor (senior, Toronto, Ont.), of the Michigan Wolverines; Scott Diamond (sophomore, Guelph, Ont.), of the Binghamton Bearcats; Fraser Robinson (junior, North Gower, Ont.), of the Northwestern State Demons.

Right-handed starters: Mike Damchuk (junior, Sarnia, Ont.), of the Spalding Pelicans; Derek McDaid (senior, Barrie, Ont.), of the Charlotte '49ers; Kris Dabrowiecki (sophomore, Toronto, Ont.), of the Northeastern Huskies; Brent Zarney (junior, Winnipeg, Man.), of the Indianapolis Greyhounds; Brad Cuthbertson (sophomore, Sherwood Park, Alta.), of the Midland Chaparrals; RHP Josh Sawatzky (junior, Altona, Man.), of Niagara; Mickey Campeanu (freshman, Mississauga, Ont.), of the Chattanooga State Tigers; David Carey (sophomore, Blenheim, Ont.), of the Kellog Bruins; Hiarali Garcia (sophomore, Windsor, Ont.), of the Eastern Oklahoma Mountaineers; Aaron

Cotter (junior, South Slokan BC), of the Arkansas Monticello Boll Weevils; Brock Kjeldgaard (sophomore, London, Ont.), of the Indian Hills Falcons; Craig Talbot (senior, Victoria, BC), of the Jamestown Jimmies; Karl Mejlholm (junior, Nanaimo, BC), of the Cumberland Bulldogs; Trystan Magnuson (junior, Vancouver, BC), of the Louisville Cardinals; Jordan Tieg (freshman, Woodstock, Ont.), of the Sauk Valley Skyhawks; Josh Brink (freshman, Abbotsford, BC), of the Western Nevada Wildcats.

Relievers: Denver Wynn (freshman, Kamloops, BC), of the New Mexico Thunderbirds; Jeff Duda (junior, Surrey, BC), of the Lewis-Clark State Warriors; Felice Cammisuli (freshman, Newcastle, Ont.), of the Cerro Coso Coyotes; Scott Robinson (senior, Ajax, Ont.), of the Maine Black Bears; Andrew Albers (sophomore, North Battleford, Sask.), of the Kentucky Wildcats; Brad Hay (junior, Stoney Creek, Ont.), of the Lander Bearcats; Dave Morari (freshman, Saskatoon, Sask.), of the Dickinson State Blue Hawks; John Mariotti (junior, Toronto, Ont.), of the Coastal Carolina Chanticleers; Joey Benda (junior, West Vancouver, BC), of the UBC Thunderbirds; Chadwick Cameron (junior, Toronto, Ont.), of the Tennessee-Martin Skyhawks; Dustin Turner (junior, St. Catharines, Ont.), of the Arkansas-Little Rock Trojans; Matt Jones (freshman, Surrey, BC), of the New Mexico Thunderbirds.

Catchers: Nick Tillsley (sophomore, Fort Macleod, Alta.), of the Arkansas-Monticello; Lars Davis (sophomore, Grand Prairie, Alta.), of the Illinois Fighting Illini; Ryan Maedel (junior, Essex, Ont.), of the Southern Wesleyan Warriors; Jeff Vickers (sophomore, Nanaimo, BC), of the Southern Idaho Eagles; Sean Hotzak (junior, North Vancouver, BC), of the Armstrong Atlantic State Pirates; Darren Meloche (senior, Edmonton, Alta.), of the Olivet Nazarene Tigers; C Rollin Matsui (junior, Thornhill, Ont.) of the Walsh Cavaliers.

First basemen: Eric Wolfe (senior, Willowdale, Ont.), of the Purdue Boilermakers; Brock Kjeldgaard (sophomore, London, Ont.), of Indian Hills; Jason Gotwalt (sophomore, Mississauga, Ont.), of the Salem International Tigers; Christian Winstanley (sophomore, Victoria, BC), of the Central Arizona Vaqueros; Johnny Yiu (senior, Surrey, BC), of the UBC Thunderbirds; Brian Brown (senior, Guelph, Ont.), of the Missouri Valley Vikings; Mitch MacDonald (freshman, Regina, Sask.), of the Monterey Peninsula Lobos.

Second basemen: Jason Chatwood (freshman, Innisfail, Alta.), of the Colby Trojans; Tyler Johnstone (senior, Brampton, Ont.), of the Auburn Tigers; Dustin Bissonette (senior, Prince George, BC), of the LSU-Shreveport Pilots; Mark Capone (senior, Etobicoke, Ont.), of the UBC Thunderbirds; A.J. Reed (junior, London, Ont.), of the North Alabama Lions; Devon Franklin (junior, Surrey, BC), of the Wisconsin-Parkside Rangers; Daniel Rieder (junior, Chilliwack, BC), of the Texas-Arlington Mavericks; Garrett Fitzgerald, (senior, Peterborough, Ont.), of Salem International; Brad McConnachie (junior, Ajax, Ont.), of the Ohio Valley Fighting Scots; Tyler Belanger (senior, Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.), of the Graceland Yellow Jackets.

Third basemen: Jeff Cowan (freshman, Scarborough, Ont.), of the High Point Panthers; Tyler Hughes (senior, Brampton, Ont.), of the UBC Thunderbirds; Brian Briscoe (senior, North Vancouver, BC), of the Peru State Bobcats; Nigel Andison (junior, Thetis Island, BC), of the Mayville State Comets.

Shortstop: Taylor Green (sophomore, Courtenay, BC), of the Cypress Chargers; Andrew MacNevin (senior St. Catharines, PEI) of Niagara; Matt Calcagni (junior, Brampton, Ont.), of the Graceland; Josue Peley (freshman, Montreal, Que.), of the Seminole State Trojans; Davey Wallace (senior, Toronto, Ont.), of the UBC Thunderbirds; Jean-Michel Rochon-Salvas (sophomore, Longueuil, Que.), of the Georgia State Panthers; Jason Chapieski (senior, Windsor, Ont.), of the Wayne State Warriors; Mark Charrette (sophomore, Ottawa, Ont.), of the Shorter Hawks.

Outfielders: Chris Head (sophomore, River Ryan, NS), of the Ulster Senators; Marc Noble (junior, Vancouver, BC), of Armstrong Atlantic; Kern Watts (junior, Brampton, Ont.), of Evansville; Ken Fuglerud (sophomore, Lethbridge, Alta.), of Southern Idaho; Phil Carey (freshman, London, Ont.),

of the Winthrop Eagles; Adam Campbell (senior, Surrey, BC), of the UBC_Thunderbirds; Jean-Philippe LaPointe (sophomore, Montreal, Que.), of the Bellevue Bruins; Mike Roeder (sophomore, Waterloo, Ont.), of the Kaskaskia Blue Devils; Skyler Stromsmoe (junior, Etzikom, Alta.), of the Southern Arkansas Muleriders; Cole Armstrong (senior, Swift Current, Sask.), of the Central Missouri Mules; Tyler Willson (junior, Surrey, BC), of the UBC_Thunderbirds; Adam Kerr (junior, Brampton, Ont.), of Graceland; Stevie Lewis (sophomore, Markham, Ont.), of Midland; Jonathan Prevost (freshman, Vaudreuil-Dorion, Que.), of Seminole State; Douglas Toro (sophomore, Longueuil, Que.), of the Crowder Roughriders; Steve Baldinelli (sophomore, Niagara Falls, Ont.), of the Mercyhurst North East Saints; Andrew Karkoulas (senior, Guelph, Ont.), of the New York Tech Bears; Colin Moro (junior, Calgary, Alta.), of LSU-Shreveport; Kip Keith (senior, Waterdown, Ont.), of the Oklahoma Baptist Bison; Eric Cassidy (senior, Windsor, Ont.), of the Concordia-Michigan Cardinals .

DH: Mathieu Coulter (freshman, London, Ont.), of the Spring Arbor Cougars; Cameron White (freshman, Grand Prairie, Alta.), of Cerro Coso; Justin Louis (junior, Hobbema, Alta.), of the Cal State Stanislaus Warriors; Evan Romanchuck (sophomore, Vancouver, BC), of the Arkansas Tech Wonder Boys.

Bluffton baseball team tragedy

Two funds have been established for Bluffton baseball team student-athletes involved in a charter bus accident on Friday, March 2, in Atlanta, Ga. The bus was on its way to Florida for the team's first games of the 2007 season. Five student-athletes, Zachary Arend (Oakwood, Ohio), David Betts (Bryan, Ohio), Scott Harmon (Lima, Ohio), Cody Holp (Arcanum, Ohio), Tyler Williams (Lima, Ohio) and the bus driver, Jerome Niemeyer, and his wife, Jean Niemeyer, both of Columbus Grove, Ohio, were killed in the accident.

To provide support for the student athletes:

A fund has been established at Citizens National Bank for the Bluffton University baseball team student-athletes. Contributions can be made by check payable to Bluffton University and mailed to Citizens National Bank, 102 S. Main Street, Bluffton, Ohio 45817. Please note "Baseball Team" in the check's memo line. Credit card contributions can be made by calling 419-358-3324 during the university's business hours. Funds will be available to the baseball players involved in the accident and their families.

To establish a lasting memorial:

A Bluffton University fund has also been established to create a lasting campus memorial. Contributions can be made by check payable to Bluffton University and mailed to 1 University Drive, Bluffton, Ohio 45817-2104. Please note "Baseball Team Memorial" in the check's memo line. Credit card contributions can be made online or by phoning the university advancement office at 419-358-3240. If giving online, please select the option "other" for the designation and type in "baseball memorial."

Texas A&M International Shines in Inaugural Season

Texas A&M International baseball is off to an impressive 27-11-1 start in its inaugural season of competition.

The Dustdevils had a seven-game winning streak and skein of 11 wins in 12 games from mid-March to early April. The Dustdevils posted a 8-7 record against Heartland Conference opponents to begin the year, and this included a 2-1 series win over then-No. 19 St. Edward's. TAMIU also swept Texas A&M-Kingsville in the season series 2-0.

Former University of Pittsburgh and Point Park College head coach Mark Jackson paced TAMIU to this solid start. Jackson posted a 183-143-3 in seven seasons as head coach at Pitt from 1991-97. He directed a dramatic turnaround of a moribund program by guiding the Panthers to a Big East regular season championship in 1994 and a conference tournament title in 1995.

The 1995 Panthers made the first (and only) NCAA postseason appearance in school history, North Carolina Central is in the process of moving to NCAA Division I. The school had to add a varsity men's sport. The administration decided to bring back baseball last February, and it chose White to build the program. The Eagles will play a Division II schedule this season, then an independent Division I schedule in 2008. White ultimately hopes the program can re-join the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference, where NCCU was a charter member.

White coached for two decades (1980-2000) as St. Augustine's College in nearby Raleigh, N.C. There, he amassed more than 320 wins and managed St. Augustine's to eight CIAA regular-season titles and five tournament titles.

"When I came in, I knew the area pretty well," said White about his recruiting process. "I really wasn't at a disadvantage. The biggest challenge was finding guys who wanted to commit to a new program."

He did find the guys, 22 of them to be exact: 16 freshmen and six transfers. Players like Oliver Jenkins, Gene Suarez and Mike Cook were already on campus. But the bulk of the team was brought in from elsewhere. The next challenge was, as White puts it, getting the freshmen to understand the college game. He said getting his players to pick up on the mental aspect of playing baseball was the toughest part.

"When we started putting in plays defensively," said White, "they were totally unaware. The learning curve has been slow. Most of our errors have been mental errors."

NCCU started 2007 with a 2-8 record and its first victory coming in its third game - a 7-4 home win over Benedict in the first game of a doubleheader on Feb. 10. The Eagles added their second win on Feb 18 with a 18-9 thumping of Morehouse College.

Jenkins is the team's leading hitter in the early going, and White is counting on him to be a team leader along with Marcus Fuller. Fuller, a junior college transfer, is not playing this season, but his previous college experience is helping him serve as a sort of assistant coach while the rest of the players get their feet wet.

White knows that his team is likely to take its share of beatings this season, but he's okay with that. Being a coach for so many years -- he also was a successful basketball coach at the high school and college levels -- he understands the learning process that some teams must endure. That will be especially true for his inaugural group of Eagles baseball players. On top of that, White expects that teams will play NCCU a little harder because of his reputation as a winning coach. Still, he expects success to come sooner rather than later.

"Right now, I just want to be competitive every time we go on the field," said White. "My timetable is when the young men begin their junior year. My goal is to just put the lineup card on the wall and say, 'Guys, let's go play ball.'"

"By the time they're juniors all that (mental errors) will be behind us. One day, I want them to look back on this (year) and laugh."

For this season, and possibly the next, the Eagles have the luxury of playing in one of the nicest ballparks among historically black colleges. Durham Bulls Athletic Park is home of the Tampa Bay Devil Rays Class AAA affiliate. The Eagles will remain there until their permanent home at historic Durham Athletic Park, the former home of the Durham Bulls and site of the Kevin Costner movie "Bull Durham," is refurbished.

NCCU's refurbished baseball program, meanwhile, looks as if it is headed in the right direction, with many more "holidays" ahead.

"I've been happy with the fan support, the administrative support, everything," said White. "It's been way beyond our expectations."

Alabama's NCBWA All-America Salem Closing Career on High Note
By Will Barry, The Crimson White; SOURCE: U.of Alabama

Alabama senior centerfielder Emeel Salem is focused - whether it's on the next pitch, practice, game, test or class.

This can be especially challenging if you are named to the 2007 College Baseball Foundation, Rivals and NCBWA Preseason All-America teams. Salem also was selected for the 2007 Brooks Wallace Award and Dick Howser Trophy watch list.

Despite all the recognition that he receives, he said he keeps focused on team goals and how he can improve for this season. He has been a team player while setting a school record for career stolen bases in '07 while eclipsing a 24-year-old 'Bama standard.

"It really is an honor to be on all these lists," Salem said. "It's a team thing, and team accomplishments are so much more satisfying than anything individual."

The 6-foot, 180-pound lefty who hit 32 RBIs and had 101 hits in 2006 does not only excel on the baseball diamond. He is also on the verge of leaving Alabama as one of the school's most successful student-athletes. Salem holds a 3.9 GPA in management and Spanish and has been on the SEC Academic Honor Roll for the last three seasons.

"I really do take pride in my grades," Salem said. "When a lot of guys go out and everything, I'm in the library studying. So, I definitely make the sacrifices."

Looking ahead would be hard for some people with his kind of resume, but Salem is worried about how to make Alabama a better team for the 2007 season.

"You just have to take every day as it comes and focus in on this moment. In baseball, you really can't really look ahead or behind because that will mess up the present," Salem said.

Emeel is not the only Salem to excel on the baseball diamond. His father, Emeel Salem, Sr., was drafted in the 10th round by the Chicago Cubs out of high school but decided to play at South Alabama for coach Eddie Stanky.

"He's always been able to guide me through all this, and he knew that education would be important to me," Salem said. "He's been great, you know, because he's there and he understands what I'm going through. And it's really great to have a resource like that."

Emeel is not the only one in his family to wear crimson and white for Alabama as well. He is related to a long list of football players at Alabama, including Ed Salem (HB, 1947-50), George Salem Sr. (HB, 1956), George Salem Jr. (OL, 1986) and Jimbo Salem (LB, 1988).

Salem said he is glad to have been able to carry on the Alabama family tradition and hopes that it will continue.

"Hopefully, my kids or one of our kids will carry it on past us," Salem said. "It's been great. I'm so glad that I made this decision to come here."

Besides excelling on the diamond and in the classroom, Salem takes time out to give back to the community. In 2006, Salem was named to the Southeastern Conference Good Works Team and continues to make giving back to the community one of his top priorities.

"I feel like with where I am in life I have a responsibility to give back to people. I've been like that my whole life, and I've always just loved to be able to aspire and influence kids," Salem said.

When his career at Alabama is over, Salem would love to continue his baseball career.

"I'd love to be playing baseball -- that's my ultimate goal. Whatever team picks me up, I'm happy with that. I'll become a fan immediately," said Salem.

"[He's] a great student, but this guy cares very much for the team and he wants what's best for the team," Alabama head coach Jim Wells said. "He's my go-to guy."

Ohio State Signs New 2-Year Radio Pact

Ohio State and the North American Broadcasting Company have signed a two-year agreement that will put Buckeye baseball games on WMNI Radio (920 AM) for 2007 and 2008, Steve Snapp, Ohio State associate athletics director, announced.

The station will carry 27 regular-season games over the air and on the Internet at ohiostatebuckeyes.com, and has agreed to broadcast another 11 games on an Internet-only basis, also on the school's official web site. All Ohio State postseason games, including any appearances in the Big Ten and NCAA tournaments, will be broadcast over the air and on the Internet. "We are pleased to announce a new, two-year contract with WMNI," Snapp said. "The station has agreed to carry 27 regular-season baseball games and expanded its coverage to include more games on the Internet. The number of games they are doing continues to be the standard among the schools in the Big Ten Conference."

Schiller Named President of International Baseball Federation (IBAF)

General (ret.) Harvey Schiller has been named president of the International Baseball Federation (IBAF) while replacing the late Aldo Notari, who died in 2006.

Born April 30, 1939, in New York City, he graduated from the University of Michigan with a Master's degree and doctorate in Chemistry as well as Honorary doctorates from The Citadel and Northern Michigan. Currently he also is Chairman of the Board and CEO of GlobalOptions Group, a multidisciplinary international risk management and business solutions company. He served in several athletics administrative positions at Air Force Academy and also was commissioner of the Southeastern Conference.

Dr. Schiller's commitment to, interest and involvement in baseball started as a boyhood player and fan in New York. Following college and graduate education, he served as both a diamond coach and official. As USOC Secretary General, he worked closely with USA Baseball during its participation in the 1991 Pan American Games and in the first Olympic Baseball competition in the 1992 Barcelona Games. As President of Sports for Turner Broadcasting in Atlanta, he was responsible for the television broadcast of the Atlanta Braves. In 2000, Dr. Schiller became the Chairman and CEO of YankeeNets (YES Network), which televises New York Yankees programming 7/24.

BLAIR ERICKSON BREAKS NCAA SAVE RECORD WITH 50TH

IRVINE, Calif. - UC Irvine starter Wes Etheridge held Cal Poly to two runs through eight innings and All-American reliever Blair Erickson struck out one in a perfect ninth inning to record his 50th career save and set a new NCAA save record on April 14, surpassing Southern California's Jack Krawczyk, who set the record of 49 from 1995-98. The duo led UC Irvine to a 3-2 Big West Conference win at Anteater Ballpark.

NATIONAL COLLEGIATE BASEBALL WRITERS ASSOCIATION

Founded in 1962, the NCBWA is dedicated to the advancement of college baseball. Membership is open to writers, broadcasters and publicists of the sport. Members receive a directory, newsletter updates and official votes in the Howser Award Player of the Year, Regional Player of the Year and NCBWA All-America voting. The NCBWA also sponsors preseason All-American awards, the Stopper of the Year Award, publication and writing contests. Additionally, the organization maintains a website at www.ncbwa.com. For membership, send annual dues (\$15), along with mailing address, phone, fax and e-mail address information to Russell Anderson, NCBWA Associate Executive Director, c/o Conference USA, 5201 No. O'Connor Blvd., Suite 300, Irving, TX 75309.

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