



LINE DRIVES
THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE BASEBALL WRITERS
NEWSLETTER
(Volume 48, No. 2, Feb. 18, 2009)

The President's Message
By NCBWA President Joe Dier

NCBWA Membership:

After lying mostly dormant for the better part of the past eight or nine months, the fields of collegiate baseball dreams come back to life this weekend when college baseball ushers in its 150th season.

For the historians among us, Amherst College nipped Williams College 73-32 in Pittsfield, Mass., on the first of July in 1859 in what is believed to be the first intercollegiate baseball game. Granted, the scoring system used that day varies greatly from the one utilized by our national pastime today. But it proved to be the start of something many of us hold near and dear to our hearts.

Some 302 RPI-counting collegiate teams on the NCAA Division I level hit the field this spring, either as independents or as members of the NCAA's 30 baseball playing conferences. The D-1 ranks did not lose any baseball-playing members over the past year and, in fact, welcome three newcomers this year --- North Dakota State, South Dakota State and Oregon. Sixty-four teams will advance to postseason play the final weekend of May, and two weeks later an elite eight will wind up at venerable Rosenblatt Stadium in Omaha, Neb., vying for a coveted crown that, since 1947, 23 different schools have claimed.

A handful of different teams have been given the preseason nod for the top spot in assorted national rankings and polls over the past two months. It bodes well for a wide-open three-month race filled with interesting twists and turns that winds its way to college baseball's coronation in Omaha.

As we begin that springtime run, I'd like to extend a word of thanks to the NCBWA officers for their tireless work in compiling our preseason All-America team and the Stopper of the Year watch list. Their efforts result in recognition for some gifted student-athletes and their respective teams. Also, here's a reminder that the NCBWA, with your help, honors top hitting and pitching performances each week through the Pro-Line Athletics NCAA Hitter and Pitcher of the Week Awards. Please direct information regarding outstanding individual performances each week to conference media relations representatives. They in turn submit nominations for the national awards that are announced each week by the NCBWA.

Best wishes to one and all this spring. Let the games begin!

Joe Dier
Mississippi State, NCBWA President

USA Today/Coaches, Baseball America, Rivals.com 2009 Preseason Polls

USA Today/Coaches (2008 Record)

1. LSU (49-19-1)
2. North Carolina (54-14)
3. Rice (47-15)
4. Georgia (45-25-1)
5. Texas A&M (46-19)
6. Stanford (41-24-2)
7. Arizona State (49-13)
8. Cal State Fullerton (41-22)
9. (tie) Florida State (54-14)
Texas (39-22)
11. Mississippi (39-26)
12. Georgia Tech (41-21)
13. Oklahoma State (44-18)
14. Miami (Fla.) (53-11)
15. San Diego (44-17)
16. Louisville (41-21)
17. Baylor (32-26)
18. UC Irvine (42-18)
19. Fresno State (47-31)
20. Missouri (39-21)
21. Pepperdine (38-21)
22. UCLA (33-27)
23. Florida (34-24)
24. Coastal Carolina (50-14)
25. Clemson (31-27-1)

Baseball America

1. Texas A&M
2. LSU
3. North Carolina
4. Texas
5. Cal State Fullerton
6. Mississippi
7. Rice
8. Baylor
9. UC Irvine
10. Missouri
11. San Diego
12. UCLA
13. Arizona State
14. Georgia
15. Stanford
16. Oklahoma
17. Pepperdine
18. Kent State
19. Clemson
20. Georgia Tech
21. Alabama
22. Arkansas
23. Louisville
24. Florida State
25. Oregon State

Rivals.com

1. North Carolina
2. LSU
3. Texas A&M
4. Cal State Fullerton
5. Rice
6. Texas
7. UC Irvine
8. Pepperdine
9. Georgia
10. Florida State
11. Florida
12. Mississippi
13. Georgia Tech
14. Oklahoma State
15. San Diego
16. Alabama
17. Louisville
18. Baylor
19. Missouri
20. Clemson
21. UCLA
22. Arizona State
23. Miami (Fla.)
24. Oregon State
25. Oklahoma

NCAA Division II Poll (Feb. 16, 2009) **Collegiate Baseball**

Rank Team Record Points Last Poll

1. Lynn 8-1 472 9
2. Cal State Stanislaus 8-1 466 30
3. Ouachita Baptist 9-2 452 5
4. Southern Arkansas 8-3 434 19
5. Mesa State 5-2 406 23
6. Ashland 0-0 398 6
7. Grand Valley State 0-0 370 T10
7. Franklin Pierce 0-0 370 8
9. West Chester 0-0 344 T10
10. Tampa 6-3 342 1
11. Valdosta State 8-2 324 21
12. Carson-Newman 7-3 302 RV
13. North Georgia 5-3 260 17
14. Angelo State 7-4 256 14
15. Abilene Christian 7-2 246 24
16. North Alabama 10-3 242 13
17. West Florida 7-3 216 RV
18. Central Missouri 2-1 194 NR
19. Cal State Chico 4-4 184 3
19. Wayne State (Neb.) 0-0 184 20

21. Lincoln Memorial 7-4 180 26
22. Lander 8-2 154 T27
23. West Alabama 6-3 138 12
24. Western Oregon 4-4 112 RV
25. UC San Diego 3-3 78 2
26. Nebraska-Omaha 4-0 66 NR
27. Georgia College & State 4-4 60 18
28. St. Joseph's (Ind.) 3-0 42 25
29. Mount Olive 7-4 40 T27
30. Florida Southern 6-3 32 NR

Also Receiving Votes: Regis 28, Francis Marion 16, Concord 10, U. Texas Permian Basin 10, Erskine 4, Montevallo 2, UMass-Lowell 2, UNC Pembroke 2, Nova Southeastern 1, Barry 1, Columbus State 1, USC Aiken 1, Catawba 1, St. Mary's (Texas) 1, Emporia State 1, Indiana (Pa.) 1, Shippensburg 1, West Virginia State 1, Indianapolis 1, Wayne State (Mich.) 1, Southern Indiana 1, Northern Kentucky 1, Bellarmine 1, New Mexico Highlands 1, Colorado State - Pueblo 1, St. Cloud State 1.

NCBWA/Division3Baseball.com Preseason Top 25

Rank School (first) 2008 Record Pts

- 1 Cortland State (12) 42-5 586
- 2 Chapman (4) 40-5 578
- 3 Trinity (Conn.) (7) 45-1 555
- 4 UW-Whitewater (1) 42-10 491
- 5 Johns Hopkins (1) 42-8 465
- 6 Adrian 36-13 459
- 7 Kean 39-11 394
- 8 Heidelberg 41-10 392
- 9 Salisbury 41-4 385
- 10 Southern Maine 36-14 377
- 11 Wooster 36-11 338
- 12 Texas-Tyler 36-9 318
- 13 Eastern Connecticut 32-15 284
- 14 Linfield 35-13 275
- 15 St. Scholastica 35-6 265
- 16 Illinois Wesleyan 33-11 217
- 17 Marietta 23-20 175
- 18 St. Thomas (Fla.) 34-9 171
- 19 Wheaton (Mass.) 34-10 147
- 20 Lynchburg 32-13 143
- 21 Thiel 29-15 115
- 22 RPI 36-12 112
- 23 UW-Oshkosh 29-11 89
- 24 Carthage 36-10 87
- 25 Augustana 34-13 71

Preseason Conferences 2009 Predicted Finishes

Big South (Coaches)

(First place votes in parenthesis)

1. Coastal Carolina (7)
2. Liberty (2)
3. Winthrop (1)
4. VMI
5. Radford
6. High Point
7. Gardner-Webb
8. UNC Asheville
9. Charleston Southern
10. Presbyterian

Big 12 (Coaches)

1. Texas A&M (9)
2. Texas (1)
3. (tie) Baylor
3. Oklahoma State
5. Missouri
6. Oklahoma
7. Nebraska
8. Texas Tech

9. Kansas State

10. Kansas

Big West (Coaches)

1. Cal State Fullerton (7)
2. UC Irvine
3. UC Santa Barbara (1)
4. Long Beach State (1)
5. Cal Poly
6. UC Riverside
7. UC Davis
8. Cal State Northridge
9. Pacific

Conference USA (Coaches)

1. Rice (9)
2. East Carolina
3. Southern Miss
4. Tulane
5. Houston

Horizon League (Coaches)

1. UIC (6)
2. Wright State (1)
3. Wisconsin-Milwaukee
4. Youngstown State
5. Valparaiso
6. Cleveland State
7. Butler

Mountain West

1. TCU (9)
2. San Diego State (1)
3. New Mexico (1)
4. Brigham Young
5. Utah
6. UNLV
7. Air Force

**Southland
Coaches Voting**

1. UTSA (5)
2. (tie) Texas State (4)
- Sam Houston State (2)
4. Lamar (1)
5. Northwestern State
6. UT Arlington
7. Southeastern La.
8. Texas A&M-Corpus Christi
9. Central Arkansas
10. Stephen F. Austin
11. McNeese State
12. Nicholls State

SLC Sports Information Directors Voting

1. UTSA (5)
2. Lamar (2)
3. Texas State (2)
4. Northwestern State
5. Sam Houston State (3)
6. UT Arlington
7. Southeastern Louisiana
8. Texas A&M-Corpus Christi
9. Central Arkansas
10. Stephen F. Austin
11. McNeese State
12. Nicholls State

Southern Conference (Coaches)

1. Elon (8)
2. Georgia Southern (3)
3. College of Charleston
4. The Citadel
5. Appalachian State
6. Western Carolina
7. UNC Greensboro
8. Furman
9. Samford
10. Wofford
11. Davidson

**The Sporting News Preseason Players of
Year and All-America Teams**

Player of the Year - Chris Dominguez, Jr. 3B,
Louisville

Pitcher of the Year - Alex White, Jr., RHP, North
Carolina

2009 College All-America Team

Dustin Ackley, Jr., 1B/OF, North Carolina
Josh Adams, So., 2B, Florida
Scott Bittle, Sr., RHP, Ole Miss
Tim Clubb, Jr., RHP, Missouri State
Kentrail Davis, So., OF, Tennessee
Blake Dean, Jr., OF, LSU
Chris Fetter, Sr., RHP, Michigan
Kyle Gibson, Jr., RHP, Missouri
Grant Green, Jr., SS, USC
Jedd Gyorko, So., SS, West Virginia
Chris Hernandez, So., LHP, Miami (Fla.)
Ryan Jackson, Jr., SS, Miami (Fla.)
Mike Leake, Jr., RHP, Arizona State
Ryan Lockwood, So., OF, USF
Tyler Lyons, Jr., LHP, Oklahoma State
Seth Maness, So., RHP, East Carolina
Mike Minor, Jr., LHP, Vanderbilt
Hunter Morris, So., 1B, Auburn
Andrew Oliver, Jr., LHP, Oklahoma State
Ryan Ortiz, Jr., C/1B, Oregon State
Eric Pettis, Jr., RHP, UC Irvine
Josh Phegely, Jr., C, Indiana
Connor Powers, Jr., 3B/1B, Mississippi State
Derek Smith, So., 1B, Charleston Southern
Angelo Songco, Jr., OF, Loyola Marymount
Jason Stoffel, Jr., RHP, Arizona
Stephen Strasburg, Jr., RHP, San Diego State
Ben Tootle, Jr., RHP, Jacksonville State
Kendal Volz, Jr., RHP, Baylor
Scott Woodward, So., 3B/OF, Coastal Carolina

ESPNU To Air 150th Anniversary College Game Between Amherst, Williams

Mayor James M. Ruberto announced that on Sunday, May 3, the City of Pittsfield will host the ESPNU televised 150th anniversary game between Williams and Amherst Colleges at the historic Wahconah Park in Pittsfield, Mass.

"This is such a significant event for the city of Pittsfield, Williams and Amherst Colleges, and the sport of baseball," said Mayor Ruberto. "Last year's game was a great success, and I look forward to being in the stands for the oldest rivalry in college baseball."

On Saturday, May 2, the Dan Duquette Sports Academy will sponsor the College Baseball Hall of Fame Youth Baseball Clinic. The clinic will be free and is open to all youth sports leagues in Pittsfield and the surrounding area. Before the official game on Sunday, baseball alumni from both Williams and Amherst will play a short vintage game using the equipment and rules of early baseball.

Local artists are being asked to submit artwork that would become the official print for the event. All submissions are due to the Lichtenstein Center for the Arts by Friday, March 13.

"Pittsfield's celebrated association with both the arts and baseball comes together in the call for a first class image for a world class anniversary," said Megan Whilden, cultural development director for the city. "We are excited to offer season tickets and a substantial prize to the best design submitted to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the world's first intercollegiate baseball game"

"Families are encouraged to come out and make a day of the event," said Duquette. "This game is a very important and significant event for Western Massachusetts, Pittsfield, and college baseball."

Get the score at D1Baseball.com

Over the past several years the college baseball world has discovered that there is no better place for getting scores than ncaa-baseball.com. Well, that will change this year. Jeremy Mills has changed the name of his outstanding college baseball score site to www.D1Baseball.com. Please mark your favorites accordingly and continue to keep up with all of the action in college baseball. And a big kudos to Jeremy and his wife for all of their hard work in keeping this site continually updated.

CollegeBaseballToday.com

Speaking of websites, some of you may be familiar with the great college baseball work that Eric Sorenson did for CSTV.com the past few years. Well, with CBS College Sports taking over CSTV, the outlet for his writing was eliminated. But, Eric has come back as part of a new college baseball site, CollegeBaseballToday.com. Eric is passionate about the game and should provide some spirited writing about the great game on this new site. Check out his work throughout the season.

Oregon Baseball is Back

For the first time in 28 years, the University of Oregon is playing varsity baseball. Head coach George Horton guided the Ducks through their first practice on Feb. 2 in anticipation of its season opener on Feb. 20 at St. Mary's (Calif.). Oregon has announced that its inaugural game at PK Park against defending National Champion Fresno State in Eugene has already been sold out.

Southern California Coaches Trade Caps for Chefs' Hats on ESPN at Disneyland

Southern California area baseball coaches traded their diamond caps for chefs hats on Jan. 24, in Anaheim's ESPN Zone in the Downtown Disney District during the NCAA Baseball Coaches Cook-Off.

Those in the "Iron Chef" style of competition were Dave Serrano of Cal State Fullerton, Southern California's Chad Kreuter, Long Beach State's Mike Weathers, Cal State Northridge's Steve Rousey, LMU's Jason Gill, Pepperdine's Steve Rodriguez, UC Irvine's Mike Gillespie, San Diego's Rich Hill, and UC Santa Barbara's Bob Brontsema. Each coach teamed with an ESPN Zone chef to prepare an entrée in a 20-minute time frame and then presented their creations to a panel of judges.

UMBC's Jancuska Owns Rare Foursome

John Jancuska is set to begin his 32nd season as the head coach at Maryland-Baltimore County this weekend. In 31 years as the Terriers skipper, he has amassed a total of 654 wins, the most ever by a coach in UMBC history, and has tallied 19 seasons with 20 or more wins, including last season when he guided the Retrievers to 21 victories. This past season, Jancuska also was named the America East Coach of the Year after guiding his team to its first-ever appearance at the America East Baseball Championships. Jancuska has previously been named Coach of the Year in each of the three prior conferences UMBC has competed in, earning the East Coast Conference nod in 1992, Big South in 1993 and Northeast in 2000. He is believed to be the only active D-I coach to be named Coach of the Year in four different leagues.

Team USA News for 2009

USA Baseball has set its 2009 calendar with key dates such as (Times listed are Eastern) Golden Feb. 17, Golden Spikes Award preseason watch list; March 2-5, World Baseball Classic team training camp, Clearwater, Fla.; March 7, World Baseball Classic Team vs. Canada, Rogers Centre, Toronto, Canada 2 p.m.; March 8-25, opponents TBD, World Baseball Classic Team, Toronto; March 9, Rogers Centre Toronto, Canada TBD World Baseball Classic Team event; May 26, Golden Spikes Award 30 semifinalists named; June 2, Golden Spikes Award five finalists determined; June 14-19 USA National (Collegiate) Team Trials training camp, Cary, N.C.; June 19-27, 16-Under Championships, West Peoria, Ariz.; June 20-24, Team USA scrimmage games; June 25- July 7, Team USA National Tour; July 10, Team USA at Kokusai Budo University, Tokyo, Japan; July 11-16, 37th USA vs. Japan Collegiate All-Star Championship in Japan, sites TBD; July 18-26, World Baseball Challenge, Prince George Citizen Field, Prince George, British Columbia, Canada; Sept. 1-5, IBAF Baseball World Cup Team training camp, Cary, N.C.; Sept. 4-7, USA Baseball Labor Day Cup, Cary, N.C.; Sept. 9-27, IBAF Baseball World Cup, Regensburg, Germany; times and opponents TBD.

Milestones

Jana Howser, daughter of the late Dick Howser Trophy namesake and currently residing in the Dallas area, surprised head coach Mike Martin and his staff at Florida State by throwing out the first pitch at FSU Baseball Day on Feb. 14 in Tallahassee. She wore No. 35 to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the inception of Dick Howser Foundation activities in and around Tallahassee at hospitals and healthcare clinics ... Central Michigan will face Florida Gulf Coast in Kansas baseball has moved its baseball office and team amenities into the McCarthy Family Clubhouse and formal dedication will be made prior to the Kansas-Kansas State contest on May 16 in Lawrence ... The Big East-Big Ten Conference Challenge takes place Friday-Sunday with 27 games among 22 teams from the two leagues in the St. Petersburg-Clearwater-Bradenton-Dunedin areas. It's a first-of-a-kind event between the two conferences ... The 2009 Southern Conference baseball tournament will be played at Fluor Field in Greenville, S.C. ... Cal State Fullerton staged a "midnight madness" workout at the mid-evening hour on Feb. 1 to open its workouts ... Justin Miller has been re-elected captain at Ohio State ... Oklahoma's annual preseason baseball dinner featured Sooner Legend honoree Darron Cox, OU coaches and emcee/telecaster/asst. AD Kenny Mossman as host ... Texas A&M has named Matt Deggs as associate head coach ... The Alabama Grand Slammers Booster held its 26th annual barbecue, meet the players session and intrasquad game on Feb. 7 in Tuscaloosa ... KLAF-TV will air eight Louisiana-Lafayette baseball games this year ... Mount Olive College and the city of Cary, N.C., will host the 2009 and '10 NCAA Division II Baseball Championships ... The Great West Conference has added NYIT and Northern Colorado as associate members in the sport of baseball for 2010 ... Ohio State is hosting its annual Meet the Players Luncheon on Feb. 14 ... The East Carolina-Southern Miss baseball series on April 24-26 will have times and dates changed to accommodate a national telecast on CBS College Sports from Greenville, N.C. The April 24 test will be carried at 7 p.m., (EST) before a Saturday opening contest at 4 p.m., and nightcap at 8 p.m. ... The Alabama Sports Writers Association held its annual preseason baseball statewide news conferences with coaches and key personnel in Birmingham on Feb. 12 ... Mississippi State has continued a 34-year tradition of preseason baseball media conferences prior to its Feb. 18 home basketball game with South Carolina ... ABCA Hall of Fame coach Ron Polk (now assisting at UAB) began the conferences in 1976.

2009 Season Milestones

Central Michigan will face Florida Gulf Coast in Ft. Myers at 12:01 a.m. (EST) Friday for the initial game allowable under NCAA Division I guidelines for the 2009 season ... Fordham plays in a NCAA-record 151st season and competed against town and amateur teams during the 1859 season – the same season that Amherst and Williams tussled in the first intercollegiate game ... Texas won its 3,000 game during the 2008 NCAA Regionals and starts '09 with 3,000 victories – second all-time to Fordham ... The Pacific-10 Conference features five teams in the current Top 10 Division I with No. 3 USC leading the way ... Arizona State completed its 100th season in '08 with 2,556 victories – sixth-most all-time ... Florida State has played the fewest seasons (61 with 2,437 wins – 40 per year to lead all DI entries) of any team on the DI Top 10 wins' list ... Milestone seasons in 2009 include North Carolina (120th), Miami, Fla. (65th), Yale (145th), San Diego State (80th), UCLA (90th), Florida (95th), Michigan State (125th), Oregon State (100th), West Virginia (115th), Vanderbilt (120th), Wake Forest (100th), Duke (120th), Tennessee (100th), Pennsylvania (135th), Bradley (110th), Cal State Fullerton (45th), Kansas (120th), Richmond (95th), Vermont (120th), South Alabama (45th), Texas-Pan American (55th), Eastern Illinois (105th), Loyola Marymount (110th), Dallas Baptist (40th), Army (120th), Creighton (60th), UNC Wilmington (45th), Missouri State (45th), Portland (105th), and Illinois-Chicago (UIC) (60th), among others ... Oregon State needs 22 victories to reach 2,000 all-time while Baylor is 41 short of that magic mark ... Oregon State needs 50 triumphs to hit 2,000 ... Closing in on 1,000 victories are Florida Atlantic (995), Central Connecticut State (990), Winthrop (975), Monmouth (967), East Tennessee State (947), and San Francisco (947) ... Cal State Bakersfield will be provisional DI and count in RPI standings in its first season of varsity baseball.

Where Are They Now?

The NCBWA features college baseball notables in "Where Are They Now?" updates on a number of coaches, student-athletes and programs. This issue's segment features additional Dick Howser Trophy winners of past years after presentation of the 22nd annual Howser Trophy in 2008 at Omaha to Buster Posey of Florida State. The 2003-08 progress reports include 2003, Rickie Weeks, Southern, standout second baseman for the Milwaukee Brewers from 2005-08 and going into salary arbitration; 2004, Jered Weaver, Long Beach State, has won 35 of his first 54 Major League pitching decisions and helped the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim into the playoffs; 2005, Alex Gordon, Nebraska, made a solid bid for Rookie of the Year honors with the Kansas City Royals and launched 29 homers in his first two MLB seasons; 2006, Brad Lincoln, Houston, coming off Tommy John surgery in '06, Lincoln is working his way rapidly through the Pittsburgh Pirates' farm system and hopes to be with the big club later this year; 2007, David Price, Vanderbilt, became the youngest player at 23 to get a save in the AL Championship Series against Boston and closed with a pair of postseason saves in the AL and World Series for Tampa Bay; 2008, Buster Posey, Florida State, was consensus college player of the year, fifth player selected in the 2008 draft by San Francisco and had a solid round of instructional league ball with the Waikiki Beach Boys.

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 (\$20), 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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