

NEW ENGLAND BASEBALL JOURNAL

January-February 2019

**Living
and training
in the Bay State,
Corey Kluber brings
uncommon dedication
to his offseason workouts**

MASS. APPEAL



- Inside the rise of Tommy John surgery
- Prospects Pulse: UConn's Mason Feole
- Top college, prep & high school pitchers

► Corey Kluber works out at Cressey Sports Performance.

In 1997 Sam Holman changed the game of baseball by inventing the first approved maple bat.



WORLD CHAMP



REACH BEYOND

It takes passion, perseverance, and relentless pursuit to always go one step further than what is expected. That's what makes Chris Sale a champion and why Mizuno's focus is to always create the greatest product possible to suit the needs of players at every level. Our passion is driven from an athlete's dedication to Reach Beyond all limits to achieve their dreams.

Congratulations to Boston and Mizuno ambassador Chris Sale on being World Champs!

OUR STARTING LINEUP

January–February 2019

NEW ENGLAND BASEBALL JOURNAL

baseballjournal.com

@NE_Baseball

/BaseballJournal

Founded 2010

Volume X, Number 1

© 2019 Seamans Media, Inc.

PUBLISHER

Eric Seamans eric@baseballjournal.com

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Rick Daniels rick@baseballjournal.com

MANAGING EDITOR

Eric Beato editor@baseballjournal.com

ADVERTISING SALES DIRECTORS

Nick Williams nick@baseballjournal.com

Terrence Butt terrence@baseballjournal.com

CLIENT RELATIONS

Michelle Seamans michelle@seamansmedia.com

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Don Cameron don@baseballjournal.com

STAFF WRITER / SOCIAL MEDIA EDITOR

Jonathan Sigal jsigal@baseballjournal.com

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Ian Browne • Landon DuMar • Chris Fay

Craig Forde • Nick Frazer • Sarah Gilbert

Dan Guttenplan • Brendan Hall • Kevin Henkin

Joshua Kummins • Wayne Mazzoni • Phil Shore

Eric Wilbur • Mike Zhe

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR — Hank Hryniewicz

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

Dave Arnold • Mike Gridley

COVER PHOTO

Dave Arnold/New England Baseball Journal

FREQUENCY

New England Baseball Journal is published eight times per year by Seamans Media, Inc. It is distributed free of charge to select baseball training facilities and baseball specialty retailers throughout New England. Subscription rates: \$34.99 (one year), \$64.99 (two years). All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reprinted or otherwise reproduced without the written permission of Seamans Media, Inc.

CONTACT US

ADVERTISING 617-773-9955, ext. 223

..... advertising@baseballjournal.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS 617-773-9955

PRINT SeamansMedia.com/subscribe

DIGITAL SeamansMedia.com/nebjfree

FEEDBACK feedback@baseballjournal.com



SeamansMedia

SeamansMedia.com

552 Adams Street, Suite 201

Milton, MA 02186

Phone: 617-773-9955

OUR PUBLICATIONS

New England Baseball Journal baseballjournal.com

New England Hockey Journal hockeyjournal.com

New York Hockey Journal NYHockeyJournal.com

New England Lacrosse Journal laxjournal.com

New England Soccer Journal NESoccerJournal.com

New England Ski Journal skijournal.com

OUR MISSION

To inspire and inform amateur athletes and their supporters by sharing compelling stories and insightful advice to help further their development throughout their careers.

FEATURES



TRUTH ABOUT TOMMY JOHN

18 SPECIAL REPORT It's the most infamous injury in baseball, and more and more pitchers are undergoing the surgery. While success rates soar and success stories abound, the road to recovery is never easy.

PROSPECTS PULSE: MASON FEOLE

11 Armed with an unorthodox delivery, UConn left-hander Mason Feole blossoms into top pro prospect.



TOP COLLEGE ARMS

14 A look at 20 of the best pitchers in college this season, including Sean Mellen and Austen Michel.

TOP PREP & HS ARMS

16 A look at 10 of the best pitchers in prep and high schools, including Sebastian Keane and Billy Seidl.

6



ACE IN THE HOLE

COVER STORY Settled in Massachusetts, Corey Kluber brings unmatched dedication to his training at Cressey Sports Performance, helping inspire pros and prospects.



27

19 THINGS IN 2019

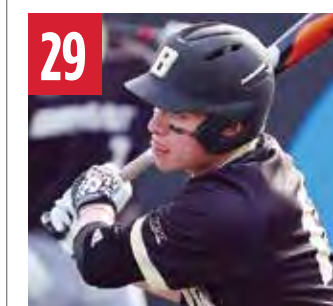
29 DIV. 1 COLLEGES What and who to watch — from Hartford's Ashton Bardzell to Bryant's Ryan Ward.

COLUMNISTS

■ MAZZONI ON RECRUITING 24
■ TYLER'S JOURNAL 25
■ THE VOLUNTEER COACH 26
■ THE MENTAL EDGE 32
■ BASEBALL NUTRITION 33

DEPARTMENTS

■ AROUND THE REGION 5
■ RED SOX BEAT 27
■ HANGIN' OUT WITH 34



29



34

DIGITAL EDITION BONUS: Only @ baseballjournal.com



HANGIN' OUT WITH ... Continue reading our Q&A with Fairfield senior right-hander John Signore



MLB NEW ENGLAND Follow every player from New England in MLB, from Ahmed to Williams.

NEW ENGLAND BASEBALL JOURNAL

OUR NEW WEBSITE
baseballjournal.com

COMING IN FEBRUARY

Including bonus coverage of:

- Prep and high schools
- Pro and college prospects
- Colleges (Division 1, 2 and 3)

... and more!

AROUND THE REGION

Late President Bush had strong baseball connections to region

President **George H.W. Bush**, whose legacy of leadership included serving as the Yale baseball team captain and the president of his senior class at Phillips Academy Andover, passed away Nov. 30. He was 94.

Bush, who went on to become the 41st president of the United States, was born in Milton, Mass., and had strong athletic ties to the region. He and his family kept a summer home in Kennebunkport, Maine, where he was an avid golfer and golf fan.

At Andover, he distinguished himself as an accomplished varsity athlete, a member of the school newspaper's editorial board and president of his senior class for one term.



► Bush at Andover

Bush enrolled at Yale after serving in World War II and emerged as a key player for the baseball team during some of its most successful seasons. He played 17 games in 1946, then helped Yale make the College World Series in both 1947 and '48. Both times, Yale advanced to the finals before losing.

A first baseman, Bush was known as a great fielder. He posted .971 and .993 fielding percentages in 1947 and '48, respectively, helping the Bulldogs as a team lead the nation in fielding percentage (.971) in 1947.

Bush also was part of a memorable event during the 1948 season. As Yale's captain, he was the team's representative for the ceremony on the field as an ailing **Babe Ruth** presented a copy of his biography to the Yale library. The moment was immortalized in a photograph showing the future President and the Hall of Famer near the pitcher's mound at a packed Yale Field.

In early 2015, as the Bulldogs prepared to celebrate their 150th season, Bush spoke about his time playing for Yale: "I am not big on giving free advice for the simple reason that it's usually viewed as being worth what was paid for it. That said, I would encourage each and every young man who might attend Yale and play ball to do the same things my mother (**Dorothy**) taught me a million years ago: Do your best, share credit, focus on the team. It's not fancy, but it worked for me."

Futures League adds Westfield

The Futures Collegiate Baseball League announced the addition of Westfield, Mass., as an expansion team for the 2019 season in January.

The Westfield franchise was pur-

chased by local entrepreneurs **Christopher Thompson** and **Don Moorhouse**. The new ownership group brings more than 40 years of experience in minor-league sports, business management, marketing and promotions.

"Westfield is a baseball town with a history that goes back to the very origins of the sport in America," said Moorhouse, a Westfield resident. "Summer collegiate baseball is a natural fit in Westfield and an extension of that legacy."

The Futures League was founded in 2011 and is a wood-bat, collegiate summer league featuring some of the top college baseball players in the country. The others teams in the league for 2019 are Bristol, Brockton, Martha's Vineyard, Nashua, Pittsfield and Worcester. ...

The Futures League announced that **Chris Hall** (Chelmsford, Mass.) stepped aside as commissioner of the league effective at the end of 2018 to pursue other opportunities. Hall was a founding member of the Futures League and its first commissioner dating back to the league's inception in 2011.

"After eight years at the helm of the Futures League, now is the right time for me to step aside as commissioner," he said in a statement. "I am so proud of the league that we founded and rapidly built into one of the greatest summer collegiate leagues in the entire country."

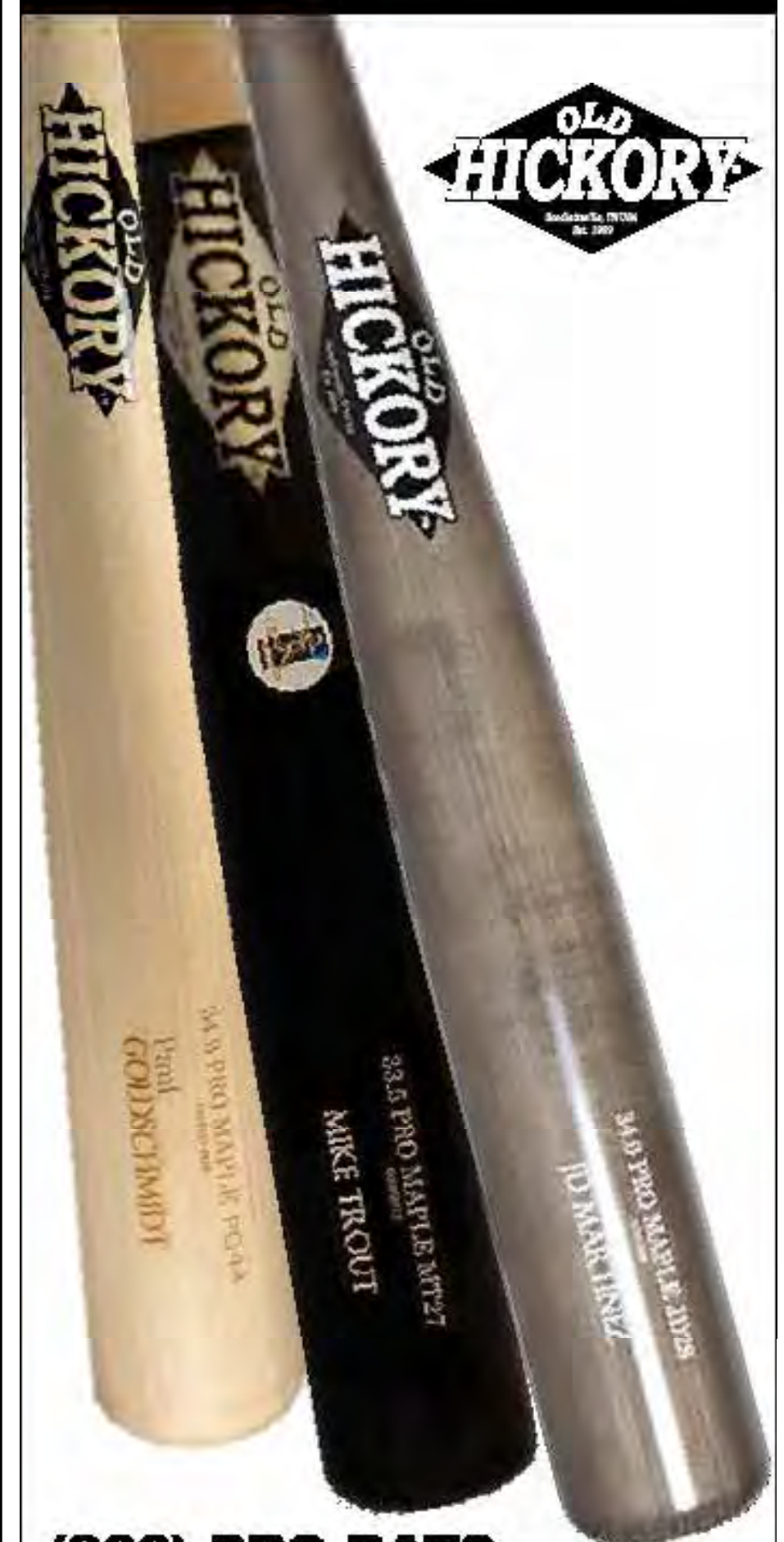
Around the horn

An 18-year-old Massachusetts resident was arrested in connection with the assault at Franklin Pierce University in December that left a student-athlete seriously injured, Rindge (N.H.) police announced recently. **Travis Flagg** of Gardner, Mass., was charged with second-degree assault, a felony, and simple assault, a misdemeanor. Police identified the victim as **Alejandro Lopez-Wheeler**, who suffered a fractured skull and was listed in critical condition. Lopez-Wheeler (Cambridge, Mass.) played at Buckingham Browne & Nichols and was on last spring's FPU roster as a sophomore pitcher. ...

Rehabilitation work on the Judy Walden Scarafie Field, the home of the Hyannis Harbor Hawks, is on schedule for the start of the Cape Cod Baseball League. Renovations began Aug. 12 after the Harbor Hawks received a grant of \$700,000 for the new field. The Cape League also received a grant of \$100,000 for the renovations from the the Yawkey Foundation, a longtime supporter of the Cape League. ...

The Boston Red Sox have named former major-leaguer **Joe Oliver** the new manager of the Portland Sea Dogs, their Double-A affiliate.

THE BEST PLAYERS SWING THE BEST BATS



(866) PRO BATS
OLDHICKORYBATS.COM

ACE IN THE HOLE

Now settled in Massachusetts for the offseason, Cy Young Award winner Corey Kluber brings unmatched focus, dedication to his training at Cressey Sports Performance, helping inspire a gym full of pros and prospects

Story by Eric Beato
Photos by Dave Arnold

► Corey Kluber works out at Cressey Sports Performance under the watchful eyes of Eric Cressey (left) and Christian Wonders (right).



Popp PPP! ... Popp PPP! ... Popp PPP!

IT'S A COLD WINTER MORNING, just days before the new year, and one of the most intimidating pitchers on the planet is humming fastballs in a near-empty gym in central Massachusetts.

Corey Kluber, two-time AL Cy Young Award winner, has driven 40 minutes from Winchester, Mass., to Cressey Sports Performance in Hudson, Mass. — his home away from offseason home.

In a couple of hours, there will be a parade of pro pitchers and prospects throwing, lifting and fraternizing amid a din of laughter, chatter and loud music. But, right now, it's just Kluber progressing through an intense workout — including throwing, stretching, lifting and more — with a quiet determination and without much attention or any fanfare.

"The environment is awesome," Kluber said, "and obviously there are a lot of other pro guys who train here."

The expansive facility is otherwise empty except for a handful of middle-agers participating in a small group workout nearby. But save for the chiseled nature of the 6-foot-4, 215-pound physical specimen — and the unmistakable "pop" of elite fastball hitting catcher's mitt — they might not even know he's a pro athlete, let alone the most durable and dominant pitcher in the American League.

HE'S NOT FROM NEW ENGLAND, didn't attend college here and has never pitched for the Red Sox. But, for three-plus months a year, Corey Kluber calls Massachusetts home.

Kluber, who turns 33 in April, has been living and training in the Bay State for the past three offseasons, since shortly after he pitched the Cleveland Indians to the brink of a championship, starting Game 7 of the 2016 World Series.

His wife, Amanda, grew up in Winchester, Mass. They met at Stetson University in DeLand, Fla., in 2006 and were married in 2010. After living in Florida in the offseasons, Corey and Amanda opted to move their growing family back to her hometown of Winchester to raise their children — daughters Kendall and Kennedy, and son Camden, who also arrived shortly after the 2016 World Series.

"This is where we wanted to raise our family, and our kids were at the point where they were about to start school, so that was the main reason we decided to move," Kluber said. "We didn't want to have them bounce around from school to school once they got started. So that was why we decided to move back when we did."

Thanks to his wife's family's deep roots here, Kluber — who was born in Birmingham, Ala., and raised in Texas — has settled in comfortably to winters in New England.

"I had visited enough that I was familiar with it before we moved back," Kluber said. "So that made a pretty easy transition."

KLUBER'S TRANSITION to New England was made all the more easy — at least training-wise — thanks to Cressey Sports Performance. Eric Cressey, a strength and conditioning specialist and native of Kennebunk, Maine, opened his first training center in Hudson, Mass., in 2007, quickly building the destination for the region's top baseball players and prospects, including the likes of Tyler Beede (Auburn, Mass.) and Tim Collins (Worcester, Mass.).

Even non-New Englanders have traveled to train at CSP. For example, Blake

Continued on Page 8

THE PITCHERS ISSUE

Corey Kluber



Photos: Dave Arnold/New England Baseball Journal



► All-Star Corey Kluber works out in late December at Cressey Sports Performance in Hudson, Mass., under the watchful eyes of Eric Cressey and Christian Wonders.



Continued from Page 7

Treinen, who had a breakout season last year as the Oakland A's closer, spent a whole off-season training in Hudson while living with a host family in Wayland, Mass. He even got engaged here and now does the Cressey program remotely from his home in Walla Walla, Wash. Kluber, though, first connected with Cressey in 2009 through a teammate when he was pitching in Double A. That offseason, while visiting Amanda's family in Massachusetts, Kluber came in for an assessment and a couple of workouts. And Kluber began adopting Cressey's program, often training on his own while he and Amanda still lived in Florida. "Corey and I kind of grew together," Cressey said. "Corey's unique in the sense that you very rarely see a guy who's had the success that he's had who's as open-minded as he is. As long as he trusts you and you have a rationale for everything you do, it works. That's why it's been a good fit."

So moving to Massachusetts also meant moving closer to Cressey headquarters in Hudson. "I think it's a convenience," Kluber said, "but I wouldn't say that it influenced our decision."

Now, though, living just 20 miles from the CSP facility, Kluber takes advantage of the entire Cressey experience, working with a team of professionals. Cressey himself often serves

as the point person for Kluber's training, but he splits his time between Massachusetts and his second CSP facility in Jupiter, Fla., which opened in 2014. So Kluber also works with John O'Neil, Frank Duffy, Chris Howard and, notably, pitching coordinator Christian Wonders.

"It's good to be in that environment," Kluber said. "I think it's a better alternative than having to go to, say, a commercial gym and kind of motivate yourself. (It's better) to be in the room working out with other guys who are in the same position."

During the offseason, Kluber visits the Hudson facility twice a week for his training regimen, throwing program and soft-tissue work with Howard. He also does another day of mobility work with Duffy at his house and meets Wonders on other days for more throwing closer to his Winchester home. They'll seek out a local turf mound or college with a bubble practice facility or just throw outside — even in 21-degree weather.

"It's always helpful to have an extra set of eyes and having somebody that you're comfortable with and that is familiar with you," Kluber said. "Having that relationship to bounce things off one another definitely helps."

FOR KLUBER, that someone is Wonders, 26, who serves as CSP's pitching coordinator and is the owner of Elite Pitching Development. A native of south



'Playing catch with Corey is really cool. He's the man. I love it. I love sitting down and talking with him about what he wants in his throwing program and helping him prepare.'

— Christian Wonders (above), pitching coordinator at Cressey Sports Performance

Florida, Wonders was pitching for Division 2 Georgia College and State University when he decided to spend the summer of 2011 training with Cressey in New England. He lived with a host family in Nashua, N.H., trained in Hudson six days a week and put on 24 pounds in 12 weeks.

"I fell in love with training," said Wonders, who became an exercise science major.

After injury derailed his own playing career, the self-described "anatomy nerd" interned at CSP in Hudson then worked part time in the Florida facility and began coaching high school travel ball. In September 2015, he moved to Dallas for a sales job but started training Drew VerHagen of the Detroit Tigers on the side. When VerHagen made the Tigers' Opening Day roster, Wonders moved home to Florida and started doing pitching lessons on the side. In September 2016, Cressey called offering a chance to return to Massachusetts as CSP's pitching coordinator.

Now, he's training dozens of pro pitchers and prospects, none more accomplished than Kluber, whom he's now catching.

"Playing catch with Corey is really cool," Wonders said. "He's the man. I love it. I love sitting down and talking with him about what he wants in his throwing program and helping him prepare."

Wonders writes out Kluber's entire offsea-

son throwing program — eight weeks total until the start of spring training. After the season, Kluber sent him eight hours of video — good games and bad from 2014 through '18.

"Then I sat on FaceTime talking to him about what he wants to feel, mechanics, weighted balls, how many times he wants to throw off the mound, what does he want to be ready for when he gets to spring training," Wonders said.

On this day — at the end of the second week of the program — Kluber is undergoing a heavy workout workload. He does a series of three pre-throw drills with weighted baseballs into a padded black wall, including half-kneeling reverse throws.

Then Kluber goes through a strict progression of throwing two-seam fastballs: 10 throws at 45 feet, 15 throws at 60 feet, 15 throws at 90 feet, five throws at 120 feet, then 10 more shorter throws from 60 feet to focus on his glove side.

"At this point in time," Kluber said, "you're just trying to bring around that muscle memory of where you want your arm slot to be, your mechanics, your release point, things like that, just to get your body used to being back to throwing."

"Once you build that arm strength and all that stuff kind of comes back to you, then you start focusing more on fine-tuning stuff and actually making pitches."



'The high school and college kids see him doing some of the same exercises they're doing, so they recognize this is directly relatable to the success he's had.'

— Eric Cressey (above), co-founder of Cressey Sports Performance, on Corey Kluber's offseason training

Wonders' offseason program calls for Kluber to start throwing change-ups in Week 4 and to begin spinning breaking balls at the end of Week 5.

"He's going to build up his arm resiliency first," Wonders said. "He's got to build back up to that. So we're going to get his throwing volume in and as the volume goes up, the intensity is going to ramp up. ... Week 5 will be his first really aggressive week."

K LUBER PUNCTUATES his throwing routine by fist-bumping Wonders, whose day is just beginning.

"The environment in here after Corey throws," Wonders said, "I'm going to have close to 20 pro guys who are going to throw."

Among others, Wonders today will work with Oliver Drake (Worcester, Mass.), who pitched for a record five MLB clubs in 2018 and recently was traded to Tampa Bay, as well as minor-leaguers Paul Campbell (Malden, Mass./Rays organization), Austin DeCarr (Foxboro, Mass./Yankees), Packy Naughton (West Roxbury, Mass./Reds) and Jacob Stevens (Darien, Conn./Diamondbacks).

"It just creates an awesome environment," said Drake, who just turned 32 in January. "It's a lot of fun to come in and train every day. With so many guys here chasing the same dream, it creates a fun level of competition and everyone kind of pushes each other."

As one of the only regulars with a wife and kids, Kluber often gets his workouts in early at Cressey before the bulk of other pros pour in. His mere presence in the gym, though, carries extra weight — especially on the prospects aspiring to reach The Show.

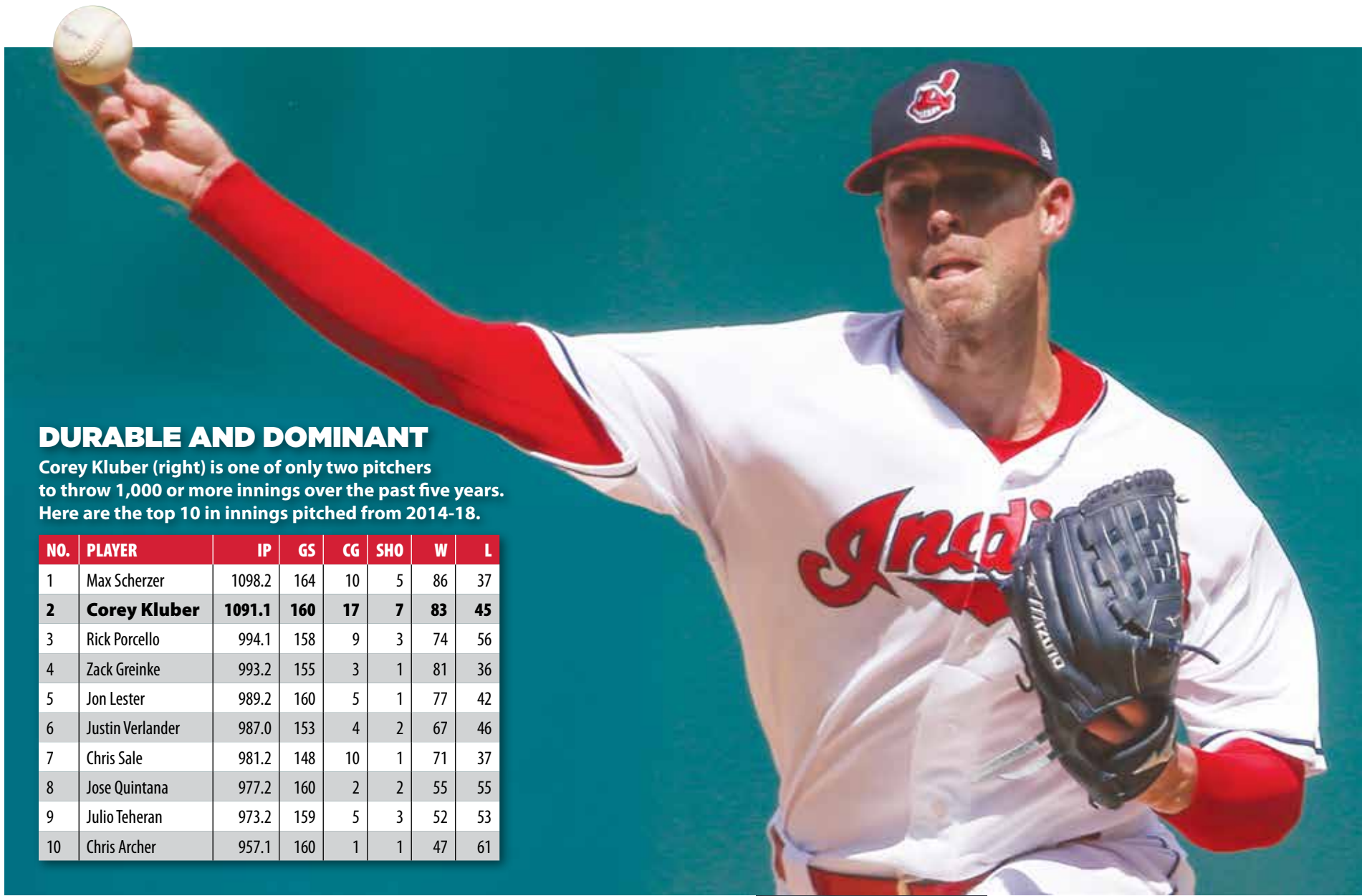
"I think it certainly helps the cause," Cressey said. "The high school and college kids see him doing some of the same exercises they're doing, so they recognize this is directly relatable to the success he's had, the durability he's had. So I do think it's important."

Kluber admits he's rarely approached by the younger players — likely intimidated by an All-Star ace known for his steely demeanor on the mound. But that reputation, Cressey says, belies Kluber's true nature as someone quick to engage in conversation, pose for photos and even joke around with the staff about pranking the arriving interns.

So, what advice would Kluber impart to high schoolers brave enough to ask? "Do things the right way. Do things with a purpose," he said. "I think if you do things the right way more often than not, you're going to get a lot more benefit out of it. And not just doing things for the sake of doing them, but doing them to actually get something out of it."

It's a lesson anyone can learn by observ-

Continued on Page 10



DURABLE AND DOMINANT

Corey Kluber (right) is one of only two pitchers to throw 1,000 or more innings over the past five years. Here are the top 10 in innings pitched from 2014-18.

NO.	PLAYER	IP	GS	CG	SHO	W	L
1	Max Scherzer	1098.2	164	10	5	86	37
2	Corey Kluber	1091.1	160	17	7	83	45
3	Rick Porcello	994.1	158	9	3	74	56
4	Zack Greinke	993.2	155	3	1	81	36
5	Jon Lester	989.2	160	5	1	77	42
6	Justin Verlander	987.0	153	4	2	67	46
7	Chris Sale	981.2	148	10	1	71	37
8	Jose Quintana	977.2	160	2	2	55	55
9	Julio Teheran	973.2	159	5	3	52	53
10	Chris Archer	957.1	160	1	1	47	61

Ron Schwane/Getty Images

Continued from Page 9

ing Kluber in the gym — even fellow pros. “It’s just awesome,” Drake said. “He’s an extremely hard worker, and that’s what you see that he gets a lot of his success from. From everything he does, from lifting, from throwing, he puts a lot of focus and attention to detail into it, and you can tell that’s a big part of why he has so much success.”

UNDRAFTED AND LIGHTLY recruited out of Coppell (Texas) High, Kluber attended Stetson University in DeLand, Fla., where he excelled on the field and met Amanda. Kluber was drafted in the fourth round by the San Diego Padres in 2007 and was dealt to the Indians at the trade deadline in 2010. He made his MLB debut a year later. Over the past five seasons, only Kluber and Washington Nationals ace Max Scherzer have topped 1,000 innings pitched. Only Scherzer — another Cressey client who trains five days a week at the Florida facility — has thrown more innings, started more games or won more than Kluber (see statistics above), but no one can match Kluber’s 17 complete games and only Clayton Kershaw has tossed more than his seven shutouts over that time. That uncommon durability and success is directly related to the dedicated work in

the gym on an offseason day like this. “The whole point of the offseason training to me is to build that baseline for you so that you’re in a good spot to hopefully log innings and stay strong through the course of the season,” Kluber said. “Now is when you build your baseline to be able to do that.” Following Kluber’s throwing regimen with Wonders, it’s Cressey’s turn with the ace. He runs him through a methodical series of exercises with painfully complicated names (see box at right) that sometimes appear just as painful and complicated. After demonstrably heaving heavy medicine balls into the black wall and slamming them into the ground, Kluber is asked what music he wants to hear on the gym stereo, which has been cranking heavy rock. He replies softly, “’90s hip-hop.” And suddenly “Running with the Devil” and “Crazy Train” transform to “Insane in the Brain” and “Gangsta’s Paradise.” Kluber literally checks off each exercise from a list on a clipboard that’s always nearby. Before starting the next exercise, he consults with Cressey on proper execution. Then he alternates between safety squat bar forward lunges (with 225 pounds for four reps per side) and reverse bear crawls, proceeds to one-leg squats from an 18-inch box with a 45-pound weight before finishing with one-leg hip thrusts with a massive metal



Kluber’s workout

- ▶ Step behind rotational medicine ball shotput paired w/1-arm lat stretch w/band
- ▶ Double clutch overhead med ball stomp paired w/1-leg side-to-side anti-rotation med ball scoop toss
- ▶ High knees paired w/1-leg wall dribbles
- ▶ Safety squat bar forward lunges paired w/reverse bear crawls
- ▶ Block pulls (elevated conventional deadlifts) paired w/dumbbell scaption
- ▶ 1-leg squat from 18-inch box paired w/half-kneeling manual resistance external rotation at 90 degrees
- ▶ TRX bodysaw paired w/1-leg hip thrust off bench vs. chains

chain draped across his abdomen. It’s been more than two hours since Kluber arrived, but he’s not done yet. After small talk — and fist bumps — with Wonders, Drake and a couple other recent arrivals, he’ll end his day at Cressey with a soft-tissue massage from Howard before driving back home to Winchester. The Kluber-Cressey relationship has produced dramatic results for both sides. Kluber has won two Cy Young Awards, including in 2017 after his first offseason in Massachusetts. And Cressey has grown into a top training destination for pros and prospects. “It worked out well, for sure, and I think to be honest, Corey’s success was probably a part of us becoming more of a national brand,” Cressey said. “But I always say to our folks that you don’t know who your Corey Kluber is going to be. Corey was another minor-leaguer when he started up with us, and he really bought in to what we did and worked hard and obviously saw some benefits and saw it was advantageous for his career. “But even one of those high school kids out there could be the next one.”

Eric Beato is the Managing Editor of New England Baseball Journal. @EricBeato editor@baseballjournal.com



Armed with a selfless, team-oriented approach and an unorthodox delivery, UConn lefty Mason Feole (Wakefield, R.I.) blossoms into top pro prospect

By Dan Guttenplan

UCONN COACH JIM PENDERS’ first impression of Mason Feole left a lot to be desired. “I thought this kid was going to be spoiled rotten,” Penders said. “He’s an only child, and his mom is the best Italian cook on the planet. I had my concerns about recruiting him.” Feole (Wakefield, R.I.) has assuaged those concerns over the last two seasons, making Penders’ decision to offer him a scholarship out of Prout School one of the smartest the coach has made in his 16-year tenure as UConn’s head coach. Over the past two seasons, Feole has earned a slew of pitching honors, including Collegiate Baseball first-team All-American (2018), first-team All-New England (2018), Collegiate Baseball Freshman All-American (2017) and All-New England Rookie Pitcher of the Year (2017).

Continued on Page 12



Continued from Page 11

The 20-year-old ace enters his junior season as a potential second-round pick after pitching nine scoreless innings while representing his country last summer as a member of the 2018 USA Baseball Collegiate National Team. Over two seasons at UConn, the left-hander has posted a record of 16-6 with a 2.90 ERA and 195 strikeouts in 183⅓ innings.

“He’s been the exact opposite of what I thought,” Penders said. “He’s the most selfless, team-oriented kid I’ve ever been around. In his mind, he comes second to everything going on with the team. That’s extremely rare with a pitcher, especially a great pitcher. He doesn’t lose any edge having that mentality.”

FEOLE’S EDGE ON THE MOUND is apparent to anyone who sees him pitch. A 6-foot-1, 194-pound left-hander, Feole has a seemingly rushed herky-jerky delivery. Everything moves quickly, first the right leg up and down, and then the entire body diving toward home plate as the head dips. His fastball sits in the low-90s, and his breaking ball also is a plus pitch. However, it’s his approach that keeps batters off balance.

“He pitches with his hair on fire like he’s in a rush,” Penders said. “The game’s over fast. He got our attention pretty quickly when we saw him pitch in high school. The arms and legs ... it’s unorthodox, but he’s able to repeat it.”

Although Feole dominated at the prep school level, earning Division 2 RIIL Cy Young for four consecutive years (2013-16), he flew a bit under the radar at a school that wasn’t widely regarded for its baseball prowess. Penders extended an offer to Feole early in his senior year, and Feole’s recruitment by other schools was further complicated due to a cancer scare during his senior year.

Feole developed an aneurismal bone cyst in his right pelvis, which was tested for forms of cancer such as osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma and hemangioendothelioma. The tumor was determined to be benign, and doctors performed a minimally invasive procedure to remove the cyst, scraping away the tissue and stopping blood flow to the infected area.



► **Mason Feole** ‘pitches with his hair on fire,’ says UConn coach Jim Penders.

“It was a no-brainer to say yes to the UConn offer,” Feole said. “It was a prestigious program and close to home. It was a combination of a good team on a good path with the best coaches in the country.”

Perhaps it was Feole’s health scare that helped shape his approach to baseball — and life, in general. Everything he’s done at UConn since has been full-speed ahead with an eye toward making a positive contribution to the greater good.

“He’s a very excitable guy,” Penders said. “He has a real enthusiasm for everything he’s doing. He does everything 100 mph. He doesn’t have a second gear; he’s always red-lined, whether it’s baseball, studying or community service.”

Taking that approach into the fall of his freshman year, Feole was determined to carve out a role immediately. He did just that, earning a spot in the starting rotation. He went 7-4 that season with a 3.38 ERA and 75 strikeouts in 82⅓ innings.

“It was a goal of mine to be in the rotation and make an impact as a freshman,” Feole said. “It wasn’t like my mindset was starter or nothing. It was to put myself in the best position to help the team win.”

AFTER THAT BREAKOUT SEASON, Feole earned an invitation to play in the Cape Cod Baseball League with the Wareham Gatemen. The Wareham coaching staff tried to make adjustments to Feole’s herky-jerky delivery, and the results were spotty for the left-hander who recorded a 4.96 ERA in 23⅓ innings.

“If we like a guy in high school, very rarely do we change anything in his mechanics,” Penders said. “I don’t think anybody who is having success and not getting injured should listen to anybody. The foundation of the game is confidence.”

Feole rediscovered his confidence last spring, and led UConn in ERA (2.50), wins (9), starts (16), innings pitched (100%) and strikeouts (120). He was the first UConn pitcher since 1979 to record 120 strikeouts in a season. He served as the ace on a staff that included

eventual second-round MLB draft selection Tim Cate (Manchester, Conn.).

“He’s learned how to breathe and separate his pitches better,” Penders said. “If things were going bad his freshman year, he would tend to continue at the same pace. If he’s not getting good results now, he’ll change the process. He’s been able to slow himself down a bit.”

Feole has added velocity each year at UConn, and he agrees with Penders that his greatest area of improvement has been on the mental side.

“The coaching staff pushes guys to focus and learn a lot about the mental game,” Feole said. “It can be a grind for everyone. The hard part is being consistent and making sure the prep is a big part of your diet as a pitcher. I mentally prepare every day so I can have confidence to perform my best. In this conference, you have to hit it so hard on the mental side.”

PART OF FEOLE’S MENTAL preparation includes watching the greatest pitchers in the game — and not just the current stars. The die-hard Yankees fan studies film of legends such as Whitey Ford and Bob Gibson.

Feole found himself among some of the current greats at the college level last summer when he pitched for Team USA against Chinese Taipei, Japan and Cuba.

“Any time you get a chance to represent your country in any shape or form, it’s an unbelievable experience,” Feole said. “I got a chance to see those three letters across my chest. I was blessed to have that opportunity. We had unbelievable coaches, and we gave it everything we had. I wouldn’t trade that experience for the world.”

Feole likely will enjoy an equally unbelievable experience this spring, the experience of hearing his name called in the MLB draft. He missed out on that experience out of high school, due in part to the fact that the pelvic cyst caused sudden, shooting pain in his right hip during a preseason workout for representatives of the San Diego Padres. After that workout, Feole’s professional baseball prospects took a backseat to concerns about his general health and wellness.

Perhaps that experience has given Feole a unique and healthy perspective among potential first-round prospects.

“My focus is definitely not on the draft,” Feole said. “It’s on helping this team win as many games as possible with the ultimate goal of winning a national championship. If I’m a good player and teammate and do all of the right things off the field, it will put me in a good spot in life. Those are the type of core values I’ve always held in my heart and try to instill in my teammates.” **B**

@Dan_Guttenplan

feedback@baseballjournal.com

NEBJ’S Top 10 draft prospects

Our preseason ranking of the top MLB draft-eligible players, limited to New England natives, regardless of school. **Rankings by Dan Guttenplan.**

Mason Feole

1 Pitcher | UConn
Hometown: Wakefield, R.I.
Bats: Left | Throws: Left
Height: 6-foot-1 | Weight: 194 pounds



The 6-foot-1 left-hander spent last summer pitching for the USA Baseball Collegiate National Team, logging nine scoreless innings with 11 strikeouts. At UConn last spring, Feole posted a 9-2 record with a 2.50 ERA and 120 strikeouts in 100⅓ innings pitched. His fastball sits in the low 90s, and he pairs it with a strong curveball.

Sebastian Keane

2 Pitcher | North Andover High
Hometown: North Andover, Mass.
Bats: Right | Throws: Right
Height: 6-foot-3 | Weight: 168 pounds



Keane created some 2019 MLB draft buzz on the showcase circuit this summer. The 6-foot-3, 168-pound right-hander showcased a 93 mph fastball at the Area Code Games, East Coast Pro Showcase and Perfect Game Showcase. As a high school junior last spring, he went 4-1 with a 0.32 ERA and 74 strikeouts in 44 innings. He’s committed to Northeastern.

Morgan McSweeney

3 Pitcher | Wake Forest
Hometown: Hudson, Mass.
Bats: Right | Throws: Right
Height: 6-foot-4 | Weight: 210 pounds



The 6-foot-4 right-hander likely will be Wake Forest’s No. 2 starter this spring. He’s been dominant at times in the Atlantic Coast Conference, earning a role as a weekend starter as a sophomore. He posted a 4.44 ERA in 73 innings pitched with 66 strikeouts. He played in the Cape Cod Baseball League last summer with Brewster. McSweeney was a late bloomer at Worcester Academy; he was actually cut from the St. John’s Shrewsbury baseball team as a junior in 2014.

Sean Mellen

4 Pitcher | Northeastern
Hometown: Norwood, Mass.
Bats: Left | Throws: Left
Height: 6-foot-5 | Weight: 190 pounds



Mellen had a breakout sophomore season at Northeastern, tying the program’s single-season record for wins by going 10-3 with a 2.28 ERA, while surrendering only 49 hits and 20 earned runs in 79 innings pitched. He struck out 81 and walked just 37, and held foes to a .179 batting average. A 6-foot-5 left-hander, Mellen took last summer off due to back soreness and tightness.

Jacob Wallace

5 Pitcher | UConn
Hometown: Methuen, Mass.
Bats: Right | Throws: Right
Height: 6-foot-1 | Weight: 190 pounds



The UConn set-up man served as the closer for the Bourne Braves in the Cape Cod Baseball League last summer, earning a selection to the league’s All-Star Game. He slammed the door for the West Division in that game, coming on to get the final two outs, both by strikeout. The 6-foot-1 right-hander can showcase a 95-mph fastball.

Also keep an eye on ...

► Jimmy Titus (Stafford, Conn.), IF/P, Bryant
► Billy Seidl (Wellesley, Mass.), P/IF St. Sebastian’s

► Chad Knight (Westport, Conn.), RHP/3B Staples High
► Brandon Dufault (Windham, N.H.), RHP, Northeastern

► Zach Hart (Wallingford, Conn.), RHP, Franklin Pierce
► Max Cotier (New Milford, Conn.), SS/2B, Canterbury

Tucker Flint

6 Outfielder | Bishop Hendricken
Hometown: Warwick, R.I.
Bats: Left | Throws: Left
Height: 6-foot-2 | Weight: 205 pounds

The 6-foot-2, 205-pound high school senior is committed to the University of Maryland. Flint played first base and left field at the Area Code Games in Long Beach, Calif., last summer. He flashed an ability to drive the ball to the middle of the field from the left side. Flint will be a four-year starter for Rhode Island powerhouse Bishop Hendricken.

Chris Galland

7 Outfielder | Boston College
Hometown: Sudbury, Mass.
Bats: Right | Throws: Right
Height: 6-foot-0 | Weight: 190 pounds



Galland is draft-eligible this year after spending a postgraduate year at Cheshire Academy. The two-time Dual County League All-Star at Lincoln-Sudbury was a force on the basepaths for BC as a freshman, swiping 28 bags and scoring 36 runs in 44 starts. He hit .316 for the season — and had his batting average as high as .348 in mid-April.

Jackson Gillis

8 Pitcher | Vanderbilt
Hometown: Wilmington, Mass.
Bats: Right | Throws: Left
Height: 6-foot-3 | Weight: 225 pounds



The 6-foot-3 left-hander hasn’t yet carved out a role at Vanderbilt that would warrant a high selection in the MLB draft, despite the fact that he can throw a 96-mph fastball. Still, if the junior can perform well out of the bullpen this spring, he could perhaps jump toward the top of this list. Last spring, he posted a 4-1 record and 4.81 ERA across 20 appearances.

Ryan Ward

9 Second base/outfield | Bryant
Hometown: Millbury, Mass.
Bats: Left | Throws: Right
Height: 5-foot-11 | Weight: 198 pounds



Ward, the 2018 Northeast Conference Player of the Year, became the first Division 1 player in Bryant program history to hit over .400 (.409) for a season. He set program records in hits (101) and total bases (157). In December, he was named a top 100 player in college baseball by College Baseball Daily and a Preseason All-America selection by Collegiate Baseball.

Bobby Zmarzlak

10 Center field | Westhill High
Hometown: Stamford, Conn.
Bats: Right | Throws: Right
Height: 6-5 | Weight: 195

Zmarzlak also shined at the Area Code Games and East Coast Pro Showcase last summer, displaying serious athleticism and power. The University of Maryland commit stands 6-foot-3 and generally hits leadoff, where he can flash his speed. During his junior season at Staples, Zmarzlak hit .425 with eight home runs and 28 RBI.

UConn closer Wallace hits 95 mph, eyes draft

JAKE WALLACE (Methuen, Mass.) introduced himself to his teammates as the new UConn closer in January by clocking 95 mph on a radar gun during an otherwise uneventful session for pitchers.

“That was his first pitch to live batters,” UConn coach Jim Penders said. “When you see a guy hit 95 mph on Jan. 15, you know he’s diligent and prepared.”

Wallace flashed that same level of diligence and preparation on the Cape last summer when he served as the closer for the Bourne Braves. His 2019 MLB draft stock skyrocketed after earning a CCBL All-Star selection. The UConn setup man made a smooth transition to Cape League closer, running a scoreless-innings streak to 13⅔ innings on the season.

“I didn’t think I’d do that well; I don’t

know if anyone did,” Wallace said. “Now I’m the closer here this year. I don’t think there’s any difference. I felt like a closer last year behind P.J. Poulin because when he was on the mound, the game was over. It didn’t even matter. So, I just have to approach it the same way.”

Wallace has come a long way from his high school days at Methuen (Mass.) High, when he could not convince the UConn staff to extend a scholarship offer to a 165-pound pitcher with an 85-mph fastball. Wallace has since added 30 pounds to his frame, as well as 10 mph to his fastball.

“He really wanted us and we wanted him, but we didn’t have any money for him,” Penders said. “All of our scholarships were gone when he came to our camp after his junior season.”

Wallace had a small role out of the

bullpen as a freshman, but he earned himself a scholarship as a sophomore when he logged 43 1/3 innings out of the bullpen as a setup man. He went 1-0 with a 3.95 ERA and 63 strikeouts in 28 games.

“He has a toughness to him,” Penders said. “He doesn’t back down. He has a great arm and a good slider. He just had to believe he was good. He didn’t trust that he could throw it by guys and get a swing and miss.”

Now, Wallace is well positioned to fulfill his lifelong dream of becoming a professional baseball player. UConn closers historically get drafted, as is evidenced by the recent succession that includes P.J. Poulin (Marion, Mass.; 2018, 11th round), John Russell (Glastonbury, Conn.; 2017, 16th round) and Patrick Ruotolo (Peabody, Mass.; 2016, 27th round).



“Now that I’m here, it’s kind of surreal,” Wallace said. “It’s been a lifelong dream. Going into college, I didn’t think it was possible. It’s great to have that

satisfying feeling that all of the hard work and time I’ve put into the sport is paying off.”

— DAN GUTTENPLAN

UConn Athletics

HEADING INTO THE 2019 SEASON, NEW ENGLAND BASEBALL JOURNAL HIGHLIGHTS THE TOP 20 COLLEGE PITCHERS AT NEW ENGLAND SCHOOLS

COLLEGE ARMS

By Joshua Kummins

THE STARTERS



Nick Dombkowski

Hartford | Sophomore
LHP | West Springfield, Mass.

The rotation-topping sophomore burst onto the scene during the Hawks' first-ever conference title run, winning six games while putting up a 2.88 ERA. Dombkowski ranked third in America East with 71 strikeouts over 90²/₃ innings and became the first to ever take home the league's Pitcher and Rookie of the Year honors in the same season, winning the latter unanimously.

Mason Feole

UConn | Junior
LHP | Wakefield, R.I.

Feole joined the likes of Anthony Kay and Tim Cate in the line of left-handers to sit at the top of the UConn rotation, turning his 9-2 sophomore season into a spot on the U.S. Collegiate National Team. During the spring, he posted a team-leading 2.50 ERA and became the first Huskies pitcher since 1979 to strike out 120 batters in a single season.

Sean Mellen

Northeastern | Junior
LHP | Norwood, Mass.

Mellen became the first Northeastern pitcher to post double-digit wins during the program's Colonial Athletic Association era (since 2006) and struck out 81 batters in 79 innings on the way to an NCAA tournament appearance last season. He posted a miniscule 0.72 ERA and posted five of his wins against league competition.

Justin Lasko

UMass | Senior
RHP | Stratford, Conn.

Lasko gave the Minutemen a chance to win each Friday during head coach Matt Reynolds' first season as head coach in Amherst. He amassed a team-leading 2.52 ERA and 63 strikeouts over his 82 innings of work while winning five of his starts. The Connecticut native was about as reliable as they come, working more than seven innings six times and completing three games.

Scott Politz

Yale | Senior
RHP | Austin, Texas

Politz led the Ivy League with a 10-2 record as a sophomore, but he set a career-best with a 3.07 ERA though he only won five games last spring. The 6-foot-2, 205-pound Texan struck out 64 batters in 88 innings of work during his junior campaign and nabbed first-team All-Ivy honors for the third consecutive season.

Tyler Wilson

Rhode Island | Redshirt Senior
LHP | Palmer, Mass.

Wilson's résumé is as accomplished as any New England pitcher, though injury set him back early in a 2017 season that began with the highest of MLB draft hopes. He earned 19 wins over his first two seasons, including 13 in 15 starts as an All-American sophomore. Wilson returned to a weekend role last year despite winning only three games. His place should be no different in 2019.

THE STARTERS (continued)

John Signore

Fairfield
Senior | RHP | Wallingford, Conn.

Signore has a chance to rewrite the pitching record books during one final season in Fairfield after becoming the fourth Stag to post 200 career strikeouts as only a junior. The 5-foot-11, 230-pound righty enjoyed a six-win campaign to lead the team and ranked second in the MAAC with 91 strikeouts, including a career-high 14 during an eight-inning gem at Canisius in March.

Steve Theetge

Bryant
Senior | LHP | Syracuse, N.Y.

Theetge again is expected to lead the rotation for a Bulldogs team that has been the class of the Northeast Conference for years and enters his senior campaign with 23 career wins, ranking seven shy of the school record holder. He earned five of his six victories in league play last spring and fanned a career-high 70 over 87¹/₃ innings, the most by a southpaw in Bryant's Division 1 history.



Nathan Florence

Hartford
Junior | RHP | Wilbraham, Mass.

As far as strikeout pitchers, Florence ranked high on the charts among New Englanders in 2018. He opened his college career with 42 in 46¹/₃ innings before more than doubling his total to 93 in 85²/₃ frames during a four-win sophomore campaign, ranking third in the region and behind only current Atlanta Braves lefty Sean Newcomb (Middleboro, Mass.) in the Hawks' single-season annals.

Matt Cronin

UMass Dartmouth
Senior | RHP | Framingham, Mass.

Cronin is the only starting pitcher from New England to be recognized as a D3baseball.com Preseason All-American after posting a 6-1 record and a 0.99 ERA that ranked second in the country. He allowed only 4.95 hits per nine innings while competing in one of the most competitive Division 3 conferences, and his 0.91 WHIP ranked 11th nationally. Cronin earned a temporary contract with the Cape Cod Baseball League's Harwich Mariners over the summer.

Zach Hart

Franklin Pierce
Senior | RHP | Wallingford, Conn.

Hart earned Northeast-10 Conference first-team honors after posting an 8-1 record and 1.97 ERA and then strutted his stuff among the best players in all of college baseball. Over the summer, the rising senior fanned 25 and allowed only eight earned runs in 33¹/₃ regular season and playoff innings for the Cape Cod Baseball League champion Wareham Gatemen.

THE SWINGMEN

Nick Rand

UMass Lowell | Senior
RHP | Hyde Park, N.Y.

Rand has produced in any role in which head coach Ken Harring has placed him, averaging more than a strikeout per inning (104 in 97¹/₃) through his first three collegiate seasons. The senior not only holds the program's Division 1 career record with 11 saves, but he also made four starts after moving to the top of the team's weekend rotation late last season.

Cody Laweryson

Maine | Junior
RHP | Bingham, Maine

Laweryson picked up some of the slack in Maine's rotation with redshirt senior Justin Courtney (Bangor, Maine) out for most of last season due to injury. He won three games and saved two more in 21 appearances, including four starts. He ranked second on the Black Bears with 52 strikeouts in 52²/₃ innings and showed excellent control, walking only nine.

Hunter Bigge

Harvard | Junior
RHP | Los Gatos, Calif.

Bigge emerged as one of the region's top two-way players last spring, making 10 appearances on the mound while also appearing in the Crimson batting order for every game. On the mound, he won three games, saved three more and struck out 31 in 29²/₃ innings of work before earning Northwoods League All-Star honors during the summer for the Duluth Huskies.



Dan Metzdorf

Boston College | Senior
LHP | Burlington, Mass.

The numbers can be deceiving, but Metzdorf has been a trusted member of BC's rotation for each of the past two seasons and returns to campus after being drafted by the New York Yankees last June. The Eagles hope their bats can create some more luck for the lefty who struck out 61 over 69 innings last year but won just once despite working at least seven frames five times.

THE BULLPEN

Jacob Wallace

UConn | Junior
RHP | Methuen, Mass.

Wallace primarily served as the bridge to ace closer P.J. Poulin during 28 appearances in 2018, but he made a name for himself most during a stellar stint at the back end of the Bourne Braves bullpen in the Cape League. He tossed 12²/₃ innings of scoreless, six-save ball over the summer, touching 98 mph with his fastball while also featuring a wipeout slider.

Andrew Misiaszek

Northeastern | Senior
LHP | Oceanside, N.Y.

The veteran lefty led the Colonial Athletic Association with 29 appearances and posted 12 saves during the Huskies' historic run to NCAAs, making him New England's top returning closer. He piled up 64 strikeouts in 56²/₃ innings and held opponents to a .234 average before then posted three wins, five saves, and a 1.11 ERA for the Cape League's Harwich Mariners.



Austen Michel

Dartmouth | Junior
RHP | South Hamilton, Mass.

Michel earned Futures Collegiate League Pitcher of the Year honors after his first collegiate season and then emerged as the Ivy League's top closer as a sophomore. He logged six of his league-leading seven saves and posted a 2.78 ERA that ranked fourth during Ancient Eight play, while his 1.39 walks per nine innings were the fewest among qualifying Ivy pitchers.

Brandon Dufault

Northeastern | Sophomore
RHP | Windham, N.H.

Dufault ranks highly among the region's rising stars. After appearing in 17 games out of the bullpen and winning two as a Northeastern freshman, the 6-foot-5, 190-pounder earned Futures Collegiate League Pitcher of the Year honors for his summer efforts with the Nashua Silver Knights. Dufault went 4-1 with a 1.31 ERA over 41¹/₃ innings, striking out 40 and walking only 10.

Drew Farkas

Hartford | Junior
LHP | Southington, Conn.

Farkas worked in front of closer Seth Pinkerton in the Hawks bullpen last season, leading the team with seven victories (and one save) in 27 appearances. He posted a 3.15 ERA and struck out 42 batters over 40 innings of work to lead the team's relievers before nailing down five saves as Dufault's summer teammate in Nashua.

WITH THE 2019 SEASON JUST AROUND THE CORNER, NEBJ HIGHLIGHTS THE TOP 10 PREP AND HIGH SCHOOL PITCHERS IN NEW ENGLAND

PREP AND HIGH SCHOOL ARMS

By Joshua Kummins

Billy Seidl St. Sebastian's Senior RHP | Wellesley, Mass.

Seidl served as co-ace for the Independent School League champion Arrows, earning MVP and Pitcher of the Year honors after going 7-0 with a 0.58 ERA and 63 strikeouts in 48 1/3 innings. The Duke commit, who also quarterbacked the St. Sebastian's football team, played for the New England Ruffnecks and Area Code Yankees over the summer, showing a fastball that hit 94 mph.

Max Meier

Lawrence Academy | Senior RHP | Belmont, Mass.

Meier made a statement during his first spring at Lawrence Academy after transferring from his hometown Belmont High. The Stanford commit was the ISL's top strikeout pitcher with 73 in 43 innings and posted a 1.15 ERA before joining Seidl and Keane on the Area Code Yankees over the summer.

Matt Joyce St. Sebastian's Junior | RHP | Braintree, Mass.

Joyce capped off his sophomore season with a 5-1 record and 0.97 ERA, cementing his place as a top underclassman arm in the region. The future Boston College right-hander was on the mound as the Arrows clinched their second consecutive ISL title outright as he tossed six innings of three-hit ball against Thayer.

Aeden Finateri Avon Old Farms Sophomore | RHP | Watertown, Conn.

The Boston College commit burst onto the New England prep scene as a freshman for one of the region's most consistent programs, striking out 33 batters in 23 innings. Ace Ryan Cusick is gone to Wake Forest, so Finateri's important role on the Winged Beavers should increase during his second season.

Jackson Emus Phillips Andover Senior | RHP | Clinton, Mass.

With Anthony Redfern (Georgetown) and Travis Lane (Boston College) graduated to the Division 1 level, the Princeton-bound Emus will have the opportunity to take over atop the Big Blue rotation come spring. The 6-foot-6, 225-pound righty was unblemished on the mound last year, going 4-0 with a 0.64 ERA and 43 strikeouts in 32 2/3 innings.

Josh Richardson Dexter Southfield Senior | RHP | Brookline, Mass.

Richardson served as one of the pitching leaders for Dexter Southfield, helping head coach Dan Donato's team to its third consecutive NEPSAC title with six innings of one-run ball against Canterbury. The Yale-bound righty's junior season also included an 11-strikeout effort against local rival Belmont Hill.

Carter Cousins Suffield Academy Senior | RHP | Westfield, Mass.

Cousins has been a varsity contributor during each of his first three seasons at Suffield, earning Western New England Prep Second Team All-League honors and committing to Georgetown last year. He posted 38 strikeouts in 38 1/3 innings and won three games.

► Billy Seidl (right), who won ISL MVP and Pitcher of the Year honors last year for St. Sebastian's, is committed to Duke.

Sebastian Keane North Andover High | Senior RHP | North Andover, Mass.

The Northeastern commit enters his final scholastic spring as one of the region's top high school arms and also ranks second among NEBJ's top MLB draft prospects. Keane was named MVP of the Merrimack Valley Conference after striking out 74 batters in 44 innings and going 4-1 with a 0.32 ERA last spring.



Dylan Castaneda Salisbury Senior | RHP | Flushing, N.Y.

Most of Salisbury's wins went to Theo McDowell (Texas Rangers) and Emmet Sheehan (Boston College) last spring, but Castaneda should see plenty more time on the mound after playing a regular offensive role for the defending Western New England champions. The Michigan commit pitched in relief and earned a postseason victory against Suffield.

Jake McOsker Belmont Hill Senior | LHP | Acton, Mass.

McOsker enters his final spring in the prep school ranks as one of New England's top lefties. He earned All-ISL honors last year after dealing 56 strikeouts.

More prep school pitchers to watch

- Grady Bohen, Choate
- Garrett Coe, Gunnery
- Sean Dennehy, Choate
- Will Greer, Roxbury Latin
- Noah Jensen, Millbrook
- Shane Kim, Groton
- Will McFadden, Belmont Hill
- Harry McKinlay, Thayer
- Jake McOsker, Belmont Hill
- Brendan O'Donnell, Dexter Southfield
- Joey Ryan, Roxbury Latin
- Jack Schwartz, Noble and Greenough
- Wyatt Scotti, St. Mark's
- Ryan Sullivan, Choate
- Jack Thorbahn, Thayer
- Tyler Van Dyke, Suffield

More high school pitchers to watch

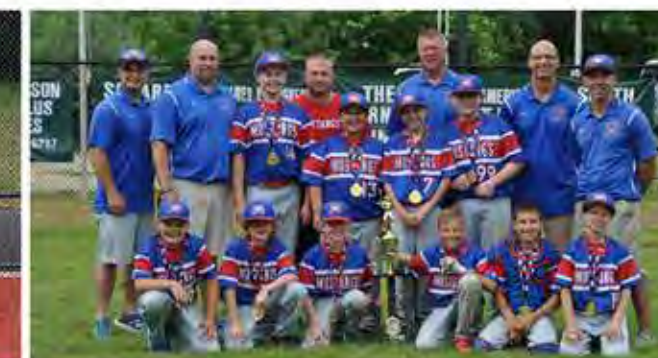
- Jack Ambrosino, South Burlington (Vt.) HS
- Matt Burnett, Ellsworth (Maine) HS
- Matt Cook, Coventry (Conn.) HS
- Zach Cowperthwaite, Bangor (Maine) HS
- Broc French, South Kingstown (R.I.) HS
- Ben Harrison, Chariho (R.I.) HS
- Saul Minaya, Colchester (Vt.) HS
- Hunter Owen, South Portland (Maine) HS
- Cam Schlittler, Walpole (Mass.) HS
- Matt Smaldone, Bishop Hendricken (R.I.) HS

Dove Arnold Photography (Keane); courtesy North Andover High (Keane)



NEW ENGLAND AAU

www.neaaubaseball.org



LEAGUES

- Spring, Summer, Fall 2019
- 450+ teams
- CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT
- Multiple Skill Levels
- League & Non-League Games
- Playoff Tournament
- Visit Us Online & Sign Up to Play!

@NEAAUbaseball & @AAUBaseball



TOURNAMENTS

- April, May, June, July, August -
- Located in MA, NH, RI -
- Quality Venues & Well Organized -
- Always Sell Out Early! -



@NEAAUbaseball & @AAU_Baseball

NATIONAL EVENTS

National AAU event opportunities exist for 9-19u teams at amazing venues and family friendly destinations.

- AAU National Championships
- West Coast Jr. Olympic Games
- Midwest Championship
- AAU National Convention
- Now Accepting Teams for 2019!



NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL AAU

www.aaubaseball.org

INTERNATIONAL AAU

Play against international competition both here and abroad. AAU's International program is growing!

- AAU USA International Collegiate Team -
- AAU International Championship -
- Recent travel to: Ireland, Scotland, Spain -
- Teams Visit from International Cities -
- Now Accepting Applications for 2019! -

THE TRUTH ABOUT TOMMY JOHN SURGERY

It's the most infamous injury in baseball, and more and more pitchers are undergoing the procedure. While success rates soar and success stories abound, the road to recovery is never easy.

By Mike Zhe



◆ Tommy John — the pioneering patient of the surgery that now bears his name when Dr. Frank Jobe performed ulnar collateral ligament reconstruction on his left elbow 45 years ago — shows off his scar (left) last year. John (above) returned to pitch 15 more seasons, laying the groundwork for pitchers to rebound from what was once a career-ending injury. Now, surgeons such as Dr. James Andrews and Dr. Luke Oh have mastered the procedure, and while pitchers often bounce back with great success, the rehab and return path is no easy road.

Stan Grossfeld/The Boston Globe via Getty Images (main); Louis Requena/MLB Photos via Getty Images (inset)

ANDREW CHIN HASN'T GIVEN UP the dream. Two months before most minor-league players will report to training camps in Arizona and Florida, the 26-year-old Newton, Mass., native doesn't have a contract but does have plenty of optimism. He's throwing and working out in Orange County, Calif., under the eye of Tom House, the founder of the National Pitching Association. In the last 1½ years, he's completely revamped his regimen as it relates to pitching, as well as nutrition and strength and conditioning. "I think," he said, "I'm a better pitcher now than I've ever been."

That Chin still hasn't given up on his dream wouldn't surprise anyone who watched the 6-foot-1 left-hander star at Buckingham, Browne & Nichols and in showcase tournaments nearly a decade ago. So impressive was he that the Toronto Blue Jays spent a fifth-round draft pick on him back in 2011.

But the straight line to The Show never happened. Instead, like a growing number of pitchers from the region, his career was detoured, pointed down a physically and emotionally draining path with the news that he would need ulnar collateral ligament reconstruction.

Tommy John surgery. Just like they know the pitching rubber is 60 feet, 6 inches from home plate, baseball pitchers know the origin of the procedure. Left-handed pitcher Tommy John was pitching the Los Angeles Dodgers to their first pennant in eight years in 1974 when he damaged the ligament in his left elbow, an injury many thought at the time would be career-ending.

Dodgers team physician Dr. Frank Jobe performed what was then called a revolutionary surgical operation, replacing the damaged ligament with a tendon from John's right forearm. He missed the entire 1975 season but returned in '76 and pitched for 15 more seasons with the Dodgers, Yankees, Angels and A's.

Jobe, at the time, gave the surgery a 1 in 100 chance of leading to a complete recovery. Today, the surgery is successful more than 90 percent of the time. But there remains post-surgery challenges, both physical and emotional; typically, pitchers stay off the mound for at least 12 months. "I think that's one of the biggest misconceptions about the surgery," said former UConn star Dan Mahoney (Brighton, Mass.), who underwent the procedure in 2009, "that once you get it, you're going to come back and everything's going to be fine."

Chin was a senior at BB&N when he felt something "weird" in his elbow while pitching a preseason game. When an MRI pointed him to the surgery, he knew exactly what it was.

"I first heard about it when I was a kid," he said. "I thought it was one of those things that would be terrible to go through and I hoped I didn't have to go through it."



▶ Andrew Chin



'I think I'm a better pitcher now than I've ever been.'

— Andrew Chin (Newton, Mass.), who underwent Tommy John surgery while at Buckingham, Browne and Nichols and rebounded to star at Boston College and pitch in the Yankees system.

Still, the list of pitchers who've undergone Tommy John surgery and returned to pitch at a high level is massive, dozens from New England alone, a group that includes former big-league stars Jason Bere (Wilmington, Mass.), Chris Carpenter (Raymond, N.H.) and Brian Wilson (Londonderry, N.H.) twice.

Though the injury is not exclusive to pitchers, they are in the majority. Some thrive after it, such as Braves stalwart John Smoltz, who had the surgery before the 2000 season and went on to have a Hall of Fame career. Others, though they come back and pitch, don't pitch with the same velocity or effectiveness they once had.

Tommy John surgery still detours careers. But not fatally.

"The success rates are a little over 90 percent now," said Eric Cressey, the president and co-founder of Cressey Sports Performance, based in Hudson, Mass. "I think in years past if you were a high school kid that had Tommy John, pro teams were like, 'Those guys don't make it to the big leagues.' Now you're seeing guys that not only have it but get \$3 million in the draft or are still first-rounders."

THE MOST FAMOUS sports physician in America is Dr. James Andrews, the Birmingham, Ala.-based orthopedic surgeon whose roster of teams and clients seems endless: Bere, Chris Capuano (West

Continued on Page 22

John Quackenbos/Boston College Athletics

Otto Greule Jr. (Bere), Rick Stewart (Rose)/Alisport; Ezra Shaw (Collins), Elsa (DeCarmen), Jim McIsaac (Hill), J. Meric (Pavano)/Getty Images; Mark Cunningham (Furbush), Mark Cunningham (Harvey)/MLB Photos via Getty Images



▶ Jason Bere (Wilmington, Mass.)



▶ Tim Collins (Worcester, Mass.)



▶ Manny Delcarmen (Hyde Park, Mass.)



▶ Charlie Furbush (South Portland, Maine)

Tommy John surgery patients from New England

There are at least 50 players with New England connections who have played professional baseball and undergone Tommy John surgery. This list may not be comprehensive, but provides a good overview of the scope of local players who have experienced Tommy John. The organization is the MLB system the player played in during or after his surgery, and the level is the highest level played at the time of surgery.

PLAYER	NEW ENGLAND CONNECTIONS	SURGERY DATE	ORG.	LEVEL
Rocco Baldelli	Woonsocket, R.I. / Bishop Hendricken	June 2005	TB	MLB
Jason Bere	Wilmington, Mass. / Middlesex CC	Sept. 13, 1996	CHW	MLB
Drew Bigda	Stamford, Conn. / Holy Cross	2006	TB	A
Jeff Burke	Loomis Chaffee / Boston College	April 2015	SF	College
Chris Capuano	West Springfield, Mass.	May 17, 2002 & May 15, 2008	MIL	MLB
Andrew Carignan	Norwich, Conn.	June 19, 2012	OAK	MLB
Chris Carpenter	Raymond, N.H.	July 24, 2007	STL	MLB
Curt Casali	New Canaan, Conn.	June 9, 2009	DET	College
Tim Cate	Manchester, Conn. / UConn	January 2014	WAS	HS
Scott Chiasson	Norwich, Conn. / Eastern Connecticut State	Aug. 7, 2002	CHC	AAA
Andrew Chin	Newton, Mass. / BB&N / Boston College	May 2011	NY Yankees	HS
Alex Cobb	Born in Boston	May 14, /2015	TB	MLB
Tim Collins	Worcester, Mass.	March 11, 2015 & April 15, 2016	KC	MLB
Austin DeCarr	Foxboro, Mass. / Salisbury	May 12, 2015	NY Yankees	Rookie
Manny Delcarmen	Hyde Park, Mass.	May 2, 2003	BOS	A+
Chris Denorfia	Southington, Conn. / Wheaton	April 3, 2007	CIN	MLB
Eric Eadington	Harvard	August 2008 & April 2014	LAD	College and AA
Tip Fairchild	Monmouth, Maine / Southern Maine	May 2007	HOU	AA
Charlie Furbush	South Portland, Maine / St. Joseph's College	June 2008	DET	A
Michael Gibbons	Simsbury, Conn. / Avon Old Farms / Wheaton	May 17, 2016	NY Yankees	A+
Brandon Gomes	Fall River, Mass.	2004	SD	College
Marvin Gorgas	East Hampton, Conn.	July 2014	SEA	Rookie
Jesse Hahn	Norwich, Conn.	August 2010	TB	College
Matt Harvey	Mystic, Conn.	Oct. 22, 2013	NY Yankees	MLB
Steve Hathaway	Acton, Mass. / Franklin Pierce	2011	ARI	College



▶ Matt Harvey (Mystic, Conn.)



▶ Rich Hill (Milton, Mass.)



▶ Carl Pavano (Southington, Conn.)



▶ Brian Rose (Dartmouth, Mass.)

Primary source: Jon Roegele, @MLBPlayerAnalys, goo.gl/3IN6HM

'The uncomfortable trend is the increased numbers of Tommy John surgery being performed in our high school and adolescent population.'

— Dr. Luke Oh, orthopedic surgeon at Massachusetts General Hospital

Continued from Page 20

Springfield, Mass.), Carl Pavano (Southington, Conn.) and Matt Harvey (Mystic, Conn.) all saw Andrews for Tommy John surgery at points in their careers.

One of Andrews' proteges, Dr. Luke Oh, an orthopedic surgeon at Massachusetts General Hospital, notes that the surgery has evolved significantly since 1974, in part due to the higher quality of imaging.

But Oh stresses that a doctor's job doesn't stop with the surgery, which involves drilling holes into bones in the patient's upper and lower arm, and threading a healthy tendon through them. The recovery is both physical and mental for the athletes, which means that doctors such as Oh need to "walk the journey."

Immediately after the surgery, there can be pain and swelling, which can scare patients. As the patient realizes he's healing and starting to feel good, there's often the need to "pull the reins in" so they're not trying to do too much, too soon.

As the rehab winds down and the athlete is close to returning, doubt can enter the picture: "Am I really ready for this? Can I throw the way I used to?"

Mahoney can speak to that.

After starring at Cushing Academy and as a reliever at UConn, and being drafted by the Marlins in the fourth round in 2009, he was converted to a starter while playing short-season Single-A ball in Jamestown, N.Y. Looking back, he recognizes that his elevated pitch count likely contributed to what would be diagnosed as a partial ligament tear.

The rest of his summer was unsettling. In addition to the growing worries about



▶ Dan Mahoney

his baseball future, he wasn't getting definitive answers from the Marlins medical staff. One doctor suggested he wait six weeks and then resume throwing. The other put his odds at needing surgery at 50/50.

While he didn't want to rock the organizational boat, he also was getting impatient for someone to make a decision that would allow him to plan his future.

"Baseball is a game where time is not on your side," he noted.

He decided to fly to Alabama to see Dr. Andrews, who gave him the straight answer he was looking for.

"He said: 'Your elbow's torn. I'll see you in surgery tomorrow morning,'" Mahoney said. "It was almost a relief."



Ronald Martinez (Wilson), Ezra Shaw (Carpenter and Morton)/Getty Images

▶ **Three New England natives have gone on to pitch in and win the World Series after undergoing Tommy John surgery: Brian Wilson (left) with the Giants in 2010, Chris Carpenter (center) with the Cardinals in 2011, and Charlie Morton (right) with the Astros in 2017.**

The surgery and rehab went well, and Mahoney was back pitching the next season, making 12 starts in Single A. But he struggled with his control, stemming from a loss of feeling in his pinky finger. The Marlins released him before the draft in 2011.

"Once you start struggling with the stuff that's always come natural to you, anxiety starts to build," he said. "You're getting paid to throw a baseball and you can't do it."

His career never got back on the track he wanted after the surgery. Even with a successful operation and a setback-free rehab, he wasn't the pitcher he'd once been.

"The surgery's the easy part," Mahoney noted. "They've got that nailed down now."

I**N 15 BIG-LEAGUE** seasons following his recovery from the surgery that now bears his name, John won 164 games, giving him 288 wins for his career, the seventh-most all-time among left-handed pitchers.

Those are the good numbers. Other numbers are more troubling.

A recent study published in the American Journal of Sports Medicine showed that, of the nearly 800 patients who underwent Tommy John surgery between 2007 and 2011, 57 percent of them were in the 15-19 age group.

"The uncomfortable trend is the increased numbers of Tommy John sur-

gery being performed in our high school and adolescent population," said Oh, who serves as team orthopedist for the New England Patriots and New England Revolution, and consults the the Red Sox. "Over the years, my mentor, Dr. Andrews, established its increase in his practice and my practice has mirrored that. The question to ask is, 'Why is that happening?'"

More injuries often result from more throwing. A generation ago, teens played for their high school team in the spring and maybe a summer team before turning their attention to other pursuits.

It's different today. Across the region, many ballplayers come from affluent suburbs, whose parents can fund spots on AAU and other travel teams that aren't bound by the cold New England winter weather. The increased number of indoor facilities also gives more teens the chance to play year-round.

There was once a school of thought that New England players had lower baseball "odometers" because they couldn't play as much as athletes from the warm-weather regions. Not anymore, though.

"Nowadays, no one makes that observation because of the number of indoor facilities," Oh said. "We need to be careful about recognizing which athletes are

ready to participate in those activities versus athletes that need the offseason to rest and recover."

Too much throwing and throwing with poor technique can increase that chance of damaging the elbow ligament.

"Typically, we talk about the flaws in training, the flaws in overexposure and increased volume," Oh said. "There are certain levels of participation that are safer for young athletes who are still growing with an immature, young skeleton."

In July 2016, the National Federation of State High School Associations mandated that each state association must establish pitch count rules regarding number of pitches thrown to "afford pitchers a required rest period between pitching appearances."

There is less regulation in offseason ball.

"I think it's pretty widespread, a known fact, that if you throw too much or you're not taking care of yourself, the risk of injury is there," said Christian Wonders, the pitching coordinator at Cressey Sports Performance. "But I do a lot of educating to parents on when to go to showcases and when not to, stuff like that. There's a lot of showcases and camps now that basically are right in the middle of when guys should be either shut down or in the process of ramping up."



▶ Dr. Luke Oh

'I think that's one of the biggest misconceptions about the surgery, that once you get it, you're going to come back and everything's going to be fine.'

— Former UConn star Dan Mahoney (Brighton, Mass.), who underwent the procedure in 2009

It's not always as simple as choosing to take some time off. As an increasing number of teens — and parents — see college scholarship dollars as the pot of gold at the end of the baseball rainbow, there's a pressure to keep up.

"If a number of players for your team are going down to play a tournament in Florida or Georgia, it's real tough to tell your son, 'I think you've been playing too much and we need to pull you back,'" Oh said. "That's tough to do."

T**HOUSANDS OF** New England teens grow up wanting to reach the major leagues. Few do. It's a difficult road faced with all kinds of obstacles, injury being just one of them.

One study shows that only 13.5 percent of ballplayers, once they sign a professional contract, even make it to Double A, two steps below the majors.

Mahoney never got there. After being released by the Marlins, he auditioned

for the Yankees and signed with them, spending another 1½ years with their Single-A affiliates before getting released.

"Coming back from being released twice, it's a long road ahead," he reasoned. "You've really got to pitch well and find the right organization to propel your career forward."

Today, he runs Mahoney Performance Training, based in northern Virginia. In addition to coaching youth teams in the area, he guides his athletes in the areas of functional movement, corrective exercise and proper nutrition.

"Hanging around training rooms and weight rooms for nine months, you kind of get interested in the stuff," he said.

For Chin, the surgery robbed him of his freshman season at Boston College. The next year, he was part of BC's starting rotation, his fastball pretty close to the mid-to-upper-80s he was throwing at BB&N.

He spent two summers pitching in the Cape Cod Baseball League and was drafted by the Yankees in the 15th round



Courtesy Dan Mahoney

▶ **Dan Mahoney (Brighton, Mass.) pitched in 75 minor-league games over five seasons in the Marlins and Yankees organizations, including 35 for the Charleston River Dogs in 2012.**

in 2014. After making 28 appearances for a pair of their Single-A teams, he was released and resurfaced in the independent Can-Am League.

Looking back to his May 2011 surgery, Chin remembered being shocked at the amount of time he'd need to recover.

"I remember sitting in Dr. Oh's office, going through the paperwork and he was saying, 'Fall of 2012,'" Chin said. "For me, that felt like forever."

Forty-five years after Jobe, who passed away in 2014, first performed the surgery, it's come a long way, both in how effectively it's performed, how often it's performed and how athletes can perform afterward.

"It's no longer that great career-ender," Chin said. "It's just a major bump in the road. But you still have a chance to get to where you want to go."

@MikeZhe603

mzhe@baseballjournal.com

KEY FEATURES

- UV stabilized
- Lightweight for fast and easy installation
- Low permeability
- Cold-crack resistant
- White covers available
- Heavy-duty sandbags available upon request

PROTECT BASEBALL FIELDS FROM ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS

Made in USA

800.231.6074 • reefindustries.com
9209 Alameda Genoa Rd. Houston, Texas 77075

The Original Iron Mike



Accept No Imitations.

www.masterpitch.com

A pitching coach’s thoughts on Tommy John surgery

Tommy John surgery is becoming an ever increasing part of my life as a college pitching coach. Here are some of my thoughts on TJS:

Why the increase?

- It's safe to say the act of overhand throwing itself isn't the best thing for the body. We all would be hard pressed to find another position in another sport that puts the demand on the muscles, joints and ligaments as pitching does to the elbow.
- If the delivery is inefficient or the pitcher's body isn't fully developed enough, the act of pitching will find the weakest link in the body, which is most often the elbow.
- The fact remains that most pitchers don't throw enough (regular catch, long toss, bullpen sessions) for the amount of in-game live pitching that they do. The arm needs proper build-up and maintenance to keep it healthy.
- From my perspective as a college coach, I see two emerging trends that are not good for the pitcher. The first is week-

end tournaments. Teams go all week without playing and then may play as many as six games in a weekend. Pitchers often throw beyond what they are capable of doing, throw two or three times in a short period without proper rest. Even worse for the two-way kids who pitch, they then throw more as position players.

- Showcases. Amazingly, pitchers are throwing all out with very little rest, sometimes no rest, between events. I understand the pressure on pitchers to get exposure, but this is a surefire way to bring on a long-term injury.
- Lastly, because Tommy John surgery has such a solid track record, many kids who previously would have opted for rest, rehab, platelet-rich plasma (PRP) injections, etc., simply opt for the surgery to be done once and for all (they hope) with

elbow pain, and they believe they will come back stronger.

Recruiting impact:

- Most of the major college programs and pro teams will be just as interested in pitchers who have had Tommy John, assuming they recover and throw as they did before. I have even heard some coaches/scouts say they would prefer a player to have had it prior to their time in college/minors as they believe it is going to happen at some point, so it might as well happen prior.
- The difficulty is if the surgery and recovery happens during the prime recruiting time for the pitcher. If the pitcher didn't have any recruiting attention prior to surgery, he is going to have to fully recover and then get interest like a normal pitcher. For some, this might mean they need to repeat a year, go to a post-grad school or consider the community college route. It would be possible to go to a four-year college and redshirt while recovering, but this assumes the college has interest in you.
- In my 25 years of college coaching, I have had two high school players come

in with the surgery. One had it sophomore year of high school, the other during his senior year. In the college program, I have had five players (one position player) who have gone through all the stages of TJ. The good news is that the rehab program is so structured and proven and the athletic trainers and physical therapists are so good that the road back, while long, is proven if you stick to the program and listen to your arm.

Going forward:

- Pitchers need to plan their throwing, arm care, strength training, and recovery and rest appropriately. They need to advocate for themselves, especially when their arms are feeling signs of fatigue or pain. There are times to push the arm, but for those throwing early in the year, especially in the cold, overuse will lead to problems.

Wayne Mazzoni is the assistant coach at Sacred Heart. Check out Coach Mazzoni's blog at blog.d1pitchingacademy.com.

@CoachMazz

feedback@baseballjournal.com

BACK TO BASICS

After a challenging season, Beede refocuses on the foundations of his success

By Dan Guttenplan

Auburn, Mass., native Tyler Beede, 25, made his major-league debut with the San Francisco Giants last April — at the start of the most challenging season of his professional career.

Beede, a first-round selection in the 2014 MLB draft, struggled in two starts at the major-league level, was moved to the bullpen in Triple A, had an injury scare in July and did not earn a September call-up. He spent the majority of the season at the Triple-A level, posting a 4-9 record with a 7.05 ERA, along with 56 walks and 75 strikeouts in 74 innings.

Beede recently joined New England Baseball Journal for a phone interview from his offseason residence in Houston.



► Tyler Beede made two major-league starts in 2018.

OK, but I decided I need more emphasis on what I'm eating and what it's doing for my body."

So what foods have you cut out of your diet? "I've cut out dairy, red meat, a lot of pasta sauce, pizza sauce, marinara, processed sugars, and I'm staying away from sweets and sodas. Maybe I'll allow a once-a-week thing. I make sure what I'm putting in my body isn't working toward making me sore or causing lactic acid or inflammation. Those foods have triggered bad results in my stomach and body."

What's been the hardest thing to give up? "I love cheese. I'm Italian, so I love cheese and sauce — a good pasta dish. It's easier here in Texas than when I go home for the holidays. There are a lot of Italian dishes. I stayed away from the cheese plates, the sauce with meatballs. That was tough. Italian runs deep in my family. Those are tough to stay away from. My wife loves to cook, and she's been good with helping me eat the right foods."

Happy New Year. How was your Christmas? "Great. I got to come home for four or five days around Christmas. Now, I'm just getting back in the routine here in Houston."

What are your goals for this offseason? "A lot of it has been geared toward getting into my old strength and conditioning routine. I flew back to Boston after the season and met with Eric Cressey for an evaluation and got my offseason program. I'm trying to build a strong foundation and capitalize on the extra month off. I've been off for all of September until now. A good chunk of the focus has been building a strong foundation through my lower body and resting my arm for the first two months of the offseason."

Have you been throwing at all? "Once I was able to pick up the ball again, it became about understanding what I need to get better at and then working on that as soon as possible. I feel comfortable and confident with the strides I've made."

Were you dealing with an injury last season? Did you have to rehab an injury this offseason? "I was completely healthy going into the offseason. I didn't earn a September call-up, so my season ended like the majority of minor-leaguers. I went into September and realized I didn't have the season I wanted. I have to improve and make quite a bit of adjustments. It's not wholesale changes — just building from the positives and learning

from the negatives. The fact that I was able to have that extra month is a blessing in disguise. I would have loved to get more big-league experience, but this may end up being the best thing for me."

Did you learn anything from Eric Cressey's postseason evaluation? Anything that can help you going into this season? "It's just kind of a full-body run-down on health, how my body is moving, flexibility, strength, and an overall scan of how things are going. My arm strength was still fairly strong. I felt strong, so that was more of a positive going into the offseason. I don't need to rehab or take time off from working out. I'll ease right into it and be in a good place mentally so I can attack the offseason from a healthy perspective."

What is the biggest change you've made this offseason? "I really wanted to clean up my eating habits. I put more emphasis on gaining weight in the past, which isn't necessarily bad. But this offseason I wanted to do it in a good way. When I go into the season, I want my body to be in a place where I feel good. I don't just want to look strong and fill out a uniform well. I want to feel good when I'm pitching by eating foods that help me recover from start to start. I think that will play a huge part in staying consistent. I've taken that for granted in the past. I've had great offseasons and put my body in great position, but then let it take a back seat during the season. I thought that was

Are you planning to change anything about your delivery or approach on the mound? "For me, it's about being more athletic with my movements. There are certainly things with my grip. I've closed up my four-seam grip. I've tried to shorten my arm path — not to the point that I throw like Joe Kelly, but I'm going for a more repeatable arm slot that's natural. I'm going for more deception so the hitter can't track the ball early when I break my hand or show the ball behind my body. When it comes out of my hand, that's the first time the hitter is seeing the ball. Then they have to decide, swing or don't swing."

"I wanted to add more deception, that's the biggest thing. Then the other thing is shoring up my off-speed pitches. The curve and changeup have to be repeatable so I'm able to throw them in any count. As of right now, I feel that those two pitches will be a big reason for my success or not."

You had so much success at every level of baseball throughout your entire life — Little League, high school, college, Single A, Double A, etc. It seemed like you were just going to cruise through to the majors without any major adversity. Have you ever had an offseason like this — with so much introspection? "The most recent time I can think back to was right before the 2016 season. That ended up being my best year in a while. I look back at that year, and a lot of things went well that I want to repeat and get back to. I put on a lot of weight that offseason to get stronger. That was something



TYLER'S JOURNAL

Our exclusive Q&A with Tyler Beede regularly since January 2014

I want to replicate. It's about getting back to the foundation of what I was doing. I'm not making wholesale changes, just smaller adjustments that pave the way for consistent results. I want to make sure to build a foundation for the rest of my career rather than make adjustment after adjustment every couple of months. It comes down to me being more confident in what I'm doing and the positive effect that can have on my career. It's about not letting outside voices hinder or change the foundation of what I'm working on."

When you say "outside voices," are you talking about coaches, media members, fans or people on social media? Or all of the above? "It's not a disrespectful thing with pro baseball coaches or pitching coaches outside of pro baseball. I'm being respectful of what they have to offer, and those will certainly make me a better pitcher. But every pitcher should have a clear understanding of his foundation — mechanically and mentally. They want us to get guys out, there's no question. So, I'll go in with my eyes and ears wide open in terms of how to do that. When it comes down to mechanics and how you feel on the mound, you're on an island out there. Nobody is going to save you. When you're at the highest level, you don't want to revert back to what somebody was saying. You want to be clear and convicted with what got you there."

Have you done anything interesting outside of baseball this offseason? "I went to Cuba on a mission trip in early December with a group of baseball guys — umpires, other players, and a couple of chaplains from other organizations. It was a blast. We went into the tougher parts of Cuba and experienced what they're going through there. We'd talk through translators and hear the issues they're struggling with. We got to hang out with baseball kids and impart some of our knowledge. Overall, it was an eye-opening experience. There were a lot of things we took away from it. It was the best part of my offseason so far."

feedback@baseballjournal.com

NEW ENGLAND
BASEBALL JOURNAL

TRIPLE PLAY

LAVIGNE GOES PRO

TURF VS. GRASS FIELDS

NEW ENGLAND
BASEBALL JOURNAL

SEVENTH
HEAVEN

2019 DRAFT PROSPECTS

SEAN NEWCOMB

NEW ENGLAND
BASEBALL JOURNAL

LOCAL
PITCH

NEW ENGLAND
BASEBALL JOURNAL

THE MOST
INFLUENTIAL

PEOPLE IN NEW ENGLAND BASEBALL

only

3 ISSUES

\$5.99

SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY OFFER

for home delivery

of our print magazine

SeamansMedia.com/nebjprint

617-773-9955

How to handle young pitchers

Coaches, Have you ever struggled getting your youth baseball team to listen to you? Of course, you have. It wouldn't be youth baseball without the occasional challenge of behaviors. However, I have a guaranteed way of getting every player on your team to stop in their tracks and immediately turn their attention to you their coach.

Simply ask: "Who would like to pitch today?"

Immediately, you will see 12 hands go up and 24 eyeballs on you pleading for the opportunity to get on the mound. Billy and Jake are no longer beating each other up. Leo and Sam have climbed down from the backstop and are standing at perfect attention, and Christian and Tommy have immediately decided their third trip to the bathroom can wait.

Everyone wants to pitch, but there is only one ball and one mound. Who do you put in? (Well, besides your son, of course.) Do you give everyone a chance? Or just the kids who can throw strikes? Can I pull an 8-year-old from a game knowing it will result in 2,400-word email from his mom at 1 a.m.? Or do I risk a 4,000-word email about how I traumatized him and crushed his confidence by leaving him in too long? And why did I give out my email address?

These are some of the questions that many volunteer coaches struggle with at the youth level.

Sure, we want to be fair and give everyone a chance on the mound, but Johnny can't throw the ball 12 feet never mind 46 feet. What do you do?

Last year, I swung by a game in our local league with the hope of catching the last inning. The first pitch was scheduled for 5:30 p.m. I arrived about 7 p.m. to find out it was the top of third inning despite a six-run mercy rule in effect for each inning. Do you know how many balls need to be thrown for a team to score six runs without getting a hit? I do. The answer is 36. These pitches also weren't "just a bit outside" either.

The sequence looked like this: A pitch



CHRIS FAY

would be thrown, tossed or at times even bowled 17 feet to the left of home plate. The catcher would run — well, walk would probably be more accurate — to retrieve the ball. He would then throw the ball back to the pitcher. Inevitably this ball would either end up going to the shortstop or center fielder. Perhaps it was a bad throw, or perhaps the catcher was trying to send the coach a message. I am not too sure.

Pitcher after pitcher walked hitter after hitter. Every so often a ball would be thrown for a strike which would send shockwaves throughout the stands. The noise would prompt several sleepy fans to look up in anticipation. What did I miss? A hit? A home run? Nope, it was a strike.

Despite the strike call, the batter didn't flinch. He exuded confidence. He knew exactly what he was doing. There's no chance he can do that three times, he thought. He was right. Several pitches later, he would trot to first base, and the slowest carousel in the world continued.

I completely understand the motivation of the coaches from both teams, and I applaud their effort to give every player a chance on the mound. It seems like a great idea, but is it?

By putting a player on the mound before he stands a chance of throwing the most important pitch in baseball — a strike — are we not stunting the development of our hitters? Infielders? Outfielders? Are we creating an experience that is fun and that players will want to come back to the next week? Or are they looking across at the lacrosse field and seeing their friends running around and breaking a sweat and thinking that looks fun? As a player, what incentive do I have to practice if we are all entitled to a chance to the toe the rubber?

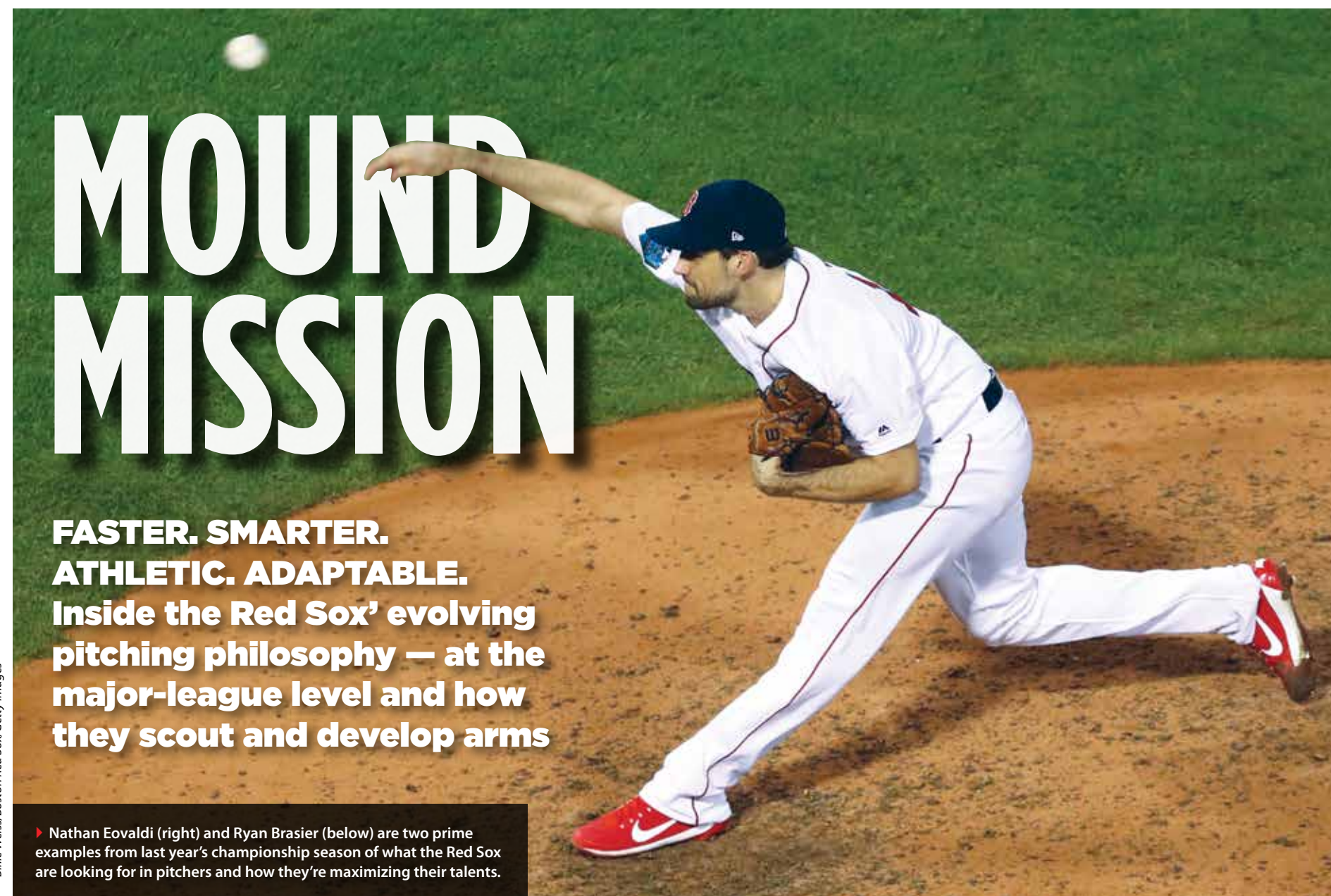
Good coaches do get players into the game and get them feeling connected to the team, but that doesn't mean playing time needs to be equal when it comes to pitching for the simple reason that if a player falls short in the responsibility of the position, it impacts the development of the rest of the players. As a coach, we also have a responsibility to put them in a position to succeed once they do get a chance on the mound.

Here are some suggestions to set up your pitchers up success:

- Everyone gets to pitch on game day, but that doesn't mean everyone pitches in the game. Rather than having 10-12 kids in the dugout, build in a 15-pitch bullpen session for each player throughout the course of the game.
- Chart the pitches. No, you don't have to do it professionally but simply have the pitcher or a teammate keep track of the number of strikes thrown. Can you get six out of 10 over the plate? Give them a goal that they can work toward. Pitching is like anything else, the more you do it, the better you become. If kids can see and feel improvement, they are more likely to continue working hard.
- You can't be a good pitcher until you become a great thrower. Focus on proper throwing fundamentals first.
- Make sure they know the why. Why did the ball go over the catcher's head? Why did the ball land short? If they start to understand why they are missing, then they can make the adjustments.

Chris Fay played collegiate baseball at Gettysburg College and also served as an assistant coach at Newbury College from 2007 to 2009. Chris recently joined Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA) — New England, which works with parents, coaches, players, youth organizations and universities to help change the culture of youth sports. He currently is the commissioner of Wayland Little League's Instructional League program. Chris lives in Wayland with his wife, Gina, and their three children.

feedback@baseballjournal.com



FASTER. SMARTER. ATHLETIC. ADAPTABLE.
Inside the Red Sox' evolving pitching philosophy — at the major-league level and how they scout and develop arms

► Nathan Eovaldi (right) and Ryan Brasier (below) are two prime examples from last year's championship season of what the Red Sox are looking for in pitchers and how they're maximizing their talents.

Billie Weiss/Boston Red Sox/Getty Images

By Ian Browne



WHEN THE RED SOX entrusted Dave Dombrowski to take over their front office in August 2015, there was much speculation that it would signal the team's move away from analytics in favor of a more old-school approach.

What transpired instead was Dombrowski being as adaptive and open-minded as ever, and perfectly willing to install new-age ideas and personnel. And in no area has this been more evident or important than the team's pitching department.

A few weeks after Dombrowski arrived in Boston, he hired Brian Bannister as the team's director of pitching analysis and development. By July 2016, Bannister's duties expanded to assistant pitching coach on the major-league staff, a role he still serves in today.

Though Bannister is just one important piece to the puzzle, his hiring started the organization toward its current path of sophistication and excellence when

it comes to all things pitching. Over the past three seasons, a span which has resulted in three division titles and a World Series championship, the Red Sox rank third in the American League with a 3.83 ERA. Talent, of course, plays a role, and Boston has had some of the best in Chris Sale, David Price, Craig Kimbrel and others. But getting the most out of that talent through exhaustive research takes it to another level.

In 2018, the Red Sox had cohesion in all aspects of their pitching operation. Manager Alex Cora helped set the tone by carefully handling pitcher workloads in spring training and the regular season. And in October, Cora put his starting pitchers into rover mode, where they seamlessly went back and forth from the rotation and bullpen and dominated in both roles. Rookie pitching coach Dana LeVangie sifted through Bannister's data and finetuned his subjects from a mechanical standpoint. Then there was Bannister, the mad scientist behind the scenes.

There's no reason to think the Sox won't again be strong on the mound in '19, particularly with the club already knee-deep in research in ways to avoid



the pratfalls that have plagued past teams in their efforts to repeat. The Red Sox are aiming to be the first repeat World Series champion since the Yankees won their third in a row in 2000.

"The goal is to win a World Series, but we're looking at why teams have a tough time repeating," LeVangie said. "I think we all understand why, but we're trying to view it all and get a sense on how we can do this the best way possible from a pitching standpoint."

THE PITCHING MISSION of the Red Sox is hardly limited to the major-league level. The goal is to spread their beliefs from the ground up.

"Teams have, in the last couple of years, been exploring ways to get more athletic on the mound, ways to push velocity both in training and in pitcher usage, ways to get more creative with the pitch mix," Bannister said. "We've worked more with the medical side to see how often to use pitches, what the actual health effects of individual pitches are."

"I think there were a lot of myths that

Continued on Page 28

RADAR TEE

- ◆ Maximize your ball exit velocity by optimizing your swing speed and efficient energy transfer to the ball
- ◆ Train to hit hard line drives
- ◆ Develop bat control and directivity to hit balls into the gaps
- ◆ Swing in an optimum plane for best hard contact probability

WWW.SPORTSENSORS.COM

adilz@cinci.rr.com
888-542-9246



Recipient of "Best of Show" award at American Baseball Coaches Association Convention in 2016

SPORTS SENSORS, INC.
The Leader in Affordable Sports Radars

PREMIER Park & Play

tel 617.244.3317
www.premierparkplay.com

Mass. State Contract Vendor

A Member of **BuyBoard**
Corporate Purchasing



The exclusive representative for **Classic Recreation Systems, Inc.** in the greater New England area.

© 2019 CRS, Inc.

Continued from Page 27

were circulated over the years that once you're able to test things and do studies and have more accurate data, you get a little more confident on the coaching side of things and the analytics side to implement them and get a little more aggressive in some areas."

How have the Red Sox been able to debunk myths? Allow Bannister to explain.

"Now we have things like the mota sleeve, where you have actual data from the elbow," Bannister said. "And really things when it comes to breaking balls, when it comes to split-finger fastballs, just a lot of things that were shied away from in the past in favor of just sticking with the fastball and focusing primarily on fastball command as the pinnacle of pitching.

"Now I think teams have gone down a lot of different avenues to see how they can approach the performance of their pitchers, and it really still feels like a blank canvas where we're still learning, we're still trying new things and the sky's the limit as long as we can keep collecting data on the pitchers and keep them healthy and figure out better training methods and figure out ways to make them more productive between the lines."

IN THE MEANTIME, the Red Sox have developed a mindset in what they are scouting pitching. What are they looking for with amateur prospects?

"I think they have to have the aptitude for pitching. Now that there are so many more possibilities, you look for a player with a growth mindset that wants to get better," Bannister said. "You look for someone who is open to new ideas and is willing to try things that are being successful at the major-league level or that we predict to be successful in the upcoming years at the major-league level and you look for guys with the body types that are capable of doing things with the baseball that they might not be doing presently.

"You might not have seen them do it, but they show all the indications, where they have hyper-mobility or the ability to spin the ball or you can tell they have a good feel for where their body is at, what their body is



Billie Weiss/Boston Red Sox/Getty Images

doing and all those characteristics really lend itself to them being even better once they get into the minor-league system. There's very few finished products directly out of high school or college anymore just because the major-league game has gotten so good and so competitive so you're looking for all the qualities in guys that can keep improving and keep taking their game to the next level as they get into the minor-league system and progress towards Fenway Park."

And how about when the Red Sox are looking to sign or trade for a pitcher to help the major-league team?

"I think you're looking for players with a unique skillset or the ability to do something that's an outlier," Bannister said. "I love unique pitchers. Pitchers who have something that you can exploit as far as a talent or a skill or a quirkiness about them, that makes it difficult for hitters to square them up. You're look-

ing for guys to stand out from the crowd just because the game has become so much more athletic than it used to be as far as pushing the limits of the physical performance side."

In other words, stuff is just part of the equation. The Red Sox are looking for pitchers who have the tools that can make them separators.

"Anything that can trick the hitters or confuse them or is a different look really stands out nowadays because everybody has so much velocity," Bannister said. "And teams are using different strategies, like 'the opener,' like 'bullpening,' so

(velocity) doesn't go as far as it used to because the hitters that are able to survive in that high-velocity environment can handle the velocity, and so you're looking for a lot of unique qualities in pitchers that can confuse hitters and then cause them to have a lot of missed judgment on squaring up the baseball."

It comes down to a pitching philosophy that the Red Sox are establishing, and a type of pitcher that will come to represent the organization.

"I personally love pitchers that are able to shape the baseball where their arm action and their body is able to do a lot of things," Bannister said. "They're not one-dimensional. They're not just lighting up the radar gun. They can make a ball break multiple ways. They can spin the ball. They create unique angles. They can repeat their delivery to have good balance and poise and competitiveness. Those are all things I look for, and our amateur scouts and pro scouts have done a great job of identifying those guys in recent years and giving the player development staff the opportunity to continue in their development."

RYAN BRASIER and Nathan Eovaldi are two pitchers in this past championship season who represented big organizational victories. Neither was really on the radar when the season start-

► **Nathan Eovaldi** always had velocity but channeled it into multiple pitches to emerge as a key cog for the Sox.

ed. Brasier had pitched seven games — including his MLB debut — in 2013, and didn't pitch in the majors the next four seasons. After spending the '17 season in Japan, he sent an email to all 30 teams asking them to consider him. The Red Sox took him up on the offer and ultimately signed him to a minor-league deal. By July, he earned his way to Boston, where he would emerge into a dominant relief pitcher down the stretch and through the playoffs.

"I had liked Brasier for several years, and he has a lot of things we identify with pitchers that we think would be successful for the Boston Red Sox," Bannister said. "When you finally get a guy with that type of arm speed where he is consistently in the high 90s, the ability to shape a nice slider, the ability to throw a split-fingered fastball, that's an exciting skillset."

Brasier already had the ingredients. The Red Sox simply helped him improve the way he mixed it.

"I think the temptation in the past, before the game became more data-driven, was that pitchers with very quick arms who threw close to 100 mph, the mentality was to make sure you get beat with your fastball," Bannister said. "And we've just learned so much more about how to use that velocity to do a number of different things because it is so important. It can be exploited in so many different styles. To create a little variety with your pitch mix or to use the fastball in different locations than he did in the past, I think the players are realizing that, 'Yes, I throw hard, but maybe I didn't think about using it this way,' and they're able to tap into different styles of pitching while still having that elite tool in their fastball velocity."

Nobody brought more velocity to the Red Sox than Eovaldi after what wound up being a pivotal July trade with the Rays. If the talk shows were furious with Dombrowski for not acquiring a reliever at the trade deadline, the veteran executive proved justified by going with the best pure pitcher who was available.

"He always had the fastball

Continued on Page 32

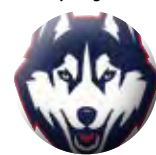
19 FOR '19

WHAT TO WATCH FOR IN DIVISION 1 THIS YEAR

By Joshua Kummins

Huskies from NU and UConn

New England clubs have fared well on the national stage since a whole handful advanced to the NCAA tournament in 2016, including a Boston College club that earned its first-ever Super Regional trip. Last spring was no different as UConn had



more wins away from home (27 road and neutral) than any team in the country and Northeastern earned its first tournament bid, also as an at-large, since 2003.



Though the MLB draft hit both packs of Huskies after last season and led to the early losses of Northeastern outfielder Charlie McConnell (Reading, Mass.) and UConn lefty Tim Cate (Manchester, Conn.) among others, they should reload and maintain their positions among the region's front-runners again in 2019.

Lefties lead the way

There are left-handers aplenty atop New England pitching rotations, but a pair of juniors from the aforementioned clubs — UConn's **Mason Feole** (Wakefield, R.I.) and Northeastern's **Sean Mellen** (Norwood, Mass.) — earned Collegiate Baseball Preseason All-America honors.

Feole became UConn's third U.S. Collegiate National Team pitcher in four years following a 9-2 year, while Mellen was the region's only pitcher to win 10 games last season. Read more about Feole in Prospects Pulse, Page 11.



Hartford sophomore **Nick Dombkowski** (West Springfield, Mass.), Rhode Island redshirt senior **Tyler Wilson** (Palmer, Mass.), and Boston College senior **Dan Metzdorf** (Burlington, Mass.) are several other southpaws back in key starting roles for their teams.

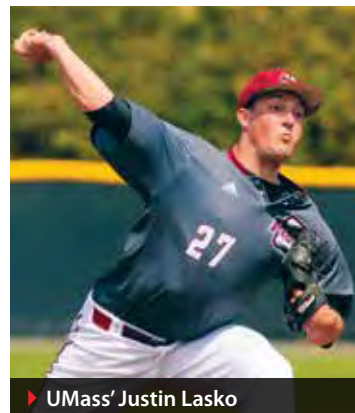
Check out all of the top college pitchers on Page 14.



► Quinnipiac's Liam Scafariello



► UMass Lowell's Steve Passatempo



► UMass' Justin Lasko



► Boston College's Sal Frelick



► Boston College's Chris Galland



► Yale's Scott Politz



► Bryant's Ryan Ward



► Northeastern's Sean Mellen

NEW ENGLAND BASEBALL JOURNAL

DIVISION 1 PREVIEW

TOP 10, TEAM CAPSULES
PLAYERS TO WATCH & MORE

Coming in February
to the all-new
baseballjournal.com

Ward's follow-up

You'd be hard-pressed to find a better pure hitter or a player with a more full trophy case in all of college baseball than Bryant's **Ryan Ward**.

As only a redshirt freshman, the Millbury, Mass., native became the first player in the school's Division 1 history to finish a season batting over .400 and also led the nation with 1.8 hits per game. Ward played all over the diamond last year, but the return of shortstop **Jimmy Titus** (Stafford, Conn.) from a torn ACL should allow him to slot into the outfield every day and create a dynamic 1-2 punch in the batting order.

Dartmouth dandy

Only three players in all of college baseball hit better than Ward in 2018, but one of the hottest bats in the country at the outset of the season belonged to Dartmouth second baseman **Sean Sullivan**. The Hopedale, Mass., native hit at a blistering .540 clip (27-for-50) through his first 12 games and wound up finishing his junior spring with a team-leading .340 average.

Sullivan, who had only 20 plate appearances through his first two seasons with the Big Green, led the Ivy League with a .456 on-base percentage.

Continued on Page 30

Hawks flying high

What a difference a year makes for Hartford. The Hawks were projected to sit in the America East cellar at this time in 2018, but ultimately they won their first-ever league championship after finishing the regular season three games ahead of UMass Lowell and the rest of the pack.

While reigning Player of the Year Nick Campana graduated, the Hawks have senior **Ashton Bardzell** back to lead the way in the outfield. The Ramsey, N.J., native earned his second consecutive first-team All-America East honor and then led the Cape Cod Baseball League's Bourne Braves with a .316 average over the summer.

Bourne identities

Bardzell wasn't the only New England collegian who followed up a strong spring with Bourne. UConn's **Jacob Wallace** (Methuen, Mass.) and UMass' **Justin Lasko** (Stratford, Conn.) shared the John J. Claffey Award as the Cape's top New England prospects after serving as key arms for the Braves.

Lasko won three starts during his second tour of duty on the Cape, while Wallace locked down six saves and went unscored upon in 13⅓ innings in perhaps a preview of a closing role he could take on this spring with the departure of P.J. Poulin (Marion, Mass.) to the Colorado Rockies.

Case for closers

While MLB clubs scooped up Poulin, Hartford's Seth Pinkerton and Rhode Island's Nick Johnson (Worcester, Mass.) last June, several clubs enter this season quite comfortable with who will be working on the mound late in games.

Northeastern senior **Andrew Misiaszek** led the region's returning closers with 12 saves a year ago. Bryant's **Nathan Wrighter** and Dartmouth's **Austen Michel** (South Hamilton, Mass.) led their conferences with eight and seven saves, respectively, before joining forces in the NECBL last summer. Wrighter led the league with nine as the duo combined for 10 of the Newport Gulls' 12 saves as a team.

Conference hopes

Bryant captured its seventh consecutive Northeast Conference regular-season title last spring, extending the longest streak in the country. However, Wagner eliminated the Bulldogs from championship contention for the second consecutive season, and LIU Brooklyn ultimately won its first-ever title.

Yale has enjoyed recent success in the Ivy League, though its third straight Championship Series appearance ended in defeat against a Columbia team over which it held a two-game lead during the regular season. The Bulldogs finished 2018 with a 15-6 mark in Ivy play, thanks in large part to a pair of reigning five-game winners in seniors **Scott Politz** and **Kumar Nambiar**.



Steve Musco/Yale Athletics

Double duty in the Ivy

As far as two-way players, the Ivy League has three of New England's best entering 2019 in the Bulldogs' **Benny Wanger** (above; Newton, Mass.), Harvard's **Hunter Bigge** and Brown's **Garrett Delano**.

In addition to hitting three home runs and driving in 31 as Yale's first baseman, Wanger won two games, saved five more and did not allow a run over 19 Ivy League innings. Bigge hit .273 with 22 RBI in 42 games and had three wins and three saves during his sophomore year, while Delano led the Bears with a .266 average as the left fielder and struck out 38 from the mound.

Out of the Valley

Wanger was one of several New England players who helped the Valley Blue Sox repeat as NECBL champions over the summer, hitting three home runs and working 14 innings out of the bullpen. Quinnipiac outfielder **Andre Marrero** (West Springfield, Mass.) was the star local from the Division 1 ranks as he hit .301 with a team-leading five homers and 32 RBI.

Catcher **Ciaran Devenney** should see plenty of action right away at UMass Lowell. The Mercer Community College (N.J.) and Delaware State transfer hit .278 and drove in 14 runs for Valley.

UMass Lowell loaded

Devenney will receive the offerings of a River Hawks pitching staff that dealt six shutouts last season to lead all of New England's Division 1 teams while joining an offense that returns talent to nearly every position.

UMass Lowell senior **Nick Rand** went from closer to starter last year and picked up three wins after saving four, while **Henry Funaro** (Lowell, Mass.) tied for the club lead with five victories to earn America East All-Rookie honors.

In the field, Lowell returns a pair of All-America East performers in senior first baseman **Steve Passatempo** (Medford, Mass.) and junior outfielder **Cam Climo** (Billerica, Mass.). Climo hit .304 with 32 RBI.



What can Brown do?

Despite finishing at the bottom of the Ancient Eight for the second consecutive season, Brown has to feel good entering this campaign with its entire weekend rotation intact and an experienced lineup taking the field.

Will Tomlinson was an anchor for the starting rotation as a sophomore and finished tops in the Ivy League allowing only 5.61 hits per nine innings. The junior from Irvine, Calif., led the Bears with a 2.91 ERA and was the pitcher of record in two of their six Ivy victories.

In addition, sophomore outfielder **Joe Lomuscio** (West Roxbury, Mass.) hit .306 to earn All-Star honors for the Futures Collegiate Baseball League's Brockton Rox, while third baseman and Phillips Andover product **Rich Ciufo** did the same in the Coastal Plain League.

Boston College freshmen

If summer performances in the Futures League are any indication, several Boston College freshmen are capable of making a major impact. Infielder/outfielder **Sal Frelick** (Lexington, Mass.) was named



Frelick

Top Pro Prospect after hitting .361 with seven home runs, 36 RBI and 22 stolen bases in 35 games for the North Shore Navigators. Infielder **Cody Morissette** (Exeter, N.H.) and pitcher **Emmet Sheehan** (Darien, Conn.) also earned

All-Star nods from the Nashua Silver Knights and Bristol Blues, respectively. They will look to follow up the first-year exploits of Sudbury, Mass., native outfielder **Chris Galland**, whose .316 average and 28 stolen bases helped him to All-ACC third-team honors last spring. Galland went on to play for the Cape Cod Baseball League's Harwich Mariners.

Power players

Quinnipiac senior **Liam Scafariello** (Southington, Conn.) formed the region's top power duo with the graduated Ben Gibson (Sagamore Beach, Mass.) last year and returns to the outfield after leaving the yard 15 times as a junior. Scafariello, returning junior **Evan Vulgamore** (Bow, Mass.) and Gibson hit 43 of the Bobcats' New England-leading 58 homers in 2018.

Maine third baseman **Danny Casals** led America East with 14 homers, while Northeastern first baseman **Jake Farrell** (Westwood, Mass.) finished his All-CAA junior campaign with 11.

Demon Deacons

Outside the Northeast, no school has hit our region harder on the recruiting trail than Wake Forest. The ACC's Demon Deacons have nine New England natives on their 2019 roster, including reigning Freshman All-America outfielder **Chris Lanzilli** (Stoneham, Mass.), weekend starter **Morgan McSweeney** (Hudson, Mass.), and Gatorade Players of the Year from the last two springs in freshman catcher **Brendan Tinsman** (Cape Elizabeth, Maine) and pitcher/outfielder **Brennen Oxford** (Durham, N.H.).

Crusaders news

No qualifying New England pitcher had a lower ERA than Holy Cross righty **Danny Barlok** last spring, but the Shrewsbury, Mass., native with a 1.71 mark over 52⅓ innings won't pitch this season after undergoing Tommy John surgery in August. Instead, Barlok will graduate from Holy Cross and then use his remaining year of college eligibility at Wake Forest in 2020.

Seniors **Pat McGowan** (Wellesley, Mass.) and **Dedan Cronin** should top the Crusaders rotation again, while freshman **C.J. McKennitt** (Concord, Mass.) and sophomore **Liam Dvorak** look to assume key late-game roles in Barlok's absence.



CCSU Athletics / Steve McLaughlin Photography

Healthy Debrosse

Central Connecticut State hopes to have **Chandler Debrosse** (above) healthy for a full season on the infield in 2019. Hamstring issues kept the junior from New Bedford, Mass., out of the lineup for close to two months last season, but Debrosse played in 13 games and hit .391 with seven RBI and six runs scored during the limited action.

A healthy Debrosse at second base will go a long way to helping the Blue Devils return to the upper half of the Northeast Conference, especially after three-time All-New England infielder Dean Lockery (New Britain, Conn.) graduated and signed with the Pittsburgh Pirates.

Fairfield record books

Down the road in Fairfield, **John Signore** will have one final year to move his name up the Stags' career record books. The Wallingford, Conn., native already finds himself ranked highly in numerous categories entering 2019, including fourth in ERA (3.03) and third in strikeouts (225). He also is six wins shy of setting a new program record after going 6-4 with a 2.93 ERA and five complete games last year.

Heart of the order

The graduation of Dan Schock (Cheshire, Conn.) takes 13 home runs and 45 RBI out of the Sacred Heart lineup, but four of the Pioneers' top six run producers are back to improve upon last season's 17-win total.

Junior **Elijah Brown** (Warwick, R.I.) hopes to take a big step in the outfield after driving in 22 runs and stealing 18 bases last season, while **Jake Frasca** (Darien, Conn.) will be a big piece to the puzzle at third base and on the mound behind returners such as senior **Brent Teller** and sophomore **Cooper Thompson** (Clinton, Conn.).

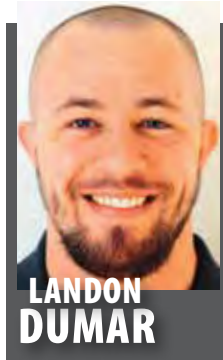
Wood bats, hardened by the cold winters of Maine

www.dovetailbat.com
(207) 695-4663
#HardestWoodInTheGame

Hangin' Out With ...
Fairfield pitcher John Signore: Page 34

f #Dove Tail Bat Company @dovetailbat @DoveTailBats

Imagine a baseball player who all of a sudden begins to struggle at bat. He's not sure what's going on, but his batting average just keeps dropping from strikeout after strikeout, and he feels confused. His coach notices this and says he needs to loosen up. So, the athlete tries to loosen up as he goes up to bat and finds he just gets tighter and has a growing sense



of nervousness and frustration. He just doesn't feel right when he's up there and finds himself adjusting his stance, his grip on the bat and his helmet. He tries focusing on the release point of the ball from the pitcher's hand, then tries clearing his mind, and tries everything he can think of, but the more he does, the less he succeeds in hitting the ball. What might you do if you were this player? One of the concepts I often bring up with an athlete like this is acceptance.

SIMPLE PLAN FOR FOCUSING ON MOMENT

■ Acceptance means letting go of experiences and expectations

This idea can sometimes be met with resistance, because acceptance can be interpreted as giving up, but that's not what I mean at all. I do not encourage my athletes to accept they can't work to improve their performance and influence future outcomes, but instead practice acceptance of their current experience as opposed to getting caught up in trying to change it. What this looks like is that we often look to doing more when faced with a challenge in our performance, instead of looking to rely on our practice and developed skill. If you've ever heard "you're overthink-

ing it," this is in essence what is being described here. Your mind is getting in the way of you performing. With the athletes I work with, I don't tell them what is happening to them but instead encourage them to see if this might be the case. What I often bring up along with this is balanced effort. In all things, we can do too much and also not do enough. Our challenge is to find the balance point for ourselves. For some athletes who have been taught that hard work is the solution to many problems, acceptance can be a helpful concept to help discover where balanced effort exists to aid in their optimal level of performance. When difficulty arises in sports by getting our minds involved and overthinking things, we sometimes can contribute to the problem as opposed to allowing solutions to arise. This is what acceptance looks like: letting go of past experience and future expectations when we are performing and relying on our developed skills. This doesn't mean we can't work to learn from our mistakes, try new strategies and continue to develop our skills through practice, but when it's time to play, we're accepting whatever our experience is in that moment whether pleasant or unpleasant, and allowing our body and mind to go

out and do what it knows how to do. In baseball, there is plenty of time for strategizing and analyzing, but when it's time to go out there and perform, you often are best served to go out there without expectation and do what you do best. I'll offer three simple steps to put this concept into action:

1. READY
Take a moment to prepare yourself to perform. What do you need to get ready — right now, in this moment?

2. SET
Set your focus on the task at hand. All your attention should be brought to performing.

3. GO
Thinking time is over — let the past and the future go. Be here in the moment, and let it fly!

What's wonderful about this process is that it can be completed in just a few moments during the game or span several hours if you're preparing to play. Remember, too, this is just a framework and is designed to give you something to try and make your own. There's no perfect answer for every athlete, and I always encourage my athlete's to develop an awareness and trust of what works best for them over any suggestions I provide. Ready. Set. Go!

Landon DuMar is the Mental Performance Coach at RPM Athlete Performance in Natick, Mass. He currently is pursuing a master's degree in athletic counseling at Springfield College and has experience working with a variety of collegiate and youth athletes, coaches and trainers on the mental aspects of sport and performance that focuses on flow, mindfulness, expertise and positive psychology. His background in counseling psychology and extensive experience working in youth mental health programming informs his holistic approach to health, wellness, and well-being. Learn more at www.rpmathlete.com.

feedback@baseballjournal.com

Red Sox

Continued from Page 28

velocity. He experimented with splitters in the past. He was always trying to find his perfect curveball grip and then he also has the true slider," Bannister said. "I think he just got really comfortable with all those pitches, and I think you saw all of them really take off towards the end of the season. When a hitter has that many pitches at that kind of velocity coming at him, knowing that he's an elite strike thrower, that's just a difficult thing to hit against."

The fact that LeVangie and Bannister complement each other rather than getting in each other's way has allowed the Red Sox

to maximize their collection of arms. "To be honest with you, just from my own perspective, I think anyone in Major League Baseball who is not willing to go the extra mile, go above and beyond to try to help players, help your team win, probably wasn't going about it the right way," LeVangie said. "It's just changed a little bit more and the front office is involved more with analytics and communication is better than I've seen in the past, it's just a really good flow right now. It's jelling, it's going to continue to grow and I think teams who make adjustments quicker are going to be better in the end."

Ian Browne is the Red Sox beat reporter for MLB.com.

@lanMBrowne

feedback@baseballjournal.com

Try more immune-boosting foods to protect yourself

It's cold and flu season, and nobody has time to get sick, especially athletes. A rough cold or flu virus could take you out for a week or more, forcing you to miss offseason training, practices or games and making getting back into shape harder. To protect yourself this season, try incorporating more of these immune boosting foods — and, of course, get your flu shot:

Vitamins C & E (antioxidants)
Citrus fruits, berries, tomatoes, peppers and spinach all are good sources of vitamin C, an antioxidant that plays a role in immune function, wound healing and collagen formation.

How much do you need? The Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) is 65 to 75 milligrams per day. To put that into perspective, one medium orange has 70 milligrams, almost all of your daily needs. If you're thinking about taking a supplement with more than the RDA, think again — vitamin C is a water-soluble vitamin that gets excreted when we consume more than we need.

Nuts and seeds are great sources of vitamin E, a fat-soluble antioxidant that has a role in immune health. The RDA for vitamin E is 11 milligrams per day,

which can be met with 1 ounce of almonds or sunflower seeds (about 7 milligrams in each), so a handful of each gives you more than your daily dose.

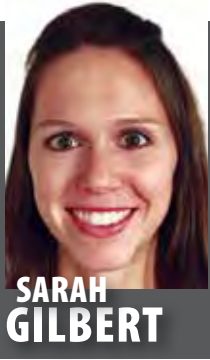
Zinc
Shellfish (specifically oysters), nuts, poultry, red meat, chickpeas and beans all are good sources of zinc, which plays an important role in immune function, wound healing and is a critical component of catalyzing over 100 enzymatic reactions in the body. The RDA for zinc is 9 to 11 milligrams per day, which can be achieved by having 6 ounces of crab, or by combining 3 ounces of beef, a half-cup baked beans and 1 cup of peas.

Vitamin D
Fish (specifically salmon, swordfish and tuna), yogurt, fortified dairy products and egg yolks are good sources of vitamin D, a fat-soluble vitamin (and hormone) that is involved in almost all bodily functions, including immune health. Living in New England means most of us don't get enough vitamin D from the sun in the fall and winter, so having good dietary sources is important.

The daily recommendation is 600 international units (IU), or 15 micrograms per day, which could come from 3 ounces of salmon and 1 cup of fortified milk. If you think you may be deficient, talk to your doctor about supplementation.

Hydration
Last but not least, don't forget to stay hydrated. Hydration is important for immune health because it helps to keep our skin and mucus membranes moist and intact, and those are the body's first line of defense against pathogens. The recommendation is for at least 8 cups of fluid per day, but for athletes this can be even higher. Sometimes when it's cold outside we don't feel as thirsty, or that we're sweating as much, but we still lose fluids — especially from heavy breathing in the cold, dry winter air. If you are not feeling as thirsty, add water to your daily routine by eating foods with a high water content such as soups and stews, cucumbers, or fruits such as watermelon, oranges and grapes.

Remember, our immune system is just that, a system, so many things contribute to its overall health. Diet is one component, but stress and lack of good sleep also can weaken our immune system. The best way to stay healthy this winter, and all year round, is to maintain an overall healthy lifestyle with a good mix of exercise, sleep and healthy diet.



SARAH GILBERT

Breakfast or post-workout smoothie

- 1 cup greek yogurt
 - ½ cup berries
 - 1 cup spinach
 - ½ banana
 - Nuts and seeds
- Combine yogurt, berries, spinach and banana in a blender. Top with nuts and seeds, as desired.

Sources: ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/list-all/

Sarah Gilbert, MS, RD, LDN, is a registered dietitian who earned her master's in nutrition from Boston University. Sarah is the nutrition coach for RPM Athlete Performance and helps athletes optimize performance and wellness and reduce risk of injury through nutrition. For more information, visit rpmathlete.com.

feedback@baseballjournal.com



FUTURES LEAGUE
welcomes new owners
Don Moorhouse and
Chris Thompson
and **Westfield, MA**

NEW ENGLAND BASEBALL JOURNAL MARKETPLACE

TURF SUPPLIES

YOUR "ONE-STOP SOURCE" FOR AMERICA'S BASEBALL & SPORTS TURF SURFACES & SUPPLIES

WE'VE SUPPLIED PRODUCTS TO EVERY MLB TEAM, MOST MINOR LEAGUE & COLLEGE TEAMS, AND THOUSANDS OF TOWNS & SCHOOLS WORLDWIDE!

800-247-BEAM
Fax: 908-637-8421 • 908-637-4191
www.BEAMCLAY.com
email: sales@beamclay.com

THE STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE FOR INFIELD MIXES, MOUND CLAYS, RED WARNING TRACKS HUNDREDS OF INFIELD & SPORTS PRODUCTS

EQUIPMENT

THE FINEST CUSTOM BAGS MADE IN THE USA

WIZARDSPORTSBAGS.COM
877-559-5425

PLAYER BAGS
TEAM EQUIPMENT
& BALL BAGS

EQUIPMENT

OLD HICKORY
Goodlettsville, TN USA
Est. 1999

#DroppinHick

(866) PRO BATS toll free
(615) 285-0588 phone
www.OLDHICKORYBATS.COM



Hangin' out with ... John Signore

How would you describe yourself as a pitcher? "I'm not someone who throws super hard, so I'm not going to try to challenge you with my fastball that much. I can spot it up wherever I want if I need it, and that's probably the biggest part of my game. I use the phrase 'student of the game' as a big facet of how I think about the way I play because if I know what the hitter is looking for before or what they don't want to get, I can use that to my advantage. If I throw the pitches that I know will work to the spots that I want them based on the at-bat, the scouting report, the hitter and his stance, any weaknesses you can pick out, then I believe that's what really makes me successful with how I pitch."

Are there any guys in Major League Baseball you try to emulate? "The way Kyle Hendricks from the Chicago Cubs pitches sticks out to me because he's a guy who doesn't throw that hard, more like the upper 80s and low 90s, but he puts pitches where he wants them and has good movement on his pitches. That's what helps him be successful. Another pitcher is another New England guy, Rich Hill. One of my buddies (Fairfield junior Bobby McNiff) is from around there (Braintree, Mass.) and ran into him training. He threw a few curveballs that weren't as sharp or didn't go where he wanted and he told Bobby, 'All you have to do sometimes is think about what you're doing wrong' and he rattled off 15 straight pitches in perfect spots. So being able to do that is more what I can try to emulate because I'm not a guy who can blow 95 past you. It's fun watching guys like Aroldis Chapman or Josh Hader with a slider that moves 20 feet, but I have to try to be my own pitcher or emulate guys who have good pitching IQ."

What made Fairfield the right choice for you? "Fairfield kind of felt like home to me because my dad went here, but the way the coaches treated me when they recruited me made me feel right at home. After they took me around and showed me the gorgeous campus, I knew immediately that this was where I wanted to go."

Was staying close to home important in making that decision? "My parents have been to every single game for my entire life, including one game against UConn that I didn't even travel to but they still showed up to support the team. That just shows the people they are. Staying close to home was huge for me because I love having them in the stands and they love being in the stands, so that makes me feel like I belonged here even more."

You've been a member of Fairfield's starting rotation since your freshman year. How much did having that trust from the coaching staff mean to you and shape your college career? "It meant the world to me. My teammates will have my back no matter what and they know that I have their back through everything. Coming in as a freshman, it's not easy at all trying to take over a junior's or senior's spot — or not even take over, but just provide the best for your team that you can, so I was a bit scared when the coaches first put me in that spot. We just wanted to do something Fairfield had never done before and win a conference championship, so it was awesome to get that done. It didn't matter to any of us how it happened, but everyone just wanted that to happen more than anything in the entire world. That helped us bond as a team, be as close a team as we could, and it's led us to success in the years after as well."

— JOSHUA KUMMINS

>> **DIGITAL BONUS:**
CONTINUED
ON PAGE B1

Fairfield Athletics

Basic bio

College: Fairfield
Pos.: RHP | **Year:** Senior
Hometown: Wallingford, Conn.
High school: Xavier
Major: Finance

Favorites

Food: Buffalo chicken
Restaurant: Colony Grill in Fairfield
TV show: "Game of Thrones"
Musical artist/band: J. Cole
Walk-up song: "Danger" by Migos and Marshmello

Video game: "Fortnite"

Place to vacation: Wellington, Fla.

Part about Fairfield: "The opportunities it presents after college."

Sport other than baseball: Basketball

Sports team: "New York Yankees, by far."

Sports movie: "Rookie of the Year"



MLB player: Jose Altuve

Non-baseball athlete: J.J. Watt

Equipment

Glove: Rawlings

Cleats: New Balance

YOUR HOME FOR COLLEGE RECRUITING, SHOWCASE BASEBALL AND GREAT VALUE IN TRAVEL DESTINATIONS

FIRECRACKER

BASEBALL SHOWCASE TOURNAMENTS

2019
TOURNAMENT
REGISTRATIONS
NOW OPEN



LISTEN TO OUR
NEW PODCAST
WHERE YOU LISTEN



**All American
Lighthouse Classic**
Old Orchard Beach, Maine
June 21-24, 2019

Ages 13U; 15U; 17U; 19U (45 teams max)
College Showcase Camp + Social Events



**4th of July Showcase
Tournament**
Providence, R.I. (R.I./Mass.)
June 29-July 3, 2019

Ages: 9U-19U (170+ teams max)
College Showcase Camp + Social Events



**Showcase Battle
at the Borders**
Saratoga/Lake George, N.Y.
July 17-July 21, 2019

Ages: 13U; 15U; 17U; 19U (40 teams max)
College Showcase Camp + Social Events



**Colonial Clash
Showcase**
Westchester, N.Y./Fairfield, Conn.
July 24-28, 2019

Ages: 13U; 15U; 17U; 19U (60 teams max)
College Showcase Camp

FIRECRACKERBASEBALL.COM

For more information, call or email
Mark Cooke, president, at 401-595-0233
or mark@firecrackerbaseball.com

www.facebook.com/FirecrackerBaseball/

[@firecracker_baseball](https://www.instagram.com/firecracker_baseball)

[@firecrackerbsb](https://www.tiktok.com/@firecrackerbsb)

[Firecracker Baseball LLC](https://www.linkedin.com/company/FirecrackerBaseballLLC)

[firecrackerbsb](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)

The first baseball/showcase
tournament provider
in the nation to provide
a mobile app. Now
available on Apple Store.



MOBILE APP NOW AVAILABLE

TRAINING AIDS | BATTING MATS | PORTABLE PITCHING MOUNDS | BATTING CAGES
FIELD COVERS | CUSTOM WINDSCREEN | HOME PLATE HALOS | PITCHING MACHINES

Helping Coaches COACHTM

Since 2001

On Deck Sports[®]
SINCE 2001

Stop spending time trying to find your equipment from multiple sources. On Deck Sports has everything you need for your team, field or indoor training center.

Official Sponsor of



800.365.6171 | OnDeckSports.com