

MOOKIE BETTS

| TALES FROM THE MINORS

NEW ENGLAND BASEBALL JOURNAL

November-December 2016

CURSE BUSTER

**Theo Epstein (Brookline, Mass.) makes history — again —
as Cubs end 108-year World Series championship drought**



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AROUND THE REGION

Cardinals' Wong headlines new Cape Hall class

Six former Cape Leaguers, including St. Louis Cardinals infielder **Kolten Wong**, will be honored at a ceremony Nov. 19 as the Class of 2016 is set to join the ranks of the Cape Cod Baseball League Hall of Fame.

The brunch and ceremony will be held at the Chatham Bars Inn, one of the Cape's premier resorts. Tickets can be purchased at shop.capecodbaseball.org or by calling 508-432-6909.

Former WBZ-TV anchor **Scott Wahle** will serve as emcee. The ceremony also will include short video introductions on this year's inductees with voice-over narration by the legendary sportscaster **Dick Enberg**.

The inductees are as follows:

■ **J.C. Holt, Brewster:** The sweet-swinging LSU product enjoyed a banner season for the Whitecaps in 2003, named Cape League MVP after leading the league with .388 batting average, breaking the Brewster team record previously held by **Bobby Kielty** (.384) in 1999.

■ **Warner Jones, Wareham:** One of the league's top infielders during the 2003 and '04 seasons, the Vanderbilt third baseman hit an impressive .344 and .303 for the Wareham Gatemen, finishing in the top 10 in batting and landing him a spot in the CCBL All-Star Game both seasons spent on the Cape.

■ **Mark Petkovsek, Chatham:** The Texas product compiled a stellar mound career in two summers playing for Chatham. Petkovsek was one of the top pitchers during the '85 and '86 seasons, finishing among the top in the Cape League rankings for wins and losses, ERA and strikeouts.

■ **Jim McCollom, Falmouth:** The right-handed hitting first baseman/outfielder from Clemson played for the Commodores in 1984, leading the league with a .413 batting average, 15 home runs and 115 total bases and finished second with 37 RBI.



▶ Cardinals infielder Kolten Wong was the Cape League MVP in 2010.

■ **Kyle Roller, Bourne:** A left-handed hitting power hitter, the East Carolina slugger played two seasons for Bourne in 2009 and '10. In 2009, Roller won two-thirds of the league's triple crown, leading the league in home runs (10), RBI (33) and slugging percentage (.644), while hitting .342.

■ **Kolten Wong, Orleans.** From Hilo, Hawaii, the slick-fielding second baseman from the University of Hawaii was named Cape League MVP in 2010 after hitting .341 with 46 hits, 22 stolen bases and a .452 slugging percentage.

Stars out in New Hampshire

The annual Granite State Baseball Dinner will be held Nov. 19 at the Radisson Hotel Expo Center in Manchester, N.H.

Guests include **Chris Carpenter** (Raymond, N.H.), who won the 2005 National League Cy Young Award and two World Series titles with the St. Louis Cardinals; first-ballot Hall of Famer **Wade Boggs**, who played with the Red Sox from 1982 to '92; and Red Sox Hall of Famer **Luis Tiant**.

Former Red Sox players **Rich Gedman** (Worcester, Mass.) and **Lou Merloni** (Fram-

ingham, Mass.) also will be on hand, along with several of the state's minor-league prospects, including **Kevin McGowan** (Nashua, N.H.), **Carson Cross** (Brentwood, N.H.) and **Ryan McKenna** (Berwick, Maine).

The Granite State Baseball Dinner, presented by Northeast Delta Dental, is an annual charitable event that benefits the Children's Hospital at Dartmouth-Hitchcock (CHaD), the Ted Williams Museum and the Fisher Cats Foundation. Since 2007, the dinner has generated more than \$1.42 million for these charities.

Bates hires Martin

Jon Martin, head coach at Vassar College since 2005, recently was appointed as head coach at Division 3 Bates College.

The all-time winningest baseball coach in Vassar's history, Martin brings a reputation as an outstanding recruiter to the position. He fills the vacancy created from former head coach **Mike Leonard's** move to Middlebury this summer.

Promoted from a two-year stint as assistant coach at Vassar, Martin elevated the Brewers from a 3-9 conference record in 2005

to their first-ever appearances in the Liberty League tournament and first-ever postseason victories in 2013 and '14, including a 19-14 overall record and 13-7 league record in 2014.

Salem State promotes Donovan

Al Donovan, who has served as pitching coach and recruiting assistant for Salem State since 2015, recently was promoted to head coach at the university.

Donovan replaces **Mike Ward**, who resigned in July after four successful seasons.

As pitching coach, Donovan guided the MASCAC's top-ranked pitching staff over the past two seasons, helping Salem State earn back-to-back conference championships along with two NCAA Division 3 tournament bids.

A graduate of Central Connecticut State, Donovan was a standout pitcher for the Blue Devils, earning Division 1 All-New England honors after transferring from Western Carolina.

Bravehearts earn honor

The Futures Collegiate Baseball League named the Worcester Bravehearts its 2016 Organization of the Year.

Now in their third season, the Bravehearts have ranked at or near the top of the league in attendance each year and drew an average of 2,230 fans per night at Hanover Insurance Park at Fitton Field in 2016. The team also cracked the top 10 summer collegiate teams in the country for the first time this season.

On the field, the team posted the league's best regular-season record and advanced to the championship series for the third-consecutive season before falling to the Nashua Silver Knights.

Silver Knights general manager **Ronnie Wallace** was named the Futures League's 2016 Executive of the Year. **B**

If you have an item for Around the Region, please send it to editor@baseballjournal.com.





MOOKIE

With David Ortiz hangin' 'em up, the dynamic Mookie Betts — coming off an MVP-caliber season at just 23 years old — enters the spotlight as the face of the Red Sox franchise

By Ian Browne

The legend who wore Number 34 will never take another at-bat for the Red Sox, leaving a void that is as big as David Ortiz himself. But if you're looking for the player who will lead Boston in the post-Papi era, there seems to be an obvious candidate.

He wears Number 50. His wrists churn faster during his swing than probably any other player in baseball. He hits for power. He hits for average. He steals bases. He catches everything in right field. He has a cannon for an arm.

And when the 2017 season starts, Mookie Betts will be just 24 years old.

The player who will be front and center in the discussion for the American League's Most Valuable Player Award later this month still has his whole prime in front of him.

Much like the man he is going to have to replace for the distinction of "best player on the Red Sox," Betts doesn't taste any satisfaction by what he's already accomplished. Instead, he has an appetite for a lot more. Now he knows what it's like to take the field in the postseason. Next time, he thinks he'll be in better position for all his skills to stand out the way they didn't during a three-game sweep at the hands of the Indians.

"We had a great year," Betts said. "We made it to the postseason. For a lot of the guys, this was the first time. We enjoyed it. Now we know what to expect. You always want to finish the season, no matter what kind of season you have, you always want to finish with a win. That's the goal going forward."

Nobody is more capable of helping them get to that goal than the electrifying Betts. He is already in rarified air.

In 2016, Betts became just the seventh player in history to have 200 hits, 40 doubles, 30 homers and 20 stolen bases. The other six? Chuck Klein (1932 Phillies), Ellis Burks (1996 Rockies), Nomar Garciaparra (1997 Red Sox), Larry Walker (1997 Rockies), Alfonso Soriano (2002 Yankees) and Jacoby Ellsbury (2011 Red Sox).

Garciaparra was the only other player besides Betts to do it at age 23 or younger. When you think of Red Sox players who burst onto the scene in a similarly impactful way as Betts out of the gate, Garciaparra and Dustin Pedroia are the two who come to mind. In '97, Garciaparra was the American League's Rookie of the Year. By '98, he was second in the race for MVP. In '99, the shortstop hit .357. And in 2000, Nomahhhh hit an eye-popping .372. Pedroia won Rookie of the Year in '07, not to mention a World Series. By '08, he was the MVP.

All of this makes you wonder what Betts is capable of

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Adam Glanzman/Getty Images



RED SOX BEAT

Continued from Page 7

achieving over the next two to three years.

“I’m proud of him,” Pedroia said. “He’s been great, obviously, ever since he’s come up. He’s continued to get better in every aspect of his game. He can help us in a ton of ways. He’s pretty special.”

But Pedroia doesn’t think it’s fair to compare Betts to him. In other words, Pedroia thinks he himself falls short in that comparison.

“He hit 31 home runs this year,” Pedroia said. “Shoot, I didn’t have my 31st career homer until my third year. He’s a force. He’s been awesome.”

Betts could be an elite player on the strength of his talent. But some of his other intangibles are what could make him a next-level performer. For instance, nobody on the Red Sox is more inquisitive than Mookie Betts. Just ask Ortiz.

“I was a guy when I was young, I asked a lot of questions,” Ortiz said. “I was like Mookie Betts. He wears me out asking me questions everyday — and I love it. I love it because he asks you questions and you give him an answer, and all of a sudden you see that he’s putting that in play.”

Or Betts is putting it out of play. He started the season as a leadoff hitter, but it got to the point where his power was being wasted. Manager John Farrell hit him in the No. 3 or 4 spots for the final seven weeks of the season.

“When you look at the power, the average, the total number of hits, he’s a five-tool player that is playing to those skills,” Farrell said. “We’re glad he’s ours.”

Considering he stands at 5-foot-9, the power might surprise you. But it’s legitimate.

“It’s all I’ve got,” Betts said. “I’m 5-foot-9, 180 pounds. I don’t have much else to work with, so I just try to use my bat speed and get the most out of what I’ve got.”



Betts hit five homers over two days (May 31-June 1 in Baltimore). By Aug. 14, he was at it again, drilling three homers on a Sunday afternoon against Arizona. The only other player in Red Sox history to have two three-homer games in the same season? Ted Williams. Betts again joined Williams in the same sentence Aug. 29, when he smoked his 30th homer. Betts, Williams and Tony Conigliaro are the only Sox players in history to belt 30 homers in a season before turning 24 years old.

“It’s even better that he’s such a great kid and he’s a good teammate. It’s an honor playing with him,” Red Sox right-hander Rick Porcello said.

While teammates will practically race to a reporter’s microphone to put in a good word for Betts, the outfielder himself somehow stays completely unfazed by all he is accomplishing.

“Means I put in a lot of work,” Betts said. “It was a long season, and I’ll give myself a little credit for just working and grinding through the whole thing. I do know there is more to go.”

The Red Sox and their fans are banking on that. To get to where they need to go in the future, Betts will need to do a lot of the heavy lifting. And there’s no reason to think he won’t.

“Special player,” Jackie Bradley Jr. said. “Fun to play beside. Great teammate.”

Even while Ortiz was still around, Betts wasn’t shy about displaying leadership. In the middle of spring training, he arranged for a team dinner at a Japanese steakhouse. Many players credited that dinner for helping to create an early chemistry for a team that won the AL East with 93 wins.

While the Red Sox’ future without Ortiz can’t help but feel daunting, the presence of Betts makes it a little easier to fathom.

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PAPI'S FINAL WALKOFF

By Ian Browne

For months, there was anticipation about how it might end for David Ortiz.

Perhaps there would be a walkoff home run to win the World Series, followed by one last duck-boat parade on the streets of Boston. While what actually took place wasn't quite the storybook ending, it was about the most genuine capper on a career you will ever see.

The Red Sox had just been eliminated out of the playoffs in three straight by — as it turned out — the World Series-bound Cleveland Indians. The end was abrupt, as it always seems to be in postseason-elimination games. But for a few minutes, the Boston fans put the sting of the lost season aside and demanded to see Big Papi in uniform one last time.

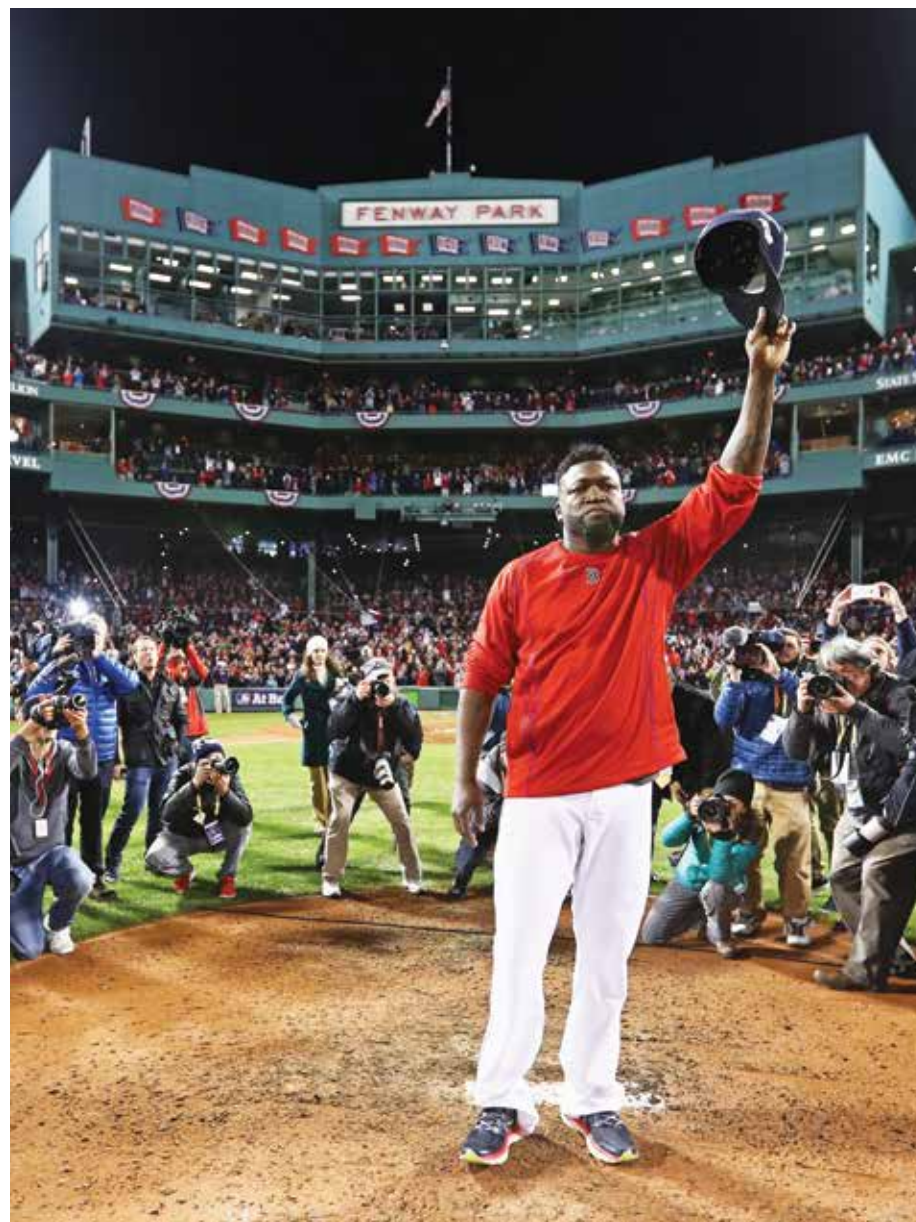
Inside the clubhouse, manager John Farrell was addressing his team. Ortiz even said a few words, imploring his young teammates to learn from what just happened and to take the good from a first-place season. In the stands — which were still packed several minutes after the final out — there was quite another scene unfolding.

For nearly 10 minutes, the roars of the crowd shifted from “PA-PI! PA-PI!” to “THANK YOU, PAPI!” and then, “WE’RE NOT LEAVING!”

Ortiz was informed of the situation by some team employees and he wasn't about to let his fans go home empty. Dramatically, Ortiz walked back on to the field, and the theme song from “The Natural” boomed through the Fenway Park sound system.

Big Papi stopped at the pitcher's mound, trailed by a barrage of cameras. He tipped his helmet to the fans and pounded his chest, taking in the applause. Ortiz tried to hold back tears, but that attempt was unsuccessful. There was a microphone there in case Ortiz wanted to say anything, but his wet eyes said it all. After roughly four minutes on the field, Ortiz walked off the field — his career now officially over.

But what a career it was. Ortiz came to Boston in 2003 as a platoon player who had just been released by the Minnesota Twins. He left as one of the most productive hitters in



► David Ortiz tips his cap to the Fenway faithful after the final game of his career.

greatness right until the very end of his career that people weren't ready for him to go home yet.

“I haven't cried after a baseball game since I was in Little League probably, but David's last game was different,” Red Sox right-hander Clay Buchholz said. “What a great guy.”

It's amazing the way things work out sometimes. On the other side of the field, as Ortiz finished his brilliant career, Terry Francona was managing the Cleveland Indians. Under Francona, Ortiz won his first two World Series titles.

“That was an honor to be on the field for his last game,” Francona said. “I think you can see by the way the fans reacted, their outpouring of affection for him — that was an honor.”

Though Ortiz badly wanted to go deeper into the playoffs, he knew how fortunate he already had been in his career and was unselfish enough to accept the ending for what it was.

“The game, the game that I love, the game that made me be who I am, the game that I look forward to watching it get better every day is something that I'm definitely going to carry the rest of my life,” Ortiz said. “And those moments, they're always going to be special. They're always going to stay with you.”

By 2017, Ortiz's famous Number 34 will be retired to the right-field façade at Fenway Park. It's a virtual guarantee that he will one day have a statue outside the ballpark, alongside Williams and Yaz. Prior to Ortiz's final regular-season game, it was announced that a bridge and a street had been named after him.

“I'm a guy that come out of the Dominican when I had just turned 17 years old, and all I wanted to do was have fun at what I do,” Ortiz said. “Because you kind of walk into this career, there's a lot of expectation, but you don't know any of them when you are that age. So I was just that one kid that was expecting just to have fun, here it is, 23 years later, having a career and walking home. And I'm happy and proud of going home the way I am right now.” **B**

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DIGITAL BONUS

Our special commemorative issue in September-October caps David Ortiz's remarkable year, with memories from Ian Browne and Papi's 10 Greatest Hits.

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THREE for TWO



2004



2007

Boy Wonder from Brookline — along with assistant from New Hampshire — repeats drought-ending feat with Cubs' first championship since 1908



KYLE HENDRICKS:

From the Ivy League to ivy-covered Wrigley Field, Dartmouth alumnus emerges as unlikely World Series hero

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► Theo Epstein (right, Brookline, Mass.) and Jed Hoyer (left, Plymouth, N.H.) — the architects of the Cubs' World Series team — enjoy the championship parade Nov. 4

Dylan Buell/Getty Images

By Jon Greenberg

CLEVELAND

It was late at night, or early in the morning depending on your perspective, and Theo Epstein was drunk. He was smiling wide and holding a bottle of champagne as he was being interviewed by Bill Murray.

Later, he would drop an expletive in a live TV interview with a Chicago affiliate and everyone laughed.

Epstein — the boy wonder baseball executive from Brookline, Mass. — could drink, swear and howl at the moon, because the Cubs had just won their first World Series since 1908, ending professional sports' longest championship drought. They did it in dramatic fashion, winning, 8-7, in extra innings in Game 7.

For a franchise known for its close relationship with disaster, the Cubs won their first championship in 108 years in efficient fashion, realizing the goal in Epstein's fifth season, the last year of his initial contract with the club.

"I'd love to sit here and say this is the second stage of our five-year plan," Epstein said when the Cubs won the National League pennant. "But it doesn't work that way."

Before the playoffs began, Epstein inked a new contract for another five years and now there is a countdown until he leaves. When Epstein was

'I'm lucky to work in Major League Baseball. I'm a little kid who grew up loving baseball. To be a part of two great franchises, for this one, I'm so proud of everyone who contributed.'

— Cubs president Theo Epstein (Brookline, Mass.)

hired in the fall of 2011, he said 10 years is the right time to stay in a professional sports job.

So now the question is: How many more titles can the Cubs win in the next five years?

Cubs fans are getting greedy. That's the Epstein effect.

When a TV reporter joked his next job should be president of the United States, Epstein joked that he was taking a month off from his current job to "go on a bender." Then he made an Al Haig joke about his second-in-command, general manager Jed Hoyer — a Plymouth, N.H., native, Wesleyan College grad and former Red Sox executive, who rejoined him in Chicago after a short sojourn in San Diego.

Epstein's mischievous side typically is hidden from the cameras, but it peeks out. After the Cubs clinched the NL East division, the front office showed up in the bleachers and Epstein sat up-close, wearing a hat and a fake mustache.

When a reporter texted him after pictures spread on social media, he replied, "That's

Continued on Page 14

Last rodeo for Lester, Ross

By Jon Greenberg

On Nov. 1, after the Cubs had just walloped Cleveland at Progressive Field to set up a Game 7 for the ages, Cubs starter Jon Lester claimed he wasn't sure he wanted to pitch in relief.

"I hope it's not an issue," he told reporters at his locker. "That's my plan. I'm not planning on anything. I'll show up tomorrow and see what 'Skip' tells me. Hopefully nothing weird is needed."

On Nov. 2, he entered Game 7 with two outs and a man on first in the fifth inning, replacing Kyle Hendricks with the Cubs holding a four-run lead. Catcher David Ross, who came in with Lester, committed a throwing error on their first batter Jason Kipnis' infield single, and then a Lester wild pitch that bounced off Ross' mask allowed both runners to score.

No wonder he didn't want to pitch.

But Lester settled down and struck out four batters before leaving with two outs in the eighth inning.

And Ross, well, he hit a homer off Andrew Miller in the next inning and the Cubs won, 8-7, in extra innings to claim their first World Series title since 1908.

The ex-Red Sox batterymates enjoyed a remarkable reunion in Chicago, where they teamed up to achieve the impossible. Lester pushed for Ross and got him a nice two-year deal.

Lester still has more to come with four years left on his \$155 million contract. For Ross, it was the perfect career finale. He wasn't thinking about catching Lester one more time after they combined for a victory in a pivotal Game 5.

"The game at home, Game 5 at home, that was a special moment," Ross said. "I was a little more into the game (7) than catching Jon and all that. But to hug his neck on that field being world champs is something that is ingrained in my memory. All he's done for me in my career and my family, he's a great friend, a great competitor. He's taught me a lot."

It's important to note Ross, the student, is almost eight years older than Lester. But the 32-year-old Lester — now a three-time World Series champion — carries himself like he's the vet in his late 30s, even if he throws like a guy in his late 20s.

Lester was the first big-ticket piece Theo Epstein brought in to turn the Cubs from builders to winners.

Lester had a rocky first impression in 2015, a bad first month. And he admitted it was because he had a lot of pressure to live up to his deal.

"I played in Boston for eight years," he said when he was introduced as a Cub in December 2014. "I think I'm pretty prepared for a lot of things."

But in April 2016, he admitted that wasn't the case. "It was a lot of added pressure I put on myself to try to get off the right foot, as opposed to just being myself, going out and trying to pitch my game," Lester said.

This season, he put together a complete performance, going 19-5 with a 2.44 ERA in 202⅓ innings. In four of the six months of the season, he had an ERA under 2.00. His only bad month was July (7.36 ERA in five starts).

He made five starts in the playoffs, going 4-1 with a 1.93 ERA. In those outings, he limited hitters to a .560 OPS, striking out 26 and walking just five in 32⅓ innings. He got big wins in Game 5 of both the NLCS and World Series. True ace situations.

National viewers found out Lester still has his mental block about throwing to bases, but he's worked around it, relying on his superior infield defense and occasional improvisation. But for a young team, he's become a lodestone. He learned how to be one by watching the veterans when he came up with Boston.

"I go back to '06-07, Tito (Francona) came up to me in spring training I think in '06, and he basically said, you know, 'Stay in Josh Beckett's back pocket. Don't leave his side. Follow him and see what he does.'"

He and Beckett are still friends. The retired pitcher got Lester and John Lackey to invest in rodeo bulls with him this spring. One of their bulls, Money Ball, earned Lester a belt buckle, which he wears proudly after almost every game.

Lester was quiet around reporters his first year, and a little standoffish with some teammates. He believed like he had to act a certain way because of his contract. Now he's a go-to quote for reporters and one of the more popular players in the clubhouse. After a playoff game in which reliever Travis Wood homered, Lester joked around with reporters for a half-hour while he sipped a beer.

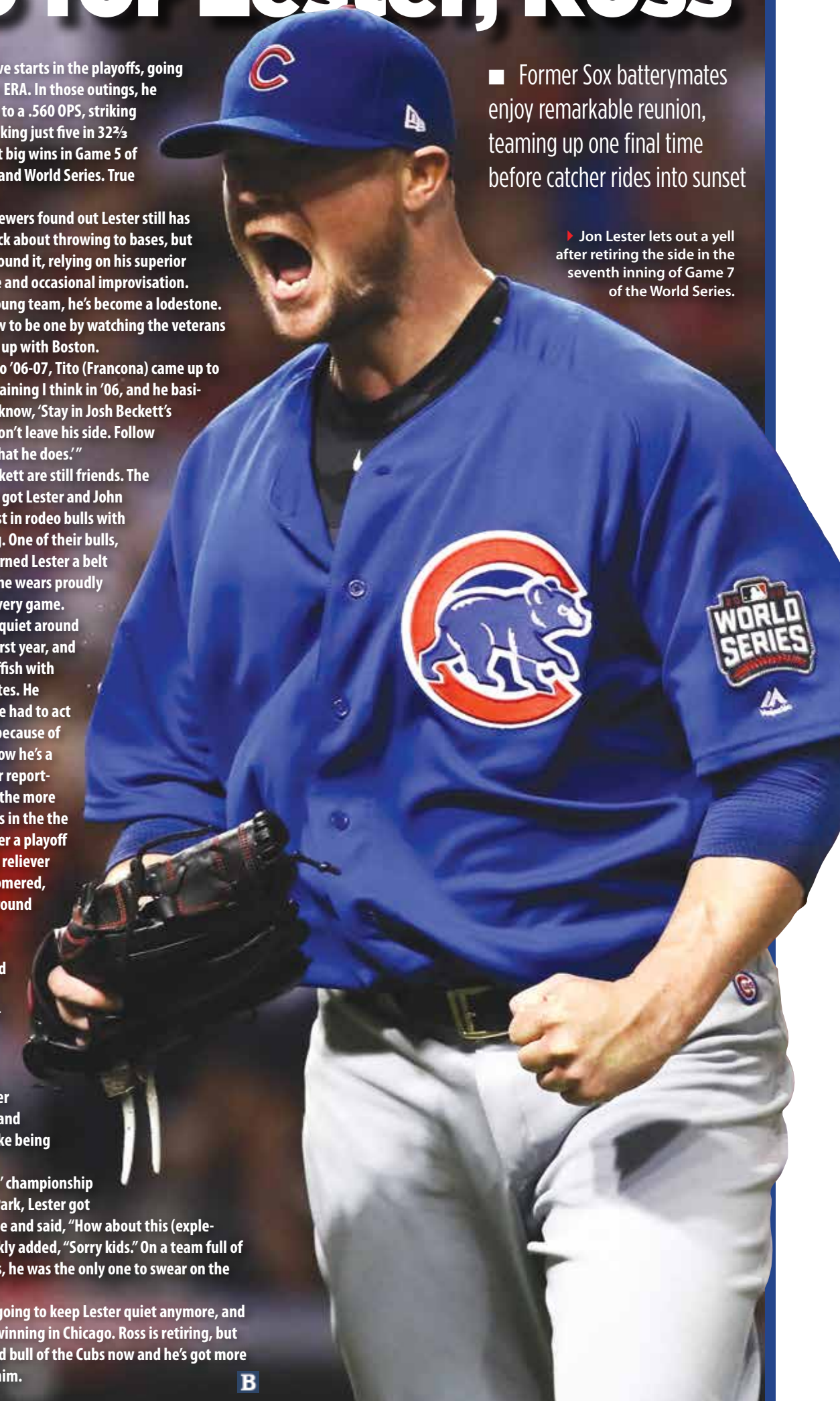
When Lackey, his close friend, said, "You need to be quiet," Lester looked at him and said, "I don't like being quiet, John."

At the Cubs' championship rally in Grant Park, Lester got the microphone and said, "How about this (expletive)?" He quickly added, "Sorry kids." On a team full of 20-somethings, he was the only one to swear on the stage.

You're not going to keep Lester quiet anymore, and he's not done winning in Chicago. Ross is retiring, but Lester is the old bull of the Cubs now and he's got more rodeos left in him.

■ Former Sox batterymates enjoy remarkable reunion, teaming up one final time before catcher rides into sunset

► Jon Lester lets out a yell after retiring the side in the seventh inning of Game 7 of the World Series.



Ezra Shaw/Getty Images



Jason Miller/Getty Image

Continued from Page 12

not me.” But, of course, it was. Months before, he had promised one of his younger co-workers that they’d sit in the bleachers after they clinched and not long before the date came, the front-office worker reminded him of it. Epstein said let’s do it and sent his assistant out to get a fake mustache.

During the World Series celebration, as random Cubs were spraying champagne across the visiting clubhouse at Progressive Field, someone naturally asked Epstein how this compares to winning in Boston. Epstein constantly is asked to compare the organizations and he usually obliges, but this wasn’t the time.

“I’m privileged to be a part of the Cubs, man,” he said. “I’m lucky to work in Major League Baseball. I’m a little kid who grew up loving baseball. To be a part of two great franchises, for this one I’m so proud of every-one who contributed.”

Epstein, a Brookline, Mass. native, has cemented his legacy as baseball’s foremost problem solver.

Twelve years ago, he presided over the Red Sox’s first championship since 1918. Nine years ago, it was his team that won Boston’s second title. Many of the players his front office acquired or drafted

led the Red Sox to their third title in less than a decade in 2013.

By then, Epstein was in the middle of a messy rebuild in Chicago. He took over a team with a losing record, a fallow farm system, a minuscule front office and a new owner who was consumed with the massive renovation of Wrigley Field.

The Cubs lost 101 games in his first year, which was mostly intentional. That season got them the right to draft Kris Bryant with the No. 2 pick in the draft in 2013. Going into the postseason, Bryant was the prohibitive favorite to win the NL MVP award in his second season. He hit .308 with a .923 OPS in the playoffs this season, with two home runs in must-win games in the World Series.

After two more forgettable seasons, Epstein’s Cubs turned the corner in Year 4 when he hired Joe Maddon to manage the team and former Red Sox pitcher Jon Lester to be the ace.

After getting swept in a surprise appearance in the NLCS last season, Epstein got the necessary funds from owner Tom Ricketts to invest further into the team, signing veterans Jason Heyward, John Lackey and eventual World Series MVP Ben Zobrist

While the Red Sox were the team of his and Hoyer’s youth, they’ve become adults, so to speak, on the job with the Cubs. Both have had second kids since working here and turned 40 years old.

‘The difference there was they had been in World Series. They had ’86 and ’75 and ’67. Having a World Series wasn’t so much the issue, as not winning it. But here, part of the issue is you know, 1 percent of the people in the ballpark tonight will have been alive for one.’

— Cubs GM Jed Hoyer (Plymouth, N.H.)

Epstein, who turns 43 in December, and Hoyer, who is a few weeks older than Epstein, came aboard as the youthful counter-balance to the cob-webbed fears of the Cubs, and now their respective haircuts are flecked with gray.

Time catches up to everyone.

As the Cubs hosted their first World Series games since 1945, both Hoyer and Epstein marveled at the carnival-like atmosphere. Epstein walks to Wrigley Field from his home in the Lakeview neighborhood and when people notice the face below the low-brimmed hat, they stop and ask for pictures.

“You’re a (jerk) if you don’t take a selfie,” he said.

Now that the Cubs have won, his celebrity Q rating is through the roof. While everyone attempts to compare the two jobs in Boston and Chicago, there is no question which one was more difficult.

“The difference there was they had been in World Series,” Hoyer said before Game 4 of the World Series. “They had ’86 and ’75 and ’67. Having a World Series wasn’t so much the issue, as not winning it. But here, part of the issue is you know, 1 percent of the people in the ballpark tonight will have been alive for one.”

The Cubs celebrated winning their first pennant since 1945 and now after a World Series championship, Epstein knows what to expect after going through it in Boston.

“Everything was amplified so much,” he said. “Ticket demand, general human interest story type stuff, affection for the team, connections that were made. All the different gauges for fan interest went up.”

Epstein has set a high bar that if the Cubs go two years without competing for a World Series, he’ll get criticized.

“Because of the arc of the team, which is pretty remarkable over the last five years, in the winter things came together really well, the young talent blossomed. People almost expected us to be here, which is ridiculous,” Epstein said. “But it’s great to live up to those expectations so far. It feels kind of meant to be.”

Does Epstein feel like he’s grown up now? The day after the Cubs won the World Series, he was videotaped pouring champagne on himself on the left-field deck of Wrigley Field while wearing a bear mask.

But he’s not boxed in like in Boston. Epstein likes his life right now. He lives close to the park, and all the lofty promises he made when he was hired have come true. He built his front office and his boss, Tom Ricketts, would never demand credit for his success.

We talk about Epstein’s future in the Baseball Hall of Fame and it seems almost like a certainty. While Oakland’s Billy Beane brought “Moneyball” to the masses, it was Epstein who blended tradition and progress into a championship formula.

He’ll get his third World Series ring as next season starts, when the expectations will be for another title.

Pretty soon, the questions about Boston will fade away. Will Epstein ever be known as a Cubs executive first? Probably not. He’s the product of all of his experiences and right now, there’s nowhere else he’d rather be.

“I think the older you get, the less hometown connections you have, the more perspective you have,” Epstein said. “And maybe it allows you to appreciate it more.”

Jon Greenberg is the editor and lead columnist for The Athletic (Chicago) and has covered the Cubs and Chicago sports for the past 13 years.

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2004 RED SOX	CATEGORY	2016 CUBS
Curse of the Bambino	Curse	Curse of the Billy Goat
86 years (1918-2004)	Championship drought	108 years (1908-2016)
Larry Lucchino	President of baseball operations	Theo Epstein
Theo Epstein	General manager	Jed Hoyer
Terry Francona	Manager	Joe Maddon
98-64	Regular-season record	103-58-1
Plus-181	Run differential	Plus-252
Second place, 3 games behind Yankees	Finish in standings	First place, 17.5 games ahead of Cardinals
Manny Ramirez (.308)	Batting leader	Kris Bryant (.292)
Manny Ramirez (43)	Home run champ	Kris Bryant (39)
Curt Schilling (3.26)	ERA leader	Kyle Hendricks (2.13)
Pedro Martinez (227)	Strikeout leader	Jon Lester (197)
Orlando Cabrera	Starting shortstop	Addison Russell
“Cowboy Up”	Rallying cry	“Embrace the Target”
Varitek shoves A-Rod, July 24, 2004	Defining moment	Cubs walk Bryce Harper 13 times in four-game sweep of Nationals in May
Curt Schilling	Hired gun with championship pedigree	John Lackey
Groundout from Keith Foulke to Doug Mientkiewicz	Final out	Groundout from Kris Bryant to Anthony Rizzo
Johnny Damon and Kevin Millar, leaders of “The Idiots”	Player-mascots	David Ross, aka “Grandpa Rossy”
7-6 for Single-A Sarasota Red Sox	Jon Lester’s record	19-5 as ace of the Cubs
Mike Timlin (38)	Oldest contributor	David Ross (39)
Fenway Park (82 years old)	Home ballpark	Wrigley Field (102 years old)
2,837,294	Home attendance	3,232,420
1986, lost to Mets in seven games	Previous World Series appearance	1945, lost to Tigers in seven games
Aaron Boone’s walkoff HR in 2003 ALCS	Previous year heartbreak	Mets sweep Cubs in 2015 NLCS
Bill Buckner, 1986 World Series vs. Mets	Ball-between-the-legs heartbreak	Leon Durham, 1984 NLCS vs. Padres
Bucky Dent	“Bleeping” nemesis	Steve Bartman
John Kerry	Home state native running for U.S. president	Hillary Clinton
George W. Bush	Republican nominee for president	Donald Trump
Edward M. Kennedy	U.S. senator from Massachusetts	Elizabeth Warren
“The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King”	Academy Award for Best Picture	“Spotlight”
Garry Shandling	Host of the Emmys	Jimmy Kimmel
Athens, Greece	Summer Olympics host	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Simone Biles (U.S.)	Gold medalist gymnast	Carly Patterson (U.S.)
6	Gold medals won by Michael Phelps	5
New England Patriots	Reigning Super Bowl champion	Denver Broncos
Launched on Feb. 4, 2004	Facebook	1.65 billion monthly active users
Ronald Reagan (June 5)	Notable death	Nancy Reagan (March 6)
St. John Paul II	Catholic pope	Francis
Massachusetts legalizes same-sex marriage	Major Massachusetts news	Tom Brady suspended for four games
“The Bourne Supremacy” earned \$288.5M	Matt Damon at the box office	“Jason Bourne” earned \$399.2M



FOREVER POISED

From the Ivy League to ivy-covered Wrigley, Dartmouth's Kyle Hendricks emerges as unlikely World Series hero

By Dan Guttenplan

DURING THE SEASON IN WHICH THE CHICAGO CUBS snapped a 108-year drought between World Series championships, let it be known that a pitcher from Dartmouth College earned the start for the Cubs in the pennant-clinching and World Series-clinching wins.

Just as everyone predicted for the last 100 years.

Dartmouth alumnus Kyle Hendricks played the role of one of the Cubs' unlikeliest of heroes during their historic season. The 26-year-old right-hander's fastball barely touches 90 mph, and yet the former Ivy Leaguer had a Cy Young-worthy regular season with a 16-8 record and MLB-best ERA of 2.13. Cast as the third playoff starter on a star-studded staff that included Jon Lester, Jake Arrieta and John Lackey, Hendricks got the ball in several high-pressure situations in October, including Game 7 of the World Series in Cleveland. He thrived in the biggest moments, pitching 7⅓ shutout innings in the NLCS-clinching game against the Dodgers before posting a 1.00 ERA in two World Series starts.

Hendricks, the only Dartmouth alumnus currently in the big leagues, was just the fourth player from one of the four Ivy League schools in New England to win a World Series. Dartmouth's Jim Beattie won with the Yankees in 1978, Yale's Ron Darling won with the Mets in 1986, and Yale's Craig Breslow won with the Red Sox in 2013.

WHILE BASEBALL FANS across the nation may have been surprised to see Hendricks thrive on the biggest stage with below-average velocity, the pitcher's former teammates at Dartmouth had seen this type of performance before. As a freshman at Dartmouth in 2009, Hendricks was the hero in the Big Green's Ivy League championship-clinching victory over Cornell. The Game 3 victory in the championship series gave Dartmouth its first Ivy League championship in more than 20 years. Hendricks pitched 7⅓ scoreless innings and was carried off the field on his teammates' shoulders.

Jack Monahan served as the Dartmouth catcher during Hendricks' freshman season. He

is now the coordinator of scouting operations for the Kansas City Royals.

"The one thing that always stood out about Kyle was his poise," Monahan said. "It doesn't surprise me that he had the poise to handle all of this. When you have that velocity, you can't waver. The margin for error is larger. No moment is too big for him. He's not showy — it's just a workmanlike approach. Show up, do your job and move on."

Dartmouth baseball coach Bob Whalen saw Hendricks pitch for the first time in 2007 at a showcase in Southern California. The longtime Dartmouth coach had heard through some contacts on the West Coast that Hendricks, a native of

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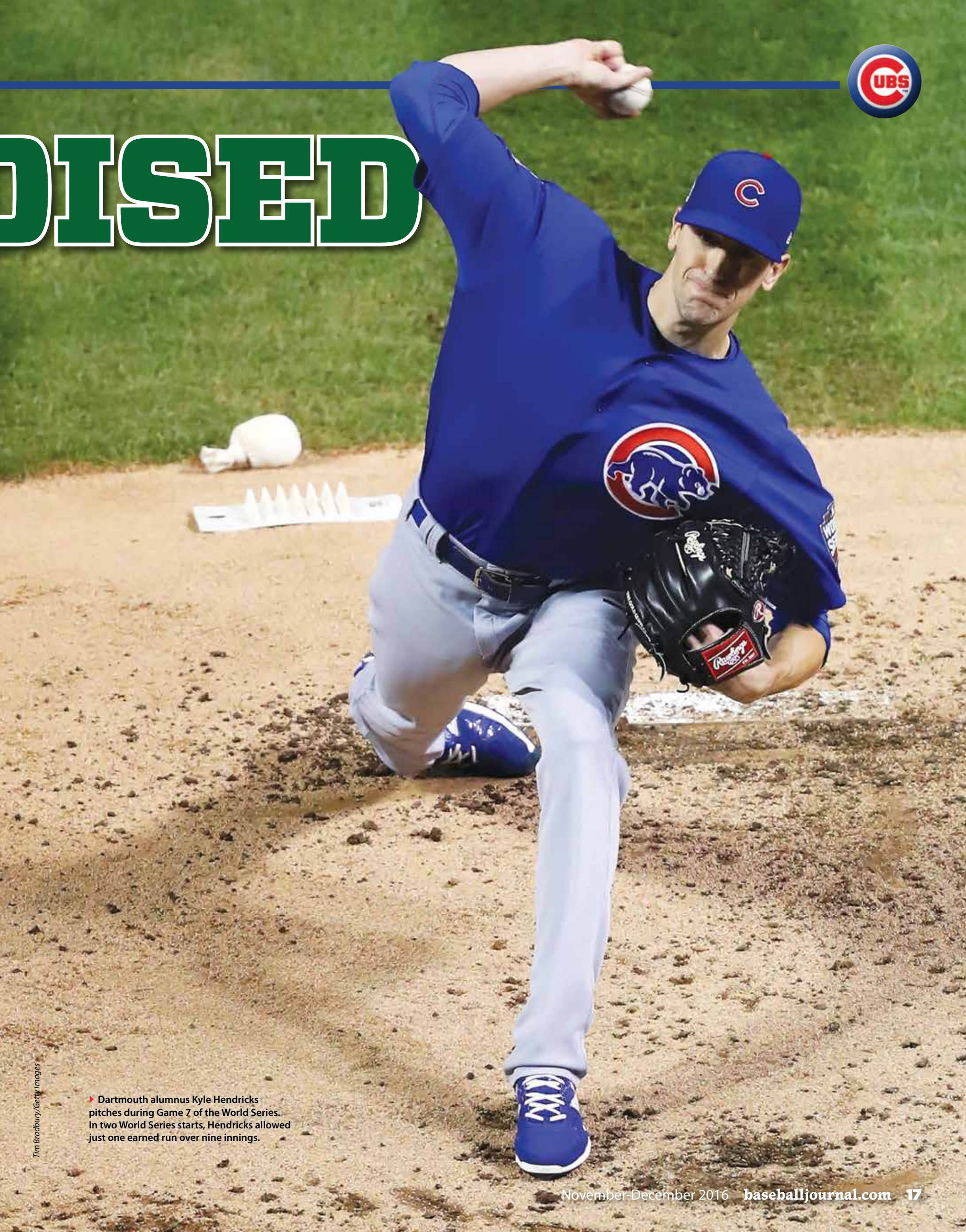
From the Ivy League to the World Series

In the past half-century, only five players from New England's Ivy League schools — Brown, Dartmouth, Harvard and Yale — have played in a World Series, and only three — Jim Beattie, Craig Breslow and now Kyle Hendricks — have won the World Series.

PLAYER	SCHOOL	WORLD SERIES YEAR AND TEAM	HOW HE FARED
Brad Ausmus	Dartmouth	2005 Astros	Went 4-for-16 (.250) as the Astros were swept by the White Sox
Jim Beattie	Dartmouth	1978 Yankees	Tossed CG vs. Dodgers in pivotal Game 5 of Yanks' six-game victory
Craig Breslow	Yale	2013 RED SOX	Recorded just one out in three appearances in Sox' six-game victory
Ron Darling	Yale	1986 Mets	Made three starts (including Game 4 win and Game 7) to beat Red Sox
Kyle Hendricks	Dartmouth	2016 Cubs	Posted 1.00 ERA in two starts, including Game 7 vs. Indians
Mike Remlinger	Dartmouth	1999 Braves	Took the loss in Game 3 as the Braves were swept by the Yankees

► Kyle Hendricks is carried off the field in 2009 after throwing 7⅓ scoreless innings vs. Cornell to give Dartmouth its first Ivy League championship in more than 20 years.

Dartmouth Athletics



Tim Bradbury/Getty Images

► Dartmouth alumnus Kyle Hendricks pitches during Game 7 of the World Series. In two World Series starts, Hendricks allowed just one earned run over nine innings.



Continued from Page 16

San Juan Capistrano, Calif., was serious about his education, and might be open to going to college on the East Coast.

Hendricks, a high school junior at the time, shared with Whalen that Stanford was his top choice, but he had yet to drum up any recruiting interest from the Stanford baseball staff. Hendricks’ arsenal of pitches at the time — a fastball in the low-80s and a 12-to-6 curveball — didn’t figure to make him an immediate contributor in the Pac-10 Conference.

Whalen’s primary competition in getting a commitment from Hendricks was the University of San Diego baseball staff. The Dartmouth coach recognized that USD had a stronger baseball tradition with more professional players spread across the major leagues. Conversely, Dartmouth’s biggest contribution to Major League Baseball was in front-office positions, with alumni such as Sandy Alderson, Jim Beattie and Matt Klentak climbing to the role of general manager for various organizations.

Hendricks was clear in his intentions with Whalen. He wanted to get the best education possible without limiting his ability to play professional baseball.

“When it comes right down to it, Ivy League baseball is very good,” Whalen said. “All teams in the league have produced guys that have been able to play at the next level. Kyle had an opportunity to come here and get innings earlier and develop quicker than if he went to a big school in California.”

Hendricks attended a summer camp at Dartmouth before his senior year of high school and returned a few months later for an official visit. He applied early decision to Dartmouth and committed to Whalen after gaining acceptance to the college.

“We felt he was a kid who had impactability,” Whalen said. “We looked at his frame and body type, and could certainly see a bit of projection. He needed to fill out and get stronger; he’s still a lean, athletic kid. We felt he had the ability to contribute right away.”

HENDRICKS MADE a big impression on his Dartmouth coaches and teammates once he arrived on the Hanover, N.H., campus. He was all-business in

his approach to baseball and academics. In terms of training, he did extra running and strength training regardless of whether coaches or teammates were present. He also committed to a dual-major in economics and math.

“He was calm and cool off the field,” Monahan said. “When I walked on campus for the first time my freshman year, it felt like everything sped up because of all the academic and athletic responsibilities. Kyle always had amazing poise. He could take a deep breath and slow everything down. Working in baseball, I always try to come up with a justification of how people become successful. Kyle’s always had a poise and maturity that wasn’t present in every college freshman. He’s more advanced.”

Hendricks was a conference starter during his freshman season, fulfilling Whalen’s hope of earning innings right away. After pitching in the decisive game of the 2009 Ivy League Champi-



Tannen Maury - Pool/Getty Images

onship Series, Hendricks earned the start against Kansas in the NCAA regional in North Carolina. He got shelled in a 16-0 loss.

Joe Sclafini, a freshman shortstop on that Dartmouth team, went on to play four years of professional baseball in the Houston Astros’ minor-league system. He remembers Hen-

dricks handling the 16-0 loss to Kansas the same way he handled the Ivy League Championship Series victory over Cornell.

“He is who he is regardless of the situation,” Sclafini said. “If he was going to get a big head, it would have been after that Game 3 clincher his freshman year. He got humbled pretty quickly,

▶ **Dartmouth’s Kyle Hendricks started the first World Series game at Wrigley Field in 71 years.**

but he didn’t change anything. The best thing about him is if he does well or struggles, you’ll never know. He’s so even-keeled and keeps the same sentiment.”

Hendricks had an up-and-down sophomore season at Dartmouth in 2010 but ended on a high note with a two-hit shutout in the Big Green’s Ivy League regular-season clinching victory over Harvard. In his final season before becoming eligible for the draft in 2011, Hendricks showcased pinpoint command, posting a 5-3 record and 2.47 ERA.

Whalen credits Hendricks for being one of the most impactful players for a program that has hit its stride since the pitcher’s arrival on campus. The Big Green have won eight consecutive Rolfe Division crowns, just the second Ivy League team to achieve that feat.

“He wanted to be great,” Whalen said. “He would do all of the things he had to do to get better whether he was by himself or I was standing right next to him. He did extra work running, lifting — he was so disciplined about his regimen. He was an excellent student.

“When you have kids that are always working hard to get better, the speed of the leaders determines the rate of the pack. Others tend to follow.”

HENDRICKS WAS selected by the Texas Rangers in the eighth round of the 2011 amateur draft. Although the pitcher had another year of eligibility remaining at Dartmouth, Whalen supported Hendricks’ decision to fulfill his dream of becoming a professional baseball player. The coach did, however, make Hendricks promise to complete his coursework at Dartmouth. Hendricks returned to Hanover for the winter quarter in 2012 and the fall quarter in 2013 to earn his undergraduate degree.

Perhaps the most fulfilling part of Hendricks’ rise to major-league stardom for his former Dartmouth coaches and teammates is the fact that his poise and persistence — two qualities that propelled him to success at the college level — remain the earmarks of his success. Hendricks still showcases the same 90-mph fastball, although

his secondary pitches have improved at each level. But the pitcher’s command of his pitches remains his calling card.

“He’s always pitched off his fastball and had great command,” Sclafini said. “He’s always been able to throw any of his pitches in any count, whenever he wanted, wherever he wanted. I don’t know if that’s something that’s teachable. It can improve, but not to the degree he does it. He’s fearless. He can barely throw 90, but he’ll get you to swing at his pitch.”

Hendricks got Sclafini to do just that back in 2014 in his final minor-league start before earning a callup to the majors. A year after he was dealt from the Rangers to the Cubs in a trade that sent Ryan Dempster to the Rangers, Hendricks faced Sclafini in a game between the Triple-A affiliates for the Cubs and Astros. Hendricks made Sclafini his final strikeout victim that day and made his MLB debut six days later. Sclafini retired from baseball after the 2015 season.

“Our dream was to make it to the big leagues, and everything we did in school was to further that goal,” Sclafini said. “It’s a credit to him that he was able to do it and have amazing success. Friends from school keep reaching out just to talk about how amazing he’s doing. Everybody takes pride in knowing him. I’m really happy for him; he deserves it.”

Whalen has remained in touch with Hendricks over the years; he spoke with him three or four times this summer during the pitcher’s breakout season.

“I don’t like to bother him all that much,” Whalen said. “I just want him to know the guys in the program are proud of him and happy for his success.”

Hendricks had Whalen as a guest at Wrigley Field during the 2015 NLCS. Even then, Whalen could never have imagined what the next year would have in store for his former ace.

“It’s hard to say anyone is going to be a legitimate contender for the Cy Young Award when they play in college,” Whalen said. “Given his talent, approach and work ethic, I can’t say I’m shocked. Things have fallen together for him through hard work.”

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Scott Olson/Getty Images

AT LAST! Cubs fans finally savor victory, too

By Eric Beato

I’m a fourth-generation Chicago Cubs fan.

My great-grandfather, Louis, a European immigrant, settled in Chicago after World War I and embraced baseball and the Cubs in his new homeland — two decades before a billy goat begat a curse. It was the depths of the Depression, so even though he lived less than 5 miles from Wrigley Field, he could afford only to listen to his new team on legendary WGN-AM.

Despite relying on radio reports, Louis passed on his passion to my father, Rick, who was born after World War II — in 1946, the year after the Cubs last won the National League pennant.

Louis didn’t attend his first Cubs game until he took my dad to his first game as a 9-year-old boy. By that time, the Cubs’ drought already was approaching 50 years, but the Cubs had a young shortstop who surely would deliver a title.

Ernie Banks was — and still is — my father’s favorite player. And “Mr. Cub” very nearly helped the Cubs to a pennant in 1969 before a black cat provided the first visible sign of a curse and the team collapsed in ignominy.

My dad, of course, passed on the family tradition to me when I was born the next year. In fact, the day I came home from the hospital, he walked me to sleep while listening to the Cubs on WGN.

Louis passed away four years later,

PERSPECTIVE

and my dad and I shared our team’s misfortune through 1984 and ’89 and ’98 and (most painfully) 2003.

By that time, I had moved to Boston, where I was working at the Boston Herald. I was in the South End newsroom the night that Bartman struck (I may or may not have punched a file cabinet) and two nights later when Grady left Pedro in too long. I vowed that night never to worry about a Cubs-Red Sox World Series again.

I shared Sox fans’ misery and Sox fans shared mine. We were connected by curses.

A year later, though, the Red Sox were cursed no more; they were champions. The night they swept the Cardinals and won the World Series, I suggested the headline that wound up on the front page of the Herald the next morning: AMEN!

My son, Bobby, was born in 2009. He was mere weeks old when we were watching a Cubs game and I, of course, apologized for his being born into Cubs fandom. I knew Bobby potentially was inheriting a lifetime of baseball disappointment — but also the hope of a most glorious championship.

So when the 2016 Chicago Cubs — and we — survived the craziest Game 7 anyone can remember, I broke down and cried uncontrollably. My dad, still living in the Chicago area, and I shared many moments of love and joy and reflection, including of our beloved Louis.

And Bobby ... well, he had fallen asleep

with the Cubs leading in the eighth. The next morning, after I recapped all of the drama he missed, I tried to emphasize the achievement: “I’ve waited my WHOLE life for the Cubs to win the World Series.”

His response: “Me, too! Seven years!”

Seven years is a lifetime to a 7-year-old, so his joy was as pure and as well-earned as my dad’s or my own.

My family’s story isn’t special or unique. There are thousands like it throughout Chicago. Just as there were thousands like it told and retold throughout Red Sox Nation a dozen years ago.

After the Red Sox returned to Boston after winning their first World Series in 86 years, the magnitude hit Theo Epstein.

“Driving from Logan to Fenway Park the day after we won, passing cemeteries, seeing Red Sox hats and pennants draped over tombstones and realizing what we all accomplished together impacted multiple generations and would profoundly change people’s lives,” Epstein said two years ago. “It was overwhelming.”

Watching the Cubs win their first World Series in more than a century was overwhelming. It did impact multiple generations, and it’s profoundly changed our lives.

And it once again connects Cubs fans and Red Sox fans — this time in victory. Amen!

Eric Beato, the Managing Editor of NEBJ, is a Chicago native and lifelong Cubs fan who has lived in Boston since 2000.

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OUR STARS

By Kevin Henkin

For the past seven years, we've documented the accomplishments of fellow New Englanders at the major-league level. This year, many New England natives have not only submitted excellent regular seasons but also have been ripping it up for their teams during the 2016 post-season. Here is New England Baseball Journal's presentation of the sixth annual MLB New England Award winners.



MOST VALUABLE DISRUPTOR

Rajai Davis

New London, Conn. | Cleveland Indians

Davis (New London, Conn.) turned 36 years old during the ALCS, and yet he continues to be one of the best and most disruptive baserunners in all of the majors. His 43 regular-season swipes (in only 49 attempts) led the American League in 2016. He also slugged 12 homers, a career high for the journeyman outfielder. His value to Terry Francona and the Indians, however, became crystal-clear in Game 2 of the ALCS against Toronto. His constant demonizing on the basepaths almost single-handedly won that game for Cleveland and swung crucial momentum for the Tribe on their path to the World Series. "He's been doing it all year," Cleveland slugger Jason Kipnis told reporters after the game. "He led the American League in stolen bases and he creates runs better than most guys in this league. You saw the pressure that he put on them." In Game 7 of the World Series, Davis hit a clutch two-run home run off Cubs closer Aroldis Chapman in the eighth inning to miraculously tie the game at 6. Sometimes, statistics tell only part of the story and that's truer of Davis's abilities than most.

Gregory Shamus/Getty Images



Sean M. Haffey/Getty Images

COMEBACK PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Rich Hill

Milton, Mass. | Los Angeles Dodgers

Rich Hill's major-league pitching career was presumed dead as recently as the summer of 2015, when he was relegated to pitching independent league baseball for the Long Island Ducks. Then 2016 happened. After Hill (Milton, Mass.) went 9-3 with a 2.25 ERA in 14 starts for Oakland, the A's shipped him to the Dodgers in a huge trade-deadline deal. Then Hill did the unlikely once again and pitched even better for L.A. He went scoreless over his first three starts and finished with an overall 1.83 ERA and a 3-2 record in six appearances for the Dodgers, including tossing seven perfect innings vs. the Marlins on Sept. 10. His seminal moment in the playoffs was six shutout innings in a Game 3 victory over the Cubs in the NLCS. Not bad for a 36-year old who seemingly had run out of chances only a year earlier.

FIREMAN OF THE YEAR

Adam Ottavino

Northeastern | Colorado Rockies

Although Steve Cishek (Falmouth, Mass.) had a nice season for the Mariners with 25 saves and a 2.81 ERA, Ottavino's season revealed a potential monster-in-waiting for 2017. After returning July 5, 2016, from midseason 2015 Tommy John surgery, Ottavino (Northeastern University) positively dominated. He went unscored upon in his first 21 appearances. By then, the Rockies had made Ottavino the de facto closer. He finished 2016 with seven saves, a 2.67 ERA and a 0.93 ERA in 34 appearances. Big things are expected from the rejuvenated Colorado hurler in 2017 while Cishek recovers from offseason surgery to repair a torn labrum.



Mitchell Layton/Getty Images

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

Kris Bryant

Honorary New Englander | Chicago Cubs

Yes, once again, we understand that Bryant (Las Vegas, Nev.) isn't technically a New Englander. But his deep roots here — his dad, Mike, is an Acton, Mass., native who played for UMass-Lowell and the Red Sox organization, and Bryant still has extended family in the area — allow us to fairly consider Bryant an honorary New Englander. And why wouldn't we? In just his second MLB season, Bryant — the favorite for NL MVP — anchored the Cubs' offensive attack with 39 homers, 102 RBI, a .292 batting average and a .978 OPS. In the playoffs, Bryant still carried a hot bat, hitting .308 with three home runs and a .409 OBP to help lead the



► Springer

Cubs to their first World Series championship in 108 years. All signs point to this being only the beginning of a stellar career.

An honorable mention goes to George Springer (New Britain, Conn.) of the Houston Astros, who played all 162 games and submitted his first full season in 2016 after battling injuries in the prior two years. Springer reached career highs in home runs (29), RBI (82) and runs (116) and also had 12 out-field assists, good for fifth in the league behind Red Sox stars Mookie Betts (14) and Jackie Bradley Jr. (13).



Gregory Shamus/Getty Images

CY YOUNG AWARD

Kyle Hendricks

Dartmouth College | Chicago Cubs

In just his third major-league season, Hendricks (Dartmouth College) emerged as one of the best pitchers in baseball in 2016. Check out these numbers for the regular season: a 16-8 record, a 2.13 ERA (best in the majors), a .207 BAA, a 0.98 WHIP and 170 strikeouts in 190 innings. Twenty-one of his 30 starts were quality starts, establishing both consistency and the ability to be a workhorse. In the playoffs, Hendricks then outdueled Clayton Kershaw in Game 6 of the NLCS to pitch the Cubs to their first NL pennant in 71 years. In the World Series, he posted a 1.00 ERA in two starts, including the instant-classic Game 7.



► Hendricks

EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR

Theo Epstein

Brookline, Mass. | Chicago Cubs

Epstein's patient approach to building a lasting contender came to full fruition in 2016. From positioning the team to draft Kris Bryant to acquiring such key pieces as Anthony Rizzo, Jake Arrieta and Jon Lester to hiring Joe Maddon to manage it all, The former Red Sox GM, Epstein (Brookline, Mass.) deserves all the accolades he'll be getting for this masterwork assembly of talent to win his third World Series championship. One day, it's likely to land him in Cooperstown.



► Epstein

This Hall of Famer Wishes He Had **The ROPE**



MLB Hall of Fame Pitcher John Smoltz and Professional Trainer Chris Verna demonstrate The ROPE Trainer™ during "Mitigation & Rehabilitation of Tommy John Surgery" at the ABCA Show.

"If I would have had The ROPE, I might not have needed Tommy John Surgery." John Smoltz

Smoltz is an advocate for raising arm care awareness across amateur baseball. He made these comments during his 2015 Hall of Fame induction speech: "It's an epidemic ... I want to encourage the parents that it is not normal to have a surgery at 14 and 15 years old ... Baseball should not be a year-round sport, that kids have an opportunity to be athletic and play other sports. Every throw a kid makes today is a competitive pitch... maxing out too hard, too early, and that's why we're having these problems. Please, take care of those great future arms."

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Active New Englanders in the major leagues Compiled by Joshua Kummins

POSITION PLAYERS	HOMETOWN/COLLEGE	TEAM	POS.	TWITTER	THE SKINNY
Nick Ahmed	East Longmeadow, Mass./UConn	Arizona	SS	@NickAhmed_	Suffered a right hip impingement in late July and was limited to 90 games this season
Eric Campbell	Norwich, Conn./Boston College	N.Y. Mets	1B	—	Posted four pinch-hit RBI this season, all during the month of September
Curt Casali	New Canaan, Conn./Vanderbilt	Tampa Bay	C	@Curtcasali	Finished season with multi-hit efforts in three of final four games and four RBI in that stretch
Chris Colabello	Milford, Mass./Assumption	Toronto	1B/OF	@CC20rake	Made first MLB opening roster, but served 80-game suspension for PED use
Rajai Davis	New London, Conn./UConn-Avery Point	Cleveland	OF	@rajai11davis	Smacked game-tying home run in eighth inning of Game 7 of the World Series
Chris Denorfia	Bristol, Conn./Wheaton	—	OF	—	Signed MiLB deal with Giants in June, but was released in August and remains a free agent
Matt Duffy	Milton, Mass./Tennessee	Texas	3B	@meduffy13	Claimed by Rangers July 23 and assigned to Round Rock, his second Triple A team this season
Ryan Flaherty	Portland, Maine/Vanderbilt	Baltimore	OF	@RFlaherty3	Played six different positions in addition to making pitching appearance Aug. 20
Nate Freiman	Wellesley, Mass./Duke	RED SOX	1B	@natefreiman	Acquired by his hometown team in May and played 90 games for Double-A Portland
Sam Fuld	Durham, N.H./Stanford	Oakland	OF	@SamFuld5	Missed season after it was deemed he would need surgery to repair rotator cuff in late April
Ryan Hanigan	Andover, Mass./Rollins	RED SOX	C	—	Sox won 21 of his 30 starts this year, but played in just 35 games due to two DL stints
Chris Iannetta	Providence, R.I./North Carolina	Seattle	C	@Chris_Iannetta	Ranked third among AL catchers with 66 starts, but appeared in just 24 of M's last 73 games
Ryan Lavarney	Woodland Hills, Calif./Yale	Atlanta	C	@RyanLavarney	Majority of season spent in New England, playing 66 games for Double-A New Hampshire
Mike Olt	Branford, Conn./UConn	San Diego	3B	@mOLTenLAVA20	Free agent signing this offseason played in 52 games in Padres system
A.J. Pollock	Hebron, Conn./Notre Dame	Arizona	OF	—	Played in just 12 games due to injuries, including five-month DL stint after fracturing right elbow
Tony Sanchez	Miami, Fla./Boston College	Toronto	C	@Tony26Montana	Changed organizations twice this year after spending his seven pro seasons with Pirates
George Springer	New Britain, Conn./UConn	Houston	OF	—	Became the first Astro to appear in all 162 games in a season since Carlos Lee in 2007
Mason Williams	Pawtucket, R.I.	N.Y. Yankees	OF	@MJordanW9	Finished whirlwind season in the majors, playing from Sept. 15 to Oct. 2 with New York
PITCHERS	HOMETOWN/COLLEGE	TEAM	POS.	TWITTER	THE SKINNY
Matt Barnes	Bethel, Conn./UConn	RED SOX	RHP	@mattbarnesRHP	Led the Red Sox with 66⅔ relief innings while setting career-highs in wins (4) and Ks (71)
Craig Breslow	Trumbull, Conn./Yale	—	LHP	@CraigBreslow	Signed by Rangers on July 27 but released Aug. 7 and still remains a free agent
Chris Capuano	West Springfield, Mass./Duke	Milwaukee	LHP	—	Missed 116 team games with left elbow injury suffered May 26
Matt Carasiti	New Britain, Conn./St. John's	Colorado	RHP	@Siti_11	Made MLB debut Aug. 12 in Philadelphia, his first of 19 appearances in MLB this year
Steve Cishek	Falmouth, Mass./Carson-Newman	Seattle	RHP	@srSHREK31	Finished season second among Mariners relievers with 76 strikeouts
Alex Cobb	Boston, Mass.	Tampa Bay	RHP	@Acobb53	He and teammate Chase Whitley were two of eight MLB pitchers to return from 2015 TJ surgery
Tim Collins	Worcester, Mass.	Kansas City	LHP	@Timcollins55	Spent entire season recovering from second Tommy John surgery
Pat Dean	Naugatuck, Conn./Boston College	Minnesota	LHP	@ImTheDean15	His pair of stints with Twins included MLB debut May 11 against Baltimore
Oliver Drake	Worcester, Mass./Navy	Baltimore	RHP	—	Pitched 12th inning for his first MLB win against Arizona on Sept. 23
Charlie Furbush	South Portland, Maine/LSU	—	LHP	@chariefurbush	Opted to continue rehab from shoulder surgery as free agent after being DFA'd by Mariners
Brandon Gomes	Fall River, Mass./Tulane	Chicago Cubs	RHP	—	Did not pitch in MLB this season, but made 19 appearances for Triple-A Iowa Cubs
Nick Greenwood	Southington, Conn./Rhode Island	Chicago Cubs	LHP	@ngreeny23	Made all of his 29 appearances between Double-A and Triple-A levels in Twins system
Jesse Hahn	Norwich, Conn./Virginia Tech	Oakland	RHP	—	Endured a challenging season, posting career-high 6.02 ERA over four stints with A's
Steve Hathaway	Acton, Mass./Franklin Pierce	Arizona	LHP	@Mr_Hath	Franklin Pierce's first major-leaguer pitched scoreless ball in 20 of his 24 outings
Matt Harvey	Mystic, Conn./North Carolina	N.Y. Mets	RHP	@MattHarvey33	Had surgery to correct Thoracic Outlet Syndrome July 18 and missed remainder of season
Kyle Hendricks	Newport Beach, Calif./Dartmouth College	Chicago Cubs	RHP	@kylehendricks28	Led MLB with 2.13 ERA, set career highs with 16 wins and 170 Ks; won World Series
Rich Hill	Milton, Mass./Michigan	Oakland	LHP	—	Posted career-best nine-game winning streak May 7-Sept. 10, going 9-0 with 1.43 ERA
Jack Leathersich	Beverly, Mass./UMass-Lowell	Chicago Cubs	LHP	@LeatherRocket	Will look to make return from Tommy John in 2017; took a step forward with late-season rehab
Dominic Leone	Norwich, Conn./Clemson	Arizona	RHP	@DLeone52	Started season with Triple-A Reno before appearing in 25 games over four stints with Arizona
Jeff Locke	Conway, N.H.	Pittsburgh	LHP	@Jeff_Locke	Earned nine victories this season while tying his career-high with 30 appearances
Charlie Morton	Redding, Conn.	Philadelphia	RHP	—	Made four appearances for Phillies before hamstring strain shut him down for season
Scott Oberg	Tewksbury, Mass./UConn	Colorado	RHP	—	Earned lone save Aug. 17, but final month-plus of season suffered from blood clots in arm
Ryan O'Rourke	Worcester, Mass./Merrimack	Minnesota	LHP	@RyanO_Rourke	Spent much of this season (Apr. 24 to Oct. 3) with strained left hamstring
Adam Ottavino	Brooklyn, N.Y./Northeastern	Colorado	RHP	—	Earned win Sept. 16 against San Diego, his first in MLB since Apr. 22, 2015
Evan Scribner	Washington, Conn./Central Conn. St.	Seattle	RHP	@evanscribner	Fanned 15 in 12 relief appearances with M's after being recalled from rehab with Triple-A Tacoma

NOTE: Players on this list appeared in at least one major-league game (or were under MLB contract) in 2015 or 2016. If we are missing any New Englanders, email us at editor@baseballjournal.com.

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GRATEFUL EIGHT

By Craig Forde and Joshua Kummins

FROM ADAMS TO ZIOMEK, the affiliated minor leagues were robust with talent honed on the high school and college baseball diamonds of New England. More than 170 players who plied their trade across the six-state region played affiliated professional ball this past season, covering 15 different leagues over six levels of play. Of the 30 MLB organizations, only one, Philadelphia, did not have a New England representative, while the New York Mets housed the most regional prospects with 19, followed by the Baltimore Orioles (18), Seattle Mariners (13) and Pittsburgh Pirates (12). Only four New England-based players dotted the farm system of the Boston Red Sox, and Vermont is the only state without representation on the list. There are many stories to tell of the journey that these young men from our communities have endured this season, each in search of living out their big-league dreams. Here is just a small sample of tales from the minor leagues:



Columbia Fireflies

PATRICK MAZEIKA

Wilbraham, Mass. | Stetson | C
Columbia Fireflies (A) | New York Mets

Since being selected in the eighth round by the New York Mets in 2015, Patrick Mazeika has been proving his worth at the plate over his first two seasons.

A product of Stetson University, by way of the Salisbury School, he debuted a year ago with the rookie-level Kingsport Mets, hitting .354 with 27 doubles, three home runs, 48 RBI and 44 runs over 62 games, an effort that earned him an Appalachian League postseason All-Star nod.



Mazeika's 2016 campaign was delayed a little over a month following an elbow injury, but once he got back to business, he picked up where he had left off the season before. With the Single-A Columbia Fireflies in the South Atlantic League, the catcher hit safely in his first five games of the season.

The Wilbraham, Mass., native managed to maintain momentum throughout much of the season as he hit .305 over 70 games, capping another strong season by hitting a combine .350 in August and September.

He also showed his worth in the field, where he gunned down 23 runners who tried to steal on him and only made four errors in 403 innings behind the dish.

CODY DUBE

Windham, Maine | Keene State | RHP
Aberdeen IronBirds (SS-A) | Baltimore Orioles

New England's college baseball success this year has been documented well on the pages of this magazine, from Boston College's NCAA tournament run to a strong group of locals shining on Cape Cod.

That success translated to the MLB draft this past June. Cody Dube was one of just three Division 3 players selected on the draft's second day, and just the second-ever pick out of Keene State.

"I was hoping there would be an opportunity at the end of the season to keep playing," Dube said of the lead-up to the Baltimore Orioles selecting him in the 10th round. "As the season went on and I was talking to more and more teams, it kind of got more realistic."

Draft day was a whirlwind for Dube, as one might expect. He talked to scouts from the Orioles and Chicago Cubs, among other teams.

But, nobody had a firm prediction until his name was about to be called. "Up until the ninth round, I definitely had no clue — no phone calls, no nothing. I was just sitting around, waiting."

As his first pro season drew to a close, Dube found himself drawing back from spending three summers with the New England Collegiate Baseball League's Sanford Mainers, where he grew close with fellow Maine native, Div. 3 All-American and 2016 draftee Sam Dexter.

For Dube, having Dexter — a 23rd-round selection of the White Sox out of the University of Southern Maine who was regarded as one of the top Div. 3 players in the nation entering the past couple spring seasons — by his side was valuable.

"We played against each other in college, but the last two summers we played with each other and lived together," Dube said. "We got a lot closer after our second year together, and it was cool living together being in the same situation from D3 schools and going into senior year."

Dube and Dexter just prove that it doesn't matter where you come from. If you can play, scouts will find you.



MIKE AHMED

East Longmeadow, Mass. | Holy Cross | 1B
Rancho Cucamonga Quakes (A) | Los Angeles Dodgers

After blazing a steady path up the ladder over his first three seasons, Mike Ahmed took things to a new level this season thanks to a massive power surge.

In his three seasons at Holy Cross, the East Longmeadow, Mass., native hit a combined 12 home runs. Over his first three pro seasons he hit just four, all of them coming last season at Single-A Great Lakes.

This season, Ahmed — the younger brother of Arizona Diamondbacks starting shortstop Nick — launched 19 home runs while with the Los Angeles Dodgers' High-A affiliate, Rancho Cucamonga Quakes.

A 20th-round draft pick in 2013, Ahmed also set career best marks in RBI (51), runs scored (81) and slugging percentage (.496) over 111 games played.

For an encore, the first baseman carried that momentum into the postseason, going 4-for-15 with two home runs, a double, three RBI, three runs scored and a stolen base, though the Quakes bowed out in final game of their best-of-three, first-round matchup against the Lancaster JetHawks.

Ahmed, who finished the season with a .279 batting average and nine stolen bases, has gone up a level in the Dodgers system in each of his four professional seasons.



SHAWN HAVILAND

Farmington, Conn. | Harvard | RHP
Columbus Clippers (AAA) | Cleveland Indians

Shawn Haviland's journey across the landscape of professional baseball has been extensive and looked to be near completion when he was released by the Triple-A Charlotte Knights prior to the start of the season.

The former Harvard and Farmington (Conn.) High School standout, who was drafted in the 33rd round of the 2008 draft by Oakland, returned to his home state and continued his ball with the newly minted independent club, the New Britain Bees.

Haviland logged 94 1/3 innings with the Bees, impressive enough for the Cleveland Indians to come knocking in August, when they purchased the right-hander's contract.

Assigned to the Triple-A Columbus Clippers, he tossed seven strong innings against Louisville before the ink was even dry on his new contract, allowing just one earned run while scattering five hits and two walks in a no decision.

In four of the seven starts that he would get with the Clippers, Haviland allowed just one earned run, and on two occasions, he didn't allow any runs across. He shined brightest in his final start of the season, his club's regular-season finale, in which he allowed just five hits and walk over five innings.



SCOTT MANEA

Shrewsbury, Mass. | St. Petersburg College | C
Kingsport Mets (Rookie) | New York Mets

Entering this summer with the Futures Collegiate Baseball League's Wachusett Dirt Dawgs, Scott Manea had one goal: to get ready for his junior year of college.

When his time as a Dirt Dawg was over, he was a pro ballplayer.

"If you play, there is the chance to be noticed," Manea said after his first pro season. "At the (FCBL) All-Star Game, scouts were present, and when the Mets called, I was grateful for the opportunity. The path for each player is different, but going somewhere you will play. Desire and hard work are the common threads."

After graduating from St. John's High School in his native Shrewsbury, Manea played one year at North Carolina State before transferring to St. Petersburg College this past year. Manea turned his summer into an All-Star selection and a pro career, hitting .368 with 15 RBI in just 19 games with the Dirt Dawgs.

While New England is home, Manea was grateful to go elsewhere to play college ball.

"I learned there are a lot of talented players out there and that you have to play at the highest competitive level possible to get ready for the next level," Manea said. "I definitely considered staying, but since a young age I have always envisioned playing down South because I never wanted the season to end."

JANSIEL RIVERA

Methuen, Mass. | CF
DSL Mariners (Rookie) | Seattle Mariners

There may be no baseball player from this region with a better story than Jansiel Rivera.

A first-year outfielder in the Mariners organization, Rivera began his high school career in his hometown of Methuen, Mass., but spent the two years immediately before this June's MLB draft playing in the Dominican Republic. He was a virtual stranger in the Merrimack Valley for those two years, playing baseball all day, every day, before returning home at the end of this past academic year for Methuen High School's prom.

The adjustment to a new country was a difficult one at first as Rivera had spent only weeks at a time there in the past. But, just weeks after Rivera came back to Massachusetts, all of his hard work — on diamonds across the Dominican — paid off with the Mariners selecting him in the 22nd round. Rivera began his first pro season with Seattle's rookie-level affiliate in the Arizona League, hitting .244 with three RBI in 14 games, but he quickly returned to the D.R. for the remainder of the year.

Rivera saw his draft stock rise, playing 32 more games in the Dominican Summer League, driving in 12 runs. Rivera was participating in the Mariners' six-week Instructional League program in the D.R.



MINORS TRACKER

For the first time ever, New England Baseball Journal has tracked every minor-league baseball player from New England or New England college — 177 total. Compiled by Craig Forde and Joshua Kummins. If we are missing any local minor-leaguers, please email editor@baseballjournal.com

PLAYER	HOMETOWN/COLLEGE	POS.	AFFILIATION	TEAMS (W/LEVEL)	2016 UPDATE
Jesse Adams	Maumee, Ohio/Boston College	LHP	Cincinnati	Dayton (A), Billings (R)	Southpaw held right-handed hitters to a .130 average
Mike Ahmed	East Longmeadow, Mass./Holy Cross	IF/OF	Los Angeles (NL)	Rancho Cucamonga (A+)	Had a career high 19 home runs, second most for the Quakes
Matt Albanese	East Haddam, Conn./Bryant	OF	Minnesota	Elizabethton (R)	Drafted in seventh round, but missed season recovering from injury suffered in college
James Alfonso	Raynham, Mass./Hartford	C	Seattle	Clinton (A)	Gunned down 20-of-46 potential base stealers (43 percent) in 67 games at catcher
Carl Anderson	Sudbury, Mass./Bryant	OF	Pittsburgh	Gulf Coast Rays (R)	Worked way back to play 9 games after missing entire 2015 after hernia surgery
Tanner Anderson	Boynton Beach, Fla./Harvard	RHP	Pittsburgh	Bradenton (A+), West Virginia (A)	Went 3-3 with a save, 3.58 ERA, 1.22 WHIP between two levels
John Andreoli	Shrewsbury, Mass./UConn	OF	Chicago (NL)	Iowa (AAA)	Led PCL with 43 stolen bases and was second in the league with 94 walks
Aaron Barbosa	Dracut, Mass./Northeastern	OF	Seattle	Bakersfield (A+), Clinton (A)	Was 18-for-22 on stolen-base attempts (125-for-153 on SB attempts in career)
Scott Barnes	Chicopee, Mass./St. John's	LHP	Chicago (NL)	Iowa (AAA)	Spent much of season on disabled list with various injuries; last pitched June 23
Noah Becker	New York, N.Y./New Haven	LHP	Cincinnati	Daytona (A+)	Had a 0.77 ERA over 10 appearances in July
Tyler Beede	Auburn, Mass./Vanderbilt	RHP	San Francisco	Richmond (AA)	2014 first-round pick led Eastern League with a 2.81 ERA; 135 strikeouts in 147½ innings
Jeff Beliveau	Johnston, R.I./Florida Atlantic	LHP	Baltimore	Bowie (AA), Frederick (A+)	4-0 with 2 saves, 2.54 ERA and 66 Ks in 49½ innings in return from shoulder surgery
Conor Bierfeldt	Torrington, Conn./Western Conn.	OF/DH	Baltimore	Bowie (AA), Frederick (A+)	In only 70 games with Frederick, second on club with 18 home runs; hit 20 total
Brandon Bingel	Peabody, Mass./Bryant	RHP	Pittsburgh	West Virginia (SS A)	Led West Virginia with 4 saves, finished 8 games and appeared in 16, posted 2.91 ERA
Matt Blandino	Bristol, Conn./Felician	RHP	Cincinnati	AZL Reds (R)	Debuted with a 1-1 record, 2.30 ERA, 1.15 WHIP and 30 Ks in 8 appearances/5 starts
Brandon Bonilla	Greenwich, Conn./Hawaii Pacific	LHP	Baltimore	—	Signed pro contract after being selected in 13th round but did not see game action
Ben Bowden	Lynn, Mass./Vanderbilt	LHP	Colorado	Asheville (A)	Allowed just 1 run on 8 hits in August and September to cap first professional season
Woody Bryson	Cambridge, Mass./Villanova	LHP	New York (AL)	Gulf Coast Yankees (R)	Undrafted free agent went 1-0 in 10 appearances, striking out 16 in 10 innings
Jeff Burke	Chattanooga, Tenn./Boston College	RHP	San Francisco	Salem-Keizer (A)	Earned first career victory June 26 in his third pro outing
Blake Butera	Madisonville, La./Boston College	2B	Tampa Bay	Hudson Valley (SS A), Princeton (R)	Had 12 doubles, 23 RBI and 23 runs in 49 games with Princeton
Eddie Campbell	Bridgewater, Mass./Virginia Tech	LHP	Seattle	Bakersfield (A+)	Had career bests in wins (11) and strikeouts (117)
Eric Campbell	Norwich, Conn./Boston College	OF/IF	New York (NL)	Las Vegas Area (AAA)	13 multi-hit games over final 33 games of season with Las Vegas; earned Sept. MLB call-up
Matt Carasiti	New Britain, Conn./St. John's	LHP	Colorado	Albuquerque (AAA); Hartford (AA)	Led Eastern League with 29 saves in 38 appearances despite late July call-up to AAA
Aaron Civale	East Windsor, Conn./Northeastern	RHP	Cleveland	Mahoning Valley (SS A)	Cleveland's third-round selection went 0-2 with 1.67 ERA, 0.82 WHIP
Matt Cleveland	Windsor, Conn.	RHP	New York (NL)	GCL Mets (R)	Opponents hit .375 over 7½ innings off region's top HS draft prospect this year

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TALES FROM THE MINOR LEAGUES

PLAYER	HOMETOWN/COLLEGE	POS.	AFFILIATION	TEAMS (W/LEVEL)	2016 UPDATE
Casey Frawley	New Haven, Conn./Stetson	2B/SS/3B	Detroit	Erie (AA), Lakeland (A+)	Released by Detroit on June 21
Austin French	Orange, Conn./Brown	LHP	Los Angeles (NL)	Ogden (R)	Struck out 31 over 25 innings in debut
Jim Fuller	Marlboro, Mass./Southern Conn.	LHP	Pittsburgh	Indianapolis (AAA)	Made three appearances before hitting disabled list
Reed Gamache	Exeter, R.I./SUNY-Binghamton	1B/2B/3B	New York (NL)	Kingsport (R), Gulf Coast Mets (R)	Undrafted in June, was tied for second with 31 runs scored for Kingsport
Dan Gamache	Newport, R.I./Auburn	1B/3B	Pittsburgh	Indianapolis (AAA)	Released by Pittsburgh on Sept. 16
Kyle Gauthier	Lynn, Mass./Hartford	RHP	San Diego	AZL Padres (R)	Undrafted free agent struck out 30 in 17 relief appearances; earned first win Aug. 13
Tom Gavitt	North Stonington, Conn./Bryant	C/DH	Oakland	Beloit (A)	Voluntarily retired after five games this season
Anthony Giansanti	Montville, Conn./Siena	2B/3B/OF	Chicago (NL)	Tennessee (AA)	Released by Cubs on May 15
Tad Gold	Vineyard Haven, Mass./Endicott	OF	Baltimore	Frederick (A+)	Released by Baltimore on May 24
Michael Gonzalez	Norwalk, Conn.	RHP	Milwaukee	AZL Brewers (R)	Pitched in both starting and relief roles as a first-year pro, earning first pro win Aug. 17
John Gorman	Norwood, Mass./Boston College	RHP	Oakland	Vermont (SS A)	Missed entire 2016 season due to injuries
Nick Greenwood	Farmington, Conn./U. Rhode Island	LHP	Minnesota	Rochester (AAA), Chattanooga (AA)	Finished the season going 4-1 with a 1.88 ERA and 0.91 WHIP over last six outings
Nick Gruener	Miami, Fla./Harvard	RHP	Baltimore	—	Drafted in 22nd round, signed but did not make debut
Jesse Hahn	Groton, Conn./Virginia Tech	RHP	Oakland	Nashville (AAA)	Spent much of season shuttling between Triple A and the big-league club
Alex Hassan	Milton, Mass./Duke	OF	Los Angeles (NL)	Oklahoma City (AAA)	Made two relief appearances, his first as a pro, and did not allow a run or a hit in 1 IP
Steve Hathaway	Acton, Mass./Franklin Pierce	LHP	Arizona	Reno (AAA); Mobile (AA)	Allowed 1 ER over final 11½ innings before promotion to Triple; made MLB debut July 30
Shawn Haviland	Farmington, Conn./Harvard	RHP	Cleveland	Columbus (AAA)	Signed with Cleveland in August after 22 appearances in indy ball with New Britain
Tucker Healy	Needham, Mass./Ithaca	RHP	Oakland	Nashville (AAA)	Spent entire season with Nashville, leading staff with career-high 8 saves
Mike Hepple	Newington, Conn./East Connecticut	RHP	New York (NL)	Binghamton (AA), St. Lucie (A+)	Promoted to AA May 25 and had 2.76 ERA over final 20 appearances (32½ innings)
Spencer Herrmann	Jacksonville, Fla./Fisher	LHP	Seattle	Bakersfield (A+), Clinton (A)	Held lefties to a .157 average, held all batters to .172 mark in May and June
P.J. Higgins	Wallingford, Conn./Old Dominion	1B/C	Chicago (NL)	South Bend (A)	Threw out 33 runners attempting a stolen base in 77 games behind the plate
Henry Hirsch	Scarsdale, N.Y./New Haven	RHP	Pittsburgh	Altoona (AA), Bradenton (A+)	Received late-season promotion to Double A after going 6-3 in 38 appearances at Bradenton
Mitch Horacek	Littleton, Colo./Dartmouth	LHP	Baltimore	Frederick (A+)	In third stint at Frederick, went 5-11 with 4.59 ERA and 110 strikeouts
Tyler Horan	Middleboro, Mass./Virginia Tech	OF	San Francisco	Richmond (AA)	Made first pro pitching appearance Aug. 8: 1 IP, 4 H, 5 ER, 2 BB, 2 SO
Ryan Horstman	South Hadley, Mass./St. John's	LHP	Seattle	Jackson (AA), Bakersfield (A+), AZL Mariners (R)	Notched back-to-back saves, his first career saves, before earning promotion to Double A
Dustin Hunt	Andover, Mass./Northeastern	RHP	Houston	Tri-City (SS A)	Astros' 10th-round selection earned first career win in second-to-last appearance of season
Brian Hunter	Port Jefferson, N.Y./Hartford	RHP	Cincinnati	Billings (R), AZL Reds (R)	Worked 15½ innings to close season after missing much of first four months with injury
Jay Jabs	Schwenksville, Pa./Franklin Pierce	IF/OF/DH	New York (NL)	Brooklyn (SS A)	Hit safely in his first seven games, and in 10 of his first 11
Thomas Jankins	West Brookfield, Mass./Quinnipiac	RHP	Milwaukee	Wisconsin (A)	A 13th-round pick, posted a 3.16 ERA with 35 strikeouts in 12 appearances
Ryan January	Swampscott, Mass./San Jacinto Coll.	C	Arizona	Missoula (R)	Second on team and tied for fifth in Pioneer League with 10 home runs
Michael Johnson	Georgetown, Mass./Dartmouth	LHP	Los Angeles (NL)	Tulsa (AAA)	Made team-high 43 appearances at Tulsa
Zach Kapstein	Tiverton, R.I.	OF	Baltimore	Frederick (A+)	Limited to only seven games due to injuries
Anthony Kay	Stony Brook, N.Y./UConn	LHP	New York (NL)	—	31st overall selection in 2016 has yet to debut
Kody Kerski	Waterbury, Conn./Sacred Heart	RHP	Seattle	Bakersfield (A+)	From May 19 to July 5, posted a 0.67 ERA over 27 innings
Mike King	Warwick, R.I./Boston College	RHP	Miami	Greensboro (A), Batavia (SSA), Gulf Coast Marlins (R)	Experienced three levels in debut, with bulk of innings (21½) coming with Batavia
Cam Kneeland	Rowley, Mass./UMass-Lowell	OF/IF	Baltimore	Frederick (A+)	Had eight-game stretch in mid-July where he hit .500 and had seven multi-hit games
Neil Kozikowski	Burlington, Conn.	RHP	Pittsburgh	West Virginia (SS A)	First full season out of pen; finished 1-0 with save and 7 strikeouts in last three outings
Dan Langfield	Somerset, Mass./Memphis	RHP	Cincinnati	—	Career plagued by arm injuries continued; did not appear in a game for second straight year

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PLAYER	HOMETOWN/COLLEGE	POS.	AFFILIATION	TEAMS (W/LEVEL)	2016 UPDATE
Jack Leathersich	Beverly, Mass./UMass-Lowell	LHP	Chicago (NL)	Iowa (AAA); Tennessee (AA); AZL Cubs (R)	Returned from TJ surgery in July; did not allow earned run or hit in 5 appearances with Iowa
Dominic Leone	Norwich, Conn./Clemson	RHP	Arizona	Reno (AAA)	His 1.03 WHIP was best of any pitcher with 30 or more innings for Reno
Chase Livingston	East Lyme, Conn./U. Rhode Island	C/1B	Kansas City	Burlington (Rookie), AZL Royals (R)	Hit .273 with 9 RBI and 10 runs across two teams in debut
Nolan Long	Waterford, Conn./Wagner	RHP	Los Angeles (NL)	Great Lakes (A), Ogden (R)	6-foot-10 pitcher struck out 107 across two levels in first full season of work
Nick Lovullo	Thousand Oaks, Calif./Holy Cross	2B/SS/3B	Boston	Portland (AA), Greenville (A), Lowell (SS A)	Son of Red Sox coach Torey; had .975 fielding percentage over three levels at three positions
Ryley MacEachern	Saugus, Mass./Stony Brook	RHP	Miami	Greensboro (A), Batavia (SS A)	Scoreless streak of 10½ innings over 6 appearances, striking out 10, allowing 4 hits and 1 BB
Johnny Magliozi	Milton, Mass./Florida	RHP	New York (NL)	Columbia (A)	Was 2-0 with 2 saves in 10 June appearances, holding opponents to .064 average
Joseph Maher	Bedford, N.H.	RHP	New York (AL)	Tampa (A+)	Released by Yankees on July 17, signed with independent club Lancaster
Scott Manea	Shrewsbury, Mass./ St. Petersburg Coll.	C/DH	New York (NL)	Kingsport (R), Gulf Coast Mets (R)	Undrafted after being 40th-round pick of Mariners out of St. John's Shrewsbury in 2014
Mike Martin	Hoffman Estates, Ill./Harvard	OF	Oakland	Beloit (A)	His .298 BA was best on team for players with more than 10 at-bats
Evan Marzilli	Cranston, R.I./South Carolina	CF	Arizona	Reno (AAA); Mobile (AA)	Led Double-A Mobile with 11 stolen bases in 18 attempts; had career-high 65 walks
Patrick Mazeika	Wilbraham, Mass./Stetson	C/1B	New York (NL)	Columbia (A)	Hit .305 in 70 games; has hit .329 over first 132 pro games played
LJ Mazzilli	Greenwich, Conn./UConn	2B	New York (NL)	Las Vegas Area (AAA), Binghamton (AA)	Son of former big-leaguer Lee, hit safely in 18 of 21 games in June at Double A
Kevin McAvoy	Syracuse, N.Y./Bryant	RHP	Boston	Portland (AA)	Second on SeaDogs with 22 starts
Max McDowell	Irwin, Pa./UConn	C	Milwaukee	Wisconsin (A)	Threw out 54 of 122 runners for a 44 percent success rate
Kevin McGowan	Nahua, N.H./Franklin Pierce	RHP	New York (NL)	Las Vegas (AAA), Binghamton (AA), Port St. Lucie (A+)	Rose up three levels after converting to relief role: 5-1, 2.35 ERA, 1.09 WHIP in 42 appearances
Ryan McKenna	Berwick, Maine	OF	Baltimore	Aberdeen (SS A)	Former fourth-rounder had a .321 average in June, hitting safely in 17 of 23 games
Bobby Melley	Barnstable, Mass./UConn	1B	Tampa Bay	Princeton (R)	Fifth in Appalachian League with .327 batting average and sixth with a .404 OBP
Danny Mendick	Rochester, N.Y./UMass-Lowell	2B/SS/3B	Chicago (AL)	Charlotte (AAA), Winston-Salem (A+) Kannapolis (A)	Climbed three levels in first full season, collecting 101 hits/20 doubles at Kannapolis
Thomas Milone	Monroe, Conn.	OF	Tampa Bay	Charlotte (A+)	Had a .993 fielding percentage and led the Stone Crabs with seven outfield assists
Tyler Mizenko	Wallingford, Conn./Winthrop	RHP	San Francisco	Richmond (AA)	Had a run of 12 consecutive appearances without allowing a run from May 11 to June 8
Jamill Moquette	Boston, Mass./UMass-Boston	OF	Baltimore	Delmarva (A)	Missed entire 2016 season following Tommy John surgery
Steve Moyers	East Longmeadow, Mass./URI	LHP	Seattle	Everett (SS A), AZL Mariners (R)	Threw 41½ innings, third most for the Arizona League Mariners
Joe Napolitano	Hollis, N.H./St. John's	RHP	New York (NL)	Kingsport (R), Gulf Coast Mets (R)	Made 12 appearances out of pen for Kingsport, finished seven games
Greg Nappo	Madison, Conn./UConn	LHP	Miami	New Orleans (AAA)	Held opponents to a .196 BA while posting a 0.73 ERA in the month of July
Nick Neumann	Middletown, Conn./Cent. Connecticut	RHP	Pittsburgh	Bradenton (A+)	Second on the Marauders with six saves
Sean Newcomb	Middleboro, Mass./Hartford	LHP	Atlanta	Mississippi (AA)	Led Southern League with 152 strikeouts; allowed just 4 HRs over 140 innings
Andrew Noviello	Raynham, Mass.	C	Boston	Gulf Coast Red Sox (R)	Struggled in 14 games, hitting .171 with one extra base hit and three RBI
Chris O'Dowd	Cleveland, Ohio/Dartmouth	C/3B	Chicago (AL)	Birmingham (AA), Winston-Salem (A+)	Hit .284 while at Winston-Salem
Scott Oberg	Tewksbury, Mass./UConn	RHP	Colorado	Albuquerque (AAA)	Finished second on Isotopes with nine saves; allowed just 16 hits over 29½ innings
Mike Odenwaelder	Goshen, Conn./Amherst	OF	Baltimore	Aberdeen (SS A)	Hit .308 over nine games in August
Tyler Olander	Mansfield, Conn./UConn	RHP	Toronto	Gulf Coast Blue Jays (R)	Former UConn basketball forward did not allow a run in 10½ innings of relief
Mike Olt	Branford, Conn./UConn	1B/3B	San Diego	El Paso (AAA), San Antonio (AA)	Signed with Padres in offseason; played 49 games at Double A before working way to majors
Thomas Pannone	Cranston, R.I./Southern Nevada	LHP	Cleveland	Lynchburg (A+), Lake County (A)	Went 4-1 with a 1.76 ERA and 58Ks in 66½ IP over his final 12 appearances
Daniel Paolini	Stratford, Conn./Siena	RHP	Seattle	Jackson (AA)	Released by Seattle on June 11
Steve Parakslis	Abington, Mass./Maine	RHP	Chicago (NL)	Iowa (AAA); Tennessee (AA)	Walked just 19 batters over 75 innings between two levels
Matt Pare	Lighthouse Point, Fla./Boston College	C/DH	San Francisco	August (A)	Had a career-high six home runs and 20 runs scored
Stephen Peterson	Danvers, Mass./U. Rhode Island	LHP	Milwaukee	Colorado Springs (AAA); Biloxi (AA)	Made team-high 52 appearances, all in relief, at Biloxi and was second on team with 8 wins

TALES FROM THE MINOR LEAGUES

PLAYER	HOMETOWN/COLLEGE	POS.	AFFILIATION	TEAMS (W/LEVEL)	2016 UPDATE
Gavin Pittore	Boston, Mass./Wesleyan	RHP	Los Angeles (NL)	Rancho Cucamonga (A+), Great Lakes (A)	Finished 16 games and had 0.99 WHIP in 28 appearances for Great Lakes
Dario Pizzano	Saugus, Mass./Columbia	OF	Seattle	Tacoma (AAA); Jackson (AA)	Posted a 1.000 fielding percentage for second consecutive season
Curtiss Pomeroy	Shrewsbury, Mass./Georgetown	RHP	New York (AL)	Gulf Coast Yankees East (R)	Walked all three batters faced in his lone outing
Sean Poppen	Chesapeake, Va./Harvard	RHP	Minnesota	Cedar Rapids (A), Elizabethton Twins (R)	Went 3-4 with 2.70 ERA across two levels after being drafted in 19th round
Alex Powers	Brewster, Mass./So. New Hampshire	RHP	Cincinnati	Daytona (A+)	In fourth season, nearly tripled career win total, going 9-0 with save in 48 appearances
Adam Ravenelle	Sudbury, Mass./Vanderbilt	RHP	Detroit	Erie (AA), Lakeland (A+)	Made 50 appearances between two levels; made 34 appearances over first two seasons
Kyle Regnault	Johnston, R.I./U. Rhode Island	LHP	New York (NL)	Binghamton (AA), Brooklyn (SS A), GC Mets (R)	Made 22 appearances across three levels, struck out 30 in 28 1/3 IP
Robby Rinn	Warwick, R.I./Bryant	1B	Kansas City	AZL Royals (R)	Led team in ABs (189), doubles (13) and RBI (31); second on club with 53 hits
Cory Riordan	Killingworth, Conn./Fordham	RHP	Detroit	Toledo (AAA), Erie (AA)	Made three appearances out of pen after 24 starts; 1-0 with a 0.82 ERA and 11 Ks in 11 IP
Willie Rios	Waterford, Conn./Fla. Southwestern St.	LHP	Baltimore	Gulf Coast Orioles (R)	Had tough debut, but managed two 3-inning outings in which he allowed just 1 ER
Jansiel Rivera	Methuen, Mass.	CF	Seattle	AZL Mariners (R); DSL Mariners (R)	18-year-old finished first pro season in Dominican Republic with 12 RBI in 32 games
Duncan Robinson	Houston, Texas/Dartmouth	RHP	Chicago (NL)	Eugene (SS A), AZL Cubs (R)	Earned first pro win July 23 in first start after being bumped up a level
Jeff Roy	Cranston, R.I./U. Rhode Island	CF	Pittsburgh	Brandenton (A+)	Released by Pittsburgh on June 29
Pat Ruotolo	Peabody, Mass./UConn	RHP	San Francisco	Salem-Keizer (A), AZL Giants (R)	27th-rounder struck out 42 batters over his first 24 innings, earned 4 saves
Tony Sanchez	Miami, Fla./Boston College	C	Toronto, S.F.	Buffalo (AAA), Sacramento (AAA)	Picked up by Giants at beginning of August after being released by Toronto
Craig Schlitter	Guilford, Conn./Bryant	RHP	Colorado	Modesto (A+)	His two wins were both secured in the 15th inning
Nick Sciortino	Barrington, N.J./Boston College	C	Boston	Lowell (SS A)	Red Sox' 17th-round selection threw out 40 percent (17-of-43) of would-be base stealers
Troy Scribner	Washington Depot, Conn./Sacred Heart	RHP	Los Angeles (AL)	Salt Lake (AAA); Arkansas (AA)	Posted career bests in wins (12) and strikeouts (117) in 2016
Chris Shaw	Lexington, Mass./Boston College	1B	San Francisco	Richmond (AA), San Jose (A+)	Hit 21 home runs, with 85 RBI and 73 runs in his first full season
Zack Short	Hurley, N.Y./Sacred Heart	2B/SS	Chicago (NL)	Eugene (SS A), AZL Cubs (Rookie)	Hit first career home run Aug. 4
Vinny Siena	Woodbridge, Conn./UConn	2B	New York (NL)	St. Lucie (A+), Columbia (A)	2015 14th-rounder went 10-of-11 in stolen-base attempts
Alex Smith	Manchester, Conn./New Haven	RHP	N.Y. (AL), T.B.	Trenton (AA), Charlotte (A+)	Did not allow a run in four of five appearances with Charlotte
David Speer	Westport, Conn./Columbia	LHP	Cleveland	Columbus (AAA), Akron (AA), Lynchburg (A+)	Made 43 appearances for second straight season, but improved WHIP from 1.28 to 1.10

PLAYER	HOMETOWN/COLLEGE	POS.	AFFILIATION	TEAMS (W/LEVEL)	2016 UPDATE
J.P. Sportman	Schenectady, N.Y./Central Conn.	OF/DH	Oakland	Midland (AA)	Had 39 extra-base hits in first run at Double-A level
Ty Sterner	Worcester, Mass./U. Rhode Island	LHP	Toronto	Gulf Coast Blue Jays (Rookie)	Allowed just one earned run in 7½ innings out of bullpen
Ian Strom	Hopedale, Mass./UMass-Lowell	OF	New York (NL)	Kingsport (Rookie)	11 of 33 hits went for extra bases
Cole Sulser	Poway, Calif./Dartmouth	RHP	Cleveland	Columbus (AAA), Akron (AA), Lynchburg (A+)	Climbed three levels after missing entire 2015 due to injury
Jack Sundberg	Mansfield, Conn./UConn	OF	Washington	Hagerstown (A), Auburn (SS A), GCL Nationals (R)	Did not err in 363⅓ innings in the outfield, adding seven assists to the mix
Brent Suter	Chicago, Ill./Harvard	LHP	Milwaukee	Colorado Springs (AAA)	Pitched over 100 innings with 3.50 ERA in Triple A before making MLB debut in mid-August
Derrick Sylvester	Franklin, N.H./So. New Hampshire	RHP	Los Angeles (NL)	Rancho Cucamonga (A+), AZL Dodgers (R)	Did not allow a run in 5 appearances; released Aug. 7
Kobie Taylor	Portsmouth, N.H.	OF	Texas	—	Opted to sign pro and forgo commitment to Vanderbilt, but did not see game action
Dennis Torres	Lawrence, Mass./UMass	RHP	Baltimore	Bowie (AA), Frederick (A+)	Made one appearance before needing season-ending Tommy John surgery
Justin Valdespina	Garfield, N.H./So. New Hampshire	RHP	Colorado	Grand Junction (R)	Appeared in three games, worked 3 scoreless innings of relief, allowing only 3 hits
Tim Viehoff	Derry, N.H./So. New Hampshire	LHP	Seattle	Everett (A)	12th-rounder made 12 appearances: 0-2, 2.77 ERA, 1.03 WHIP
Jason Vosler	West Nyack, N.Y./Northeastern	1B/3B	Chicago (NL)	Tennessee (AA), Myrtle Beach (A+)	Notched career highs in hits (108), doubles (32), RBI (51) and walks (42)
Mike Wallace	Madison, N.J./Fairfield	RHP	Pittsburgh	West Virginia (SS A), Bristol (R)	Had a team-best 0.95 WHIP over 52⅓ innings with Bristol
Kyle Wilcox	Sandy Hook, Conn./Bryant	RHP	Seattle	Clinton (A)	M's sixth-round selection last year struck out 80 batters over 76 innings in first full season
Doug Willey	Shelburne, N.H./Arkansas	RHP	Los Angeles (AL)	Orem (R)	Earned first career win with 2 shutout innings against Ogden on June 27
Mason Williams	Pawtucket, R.I.	OF	New York (AL)	Scranton/Wilkes-Barre (AAA), Tampa (A+)	Hit in 22 of 31 games at Triple A after missing most of the season after shoulder surgery
Rhett Wiseman	Mansfield, Mass./Vanderbilt	OF	Washington	Hagerstown (A)	Former third-rounder had 10 OF assists and led Hagerstown in HR (13), RBI (75) and runs (71)
Mike Yastrzemski	Andover, Mass./Vanderbilt	OF	Baltimore	Norfolk (AAA), Bowie (AA)	Had a career-best 61 walks but also struck out a career-high 118 times
Nick Zammarelli	Lincoln, R.I./Elon	3B/1B/OF	Seattle	Everett (SS A)	Drafted in eighth round; hit .329, second on team with 84 hits, had 24 extra-base hits
Joseph Zanghi	Milford, Conn./Cumberland County Col.	RHP	New York (NL)	Brooklyn (SS A)	Third on Cyclones with 23 appearances; 45 Ks in 29⅓ IP; 1-0, 1.23 ERA
Grant Zawadzki	Shrewsbury, Mass./Bryan College	RHP	San Diego	AZL Padres (R)	Converted to pitcher, made a team-high 23 appearances
Josh Zeid	New Haven, Conn./Tulane	RHP	New York (NL)	Las Vegas Area (AAA), Binghamton (AA)	Went 7-6, logged 91⅓ innings after starting year with indy New Britain Bees
Kevin Ziomek	Amherst, Mass./Vanderbilt	LHP	Detroit	Lakeland Flying Tigers (A+)	Required surgery on pitching shoulder mid-season, made only 1 appearance

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Training debate: Old school vs. new school

I LOVE THE TOPIC of old school vs. new school training.

I meet as many people who tell me about some state-of-the-art system or product that is going to revolutionize players development as often as I meet a coach who tells me all of it is a waste of time and you have to simply work hard.

I'll offer my case for both sides and then tell you what my philosophy is.

Old-school training — meaning less tech, more hard work — certainly has merit. Go watch rookie-level ball in Florida or Arizona and you will see many players from Latin American countries who've never heard of a Zepp, weighted ball program, or hittrex.

They likely have had little coaching and simply go to the field, play all the time, know baseball is a ticket to a better life, and try to be their natural athletic self, throwing the ball as hard as they can and trying to crush at the plate. We've all heard the true stories of the kid fielding with a piece of cardboard on a crappy makeshift field who develops amazing hands.

Billy Wagner grew up on a farm in the middle of nowhere. After breaking his right arm, he used his left to throw a ball against a barn wall and turned himself into a seven-time MLB All-Star.

So it is fair to say, you can develop and become great without a single bit of instruction, technology or training.

On the other hand, being able to measure running speed, exit velocity, spin rate, biomechanical movements from high-speed cameras and force plates, plus movement evaluations that identify and work on flexibility and strength issues and plans to improve in those areas certainly can work as well.

Certainly many minor- and major-league players, with money and access to elite services can benefit from these types of technology and training. Jake Arrieta claims Pilates turned his career around. Most big-league hitters can watch video of at-bats and pitches during or after the

game and from technology such as TrackMan, get information that can really help them make minor adjustments, which of course is huge at the pro level.

Imagine testing out various grips on your slider and then getting a report on which has more movement, spin rate, velocity, etc. — all of which make it harder to hit.

So where does that leave coaches like me and, for that matter, today's developing player. I believe we need a bit of both. To simply go old school and stick your head in the sand on, say, using video to view your swing and pitching, doesn't seem to make much sense to me. At the same time, spending lots of money to determine that you don't have enough hip-to-shoulder separation in your delivery, but then not setting up a bust-your-butt plan to improve it, also is silly.

Think about a pro golfer: He will use all the tech he can get to analyze his

swing, but then he is going to go to the range and hit buckets of balls to refine what he has seen and felt.

So I believe a bit of both is good and needed. It's great to know your bat speed and path but only if you work hard in the cage and get to the plate with the idea of hurting the baseball rather than being technically perfect.

I know plenty of guys who have all the tech, know everything there is to know about hitting, but they have one problem ... they can't hit!

So the guy who already can hit, but maybe wants a bit more carry on his ball, can benefit from some new-school knowledge of his swing, but it's the old-school work ethic that's going to make it impact his swing.

Wayne Mazzoni is the pitching coach at Sacred Heart. For Coach Mazzoni's free report, "10 Traits of Elite Baseball Players," visit www.CoachMazz.com/10-elite-traits.

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WAYNE MAZZONI

FIRST STEPS

It's weird to be excited about surgery, but I knew my arm wouldn't hurt anymore and I was ready to start my comeback

Editor's note: We're proud to introduce our newest columnist, professional player Doug Willey, a Shelburne, N.H., native, who will document his recovery following elbow surgery in every issue.

GROWING UP PLAYING baseball in the cold weather of New England, we know how it feels to play when our bodies don't feel 100 percent. But this summer — my first season of professional baseball — I knew something was seriously wrong and different about the way my arm felt.

I had some arm pain for most of the summer after being drafted by the Los Angeles Angels in the 32nd round of the MLB draft. For nearly every pitcher, some days are better on our arms than others, but the pain in my elbow got worse and worse as the season went on. I often thought to myself, "Man, something is going on with my arm. This just doesn't feel normal." So, sure enough the pain got so bad and sharp that I couldn't even play catch in my throwing program.

Most pitchers I know with elbow troubles have felt their ulnar collateral ligament (UCL) tear or "pop" on one particular throw. For me, it wasn't like that. It was a gradual wearing down on my arm, throwing through pain and weeks of my arm feeling awful.

But the outcome was the same: Tommy John surgery.

After I found out I needed Tommy John, I was talking on the phone with our team surgeon in Los Angeles about how much I threw in the past year and how long I took off from throwing. I threw the whole summer last year in the Cape Cod Baseball League, threw the entire fall ball season at the University of Arkansas, took two weeks off from throwing during the winter, amped up the throwing to get ready for the spring season, threw the whole college season and led the team with 26 appearances, then went straight to pro ball and threw in another 17 games before I couldn't pick up a ball anymore.

For a guy coming out of the bullpen, that's a lot of innings and games for anyone at any level, and our team doctor could tell there was some long-term damage going on inside my elbow.

I threw my last game of my first pro season against the Los Angeles Dodgers' advanced rookie team in early September. The next day, I couldn't even play catch. The pain in my elbow was

unbearable, and it felt like there was a sharp knife stabbing the inside of my elbow. So, I spoke with my trainer and our manager and they got me a flight down to our spring-training complex in Tempe, Ariz., first thing the next morning. I saw two different doctors and they both were concerned with the UCL in my elbow.

That was exactly what I didn't want to hear. I was hoping it was anything but my UCL so I could go back and help my team — the Orem Owlz — win the Pioneer League championship, but that didn't end up happening.

The next step was to get an MRI on my elbow and send the results to the Angels team surgeon as well as the renowned Dr. James Andrews in Florida. The next morning, our rehab coordinator brought me into his office and told me the results showed a "high-grade, 75 percent proximal UCL tear," and that surgery was necessary and recommended.

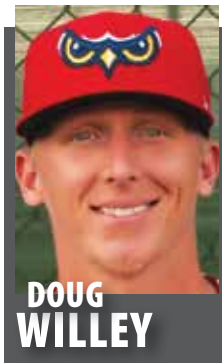
Instantly, my heart dropped into my stomach. I was given

the option to take 10 weeks and attempt to rehab it, or jump right into Tommy John surgery. So after a few days of weighing all my options and talking with my family, Tommy John was a no-brainer.

The dread I first had on needing TJ had completely gone away, and the feeling turned into excitement and anxiety to get it done. It probably sounds weird that I was excited to get surgery. Well, that's honestly how I felt, because after knowing how much my arm hurt and for how long it felt that way, I knew that after the surgery I wouldn't have that pain again and that I would make myself come back better than ever.

The next step was to head to Los Angeles to get the surgery done so I could start my road to recovery.

My dad and I were left tickets for the



DOUG WILEY



In his first pro season this year, Doug Willey made 17 appearances for the Orem Owlz.

big-league game in Anaheim, Calif., the night before to take some stress off the trip. However, I couldn't sleep the night before surgery because I was so excited. My dad was making fun of me because he had never heard of anyone being excited to get Tommy John or any surgery actually, but that's just how my mind was working. I was pumped to get my arm fixed and to start rehab.

So, we woke up early the next morning and went to my team surgeon's office in L.A. While I was lying on that table going through all the pre-surgery checklists and information from the nurses, anesthesiologist and our surgeons, I still didn't feel nervous or any feeling of regret. I knew I made the right decision. My surgeon came into the room with my dad and me and said, "You ready?"

Huge smile on my face. "Let's go!" I gave my dad a fist pound and then got wheeled into the surgery room. The last thing I remember is saying, "Gimme a good one, guys!" then I woke up in a different room sitting with a sling on my new elbow. Post-surgery didn't feel great and it was really hard to move around, but I was still happy with my decision.

Day 1 of recovery began the moment they wheeled me out of the office. For that whole first week, I was alone in Arizona basically sleeping an absurd amount of hours a day and trying to stay hydrated as best as I could. That was my first surgery, so it was a pretty wild learning experi-

ence. You definitely gain a new appreciation for being able to use both your hands whenever you want to!

A week of sleeping and resting went by, and then Week 2, I got to begin going to rehab. The weirdest part early on was getting my stitches out and seeing my scar for the first time. I was extremely scared to move it around, but I began to get my range of motion back very quickly as the days went by.

People around the complex began calling me a super human freak because I was adjusting to the surgery so well. They would say it didn't even look like I had elbow surgery based on how well I could move it so early on in the process. All good signs, and it was great to hear that I was making good progress.

With such a long process of recovery, I've found that you can't think of the length of time you have left in the recovery process. You just have to focus on each day and progressing each day and accept that you're going to miss the next season.

My mom texts me just about every day, "WIN THE DAY BABY!" and it reminds me to stay in the moment, take care of business each day, and make progress every single day.

So far, I've made dramatic progress in my recovery and I couldn't be happier with my decision. There's a long road ahead in this process, so stay tuned.

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Behind the fueling of Bentley OF/IF Brandon Grover (Rocky Hill, Conn.)

Being smart about weight gain

SOME PHONE CALLS stand out in my mind either because of something the athlete says or because of the feeling I get when speaking with him or her. In the case of Bentley College outfielder and first baseman Brandon Grover, it was both.

Polite and articulate, I could tell that he would be smart about his nutrition. It's not a surprise that his 3.5 GPA has earned him a spot on the Bentley Dean's List and the Northeast-10 Conference Commissioner's Honor Roll.

I also got the sense that Brandon would be coachable and methodical in his approach. I was right.

Amid all of these positive attributes, perhaps the one that would make his parents most proud and a future employer most grateful to have Brandon on board is that he is a consummate teammate. Brandon was captain of the 2014 Rocky Hill (Conn.) High School state championship team and those leadership skills have stayed with him.

When I asked Brandon if I could introduce him via a group text message to another new client, Peter Bocchino, who was transferring to Bentley and would be playing baseball, Brandon replied, "Of course," without hesitation. Peter's reply to that group message was, "Thanks. We already met." Brandon found him in the dining hall.

I asked Brandon to share his thoughts on his nutrition plan, including the challenges and transition to eating on a college campus.

What prompted you to focus on your nutrition and begin working with Kinetic Fuel? On your intake form, you said you actually found me through New England Baseball Journal, so it's kind of cool that now you can be that same inspiration for other players, don't you think?

"From a young age, I was a fairly clean eater, or at least I thought I was doing all of the right things from a nutritional standpoint. I really didn't think I needed to make radical changes in my eating habits. I was looking to get bigger and stronger but also gain lean mass as opposed to just putting on sheer weight. I'm an outfielder, therefore speed and explo-

siveness are obviously important parts of my game, and that was just another reason for me to be smart about my weight-gain objectives. I started to look for something more

after struggling a bit with weight loss and trying to maintain my strength during my first full year as a student-athlete in college. The day-to-day schedule is both a battle and a balance. I read an article about Julie and Kinetic Fuel in New England Baseball Journal regarding

a college baseball player and his weight-gain success story, and I was immediately interested."

What was the easiest change you made when you first received your plan?

"When I first received my plan, the easiest transition for me was the fact that I was already eating pretty good foods. There were definitely some new foods introduced into my diet with my new plan, but the majority of the foods were foods that I already was eating. The things I had to change the most were when I was eating certain foods, how much I was eating per meal, and how often I was eating."

What do you notice the most when you're dialed into your nutrition? And when you're not?

"When I am following my nutrition plan to a tee, the biggest thing I notice is my energy level. I feel much more energized and active when I am feeling good from what I eat. Therefore, the more energy I have, the better my performance and productivity is in all aspects of life. Not only am I more successful on the baseball field, I find myself more focused in the classroom and just more motivated throughout the day. One example of when I was not dialed into my nutrition occurred this fall during our fall baseball season. During the first week or two, I was feeling slow and sluggish at practice and did not know why. I talked to Julie, and we determined my pre-practice meal was not perfectly



► Brandon Grover improved his habits in order to maintain weight and strength.

was never too difficult, because I lived at home and had everything I needed right in front of me. I cooked often and made frequent trips to the grocery store. I packed a big cooler filled with my meals for whatever length of time I was going to be away from the house. Now being on campus, the challenges have increased immensely. The challenge with fall ball has been surviving our long weekends of 18-inning doubleheaders with no break in-between games. This is when I struggled the most because I was not in the mode of pre-packing my meals like I did during the summer. I was able to bring some small snacks down to the field to eat during the day, but with the dining hall not open early on weekends and being at the field for 6-7 hours at a time, it was a tough transition."

What is/are the biggest challenges to eating to compete on a college campus?

"There are a few challenges to eating to compete on a college campus. Certainly, the convenience of cooking at home and having access to Tupperware containers, a stove and other cooking appliances is something I miss. For the most part, I generally can find the types of food I need on campus, and quantity is never a concern with an all-you-can-eat meal plan. Variety can be a drawback, but I've tried to become more creative with the options available to me. The first month or two back to school was definitely an adjustment with my new plan from Julie, but with many conversations with her and some minor changes, I made it work."

I remember how disciplined you were during summer ball — packing all your meals and eating your own food when the team supplied less-than-ideal options. How has the transition been from summer ball to college fall ball in terms of nutrition?

"During summer ball, there were definitely challenges in terms of preparing all of my meals with all the extensive travel we did and the long hours we spent at the ballpark every day. It

FIND YOUR YODA: Attributes of a good instructor

ONCE WE CLEAR OFF the Thanksgiving Day tables and eventually put away all the holiday decorations to ring in the New Year, kids all over the country will be in search of some instruction as their season begins to loom closely around the corner of spring.

Parents (in most cases) will tirelessly peruse the land for the best instruction for their young ballplayers. I want to highlight some of the characteristics I think you should be looking for in an instructor. Here is my list of the top five attributes of a good instructor, in a loosely structured order:



1 Passion. This one is simple. How much does your instructor love doing what he does? This can be hard to gauge at times, so here are a few things to look for. Passionate instructors will show a genuine reaction of happiness to the small successes throughout the learning and development process. For them, just seeing the light bulb go off in their athletes as they comprehend even the most trivial of concepts will bring honest excitement to them. A passionate instructor also will stay positively per-

sistent through everything. This means never giving up on an athlete and staying encouraging the entire time.

2 Communication skills. This one also is real easy. You can attain all the knowledge in the world and be the thought leader of your generation in your subject, but if all you can muster is a few cave-man grunts followed by a slew of "umms" and "ahhs," then your pearls of wisdom will never find the masses. You're not necessarily looking for an entertainer here, but you are looking for a captivator. You're looking for someone who can hold the attention of his/her athletes and relay the information in ways that the athlete will be able to comprehend.

3 Experience. I do not mean how many years did he play in the big leagues! It is important to point out here that I'm not, specifically, speaking of "playing" experience. Some of the best pitching coaches I have come across never played in The Show, but does that make their opinions less than valuable? Absolutely not! What you're looking for here is years within the game. While some of these coaches I speak of had not played

at the highest levels, they undoubtedly had been coaching there for quite some time. I've always been a firm believer that there is no better teacher than experience itself. As with anything, the more you are around it and the more you experience something, the more knowledge you inherently will gain.

4 Approach. Everyone learns differently. There are visual learners, hands-on learners, analytical learners, right-brain and left-brain learners, even Simon-says-touch-your-nose learners. If you can understand and identify what type of learner you are, you will be better equipped to pair yourself with an instructor who suits your style. Another way to put it is, in what environment do you feel the most comfortable and the most receptive? Find an instructor who complements that.

5 Personableness. (It's a word, I promise.) I'm putting this one in at the end because it's not essential but certainly can make life a little easier on you. In some instances, the notion of the dictator-esque instructor whose iron fist will come down swiftly if your MPHs don't exceed a certain barrier may effectively work for some. But I think for most of us, nobody enjoys dealing with a narcissistic (insert expletive insult of your

choosing). A friendly instructor can make communication much easier. The easier it is to communicate, the easier it is to achieve the levels of success you desire.

I want to add a sixth, sort of addendum bullet point here, and that is Self-Education. I personally encourage all of my athletes to see, listen to, and learn from as many different sources as possible. As you open your eyes and ears to numerous sources, you'll begin to discover what works for you, and you'll start to see certain bits of information that get reiterated again and again.

Then you'll be able to say to yourself, "Hmmm, nine out of 10 of these guys said that mental strength is what will set them apart from their competition at higher levels! Perhaps they're on to something."

My best advice that I can give aspiring athletes is to know where you want to be, identify the people who have been there and can help get you there, and learn from them.

Jonah Bayliss, a native of Williamstown, Mass., was drafted in the seventh round out of Trinity College by the Kansas City Royals in 2002 and made 61 major-league appearances over parts of three seasons with the Royals and Pirates. He is the founder of The A1 Pitching Academy in Adams, Mass. For more information, visit a1pitchingacademy.com

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What are your first memories of playing baseball? "Probably going to Cooperstown. I played there in tournaments when I was 10 and 11."

What's the best advice you could give to someone trying to get to the major leagues? "Just to continue to have fun with it and don't put pressure on yourself."

Who helped get you to where you are now?

"My parents, for sure. Growing up, they would keep me humble and give me confidence. They supported me and I had a big family. Pretty much everybody in my family, honestly, whether it be basketball games in high school or college baseball games, they would always be there."

What was the most memorable moment from your first couple of months in the major leagues? "I think mainly my first start in Seattle. My entire family was there. Having them all there was cool and seeing them get my first hit was great."

You've heard about your lack of height your whole life. What advice would you give others your size about dealing with that? "The good thing about baseball is it doesn't matter. If you look at some of the best players in the game, they aren't tall. Look at Dustin Pedroia, Mookie Betts, Jose Altuve. They're all under 5-10. It's not like basketball where you have to be a big guy."

You wore number 40 this year. Does that number mean anything to you or is it just what they gave you? "That was the number I was given. Sixteen is my favorite number, but Deven Marrero already has it"

Who was the most influential coach or manager you've ever had? "It was probably my high school basketball coach. Even as a freshman, just the way he kind of taught me, not just about basketball, but other things and how to handle myself"

What's the best thing about playing at Fenway? "The atmosphere. It's an old park with tons of history and being able to play there is amazing."

Of the few road parks you've played at so far, do any stand out? "Baltimore. Also love Seattle."

What was it like playing with David Ortiz? "Just watching him do what he does and go about his business. Everyone wants to pull at him every which way and he just keeps his focus and he had an unbelievable year at the age of 40. It's fun to watch."

How about Dustin Pedroia? "He made me feel comfortable and really brought me in. Matter of fact, he let me live with him during the season. He just asked me out of the blue, 'Come live with me.'"

— IAN BROWNE

Billie Weiss/Boston Red Sox/Getty Images

Key facts

Team: Boston Red Sox
Position: OF
Hometown: Cincinnati, Ohio
Birthdate: July 6, 1994
Size: 5-foot-10, 170 pounds

Favorites

Movie: "'Wedding Crashers.' It's hilarious."
Actor: Vince Vaughn or Adam Sandler
TV show: "I really like 'Game of Thrones.' At first, I was like, 'I don't know about this,' but it is really good."

Hobby: "Probably just watching movies."

Video game: "Call of Duty"

Music: "Country. That's basically all I listen to."

Baseball player growing up: "I always liked Derek Jeter, the way he played. Being

from Cincinnati though, Ken Griffey Jr. was everyone's favorite player."

Sport other than baseball: "Basketball. I loved playing in high school. I was a guard. We ran a five-guard offense. We would just run and gun."

Equipment

Bat: Victus

Batting gloves: Under Armour

Spikes: Under Armour

Glove: Wilson

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