

★★★★ SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE ★★★★★

# NEW ENGLAND BASEBALL JOURNAL

September-October 2016

## HUB FANS BID PAPI ADIOS

- ▶ **BROWNE:** Ortiz always answers call
- ▶ **COMMENTARY:** Fan favorite forever
- ▶ 10 Greatest Hits
- ▶ By the Numbers
- ▶ Volunteer Coach, Jonah Bayliss & more



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BASEBALL JOURNAL

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## EXCLUSIVE BONUS CONTENT IN OUR DIGITAL EDITION

Our expanded digial edition includes **54 BONUS PAGES**, including much more on David Ortiz's legendary career (and an excerpt from Ian Browne's book) plus our popular MLB Digital Directory and MLB NinE. To access our reader-friendly Text View, click the icon in the toolbar (desktop) or in the toolbox (mobile).

— Eric Beato, Managing Editor

### PAPI'S GREATEST HITS

We count down David Ortiz's greatest hits — many of them iconic — from a legendary career of clutch moments. Plus, relive Game 4 of the 2004 ALCS in an excerpt from 'Idiot's Revisited.'

### MINOR LEAGUES

We go around the minors and catch up with a host of local pro players. Plus, check out this month's entry in Tyler's Journal.

### FCBL GALLERY

More photos from the road by Joshua Kummins from his travels with the North Shore Navigators.

### MLB NinE

We count down the nine most noteworthy New England major-leaguers from the past month. Plus, check out our popular MLB New England Digital Directory.

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# AROUND THE REGION

## Nine inducted into Maine Baseball Hall of Fame

Nine members were inducted into the Maine Baseball Hall of Fame recently during the shrine's 46th annual induction ceremony at the Holiday Inn by the Bay in Portland.

Inductees include:

**Dan Kane** of Surry, who played on two College World Series teams in 1984 and '86 at UMaine, and coached at George Stevens Academy for 27 years, winning three state titles

**David Gonyar** of Bangor, who played on two UMaine teams that advanced to the College World Series. He also coached at Bucksport High School

**John Sawyer**, who pitched for Messalonskee High School and later in the 1976 College World Series for UMaine. He also coached at Narraguagus High School for 13 years, winning a state title in 1986

**Ralph Damren** of Pittsfield, who umpired for 50 years at all levels

**Dan Deshaies** of New Gloucester, who umpired 27 Maine high school state championship games

**Thom Freeman**, who led Bates College to Maine State Series titles in 1962 and '63, and later played four years in the New York Yankees organization

The late **Amel Kiszczak** of Lisbon Falls, who was a three-year letterman at UMaine in the 1930s and later managed the Roberts 88ers to semipro success

**Mike Mazerall**, who starred as a pitcher for Westbrook High School in the early 1960s and pitched in the Red Sox organization for four seasons;

**Gary Williamson** of Bethel, who helped the University of Southern Maine win its first Division 3 national champion-



## DIGITAL BONUS

► Exclusively at [baseballjournal.com](http://baseballjournal.com)

Cuban translator and photographer Reynaldo Cruz Diaz, who accompanied a team of under-15 Cuban ballplayers on a return goodwill visit to Connecticut in July, recounts the historic experience for the U.S. and Cuban kids.

ship in 1991, earning NCAA regional MVP and World Series MVP honors.

### Lowell native killed in S.F.

Massachusetts native **Calvin Riley**, who grew up playing baseball in Lowell and was on the team at San Joaquin Delta (Calif.) College, was shot to death in San Francisco last month.

A family friend told the San Francisco Chronicle that Riley was shot while he and a friend were playing the mobile game Pokemon Go! in Ghirardelli Park in the city.

Riley attended the Immaculate Conception School in Lowell before his family moved to San Mateo, Calif., just south of San Francisco, in 2010. He was a baseball standout at Junipero Serra High School and the oldest of three siblings.

sas City-based architects, and the insurer will pay for the new work.

The Double-A Hartford Yard Goats, which have played this season on the road, could leave the city if the ballpark is not finished in six months.

### Balzano stepping down

**Rich Balzano**, who coached the Branford (Conn.) Senior American Legion baseball team for the past 12 seasons, stepped down as Post 83 coach following the season.

Post 83 won both the state and Northeast Regional championships four times in Balzano's run as head coach, claiming titles in his first year in 2005, as well as '07, '10 and '13. Balzano is the only head coach in the history of Connecticut American Legion baseball to guide a team to the World Series on four occasions.

His team's best finish came in 2005, when it finished in third place.

### Umpire honored

After officiating for over a decade at various levels of baseball, veteran umpire **Mickey Garcia** received the 2016 Curly Clement Award last month, presented for officiating excellence and contributions over the years to baseball umpiring in the Cape Cod Baseball League.

The 12th annual Clement Award was presented to Garcia during a playoff game between Bourne and Falmouth last month. In addition to 11 years working as an umpire overall, Garcia has spent the past six years working Cape League and other collegiate games.

A native of New York City, he and his family make their home in Mashpee, Mass. **B**

If you have an item for Around the Region, please send it to [editor@baseballjournal.com](mailto:editor@baseballjournal.com).

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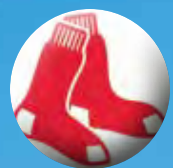
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## clutch

adjective \kləCH\

1. (in sport) denoting or occurring in a critical situation in which the outcome of a game or competition is at stake
2. successful in a crucial situation
3. David Ortiz

# CLUTCH



**As David Ortiz prepares for his final walkoff, NEBJ's Ian Browne recalls how Big Papi always answered the call when it mattered most**



Michael Ivins/Boston Red Sox;  
Adam Glanzman (inset)/Getty Images





# ADIOS, PAPI

By Ian Browne

**AS THE LEGENDARY CAREER OF DAVID ORTIZ WINDS DOWN** with no decline in sight, you are left to try to measure his impact for his team, for his city and for the hundreds upon hundreds of people he has touched in numerous ways through the years.

This much is clear: The Red Sox will never replace Ortiz. If they are lucky enough, they might find another elite slugger who can put up similar numbers. But will they be able to find anyone who does it for so long, and in so many big moments?

Will they find anyone with such a wide smile, joy for life, and the ability to so aptly embrace all of his surroundings?

“I was just thinking about this,” NESN play-by-play-man Dave O’Brien said. “What is it going to be like to walk into that clubhouse next year and 34 is not there? Talk about punching a hole in a wall that’s never going to be filled.”

When it comes to hitting the baseball, only one man in the storied history of the Red Sox has accomplished more than Ortiz. That would be Ted Williams, considered by some to be “The Greatest Hitter Who Ever Lived.” Only Williams has more home runs for Boston than Ortiz. Only Williams and Carl Yastrzemski have more extra-base hits. In future Red Sox media guides, the three names listed in the lead for every relevant production category will be, in some order, Williams, Ortiz and Yaz.

When it comes to providing the hits that led to a championship trophy, no Red Sox player has ever done more than Big Papi. Three times, he made duck-boat parades possible with an uncanny ability to deliver hits when his team needed them the most. If just about any other player had hit the game-tying grand slam Ortiz ripped against the Tigers with two outs in the eighth in Game 2 of the 2013 American League Championship Series, it would have been the biggest hit of his career.

But with Ortiz, there will always be debates about which moments were his biggest. Were the two walkoff hits he had against the Yankees on back-to-back days in Games 4 (12th inning) and 5 (14th inning) even larger than the grand slam against the Tigers that had that police officer indelibly raising his arms in triumph in the bullpen? What about Ortiz’s otherworldly performance in the 2013 World Series, by which time his teammates simply started calling him “Cooperstown” as he hit an amazing .688 over six games against the Cardinals?

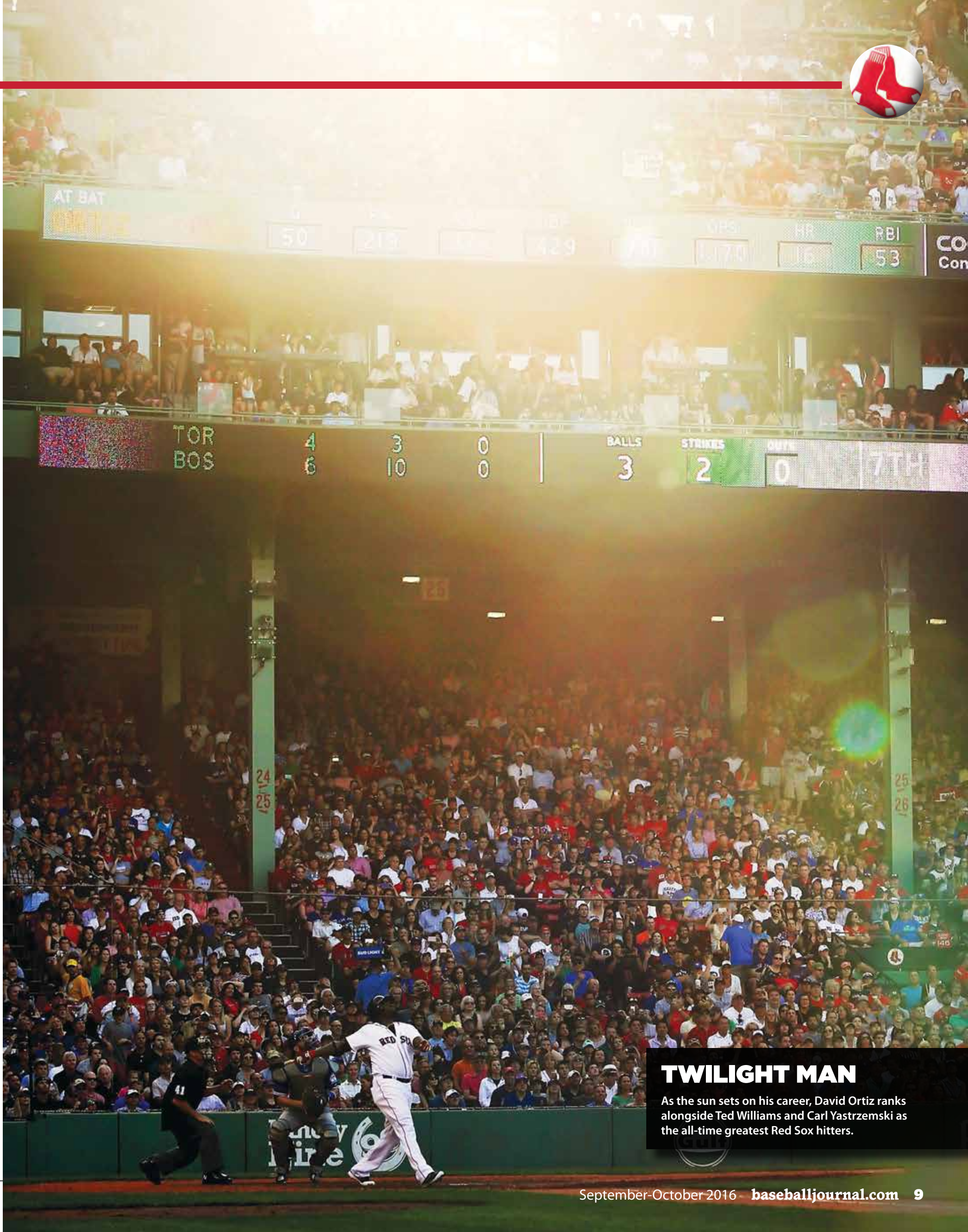
**ORTIZ’S ON-FIELD** contributions are at least measurable, and easily stacked up against the best who have ever played the game. The intangibles are what takes Big Papi to another level, particularly within the city of Boston.

On a personal note, I’ve covered Ortiz for his entire career in Boston and have had the chance to witness some up-close events that capture the essence of who he is and how he can make people feel.

In 2014, my family took a trip



Thearon W. Henderson (left), Adam Glanzman (right)/Getty Images



## TWILIGHT MAN

As the sun sets on his career, David Ortiz ranks alongside Ted Williams and Carl Yastrzemski as the all-time greatest Red Sox hitters.





Continued from Page 8

to the start of spring training with me. My youngest son, Casey, was feeling a little down that day because in his 11-year-old mind, his two older brothers were having a better vacation than he was. I can't remember why he felt this way. Maybe they had spent more time at the ballpark with me that week? At any rate, as I strolled around the team workout with Casey, I noticed Ortiz sitting on the bench at one of the practice fields. Suddenly, I saw a way I could brighten my son's day. I took Casey over to meet Ortiz, and the kid's day was not only changed for the day but also for several weeks after that. Not only did Ortiz say hi to my son, but he told him to sit next to him, put his arm around him and made him feel like the most important person in Fort Myers that day.

"Hey Casey, what grade are you in? Do you play baseball? I like your notebook. You look like you want to be a writer like your dad."

Casey then asked Ortiz how many home runs he was going to hit that year.

**A YEAR LATER**, as I was standing around the clubhouse in Fort Myers waiting to ask Ortiz about something, he said to me, "Hey, Ian, how's your son doing? Give me that tape recorder of yours." Without me asking him to do so, Ortiz spoke into my recorder and said, "Hey, Casey, Big Papi here. Hope you're doing good. I'll see you at Fenway soon." I think you can probably guess that my son was over the moon when he received that voice recording.

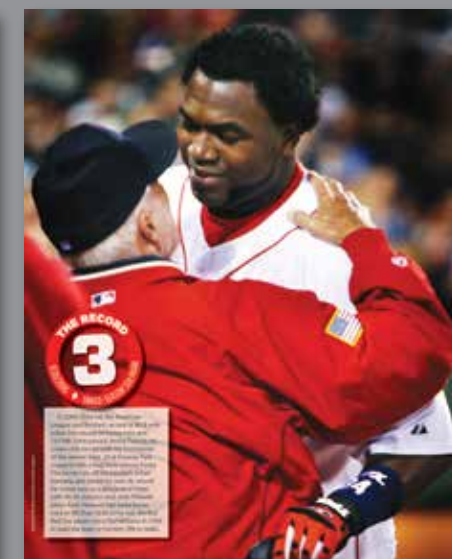
There are so many similarly poignant stories with Ortiz. Take, for example, the day my wife, Amy, called and asked me for a favor. She is a teaching assistant for first-graders and a student named Jack was having a tough time with school, and he was crying every morning and didn't want to be separated from his mother. He started to take some small steps and do a little better, so it seemed like maybe



Photos/Getty Images

# GREATEST HITS

With dozens of classic, walkoff, game-winning, milestone and/or memorable hits, David Ortiz has proven to be not only the greatest designated hitter of all time but also perhaps the greatest clutch hitter of all time. Check out NEB's ranking of Big Papi's 10 Greatest Hits by Joshua Kummins, exclusively in our digital edition at [baseballjournal.com](http://baseballjournal.com).







THE FIRST  
**10**  
4/24/03 ♦ FIRST HR WITH SOX

Who knew this would be the first of so, so many home runs and memorable moments? Ortiz's first home run with the Red Sox, fittingly, was a game-winner. He took the Angels' Mickey Callaway deep as a pinch-hitter in the 14th inning of an eventual 6-4 Boston win. He and catcher Jason Varitek went back-to-back, leading Boston to the win. Ortiz took over for Jeremy Giambi as the starting designated hitter by June 1 of the 2003 season, his first year with the Sox, over which he totaled 31 homers and posted 16 game-winning RBI.

Ronald Martinez/Getty Images



THE LAST CHAPTER  
**9**  
5/14/16 ♦ FAREWELL TOUR

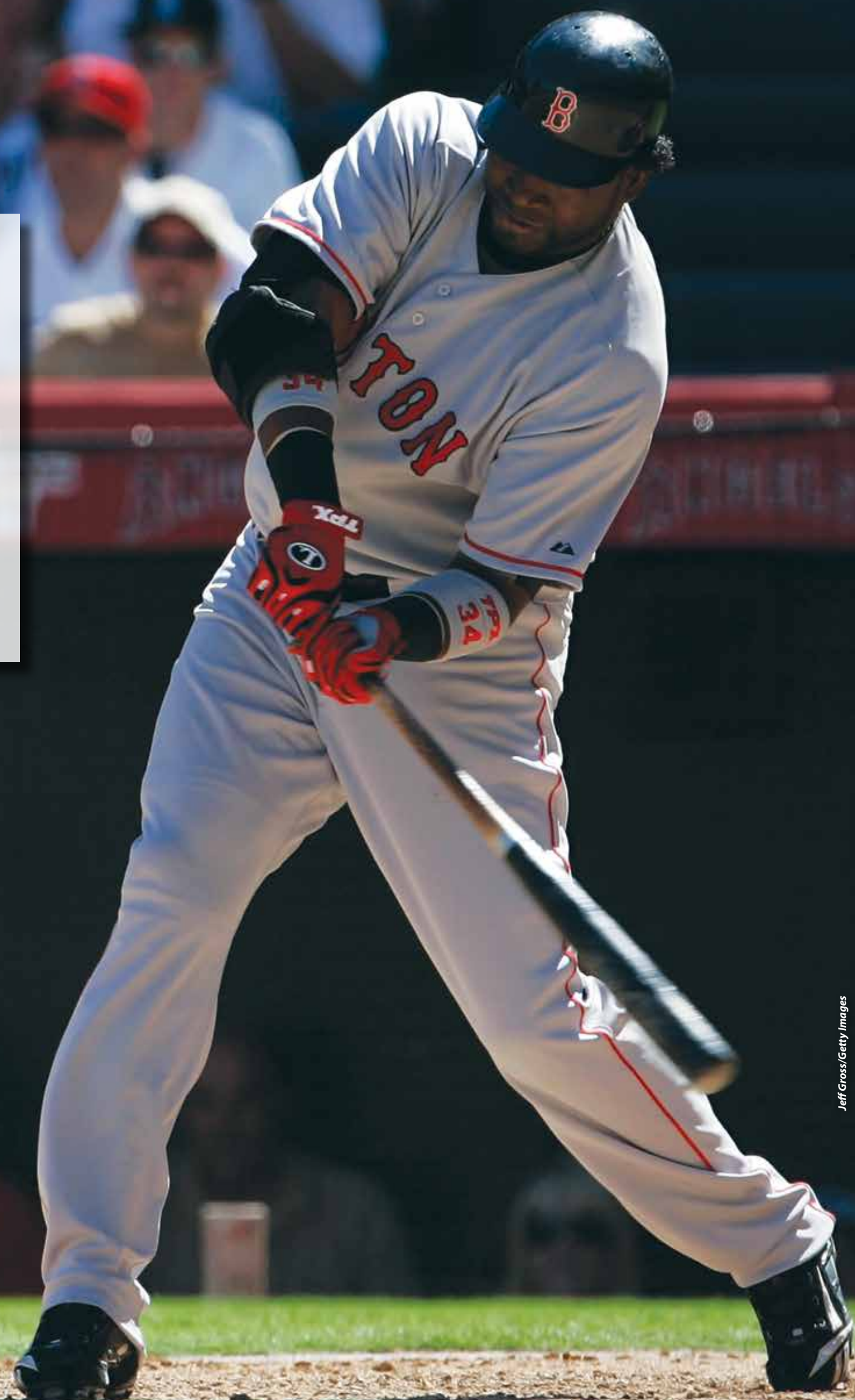
It's still being written, but the final chapter of Ortiz's career — his 14th straight season in a Red Sox uniform — has been one to remember. He reached the 25-homer plateau for the 12th time in his career, something only Ted Williams has done more in Red Sox history. Ortiz sent Boston's eventual May 14 win over Houston to extra innings with a game-tying triple to center field. Well, it was only tied until he hit a walk-off double — the 600th two-bagger of his career — in his next at-bat two innings later. His latest milestone came Aug. 12 as he became just the third player in team history to post 1,000 extra-base hits with a seventh-inning home run. What will the final month bring?

Rob Tringali/SportsChrome/Getty Images





The Sox played 14 postseason games en route to their second World Series title in four years in 2007. Ortiz reached base in all but two, hitting .370 with three home runs, 10 RBI and a whopping 14 walks. His .714 batting average (5-for-7) with six walks in a three-game division series sweep of the Angels was the highest-ever in that round of postseason play. Two of Big Papi's three postseason homers came in the ALDS, including one in the third and final game of the series Oct. 7 in Anaheim. Ortiz drove in seven runs in a seven-game ALCS against Cleveland and four more in a World Series sweep of Colorado.



Jeff Gross/Getty Images



Ortiz gave Sox fans something to smile about at the end of a disappointing 2015 season as he became just the 27th player in Major League Baseball history to enter the 500 home run club. He hit the milestone homer Sept. 12, off Tampa Bay starter Matt Moore at Tropicana Field, a place he had hit more home runs than any visiting player at the time of the historic blast. Only two other players active at the time — Alex Rodriguez and Albert Pujols — had reached the milestone, while Pujols was the only other in MLB history to hit his 499th and 500th career homers in the same game.

Brian Blanco/Getty Images







The year 2004 was a first All-Star season for Ortiz, whose heroics reached an all-time high as the calendar hit October. Owner John Henry would coin him “The Greatest Clutch Hitter in the History of the Boston Red Sox” toward the end of the 2005 season, but that would not have been possible without his exploits en route to the team’s first World Series title in 86 years. His first “big moment” of the title-winning march came in the American League Division Series — a two-run, walkoff home run in the 10th inning of Game 3 to sweep the Angels at Fenway Park. He went 6-for-11 in the series, but half of his RBI total came at the end, on one swing of the bat.



Barry Chin/The Boston Globe via Getty Images



Ortiz’s magic lifted the Red Sox to victory over the Yankees for the second time in as many nights — well, really, for the second time in the same day. This time, though, it took until the 14th inning and 10 pitches into his at-bat for Ortiz to become the hero of Game 5 of the ALCS as he singled to center field to bring Boston within a game of tying the eventual seven-game series. The hit was his third walkoff of the postseason, still the most-ever by a single player. He went on to win Most Valuable Player for the Series as he hit .387 (12-for-31) with three homers and 11 RBI.



Jim Davis/The Boston Globe via Getty Images





Again, there was not one true moment of greatness as Ortiz won his third World Series with the Red Sox. Instead, at age 37, he was truly dominant from start to finish against the St. Louis Cardinals. He hit .688 with two home runs in the series and reached base at a .760 clip. With his Game 2 home run Oct. 24, Ortiz became the first Red Sox to ever go deep in the first two games of a World Series, then went 6-for-7 over Games 4 and 5 to help swing the eventual six-game series in Boston's direction for good. However, not mentioned in any statistics is the speech Ortiz gave to his teammates in the middle of Game 4. With the Red Sox reeling, Ortiz took it upon himself to inspire the Sox dugout. And, that he did.

John Tlumacki/The Boston Globe via Getty Images



In 2006, Ortiz led the American League and finished second in MLB with a Red Sox-record 54 home runs and 137 RBI. Ortiz passed Jimmy Foxx to set a new club record with his 51st homer of the season Sept. 20 at Fenway Park (capped with a hug from Johnny Pesky. The home run, off Minnesota's Johan Santana, also broke his own AL record for home runs as a designated hitter with 44. At season's end, only Philadelphia's Ryan Howard had more home runs or RBI than Ortiz as he was the first Red Sox player since Ted Williams in 1949 to lead the team in homers, RBI and walks.

Jim Davis/The Boston Globe via Getty Images



THE GRAND SLAM  
10/13/15  
2  
GAME-TYING ALCS SLAM

The Tigers held Ortiz to just two hits in the six-game series, but Ortiz made his late-game stroke in Game 2 count, big time. With the Red Sox in the eighth inning, Big Papi took

Joaquin Benoit deep for a game-tying grand slam into the bullpen at Fenway Park. While it served as the crucial hit that tied the series up for Boston, as the Sox wound up with a 6-5, walk-off win, it perhaps made one man — “Bullpen Cop” Steve Horgan — more famous. Horgan raised his

arms in the air in celebration as Detroit outfielder Torii Hunter tumbled over the wall trying to make the catch, making this iconic photo.



Stan Grossfeld, Jim Davis (inset)/The Boston Globe via Getty Images

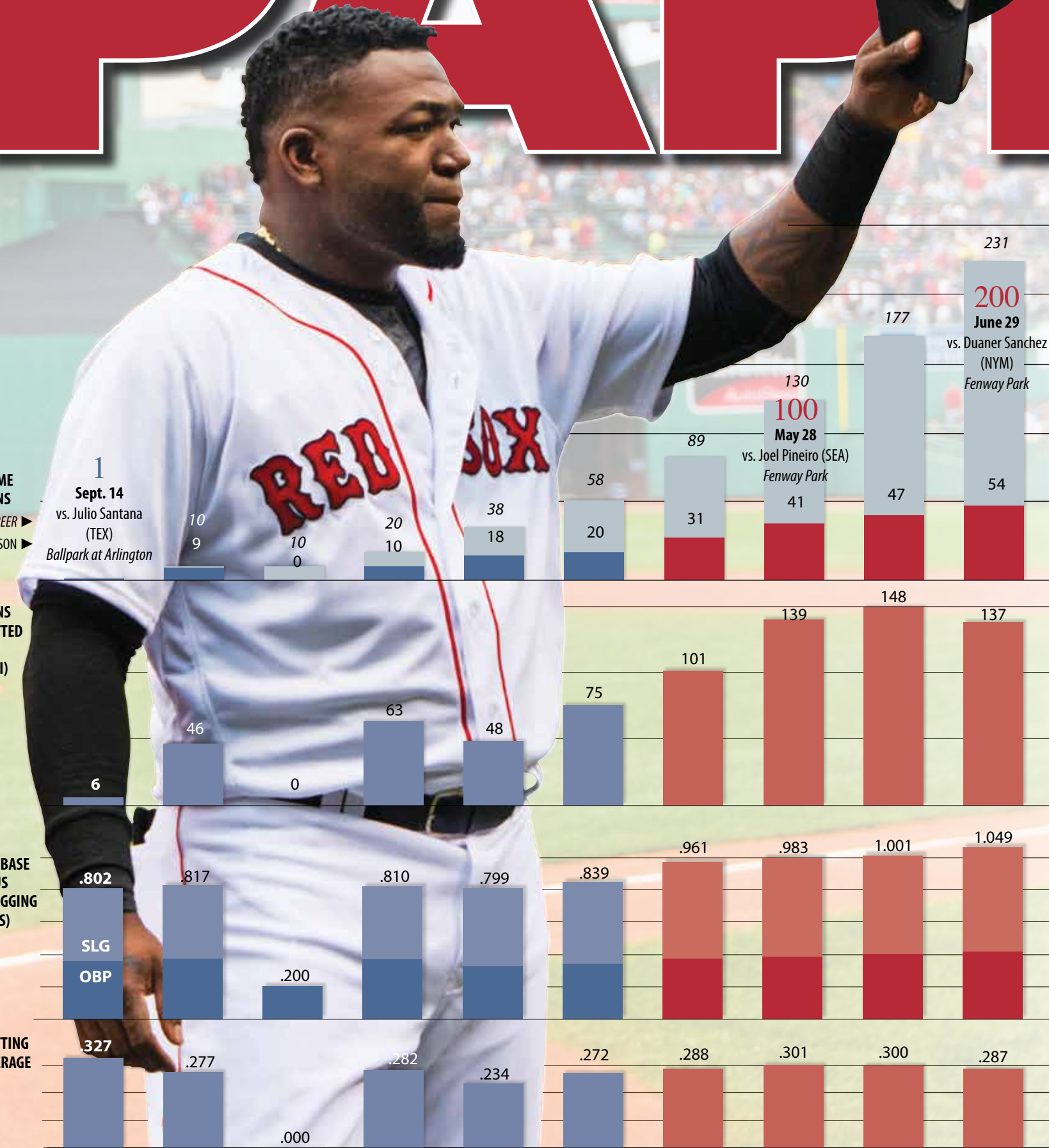
THE LEGEND BEGINS  
10/17/04  
1  
ALCS WALKOFF HR

Ortiz set the wheels in motion for “The Greatest Come-back in Baseball History” with a game-winning, two-run homer in the 12th inning for the Sox’ first win of the 2004 American League Championship Series against the Yankees. This game also is remembered for Dave Roberts’ famous steal of second base that led to the game-tying run, forcing extra innings. However, it took three extra frames to decide a winner. Ortiz became the first MLB player ever to hit two walk-off home runs in the same postseason as his first capped off a sweep of the Anaheim Angels in the American League Division Series.

Doug Pensinger/Getty Images



# PARI



HITS	16	77	0	117	71	112	129	175	180	160	182	110	129	140	162	103	160	136	144	130				
AT-BATS	49	278	20	415	303	412	448	582	601	558	549	416	541	518	525	324	518	518	528	406				
GAMES	15	86	10	130	89	125	128	150	159	151	149	109	150	145	146	90	137	142	146	114				
TEAM	MINNESOTA TWINS						BOSTON RED SOX																	
SEASON	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016				
HIGHLIGHTS	Sept. 2: Made MLB debut with pinch-hit fly out vs. Cubs at Wrigley Field						Dec. 16: Released by Twins						Jan. 22: Signed by Red Sox as a free agent						ALCS MVP		★			
													★						★		★			
							September: AL Player of the Month						July: AL Player of the Month						September: AL Player of the Month					
																			May: AL Player of the Month					
																			Roberto Clemente Award					
																			World Series MVP					
																			★ = All-Star ✕ = Silver Slugger					
																			Statistics through Aug. 21; sources: baseball-reference.com, MLB.com					





Continued from Page 10

a time to reinforce some of that good behavior. Jack is such a big fan that he has a David Ortiz backpack that he takes to school. I told Ortiz about the situation, and he again asked for my tape recorder. “Hey, Jack, Big Papi here. Mrs. Browne said you’re doing a great job in school. I’m proud of you. Keep it up.” Jack hasn’t had an incident getting to school ever since.

Then, there was that day in 2013, when I got this email from someone at my office: “Strange request. I have a friend of a friend who is about to die from cancer. He seriously only has a few days to live. He’s 24. Just married. His last wish it to speak to a player on Red Sox. That’s his favorite team.”

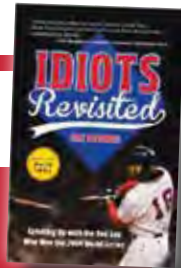
Take one guess which player I went to so this request could come true. As Ortiz was coming off the field after batting practice, I stopped him and apprised him of the situation. I told him the man’s name was Mauricio, and I



Eric Shaw/Getty Images

DIGITAL BONUS

The legend of David Ortiz began in Game 4 of the 2004 ALCS with his dramatic walkoff home run that spurred the Red Sox’ comeback vs. the Yankees. Check out an excerpt about that game from Ian Browne’s 2014 book, “Idiots Revisited,” in our digital edition. [▶ baseballjournal.com](#)



dialed the number for the hospital he was at. Ortiz took the phone and made the easiest conversation with him. One of Mauricio’s family members took a video of the chat so I later got to see it from both sides. Mauricio was overjoyed to speak with Ortiz, and he told David how much he had meant to him. Mauricio probably had no idea how much a conversation like this meant to David. As I was walking back to the press box, I saw Ortiz in the tunnel by the clubhouse. I thanked him for speaking to Mauricio. Ortiz said to me, “Ian, that kind of messed me up. I can’t believe someone so young is going to go.”

I’ll share one last story with you. This past spring training, I got word that a 92-year-old World War II vet named Ernie Lefebvre

was going to be at a game at Jet-Blue Park. Ernie got some VIP treatment from the Red Sox and sat in a wheelchair behind home plate during batting practice in the baking sun. I spotted Ortiz in the dugout and introduced them. Ortiz went over to thank Ernie for what he had done for the country, and told him everybody appreciated it. After Papi walked back to the dugout, Ernie bellowed out, “That was better than meeting the Pope!”

It’s fair to wonder which will be harder to replace: Ortiz’s production or his acts of kindness. **B**

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

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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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Jim Rogash/Getty Images

By Dan Guttenplan

**I** moved to Boston in 2002 — a year before David Ortiz came to town — and it seems that many of the milestones of my adult life can be marked by Ortiz memories.

The first time I was face-to-face with Ortiz was in 2006 while covering a Red Sox game at Fenway Park for a local newspaper. Ortiz was, of course, a larger-than-life figure who had finished fourth, second and third, respectively, in the MVP voting over the previous three seasons.

The giant slugger with the 10,000-watt smile was a big part of the victory that day, as was one of his newest teammates — rookie second baseman Dustin Pedroia. After the game, Pedroia had a fairly substantial nosebleed. The rookie stopped the bleeding by shoving a cotton ball in each nostril and, about a minute later, turned to face the media with cotton hanging out of his nose. He asked that the surrounding reporters keep the television cameras off until he could remove the cotton balls, but in the meantime, answered questions from the print and radio media.

On the other hand, Ortiz wasn’t ready to face reporters for about a half-hour. He lis-

**No matter what, David Ortiz always sought and found love in Boston — and he always hugged the city back**

COMMENTARY

tened to music and talked to friends and family by his locker. Big Papi finally emerged from his locker wearing designer jeans, white sneakers, a T-shirt and diamond earrings, and pulled a sports jacket emblazoned with diamond rhinestones over his broad shoulders as he moved to the center of the clubhouse. The last touch for Ortiz was the placement of a pair of big, dark sunglasses.

Ortiz made TV producers in the clubhouse happy by centering himself in the middle of the flat-screen TV, which he turned off. He straightened his jacket and sunglasses, and flashed an electric smile while saying, “Everybody ready? OK, let’s go.”

I thought of that moment often over the past six months, as Ortiz has gone through his farewell tour across MLB cities. He’s always been able to turn it on in front of the bright lights, and this year certainly has been no exception. He’s been magnetic, engaging, entertaining — and just about every other quality a fan could want in his superstar athlete.

After delivering the greatest offensive season for a 40-year-old in MLB history, he will go out just the way he’s always wanted — feeling loved.

For me, that will be the lasting memory of David Ortiz. Beyond all of the walkoff home runs, playoff heroics and world championships, he’s a player who always has cared deeply about the way in which he’s perceived by the Boston fan base and his constituents across the game of baseball.

The burning desire to be loved certainly separates Ortiz from many other one-time or current Red Sox legends — including Ted Williams, Jim Rice, Wade Boggs, Roger Clemens and Manny Ramirez, to name a few.

While Ortiz was and still is undeniably loved by fans, his standing in the game among the all-time greats is uncertain. Like Ortiz’s former teammate and slugging partner Ramirez, his road to Cooperstown may also hit a road block due to his link to performance-enhancing drugs. When a report was released in 2009 stating Ortiz and Ramirez had both tested positive in 2003 — before players were subject to suspensions by rule of the collective bargaining agreement — Ortiz urged Red Sox fans to trust him as he sought out answers as to why he may have had a banned substance in his system. In retrospect, Ortiz’ request for trust seemed to be a matter of kicking the can down the road and hoping

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# ADIOS, PAPI

Continued from Page 15

fans forgot. He never was able to provide more information on those reports.

Ortiz also has had his various gripes throughout the years that have served as mild annoyances to some fans.

To wit, he never had a problem airing out contract grievances and requests for the Red Sox to exercise team options through the media.

He never expressed any interest in playing first base in interleague games — even if the Red Sox were in the midst of a battle for a postseason berth — out of fear that an injury might cost him longevity in his career.

He occasionally took umbrage with scoring decisions — even if those decisions had no effect on the overall result for the team — because he hated to be cheated out of individual statistics.

He made baseball purists cringe every time he celebrated sure-thing home runs by admiring the trajectory of the ball from the batter's box before “pimping” his way around the bases.

And he complained when Red Sox pitchers threw purpose pitches — high and inside — to opposing batters, knowing he was often the player most likely to receive retaliation.

Red Sox fans had a long leash for the ev-



Billie Weiss/Boston Red Sox/Getty Images

er-productive Ortiz's antics, but one consistent source of irritation was the designated hitter's lack of hustle on the basepaths. I attended a Sox vs. Tigers game as a fan in late July on a 90-degree night at Fenway. Ortiz ignited the enthusiasm of fans early when, with the Sox trailing 4-0 in the third inning, he crushed a three-run homer to right to get the home team back in the game. A couple innings later, Ortiz came to the plate with a runner on first and one out. He hit a sharp ground ball to first baseman Miguel Cabrera, who flipped to former Red Sox Jose Igle-

sias covering second base. Iglesias noticed Ortiz wasn't hustling down the first-base line, so he took plenty of time in turning the double play. Iglesias made the catch, moved out of the way of sliding Xander Bogaerts, double-clutched and threw softly to first to retire the side.

Ortiz, perhaps in an attempt to extinguish a smattering of boos coming from the bleachers, did as he often does in a somewhat tense moment. He disarmed the vocal minority of fans by playfully hugging the opposing team's first baseman, Cabrera, as the fellow slugger patted Ortiz on the chest in a show of respect.

In moments like that, I often wondered whether Ortiz's effusive, jubilant personality was entirely genuine — or if perhaps he might have occasionally been playing to the Boston fan base. The relationship between player and fan certainly can be fickle. If the story of Yankees counterpart Alex Rodriguez is any indication, the relationship of a fan base with its highest-paid players is almost always directly proportional to the productivity of that star player. Ortiz was wildly productive over his Red Sox career, particularly in the most clutch moments, and so he played in Boston with the rare benefit of having as close to unconditional support from the fans as a player can ever expect.

Production rarely has been a problem for Ortiz. He is a three-time World Series champion (2004, 2007, 2013) with one ALCS MVP (2004) and one World Series MVP (2013) on his resume. He will retire as baseball's career leader among designated hitters in home runs, RBI and hits. Even at the advanced age of 40, he will challenge for the league lead in OPS.

Simply put, Ortiz arguably is the most clutch Red Sox player of all-time. Perhaps the best way to describe his on-field contribution over his 14-year career in Boston is he spent his entire career batting in the No. 3 or 4 spot in the lineup on a team that entered every season with one of baseball's biggest payrolls and aspirations to win a World Series. Surely, Red Sox fans will quickly learn how difficult that type of stability was to replace when Big Papi is gone.

But on-field production won't be the only thing for which Ortiz will be celebrated in the years and decades to come. Ramirez also spent an extended stretch in the middle of a productive Red Sox order. Ortiz always has been different.

In late July, Boston Globe beat writer Peter Abraham relayed a story of Ortiz before a game at Fenway in 90-degree heat. A group of young players from the Dominican Republic visited the historic ballpark days before taking part in an international tournament in Providence, R.I.

Abraham wrote, “The players, all in uniform, were on the field before the game watching some of the Red Sox starting pitchers take batting practice when Ortiz popped out of the dugout wearing sweat pants and a T-shirt.

“He told the group to take a seat in the stands in the shade. They gathered in Section 15 and Ortiz spoke to them for about 15 minutes while signing autographs and posing for photos.

“Ortiz told the kids about his own experiences and encouraged them to work hard in school and on the field. When he finished up, the kids chanted ‘Papi! Papi!’ and applauded him.

“As some early arriving fans looked on in disbelief, Ortiz made his way back down the stands and returned to the clubhouse.”

In moments like that, it was easy to feel cynical or jaded for questioning whether Ortiz was, in fact, genuine.

Of course, a more public display of Ortiz's love for Boston and its fans came in the aftermath of the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings, which left four local residents dead and hundreds more physically and emotionally wounded. Less than a week after the bombing, Ortiz spoke to the Fenway crowd over the public-address system, punctuating the speech with a line that will long be remembered as a rallying cry for the city.

“This is our f---ing city,” Ortiz said. “And nobody's going to dictate our freedom.”

To say Ortiz forever won over the hearts of Boston fans with that speech would be an exaggeration. He already had done that many times over — from his clutch hits during the 2004 World Series to the generosity and guidance he lent fans and teammates alike once he became a legendary hitter.

But perhaps that moment cemented the realization that, yes, Boston is indeed David Ortiz's city. Boston fans spent 14 years showering him with adulation and affection, and Big Papi was the rare superstar athlete who reciprocated that adulation and affection.



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## SOX CLUBHOUSE By Joshua Kummins

@JoshuaKummins

THE STAT: Manager John Farrell passed Ralph Houk for ninth place on the Sox' all-time wins list with his 313th victory Aug. 17.

### THE LEAD

## ‘Boom Boom’ Betts does it all

The Red Sox' youthful outfield has been something special to watch this season.

But nobody is more fun to watch than **Mookie Betts**.

No matter where he is penned into the lineup, he just hits. And hits. And hits some more. It's led to one question — “What can't Mookie do?” — being asked many times over.

“We talk so much about young players moving around the lineup, and he has not changed his approach in the 4-hole,” Sox manager **John Farrell** said. “He's in some kind of spot right now the way he's seeing the baseball, the way he's making such hard contact.”

He hit in the leadoff spot in Farrell's batting order for 108 straight games, doing so at a .310 clip with 23 home runs and an .896 OPS in that span.

If it ain't broke, don't fix it, right? No. Wrong, I guess.

Betts slid to the No. 3 slot, from which



Matthew J. Lee/The Boston Globe via Getty Images

he hit three home runs and eight RBI as the Sox completed a sweep of Arizona on Aug. 14. The three-homer game was his second of the season, a feat no player younger than Betts has ever accom-

plished in Major League Baseball history.

But, then, he provided all of Boston's offense with a three-run homer and another two-run shot from the cleanup slot a couple nights later in Baltimore.

How has he done it? That question, Betts couldn't really answer. “Shoot, I have no idea,” Betts said after the Sox' Aug. 16 win in Baltimore. “Somehow it's going over the fence.

Again, I'm going to continue to say I don't know why, but I'm just trying to put good swings on it and enjoy it.”

At least Sox pitcher **Robbie Ross Jr.**, had something to say.

“I got to see some guys like **Nelson Cruz**, and I was here actually when **Josh Hamilton** had those four home runs,” Ross said. “That was sweet. But I've never seen anything like this where it was like night and day, boom, boom, boom. It was pretty special.”

He's just something special, no matter who answers the question.

### TRACKING PAPI: WHERE ORTIZ RANKS AMONG ALL-TIME RED SOX

Career statistics accumulated with Red Sox only. Ortiz's statistics through Aug. 21.

GAMES PLAYED		
1	Carl Yastrzemski	3,308
2	Dwight Evans	2,505
3	Ted Williams	2,292
4	Jim Rice	2,089
5	<b>ORTIZ</b>	<b>1,916</b>

HOME RUNS		
1	Ted Williams	521
2	<b>ORTIZ</b>	<b>474</b>
3	Carl Yastrzemski	452
4	Jim Rice	382
5	Dwight Evans	379

RBI		
1	Carl Yastrzemski	1,844
2	Ted Williams	1,839
3	<b>ORTIZ</b>	<b>1,500</b>
4	Jim Rice	1,451
5	Dwight Evans	1,346



Jason Miller/Getty Images

DOUBLES		
1	Carl Yastrzemski	646
2	Ted Williams	525
3	<b>ORTIZ</b>	<b>515</b>
4	Dwight Evans	474
5	Wade Boggs	422

RUNS SCORED		
1	Carl Yastrzemski	1,816
2	Ted Williams	1,798
3	Dwight Evans	1,435
4	Jim Rice	1,249
5	<b>ORTIZ</b>	<b>1,185</b>

SLUGGING PCT.		
1	Ted Williams	.634
2	Jimmy Foxx	.605
3	Manny Ramirez	.588
4	<b>ORTIZ</b>	<b>.570</b>
5	Nomar Garciaparra	.553

OPS		
1	Ted Williams	1.115
2	Jimmy Foxx	1.034
3	Manny Ramirez	.999
4	<b>ORTIZ</b>	<b>.956</b>
5	Mo Vaughn	.936

‘He’s probably one of the few guys, every time I see him hit, I think he’s going to hit a homer. It’s just that presence that he has in the batter’s box.’

— Xander Bogaerts on Mookie Betts

### THE NOTEBOOK

One of the highlights of a strong August at Fenway Park was the promotion of outfielder **Andrew Benintendi** from Double-A Portland on Aug. 2. The Sox' first-round pick out of Arkansas just last year, Benintendi had multiple hits in five of his first 12 games in MLB. ...

Red Sox catcher/outfielder **Blake Swihart** underwent successful surgery on his left ankle on Aug. 15 at Mercy Hospital in Charlotte, N.C. He is expected to make a full recovery before spring training begins in 2017. ...

The Red Sox claimed **Bryan Holaday** off waivers from Texas on Aug. 6 and selected him to the active major-league roster the following day as **Ryan Hanigan** (Andover, Mass.) was placed on the 15-day disabled list with left ankle peroneal tendinitis. A 28-year-old catcher, Holaday appeared in 30 games with the Rangers, including 25 starts behind the plate. ...

Also in the transactions department, the Sox recalled pitcher **Heath Hembree** and infielders **Marco Hernandez** and **Deven Marrero** from Triple-A Pawtucket on Aug. 15. The recall began Hernandez's fourth MLB stint this season. ...

Statistically speaking, Boston continues to pace the majors offensively. The Sox' 648 runs lead the league and are 55 more than the second-highest mark in the American League. They have also hit 58 home runs since July 4, another MLB best. ...

**Mookie Betts** is somehow attempting to top a month of July for which he was the second Sox player to be awarded A.L. Player of the Month this season, joining **Jackie Bradley Jr.**, in May. From July 1 to Aug. 16, Betts collected 35 RBI and was tied for the league lead in batting average. ...

Second baseman **Dustin Pedroia** entered Aug. 18 tied for 12th place with **Frank Malzone** on the Sox' all-time games played list with 1,359. Also, Pedroia's 513 extra-base hits were even with **Jason Varitek** for ninth in the club's record book. ...

Outfielder **Chris Young** played in his second rehab game for the PawSox on Aug. 14. He was placed on the 15-day DL with a right hamstring strain back on June 24. ...

The Red Sox were 67-52 through 119 games this season, an identical mark to Boston's 2004 championship team at that point. Eight of the last 13 World Series champions started out with 67 wins or fewer, including four of the last six. San Francisco was 65-54 in 2012 and two games better en route to its 2014 title.



► Benintendi



In his 2014 book, ‘Idiots Revisited: Catching Up with the Red Sox Who Won the 2004 World Series,’ MLB.com writer — and NEBJ contributor — **Ian Browne** recounts how Derek Lowe, Keith Foulke, Kevin Millar, Dave Roberts, Bill Mueller and even Curtis Leskanic helped set the table for David Ortiz’s most dramatic magical moment in Game 4 of the ALCS

# Man of Steal sets Superman stage

By Ian Browne

Being the chief “Idiot” everyone knew and loved, Johnny Damon figured the best way to respond to being one defeat away from an embarrassing sweep in the ALCS was to pack his suitcase so he’d be ready to head home as soon as the Red Sox lost Game 4. In actuality, Damon was just goofing around and trying to lighten the mood by packing. He figured if he packed, the Red Sox would win — kind of like the guy who knows that if he doesn’t bring an umbrella, he’ll get poured on, and if he does, he would stay dry.

“Pack your bags,” Damon said. “I always feel like if you do something like that, it won’t happen, so I had my bags packed and ready, because I knew if we lost, I was in a car that day and I was gone. Then we all just kind of started saying, ‘We’re not ready to take our kids to school yet or get in the car line, so let’s win.’”

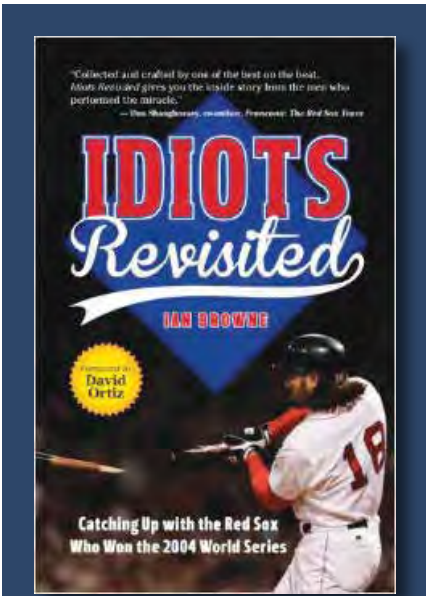
While a lot of that talk seemed like reaching for a team that sure seemed headed to an early vacation, Kevin Millar put on the most convincing happy face, and it was even captured on camera.

“Don’t let us win tonight,” Millar told anyone who would listen during batting practice. “We win tonight, you’ve got Pedro [Martinez] in Game 5, [Curt] Schilling in Game 6, and anything can happen in Game 7.” Millar told this to bullpen catcher Dana LeVangie, a Massachusetts resident. He told it to fans sitting behind the dugout. And most passionately, he told it to Boston Globe columnist Dan Shaughnessy, who wrote that the Red Sox threatened to go down as a “pack of frauds” if they were swept by their forever enemies.



▶ Millar

“When I read the article about Shaughnessy calling us frauds, it hit home. I said, ‘Wait a minute, we’re not frauds. They might be better than us, but we’re not frauds.’ One thing that team is not is frauds,” Millar said. “The Yankees can be better, and they probably were better. But the fraud situation got me and that’s what started the whole thing. ... So when I got to the field that day, I wasn’t going to change. I wasn’t going to pout or start packing up



Excerpt from “Idiots Revisited: Catching Up with the Red Sox Who Won the 2004 World Series” by Ian Browne. Copyright 2014 ISBN: 978-0-88448-384-7 Reprinted by permission of Tilbury House Publishers.

boxes. We had to now fight.”

One of Millar’s closest friends on the team was Gabe Kapler. Yet Kapler still doesn’t believe the rest of the team felt what Millar was feeling going into Game 4.

“Millar and I argue about this,” said Kapler. “But the only time I can remember in the entire season where I felt like we as a unit didn’t believe in ourselves was after Game 3 of the ALCS. And he says [on camera], ‘Don’t let this happen, don’t let this happen, don’t let this happen, let’s get back in it.’ I don’t believe that was the sentiment. I think Kevin was incredible at presenting that. But I don’t feel like that was the collective feeling in the clubhouse. So after Game 3, we go down three games to none, I think the feeling in the clubhouse was, ‘Oh, [expletive].’”

Only the biggest optimist of all time could have believed at that point. Through a 162-game regular season, the 101-61 Yankees had one four-game losing streak, from April 22 to 25. It seemed pretty simple when everyone got to Fenway Park on October 17, 2004. The Yankees would soon be headed to the World Series, and the Red Sox would soon be left to pick up the pieces of another season that would end in bitter disappointment. At about this time, no-



between 35+36

▶ Down 3-0 entering Game 4, Red Sox fans still had hope — even if the players didn’t.

body felt worse than Curt Schilling. He was the one who put the bull’s-eye on his back and told the Red Sox and their fans they couldn’t win a championship trophy without him. And his last act of the season was going to be that pitiful performance from Game 1 of the ALCS? “I thought I was done,” Schilling said. “We’re down 3-0. I know everybody wants to tell you they thought we were going to win but I was devastated. I wanted to think we could win it, absolutely. I’m also not stupid. It wasn’t about beating somebody four straight. It was about beating that team in four straight.”

And that’s why Kapler is absolutely unapologetic when he describes what he believes his team’s true mindset was leading up to what turned into one of the most famous games in baseball history.

“This is the discrepancy between what has been reported and what actually was, because I think when we got to the park, it wasn’t like, ‘Don’t let us get back into this.’ I think it was more like a surrender,” said Kapler. “‘OK, guys, we did everything we can. We’ve already done everything we could do. We can’t practice anymore, there’s no more cage work. There’s no more meetings. Let’s go and see what happens. Let’s throw it out

there one more time and see what happens.’ I’m a realist in that way. I don’t think anyone that was really honest with themselves was saying, ‘We’re going to come back and win this series.’”

But Millar kept talking the Sox into believing they could do it, even if he wasn’t quite sure what the recipe would be for the win that got his team back into the series.

“I had no idea. Had no idea how we were going to win the game,” Millar said. “Derek Lowe against the Yankees. They have left-handed hitters that drive the ball to left center. I knew we would be OK in [Games] 5, 6. Most of the time when you talk to me, I’m going to tell you the truth. You might not like it, but that was my true heartfelt feeling is that if we could find a way to win Game 4, ‘Don’t let us win, because Game 5 is Pedro, Game 6 is Schilling, and Game 7, anything can happen.’”

The first thing that had to happen was for Lowe to again take the mothballs off and try to find a way to cool off a Yankees’ offense that had drilled 19 hits the night before. The righty had another eight days of rest after his 10-pitch cameo in Game 3 of the division series and was going a little stir crazy. But when he came to the ballpark for Game 4 of the ALCS, he finally had a purpose again. Given the unlikelihood of the Red Sox coming back to win the final four games of the series, Lowe didn’t have a hard time focusing on himself. This was one last chance to show potential suitors that he could still pitch. And if he pitched really well, it would also be good for his current team. “You’re down 3-0. This is my last chance.



▶ Lowe

This is it. This is the end of the line here, kid,” said Lowe. “I specifically remember standing in the outfield. They were getting ready to do the national anthem. By the time I got stretched, I was in center field. I reminded myself, ‘Take this all in because this is gonna be your last game ever at Fenway Park as a Red Sox.’”

Looking back, the Red Sox are actually fortunate they got as much out of Lowe as they did in Game 4. Sinkerballers generally thrive on less rest, not more. But he was able to keep the ball down and keep the Red Sox in it early. Alex Rodriguez did hit an absolute rocket of a home run that went over the



Stan Grossfeld/The Boston Globe via Getty Images

Green Monster to make it 2-0 Yankees in the third. The Red Sox, facing a big-game pitcher in Orlando “El Duque” Hernandez, finally rallied in the fifth, getting an RBI single by Orlando Cabrera and a two-run single by David Ortiz to take a 3-2 lead. After retiring Gary Sheffield to open the sixth, Lowe’s night came to a sudden end when Hideki Matsui launched a triple out of the reach of a lunging Damon and into the gap in right center. Just like that, Terry Francona came out to the mound and removed Lowe, who seemed almost bewildered as he left the game. Lowe had thrown 88 pitches, but Francona quit while he was ahead. Mike Timlin came on and got nickel-and-dimed to death. Bernie Williams hit a game-tying infield hit that a charging Cabrera tried to backhand, but whiffed on. Ruben Sierra and Tony Clark also had infield hits that second baseman Mark Bellhorn couldn’t make plays on, and the Yankees were back up, 4-3.

An interesting thing happened in the top of the seventh, when, with one on and one out, Francona called on closer Keith Foulke. Yes, there was the closer in the seventh inning, signaling that Francona was willing to do anything to try to save the season.

“That’s why I didn’t want to use those guys in Game 3,” Francona said. “It was hard to explain to people, but it made sense to me. We knew if we were going to win, we were going to have to lean on some guys.”

Foulke wanted to be leaned on at that point. In fact, more than any of his teammates, Foulke did not want the season to end, and he would do anything to keep it going. His reason was very personal: His wife, Mandy, had left him late in the 2004 season, and the couple was headed toward a divorce. Foulke didn’t tell many people at the time what he was going through,

▶ In a must-steal moment, Dave Roberts barely beat the tag by Derek Jeter.

but he was devastated. And the last thing he wanted was to end the baseball season and go home to an empty house.

“Motivation,” Foulke said, when asked how the adversity in his personal life fueled his ‘04 playoff run. “It was one of those things where part of my life was not where I wanted it to be but when I went to the field, it was actually kind of a safe spot for me. I wasn’t alone again. I’m back with my teammates and my brothers and stuff. It was good. It made me more focused. I was locked in. We had a goal and I wanted to do everything I could possibly do to help get us there.”

Of all the big plays and key individual performances that occurred in that post-season, Foulke’s performance in Game 4 was among the most underrated, even in hindsight. He threw 50 pitches over 2½ innings to keep the deficit at 4-3, when his regular-season high had been 41 pitches, and only five relief outings in his whole career had been longer. Pitch No. 50 struck out Matsui, and that brought the Red Sox back into the dugout for what threatened to be the final three outs of their season. Joe Torre was going for the jugular on New York’s side, and he had gone to the great Mariano Rivera to start the eighth. And when Rivera came back out for the ninth, there was a strong chance that the Red Sox were about to be executed. Entering that game, Rivera had a career postseason ERA of 0.69.



▶ Foulke

Asked what he had thought at the time, Lowe said, “We’re probably going to lose. We’re going to lose. And I hate to say it, but having seen him for all the years that we had been playing against him, this is when this guy shines. I mean, he’s got a career ERA under 1. Why is he going to give up a run now?”

Millar, who had done all that chatting before the game, was the man who would get the first crack at Rivera in the ninth. The last time Millar had seen Rivera was Game 2, when, as the tying run at the plate, he struck out to end the game.

The first pitch was high for ball one. Then came the pitch that brought Millar out of his shoes.

“He threw a 1-0 fastball — a hittable pitch — and I pulled it and yanked it foul,” said Millar. Rivera was the one who yanked the next three pitches — all of them out of the strike zone. The Red Sox had life. The leadoff man had reached base.

“He doesn’t walk people,” Millar said. “Most of them were up and in, which was surprising, because I thought, if anything, I thought they’d attack me down and away. The only place he could really get hurt was up and in. I think I had five home runs to right field in my life. At that point, it’s all Francona and Dave Roberts and see what happens.”

Millar had barely even touched first base before the speedy Roberts came over to take his place. Roberts was the only key participant in Game 4 who was even more rusty than Derek Lowe. He hadn’t stepped on the field for a single play in 11 days — the regrettable experience in which he chose not to try to steal against Francisco Rodriguez in Game 2 of the division series. This time, he was running. And he didn’t even need to look for the signs to know that. Francona had given him a wink of assurance as he left the dugout.

“It’s a huge spot and I think that I’ve

documented that Tito looked down at me in the dugout and gave me a wink and kind of a nod like, ‘OK, go for it. Do your thing.’ So I go out there and it’s just one of those things, there’s a lot of nerves and excitement and fear,” said Roberts, a gifted base stealer who was successful in 38 out of 41 attempts in 2004.

As Roberts got to first base, the voice of Maury Wills was literally ringing in his ears. Wills would steal 586 bases in his career, exactly twice as many as Roberts had when he retired after the 2008 season. When Roberts was with the Dodgers, there were numerous spring training mornings in Vero Beach, Florida, when Wills would be in the ear of Dave Roberts. As Roberts tells the story, this is what he remembers Wills telling him: ‘D.R., one of these days you’re going to have to steal an important base when everyone in the ballpark knows you’re gonna steal but you’ve got to steal that base and you can’t be afraid to steal that base.’ Said Roberts, “Just kind of trotting out onto the field that night, I was thinking about him, so he was on one side telling me this was your opportunity and the other side saying, ‘You’re going to get thrown out, don’t get thrown out.’ Fortunately, Maury’s voice won out in my head.”

Roberts wasn’t shy in the moment. He took a monster lead, prompting Rivera to throw over three times. Actually, Rivera was doing Roberts a big favor with the continued throw-overs, because he was allowing Roberts to rev his engine. And on the third throw, Roberts was almost picked off. He just got his hand back on the bag before Tony Clark swiped the tag.

“I think if Mo would have thrown to the plate first, I don’t think I would have gone,”

Continued on Page B15



Continued from Page B14

Roberts said. “He threw over once, and the anxiety, everything started to dissipate a little bit. And then he threw over again and I was almost picked off. And then it was like, ‘OK, I’ve been in this game’ and the game started to slow down.”

On the near pickoff throw, Roberts made a classic reaction, as his mouth formed a tight circle, and it looked like he was saying, “Whooooooooo.”

Then came the hard part — actually stealing the base everyone knew he was going to try to steal. As Rivera came set, Roberts made sure he was going to the plate before he took off. He still remembered the delay tactic Rivera used when Roberts stole off him exactly one month earlier in that comeback Friday-night game at Yankee Stadium.

“That’s what I went into the ALCS with,” said Roberts. “So after he threw over a second time and then a third time, I was pretty certain he was going to go to the plate and then I told myself, wait him out, wait him out, because he’s going to go to the plate, so don’t be too antsy, just wait him out. And that’s exactly how it played out.”

Rivera gave Posada a perfect pitch to throw Roberts out on — outside and a little high for a ball. Posada had a lightning-quick release — the fastest Sox bench coach Brad Mills had ever timed him at—and a near-perfect throw. Yet Roberts still dove in just safely ahead of the tag by Derek Jeter.

“I got a great jump,” said Roberts. “I didn’t even think it was going to be a close play. And Jorge makes a great play. I just beat the throw.”

Francona often joked in the ensuing years that the play looks closer and closer every time he sees it. And Roberts, Francona, and the Red Sox will be forever grateful that second-base umpire Joe West got the call right. “It’s funny, when I look at the video and the footage, it’s like I didn’t realize how close it was at the time,” Roberts said. “Joe West jokes all the time, saying, ‘I made you famous with the safe call.’ So many umpires have come up to me so many times, saying, ‘Man, do you realize how good of a call that was for Joe to be in position?’ Honestly, initially I didn’t, but after I looked back, I was like, that was a really close play. I definitely thank him for making me famous.”

At the moment of the steal, Fenway Park roared with anticipation. Roberts had just executed what would end up being the most famous stolen base in the history of October baseball. Yet not enough people thank Bill Mueller for turning Roberts into the primary hero of that night.

Mueller, the man who had tormented Rivera back on July 24, was back at the plate in the biggest spot imaginable.



Era Shaw/Getty Images

► Roberts roared with the tying run on Bill Mueller’s clutch hit off Mariano Rivera.

The most low-key player on his team was about to come up with the biggest hit of his life. After showing bunt on the 1-0 pitch, Mueller watched that pitch go by for a strike. “Theseseason hanging on a bunt here,” guest analyst Al Leiter, who was still an active pitcher in the majors at time, told his audience on Fox.

Right as that sentence left Leiter’s lips, the baseball left Rivera’s hands and Mueller was not bunting. Instead, he hammered the ball straight up the middle. Out of desperation, Rivera wound up on the ground trying to field it, but the baseball was scalded. Fortunately, Bernie Williams had a weak arm and third-base coach Dale Sveum knew it. He sent Roberts around from second and he slid in before going into a fist pump and a string of high-fives from his teammates. “Bill Mueller has tied it!” Joe Buck exclaimed on television. The throw never even made it home. Rivera cut it off himself, knowing there was no play, and snatched the baseball with anger back into his glove. Amazingly, Rivera had once again missed his location badly with Mueller standing 60 feet, 6 inches in front of him. “Middle-middle cutter,” is how Leiter described it.

As Fenway Park rocked with joy, Theo Epstein got reflective. “When Roberts stole the bag, I flashed back to July 31. We were swamped with the Nomar trade and had put our pursuit of a pinch-runner on the back burner,” said Epstein. “Earlier in the day I had asked Zack Scott to come up with a list of possible pinch-runners we could acquire — guys who could steal us a base when we absolutely had to have one. Roberts was one of the names at the top of Zack’s list and he suddenly became available when the Dodgers traded for Steve Finley right before the deadline. Right in the middle of the mayhem of the four-way Nomar trade talks, we were able to acquire Roberts for Henri Stanley. As Roberts came around to score, I thought of Zack’s list and all the great teamwork



Al Bello/Getty Images

► Rivera, the legendary closer, entered the game with a career postseason ERA of 0.69.

and camaraderie in our Baseball Operations department. It was a nice little moment during a really big moment.”

If you think Roberts moving up 90 feet took some weight off Mueller, you’d be wrong. Aside from knowing he could no longer hit into a ground-ball double play, Mueller still felt like he had quite the job in front of him. “Nothing changes in your body when you’re facing Mariano,” Mueller said. “That is a tough at-bat. Without a doubt, it takes every bit of what you have to try and be successful off of him. Nothing changed. My senses were as high as ever with Roberts on first or second or third or wherever he would be. He’s just a tough at-bat and you’re hoping he makes a mistake and you’re able to put the ball in play.”

“It was out over the plate and I was able to make contact and that’s what I was hoping, that he’d make a mistake. [It was] very fortunate that I was able to put that ball in play. I was thinking more of moving him over and doing my job and getting him to third base, almost to the degree that it would be a positive out because of how tough Mariano is. I was fortunate to find a hole.”

There would be no fist pumps or signs of elation from Mueller. While the clutch hit fit perfectly with who he was, to celebrate with a game in progress would have been the anti-Bill Mueller. Much as Millar performed well in the spotlight by all but daring it to shine on him, Mueller’s method was the opposite. He just wanted to play baseball the right way for nine innings every game, which usually entailed getting his uniform filthy along the way. “That was just my personality. That was the way I was able to handle the pressures and all that,” Mueller said.

If Mueller’s place in Red Sox history has never been fully appreciated, he doesn’t much care. Just as he seemed to enjoy the relative anonymity that came with being an advance scout during the 2013 season, he had absolutely no issue with being perhaps the most unheralded

hero of the 2004 Red Sox.

“The credit is for the team,” Mueller said. “We won the World Series. That’s where the credit goes. All the guys on that team contributed.”

Mueller’s teammates, on the other hand, loved to give him credit.

“Obviously me getting on base is a big part of it, and obviously Dave Roberts stealing second base is the second big part of it, but Billy Mueller’s base hit up the middle, you’re exactly right, without that, we’re not talking about any of this,” said Millar. “If Billy Mueller pops up to short and the next guy grounds out, and the next guy strikes out, it’s all irrelevant. Billy Mueller drove in Dave Roberts with a bullet up the middle that tied the game.”

Unlike that thriller on July 24, Mueller didn’t end the game this time. The Yankees were still in it. But it sure felt like the Red Sox were going to win, and Francona used his bullpen masterfully to put them in position to do so. Once Foulke was done, Alan Embree got five outs. When lefty specialist Mike Myers walked Hideki Matsui, the only batter he faced, to load the bases with two outs in the 11th, Curtis Leskanic was the man entrusted to get Bernie Williams out and keep the game tied. This is the same Bernie Williams who would smack 22 career homers in postseason play while driving in 80, producing an .850 OPS.

In Game 3, like all of Boston’s pitchers, Leskanic didn’t perform well, giving up two hits and three runs while retiring just one batter. But the next night, with the season merely hanging in the balance, he was supposed to save the season? At this point, Leskanic had put together a serviceable career, posting a 4.36 ERA in 603 games. But his arm didn’t have a whole lot of life left in it by 2004. In fact, Game 4 of the ALCS would prove to be the final game Curtis Leskanic ever pitched.

After being released by the Kansas City Royals, Leskanic joined the Red Sox roster June 22, 2004. Leskanic fit right in from a personality standpoint. His long, stringy hair would always look like a grease factory after a few pitches.

In the showdown with Williams, who could have prevented Boston’s launch into history by coming through like he had so many other times in his career, Leskanic induced a shallow fly-out to his pal Damon in center. The righty came back out for the 12th and there was some concern when Jorge Posada led off with a single and Ruben Sierra bounced one off Leskanic’s right leg. Leskanic was able to pick it up and throw to first for the out. Francona and a trainer actually came out to make sure Leskanic was fine to stay in the game. He nodded with approval and then mowed down the next two hitters, capped by a strikeout of Miguel Cairo.



► Leskanic



► In a game of heroics, it was David Ortiz who reigned supreme in the 12th inning.

Backed by the stellar relief of Leskanic, could the marathon Game 4 of the ALCS finally be building toward a conclusion? It sure seemed like it when Manny Ramirez led off the 12th by belting a single to left. Big Papi was coming up, and he didn’t let many opportunities go by in the postseason of 2004. Quantrill hung a nice meaty 2-1 offering at 88 miles per hour and Ortiz deposited it into the Yankees’ bullpen. The big man had come up big yet again. His previous walkoff had ended the division series against the Angels. This one made sure that the ALCS didn’t end.

Ortiz again seemed almost mythical. While Ortiz has had a brilliant career, one that could land him in the Hall of Fame someday, he wouldn’t reach the heights of 2004 again until 2013, when he fueled a third World Series title in under a decade by performing some similar magic. But ’04 was the first time he had done things like this with the world watching.

“David at that point in his career turned into the greatest big RBI guy in the history of baseball,” said Millar.

Jed Jacobson, Al Bello (inset bottom), Doug Pensinger (inset bottom)/Getty Images

“There wasn’t a bigger RBI guy going than David Ortiz, period. You knew any situation, he was going to do something special. That’s just the way he was. We knew at that point he was a superstar. David Ortiz at that point turned into a superstar. The ’03 season put him on the map. In 2004, he is now a superstar. The stuff that he did doesn’t make sense.”

Ortiz has always been so matter-of-fact while explaining how he can continually come through, not just when baseball games are on the line, but when baseball seasons are on the line.

“I tell you what, man, postseason is something that can work both ways for you,” Ortiz explained in October 2013. “It can go well, if you stay calm. Or it can go bad if you try to overdo things.”

It was a mob scene Ortiz arrived to at home plate at the end of Game 4 of the 2004 ALCS. And if the Red Sox were still down 3-1 in the series, it no longer felt like that. That walkoff pile at the plate almost made it seem like Boston had just won the pennant. Millar no longer needed to provide a sales pitch to make people believe the Red Sox had legitimate hope. With one swing, Ortiz had

threatened to swing a series.

“Yes,” Kapler said. “Because now you can start to project just a little bit.”

But the key to the eventual comeback would be to not do too much projecting, and Jason Varitek and some other veterans stressed the importance of trying to win each pitch and each inning, rather than looking at the entire game or series.

“Each inning, we want to win the inning,” Trot Nixon said. “We want to win the top half. We want to get them up to the plate and out. We want to win more innings than they do. Simplify it like that and at the end of the game, we’ll see where we’re at. That may have calmed some things down. That may have put some guys in focus to say, OK, instead of going up there and saying, ‘I need to get hits tonight,’ now it’s like, ‘We’re in battle mode. We’re backed up against the wall.’ Sometimes when someone is backed up against the wall, you don’t know quite what they’re capable of. They’ve got nowhere to go. So they’re going to have to fight their way back out. And that’s what we did.”

Nomar Garciaparra, whose Cubs missed the playoffs by three games, was out with some friends from Boston

watching Game 4, and he had a strikingly clear picture of where things stood once Ortiz had done his walkoff thing again. “I remember being out with friends, and they won the fourth game and I looked at them, and I said, ‘Oh my God. They just won the World Series.’ They looked at me like I was crazy,” Garciaparra said.

“They were like, ‘What?’ I said, ‘I know my guys, it’s over.’ I said, ‘They just won the World Series. I’m just telling you, it’s over. I know my guys. I know the mentality. I know the attitude. They didn’t get swept. It’s over.’ ”

In both 1999 against the Indians and 2003 versus the Oakland Athletics, Garciaparra had been part of Boston teams that were down 2-0 in a best-of-five division series and went on to win the next three games to advance to the ALCS. Nomar wasn’t the only one feeling suddenly optimistic about the Red Sox.

And as a prophet named Millar promised, Pedro was lined up for Game 5, followed by Schilling in Game 6. And anything can happen in Game 7. **B**

“Idiots Revisited” by Ian Browne reprinted with permission of Tilbury House Publishers.

**‘There wasn’t a bigger RBI guy going than David Ortiz, period. You knew any situation, he was going to do something special. That’s just the way he was. We knew at that point he was a superstar. David Ortiz at that point turned into a superstar. The ’03 season put him on the map. In 2004, he is now a superstar. The stuff that he did doesn’t make sense.’**

— Kevin Millar on David Ortiz





# RAVEN'S LANDING

**Steve Hathaway (Acton, Mass.) completes unlikely journey to become first player from Franklin Pierce to reach big leagues**

By Kevin Henkin

**W**e were walking down the runway toward the visitors' dugout in Fenway Park, getting ready to do a pregame interview. I was thanking the newly arrived major-league rookie Steve Hathaway for his time. "You have a great story to tell," I said to him.

"I really do," the Acton, Mass., native said, still shaking his head in wonder that he was here at Fenway as a major-league pitcher. Before Hathaway made his debut as a lefty reliever for the Arizona Diamondbacks on July 31, he took a most unconventional journey to the bigs. At Acton-Boxboro High School, Hathaway was a standout pitcher and outfielder up until his senior year in 2009 but was overlooked by everyone at the college level. Not quite ready to walk away

from the game, Hathaway called a friend on the team at Dean Community College and asked if there was any room for him. Three weeks later, Hathaway was throwing for Dean. After one year there, Hathaway parlayed his time at Dean into an opportunity to transfer to Franklin Pierce University in Ringe, NH. At the Division 2 level, Hathaway continued to expand his presence on the baseball landscape. As a freshman in 2011, Hathaway went 6-2 with a 3.64 ERA in 47 innings over nine appearances. He was just beginning to feel his pitching career gaining momentum when he injured his shoulder and elected

to undergo Tommy John surgery, thus losing the entire 2012 season to recovery. Looking back on that surgery, Hathaway said, "Because at that point, I knew I wasn't in pro ball at the time, I didn't need to recover in 10 months. So I took my time with the recovery and worked with some great people, and I came back with some higher velocity stronger than ever." Hathaway indeed came back strong in 2013, logging a 2.90 ERA in eight appearances over 31 innings. Although a limited sample, Hathaway's performance was enough for the Diamondbacks to select him in the 14th round of the MLB draft that June.

After the draft, however, minor shoulder woes continued to plague Hathaway. During that period, he was converted from a starter to a relief pitcher. "I was up and down with some shoulder issues in 2013 and 2014," Hathaway said. "I was very limited pitching in games just because I was battling shoulder injuries the whole time. But in 2015, the Diamondbacks got me right and I was feeling great. I was just taking advantage of playing because it had been so long of fighting through all those injuries. I was very thankful to be out there and I just took off."

In 2015, Hathaway made 45 appearances at the Single-A and high-A-ball levels over 43% innings without giving up a homer. For high-A Visalia last year, he went 5-1 and had a 2.00 ERA and 29 strikeouts in 27 innings. Hathaway's success in 2015 paved the way to his amazing leap less than a year later from 'A' ball to the majors. "Starting this spring, I knew I wanted to start in Double A," Hathaway said. "I thought it was very possible to maybe get



**'Me getting here, it sets an example and goals for other guys that go to smaller colleges. There are great baseball players out there everywhere.'**

— Steve Hathaway (Acton, Mass.), the first Franklin Pierce player to reach MLB

here where I am now, maybe eventually, but I honestly didn't know that this could happen that quick." Hathaway did indeed start off 2016 in Double A but quickly earned a promotion to Triple-A Reno, where he made 24 appearances before the late July call-up to the Diamondbacks.

In his major-league debut against the Dodgers in Los Angeles, Hathaway got hit hard: three hits and three earned runs in one-third of an inning. Following that, however, he was unscored upon in his next six appearances. Regarding his debut, Hathaway said, "L.A.'s a tough place for anyone. The atmosphere is crazy. There were some butterflies, but I tried to tell myself that it's the same game. Once I lock in, I'm usually OK. I don't get nervous after that." He added: "In my debut, the ball was up and I went back and watched my video. I saw that I was mostly in the middle of the plate and my secondary stuff, I was throwing it for strikes, but it was lighter than normal. I was babying it because I really want it to be for strikes. I didn't want any walks. I didn't want to be wild. But from that day on, I just told myself to let it loose and whatever happens happens."

With that debut, Hathaway became the first player from Franklin Pierce to ever appear in a major-league game. "Me getting here, it sets an example and goals for other guys that go to smaller colleges," Hathaway said. "There are great baseball players out there everywhere. Some guys are just late bloomers like I was, and it just gives everyone a goal. They can look up to that and say, 'If he did it, I can do it.'" Taking in Fenway from the visitors' dugout, Hathaway said, "Just coming here and watching Pedro Martinez and David Ortiz and all those legendary big-name guys, it made me want to reach this level and stand on this field one day as a player," Hathaway said. A few hours later, Hathaway made his official Fenway debut, dusting away fellow rookie Andrew Benintendi in a merciless five-pitch strikeout. With that, his night was over. But to anyone paying attention, it seemed like Hathaway's steady career as a major-leaguer was just beginning.

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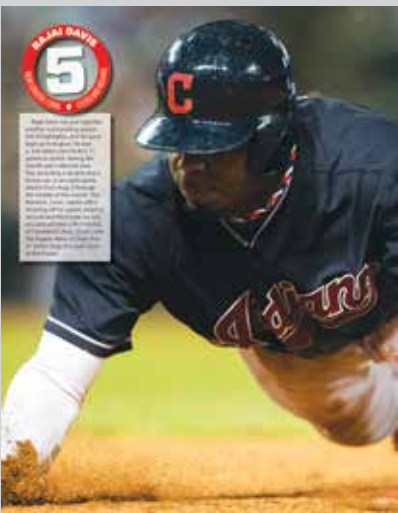


Norm Hall/Getty Images



# MLB NinE

NEBJ counts down the nine most noteworthy major-league players with New England roots of the past month. Flip through all nine exclusively in our free digital edition at [baseballjournal.com](http://baseballjournal.com)



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### Nick Ahmed

Arizona Diamondbacks | SS  
Hometown: East Longmeadow, Mass.  
College: UConn



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### Matt Barnes

RED SOX | RHP  
Hometown: Bethel, Conn.  
College: UConn



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### Jeff Beliveau

Baltimore Orioles | LHP  
Hometown: Johnson, R.I..  
College: Florida Atlantic



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### Rajai Davis

Cleveland Indians | OF  
Hometown: New London, Conn.  
College: UConn-Avery Point



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### Pat Dean

Minnesota Twins | LHP  
Hometown: Naugatuck, Conn.  
College: Boston College



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### Chris Denorfia

San Francisco Giants | OF  
Hometown: Bristol, Conn.  
College: Wheaton College



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### Oliver Drake

Baltimore Orioles | RHP  
Hometown: Worcester, Mass.  
College: Navy



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### Matt Duffy

Texas Rangers | 1B-3B  
Hometown: Milton, Mass.  
College: Tennessee



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### Ryan Flaherty

Baltimore Orioles | IF/OF  
Hometown: Portland, Maine  
College: Vanderbilt



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### Craig Breslow

Texas Rangers | LHP  
Hometown: Trumbull, Conn.  
College: Yale



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### Eric Campbell

New York Mets | 1B  
Hometown: Norwich, Conn.  
College: Boston College



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### Chris Capuano

Milwaukee Brewers | LHP  
Hometown: West Springfield, Mass.  
College: Duke



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### Nick Greenwood

Minnesota Twins | LHP  
Hometown: Southington, Conn.  
College: University of Rhode Island



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### Jesse Hahn

Oakland Athletics | RHP  
Hometown: Norwich, Conn.  
College: Virginia Tech



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### Ryan Hanigan

RED SOX | C  
Hometown: Andover, Mass.  
College: Rollins College



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### Matt Carasiti

Colorado Rockies | RHP  
Hometown: New Britain, Conn.  
College: St. John's



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### Curt Casali

Tampa Bay Rays | C  
Hometown: New Canaan, Conn.  
College: Vanderbilt



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### Steve Cishek

Seattle Mariners | RHP  
Hometown: Falmouth, Mass.  
College: Carson-Newman Univ.



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### Matt Harvey

New York Mets | RHP  
Hometown: Mystic, Conn.  
College: Univ. of North Carolina



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### Steve Hathaway

Arizona Diamondbacks | LHP  
Hometown: Acton, Mass.  
College: Franklin Pierce



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### Kyle Hendricks

Chicago Cubs | RHP  
Hometown: Newport Beach, Calif.  
College: Dartmouth



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### Alex Cobb

Tampa Bay Rays | RHP  
Hometown: Boston, Mass.



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### Chris Colabello

Toronto Blue Jays | 1B/OF  
Hometown: Milford, Mass.  
College: Assumption



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### Tim Collins

Kansas City Royals | LHP  
Hometown: Worcester, Mass.



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Click the NEBJ icon to search our previous coverage of the player since January 2013.






Click the MLB icon to access his official bio page with current stats, news and videos.



Access his Twitter account.



**Rich Hill**  
**Los Angeles Dodgers** | LHP  
**Hometown:** Milton, Mass.  
**College:** University of Michigan









**Chris Iannetta**  
**Seattle Mariners** | C  
**Hometown:** Providence, R.I.  
**College:** Univ. of North Carolina







**Ryan Lavarney**  
**Toronto Blue Jays** | C  
**Hometown:** Woodland Hills, Calif.  
**College:** Yale

**Jack Leathersich**  
**Chicago Cubs** | LHP  
**Hometown:** Beverly, Mass.  
**College:** UMass-Lowell









**Dominic Leone**  
**Arizona Diamondbacks** | RHP  
**Hometown:** Norwich, Conn.  
**College:** Clemson






**Jeff Locke**  
**Pittsburgh Pirates** | LHP  
**Hometown:** Conway, N.H.








**Charlie Morton**  
**Philadelphia Phillies** | RHP  
**Hometown:** Redding, Conn.












**Scott Oberg**  
**Colorado Rockies** | RHP  
**Hometown:** Tewksbury, Mass.  
**College:** UConn


**Mike Olt**  
**San Diego Padres** | 3B  
**Hometown:** Branford, Conn.  
**College:** UConn

**Ryan O'Rourke**  
**Minnesota Twins** | LHP  
**Hometown:** Worcester, Mass.  
**College:** Merrimack









**Adam Ottavino**  
**Colorado Rockies** | RHP  
**Hometown:** Brooklyn, N.Y.  
**College:** Northeastern





**A.J. Pollock**  
**Arizona Diamondbacks** | OF  
**Hometown:** Hebron, Conn.  
**College:** Notre Dame









**Tony Sanchez**  
**San Francisco Giants** | C  
**Hometown:** Miami, Fla.  
**College:** Boston College







**Evan Scribner**  
**Seattle Mariners** | RHP  
**Hometown:** Washington, Conn.  
**College:** Central Connecticut State









**George Springer**  
**Houston Astros** | OF  
**Hometown:** New Britain, Conn.  
**College:** UConn









**Tim Stauffer**  
**Arizona Diamondbacks** | RHP  
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**College:** University of Richmond

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**New York Yankees** | OF  
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## PAT DEAN 9 NAUGATUCK, CONN. ♦ MINNESOTA TWINS

Pat Dean earned his second call to Minnesota this season Aug. 12, three months and one day following his MLB debut with the Twins earlier in the year. Six of Dean's first nine appearances in the majors this year were starts, but he has been placed into duty in the bullpen this time around as Minnesota continues to struggle in the basement of the American League Central. His first outing since being recalled was a good one as he struck out six Royals on Aug. 12, allowing just one run on one hit in three innings.

Brace Hemmelgarn/Minnesota Twins/Getty Images

## SCOTT OBERG 8 TEWKSBURY, MASS. ♦ COLORADO ROCKIES

Scott Oberg is in the midst of his third stint with the Rockies this season, but just earned his first win despite the Rangers tagging him for two runs and two hits Aug. 11. The victory was just the fourth of his career and came just two nights after he failed to record a save — in his first opportunity of the year — against Texas, allowing four runs on four hits in just two-thirds of an inning. Oberg worked himself through some tough situations late in July as he pitched a scoreless frame on the 28th after allowing the bases to load with nobody out. One night later, he worked through a two-on jam in just three pitches.

Mitchell Leff/Getty Images





The Twins selected a second New England native reliever to the major-league pitching staff on Aug. 13. Ryan O'Rourke, a Merrimack College product, tossed 1½ innings without allowing an earned run the day after his promotion, lowering his ERA to 4.15 with the Twins this season. Over his stay with the Triple-A Rochester Red Wings this season, O'Rourke was stretched out beyond his previous role as a lefty specialist, according to Twins manager Paul Molitor, and was the recommended option with the club looking for a fresh arm after Matt Albers was designated for assignment.

Brace Hemmelgarn/Minnesota Twins/Getty Images



Steve Hathaway became the first Franklin Pierce University product to reach the major leagues, but he allowed three runs in his July 31 debut in Los Angeles. Thereafter, the Acton, Mass., native settled down and pitched scoreless ball over his next 7½ innings of work with the Diamondbacks, limiting right-handers to a 2-for-12 showing at the plate in that stretch. Hathaway could not have picked a more convenient time to earn his first call to "The Show" as the D-Backs visited Fenway Park for a series Aug. 12-14 during which he tossed 1½ scoreless frames over two outings.

Norm Hall/Getty Images





Rajai Davis has put together another outstanding season full of highlights, and his pace kept up in August. He was a .324 hitter over his first 11 games in action during the month and collected nine hits, including a double and a home run, in an eight-game stretch from Aug. 4 through the middle of the month. The Norwich, Conn., native still is showing off his speed, swiping second and third base on consecutive pitches in first inning of Cleveland's Aug. 12 win over the Angels. Nine of Davis' first 31 stolen bags this year came at third base.





MATT CARASITI  
4  
NEW BRITAIN, CONN. ♦ COLORADO ROCKIES

The St. John's University product who calls Connecticut home was a second native New Englander to make his MLB debut this past month, appearing for the first time in the Rockies' Aug. 12 contest in Philadelphia. Colorado suffered a 10-6 loss that night, but Matt Carasiti retired Maikel Franco for his first strikeout in the majors. He recorded 31 saves and a 1.96 ERA between Double A and Triple A this season, earning All-Star honors with the Hartford Yard Goats before a July 25 promotion to Albuquerque.



DIGITAL BONUS

Check out our profile of Matt Carasiti in our August issue:

► [goo.gl/CO6YGG](https://goo.gl/CO6YGG)



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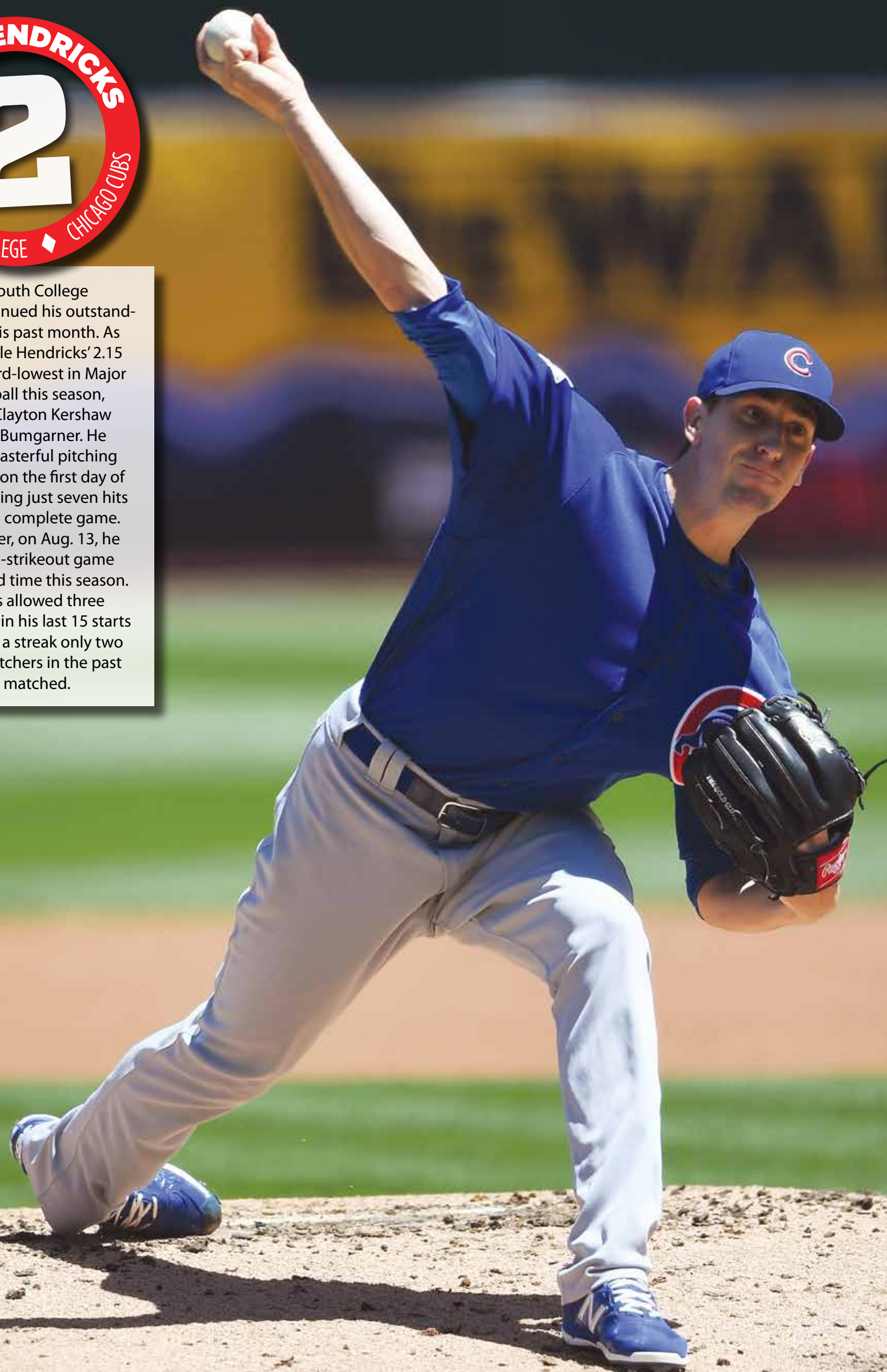
GEORGE SPRINGER  
3  
NEW BRITAIN, CONN. ♦ HOUSTON ASTROS

George Springer recorded hits in seven of eight games through the middle of August, continuing an outstanding season over which he already has set career highs in home runs and RBI, despite just a .260 average. The UConn product became the third-ever Astro to post three RBI and three extra-base hits in the same game out of the leadoff spot in the second game of an Aug. 11 doubleheader against Minnesota, joining Craig Biggio and Joe Morgan. He also ranks second in the AL with 12 outfield assists, the most by a Houston right fielder since 2009.





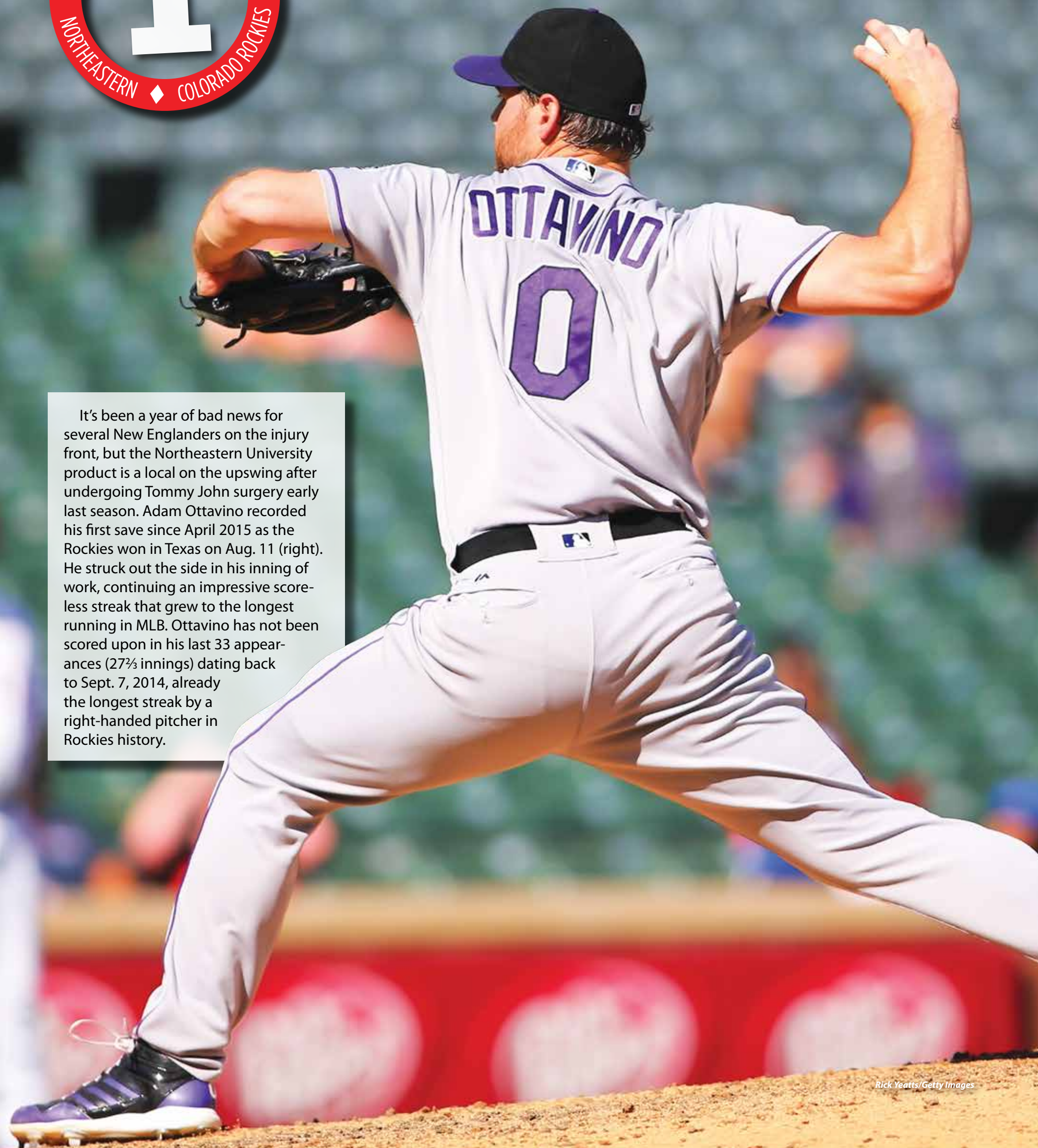
The Dartmouth College product continued his outstanding season this past month. As of Aug. 15, Kyle Hendricks' 2.15 ERA is the third-lowest in Major League Baseball this season, trailing only Clayton Kershaw and Madison Bumgarner. He delivered a masterful pitching performance on the first day of August, allowing just seven hits in a 123-pitch complete game. Two starts later, on Aug. 13, he recorded a 12-strikeout game for the second time this season. Hendricks has allowed three runs or fewer in his last 15 starts since May 22, a streak only two other Cubs pitchers in the past 30 years have matched.



Thearon W. Henderson/Getty Images



It's been a year of bad news for several New Englanders on the injury front, but the Northeastern University product is a local on the upswing after undergoing Tommy John surgery early last season. Adam Ottavino recorded his first save since April 2015 as the Rockies won in Texas on Aug. 11 (right). He struck out the side in his inning of work, continuing an impressive scoreless streak that grew to the longest running in MLB. Ottavino has not been scored upon in his last 33 appearances (27⅓ innings) dating back to Sept. 7, 2014, already the longest streak by a right-handed pitcher in Rockies history.



Rick Yeatts/Getty Images



North Shore’s immediate impression

By Joshua Kummins

As minor-league baseball’s regular season nears an end, a pair of New Englanders have made seamless transitions from the collegiate game, posting excellent starts to their careers as professionals in the short-season ranks.

And, although they are starting their pro careers on opposite sides of the continental United States, they call home just towns away from one another north of Boston.

Peabody, Mass., native **Brandon Bingel** has turned in a strong season out of the bullpen for the West Virginia Black Bears, earning a nod to the New York-Penn League’s South All-Stars.

The Bryant University product allowed just one earned run over his first 18 innings in the

Pirates organization and locked down four saves in five opportunities. Bingel’s lone decision at the All-Star break was a

loss, but the 22nd-round draftee totaled 15 strikeouts and walked just five in that span.

Despite a sub-500 record before the NYPL broke for its All-Star Game on Aug. 16 in Wappingers Falls, N.Y., Bingel was one of six Black Bears who earned All-Star status.

Behind the plate and across the country with the Missoula Osprey in the Diamondbacks organization, fellow North Shore native **Ryan January** of Swampscott, Mass., has flourished to begin his pro career.

January propelled himself onto the Pioneer League’s All-Star squad as he was a .311 hitter with eight home runs and 22 RBI over 33 games, including a pair of long balls in his first five August games. The Osprey won the Pio League title last season.

More from the NYPL

Staying in the New York-Penn League, the Red Sox-affiliated Lowell Spinners led the Stedler Division by one game over the



Black Foot Media Group

► **Ryan January** (Swampscott, Mass.) earned a Pioneer League All-Star selection with the Missoula Osprey.

Connecticut Tigers at the break. Three Spinners joined Bingel at the All-Star Game, including outfielder **Tyler Hill**, whose .341 average led the circuit. ...

Pro ball is treating **Nick Zammarelli** (Lincoln, R.I.) quite well as his .324 clip ranked second for the Northwest League’s Everett AquaSox. The Elon product did not earn an All-Star berth, despite scoring 31 runs and driving in 27 more while tying for the team lead with five home runs. Zammarelli hit a walk-off, two-run double in a 6-5 victory on Aug. 14. ...

**Chase Livingston** (East Lyme, Conn.) was the Royals’ 40th-round selection this June, but the former University of Rhode Island catcher is proving his worth. After hitting .316 through just eight games in the Arizona League, Livingston earned the call to Burlington and went 2-for-2 in his Appalachian League debut July 27 against the Bristol Pirates. ...

Also in the Kansas City system, Bryant product **Robby Rinn** (Warwick, R.I.) led the AZL

**DIGITAL BONUS**  
We featured Ryan January in our Tips from the Pros last month.  
► [goo.gl/2HV3Uk](http://goo.gl/2HV3Uk)

Royals with 10 doubles and 27 RBI while hitting a solid .289 at the 40-game marker. ...

A victory has eluded **Thomas Jenkins** (West Brookfield, Mass.) of the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers, but the former Quinpiac standout fanned 29 batters and allowed just 11 earned runs in his first 30 innings as a pro, all while issuing just six walks. ...

Boston College product **Joe Cronin** (Scarborough, Maine) began August on the disabled list with the Gulf Coast League Twins, but clubbed a home run July 25. Cronin drove in seven runs and stole seven bases in his first 24 games. ...

**Richard Fecteau** (Newbury, Mass.) picked up his pace toward the end of July for the AZL Angels, hitting .265 with four RBI in a 10-game span through Aug. 15. The Salem State product was one of just three players on his team who hit more than one triple by that point.

Nationals duo teams up

Through his first full season in the Nationals organization, **Rhett Wiseman** (Mansfield, Mass.) has been a consistent performer for the South Atlantic League’s Hagerstown Suns. Wiseman’s average stood at just .246, but he had driven in 60 runs. The Vanderbilt product reached the 10-homer mark Aug. 11, his 112th game of the season. ...

Former UConn captain **Jack Sundberg** (Mansfield, Conn.) played at three different levels through his first 30 games as a pro, working all the way up to Hagerstown, where he joined Wiseman a week into August. He went 3-for-5 with a run scored in an 8-6 win over Asheville on Aug. 14, just his sixth game in the SAL.

Sundberg was called up to the Auburn Doubledays after playing just six times in rookie ball in Florida. He played in 19 games in the NYPL, hitting .269 with two triples and five RBI. ...

**Dustin Hunt** (Andover, Mass.) has alternated between starting and relief roles for the Tri-City ValleyCats. The Northeastern product posted 19 strikeouts in his first 25½ innings of work in the Houston organization, while earning a three-inning save — his first pro decision of any kind — Aug. 6 against Brooklyn. ...

East Windsor, Conn., native **Aaron Civale**, who formed a strong tandem with Hunt at Northeastern this past spring, has been a valuable contributor to the Mahoning Valley Scrapers. The Indians’ third-round draftee made the start in each of his first nine games, striking out 20 while walking just five, although he has lasted more than three innings just once. ...

**Seamus Curran** (Agawam, Mass.) earned a quick, seven-game call to the Aberdeen IronBirds, but has posted a strong season for the GCL Orioles. Curran hit a team-best .289 and drove in 18 runs through 29 games, including his first home run of his second pro season as part of a 2-for-5 day Aug. 3 against the Red Sox.

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Dale Sparks/West Virginia Black Bears

► **Brandon Bingel** (Peabody, Mass.) has started strong with the West Virginia Black Bears, allowing just one earned run in his first 18 innings.



On innings limits, statistics and Pokemon Go

By Dan Guttenplan

Auburn, Mass., native Tyler Beede is in the midst of his second full season as a professional baseball player for the San Francisco Giants' Double-A affiliate — the Richmond Flying Squirrels. Through his first 20 starts, the Lawrence Academy (Mass.) alumnus and former Vanderbilt University right-hander was 6-6 with a 2.98 ERA and 107 strikeouts in 120½ innings. In his last three combined starts, Beede allowed a total of two earned runs over 19 innings with 23 strikeouts.

I noticed you've been pitching really well lately. Have you been doing anything differently, or was it a matter of getting through a tough midseason stretch?

"I'd say a little bit of both. I had a little bit of a rough stretch in July. At that point in the season, I was pressing. I take it as a learning experience. I learned that I was trying to do more than I had been doing in the months prior. I was trying to have an exceptional start every time out and make really special pitches. I was outside of my comfort zone. Really what's been working is getting back to the process of what I've been doing all year. It's about simplifying things and not trying to overthink it. I had to calm down, make quality pitches, and that allowed me to get into a better rhythm."

Why do you think you were pressing? Were you anxious to get promoted to Triple-A or nervous about the trade deadline?

"I'd say a little of both. I had a really good couple of months in May and June. Personally, I thought I had to do more to get a call-up, and with the trade deadline, I felt I had to have an outing that was off the charts. I put a lot of pressure on myself to impress other people rather than take each game as it is — and just make another quality pitch. There were some outside factors. To be able to step back and put it into perspective, I was happy to be able to do that. I can take that mentality moving forward. After my second bad outing, I simplified things. This organization has a plan, and there are reasons why I'm still here."

TYLER'S JOURNAL

Exclusive commentary for New England Baseball Journal by Tyler Beede (Auburn, Mass.)



Did you come to that realization on your own, or did you speak with someone in the organization about the plan?

"Really, it's just my second year here, and I have to understand that it's not a bad thing that I'm not moving as quickly as I'd like. I don't need to think I should be at a different level by now. It doesn't always matter what I'm doing statistically. I'm getting confidence, learning and developing, and that's something I had to understand personally. Being able to talk to people in the organization — like my pitching coach and some of the coordinators that come through here — I was able to learn how they feel about what I'm doing this year. Personally, being in Double A, I wanted a new challenge at a different level, but they preached to me that there's a big reason why the minor leagues exist. When it comes to the end of the season, there's an opportunity for anyone to get called up. I took that advice to heart."

In the past, we've talked about an innings limit, but I haven't heard you talk about it as much this year. You're only four innings shy of your career high in innings pitched (124⅔), which you set last year. Have you heard anything about an innings limit this year, or would you be able to contribute to the big-league roster if you were called up when rosters expand on Sept. 1?

"I definitely feel like I'm not necessarily on an innings limit. I'm sure they're keeping an eye on it to make sure I'm not too worn out, but it has been vocalized by me and my training staff that where I'm at is a great place in terms of the

health of my arm. If I were to have the opportunity to pitch through September and beyond, my body is in a great position to do that. An innings limit is more for guys in their first full season or when some type of injury is involved.

I put on 30 pounds last offseason because I wanted to feel strong in August and September. I wanted an opportunity for a September call-up, and I'll be prepared for that call if it's made. I certainly hope it will be."

Earlier, you mentioned that the statistics don't really matter in terms of the organization's impression of your season. But I was just looking at your stats, and your ERA is now under 3.00. Your strikeouts are up over the last month. Do you ever look at your stats and admire how they look?

"I would say I don't really set statistical goals, but I do pay attention to it. I wouldn't say I start the season with certain goals in terms of ERA or strikeouts. But I have been really happy that my strikeouts have increased throughout the season. Hitters approach pitchers differently throughout the year, so it's nice to see that I'm now striking out one guy per inning compared to the beginning of the year when I had five or six strikeouts per nine. It shows my stuff is improving throughout the year. I care about my ERA because I want the team to be in a position to win. I try to hold teams to three runs or less and get a quality start. After that, it depends how the team's playing. Overall, stats are probably more for the fans. When an organization thinks about making a move, they look at the finer details like if a pitcher can get swings and misses and throw pitches that can get big-leaguers out. Sometimes, the stats show the opposite."



David Monsieur/Airon RubberDucks

► Excelling for Richmond, Tyler Beede started the Eastern League All-Star Game in July.

Is it difficult to remain happy in Richmond when you're so eager to advance to Triple-A or the majors?

"In terms of where I am with my faith, it allows me to remain happy with whatever circumstances happen in baseball. I've been in low places in baseball when it's been tough to enjoy my life off the field. Where I'm at now, I'm not worried about statistics or allowing baseball to dictate my happiness. My girlfriend is here a lot, and she keeps me sane. Richmond's great; we have a lot of fun in the city."

What are you doing off the field for fun? Playing Pokemon Go?

"No, I'm not a Pokemon Go guy, but I'd say 80 percent of the guys in our clubhouse are playing. I'm not much of a phone game guy. I try to be off the phone as much as possible. But fantasy football is coming, so I'll be on my phone quite a bit."

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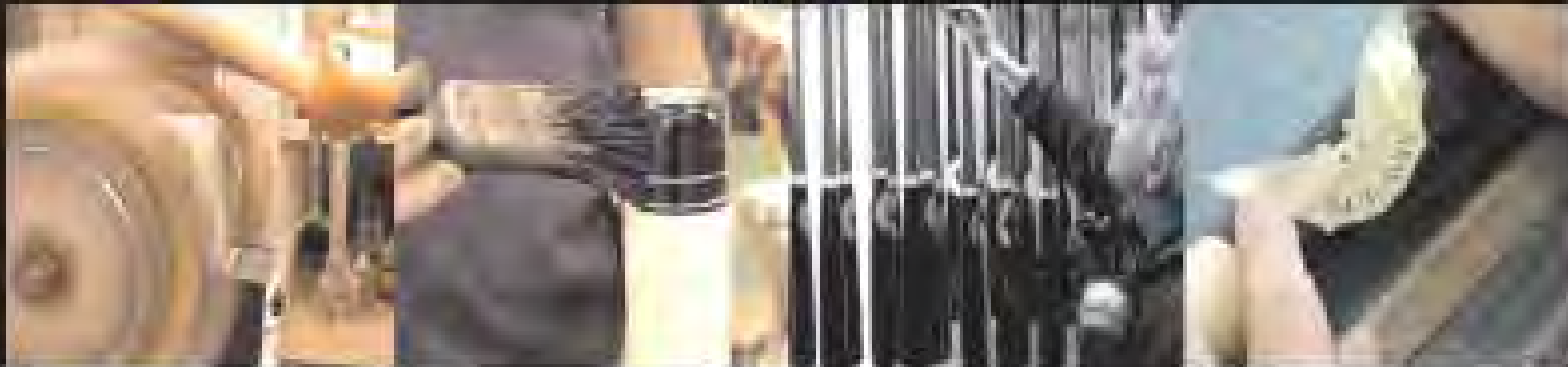
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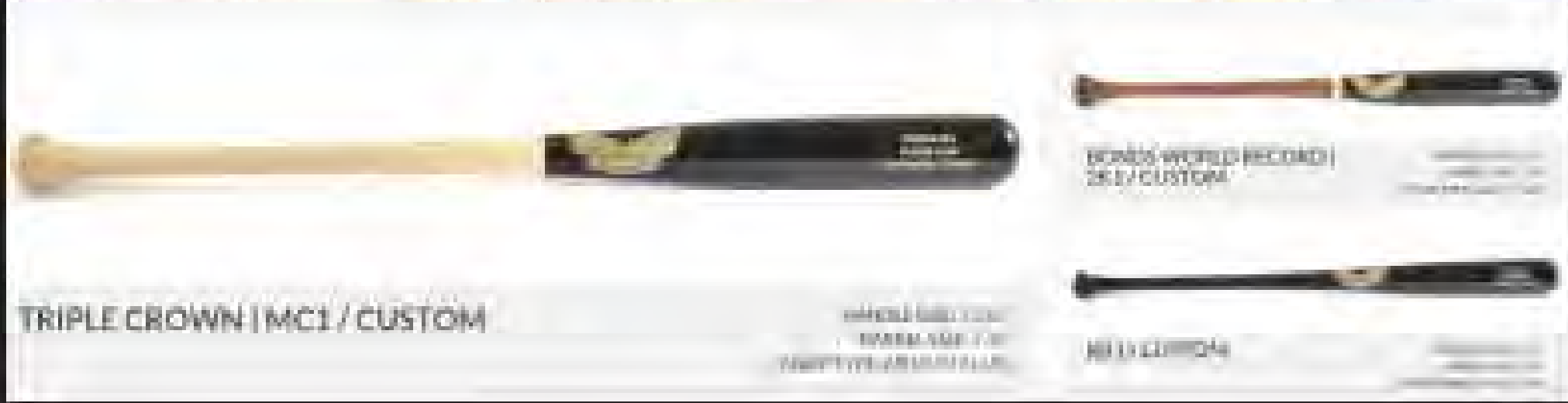
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# Y-D DYNASTY

■ New England contributors help power Yarmouth-Dennis to Cape’s first three-peat in four decades

By Joshua Kummins

It’s only fitting — as the Yarmouth-Dennis Red Sox like to point out — that you can’t spell “dynasty” without a ‘Y’ and a ‘D.’

The Yarmouth-Dennis Red Sox staked their claim to a true dynasty when they won their third consecutive Cape Cod Baseball League championship Aug. 13.

“It was a dream come true and an honor to be (on the Cape), but especially winning a championship was really cool,” said UConn pitcher William Montgomerie (Lakeville, Conn.), one of four New Englanders on Y-D’s final roster. “A lot of hard work and time (got) put in throughout the whole summer and the spring, so it was awesome to have everything come together.”

Year-over-year roster turnover is so great in summer collegiate baseball, but the continued success head coach Scott Pickler has created on the mid-Cape is just hard to ignore.

The coach at California power Cypress Junior College for the rest of the year, Pickler led Y-D to the Cape’s first three-peat since the Cotuit Kettleers won four consecutive titles from 1972 to ’75.

Pickler has had championship teams before. In this particular case, his lasting memory is the team’s camaraderie and how much his players enjoyed being together.

“They came together, the chemistry got better and the kids got more com-



Sydney King/Yarmouth-Dennis Red Sox

► The Yarmouth-Dennis Red Sox won their third consecutive CCBL championship, with the help of a trio of New Englanders: Will Toffey (10, Barnstable, Mass.), Brendan Skidmore (29, Franklin, Mass.) and William Montgomerie (42, Lakeville, Conn.). A fourth local, James Taubl (New Haven, Conn.), made a huge contribution in his one appearance.

fun,” said first baseman Brendan Skidmore (Franklin, Mass.). “Not that I didn’t see everyone come together throughout the year, because we really did. But, especially throughout the playoffs, some of our big guys stepped it up with some big hits and big pitching performances.”

All-Star shortstop and Playoff MVP Kevin Smith (Maryland) was a leader from beginning to end, but players such as Skidmore proved to be even more vital as the season progressed.

After posting a .253 average during the regular season, the Binghamton University product saved some of his best baseball for playoff time. Skidmore hit safely in six of Y-D’s seven postseason games, at a .346 clip, with two RBI.

The same could be said for Vanderbilt’s Will Toffey, who makes his home just a couple exits down Route 6 in Barnstable, Mass. His 9-for-25 playoff effort was third-best on the team and followed up a regular season over which he hit .283.

“I thought Will Toffey changed his whole swing this summer, and it was so much better than when I had him for a short time last year,” Pickler said. “He bought in, worked hard and came up big in the playoffs.”

“He was outstanding for us hitting in the No. 4 hole, and ‘Skid’ hit (No.) 5. Those guys both hit right in the middle

fortable with each other,” Pickler said of what made this team special. “And, just how hard my kids played all year long.”

Y-D swept Orleans and Chatham in straight games in its two divisional series, but came from behind against Falmouth — the league’s best team through the 44-game regular season — for a 2-1

Championship Series win.

One year after Northeastern’s Dustin Hunt (Andover, Mass.) and Vanderbilt’s Ben Bowden (Lynn, Mass.) helped anchor the pitching staff, New Englanders played key roles on Y-D’s sixth championship team in 12 summers.

“It was challenging, but it was a lot of

Continued on Page 22

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## OFFICIAL HEADWEAR OF THE CAPE COD BASEBALL LEAGUE







Continued from Page 20

of my lineup.” Skidmore’s story is extra special as he started the summer as a temporary player before officially earning a full contract about July 4.

Pressure to perform? Perhaps. But Skidmore did not change his approach from one day to the next. The whole summer was about surrounding himself with other talented players, and learning a lot before he returns for his senior year with the reigning America East Conference champion.

“A lot of the guys were putting up some big home run, RBI numbers, so I was just trying to play my part and get on base,” Skidmore said. “I just want to go back to school and take (what I learned) with me and help out some of my teammates.”

While Montgomerie, Skidmore and Toffey were mainstays all year long for the Red Sox, Sacred Heart pitcher James Taubl was just there for a chance.

It was a short stint for the Pioneers’ rising junior and New Haven, Conn., native, but one that had a big impact on his work ethic and the way he sees the game.

“When you’re on the Cape, you have



Sydney King/Yarmouth-Dennis Red Sox

► The Yarmouth-Dennis Red Sox are the first team to three-peat in the Cape Cod Baseball League the since the Cotuit Kettleers won four straight championships from 1972 to ‘75.

have had a full bullpen,” Pickler said. “He pitched very well and wasn’t intimidated by anything. I really enjoyed the kid.”

Similarly, Montgomerie was the winning pitcher in the deciding third game of the East Division Championship Series on Aug. 9 as he held Chatham to just one run on two hits in six innings.

Pickler’s Red Sox just got it, and that’s what a successful Cape League team needs.

New Englanders understand the grind of a Cape League season and what the opportunity means. They proved vital to yet another Y-D title, on the field and in their hearts.

“You’re looking for guys that understand what this is about,” Pickler said. “If that kid is from the West Coast, maybe it’s not that big a deal to them to be a Cape League champion.”

To this team, these locals, it sure was important.

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# MYSTIC’S FIRST

■ With a high-powered offense and improved pitching, Schooners sail to first Fay Vincent Sr. Cup

By Kevin Henkin

The Mystic Schooners came into the season with a loaded offense. The question was whether the team would have a balanced enough attack to avenge a maddening loss in the NECBL finals last year to the Vermont Mountaineers.

“I thought we were going to be a good team,” said Schooners GM Dennis Long, who also serves as the team’s pitching coach. “Our manager, Phil Orbe, and I have been at it for five years together now. We thought on paper, our hitting was going to be pretty solid but that our pitching was inexperienced.”

Over the first half of the season, Long’s fears about his pitching staff materialized on the field.

“At the beginning of the year, we had trouble just getting out of the first inning,” Long said. “For 10 or 11 games in a row, we didn’t have a clean first inning. But then we turned the corner on that in

early July. Our pitchers starting throwing more strikes and finishing games and we kept on hitting like we had from the beginning.”

The offense, although projected to be strong, even exceeded those high expectations. Four Schooners finished in the top 10 in league batting average and six everyday players finished with averages above .300, led by shortstop Nick Mascelli at .369. The team batting average for the season was an astounding .295.

After a red-hot second half of the season, the Schooners finished with a league-best 29-15 record and were well-positioned for a run to the team’s first title. Even so, Long knew how tough it could be to prevail in the playoffs.

“You never know how it plays out in this league,” Long said. “We had a good team last year, and we went to the last game (against Vermont) and lost.”

Mystic, the top seed in the league’s Southern Division, fought through a tough three-game series against the New Bedford Bay Sox to earn a second consecutive appearance in the NECBL finals.

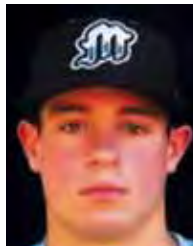
“The mindset of these guys was really professional and I was proud of that,” Long said. “The way they played the game each day through the tournament and recovered from a Game 2 loss against New Bedford (in the semifinals) showed how tough they were and translated right into the finals.”

“I think the keys for us were the returning guys from last year who knew what to expect and knew that it takes two wins to win the championship series, not just one,” Long said. “I think it was really important for us to go up to Sanford for that second game and playing really well up there.”

In that clinching Game 2 against the Sanford Mainers, the Northern Division champs, Mystic’s offense predictably

led the way.

“We got off to a 3-0 lead in the first couple innings,” Long said. “We got antsy from there, because it stayed 3-0 and then all of a sudden it was 3-1, then it was 3-2. So we had that thought that it was like last year, and we just didn’t want Game 3 to even happen. But we put some runs on the board and stretched it



► Mascelli

out.”

Strong pitching played a hand in the decisive 8-2 final score as well. Starting pitcher Kevin Magee went five innings, letting up one run and earning the win.

The title represents the Schooners’ first Fay Vincent Sr. Cup since arriving in Mystic in 2011. The franchise — formerly the Willimantic Tides — won the NECBL’s first title in 1994.

Summarizing what was special about his squad this summer, Long said, “We had guys that just loved being together and being out there playing every day, loving the game of baseball. They wanted to get better every day and still showed frustration if something went wrong. I was as proud of that as anything.

“As a GM and a pitching coach, I get a chance to see the league from both the administrative side and the players’ side. Like I told the other GMs at the end of the year, this is such a good league and I just love getting out to every town in the league and watching the level that’s played here.”

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By Joshua Kummins

Summertime baseball is a major part of our sports culture here in New England.

Every year, a new crop of talented future stars — coming anywhere from, literally, around the corner to across the country — shine bright on baseball diamonds all across the region we call home.

The Futures Collegiate Baseball League's North Shore Navigators are a prime example as 24 players on the roster throughout the season hailed from Massachusetts, while nine other states were represented.

During the last week of May, they were strangers. Now, they are teammates and friends.

"I think we have great team chemistry, one of the best in the league," said Nick Malatesta, a Wrentham, Mass., native and pitcher at regional Division 3 power St. Joseph's College of Maine. "I think we all support each other and encourage each other to do our best, and we're always having fun."

That's the beauty of summer collegiate baseball. It is an opportunity for building up baseball skills and creating friendships that last forever.

I had the opportunity to experience this first-hand this summer, accompanying the team on numerous road trips to some of our region's baseball gems, such as Wahconah Park in Pittsfield, Mass.; Muzzy Field in Bristol, Conn., and Holman Stadium in Nashua, N.H., to name a few.

Here are some tales from the road.

The Navigators endured a challenging start to the season, winning just two of their first 14 games. However, one of the most unique experiences of the summer got the team moving in the right direction for the remainder of the season.

On June 18, the Navs made the quick trip south to Campanelli Stadium in Brockton, Mass., for a rare day-night double-header. Not only did they return home with two victories, but perhaps a few extra carry-on items after a trip to South Shore Plaza in Braintree.

A little shopping was, of course, secondary, but manager

**We follow the North Shore Navigators as they travel the FCBL**

## ON THE ROAD — AND BOAT



Photos/Joshua Kummins/New England Baseball Journal

**'I've had to kill a lot of time in random states before, but the boat is something I've never experienced. It's very unique and something I'll remember forever.'**

— Alex Brickman (Andover, Mass.) on playing a road game on Martha's Vineyard

John Zizzo said the two wins turned out to be a major swing in the season.

"It really jump-started us and got us a lot of confidence at the right time, going into a home-stand," Zizzo said. "We never lacked confidence. We kept working hard every day, and

that's our approach. Win one a day, except for Saturday."

Team chemistry and morale were high all the way through, but the Navs received an extra boost around the halfway point as a slew of Northern Essex Community College products kept trickling in.

At one point, NECC had six representatives on the Navs roster, including three who played baseball for Massachusetts legend Frank Carey at North Reading High School.

North Shore's roster featured numerous local natives and groups of mutual friends,

but NECC's group — including UMass-Lowell-bound center fielder Colby Maiola, the franchise's new single-season home run leader — played a big role in bringing the team together.

Of course, the Knights had lots of time to foster that team chemistry, and bring it forward,

as they once again competed in the National Junior College World Series this spring. Maiola was named Division 3 National Player of the Year.

"The team all year had a great chemistry at Northern Essex, and the same thing last year with (fellow Navigators) MacDaniel (Singleton) and R.J. (Warnock) there," Maiola said. "Having a lot of those guys here just helped build the chemistry a little more. I could tell the chemistry was good on this team the first day, so it's just that extra boost."

This team chemistry was fostered on bus rides across our region, many of which included games of "mafia" that Tufts University's Speros Varinos (Middleton, Mass.) led upon his return from the Cape Cod Baseball League's Harwich Mariners.

No time on the road, though, could match a trip to Oak Bluffs, Mass., when the team played the Martha's Vineyard Sharks. I joined in for their fourth and final trip of the summer July 22.

College ballplayers are no strangers to travel but never have they had to take a bus to Woods Hole, hop on The Steamship Authority, take a bus to the ballpark and do it all over again (to return home) in order to get their nine innings in.

Andover, Mass., native Alex Brickman — bound for Siena College this fall — summed up the unique experiences well.

"I've had to kill a lot of time in random states before, but the boat is something I've never experienced," said Brickman. "It's very unique and something I'll remember forever. It's always fun to go down and play those guys, in a nice vacation spot."

This experience was like a self-guided tour of New England, through baseball. And, those on the field aside, I met many people along the way.

People such as Georgy Shukaylo, a Navigators intern who hails from Russia and attends the University of Massachusetts. He assisted Zizzo and pitching coach Pete Gonski throughout the season, sitting near me on bus rides to many road games.

And, like Nashua radio announcer Matt Neverett and intern Pete Nakos, who I showed around Fraser Field and sat next to during several games. Yes, if you were wondering, Tim Neverett — who calls Red Sox games with Joe Castiglione on WEEI — is Matt's dad.

Of course, who could forget Jake The Lion? He always made sure to stop by the press box at his Worcester, Mass., home, Hanover Insurance Park, and give a high-five to me and Bravehearts social media guru Steve Carrington.

Speaking of Worcester, no visit to "The HIP" was complete without a round of mini-golf. The Bravehearts' new nine-hole course under the first-base grandstand was a huge hit with Navs players, especially the bullpen, on the road this summer.

From the start, I could tell that this group took to one another. Win or lose, the mood seldom changed.

And, as always in summer ball, connections the players made will last much longer than the bitter end in the semifinal round of the playoffs. **B**

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## Nashua nabs 3rd title

WORCESTER, Mass. — When the Nashua Silver Knights won Futures Collegiate Baseball League championships in 2011 and 2012, they clearly were the best.

However, the road to the top was more of an uphill climb this year as the Silver Knights — well, a much different incarnation of the team that started the season, and even the one that took the field in mid-July — became the first three-time champion in FCBL history.

"What stands out to me? All the guys that we lost (to injuries), and here we are," Nashua manager B.J. Neverett said after Nashua's 8-5 win over Worcester on Aug. 12. "We obviously had a great roster. The kids really wanted to win today and really stepped up. I can't be prouder of these kids."

This time around, third-seeded Nashua had to beat the best.

After winning a play-in game against Torrington and a three-game series against East Division winner Seacoast, the Silver Knights swept the two-time defending champion Worcester Bravehearts to win the title.

It was the adversity overcome and the stick-to-itiveness that Neverett and his players will remember most.

"This is extremely special," said Southern New Hampshire first baseman Ryan Sullivan (Hopkinton, Mass.). "I had one of the umpires come up to me during the game saying how we were like the Kansas City Royals from last year. We just kept finding a way to win, and we had great team chemistry, which I think helped us a lot."

While Nashua may not have been the league's single best team in 2016, the Silver Knights certainly had some of the best players.

Bryant catcher Mickey Gasper (Merrimack, N.H.) was dominant from start to finish at the plate, becoming the first Nashua player to ever win FCBL Most Valuable Player honors after leading the league with a .421 average.

Sullivan, who began his career at UConn before moving to Bunker Hill Community College in Boston and now SNHU, is a four-year Silver Knights veteran — an extreme rarity in summer ball.

He delivered in the biggest spots, going 6-for-10 with two home runs in the championship series. The FCBL Championship Series Most Valuable Player ultimately was responsible for scoring or driving in 10 of Nashua's 17 total runs over the two games.

Sullivan and Gasper were crucial members of the team from start to finish, but it was a group of unsung heroes who helped get the job done.

"Those guys didn't win this game," Neverett said. "But pitchers who hadn't really been that successful during the entire season stepped up and made it happen."

Bates' Justin Foley (Lynnfield, Mass.) struggled during the regular season but pitched three perfect innings to help deliver a come-from-behind, 9-8 win in 11 innings in the Aug. 11 series opener at Holman Stadium.

"Justin didn't have a lot of success this season. He really didn't," Neverett said of Foley, whose ERA over 12 appearances was nearly 8.00. "But he wanted to win, I could tell. He pitched his best at the right time."

The pitching staff benefited from the efforts of two UMass-Lowell stars

as Nashua native Ricky Constant followed Foley in the series opener, earning the win after pitching the final three innings. Collin Duffley (Manchester, N.H.) was a late-comer to the staff but made his first start of the summer a big one with five innings of two-run ball in the series-clinching game.

Nashua was down to its final available pitcher in the deciding game as Binghamton's Anthony Meduri labored through the final inning, walking two and allowing a hit and a run.

But, with the bases loaded, it was strike three. Game over, series over.

When Sullivan first arrived in Nashua, championships were expected. Now, he has one to call in part his own.

"For me, it's been four years," Sullivan said. "It's been a great summer, and it's a great feeling. We went into a little bit of a slump (winning championships), but to get back to the pinnacle feels great."

— JOSHUA KUMMINS



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## ALL-FORE!-ONE

Sean O'Neill (No. 33), Richie Cruz (No. 17) and Brett Morrison (blue shirt) join their Navigators teammates for a round of mini-golf under the stands at Hanover Insurance Park at Fitton Field in Worcester, Mass., before a game against the Bravehearts.

*Joshua Kummins/New England Baseball Journal*





# BULLPEN WORK

Speros Varinos throws in the bullpen at Hanover Insurance Park at Fitton Field in Worcester, Mass. before Scout Day during All-Star Game festivities.

Joshua Kummins/New England Baseball Journal



# PREGAME POKEMON

At Holman Stadium in Nashua, N.H., Bobby Tramondozzi (left) — accompanied by Brett Morrison and Nick Malatesta — plays Pokemon Go beyond the outfield fence.

Joshua Kummins/New England Baseball Journal

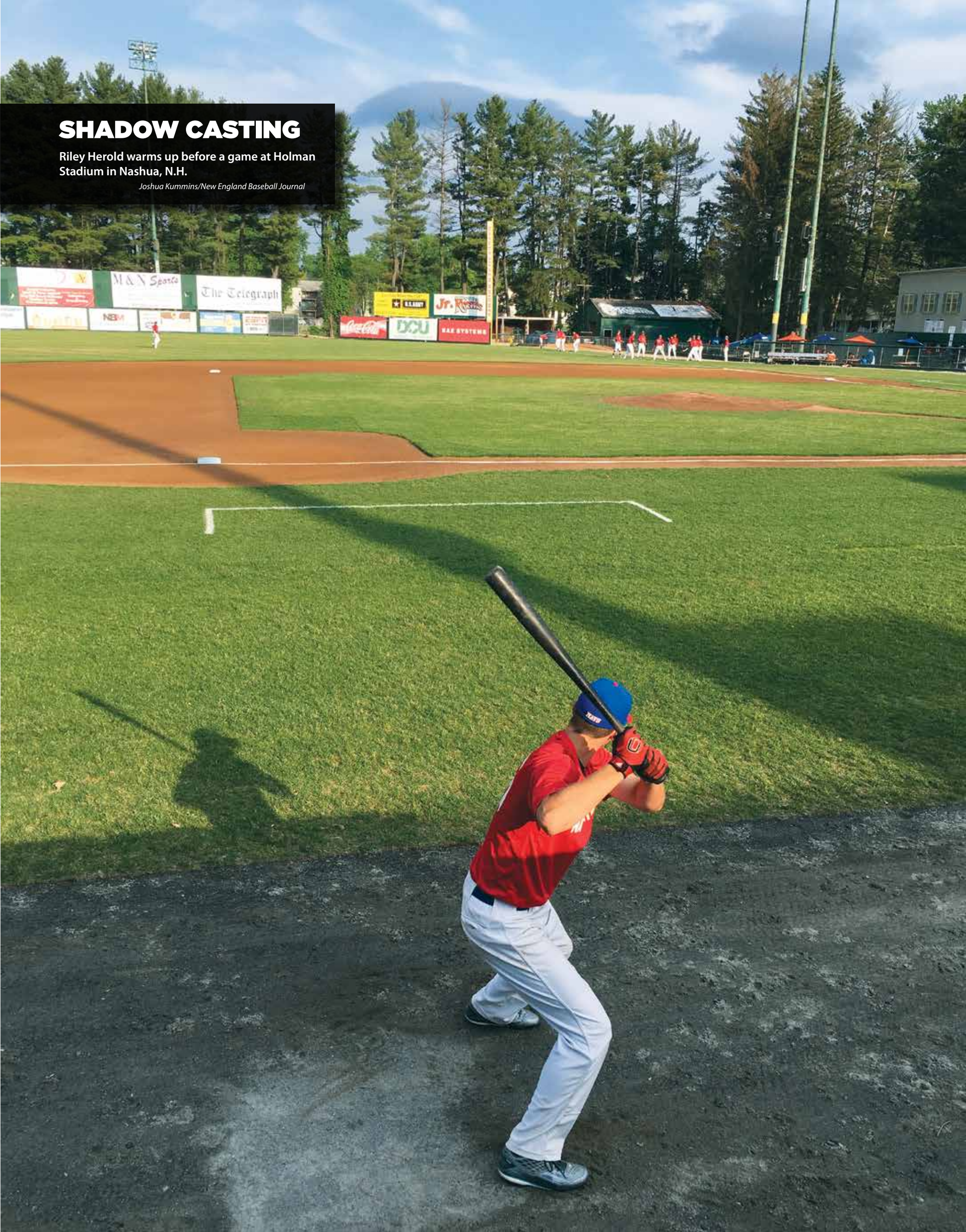




## SHADOW CASTING

Riley Herold warms up before a game at Holman Stadium in Nashua, N.H.

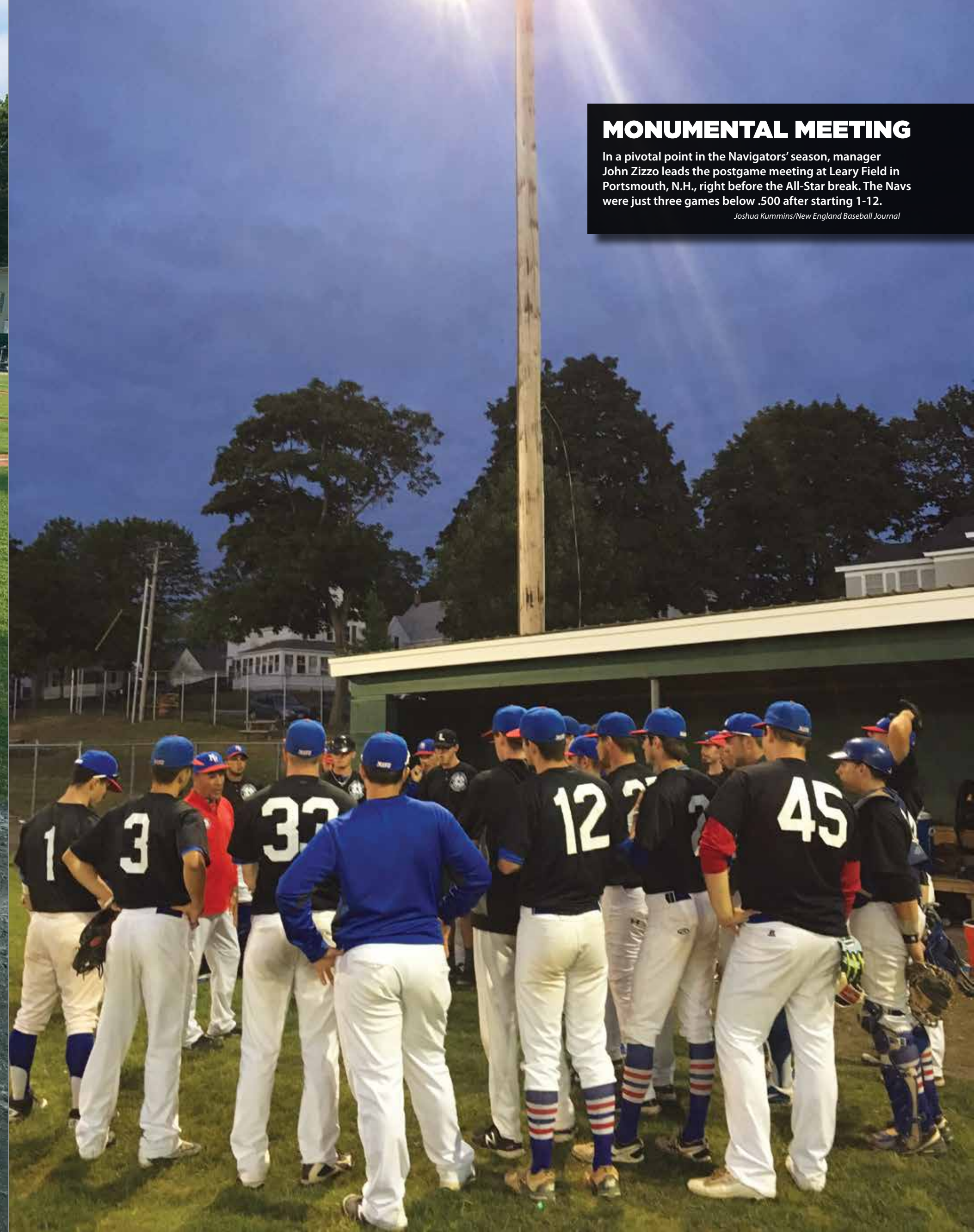
*Joshua Kummins/New England Baseball Journal*



## MONUMENTAL MEETING

In a pivotal point in the Navigators' season, manager John Zizzo leads the postgame meeting at Leary Field in Portsmouth, N.H., right before the All-Star break. The Navs were just three games below .500 after starting 1-12.

*Joshua Kummins/New England Baseball Journal*





## PICTURESQUE PARK

The sun sets on a game at historic Muzzy Field in  
Bristol, Conn.

*Joshua Kummins/New England Baseball Journal*





PROSPECTS IN LONG BEACH

By Dan Guttenplan

The consensus among scouts, agents and coaches is there is no greater stage for a high school player during the summer than the Area Code Games in Long Beach, Calif.

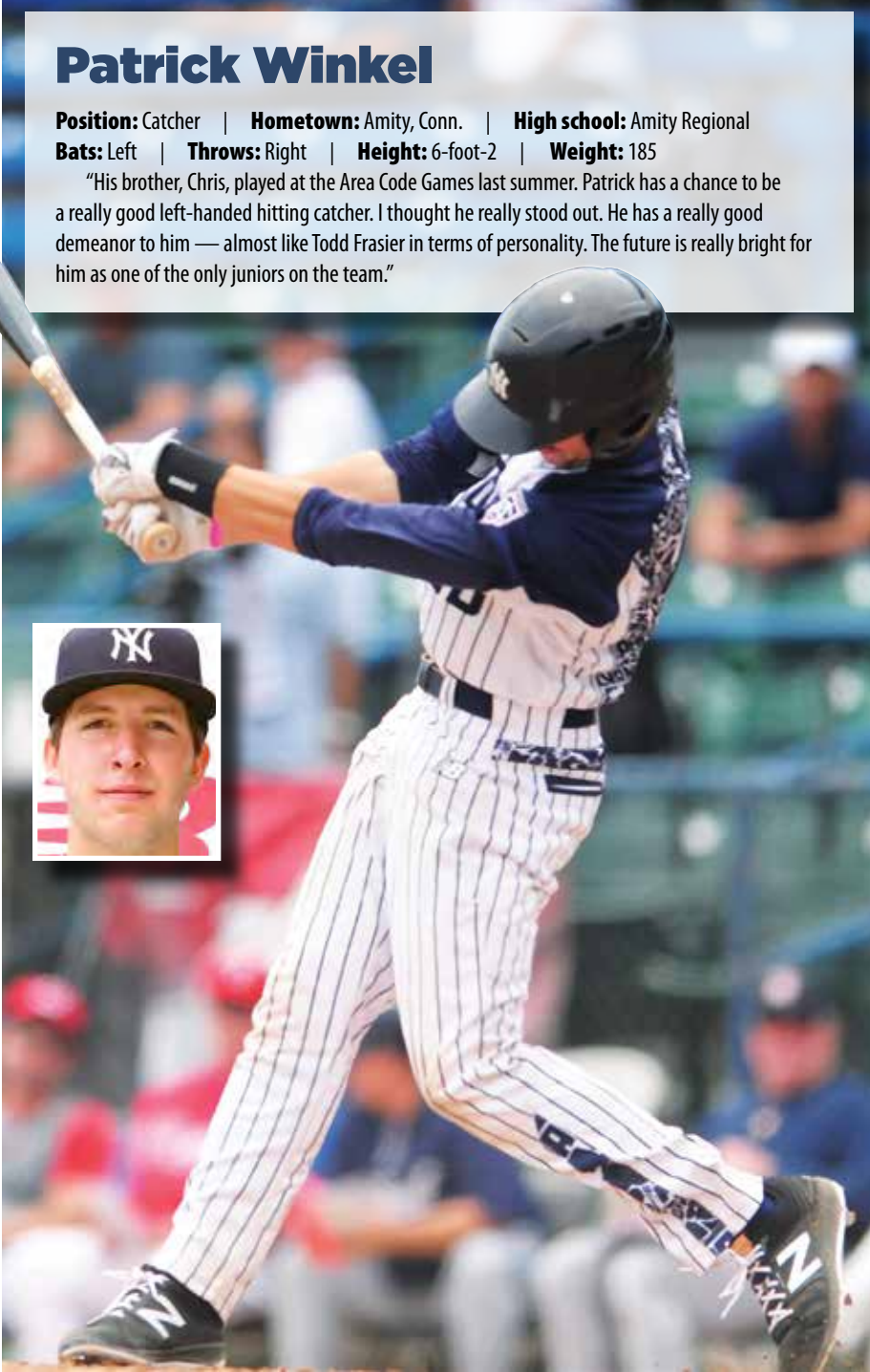
The list of former high school standouts who parlayed their Area Code Games participation into selections in the MLB draft includes Tyler Beede (Auburn, Mass.), Rhett Wiseman (Mansfield, Mass.), Adam Ravanelle (Sudbury, Mass.), Chris Shaw (Lexington, Mass.), Ben Bowden (Lynn, Mass.), Will Toffey (Barnstable, Mass.), Isan Diaz (Springfield, Mass.), Ryan McKenna (Berwick, Maine) and Kobie Taylor (Portsmouth, N.H.).



Ben Casparius

**Position:** Pitcher/third baseman  
**Hometown:** Westport, Conn.  
**High school:** Staples  
**Bats:** Right | **Throws:** Right  
**Height:** 6-foot-2 | **Weight:** 195

"Ben is a two-way guy who is committed to the University of North Carolina. (His fastball velocity) was up to 90 mph off the mound. He also plays third base and has some pop in the bat. He's a line-drive doubles hitter. He's kind of one of those guys who will be a solid college baseball player."



Patrick Winkel

**Position:** Catcher | **Hometown:** Amity, Conn. | **High school:** Amity Regional  
**Bats:** Left | **Throws:** Right | **Height:** 6-foot-2 | **Weight:** 185

"His brother, Chris, played at the Area Code Games last summer. Patrick has a chance to be a really good left-handed hitting catcher. I thought he really stood out. He has a really good demeanor to him — almost like Todd Frasier in terms of personality. The future is really bright for him as one of the only juniors on the team."



Jared Shuster

**Position:** Pitcher  
**Hometown:** New Bedford, Mass.  
**High school:** Taber Academy  
**Bats:** Left | **Throws:** Left  
**Height:** 6-foot-3 | **Weight:** 195

"Jared pitched better out in Long Beach than he did in Tampa. He's a lefty with a good body. His fastball gets up to 90 or 91 mph. The difference-maker for him going forward will be how he improves his breaking ball. He has good command and throws strikes. He could easily take a big jump next spring."



Matt Tabor

**Position:** Pitcher  
**Hometown:** Westford, Mass.  
**High school:** Milton Academy  
**Bats:** Right | **Throws:** Right  
**Height:** 6-foot-1 | **Weight:** 165

"Matt is a highly projectable right-handed pitcher. He's a strike-thrower. His body has yet to fill out, but he'll get stronger. He has a really quick arm. He lives in the bottom of the strike zone. He has really good upside — one of those players with really good mechanics. His fastball velocity was 88 to 91 mph."



Warwick North earns LLWS bid

By Mike Zhe

An impressive two-way performance from **Colin Lemieux** sent Warwick North (R.I.) Little League on to the Little League World Series.

Lemieux pitched five innings without allowing an earned run and also drove in three runs as Rhode Island took a 5-1 victory over Connecticut's Fairfield American LL at Breen Field in Bristol, Conn., last month in the New England championship game.

Warwick won all three games it played in the regional to mark the ninth time a Rhode Island team will head to Williamsport, Pa., for the Little League World Series. Warwick was slated to open World Series play against the Mid-Atlantic champion on Aug. 18.

"This team has been together for a while," Warwick coach **Ken Rix** told the Providence Journal. "You dream of it. You know when you have a special group of kids that all get along together. They've been playing together for years. Williamsport, yeah that's a dream."

Lemieux's two-run home run in the third inning put Warwick ahead to stay and he added a double in the fifth inning. **Domenic Brazeau** followed the homer with an RBI single to make it a 3-1 game.

On the mound, Lemieux dominated, as he did not allow an earned run on the day, giving up six hits and only one walk while recording six strikeouts in five innings.

**Matt Longo** took the loss for Connecticut after 4⅓ innings of work. Fairfield American, which scored its only run on the day on an error, was coming off wins that saw it score 17 and 11 runs, respectively.

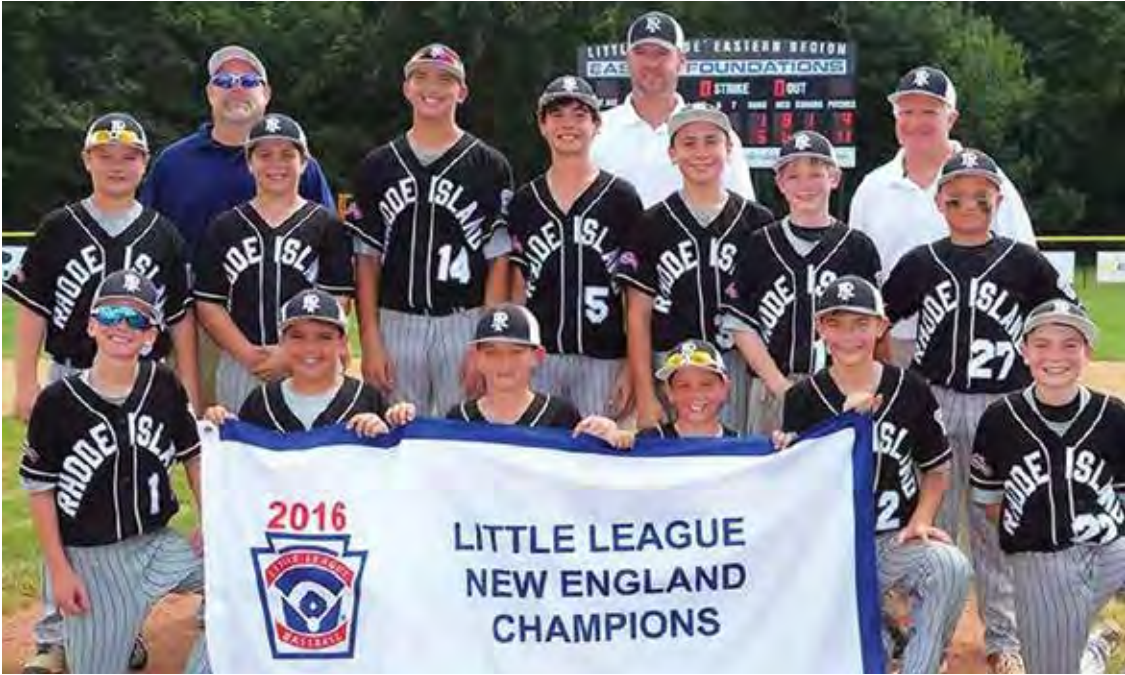
It's the third straight year and fourth time in six years that New England will be represented by a team from Rhode Island at the Little League World Series.

Other state champions representing their states in Bristol were Bedford, N.H.; Wellesley South, Mass.; Scarborough, Maine; and Brattleboro, Vt.

American Legion

Upper Deck of Cumberland, R.I., ended the two-year reign of Rocky Hill-Cromwell-Portland (Conn.) Post 105 and its own program's drought at the Northeast Regional, beating RCP, 5-0, in a winner-take-all title game and earning its spot in the American Legion World Series in Shelby, N.C.

**Ryan Brehio** pitched eight shutout



► Warwick North is the ninth Rhode Island team to make the Little League World Series.

innings for the win. The big hits were delivered by **Drew Szafranski**, a two-run single that opened the scoring in the fourth; and **Tyler Calabro**, who hit a two-run double in the eighth.

It's the first time since 1980 a Rhode Island team won the regional, with Warwick, R.I., winning that year. Upper Deck primarily draws players from the towns of Cumberland and Lincoln.

It also was just the second time in a decade that the champion didn't come out of Connecticut. RCP, which had won the Northeast Regional in 2014 and '15, advanced to another final after ousting Rochester, N.H., in an elimination game earlier in the day.

At the World Series, Upper Deck won its opener, 9-2, against Leesburg, Va., but then fell to eventual champion Texarkana, Ark., 8-3. It finished the tournament with a record of 1-2 after a 5-4 loss to San Mateo, Calif.

Babe Ruth

**Trevor Allen's** walk-off double gave Cape Cod a 7-6 win over Keene, N.H., in the championship game of the Babe Ruth 16-18 regional in Worcester, Mass., sending his team on to the World Series in Ephrata, Wash., for the sixth consecutive year.

Cape Cod won all three of its games in the regional while New Hampshire had to fight out of the losers bracket.

At the World Series, Cape Cod won a pair of games but was eliminated by Union County, N.C., 7-5. ...

In the 15-year-old regional at Fraser Field, host Greater Lynn (Mass.) claimed the title by beating North Smithfield,

Pitcher.

At the World Series in Williston, N.D., Greater Lynn split four pool-play games before being eliminated by Ohio Valley, 7-6. ...

In the 13-year-old regional in Rochester, N.H., it was Waterford, Conn., running the table, winning all five of its games and beating Keene, N.H., 10-3, in the championship.

Pitcher **Ryan Bakken** got stronger as the game went on, surviving a dicey second inning but retiring 11 of the last 12 batters he faced. **Luke Sokolski** had three hits, three runs and an RBI in the win, which advanced Waterford to the World Series in Ottumwa, Iowa, where it won three of its four pool games before getting ousted by Sarasota, Fla., 5-3.

GameChanger

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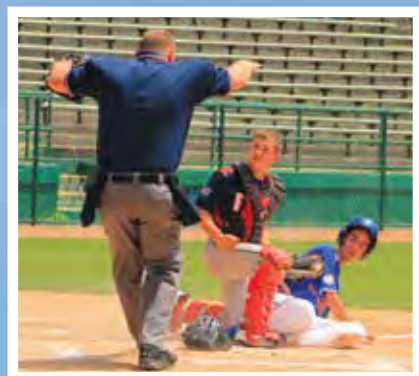
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# CUBA & CONNECTICUT



A team of 12 Cuban ballplayers from the eastern province of Holguin visited Connecticut in July. The kids played games in West Hartford, Hartford, Newington and Glastonbury, while sharing life experiences and creating everlasting memories and friendships that broke long-standing barriers between two long-time political adversaries.

A leap of faith taken by two coaches, two translators and a facilitator from Cuba was met with joy, respect and love from a group of Americans who welcomed them into their homes and also created their own memories for the ages.

Here, the Cuban team's translator and photographer recounts the journey.

Story and photos by Reynaldo Cruz Díaz

▶ FROM LEFT: The Cuban team prepares to take the field in Connecticut; Cuba head coach Karel Garcia; play at the plate at Doubleday Field in Cooperstown, N.Y., where the Cubans celebrate a victory (far right).

▶ BELOW: The U.S. and Cuban flags are presented prior to Team Cuba's final game in Connecticut at Riverfront Stadium in Glastonbury.





By Reynaldo Cruz Díaz

**THEY CAME ON A GRAY**, drizzly Sunday morning, on a bus from Canada after flying from Varadero, Cuba, following an 11-hour drive from the Cuban city of Holguin.

The people gathered at Conard High School in West Hartford, Conn., were expectant, anxious: They had visited Holguin themselves in April, and this was just the return trip in which they were the hosts, and the 12 Cuban kids — 12-, 13- and 14-year-olds — were strangers in a foreign land, all of them for the first time in their lives. With the bus came the hugs, the joyful tears, the smiles, the noise, the re-encounters and the introductions.

After barely dusting off their shirts, a quick shower and breakfast provided by the hosts, the young ballplayers — Cubans and Americans — got onto another bus and headed for Boston to visit no other than Fenway Park, with its Green Monster and its Big Papi.

Introduced to the audience (the Cubans with their blue game jerseys and the Americans with their dark blue ones) and shown on the Jumbotron along with the likes of Red Sox greats Luis Tiant and Bill Lee (one Cuban, one American), the kids moved to the grandstand, where all of them were about to witness their first-ever Major League Baseball game. Fittingly, David Ortiz homered and the Red Sox won.

The next day, after an interesting morning in Elizabeth Park, where kids from both countries took things right from where they had left them in Cuba with a pickup Wiffle ball game, they moved to the University of Hartford, where things got a little bit more serious, as they played their first game. For the Cubans, it was the first time they stepped on artificial turf. Yet, that did not slow them down, and they ended up getting the victory with nearly the entire crowd cheering for their opponents. As a curious fact, some Latino members of the community, including some Cubans, came to Fiondela Field to cheer for them. Tiant —just as he did with the historic game of the Tampa Bay Rays against Cuba in Havana, with Cuban President Raul Castro and U.S. President Barack Obama in the stands — threw out the ceremonial first pitch alongside his longtime friend and rotation partner Lee.

The next day, the contingent departed very early in the morning from Conard High. The destination was no other than Cooperstown, NY, home of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. They were welcomed in the place where every baseball player wants to be after retirement, and they were shown a sample of Cuban baseball, with the jersey worn by Cuban coach Rodolfo Puente during the 1999 Baltimore Orioles exhibition game against Cuba. After attending an interesting presentation by Craig Muder, they made a symbolic stop at



two important places: the shrine to Jackie Robinson and the plaque of Cuban legend Martin Dihigo, a Negro Leaguer who never played in the majors yet was the first Cuban to be voted into the Hall.

Aiming to break barriers themselves, the kids walked into Doubleday Field as the first Cuban team in history to play in one of the most hallowed baseball places in the world. And in perhaps the best game played by these two young teams, the Cubans came from behind for another victory. But the long faces of the Connecticut kids who visited Cuba in April were soon erased as they got together in left field for a group photo, some dancing and hugging. Even though they played as the New York Yankees and the Boston Red Sox, joy, friendship and love were the more important results of the game. The

bond already was strong, these kids had been playing other kids with whom they were sharing their food, their homes and their families. At the end of the game, the groundskeepers had a nice gesture with the teams, giving handmade Cooperstown banners to both of them, while handing the U.S. team a base and the Cuban team a pitching rubber, both used in Doubleday Field the previous year.

The following day was clinic day, with the presence of Tiant, Lee and Canadian former major-league outfielder Ryan Radmanovich —who is familiar in Cuban households as a member of Team Canada in two nail-biter semifinal games, in the 1999 Winnipeg Pan Am Games and in the 2004 Athens Olympics — as well as Cuba's head coach, Karel García, who won the National Championship with

Holguin in 2002 as an utility defensive replacement and saved one playoff game by picking up a catcher's bad throw as a substitute second baseman late in the game. García impressed everyone (including other assisting coaches) with his skill picking up grounders and making the transfer to the throwing hand.

After having lunch at the field, they moved to Eisenhower Pool to relax and then to Mark Twain House, where they not only got to hear the presentation by John Hassan before touring the house, but they also learned about the author's link to baseball, and Cuba's connection to Connecticut with the presence of Fordham University student and Cuban-born Esteban Bellán as the first Latin American player to play professional baseball in the United States with the Troy Haymakers.



► **1. U.S. and Cuban players watch batting practice from the field at Fenway Park; 2. Translator Yosel Vázquez (front) leads the Cuban kids towards the bus after their first U.S. shower; 3. U.S. players eagerly await the Cubans arrival; 4. Team Cuba poses in front of a picture of Jackie Robinson at the Baseball Hall of Fame; 5. Visiting the "Baseball Tonight" set at ESPN; 6. The Cuban and U.S. flags were present at every activity, even on the tables; 7. Bill Lee (left) and Luis Tiant (right) throw simultaneous ceremonial first pitches before a game at Fiondela Field at the University of Hartford; 8. The Cuban bench cheers for the team at Doubleday Field in Cooperstown, N.Y.**

PHOTOS/REYNALDO CRUZ DIAZ



That day's game, at William H. Hall High School, against West Hartford Havoc — and the first time they counted on majority cheering, because their host families and their opponents from the previous games cheered for them — was perhaps the game of the tour, as they came back from a 9-0 deficit to tie the game, which was called due to darkness.

From that day on, the same kids who visited them and played them in Cuba, Hartford and Cooperstown would spend every game in the Cubans' dugout, cheering for them, supporting them and sharing the excitement with them. From that day on, they were no longer strangers on a foreign land; they were at home, embraced by their new family.

Thursday was a bad baseball day for Team Cuba. Under the same weather that

welcomed them at Conard High when they arrived, they took the field on Hyland Park — part of Cal Ripken Jr.'s RBI program — to face the team from Hartford. To their surprise, many of those kids had Latino backgrounds, and they played with exactly the same craftiness, passion and drive. The weather did not help them, as the sun never was seen during the game, and Hartford won, handing Cuba its first loss since the beginning of the USA/Cuba Goodwill Tours in April 2016.

The defeat did not kill their spirits, and after a nice lunch, they went to the Hartford Science Center, where they could relax a little bit by taking a look at the different advances in sports and physical activities, and also by visiting the space section. Afterwards, they headed to Frank Pepe's Pizza, where both teams and the

families were hosted by the owners of the place, who were kind enough to serve all different varieties of pizzas they had available so everyone could get at least a piece of each of them. It was a very interesting moment, because Cuban and American kids shared the table, and did exactly what every kid their age does: cause havoc.

The next morning, they had a great experience by visiting ESPN in Bristol. They had a chance to see how sports are broadcast and produced in a larger scale in the United States, while also visiting the very spot where "Baseball Tonight" is filmed. The ESPN tour guides were very helpful, and they made sure the Cuban kids and their coaching staff had a good time. The highlight of the visit was when they stood in front of a mural containing different phrases originated at ESPN,

such as Ernesto Jerez's popular home run call in Spanish, "*NO... no, no, no, no no ¡Díganle que no a esa pelota!*" — which is very well-known throughout all of Cuba.

Newington hosted them the next morning at Legends Field, with perhaps the most *sui generis* opening ceremony, as a local band played both "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "El Himno de Bayamo." With a day off the field after dropping one game to Hartford, they won yet another game and the hearts of the Newington locals, who cheered for both teams and hosted them for lunch, along with their host families and the U.S. team that visited Holguin ... already part of the Cuban team themselves.

The last game was to be played in Glastonbury's Riverfront Stadium (nothing to do with the old Cincinnati Reds' ballpark in Ohio), and in very Cuban fashion, they came from behind yet again (although this time some power-hitting by them and not the errors by their opponents marked the day). The last inning was played under artificial lights, the first time the Cuban kids had such an experience, because artificial lights in Cuba are reserved only for the main league, the 23U or the 18U. They held on to their late-obtained lead to finish the tour with a 4-1-1 record.

A relaxation day in Lake Compounce before the last day capped an incredible experience for the Cuban entourage, which came to Connecticut to play baseball and ended up having an amazing experience, getting to know people from a different environment and forging bonds that time, distance, culture, language and politics won't be able to break.

Dennis Woodworth, founder of the Canada/Cuba Goodwill Tour, and his counterpart in the United States, Tim Brennan, did an amazing job organizing, planning and hosting. This event proved that when there is a will, there is a way, and when there is goodwill, there are, as Woodworth says, "Good results."

The highlight for the Cubans was not Fenway Park, Cooperstown nor ESPN, it was not the games they won or the incredible comeback that ended in a tie. No, it was the people they met, the bonds they created, and the family they left in Connecticut, forever and beyond. **B**

Reynaldo Cruz is the founder and head editor of the Cuban-based magazine Universo Béisbol, which is hosted in MLBlogs. He is a language graduate of the University of Holguin, in his hometown. A SABR member since the summer of 2014, he writes, translates and photographs baseball and was in the first row of the historic game in Havana attended by President Obama, shooting from the Tampa Bay Rays dugout. In spite of the rich history of Cuban baseball, his favorite player is Ichiro Suzuki, whom he expects to meet and interview one day. A retro lover, he considers Fenway Park, Wrigley Field, Koshien Stadium, and Estadio Palmar de Junco as the can't-miss places in baseball.

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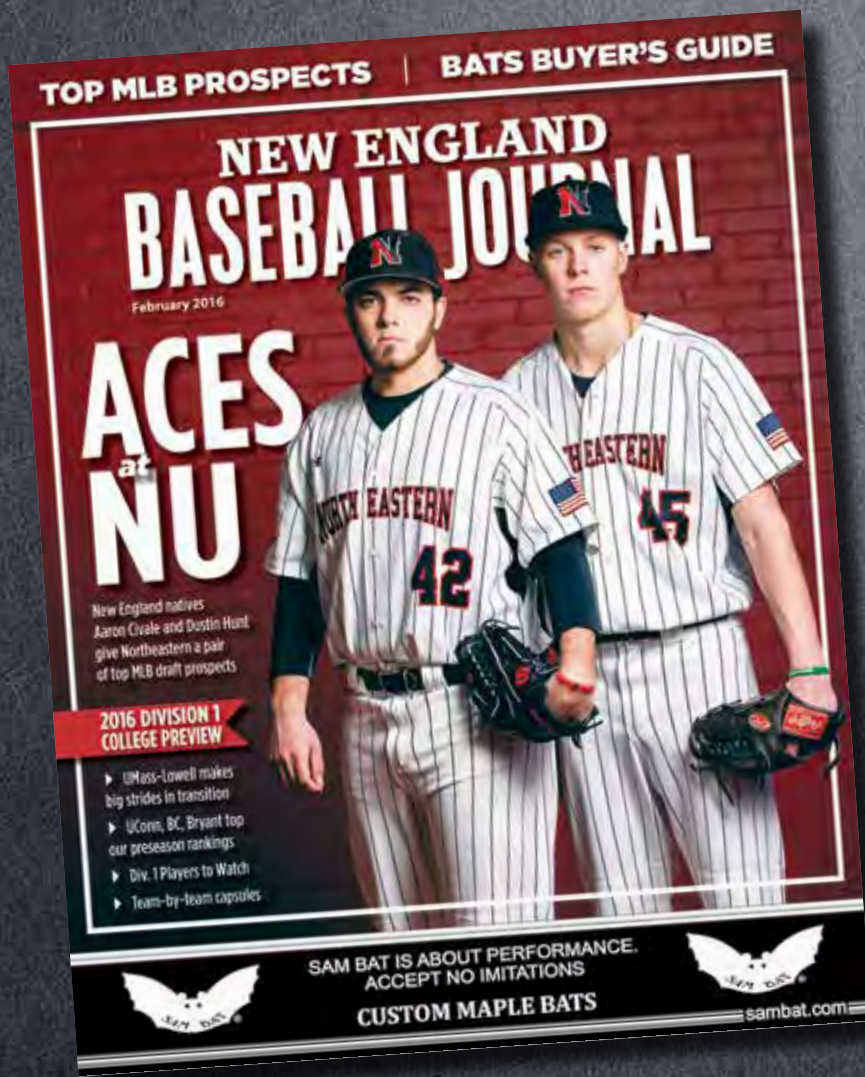


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## THE VOLUNTEER COACH

# Ortiz: Be there for your kids

**T**o all of the coaches out there, David Ortiz has a message for you: I have learned a lot from you — and cherish your opportunity to be a volunteer coach.

In this century, no baseball player has meant more to an organization or a city than David Ortiz.

He is adored from Maine to Connecticut (well, at least north of New Haven). He has given rise to a new generation of Red Sox fans who expect to win, and who are not accustomed to a wait-il-next-year mindset.

He is the reason young ballplayers don't hear the chants of "1918" from the southern empire.

He is the greatest clutch hitter of this generation with more (positive) memorable moments than most entire franchises during that same period.

He lifted an entire city during its darkest hour and has earned a place at the table in the discussion of being on the Mount Rushmore of Boston's great athletes.

To see his impact, simply come watch any youth baseball practice in New England. Or go to any beach on the Cape. You undoubtedly will see Red Sox No. 34 jerseys everywhere you look. According to one of the areas largest uniform providers, the most asked for uniform number among AAU and other select teams, which often allow players to choose their own number is ... you guessed it ... 34.

Furthermore, since 2006, I have had the pleasure of training thousands of baseball players in a training center a mere 15 miles from Fenway Park. Players of all ages and abilities come to the training center to better their skills — and they often do so with the name "Or-

tiz" on their back.

Sure, over the years we have seen a lot of No. 15, 45, 24 and course a lot of 12 (football is king after all). However, from tee-ballers to the grandparents cheering on their future star, everyone wants to be Big Papi. He is not perfect or without fault, but in New England, he is ours.

As his career comes to an end, the three-time World Series champion recently reflected on his playing days, the life les-

sons that baseball has given to him, and the admiration he has for none other than you, the volunteer coach. In a discussion with The Player's Tribune, Ortiz and fellow countryman and teammate Hanley Ramirez discussed the American Dream.

"I can not believe how much time fathers spend with their kids in sports," Ramirez said. "That's every-

thing to them."

Ramirez added that for parents to have the ability to take "them to baseball practice, and it's like, Wow. You know, that's kind of like the American Dream right there. Just to have the time to do that."

Despite all his memorable moments playing at Fenway Park and on the biggest of stages, Ortiz reflected on one baseball memory he will never forget. It wasn't in front of 37,000 fans — just one. Ortiz's father, who was a mechanic, was a tireless worker who was too busy providing for his family to attend his son's games while growing up in the Dominican Republic.

"I remember seeing my dad at Little League. One time. Just one time. My dad got out of work and he just showed up at the field where I was playing. I didn't know. But when I hit a home run, I was running around the bases and my dad



David Ortiz and son D'Angelo share time before batting practice in spring training.

jumped out of the stands and he was like going crazy," Ortiz said.

"For me as a dad, it's so cool to see my kids running around the ballpark with all their Boston stuff on. We learn the American way, how to spend time with our kids and be there for them."

The operative words being *be there*.

Whether you are a future Hall of Famer or a dad who struggles to throw batting practice, the reason why so many of us volunteer to coach is so we can be there for our children. Let's not forget this or take it for granted. As Ortiz reminds us, there are many dads throughout the world who are far "too busy working to survive" and miss out on so many great memories like watching their child play a sport.

To coach at any level or in any sport is truly a blessing and serves as a great vehicle for spending time with your children and teaching them life lessons that they can take with them long after the

game's final out. Often, we as coaches learn just as much as the players during the season and the rewards are great.

This past summer I coached a team that went up against another Ortiz. David's son, who has made a name for himself as a host on NESN Clubhouse, wore his dad's No. 34 and hit a ball that was still going up when it hit cleared the center-field trees. About an hour later, his dad also hit a home run over the Green Monster, and while Big Papi's days of hitting home runs are coming to an end, some of his greatest baseball memories appear to be still in front of him. **B**

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

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Play the way you want to be remembered

This month (and perhaps October) apparently will mark the last hurrah of David Ortiz.

Although he has produced one of the best seasons of his illustrious 20-year-career, at the age of 40, he admits that his body is telling him no. I'm sure many speculate that such a successful season may lure him back for another. Big Papi, however, is adamant that this is it.

One thing that is for certain is that David Ortiz can look back on his time in baseball and be confident that he did it right.

I will never forget an exercise one of my A-ball coaches told us to do. In an effort to help mold and in some cases transform 25 young, aspiring professional baseball players into reflections of high character, he suggested that we take an index card and write down all the things we would like our teammates to say about us at our Hall of Fame induction.

Then he told us to keep that card and use it every day to ensure that we were creating and living a career we could be proud of. Every day, you can ask yourself if the things you are doing will lead to the words on that card. Essentially, am I



living the career I want?

I found it to be a very profound exercise. Although I don't think it was met with unanimous popularity, I took the time to do it. I carried that card with me for several years. It was with me through Double A and Triple A, as I ascended to the MLB ranks.

Then something happened. My card disappeared. My daily reminder of the player I wanted to be remembered as was no longer a part of my daily life. My game suffered. I lost track of who and what I wanted to be. I knew where I was, but I had lost my road map to how I wanted to be remembered.

To this day, I encourage many young baseball players to do the same exercise. Sit down and think about the things you hope your teammates will say about you when you're done playing:

"He was a ball of positive energy!"

"He brought his A-game every single day."

"He was one of the fiercest competitors I've every seen on a baseball field."

"He was one of the greatest people I've ever met!"

Once you have your list, attack every day with the intent to fulfill those words.



Billie Weiss/Boston Red Sox/Getty Images

written on your card?

The goal of this journey we all call baseball is to be able to look in the mirror at the end of your day and ask yourself if you have any regrets ... honestly. Knowing what you want to be and how you want to be remembered, is there anything you wish you had done differently?

I don't know Big Papi, but I would be very willing to say that at the end of his 20 years in the major leagues, he will have no such regrets. I never had the opportunity to play with him, but I have heard nothing but rave things said about him throughout the small baseball world. I have yet to come across a poor review from anyone, and that is how you want to be remembered.

Big Papi, it appears as though you did it right. Thank you for your time, and thank you for the example you have set. Best wishes in whatever the future holds for you.

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](http://a1pitchingacademy.com)

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David Ortiz can look back on his 20-year big-league career with few, if any, regrets.

When you find yourself dragging your butt to practice, ask yourself what are the things you are doing at that moment and what will they prompt your teammates to say. Are they the same things that are

Back to school, back to breakfast

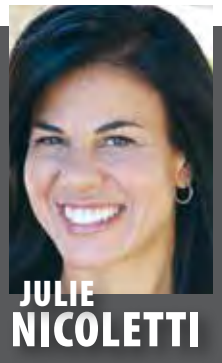
The air is changing. It is cooler in the mornings than it was a few weeks ago and those hot, humid summer baseball games now are a memory. It's time to go back to school.

College players now will need to navigate dining halls and bus rides in the midst of fall ball, and younger players who go back to school will have busier schedules and school lunches to contend with.

Breakfast seems to present a challenge for both college players and younger players for two reasons: access and time.

College players who live in the dorms have the option to either eat something in their room before classes begin or before an early morning lift or go to the dining hall. Players who live in suite-style dorms with kitchens or in an apartment or house off-campus certainly have more flexibility in their choices, but with that comes greater responsibility and a bit more effort in terms of preparation, which requires more time.

High school or younger players tell me that during the school year when they need to wake up earlier, they either skip breakfast because they aren't hungry yet or don't have time in the mornings or



they eat something on the run or take something from home to eat during their commute.

Below are some tips to make breakfast a home run for baseball players.

**College players**

1 Plan your mornings with enough time to eat breakfast. It offers essential fuel for your brain and your body.

Before a 6 a.m. lift, you may want to simply eat fruit (which you could take from the dining hall at dinner the evening before). Post lift, focus on protein and carbohydrates as your recovery — this could be a protein shake and banana immediately following your lift and then ideally breakfast within an hour.

2 On days when you have class, breakfast should include protein, carbohydrates and a healthy fat. For example: an omelet with vegetables plus home fries, an apple and almond butter. If you are eating something in your dorm room, consider a Greek or Icelandic yogurt that has more protein than sugar plus a piece of fruit and either some nuts, trail mix or nut butter.

**High school or younger players**

1 If you have time and the appetite, eating a real breakfast at home such as the example provided above would be ideal. I understand that that may not always happen, so consider

options that are easy but still packed with nutrients.

Filling your stomach with processed foods such as chewy granola bars and bagels just to satisfy hunger is not ideal. A bagel with cream cheese is recognized by your body as fat on top of sugar and most likely will make you sluggish and drowsy by second period.

2 Consider a frittata or a batch of protein pancakes that can be made ahead of time and then reheated in the morning. Reheating and eating takes no more time than pouring a bowl of cereal and eating it. I promise.

3 Another on-the-run option that is very popular is a smoothie. They are easy to make and easy to take with you.

Eat breakfast.It's a perfect way to #FueltheChampionWithin.

Julie Nicoletti is a nationally recognized sports nutritionist who specializes in coaching student and professional athletes to optimize performance and minimize the risk of injury through nutrition. As the founder of Kinetic Fuel Performance Based Nutrition, Julie combines her professional training as a registered pharmacist with her experience as a certified sports nutritionist to customize plans for athletes and teams enabling them to see transformative results. Learn more at [www.kineticfuel.net](http://www.kineticfuel.net).

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RECRUITING

Papi's lessons: Have fun and be a great teammate

To start, let's be clear that I am not a Red Sox fan, nor have I ever met David Ortiz. But when a guy is in the spotlight as long as he's been, you can learn a lot about someone.

What's easy to see is that Ortiz is the best designated hitter the game has ever seen. His production — much of it famously in the clutch — has set him apart from the rest and surely will result in him being enshrined in the Baseball Hall of Fame one day.

But clearly the man is so much more than a good hitter. From what I can see, he brings two things to the table that are crucial to any team.

First and foremost, he has fun playing the sport. So many of us, at all levels, get caught up in negativity that surrounds a season, but Big Papi seems



to truly enjoy all aspects of being a baseball player.

I've been lucky enough to coach a handful of guys who've moved on to the next level, and without exception, they simply love the sport. Most people claim to love the sport, but they really only love game days and when things are going well. The true leaders and joyful players love it all — the bus rides, the lifts, the practices and all the games regardless of outcome. While everyone wants to do well and Papi isn't going to smile and high-five after a strikeout, his overall attitude is one of joy and gratitude.

The second thing I admire and take away from Ortiz is that he is a great teammate. Boy, in our sport, it isn't easy to do, but in fact it's what people remember years later. Meaning 15-20 years later, you may find it impossible

to recall your individual statistics or even your team's wins and losses, but I can promise you that you'll remember what kind person your teammates were.

I've met a good amount of pro players, and when I tell my friends who I've met, they all ask the same question, "Was he a nice guy?" Ortiz seems like the best of guys and you can tell from the way his teammates talk about him. Again, it's easy to be a good friend or teammate when things are going well, but when they're not is when you really find out what people are all about.

Congratulations on a great career, Big Papi. It's likely we won't see another one like you again for a long time.

Wayne Mazzoni is the pitching coach at Sacred Heart. Coach Mazz publishes both written and video blogs at [CoachMazz.com](http://CoachMazz.com).

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# GIAMPETRUZZI

## Hangin' out with ... Carmen Giampetruzzi

**At school, what is your typical day like?** "In season, I wake up and eat a good breakfast down at the dining hall with the buddies. We go to class from 9 to about 1, in that area. If we have an away game, we hop on the bus around 2 on mid-weeks. If we don't have a game that day, usually we're practicing, eating and then going to study hall and all that stuff."

**Do you have a favorite class?** "My favorite class was 'Psychobiology of Mental Disorders' this past year."

**What sold you about Boston College?** "Basically, just the overall family feel of the campus. When I went there, everyone was friendly, and I felt like I fit right in with everyone and the coaching staff as well."

**Was staying local important to you? What other schools were you considering?** "Staying local was very big for me, having my family around. I committed pretty early, but I considered other schools in the Northeast as well."

**How much pride do you take in being a New England native playing college baseball so close to home?** "Oh, a ton of pride. We always talk at school about adversity we're always facing with the snow and stuff, so we love going south and competing with those guys who are playing year round."

**How would you describe yourself as a pitcher? I know you mentioned Jon Lester before, but are there other guys in Major League Baseball you like to model yourself after or just like to watch?** "Yeah, I would say Jon Lester. He's a strong guy who just pounds the zone. Our mechanics are pretty similar, I'd say. I watch a lot of film on him. The big thing is that I like to compete to get guys out, so just pounding the zone with all my pitches and just giving it everything I've got each time I'm out there."

**You have a pretty long and varied sports resume. Were you a multi-sport athlete your whole life?** "Yeah, I played three sports growing up all the way through high school. Honestly, growing up I loved playing them all. Then, when it got later on, it was tough to give one of them up. Finally, I chose baseball, which could get me the furthest. I still play basketball on the side, shooting around and stuff like that."

**What do you miss most about playing football and basketball?** "Football, the Friday Night Lights, the atmosphere and being able to hit people and tackle. I miss that. Same thing with basketball, just the high intensity, I guess."

**Are there particular memories that stand out to you from your career in other sports?** "For sure. In basketball, we won a state championship my junior year. We played with a kid named Wenyen Gabriel, and he's actually going to Kentucky now after prep school. That was cool to see him grow and develop. Football, we won a state championship my sophomore year. It was a great time with all those guys, a lot of them at UNH and some other local schools now."

>> **BONUS: CONTINUES ON PAGE B39**

— JOSHUA KUMMINS

BC Athletics/Jim Pierce

### Key facts

**School:** Boston College  
**Position:** LHP | **Year:** Junior  
**Hometown:** Manchester, N.H.  
**High school:** Trinity  
**Major:** Psychology

### Favorites

**Food:** Chicken Parm  
**Restaurant:** Pappy's Pizza, Manchester, N.H.  
**TV show:** "It's a little throwback, but 'The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air'" | **Sports movie:** "Coach Carter"  
**Musical artist/band:** Drake

**Walk-up song:** "In the summer, it's 'I'm Shipping Up To Boston' by the Dropkick Murphys."  
**Video game:** "Call of Duty"  
**Place to vacation:** St. Thomas  
**Part about Boston College:** Baseball  
**Sport other than baseball:** Basketball  
**Sports team:** Boston Red Sox

**MLB player:** Jon Lester  
**Non-baseball athlete:** Tom Brady

### Equipment

**Glove:** Easton  
**Cleats:** Under Armour

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# Hangin’ out with ... Boston College pitcher Carmen Giampetruszi

>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 30

**I’ve talked to a lot of the guys about what it was like this year at BC. From your perspective, what was it like to be a part of that wild ride to Super Regionals?** “It was unbelievable doing something that BC hasn’t done, ever, pretty much. Just the group of guys, this whole season, we came together. Just watching everybody grow together as a family and just get stronger was amazing.”

**You didn’t get to pitch as much, but what are your biggest takeaways and things you learned this year?** “Basically, we’re a Northeast school, but we can compete with anyone in the country. We have something going really good right now at BC. I think we’re on the upswing. So, with all the new recruits coming in, I think BC can be a powerhouse every year if we keep building. Individually, it shows how much work it really takes to actually have a big impact on a team. I’ve been working real hard this past summer, had a good summer. I’m really looking forward to this year. We lost some pitching, so hopefully things are going to turn around for me.”

**What will you remember most about this team, this season?** “It’s just the brotherhood. We lost a lot of guys to the draft and seniors, and we’re going to miss them. This was probably the best team with chemistry I’ve been on.”

**What is it like to play for coach Mike Gambino?** “It’s awesome. He prides himself in adversity and working hard, so those are things I pride myself on as well. He’s a guy who is so passionate about baseball and cares about all of us, so it’s awesome to play for him.”

**You guys are losing quite a bit after a great showing in the MLB draft. What was it like to see that, and to follow their progression as professionals?** “It’s great. I’m seeing Justin Dunn, Mike King and Jesse Adams, they’re all doing very well already. It just shows that these guys who are in the locker room next to me can be big-time pros, at the next level. It’s just amazing to see their whole process and all that.”

**Have you seen any of them yet? Specifically, Nick Sciortino in Lowell.** “I have not been to Lowell yet. Their season is coming to an end, so we’re trying to make a trip.”

**The three guys you just mentioned are pitchers. As someone whose role was limited this year, does that make your eyes light up a bit?** “Yeah, definitely. We lost a lot of pitching, so the door is open. There are plenty of spots open, so it’s whoever is going to work the hardest and take it. It will be fun to compete with my other teammates throughout the fall and winter.”

**You spent the summer after you graduated from high school with the Futures College Baseball League’s Nashua Silver Knights, and got to come back for this year’s playoffs. As you’ve progressed in your career, how do you look back on that initial experience?** “When I was coming in out of high school, my eyes were wide open in here seeing all these college kids. From a different perspective now, I can really see that the talent has progressed in this league tremendously. Now, I’m just more mature and know how to attack hitters differently, so it goes from when I was just throwing the ball back then to actually trying to examine hitters. It’s a more mature outlook on the game.”

**How did the opportunity to return to Nashua come about?** “So, I finished up in Keene (in the New England College Baseball League) pretty early. We didn’t make the playoffs. I was on the phone with Coach Gambino and B.J. (Neverett, manager of the Silver Knights). They talked to one another. He just said, ‘If you could get a few more innings, that would be awesome.’ Now, we’re in a championship run, and it’s awesome.

**Were you pretty much unlimited going into the summer, as far as innings or appearances?** “With this summer, I didn’t have a strict limit. It was basically to see as many hitters as I could, so that was the goal for me this summer.”

**You were thrown right into the fire just before the playoffs in Nashua. Was it difficult to go back right after playing for the NECBL’s Keene Swamp Bats again?** “I went from being a reliever in the NECBL, to a starter. That was a little transition, but the guys welcomed me here with open arms. I knew a lot of the players who were local guys. That helped a lot.”

**As someone who had experienced the Futures League before, were you able to be like a veteran presence to some of the guys?** “Exactly, that was nice. But, they all know what they’re doing. They’ve had a great season, so I try to show them a few things here and there.”

**As you look over your college career so far, what have you taken away most from your initial experience in Nashua?** “It helped me adjust to the college game. Long bus rides and being in the locker room with a big group of guys and playing with older guys from different schools, different styles. It was just a big help, making the transition to college easier.”

**We touched on Keene, where you’ve played for each of the last couple summers. The Swamp Bats have done it for a long time, known as one of the best summer collegiate organizations in the region. What was the experience there like?** “It was amazing. We had fans ranging from age 5 to age 75. The whole town of Keene, they come out and support you every day. It gives you a reason to be fired up to play there every day, which is awesome. We help out in the community there and stuff like that too, so it’s definitely good and we’re treated well.”

**To you, was there a difference between the two leagues, the NECBL and Futures League, on the field and elsewhere?** “There wasn’t a huge difference. Obviously, in this league, the facilities. They play in the top-notch stadiums around town. Talent-wise, it’s pretty similar. They’re all college players, so everyone’s very good.”

**The NECBL has a more distinct national feel, but you’re a New Hampshire native. Was it special for you to represent the state there, and in Nashua as well?** “It’s awesome playing for your hometown and your family can come by to see you play. We had guys coming from all over the country, which was awesome.”

**Speaking of that, who were some of the guys you became close with?** “I played two years with a kid named Tommy Doyle from Virginia. We became real close, worked together in Keene. Then, some kids from Louisville. It’s fun when you go down to play them and you have someone to go chat with during BP. Just learning their styles of play, being from different parts of the country, is awesome.”

**You mentioned growth in the FCBL. What are the things you noticed as you returned to Nashua?** “Like I said, I think just talent-wise. I thought this league was very good, obviously, coming out of high school. Now, even as a college player, these guys can all hit. We see some big-name schools in here too, so it’s definitely grown in the past two years.”

**Who are some of the Silver Knights guys you had experience with before?** “Mickey Gasper, I played against him in high school. Now, watching him, he’s one of the best hitters I’ve seen in a while and everyone in the league knows that. Ricky Constant, I remember he was just a little lefty from (Nashua) North. Now, he’s grown into a monster. It’s fun seeing all these local guys, and then Ryan Sullivan and Cam DiSarcina, they’re still here. And they’re still doing what they did best back then, hitting the ball.”

**You mention Sully and DiSarcina still being with Nashua. Is it kind of funny to still see them plugging away here?** “It’s awesome. They were calling Sullivan ‘The Mayor’ at Holman. They love it, they love Nashua.”

— JOSHUA KUMMINS





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