

August 28, 2007

This Week in Blue Raider Baseball

MT Media Relations

MORE HONORS FOR SIGNEES: In the last month four Middle Tennessee signees were honored with All-State honors.

Catcher Tyler Acker from Donelson Christian Academy in Nashville, Tenn., and outfielder/pitcher Bryce Brentz from South Doyle High School in Knoxville, Tenn., were both named All-State by the Tennessee Sports Writers Association.

Just a few days later infielders Justin Miller from Bearden High School in Knoxville, Tenn., and Tyler Burnett from Oakland High School in Murfreesboro, Tenn., were both honored by the Tennessee Baseball Coaches Association on the AAA/D-II All-State team.

Acker, Brentz, Miller and Burnett were among nine Middle Tennessee signees for the 2008 season that also included righthanded pitcher PJ Francescon (Nolensville, Tenn., Ravenwood HS), outfielder/pitcher Michael Adamson (Freeburg, Ill., Freeburg HS), righthander pitcher Kevin Whittaker (Nashville, Tenn./Volunteer State Community College), righthander pitcher Judd Stoltz (Lewisburg, Tenn./Marshall County HS) and lefthanded pitcher Benji Farr (Cartersville, Ga., Cartersville HS).

SUMMER SEASON ENDS FOR 13 PLAYERS: Thirteen Middle Tennessee players took part in collegiate wood bat summer leagues across the nation, with each of the seasons ending in late July or early August.

Infielder [Zach Barrett](#) had one of the best summers by any of the 13 players, batting .312 in 46 games for the Staunton (VA) Braves in the Valley League. Barrett led the team in hitting and added eight doubles, two home runs, 23 runs scored and 32 RBIs. He also walked 15 times and stole nine bases. Barrett was the Most Valuable Player of the South All-Stars at the 2007 Valley League All-Star Game.

Five Middle Tennessee players participated in the KIT League, four with the Union City (TN) Greyhounds, coached by former Blue Raider Chris LeGueneec, and one with the Fulton (KY) Railroaders.

Catcher [Drew Robertson](#) played with the Railroaders, batting .240 in 26 contests with two doubles, two home runs, 15 runs scored and 18 RBIs.

[Blake McDade](#), [Ben Darlington](#), [Zach Hudson](#) and [Tyler Hyde](#) all played for LeGueneec in Union City. The Greyhounds defeated Owensboro (KY), 2-0, in the first round of the playoffs before knocking off Robertson and Fulton, 2-1, in the finals to claim the 2007 KIT League championship.

McDade had a terrific summer, batting .337 in 27 games with six doubles, two home runs, 13 runs scored and 18 RBIs. He also walked nine times and struck out just seven times in 110 plate appearances. Hudson batted .297 in 24 contests with two doubles, 19 runs scored, 12 RBIs and 11 walks and was hit five times. Darlington hit just .190 in 27 games but scored 13 runs and collected a pair of doubles. Hyde posted a 3-1 mark with a 2.39 ERA in six contests, working 37.2 innings with 27 strikeouts and a .218 opponent batting average.

Hurler [Brad Robinson](#) tossed 51.2 innings for the Edenton (NC) Steamers in the Coastal Plain League, registering a 3-4 record with a 2.96 ERA in 12 games and nine starts. The righthander struck out 46 and walked just 20, with opponents batting only .255.

Pitcher [Brett Smalley](#) posted a 1-2 mark with a 3.09 ERA in nine relief appearances for the Bethesda (MD) Big Train in the Cal Ripken, Sr., Collegiate League. The righthander worked 23.1 innings, striking out 17 and allowing just a .176 opponent batting average.

Infielder [Taylor Dennis](#) and lefthanded pitcher [Kenneth Roberts](#) both played with the Carolina (SC) Sox in the Southern Collegiate League. Dennis batted .329 in 32 contests with eight doubles, 18 runs scored and 15 RBIs. Roberts registered a 7-0 mark in 13 appearances with one save, tossing 31.1 innings and giving up just six earned runs. He struck out 38 and walked only four, with opponents batting just .220.

The final three Blue Raiders in summer ball played with the Junction City (MO) Generals - [Rawley Bishop](#), [Myles Ervin](#) and [Chad Coley](#).

Bishop led the squad with a .380 batting average in 48 games with 19 doubles, six home runs, 43 runs scored and 51 RBIs. He



Former Blue Raider Josh Horn has helped the Windy City Thunderbolts to the best record in the Frontier League this season. (Courtesy of Windy City Thunderbolts) 

walked 31 times and was hit seven times. Ervin started the summer strong but struggled late, batting .231 in 37 contests with three doubles, 16 runs scored, 17 walks and 19 RBIs. Coley posted a 2-2 mark with a 4.50 ERA in 13 appearances with three starts, working 24.0 innings. He struck out 20 and opponents batted just .200 against the lefthander.

PROFESSIONALS WRAPPING UP SEASON: Eleven former Middle Tennessee players are wrapping up their professional seasons in the next two weeks, with as many of seven still with the possibility to make the postseason.

Brett Carroll is the only former Blue Raider to play in the major leagues in 2007, playing in 11 games in June with the Florida Marlins. Carroll is currently batting .312 with 53 runs scored, 19 doubles, 17 home runs and 66 RBIs for the Albuquerque (NM) Isotopes in the Pacific Coast League, AAA for the Marlins. The Knoxville, Tenn., native also spent the first month of the season in AA with the Carolina (NC) Mudcats and has 32 doubles, six triples, 20 home runs and 78 RBIs in minor league action this year.

The Isotopes remain 1.5 games ahead of the Oklahoma Redhawks in the PCL America South Division with seven games left on the schedule.

Chris Mobley has bounced around three teams this season within the Marlins organization, starting the year in A ball with the Jupiter (FL) Hammerheads before playing one game for Albuquerque and then being sent to Carolina, where he has spent the majority of the year. Currently Mobley is 7-2 with a 4.81 ERA for the Mudcats in 33 relief appearances, all in relief. He has 10 saves in 33.2 innings of work with 23 strikeouts. This year the Kingsport, Tenn., native has pitched 49 times with 10 saves over 60.1 innings of work.

Jeremy Owens has spent the entire season with the Durham (NC) Bulls, AAA affiliate of the Tampa Bay Devil Rays in the International League, batting .266 in 105 games with 38 runs scored, 16 doubles, five triples, seven home runs and 32 RBIs. The Bulls are 2.0 games ahead of the Richmond (VA) Braves for a playoff spot in the South Division.

Dewon Brazelton started the year in the Kansas City Royals organization and got off to a rough start in AAA with the Omaha (NE) Royals before being released. He then signed with the Pittsburgh Pirates organization and has spent the last two months with the Altoona (PA) Curve in AA in the Eastern League. Brazelton is currently 4-5 with a 3.84 ERA in 14 starts covering 79.2 innings, striking out 47. He has two complete games with the Curve.

Michael McKenry is batting .290 in 109 games for the Asheville (NC) Tourists, A affiliate of the Colorado Rockies. McKenry has 76 runs scored, 34 doubles, 21 home runs and 89 RBIs as well as 62 walks for the Tourists. Asheville remains 3.5 games behind the Columbus (GA) Catfish for the second half crown in the South Atlantic League Southern Division with only six games remaining.

[Wayne Kendrick](#) has bounced back-and-forth between the Sarasota (FL) Reds and the Billings (MT) Mustangs, both Rookie level teams in the Cincinnati Reds organization. Kendrick played 22 games in Billings, batting .246 with three doubles, seven runs scored and seven RBIs. He is currently in Sarasota, hitting .238 in eight contests with two doubles and two runs scored.

[Matt Ray](#) is also playing at the Rookie level in the Oakland A's organization. Ray has played 45 games with the Vancouver, British Columbia, Canadians, scoring 17 runs with eight doubles and 11 RBIs while batting .216.

Todd Martin battled injuries in spring training and was sent to Mahoning Valley (NY) Scrappers (Cleveland Indians organization) in the short-season New York-Penn League. Martin has been splendid with the Scrappers, batting .360 in 54 games with 27 runs scored, eight doubles, eight home runs and 40 RBIs. Mahoning Valley is four games behind in the standings with 11 games left on the schedule, battling the Auburn (NY) Doubledays for the playoff spot in the Pinckney Division.

Former Blue Raider Jayhawk Owens is the manager of the Chattanooga (TN) Lookouts in the Southern League. The Lookouts trail Huntsville (AL) by 3.0 games with seven games left. Huntsville won the first half in the North Division, as well, so whoever finishes second in the division in the second half will also make the playoffs. The Tennessee Smokies trail Huntsville by 2.0 games, followed by the Lookouts.

Two other former Blue Raiders in the independent leagues are Eric McNamee and Josh Horn.

McNamee is playing his third season with the Gary (IN) Southshore Railcats in the Northern League. McNamee is batting .279 in 74 contests with 41 runs scored, nine doubles, 29 RBIs and 47 walks. The Railcats won the first half in the South Division, clinching a playoff spot, and are tied for the second half lead with five games remaining on the schedule. Gary will host a playoff game on September 7 no matter what the outcome of the final five contests.

Horn has had a great season playing for former Middle Tennessee assistant coach Andy Haines with the Windy City (IL) Thunderbolts. Horn is batting .298 in 83 games with 60 runs scored, 18 doubles, seven home runs and 48 RBIs as well as 39 walks. The Thunderbolts own the best record in the Frontier League and have already clinched a playoff spot with six games left in the season.

Original URL: <http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/27240>