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Blue Raiders sign six in early period

Four right-handed pitchers highlight class

MT Athletic Communications

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - The Blue Raider baseball program has signed six student-athletes to National Letters of Intent during the early signing period as announced by head coach Steve Peterson on Wednesday.

The signing class includes four right-handed pitchers, Hunter Adkins of Chattanooga, Tenn., and Daniel Palo of Germantown, Tenn., and Brandon Hall of Hendersonville, Tenn. The Blue Raiders have also signed a two-way player in Jonathan Sisco of Murfreesboro, Tenn., and two position players, Ryan Ford and Jordan Rorex both of Knoxville, Tenn.

"Coach McGuire and Coach McLaury just really isolated on this group and we knew we really had to have a strong recruiting class on the mound. We wanted to pretty much stay with freshmen coming in because we have such a large junior class," Peterson said. "So it just really worked out and I think we are bringing in four good arms and they are all really good athletes. Ford and Rorex will help us with position players so I think on paper it looks good."

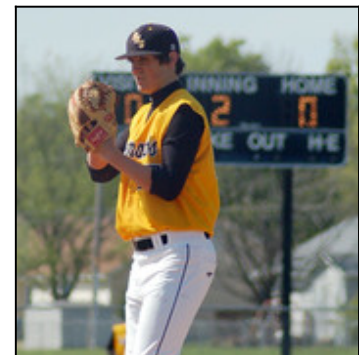


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Sisco will also be able to help the Blue Raiders in the field as he plays first base at Blackman High School. As a junior, Sisco batted .358 with 11 home runs and 40 RBI while posting a 2.58 ERA on the mound. Sisco was named All-District 7 AAA, DNJ All-Area Baseball team and Blackman Pitcher of the Year in 2008.

"Always getting a talented player from your hometown is nice especially in an area that has some of the best high school and summer baseball in the country. Jonathan has the capabilities of helping us on the mound and with his bat. He has a great upside and has progressively gotten better. He has a good arm with a good out pitch and a slider and possesses power. He is a guy we think will be a corner player at either first or third in addition to helping on the mound," Peterson said.





Hall is a two-sport athlete at Hendersonville High School and is currently competing in the TSSAA state football playoffs but will join the Blue Raiders as a one-sport athlete in the fall. As a junior, Hall posted a record of 5-4 in 55 innings of work for a 4.07 ERA. Hall also notched 74 strikeouts on the season.

"Brandon is the starting quarterback at Hendersonville High School which tells you the type of athlete he is. He is a young man who as he begins putting all of his time into baseball will be interesting to see how all of his strengths fall into place. He is very has very good arm strength is strong, athletic and has shown he has a very good breaking ball," Peterson said.

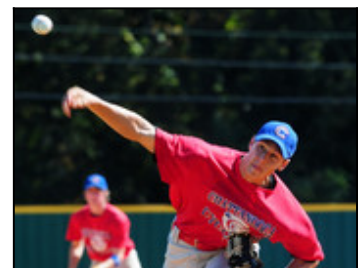
Hall received District 9AAA All-Tournament honors as a junior along with All-Sumner County First Team and TBCA Showcase Team.



In his junior season at Houston High School, Palo did not get much help at the beginning of the season with run support and defense posting a 2-5 record in 10 starts. Palo rebounded ending the season with a 1.05 ERA with 55 strikeouts in 39 innings of work.

"He is from the same high school as [Rawley Bishop](#). He has very good size and possesses good arm strength and was heavily recruited. I think he just saw something that fit. He really liked Middle Tennessee and Murfreesboro and his talents are such he could fit right into our starting rotation. We are putting a lot of emphasis on young pitchers. He can also swing the bat well. We will see in the fall how he swings the bat. His main duty for us will be pitching but he could also fill-in at first base or designated hitter.

Palo batted .308 as a junior and the Blue Raiders will look to use him at the plate as well as on the mound. Palo has been All-Tournament USA Classic, All-Metro Best of Preps Baseball and Team Tennessee during his high school career.





Adkins is a three-year letterwinner for Red Bank High School and was an All-District 6-AAA selection as junior, rounds out the pitchers who have signed with the Blue Raiders in 2008. Adkins posted a 4-1 record in 40 innings of work striking out 44 batters as a junior.

"I have had a number of outstanding players from the Chattanooga area and Red Bank High School it is a really good baseball area. Hunter is just progressively getting better and better. The professional scouts are taking notice of him. He has a good arm with a good breaking ball and I feel he is going to get a lot of opportunities his freshman year to show he can pitch on this level," Peterson said.



Ford and Rorex are the only two position players in this year's signing class.

Ford batted .370 with a home run and led the team in hits with 63 as a junior at Bearden High School in Knoxville, Tenn. Ford has received the Gold Glove award all three years in addition to All-District honors as a junior.

"I really like the way Ryan plays. He is from Bearden High School which is the same high school as [Justin Miller](#) and former player Brett Carroll. Ryan's motor is running all the time. He is not a big guy but has big man tools. He has good arm strength, speed and can play the middle of the infield," Peterson said. "He has the speed and range to play anywhere in the outfield but I just like his get-up-and-go attitude. He is very athletic which is a big plus for us and will fall right in line with all of the outstanding players we have had from the Knoxville area."





Rorex an outfielder at Anderson County High School in Clinton, Tenn., batted .437 with three home runs as a junior and was an All-State selection in 2007. Rorex also stole 33 bases and hit 22 doubles in 2008.

"He might be the sleeper out of the whole bunch. He is a great basketball player but has decided he wants to put all of his eggs into one basket. He reminds me a lot of Jason Maxwell who went on to play in the major leagues. When Jordan is only playing baseball it will be fun to see how he comes through and plays," Peterson said.

"Now they have to get here and get in but with the recruiting restrictions placed on us by the NCAA with how many players can be on scholarship, the amount of scholarship allotted and the number of players on the roster it is the first recruiting class you had to be really tight on your selections and academics. I feel really good about it and I really commend Coach McGuire and Coach McLaury because they identified these guys and when I went in I could see why."

Middle Tennessee will open the 2009 season at home in the newly renovated Reese Smith Field on Friday, Feb. 20 in the first of a three-game series with Missouri State.

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