

November 11, 2009

Blue Raiders sign six in early period

Three pitchers and three position players comprise class

MT Athletic Communications

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

The signing class includes three pitchers, Conlon Palo a left-hander from Germantown, Tenn., Cody Tollison a left-hander from Nashville, Tenn., and right-handed sidearm pitcher Wes Robinson from Hendersonville, Tenn.

Three position players round out the class, Hank LaRue infielder from Evansville, Ind., outfielder Ryan Stephens of Murfreesboro, Tenn., and catcher Trent Miller of Kansas City, Mo.

Palo, whose brother Daniel joined the Blue Raiders this season, plays for Lane McCarter at Houston High School. Palo was selected for Dulins Dodgers Summer Elite Travel team and the 2009 TBCA Showcase team.



The Blue Raider baseball program has signed six student-athletes to National Letters of Intent on the first day of the NCAA early signing period as announced by head coach Steve Peterson on Wednesday. (Bradley Lambert)



"Conlon is the brother of Daniel Palo. I can see the headlines right now, kind of like Dizzy and Daffy Dean. Dizzy would pitch one game and Daffy would pitch the next game for the St. Louis Cardinals. Conlon is left-handed, doesn't have the physical stature Daniel has, but is going to grow. He is going to get bigger and as he gets bigger and stronger so will his fastball. He is competitive on the mound, throws strikes and has good arm action. His future is well ahead of him."

Tollison, a pitcher at Ensworth High School under former Blue Raider Jason Maxwell, was named All-Region in 2009. As a junior, Tollison posted a 7-2 record with a 2.89 ERA. At the plate, he batted .396 with two home runs, 17 RBI and 14 stolen bases.



"Cody is the starting quarterback for Ensworth High School. A lot of people think of him as strictly a football player, but he is a very good left-handed picture and can play centerfield. I've never watched him play football personally, but I have watched him on

television and he can do some things. I really like his competitiveness and we needed to add left-handed pitching. In signing these two left-handed pitchers, their bodies will have to fill out and get stronger," Peterson said.

"Cody played for Jason Maxwell and Jason played for us in the early 90s, signed a pro contract and played in the majors with the Chicago Cubs and Minnesota Twins. I know Jason is really happy Cody made the decision to come here. He is a great competitor who will make a great teammate and the fans will love to watch him play."

Robinson will join the Blue Raiders following his sophomore season at Volunteer State in Gallatin, Tenn. Robinson played with Blue Raider newcomer Eric Gilley, who transferred to Middle Tennessee this season from Vol State. In 2009, Robinson was a member of the Vol State team who won the state junior college tournament.



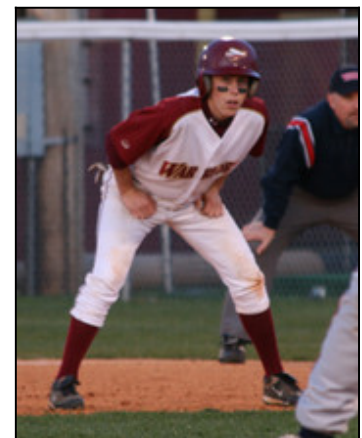
"I think the coaching staff at Vol State has done a great job grooming Wes. He is a submarine style pitcher that we have had opportunities to coach just recently [Coty Woods](#), who signed with the Colorado Rockies," Peterson said. "I think Wes is improving and has definitely done what we think he needs to do go to the next level and pitch. We have everything he wants on and off the field and I think it is a great fit for him and for us."

Robinson worked 23 innings as a freshman working one to two innings per outing as a short reliever or closer. Robinson had a 1-0 record with 4 saves and 27 strikeouts. As a senior at Riverdale High School, Robinson had a 6-2 record for a 1.06 ERA with 64 strikeouts and ranked 16th in the state in ERA.

LaRue, a four-year letterwinner at Mater Dei High School, was named 2009 Hoosier Diamond Second Team All-State. As a junior, he batted .333 with 19 RBI, 10 doubles, 24 runs and 22 stolen bases.

"Out of high school he will come to us as a switch-hitting shortstop. He can play anywhere in the infield or outfield. He is athletic and I was really impressed watching how hard he played. Obviously he has the talent, but I think he is going to be able to come in and hit. We will look at him in the infield first. He is going to be a lot of fun to coach and is a talented guy who can run, throw and hit."

Stephens, a senior at Riverdale High School, was named 2009 All-District 7AAA, Riverdale 2009 Offensive Player of the Year and selected to the 2009 TBCA Showcase team.



"Ryan fills the need for us to bring in young, left-handed hitters because we will be losing hitters. Stephens has a good bat, can run, play the outfield and in time his bat will find a way into the lineup. He is another guy who I think has a good future for us in the

outfield."

As a junior, Stephens posted a .351 batting average with 39 hits, five home runs, 24 RBI and 10 stolen bases.

Miller is currently ranked 131 in the country among 2010 student-athletes by Perfect Game and is a member of the 2009 Kansas City Royals Elite Scout team. Miller helped his summer ball team, Mac-n-Seitz, earn fifth place out of 192 teams at the WWBA in Marietta, Ga., in the summer of 2009.

"We have to add to our catching core and we saw Trent in some showcases. He is from Kansas City, Missouri and can play the outfield. He is a pretty good right-handed hitter, has power and good arm strength. Trent showed well in national showcases and was recruited by a number of schools," Peterson said.

As a junior, Miller batted .435 with eight doubles and five home runs and in summer ball had 54 RBI and seven home runs with a .605 batting average.

"He definitely fills the need of a future catcher. After this year, we will have all young catchers except for Tyler (Acker), so we need to keep bringing in catchers. Trent is a guy who can hit play the outfield and also catch."

Middle Tennessee rounded out fall practice two weeks ago and will begin spring preparations for the 2010 season in February.

Printed on February 10, 2012

Original URL: <http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/42243>