

Blue Raider baseball at the next level

Former Blue Raiders making their mark in professional baseball

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*Middle Tennessee baseball continues to produce student-athletes succeeding at the next level. This year, 17 former Blue Raiders played or coached in the professional and international ranks. Below are highlights for each of them from the 2011 season. In addition, former Blue Raider Bryce Brentz stopped in to talk about his season and winning the 2011 Minor League Co-Offensive Player of the Year award for the Red Sox organization. Click [here](#) for the special video interview. **Jeff***

Beachum (2003-06) played for the Gary Southshore Railcats this season, an independent team in the American Association. Beachum, a native of Cordova, Tenn. played in 19 games this season as an infielder for the Railcats before suffering ligament damage in his wrist, which landed him on the inactive list for the rest of the season. Before the injury, Beachum batted .161 (10-62)

with five RBI, two walks, two stolen bases and three runs scored. He entered the 2011 campaign in third place on Gary's career batting average list. **Rawley Bishop (2006-09)** played in 124 games this season for the Erie SeaWolves of the Eastern League. The Germantown, Tenn., native batted .266 (121-455) in 2011 with 28 doubles, 10 home runs, 67 RBI, 52 walks, 16 stolen bases and 58 runs scored as a first baseman. Erie is the Double-A affiliate of the Detroit Tigers, who drafted Bishop in the 19th round of the 2009 first-year player draft. **Brett Carroll (2002-04)** played for the Milwaukee Brewers organization for most of 2011 as an outfielder after being traded from the



Kansas City Royals in the preseason in return for cash. The Knoxville, Tenn., native played in 93 games for the Nashville Sounds of the Pacific Coast League where he batted .281 (94-335) with 14 doubles, 15 homeruns, 51 RBI, 34 walks, nine stolen bases and 66 runs scored. Carroll received a promotion to the Brewers on July 21 and appeared in two games with the parent club. On July 31, he was designated for assignment by Milwaukee and chose free agency where he signed with the Red Sox and was sent to the team's AAA club, the Pawtucket Red Sox. Carroll played in 24 games for Pawtucket, batting .229 (19-83) with six doubles, a home run, 12 RBI, eight walks, two stolen bases and 10 runs scored. He was originally selected in the 10th round of the 2004 first-year player draft by the Florida Marlins. Carroll also earned the silver medal with Team USA at the Pan Am games in October. Carroll led Team USA in hitting throughout the Pan Ams with a .556 average and drove in the lone run for the squad in the finale. In addition to hitting .556, the Knoxville, Tenn., native recorded eight RBI in five Pan Am games. Overall, Carroll collected 11 RBI and hit .348 in 13 games throughout the IBAF Baseball World Cup and Pan Ams. He also slugged a team-best .587.

Bryce Brentz (2008-10) spent 2011 as an outfielder in the Red Sox minor league organization after being drafted by the Red Sox as the 36th overall pick in 2010 first-year player draft. He was named the No. 13 prospect in the New York-Penn League by *Baseball America* following the 2010 season. This season, the Knoxville, Tenn., native began the year with the Greenville Drive of the South Atlantic League. He played in 40 games for the Drive, batting .359 (61-170) with 10 doubles, 11 home runs, 36 RBI, 14 walks and 43 runs scored. He was named the SAL player of the week on May 16. On May 21, Brentz was promoted to the Salem Red Sox of the Advanced Class-A Carolina League. He batted .274 (79-288) for Salem with 15 doubles, 19 home runs, 58 RBI, 26 walks and 48 runs scored. He was chosen as a Carolina League postseason all-star. Brentz also was named the 2011 Minor League Co-Offensive Player of the Year by the Red Sox on Sept. 19. He ranked first in the Red Sox organization with a .306 batting average and second in home runs with 30 on the season, making him the first Red Sox farmhand since 2004 to hit at least 30 long balls in a minor league season. At season's end, Brentz was named the No. 8 prospect in the Carolina League by *Baseball America*. **Tyler Burnett (2008-10)** played the 2011 season as a first baseman for the Lexington Legends of the South Atlantic League. The Murfreesboro, Tenn., native played in 103 games for the Legends, batting .249 (91-366) with 16 doubles, six home runs, 32 RBI, 40 walks, 21 stolen bases and 53 runs scored. The Legends are the Class-A affiliate of the Houston Astros, who drafted Burnett in the 17th round of the 2010 first-year player draft. **Andy Haines (Manager)** managed the Greensboro Grasshoppers in the 2011 season. The Grasshoppers are the Class-A affiliates of the Florida Marlins and finished second in the South Atlantic League North overall standings in 2011 with a 79-60 record under Haines. They won nine of their last 10 games and finished one game back of Hickory for first place. The Grasshoppers went on to win the South Atlantic League Championship Series over Savannah. Following the Grasshoppers season, Haines spent three weeks assisting as a coach with the parent club. **Josh Horn (2005-06)** played for Wichita Wingnuts, an independent team in the American Association. The Shelbyville, Tenn., native played in 100 games as an infielder for the Wingnuts, batting .326 (133-408) with 31 doubles, 35 walks, 16 stolen bases and 75 runs scored. He was 4-16 with three RBI in a short postseason run for Wichita. He was selected to the 2011 American Association postseason all-star team. Horn has been chosen to an all-star team in his first five seasons of professional baseball. **Tyler Hyde (2008-10)** appeared in 22 games in 2011 with Rockford Riverhawks, as independent team in the Frontier League. The St. Louis, Mo., native pitched out of the bullpen this season, posting a 1-3 record in 22 innings with an ERA of 4.91 and eight strikeouts. His best performance came June 10 against Gateway in which he pitched three shutout innings with two strikeouts in a one-run loss. **Alex**

McClure (2008-10) played in 67 games as an infielder for the Wilmington Blue Rocks of the Carolina League in 2011. The Clarksville, Tenn., native batted .196 (47-240) with eight extra-base hits, 13 RBI, 15 walks, 14 stolen bases and 22 runs scored. McClure missed the second half of the season after fracturing his right hand when he was hit on the hand while attempting to bunt in the ninth inning of a game against Frederick in late June. The Blue Rocks are the Advanced Single-A affiliate of the Kansas City Royals, who drafted McClure in the 11th round of the first-year player draft in 2010. **Blake McDade (2007-10)** spent the entire 2011 season with the Tri-City Dust Devils of the Northwest League. McDade played first base this season for the Dust Devils in short-season play. He appeared in 29 games in which he batted .182 (12-66) with five extra-base hits, nine walks and nine runs scored. The Ooltewah, Tenn., native was taken by the Colorado Rockies in the 20th round of the 2010 first-year player draft. **Michael McKenry (2004-06)** was a member of three different major league franchises in 2011. He began the year with the Colorado Rockies, who drafted him in the seventh round of the 2006 first-year player draft. The Knoxville, Tenn., native was traded to the Boston Red Sox on March 29 for a minor league pitcher. McKenry played in 29 games with the Triple-A Pawtucket Red Sox of the International League, batting .274 (26-95) with eight extra-base hits, 12 RBI, 14 walks and 10 runs scored. On June 13, he was traded to the Pittsburgh Pirates for cash and a player to be named later. The Pirates quickly brought McKenry to the majors to replace injured catcher Ryan Doumit. McKenry recorded his first major league hit on June 15 and his first career major league home run on July 8. He batted .222 for the Pirates with 12 doubles, two home runs, 14 walks and 17 runs scored as a catcher. **Justin Miller (2008-10)** played in 63 games this season for the Auburn Doubledays of the New York-Penn League. The Knoxville, Tenn., native batted .299 with 17 doubles, five triples, seven home runs, 47 RBI, 14 walks, four stolen bases and 40 runs in short-season play. He was named the New York-Penn League Player of the Week on Sept. 6. Miller was selected by the Washington Nationals in the 18th round of the 2010 first-year player draft and continues to play in their organization for Auburn. **Chris Mobley (2002-04)** spent the 2011 season as a member of four different minor league clubs. The Hickory, N.C., native began the season with Texas Rangers organization with Double-A Frisco and Triple-A Round Rock. He was traded in late May to the Cincinnati Reds for cash and a player to be named later. Mobley began his Reds career with Triple-A Louisville, but was later sent to Double-A Carolina. He appeared in 49 games out of the bullpen in 2011 and started one game between the four teams. He recorded a combined record of 5-5 in 67.1 innings with an ERA of 5.21 and 71 strikeouts. Mobley was originally drafted by the Florida Marlins in the 22nd round of the 2004 first-year player draft. **Jeremy Owens (1996-98)** played and coached in the 2011 season with the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs. Owens is an outfielder and the all-time leader in Blue Crab history in games played (373), home runs (61), extra-base hits (141), runs scored (244), stolen bases (51) and walks (178). The Johnson City, Tenn., native batted .236 (82-347) with 18 doubles, 13 home runs, 48 RBI, 39 walks, 10 stolen bases and 47 runs scored for Independent League, Southern Maryland. Owens was originally drafted in eighth round of the 1998 first-year player draft by the San Diego Padres. **Kenneth Roberts (2007-10)** played this season with Tri-City Dust Devils of the Northwest League. The Murfreesboro, Tenn., native pitched 38.2 innings in 27 games out of the bullpen for the Dust Devils with a record of 4-2, an ERA of 1.86, 39 strikeouts, held opponents to a batting average of .188 and recorded 10 saves. Roberts was selected as a postseason all-star in the Northwest League. Tri-City is the short-season affiliate of the Colorado Rockies, who selected Roberts in the 25th round of the 2010 first-year player draft. **Will Skinner (2010-11)** became Middle Tennessee's most recent draftee when the Atlanta Braves took the outfielder in the 25th round of the first-year player draft in 2011. Skinner led the Gulf Coast League Braves with a .300 (24-80) batting average in 24 games and collected 18 RBI before being called up to the Danville Braves of the Appalachian League. The

Murfreesboro, Tenn., native made the most of his first appearance for Danville, going 4-for-6 with a home run and three RBI in the Braves' regular-season finale. **Tjerk Smeets (1999-01)** served as the hitting coach for the Dutch National Team at the 2011 IBAF Baseball World Cup. The team defeated Cuba in the title game to win the championship and slugger Curt Smith was named the tournament's MVP. **Coty Woods (2009)** played in 2011 for the Modesto Nuts of the California League. The Christiana, Tenn., native played in 49 games this season. He pitched 78 innings out of the bullpen with a 5-4 record, an ERA of 2.19, 88 strikeouts and an opponents' batting average of .215. On June 20, Woods was selected as a California League Midseason All-Star. He was picked by the Colorado Rockies in the 33rd round of the 2009 first-year player draft and continues to play in their organization with Modesto.

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