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## BEN'S 2ND ACT



**BEN MCDONALD'S** authenticity has made him a fan-favorite for years, however, his transition from player to commentator was anything but seamless

BY KEVIN ECK > Page 16

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# STARTING LINEUP

- TABLE OF CONTENTS -

## COVER STORY

**BEN'S SECOND ACT..... 16**  
*Ben McDonald's authenticity has made him a fan-favorite for years, however, his transition from player to commentator was anything but seamless*  
 By Kevin Eck

## FEATURE STORIES

SPORTS BUSINESS W/ BALTIMORE BUSINESS JOURNAL..... 08  
 MARYLAND GAMING W/ BILL ORDINE ..... 12  
 RAVENS REPORT W/ BO SMOLKA..... 13  
 ORIOLES REPORT W/ RICH DUBROFF..... 21  
 VARSITY REPORT W/ WICK EISENBERG..... 29

## COLUMNS

> ONE FAN'S OPINION ..... 05  
 Stan "The Fan" Charles  
 > CONNOLLY'S CORNER ..... 23  
 Dan Connolly  
 > THE REALITY CHECK ..... 33  
 Glenn Clark

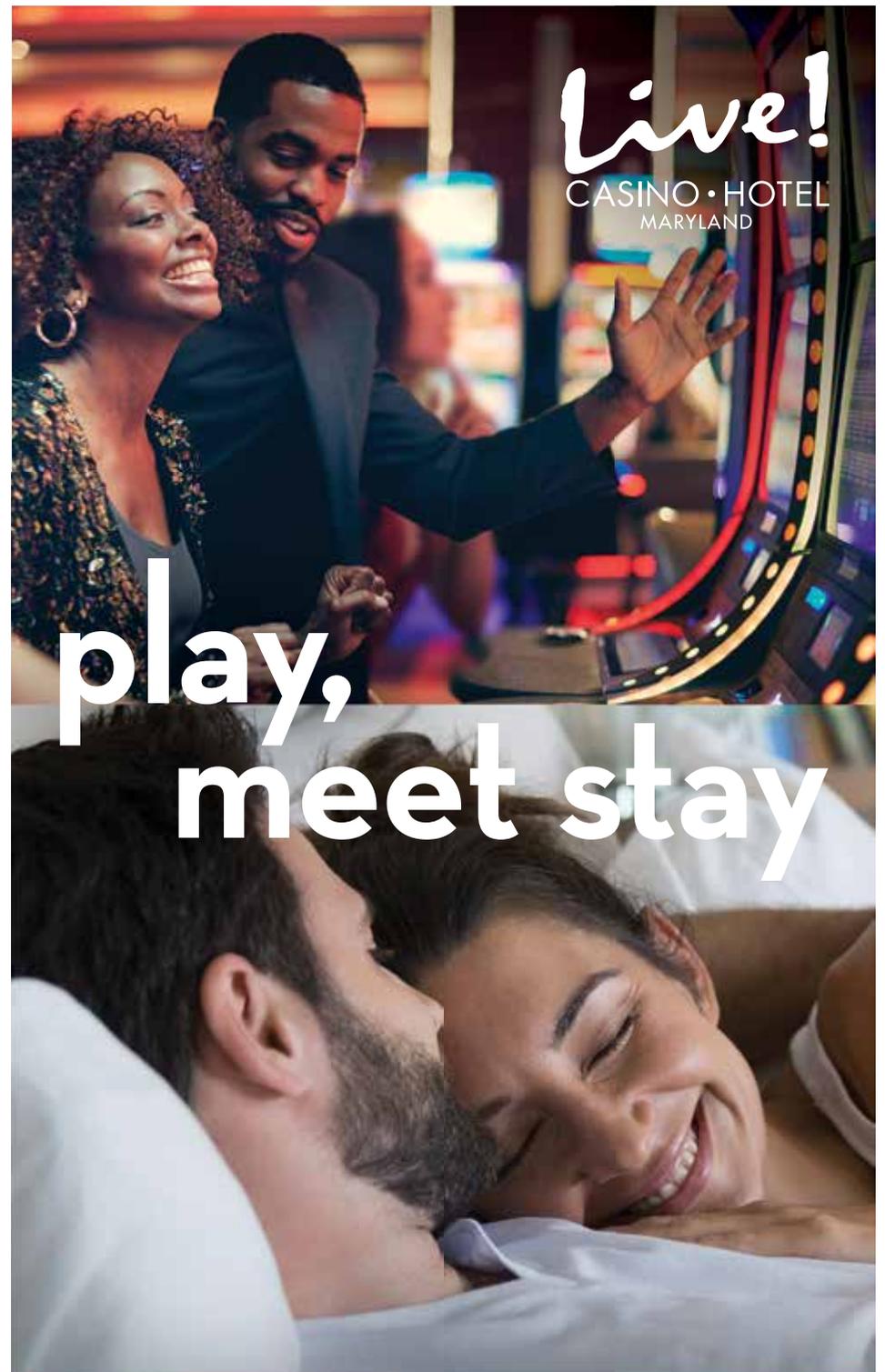
## SECTIONS

FRONT ROW..... 06  
 COLLEGE..... 24

## VOICES

10 QUESTIONS WITH..... 11  
 COMMUNITY BEAT ..... 31  
 THEY SAID IT ON GLENN CLARK RADIO ..... 32  
 RICIG'S WORLD OF SPORTS ..... 34

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## ONE FAN'S OPINION

# Orioles' Past Struggles Foreshadow Current Affairs

★ STAN "THE FAN" CHARLES

**U**nder executive vice president of baseball operations Dan Duquette and manager Buck Showalter the Orioles have had a nice run. But that run is finished. It may not end gracefully for Duquette or Showalter -- or both -- but whatever brand of Orioles magic the team displayed since 2012 has evaporated.

On May 1, the Orioles record stood at a putrid 8-20, which reminded me that it's the 30th anniversary of the team's 0-21 start to the 1988 season.

I stressed the importance of a strong finish to the 2017 season during my postgame talks on Facebook last year, even if trying to hide the disappointment of a failed opportunity to reach the postseason. But the Orioles staggered to a 4-19 record to end the year.

So, at the point where this season became almost assuredly lost, I added up the 8-20 start of 2018 with the 4-19 finish of 2017. That's a .235 winning percentage. It stunned me.

I suspected that a horrid finish to one season might be a prologue to how the next season will start. As it turns out, the Orioles lost 28 of their final 38 games in 1987, including a September stretch in which they lost 17 of 18. I calculated the team's winning percentage using the 10-28 finish and 0-21 start. That, my friends, is a .204

winning percentage.

This year, the Orioles continued to lose in May, including a disastrous West Coast trip May 1-6 in which they went 0-6, and as a result, their winning percentage continued to dip.

You can certainly point to a handful of excuses for the poor start -- closer Zach Britton's rehab from a ruptured Achilles, slugger Mark Trumbo starting the season on the disabled list and second baseman Jonathan Schoop's oblique injury. You can also bemoan the fact that had the O's signed right-hander Alex Cobb in mid-February, they wouldn't have experienced the pain of losing each of his first four starts while he was rushed back to MLB action after only 21 days of preparation.

The problem with that kind of thinking, though, is how to end it. The reality is that a team with an awful lot of warts was again treated with band-aids during the offseason.

While a comparison of 1987-1988 Orioles and the 2017-2018 Orioles reveal obvious similarities, there are differences.

Cal Ripken Sr., the 1987 manager, was regarded as a good and loyal soldier, having been a minor league manager and big league coach within an Orioles organization that was the envy of baseball. Not only was he an accomplished baseball man, but he happened to be the father of one of the best players on the team, Cal Jr.

That resume led then-owner Edward Bennett Williams to follow the lead of general manager Hank Peters and hire Cal Sr. as

manager ahead of the 1987 season.

However, the overall play of the team in 1987 (67-95) led to the elder Ripken's quick dismissal after just six games (0-6) in 1988. That led to the hiring of Frank Robinson, who weathered the last 15 games of that 0-21 start. Robinson's style and tactical expertise led to a quick turn-around in the famed 1989 Why Not season, when the O's battled for the American League East down to the wire before losing out to Toronto.

Today, the skipper is a well respected and steady hand who single-handedly overhauled what had become a chronic losing culture. Before Showalter, overall lapses in professionalism and the lack of attention to detail marked 14 straight losing years in baseball purgatory from 1998 to 2011. Under Showalter, such effort was not suffered without consequences and the club played .500 or better for five seasons in a row from 2012-2016 and went to the playoffs three times.

Yet, despite Showalter's steadfast efforts, the culture of a champion was not quite achieved, as the team lacked that one extra player or failed to make that one extra expenditure that could have taken the 2014 club, which won the AL East, over the top in 2015 or 2016.

Now, the culture Showalter nurtured -- something that can be quite fragile -- has come undone.

My crystal ball may be hazy on the ultimate conclusion of Duquette and Showalter's Orioles careers. But I feel secure in saying that for two men -- who probably have had more success together in Baltimore than anywhere else -- it's a shame that the fact that they could not forge a winning culture between themselves will be what did in them as well as the Orioles team they cared so much about. •

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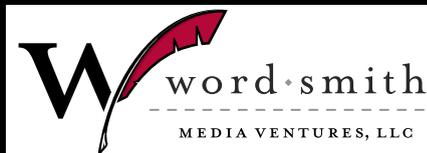
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# ORIOLES COVERAGE



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COURTESY OF CHRIS DACHILLE

Chris Dachille

## Long-Time WBAL Sports Producer Chris Dachille Fights Rare Form Of Cancer

It was something WBAL-TV executive sports producer Chris Dachille had done every day since he began working full-time at the station in 2004: head into the control room and take a seat among the rest of the station's production crew to guide that night's sports segment.

But one night during an 11 p.m. news-cast late last October, Dachille experienced sharp pains in his back, the first stage of a four-month process to discovering he had Langerhans cell histiocytosis (LCH), a rare but treatable form of cancer.

"I was attempting to just sit down and I couldn't," Dachille said of that late October night. "It was just really weird. I just kind of played it off as a joke more

than anything else, and just thought really nothing of it."

Though the pain eventually subsided and Dachille was able to drive home that night without incident, he visited his primary care doctor for a checkup two weeks later. An MRI revealed what Dachille's doctor believed to be lymphoma based in the spine. Dachille then had a number of biopsies to confirm he had lymphoma, but none of the tests were able to do so.

By late February, Dachille's gait had turned into a limp, which prompted him to get an MRI and PET/CT scan. The MRI revealed a fracture in his left hip. Dachille had successful hip surgery Feb. 26, during which tumor samples were taken. That led to Dachille's LCH diagnosis in March.

About one out of a million adults are

affected by LCH. Dachille joked he "kind of won the reverse lottery," but it was a relief to him that he finally figured out why his body was failing him.

"It was very frustrating," Dachille said. "I started to assemble what they call a cancer team. Everyone had different ideas, but no one really could pinpoint exactly what it was. It's an unsettling situation. You lose sleep over it, obviously. It's tough. But now we have a plan of action, which is nice to have."

Dachille is scheduled for 12 rounds of chemotherapy, the first of which he underwent in April. The current plan calls for three weeks between chemotherapy treatments, with the goal to be cancer-free by the end of his treatments next year. Dachille plans to continue to work between rounds of chemotherapy as much as he can; he received a standing ovation upon returning to WBAL April 24, after his first round of chemotherapy.

Dachille's family at WBAL began a "Cash For Dash" GoFundMe in early April to help Dachille offset some of the financial costs of battling cancer. The effort raised about \$28,000 through early May. WBAL sports anchor Gerry Sandusky said he and a few others in the newsroom came up with the idea.

"The great part is just to see how many people reached out to Chris," said Sandusky, who first met Dachille when the latter was an intern at the station. "It was affirming for him to see just how many people were there for him in his hour of need. To see those numbers build up to where he knew, 'OK, a lot of the financial pressure is now off,' and he can focus on his health, that was a really big step for him to put his energy into his health and not try to fight a war on two fronts."

Said Dachille: "To see that thing take off was kind of mind-blowing. It's just very awesome to know that there are so many people that care about you and love you. That was pretty amazing."

Dachille began working full-time at WBAL shortly after graduating from the University of South Carolina in 2004. Armed with a broad range of sports knowledge, Dachille is the brains behind WBAL's sports newscasts. Story ideas flow through Dachille, as do the decisions about what video to use for the broadcast and the graphics to put on the screen.

Dachille is the point man for WBAL's local sports specials, like the station's three-and-a-half hour lead-in to the Preakness Stakes and the "Olympic Zone" shows every two years. He's also responsible for ensuring the station has the proper staffing at upcoming sporting events.

Dachille is "second-to-none" as a sports producer, according to WBAL general manager Dan Joerres, but "more importantly, he's a special person to have on the staff as he buoys everybody

else." One of the secrets to Dachille's success as a producer is his personality, which teems with positivity. Now, doctors, nurses and technicians see that same personality as Dachille works to beat cancer.

"He is so unfailingly polite and upbeat to those people that they then are in love with him," said WBAL sports anchor Pete Gilbert, who has known Dachille since 2004. "They can't believe they have the nicest patient in the world, and that's who he is. He's constantly apologizing for them having to do their jobs. It's not what they normally get in there. I've enjoyed watching their reaction coming to see who he is that I've known for so long."

Donations can be made at [gofundme.com/cash-for-dash](https://www.gofundme.com/cash-for-dash).

-- LUKE JACKSON

## Late Promoter Scott Wagner Honored By Maryland Boxing Hall Of Fame

The relationship Scott Crouse had with Scott Wagner started almost by accident, thanks to a broken credit card machine one day several years ago.

Wagner had taken the concept of Ballroom Boxing at Michael's Eighth Avenue in Glen Burnie, Md., and helped it grow into something huge, seen regularly across the nation on ESPN, USA Network, Armed Forces Network plus many satellite TV groups across the U.S., according to long-time ring announcer Pat O'Malley.

But Wagner and Crouse really connected when the latter called the former's radio show -- 1300 AM, The Ballroom Boxing Report -- to renew season tickets to Ballroom Boxing. However, the credit card machine malfunctioned, and Crouse was stunned when Wagner, the man behind all of this, called him.

They talked for an hour and began a long friendship. The two were on the radio together for several years, and Crouse was happy to see Wagner inducted in the Maryland Boxing Hall of Fame last month, albeit posthumously. Wagner, 49, died in February after an illness.

"Scott was probably the most generous human being I've ever known in my life," Crouse said. "He just never seemed to tire. Scott provided something locally that people didn't have. The people that called in [to their radio show] were very, very hungry for what he provided. He often invited callers to his own house to watch boxing."

The Hall of Fame ceremony, in an in-

interesting twist of fate, was held at Michael's, where he made Ballroom Boxing famous.

Wagner didn't want the honor when first informed, according to his mother Carol Wagner, but he eventually agreed. The event was originally set for January but shifted to April.

Wagner would have been in attendance if the January date was kept, but there were still plenty of accolades for him, even if he was not there to hear them.

Carol Wagner said her son promoted 94 fights there throughout the years. Ballroom Boxing was held from 1995-2010, usually on Thursday nights, drawing good crowds.

"We would pack the house," Carol Wagner said. "He was the driving force. He just engineered the whole event. We supported Scott. He just planned the fighters and put the fights together."

At its peak, Ballroom Boxing became nationally known, and Wagner also did a long-running radio show. He paired with Crouse for several years, and their love of boxing helped make the show a can't-miss for die-hard boxing fans.

Crouse said they scored interviews with Mike Tyson, Sugar Ray Leonard, Larry Holmes, George Foreman, Evander Holyfield, Lennox Lewis, Roy Jones and Bernard Hopkins, among others. Wagner would often travel to places like Madison Square Garden in New

York to cover fights and report on it for the show.

But it was all about boxing, and Wagner was the driving force.

"Scott was always easy-going," Crouse said. "It made it easy for me. I never had to worry about was I going to make a mistake. It just wasn't a big deal to him. He just wanted to go on the air and talk boxing."

O'Malley worked as the ring-time announcer for 15 years at Ballroom Boxing and had nothing but praise for Wagner and his abilities to make fights happen. Wagner will have quite a legacy.

"I can honestly say that Scott Wagner was the best promoter that the sport ever had in the metro area," O'Malley said. "He was amazing in pulling shows together. Scott's contributions to boxing were immeasurable. Ballroom Boxing was known all over the country, and it was known as a first-class operation."

-- JEFF SEIDEL

## Baltimore Golf Week Raises Support For YouthWorks

Sinking a hole-in-one is a thrilling career event for any golfer. Now, imagine win-

ning a million dollars for that hole-in-one.

A million-dollar hole-in-one contest is just one of the many perks during Baltimore Golf Week, which will be held from May 26-June 3 across many Baltimore City golf courses.

The week was created to raise support for YouthWorks, a nonprofit organization created by the Baltimore Mayor's Office of Employment Development. YouthWorks provides summer jobs for thousands of Baltimore City kids ages 14-21.

"We are one of the signature programs for the city," said Brice Freeman, communications director for the Mayor's Office of Employment Development. "We are one of the biggest and best in the city. We provide approximately 5,000 jobs every summer, and last year we were able to increase that number to 8,000."

The Baltimore Municipal Golf Corporation, which manages the "classic five" municipal golf courses in the city, announced in April that it would host Baltimore Golf Week to give back to YouthWorks and the Baltimore community.

"Our goal is to raise as much money as we can for the YouthWorks program," said Jon Ladd, executive director of the BMGC. "In the process of doing that, we hope to get exposure for our golf courses and get people in the city excited about golf again."

In addition to the million-dollar hole-

in-one contest at Pine Ridge Driving Range, other events include a \$50,000 hole-in-one contest at the Forest Park Golf Course and the Mayor's Cup, where foursomes can enter and compete to win the Mayor's Cup.

"It's all about having just a fun golf day," Ladd said. "The mayor will be participating, which is why it is called the Mayor's Cup in the first place."

Ladd said Baltimore City Mayor Catherine Pugh loves golf, which is why it made perfect sense for the golf organization to link up with a youth jobs effort that runs through the mayor's office and is so important to the city.

"The week is about raising money for YouthWorks," Ladd said. "We also want to get some interest in getting golf back in high schools. We hope to give opportunities for young people to find friendships and love of golf and everything it teaches as far as honesty and integrity."

Ladd said Baltimore Golf Week is the perfect opportunity to increase interest in high school golf.

"We want to grow this thing and make it an annual event," Ladd said. "We want this to really be a big thing for the city of Baltimore and we believe it can be."

For more information, visit [classic5golf.com/Baltimore\\_Golf\\_Week/](http://classic5golf.com/Baltimore_Golf_Week/).

-- EVAN RAIGRODSKI



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## Skepticism About Under Armour Shares Persists Despite Kevin Plank's Optimism

★ **HOLDEN WILEN**  
*Baltimore Business Journal*

**S**ome analysts remain skeptical about Under Armour despite CEO Kevin Plank's outlook that the company is on the right path to turning itself around after a rough 2017.

Plank said during a May 1 conference call with analysts that Baltimore-based Under Armour is going from "being a good company to being a great company" and that the sportswear maker is following through on its initiatives after its revenue in the first quarter of 2018 topped Wall Street expectations. At the same time, though, some analysts remain worried about Under Armour's ability to get its inventory under control.

Under Armour shares closed up 1.6 percent to \$18.04 on May 1, the same day it reported its quarterly earnings. But at one point in the day, shares were down as much as 6 percent. The company reported a loss in the

first quarter but saw sales grow 6 percent to \$1.19 billion, exceeding Wall Street estimates. International sales in particular continued to skyrocket, growing 27 percent.

At the heart of the concern is the continued rise in Under Armour's inventory, leading to smaller margins. Under Armour's inventory rose 27 percent in the first quarter to \$1.1 billion. The company's gross margin was 44.2 percent, down 1.2 percent.

CFO David Bergman said Under Armour expects inventory growth at the end of the second quarter to be up less than 20 percent, better than a previous expectation of 26 percent. In the second half of the year inventory growth is expected to move more in line with

revenue growth.

There will continue to be pressure on margins in the second quarter, Bergman said, with improvements coming in the second half and going into 2019. Under Armour has been making improvements to its supply chain and getting "tighter" with what it sells to vendors.

Victor Ahluwalia, an analyst for CFRA Research, wrote in a note May 2 that Under Armour's inventory continues to rise even after "aggressive discounting and clearances." Capital expenditures are decreasing, "further signifying a breakdown in the growth story."

"They almost have to figure out how to get rid of that inventory, maybe write it down or something, to just get it out of the way,"



SABINA MORAN/PRESSBOX

**"WE'RE FOCUSED ON HOW DO WE BECOME AN INCREDIBLY PROFITABLE COMPANY THAT IS DELIVERING THE BEST PRODUCTS TO OUR CONSUMER, DELIVERING THEM GREAT VALUE AT THE SAME TIME."**

> **KEVIN PLANK**

analyst Sam Poser of Susquehanna Financial Group LLLP said in a CNBC interview. "They have to do something. Even if they get inventory in line with sales by the end of the year ... inventory is still likely \$250 million heavier than at optimum point because inventory has been inflated over the last few years."

Under Armour president Patrik Frisk said he is confident Under Armour will become a "healthier business" in North America, "but it will take time and a disciplined execution against our plan, which is exactly what we're doing."

Throughout the investors' call, Plank emphasized Under Armour's focus on improving profitability. He said the company is "playing the long game" and concentrating on improving its bottom line more than growing its top line.

"We're focused on how do we become an incredibly profitable company that is delivering the best products to our consumer, delivering them great value at the same time," Plank said. "We are hyper focused on that and as we get strong, you'll continue to watch us march forward and the good news is we're doing this in a way that's pretty balanced." •

For more sports business coverage, visit [BaltimoreBusinessJournal.com](http://BaltimoreBusinessJournal.com)

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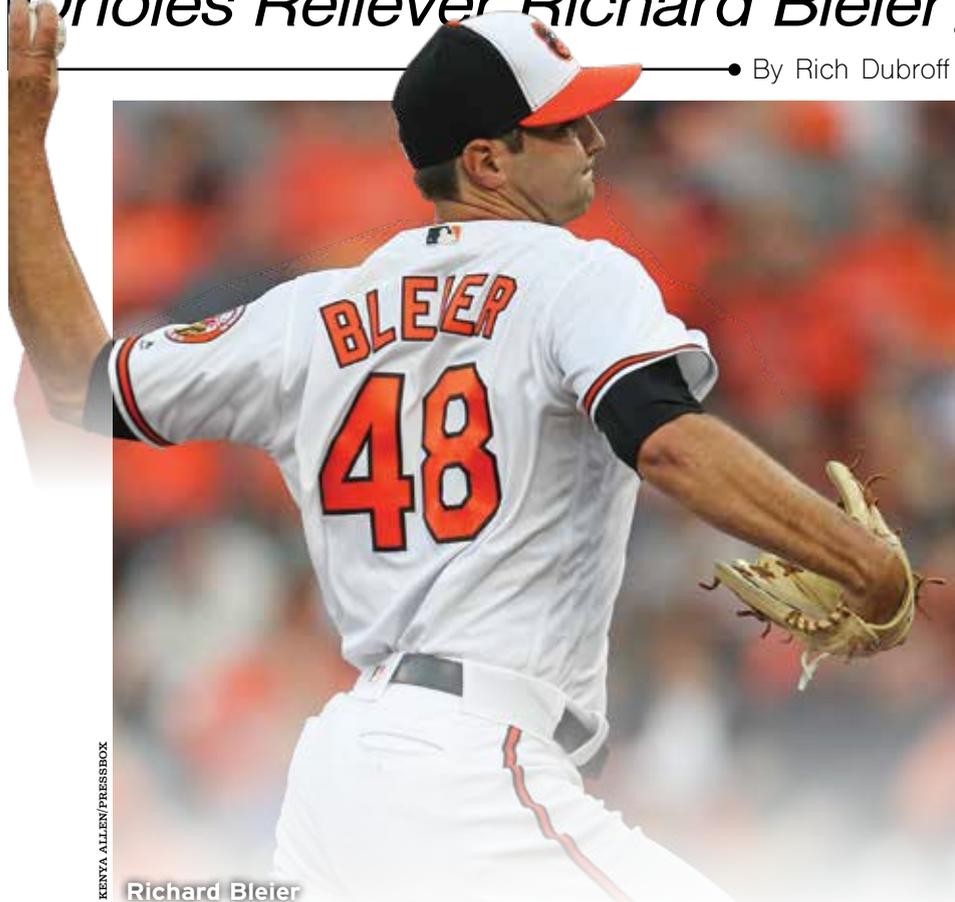
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# 10 Questions With Orioles Reliever Richard Bleier

• By Rich Dubroff



KENYA ALLEN/PRESSBOX

Richard Bleier

- Q1** *What's a habit you wish you didn't have?*  
I've got a sweet tooth. It's not a habit, but it's definitely something I could get rid of.
- Q2** *What's your favorite guilty pleasure fast-food order?*  
After a long day of fishing, I will go to McDonald's and order a bunch of double cheeseburgers.
- Q3** *What's your favorite pregame meal or snack?*  
Lately, I've been doing a burger with an egg on it.
- Q4** *Who was your favorite sports star when you were a kid?*  
Ken Griffey, Jr.
- Q5** *What would you be doing if you weren't playing baseball?*  
I was a year away from getting a degree in criminal justice, so probably something in law enforcement.
- Q6** *Are you a good cook? What's your best dish?*  
Fish we catch and cook up the same night. It's pretty hard to mess that up.
- Q7** *What's your favorite thing to do on an off-day?*  
We'll take the dog out and let him play at a dog park.
- Q8** *What kind of dog do you have?*  
A lab mix named Rocky. We got him from the humane society.
- Q9** *What's your all-time favorite movie?*  
"Austin Powers in Goldmember."
- Q10** *What exercise do you hate doing?*  
Running. You've got to do it, though.

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# MARYLAND GAMING

## Regardless Of Supreme Court Decision, Rise Of Sports Gambling Will Continue

★ **BILL ORDINE**

Forget the NFL agonizing over what's a catch, or Major League Baseball's latest gimmick to quicken the pace of its games.

The most important decision regarding the future of sports has been in the hands of the U.S. Supreme Court for the last several months. That would be the call on the case that pits the state of New Jersey against Big Sports (meaning the NFL, MLB, NBA, NHL and NCAA).

The decision on that case has been expected on any given Monday -- the day the Supreme Court usually announces decisions -- this spring or early summer. It could land in May or June.

At issue is whether New Jersey can offer sports betting at its casinos and racetracks, just like Nevada. The central issue has been a 1992 federal law,

the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act (PASPA) that prohibits states from legalizing sports gambling. Big Sports has opposed New Jersey, contending legalized sports betting could hurt its product.

Some folks have viewed the case as simply whether sports gambling will be allowed in any state that wants it. That's too simplistic.

Unlike a sports score, the decision the Supreme Court hands down may not render an outcome as clear-cut as the final numbers on a scoreboard.

Regardless of how the Supreme Court rules, there are some things about sports gambling in America that are almost certain:

### MORE WIDESPREAD SPORTS GAMBLING WILL HAPPEN

Regardless of the Supreme Court's decision, whether it is sweeping or nuanced, the momentum toward sports

gambling in America has become an irresistible force. Whether the spread of sports gambling is a function of a judicial decision or legislative action -- such as Congress repealing or amending PASPA -- it's coming, just as sure as another TV commercial for insurance.

Why?

It is financially good, or even essential, for everyone who makes money off of sports -- the owners, the players and the media. Those folks are finally frightened enough by their loosening grip on America's fleeting attention to concede the point.

Nothing encourages fan engagement quite like having a stake on an event's outcome. For those selling T-shirts, luxury suites and everything in between -- like advertising time and subscriptions to sports content -- fan engagement is everything.

### LEAGUES, PLAYERS AND STATES WILL WANT THEIR CUT

Admittedly, you don't have to be a soothsayer to see this coming because the leagues already tipped their hands. Stunningly, while they are parties in the argument against New Jersey's ambition to have sports gambling, the NBA and MLB have simultaneously been mounting efforts in some individual states to help craft legislation to mold the rules and regulation of sports gambling laws. That such legislation will establish state governments' shares of taxes is a slam-dunk.

A big part of the leagues' helpfulness in crafting that legislation has been to devise ways in which they would extract direct or indirect revenue from the wagers.

In one proposal, sports leagues suggest they receive 1 percent of the handle (meaning all money bet on games), which would translate to a stunningly high 20 percent of sports gambling revenues.

The justification for the money-grab, sometimes dubbed an "integrity fee," is that leagues would have to beef up their vigilance to protect the integrity of their games. Of course, considering there's a multi-billion dollar illegal market in sports gambling churning away every minute of every day, you'd think that sports leagues were already taking care of the integrity business.

But if the "integrity" argument doesn't work, the leagues could argue that the statistics and data to determine wagers are something that they own and control -- and they should be paid for those things.

As far as the players are concerned,

that move is already afoot. Last month, the players' associations for all four major sports leagues joined to announce their interest in sports gambling.

They said, in part, the following:

"Our unions have been discussing the potential impact of legalized gambling on players' privacy and publicity rights, the integrity of our games and the volatility on our businesses," the Players' Associations said in a joint statement.

"Betting on sports may become widely legal, but we cannot allow those who have lobbied the hardest for sports gambling to be the only ones controlling how it would be ushered into our businesses. The athletes must also have a seat at the table to ensure that players' rights and the integrity of our games are protected."

Notice the use of the word "rights" (as in "publicity rights") in that statement. Those rights just may have some monetary value, as the players see it.

### SPORTS MEDIA WILL INCREASINGLY FOCUS ON BETTING

Until recently, the issue of betting has been a minor sidebar in sports coverage.

That will change.

It already is changing.

Brent Musburger, the veteran broadcaster who had a long career at CBS, ABC and ESPN, now anchors a purely sports betting show from Las Vegas that is live streamed several days a week.

The Action Network is a website that has brought together previously independent websites that specialize in sports data, daily fantasy sports and betting analysis to produce a fistful of articles every day. The Action Network was put together by Los Angeles-based The Chernin Group, which has produced TV series and feature films, so this is a serious editorial effort.

As sports' gambling becomes more widespread, reporting on betting and wagering advice will become as much a part of the mainstream sports media landscape as that night's highlight plays.

Ted Leonsis, owner of the NBA's Washington Wizards, NHL's Washington Capitals and WNBA's Washington Mystics, along with other sports teams including the Arena Football League Baltimore Brigade, is especially bullish about sports wagering's place in media.

In a radio interview late last year, Leonsis made this observation:

"I joked the other day with someone from ESPN, I said look, 'If you're a day trader or you're in the financial community, you have CNBC on 24/7. And there are buy-side analysts and there are sell-side analysts and there's a ticker. You could see one day ESPN2 being like CNBC.'

"Gambling is no different than betting on stocks on Wall Street, right? The people who do best are the most informed."

Leonsis is a sports owner who can feel the tectonic plates of sports beginning to shift.

There can be arguments that it will be for the better or for the worse.

What there is no argument about is that it is inevitable. •



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# RAVENS REPORT

## 'Masterful' First Round Highlights Ozzie Newsome's Final Draft

★ **BO SMOLKA**

It probably isn't fair to say Ozzie Newsome saved his best for last -- because his best was actually first, when he picked future Hall of Famers Jonathan Ogden and Ray Lewis with the very first picks in Ravens history.

But in the first round of his final draft as Ravens general manager last month, Newsome was at his finest, demonstrating all the traits that have made him among the most widely respected and successful general managers in league history throughout the last quarter century.

Newsome was patient. He was calculating. He was calm, and then when opportunity came, he was well-positioned to strike, and he was decisive. As a result, the Ravens came away with a pair of first-round draft picks -- the presumptive starting tight end in Hayden Hurst and the quarterback of the future in Lamar Jackson.

"What happened in that draft room was a masterpiece," head coach John Harbaugh said after the opening night of the draft.

Granted, optimism always reigns in the hours after the draft, and even Newsome was quick to caution that no one yet knows how good this draft class will be.

"Ask me two years from now," Newsome said after the draft ended, "because now we have to get them in, we have to work with them, we have to develop them, and then two years from now we'll be able to determine what job we did this weekend."

Still, the fact that the Ravens were able to come away with Hurst and Jackson speaks to Newsome's war-room savvy. He obviously could have selected either player when the Ravens were initially on the clock at No. 16. But by demonstrating patience and making an educated guess as to how the draft would unfold, he was able to trade back, acquire additional picks and get both of them. As has often been the case, his instinct was spot-on.

The Ravens traded back twice -- bypassing some outstanding players in the process -- first to No. 22 and then

again to No. 25, knowing that a number of players they coveted would still be there. Then, using the draft-pick capital gained from one of those deals, the Ravens jumped back into the first round and grabbed Jackson at No. 32, the final pick of the round.

There are major ramifications to that move as well; since Jackson was a first-round pick, the Ravens automatically have a fifth-year option on him, which would not be the case if he was selected one pick later.

To hear Newsome and others talk of the moments leading up to the deal, it has all the earmarks of Newsome at his finest. The Ravens had already picked at No. 25, selecting Hurst. Their night could have ended right there -- and some in the draft room thought it had -- and the first round would have been deemed a success for having selected the top tight end that fit one of the team's most pressing needs.

But, as everyone learned about 30 minutes later, Newsome wasn't done.

The Ravens had previously had Jackson in for a workout. Their interest in the former Heisman Trophy winner from Louisville had been widely broadcast, which does not always translate to actual interest given pre-draft smokescreens.

But it's clear the Ravens were very interested, and that makes sense given how several members of the Ravens' offensive coaching staff -- especially Marty Mornhinweg, Greg Roman and James Urban -- had a long track record of success with dual-threat quarterbacks in the mold of Jackson, such as Michael Vick, Colin Kaepernick and Tyrod Taylor.

Now it was a matter of getting him.

Eric DeCosta, Newsome's longtime top lieutenant who will succeed him as general manager next season, and Newsome had already focused on the Eagles as a potential trade partner. Newsome was willing to part with second-round picks this year and next year, and they knew the Eagles were light on Day 2 picks.

The Ravens figured the Eagles weren't in the market for Jackson -- not with Carson Wentz and Super Bowl MVP and backup extraordinaire Nick Foles already on the roster.

So trade talk heated up -- and then stalled. When Newsome first got off the phone with Eagles executive vice president for football operations Howie Roseman, no deal was

## The Ravens' 2018 DRAFT CLASS

- > **1ST ROUND:**  
TE HAYDEN HURST | SOUTH CAROLINA
- 1ST ROUND:**  
QB LAMAR JACKSON | LOUISVILLE
- 3RD ROUND:**  
T ORLANDO BROWN | OKLAHOMA
- 3RD ROUND:**  
TE MARK ANDREWS | OKLAHOMA
- 4TH ROUND:**  
CB ANTHONY AVERETT | ALABAMA
- 4TH ROUND:**  
ILB KENNY YOUNG | UCLA
- 4TH ROUND:**  
WR JALEEL SCOTT | NEW MEXICO STATE
- 5TH ROUND:**  
WR JORDAN LASLEY | UCLA
- 6TH ROUND:**  
S DESHON ELLIOTT | TEXAS
- 6TH ROUND:**  
OL GREG SENAT | WAGNER
- 6TH ROUND:**  
C BRADLEY BOZEMAN | ALABAMA
- 7TH ROUND:**  
DE ZACH SIELER | FERRIS STATE

done. Then the Eagles were on the clock. Newsome, as he has done in the frenetic war room for 23 years, remained calm. They'll call back, he told people in the room.

Sure enough, they did, and the deal was finalized, with the Ravens sending second-round picks in 2018 and 2019, along with a fourth-round pick, to the Eagles for the No. 32 overall pick and a fourth-rounder.

"It was masterful, the way it happened in the draft room tonight," Newsome said moments after Jackson had been selected. "The trades came to us, and we were able to acquire some picks in the third and fourth round, then having the ability to go back up and get the quarterback at the end of the round, it was unbelievable."

In drafting Jackson, Newsome not only supplied the organization with its quarterback of the future, but it sent a palpable jolt of energy through the fan base sorely in need of one.

Ravens officials have acknowledged that they noticed the empty seats last year. They knew of the anger fans felt in light of the team's national anthem protest in London. They sensed fan apathy derived from three straight years without a playoff berth and a roster largely devoid of charismatic playmakers.

On the first night of his final draft, Newsome changed the narrative with a bold move to select one of the most charismatic playmakers in the entire draft, and the fan base took note.

Fan reaction on local sports talk radio was overwhelmingly positive, and Lamar Jackson's No. 8 jersey flew off the virtual shelves of the team's online store.

As Newsome cautioned, Jackson's story is very much unwritten. Newsome and Harbaugh aren't about to anoint anyone who has yet to throw an NFL pass. In fact, both stressed that in 2018, the Ravens remain incumbent quarterback Joe Flacco's team.

But make no mistake, Jackson was drafted to be the face of this franchise into the 2020s, and he is only wearing purple today because Ozzie Newsome, in the final draft of his remarkable GM career, was on the top of his game. •



Hayden Hurst



Lamar Jackson



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For what feels like the last three decades, the question of whether the Preakness Stakes could move out of Baltimore has loomed over every spring. But more than ever before, the question of whether this year's event could be the last Preakness in Baltimore seems legitimate, with a move to Laurel Park feeling inevitable.

So with that in mind, Baltimore could perhaps use some new major sporting events to fill the void. Most would be one-offs, others could happen annually. Here are the 15 major sporting events that should happen in Baltimore.



## MAJOR SPORTING EVENTS THAT SHOULD HAPPEN IN BALTIMORE

### [ 01 ] BIG TEN BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

This is the first of a few events on the list that would require a new downtown arena, which is an issue that has existed for some time. In fact, I believe the civic leader in charge when the issue first began was Cecil Calvert. That being said, should a new barn ever pop up in town, the Big Ten has already brought the tournament to Washington, D.C., and appears willing to keep moving it around. Of course, if Maryland doesn't get any better, I'm not certain anyone around here will care all that much.

### [ 02 ] COLLEGE CUP

While an outdoor sporting event in December wouldn't necessarily seem to be a perfect fit for Baltimore, college soccer's equivalent of the Final Four has been held in Chester, Pa., (just outside Philadelphia) twice in the last five years and two of the next four are slated for Cary, N.C. Warm weather doesn't appear to be a necessity. Of course, considering how weather works in Baltimore, it might somehow actually be warm here in December anyway. The regular success of programs like Maryland and UMBC would make this event a logical fit, and a venue like Towson's Johnny Unitas Stadium would seem to be the correct size.

### [ 03 ] GERVONTA DAVIS TITLE FIGHT

This one might not even require a new arena. The Baltimore native has yet to main event a major fight and hasn't fought in Baltimore since July 2013. He's hoping for his next fight to be against the Tevin Farmer/Billy Dib winner to unify the WBA super featherweight title he currently holds with the IBF belt he previously held. While Brooklyn or Las Vegas might seem to be the most logical locations for the fight, the chance for Baltimore to embrace their current champ could also be enticing.

### [ 04 ] MARYLAND-NAVY COLLEGE FOOTBALL GAME

The difficulty of pulling this off cannot be overstated. Navy's schedule already features eight American Athletic Conference games annually plus rivalry contests against Army, Air Force and Notre Dame. Maryland now plays nine Big Ten games a year. There isn't much room to add anything to the schedule. But we can still hope, right? The schools have met twice at M&T Bank Stadium since 2000, both incredible events that breathed life into the city over Labor Day weekend. Perhaps the schools could play each other every fourth or fifth year and could alternate hosting another team in Baltimore in the other years?

### [ 05 ] MCDONALD'S ALL-AMERICAN GAME

The annual high school all-star event featured two Baltimore-area players this year, Mount St. Joseph center (and future Terp) Jalen Smith and Kentucky-bound John

Carroll guard Immanuel Quickley. After a long stint in Chicago, the game was elsewhere again this year (Atlanta). Could you imagine how much fun it would be if the next time two locals played in this event they were on the floor of a new Baltimore arena together? That would be neat.

### [ 06 ] MLB ALL-STAR GAME

This July marks 25 years since the last time Charm City hosted the Mid-Summer Classic. We all know the story. The Orioles won't be hosting the event again until the ongoing MASN dispute with the Nationals is settled ... despite the fact that the Nationals are hosting this year. It just kind of is what it is. But could you imagine how much fun it might be for Nats slugger Bryce Harper to take aim at the Warehouse during the Home Run Derby?

### [ 07 ] NBA AND NHL REGULAR-SEASON GAMES

The Washington Wizards and Capitals both played preseason games in Baltimore in recent years, but issues with the facility and a lack of interest made the experiment short-lived. A new venue might improve the chances of getting area sports fans interested ... as long as the games were actual, regular-season games. Baltimoreans aren't exactly enamored with paying real money to see preseason games ... even the ones involving their own teams. And then there's the chance of actually landing an NBA or NHL team of our own, but I'm trying to stay at least in the vicinity of reality.

### [ 08 ] NCAA LACROSSE FINAL FOUR

There are plenty of people within the sport who think having the Final Four in Baltimore permanently would be best for the sport of lacrosse. The problem is that the folks here don't seem to agree. The Orioles don't want to give up hosting games on Memorial Day weekend.

The Ravens don't seem to think the money brought in by the event is worth the fight to host the event. With that said, it's not coming back to Baltimore any time soon.

### [ 09 ] NCAA TOURNAMENT FIRST ROUND

One of the cooler things about UMBC's historic upset win against Virginia this year is that its head coach (Ryan Odom) was actually in attendance the last time the city hosted the amazing event that is the first round of the NCAA Tournament. Odom, of course, is the son of Dave Odom, who was Wake Forest's coach when the Deacons were the No. 1 seed at the then-Baltimore Arena in 1995. The first day is pure magic, with four games throughout the day. Again, the city will need an arena to make it happen.

### [ 10 ] NFL DRAFT

With incredible success in Dallas, Philadelphia and Chicago since moving out of New York, the draft seems like the perfect event to continue moving throughout the country. Cities like Nashville, Denver, Jacksonville and Canton, Ohio, (home of the Pro Football Hall of Fame) have pushed for future events. A Baltimore draft could incorporate Fort McHenry, the Inner Harbor and M&T Bank Stadium throughout a late April weekend.

### [ 11 ] PGA BMW CHAMPIONSHIP

After hosting the PGA Tour Champions' Senior Players Championship last year, there was a belief that Caves Valley would push to try to land the FedEx Cup playoff event, which rotates annually between the Chicago area and another city in the country. Caves Valley would probably still need to do some more work to manage the incredibly large crowds that would come to a PGA Tour event, but it shouldn't be impossible to pull off.

### [ 12 ] UFC PAY-PER-VIEW

After UFC 172 pulled in a \$2.3 million gate in Baltimore in 2014, I thought the city would be a sure thing to land another major event in the coming years. Alas, it still hasn't happened. The 2014 event was a unique circumstance, as it was announced when Arthur Jones, the brother of then light heavyweight champion Jon Jones, was playing for the Ravens. Since then, Arthur Jones has departed and Jon Jones' career has spiraled due to issues away from the octagon. Sadly, there is no current obvious logical option to main event a Baltimore fight in Jones' stead.

### [ 13 ] U.S. OLYMPIC SWIMMING TRIALS

Unfortunately, the 2020 trials have already been announced to return to Omaha, so 2024 would be the next option for Baltimore (which would again give a little time to erect a new arena). And it's not impossible that Michael Phelps might un-retire, retire and un-retire again by then. I mean, he'll still only be 39. With Maryland native Katie Ledecky likely to still be a dominant figure at that point, and Harford County native Chase Kalisz likely to be a mainstay on the international swimming circuit, Baltimore could still be a logical choice even if Phelps stays retired (there's no chance he will though, right?)

### [ 14 ] WORLD CUP

This is the one that seems most likely at the moment, as Baltimore is part of the United States' bid for the 2026 event. Of course, the North American bid -- which includes Canada and Mexico -- still has to win, which for political reasons might not be the sure thing we thought it was.

### [ 15 ] WE COULD JUST KEEP THE PREAKNESS?

That would be really great. •

BY KEVIN ECK

# BEN'S 2ND ACT

**B**altimore Orioles radio play-by-play announcer Joe Angel still chuckles when he recalls the time last year when former Orioles pitcher Ben McDonald, during one of his stints in the booth as an analyst, made one of the more mundane moments of the broadcast unintentionally hilarious.

"We have this disclaimer we have to read once a game about how you can't copy them or use them for your own purposes, and there's a word in that disclaimer: 'disseminated,'" Angel said. "Well, Ben went two or three days and he could not say 'disseminated.' He kept saying something like 'dis-se-seminated.' He did it in that Southern drawl, and we were both cracking up in the booth. You could almost hear people laughing along on the radio, saying, 'Ah, that's Ben. What a great guy.' Even when he can't do something, people like him."

McDonald's folksy demeanor, combined with his baseball knowledge and infectious love for the sport, has made him a favorite of listeners and viewers of Orioles radio and television broadcasts since he began working with the club as an analyst for select games in 2010. This season, fans will get to hear more of McDonald than ever, as he will take part in more than 30 games on the Orioles Radio Network beginning in late July.

It's fitting that Baltimore has a role in the second act of McDonald's professional life. One of the most heralded prospects of all-time, McDonald was selected by the Orioles as the No. 1 overall pick in the 1989 Major League Baseball Draft. McDonald played seven seasons in Baltimore, and though he experienced his share of highs and lows during his time in orange and black, McDonald was thrilled when the Orioles asked him to join their broadcast team.

"I tell people all the time that Baltimore is where I grew up and became a young man," said McDonald, a Louisiana native who resides in Denham

Springs, near Baton Rouge. "I was a 21-year-old kid when I came to Baltimore, and I didn't know anything about anything. The fans really took me in, and Baltimore has always been a home away from home for me. When I got the chance to come back, gosh, I felt like I was home again."

McDonald, 50, began his broadcasting career as an analyst for his alma mater, Louisiana State, on a regional television network in 2003, several years after his playing career was cut short due to shoulder injuries. The College Baseball Hall of Famer also works as a college baseball color commentator for ESPN and the SEC Network.

Angel, who has the distinction of being the play-by-play announcer for McDonald's major league debut in 1989 as well as his first major league radio broadcast as an analyst more than 20 years later, said McDonald is a natural in the booth.

"Ben's friendly, he's a good storyteller and he has credibility," Angel said. "People believe what he says and they love the way he says it. That's a pretty good combination to have."

That McDonald is an entertaining commentator should come as no surprise to anyone who remembers the character he was as a player. The jocular McDonald once put an alligator in the bathtub of a teammate while in the Florida Instructional League, and during a rain delay at Oriole Park in 1993, he donned a floppy hat, got his rod and reel and went "fishing" in the flooded dugout.

McDonald's transition from player to commentator was not seamless, however. In fact, when he had no choice but to retire in 1998 at the age of 30, the gregarious country boy sank into a depression that lingered for months.

## GREAT EXPECTATIONS

To say McDonald was the very definition of a phenom would be an understatement. With his extraordinary talent -- he received Major League Scouting Bureau's highest score ever -- gangly body and proclivity for wrestling alligators in the Louisiana bayous, the 6-foot-7 right-hander who also played basketball in college was a real-life Sidd Finch, the fictional baseball sensation rolled out in an April Fools issue of *Sports Illustrated* in 1985.

It was a foregone conclusion that the Orioles would select the hard-throwing junior from LSU with the first pick in the 1989 draft. That the Orioles would actually be able to sign the "golden boy" -- he led the U.S. Olympic baseball team to gold in 1988 and won the 1989 Golden Spikes Award as the nation's best amateur baseball player -- was much less certain.

After more than two months of intense negotiations between Orioles president Larry Lucchino and agent Scott Boras, the two sides finally reached an agreement on a three-year, \$950,000 contract, which at the time was the second-highest ever given to an amateur baseball player (the Kansas City Royals had given Bo Jackson a \$1.1 million deal in 1986 to lure him from the NFL), and a then-record \$350,000 signing bonus.

Less than three weeks after signing, McDonald made his major league debut Sept. 6, 1989 at Memorial Stadium, coming on in

relief against the Cleveland Indians with two runners on base and one out in the third inning with the Orioles trailing, 4-0. He threw one pitch and got an inning-ending double play. That was impressive for sure, but not as impressive as McDonald's first major league start, which he made against the Chicago White Sox at Memorial Stadium July 21, 1990. He pitched a complete-game shutout, throwing just 85 pitches during a 2-0 victory. McDonald also won his next four starts, putting his record at 5-0 with a 1.55 ERA.

At that point, giddy Orioles fans likely envisioned multiple Cy Young Awards for McDonald and his likeness emblazoned on a bronze plaque in Cooperstown, N.Y., but the reality would be much different. After winning his first six decisions, McDonald went 52-53 with the Orioles before leaving as a free agent after the 1995 season to sign with the Milwaukee Brewers. For his career, McDonald was 78-70 with a 3.91 ERA in nine seasons.

Reflecting on his years with the Orioles, McDonald said the ridiculously high expectations weighed on him.

"I remember my second year, Frank Robinson was the manager, and he said in public that if we were going to have a chance of winning that year I was going to have to win 20 games," McDonald said. "I'm thinking, 'I don't even know how to pitch yet and you're telling me that I have to win 20 games.' All of a sudden, you start trying to live up to that. It spiraled out of control for a while for me. There was so much hype that the fans expected it, too. Of course, it wasn't their fault; I was supposed to do all these things at an early age. I just think the expectations were unrealistic at that point."

McDonald's stuff was undeniable; the problem, he said, was that he didn't understand how to use it.

"I was in a man's game all of a sudden," he said. "My college coach had called every pitch I ever threw at LSU. ... Whatever he called, I just threw and never really understood why I was doing it. Now I'm in the big leagues and, heck, I have to call my own game against the best players in the world."

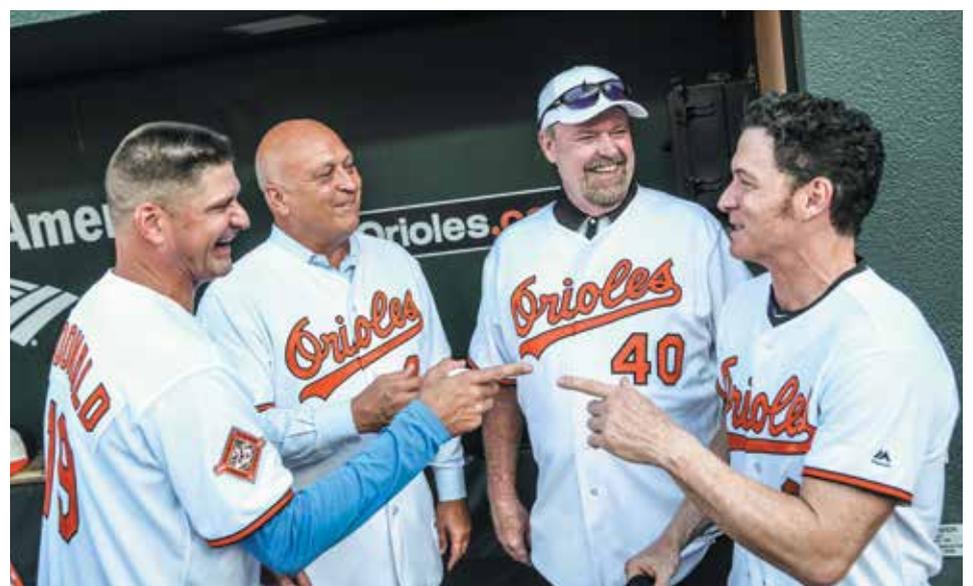
McDonald's battery mate in 1991 was a young Chris Hoiles, who also was learning on the job, so shortstop Cal Ripken Jr. called McDonald's pitches that season. When veteran pitcher Rick Sutcliffe signed with the Orioles in 1992, he served as a mentor to McDonald and often called his pitches from the dugout.

"I was also 6-[foot]-7, and I was a first-round pick by the Dodgers and a lot of expectations were placed on me," said Sutcliffe, now a baseball analyst for ESPN. "I was just able to share a lot of my experiences with him and just let him take it from there."

Said McDonald: "When Rick Sutcliffe came over, I had a veteran guy that I could lean on a little bit and bounce stuff off of. That helped my maturing process a lot. ... I felt like I was on my way and had some things figured out, and the numbers really proved that."

McDonald's ERA went from 4.84 in 1991, to 4.24 in 1992, to 3.39 in 1993. In the strike-shortened 1994 season, he went 14-7, finishing fourth in the American League in victories.

"Then injuries started happening," Mc-



(LEFT TO RIGHT) BEN McDONALD, CAL RIPKEN JR., RICK SUTCLIFFE AND BRADY ANDERSON



(LEFT TO RIGHT) JORIE, BEN, NICOLE AND JASE McDONALD

Donald said, "and it was downhill from there."

## 'JUST NOT MEANT TO BE'

Tendinitis in McDonald's shoulder limited him to 13 starts with the Orioles in 1995, as he went 3-6 with a 4.16 ERA. He rebounded to go 12-10 with a 3.90 ERA with the Brewers in 1996, but shoulder problems returned the following year, and he had to undergo season-ending surgery to repair his torn rotator cuff. McDonald was traded to the Indians after the 1997 season, but he would not throw a single pitch for them.

When McDonald walked off the mound at Milwaukee County Stadium after retiring the Indians in order in the sixth inning July 16, 1997, he had no idea it would be his final appearance in the majors. He was four

months away from his 30th birthday.

After McDonald underwent two subsequent shoulder surgeries, renowned orthopedic surgeon Dr. James Andrews delivered the news McDonald had been dreading.

"He said, 'Listen, go find you a fishing pole and go do something else,'" said McDonald, who underwent three rotator cuff surgeries. "He said, 'You've worked as hard as anybody I've seen go through rehab, and we all did the best we could do. It's just not meant to be. You've got to move on.'"

"It was like someone hit me in the head with a hammer," McDonald said of his reaction when Andrews told him his playing career was over. "All I had known since the time I was 5 years old was sports. I'm supposed to be in the prime of my career. I've just now got it figured out and now you tell me I can't do what I love anymore. It was an adjustment to say the least." →

“There was depression. I just moped around the house. I really wasn’t much fun to be around for my wife and [young daughter]. It almost cost me my marriage; almost cost me a lot of things. I kind of turned my back on everything.”

McDonald said he was in a funk for about six months before he finally was able to come to grips with his situation.

“I’ve always enjoyed being outdoors and hunting, and that’s what really helped pull me through it,” he said. “I was able to go out in the woods by myself and sit up in a tree and just think about things and go back through the whole process. The more I thought about it, I realized, ‘Hey, some things just aren’t meant to be.’ I saw the best doctors. We rehabbed the heck out of it. We did everything we were supposed to do and it just didn’t work. At the end of the day, I can live with that now.”

McDonald decided to make the best of his newfound time at home by getting more involved with his family. His and his wife Nicole’s daughter, Jorie, was a preschooler when he retired, and their son, Jase, was born a few years later. When his kids began playing sports, McDonald coached their teams, including Jorie’s traveling softball team, which went on to win two national summer league titles. (McDonald will coach 17-year-old Jase’s summer league baseball team before he heads to Baltimore.)

McDonald’s professional future remained uncertain.

“I remember saying to myself that [having to retire] is not going to define me as a human being and what my life is going to

be about,” McDonald said. “I got the rest of my life in front of me. What am I going to do from here on out? I knew I was going to stay busy hunting and fishing, but I also wanted something else, too.”

## TALKING BASEBALL

That “something else” presented itself several years after his playing career ended when he ran into his old college baseball coach at LSU, Skip Bertman, who told McDonald that Cox Sports Television, the regional network that broadcasted LSU’s baseball games, was looking for a color analyst.

“I told him I’d never done it before, but he said, ‘You’d be great,’” McDonald said. “I kind of jumped in feet first not having a clue what all it took and the prep work. I started off without a score pad or anything, just up there talking about baseball.”

McDonald made enough of a positive impression that ESPN came calling that same year to have him work a Super Regional in Baton Rouge. That led to him doing about 15 LSU baseball games a season for the next several years in addition to getting more work with ESPN and eventually the SEC Network. He announced his first College World Series in 2017.

Including his Orioles gig, McDonald will do more than 100 games this year.

“About 10 years ago it went from a hobby to a job,” McDonald said. “I’m still an old country boy at heart, and I don’t necessarily enjoy all the travel, but I love it once they say

‘play ball’ and I get to talk about baseball. It’s fun for me.”

In 2010, the Orioles brought in McDonald and fellow former Orioles stars Eddie Murray, Brady Anderson and Mike Boddicker to serve as color analysts on television and radio broadcasts on a rotating basis, each of them doing about a dozen games. McDonald instantly connected with the audience and has returned to Baltimore every year since to take part in select broadcasts.

“Ben knows what he’s talking about and he also has that down-home folksiness that people really enjoy hearing,” said Fred Manfra, the longtime Orioles radio play-by-play announcer who retired last season. “He has those expressions from the South that come up during the course of a broadcast. It’s like a young guy watching the game of baseball with exuberance and using the same phrases he used growing up.”

One of the first people McDonald goes to when he comes to Baltimore to get up to speed on the club is Orioles Hall of Fame pitcher Jim Palmer. During McDonald’s playing days, Palmer was someone he would talk to about pitching.

“Whether you’re Ben McDonald or Jim Palmer or anybody that is a player or broadcaster, there’s not a day that you don’t go to the ballpark and learn something new or see something different,” said Palmer, who is in his 26th season as an Orioles television analyst. “From what I’ve seen of Ben, he’s certainly embraced that, and he’s got the aptitude and the interest and the energy to do that. That’s why he’s a good broadcaster.”

Paying it forward, McDonald shares his

knowledge and experience with young Orioles starters Kevin Gausman and Dylan Bundy.

“When I see him here, I always make sure to talk to him,” said Gausman, who first met McDonald in 2011 when he was pitching for LSU and McDonald was the team’s television analyst. “... I was lucky enough while I was in college, me and a couple of guys went [to McDonald’s house] for dinner one night. We came over and saw his Golden Spikes Award.

“That’s when I found out he played basketball at LSU, too. He had a basketball jersey, and I was like, ‘Whose jersey is that?’ He said, ‘It’s mine.’ OK, that’s cool.”

McDonald said he’s happy to talk shop with the young pitchers, but he makes it a point not to force his opinions on them.

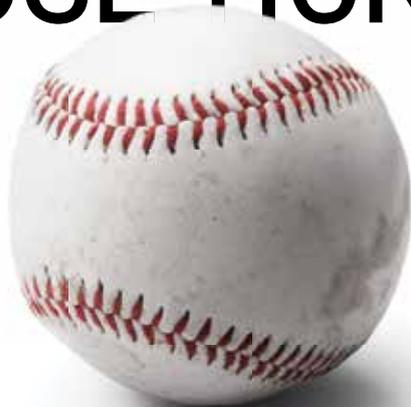
“I don’t want to do that because I know how it was when I was a player and an ex-player would come around,” McDonald said. “But if they ever ask me a question about something, of course I’m always there.”

It’s that approachability and genuineness that has endeared McDonald to Orioles fans throughout the years. The feeling is mutual.

“I look forward every year to going back to Baltimore and mingling with the fans,” he said. “My favorite thing is getting a crab cake and a cold beer. I still bump into some of the same ushers in the ballpark that were there when I played, and we have some talks. ... I just love Baltimore.” ■

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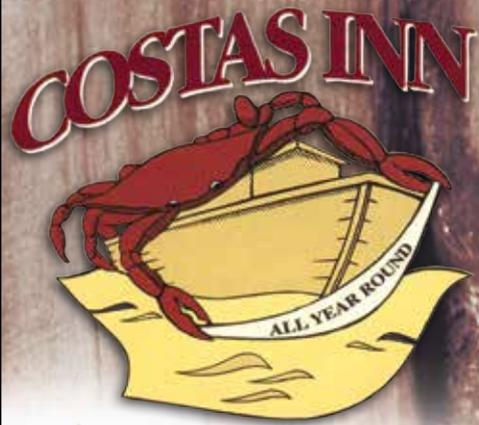
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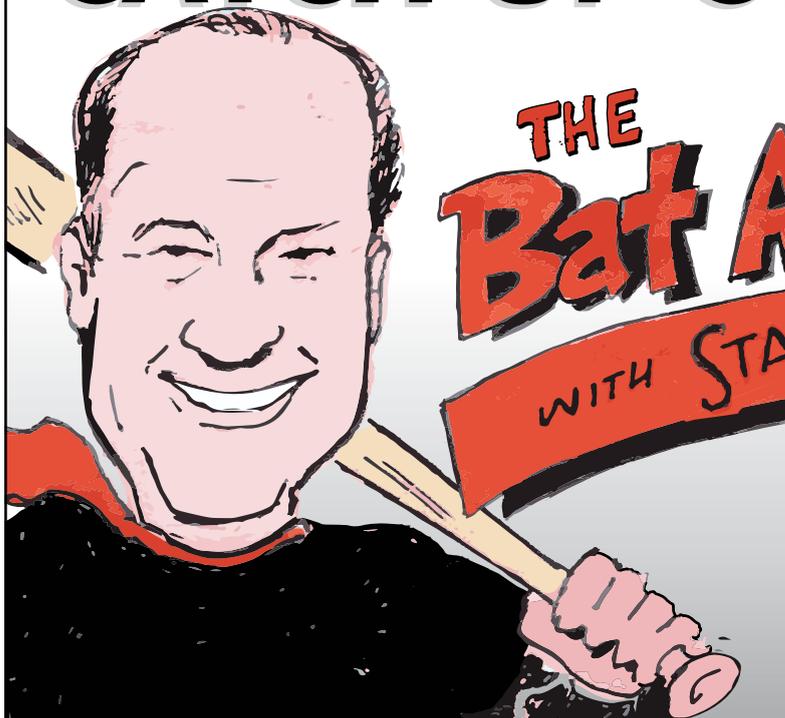
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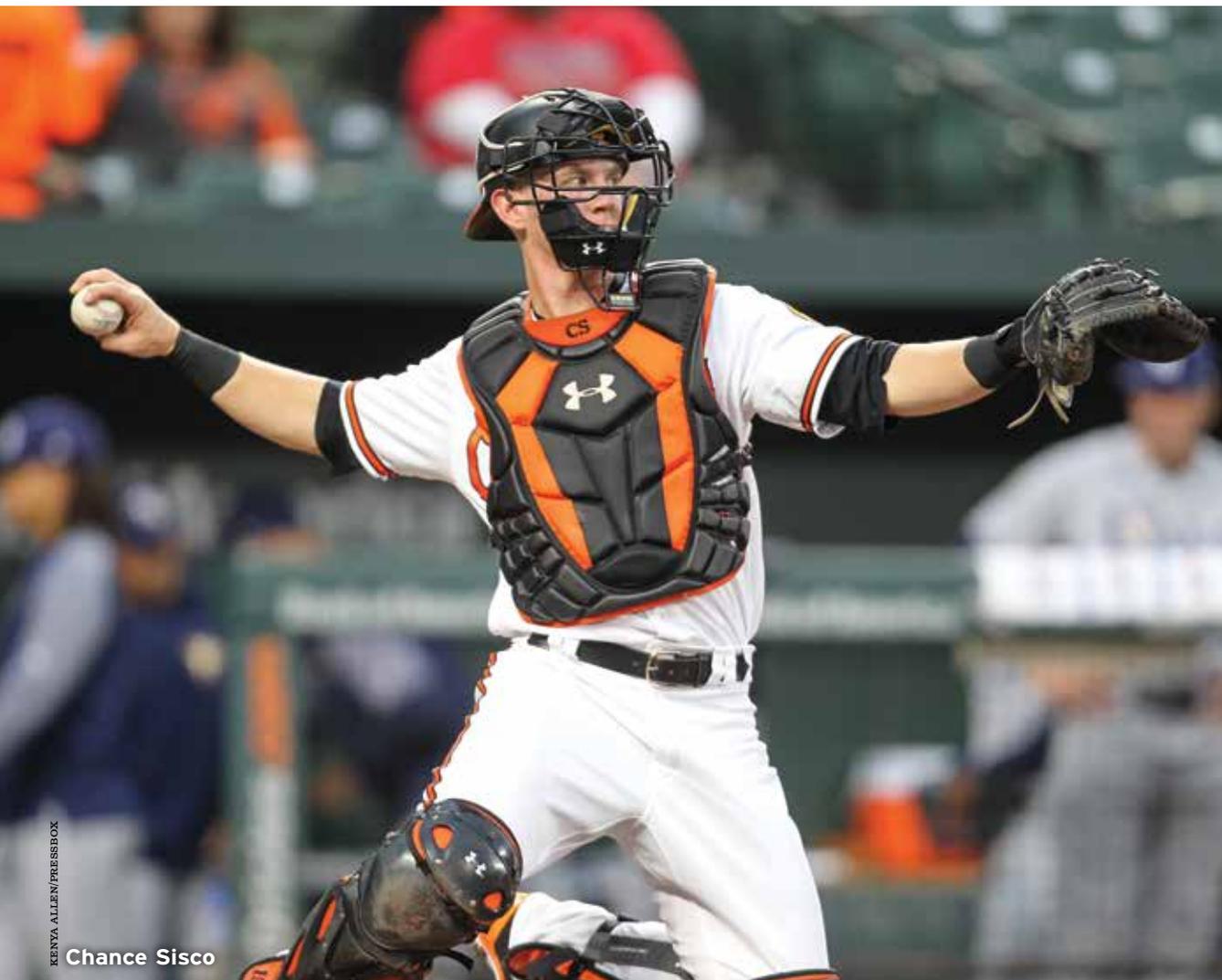


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# ORIOLES REPORT



KENYA ALLEN/PRESSBOX

Chance Sisco

## Chance Sisco Hopes To Be The Strong, Quiet Leader Behind The Plate

★ RICH DUBROFF

**I**t doesn't matter to Chance Sisco that he's often referred to as quiet. The 23-year-old Orioles catcher doesn't shy away from that description.

"I've been quiet my whole life," Sisco said.

That won't stop him from doing his job.

"I have no problem going over game plans and talking to [pitchers about] how their outings went and what we both need to work on," Sisco said. "I'm just not the outspoken type, I guess. I lead more by example rather than words. I've seen guys do it both ways and it works both ways."

Sisco had little big league experience before this season. He was called up last September and hit .333 in 10 games. That wasn't enough to convince the Orioles that Sisco was assuredly ready to share some of the catching duties with Caleb Joseph.

In spring training, Sisco showed them, hitting a ro-

bust .429 with two home runs and 10 RBIs while demonstrating improved defensive skills. Bench coach John Russell has worked well with Sisco.

"That was fun to watch. He and John have worked real hard at it," Orioles manager Buck Showalter said April 21, when Sisco became the first Baltimore catcher to throw out three basestealers in a game since Matt Wieters in August 2012.

"Keep in mind this guy was a lot more shortstop than he was catcher coming out of high school, so he's come a long way," Showalter said. "I know he should take a lot of pride in it."

Coming out of camp, Sisco made the Orioles' roster over Andrew Susac, even though Susac had more big league experience. Early in the season, it looked like a wise choice, especially considering Sisco's improved ability to control the running game. He threw out eight of his first 15 base stealers.

"There's a lot of ability there," Showalter said. "It's a lot like a pitcher mechanically. Some things you have to do, moving your feet and cutting out some steps that a lot of catchers make after they catch the ball. It's basically

a cheat move where you try to get your feet and his feet working a lot better. You can tell he has a lot of confidence throwing right now."

Besides Russell, Sisco has worked extensively with minor league catching coordinator Don Werner and Joseph, whom he credits for being generous with his knowledge.

After all, Sisco is taking playing time from Joseph.

"It was surprising at first, but getting to know the guy that he is and the way that he is with everyone else in the clubhouse, it's not surprising at all the way he treats me," Sisco said.

"The relationship that we've put together, it's awesome to see and to be on the receiving end of how he's treated me. A lot of credit goes to him. That's a tough thing to do for someone that plays the same position. He's in the position that he is because of the guy that he is."

Sisco has impressed Kevin Gausman, who has always had catchers older than he was, until now.

"I think he's been eager to learn, asking questions," Gausman said. "He's kind of on the quiet side, so you kind of have to pry it out of him sometimes. He likes talking the game. That's one thing I've noticed. He pays attention, and I know that Caleb has really kind of been there for him, too, to help him and get his reins here."

"Now, it's more about getting innings under his belt and being in those big situations. First time you do it at this level ... you kind of check [it] off the list, learn from it, and not let it happen again."

Showalter concurs, and while there are growing pains with Sisco's defense, both will have no choice but to work through them.

"That's why we wanted him to get a taste of it last year, just knowing the hitters and knowing the pitchers," Showalter said. "It's a process. He's done well with it. His learning curve is what we expected. You can tell with some of the pitchers [that] he just didn't know them and didn't know what to expect. He's getting a real feel for it."

The oldest player on the Orioles' roster is Darren O'Day, who at 35 is a dozen years older than Sisco. O'Day knows what he wants from a catcher, and the early weeks with Sisco have gone well.

"I actually threw to Chance in a rehab appearance a couple of years ago. He did well," O'Day said. "As soon as I came back, that was the first thing they wanted to know, 'How did Chance Sisco look?' It takes a long time to learn a position. He's still working at it, obviously, but at the end of the year last year, he was getting a feel for the position, pitch calling. There are so many phases to catching, and pitch calling is a very important one. I thought he was doing a great job with that."

"It's kind of carried over to this year. ... It is different having a young catcher back there. He's a really sharp. ... He listens a lot. He thinks a lot. He doesn't talk as much. As he gets more comfortable, he'll start talking more. He's a sharp kid, so he's picking things up quickly."

Sisco and Russell have spent hours on the fundamentals, and it seems to be paying off. His release time has gotten better, and it's a key to his success in throwing out runners.

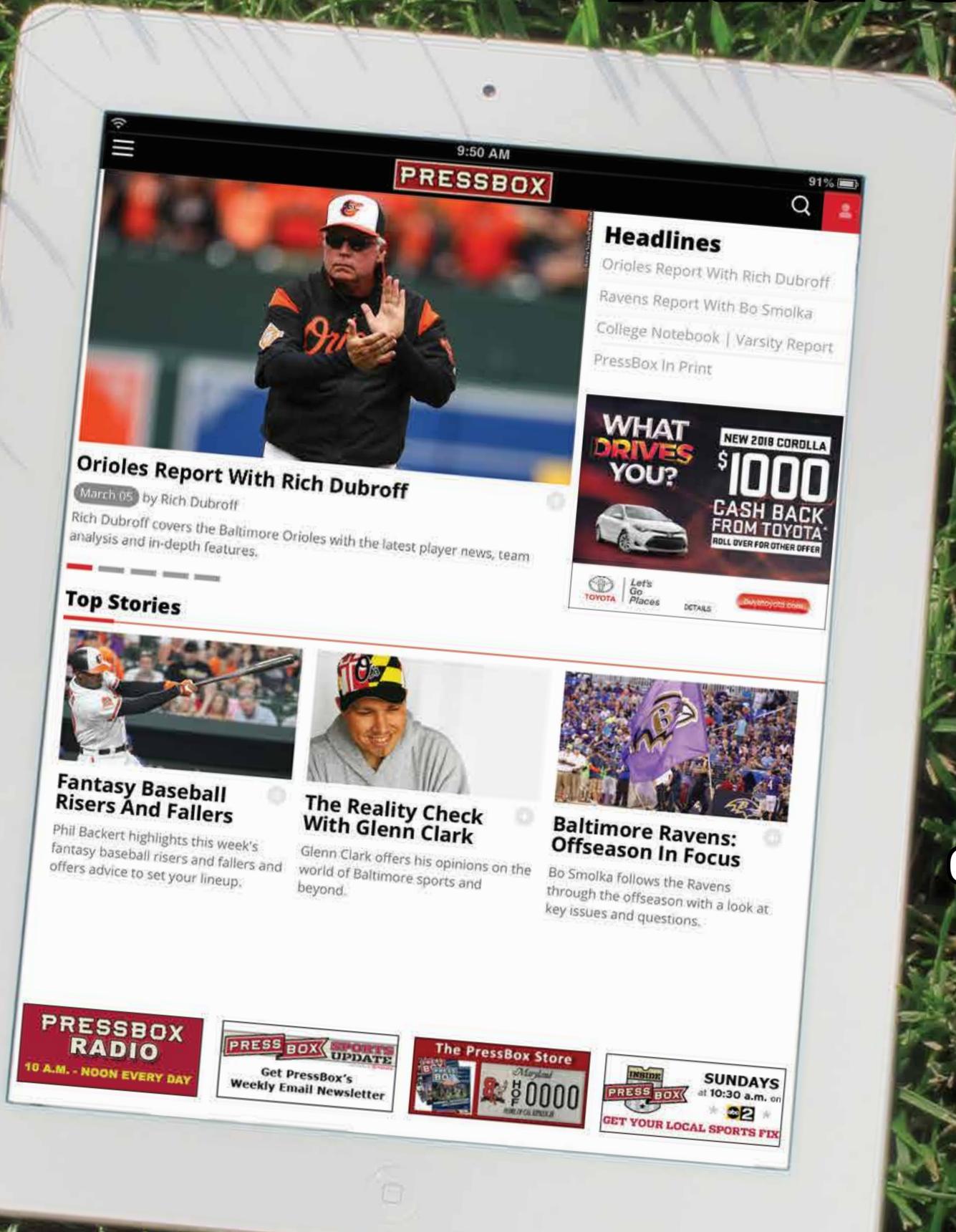
"I'm just trying to get it out as quick as I can, get the ball on its way," Sisco said. "A lot of credit goes to [Russell] and Caleb for helping me out tremendously. ... There's a lot of mechanics that do go into it, but once you do start feeling comfortable with those mechanics, it's a confidence boost."

As a rookie major leaguer, Sisco wasn't sure what to expect, but he's enjoying the experience.

"There are things that are different, things that are a little more complicated, but I don't know if I'm surprised by it, kind of expected it to be that way," Sisco said. "... There are things that are a lot different, but I'm not really surprised by them." •

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## CONNOLLY'S CORNER

# Long Litany Of Reasons For Orioles' Woeful Start

★ DAN CONNOLLY

In a blog entry earlier this month on BaltimoreBaseball.com, I asked readers whether the start of this Orioles' season had them more frustrated than ever before.

A significant number said yes -- and that wasn't surprising.

We live in the moment; things always seem worse, better or more intense as we are experiencing them. Proper perspective isn't found until we've moved on and can look back.

Still, the first six weeks of the Orioles' 2018 season have been terribly ugly. We don't need retrospect for that. Statistically speaking, however, this is not as bad as the 0-21 start of the 1988 season or the 4-32 finish to the 2002 season.

But fans don't want historical perspective. They want to scream from the foul pole that this has been positively miserable because there are so many factors that have led the Orioles to this point. There are so many reasons why this team is awful, why the future looks bleak and why the success in the recent past seems wasted.

Here are my thoughts on what has made the beginning of 2018 so painful to endure, even if it isn't the worst stretch, record-wise, in the franchise's history.

### IT'S A CARRYOVER

Sometimes bad starts are shocking. Yet the Orioles dropped 22 of 29 to end 2017. Since much of the personnel is the same, with the exception of two-fifths of the starting rotation, this has been an extension of last season's plummet. That's frustrating because the front office had the offseason to make this team better -- and it spent money on its biggest need. Yet this club isn't better. It's at least as bad as last September, maybe worse.

### THE ROTATION HAS IMPROVED, BUT ONLY MILDLY

The Orioles spent a guaranteed \$76 million to fill three spots in the rotation: Alex Cobb (a four-year, \$57 million deal); Andrew Cashner (two years, \$16 million); and Chris

Tillman (one year, \$3 million). But the results, so far, have not been considerably better. Cobb had almost no spring and struggled early, Cashner has been inconsistent and Tillman hasn't broken out of his 2017 funk. There's hope for this group, but the big step hasn't been taken yet.

### THE OFFENSE HAS REMAINED MADDENLY SIMILAR

Orioles executive vice president of baseball operations Dan Duquette has said repeatedly that the offense needs to be better at getting on base. And yet, nothing was done during the offseason to improve that. The primary offensive acquisitions were Colby Rasmus, Pedro Alvarez and Danny Valencia, all players with power and a propensity for strikeouts. The one-dimensional offense became even more one-dimensional and the strikeouts initially piled up at a record pace. Yes, these Orioles can erupt for a big inning on occasion, but that doesn't make up for those multiple-strikeout, rally-killing innings that are so prevalent with this team.

### THE DEFENSE IS MUCH WORSE

One of the more impressive things about manager Buck Showalter's teams during their postseason march from 2012-2016 was just how rock-solid the defense was. There was a Gold-Glove-caliber defender at most positions. That's no longer the case. The club's best defender switched positions from third base to shortstop, and Manny Machado is undergoing growing pains as part of the transition. He'll be fine, but third base -- with and without Tim Beckham, who underwent sports hernia surgery in late April -- is a concern. So, too, was second base with Jonathan Schoop on the shelf. The truth is the Orioles have arguably six first basemen and/or designated hitter types on the roster, and it shows.

### THE BULLPEN IS IN FLUX

Throughout the Orioles' recent run, the bullpen has been the fix-it-all duct tape. That's not the case anymore. Zach Britton likely won't pitch for the Orioles until early June due to offseason Achilles surgery. His replacement at closer, Brad Brach, has struggled mightily in the early

going. Mychal Givens and Darren O'Day have struggled to find consistency. The Orioles are also carrying a Rule 5 pick, Pedro Araujo, who has a good arm but had never pitched above High-A before the season and isn't yet prepared for having to make important pitches in the majors.

### MANNY IS GONE

Machado says all the right things, but there is little question that the pending free agent will be playing elsewhere in 2019. Frankly, the way the Orioles have started this year, it would be a shock if he isn't traded by the July 31 non-waiver deadline. The Orioles aren't going to pay him top dollar -- the sense is he'll get somewhere between \$200 and \$300 million -- and haven't attempted to negotiate in a couple years, believing (correctly) that ship has sailed. It's understandable the Orioles don't want to spend a huge chunk of their payroll on one player; the real frustration is born from the lack of foresight a few years ago in not attempting to lock up the generational talent. History appears to be repeating itself with Schoop, who is a free agent after 2019 and has not been approached about a long-term deal.

### DAVIS IS STAYING

When Chris Davis signed a franchise-record, seven-year, \$161 million deal with the Orioles in January 2016 -- a contract brokered by majority owner Peter Angelos -- most saw it as a sign that the Orioles were rewarding a prodigious slugger and strong defender who had led the league in homers in 2015. It also was perceived as an overpay, but, hey, it wasn't the fans' money. Well, it's been a disastrous ride for Davis, who often looks completely lost at the plate. He's 32, signed through 2022 and is untradeable. He's also not going to be cut; that would be a tremendous amount of money for a franchise like the Orioles to absorb with no chance of production at all. To exacerbate things, some fans have targeted Davis' contract as the reason the Orioles don't have the money for Machado. I don't fully buy that. Even if Davis had never been signed, I couldn't imagine the Orioles spending \$300 million on a single player. Yet, the way Davis' contract situation has turned out, it certainly makes it less likely for this ownership group to want to rendezvous in that upscale neighborhood again.

### LACK OF DIRECTION

Perhaps everything above can be wrapped up into this one paragraph. There doesn't seem to be a plan for these Orioles. Showalter and Duquette are without contracts after this season, and though I'd expect Showalter to return to the dugout, the hierarchy for 2019 is a mystery. Vice president Brady Anderson will continue to have major influence with the Angelos family, but without one person fully in charge, the approach going forward is in doubt. That may be the apex of frustration for the fan base, because you can't buy into a plan when you don't know what that plan is. •

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COURTESY OF MARYLAND ATHLETICS

Adam DiMillo

# Adam DiMillo Embodies Spirit Of Maryland Lacrosse

★ TODD KARPOVICH

Adam DiMillo is an “Ironman” for the Maryland men’s lacrosse team.

Entering this year’s NCAA Tournament, the senior appeared in 72 career games, second-most in the NCAA behind teammate Connor Kelly (73).

DiMillo’s streak is impressive considering he played through two shoulder injuries while transitioning from a short-stick defensive midfielder to a two-way player.

In short, DiMillo’s unselfish play and work ethic embodies the spirit of the Terps lacrosse program. He was named team captain this season and was also the 48th overall pick of the 2018 Major League Lacrosse Draft by the Charlotte Hounds.

“It’s been a dream come true,” DiMillo said about playing at Maryland. “Every young kid coming up through the ranks -- lower school, middle school, high school -- watches Maryland lacrosse on TV. Just being able to be a part of it and being in the locker room, is a dream come true.”

DiMillo came to Maryland as a highly touted midfielder from Bishop Timon-St. Jude High School in Buffalo, N.Y. He was a three-time U.S. Lacrosse High School All-American and was ranked as the No. 6 freshman midfielder in the nation, according to *Inside Lacrosse*.

DiMillo scored 238 goals and had 132 assists for 370 points at Bishop Timon-St. Jude and won the Tom Borelli Award, given to the best senior lacrosse player in Western New York in 2014.

However, when he enrolled at Maryland, head coach John Tillman asked him to focus on defense because the Terps needed the depth. DiMillo embraced the opportunity and appeared in all 19 games as a short-stick defensive midfielder during his first year

in College Park, Md.

“You come to Maryland and Coach wants to develop all of the guys into all-around players,” DiMillo said. “I saw playing defense as an opportunity to get better as a player. I ended up really helping my game, understanding both offensive and defensive concepts. I’ve gained a well-rounded understanding of the game.”

Shoulder injuries during DiMillo’s first two years limited what he could do as an attacking midfielder. As a result, the new position allowed him stay on the field and pick up more nuances of the game.

“He’s a guy who’s just a stable, measured, confident guy,” Tillman said. “When you have younger guys, you point out that’s the kind of guy you want to be. Adam DiMillo is a great role model on our team.”

After appearing in all 19 games as a sophomore, DiMillo got back to his natural position as an attacking midfielder the next year. He scored his first career goal at St. Joseph’s Feb. 14, 2017 and played in every game that year. DiMillo’s junior season culminated with two goals against Ohio State in the 2017 NCAA national championship game to help the Terps to a 9-6 win and their first title since 1975.

This season, DiMillo continued to be a key contributor. Maryland finished the regular season 11-2 and had a key 8-7 triple overtime win against Johns Hopkins that clinched a fourth consecutive Big Ten regular-season championship. That game was played in front of a crowd of 10,000 at Homewood Field.

“It was awesome,” DiMillo said. “You live for environments like that, 10,000-plus fans. You don’t get to experience a lot of things like that, especially during the regular season. You kind of see it down the stretch in the playoffs. It’s nice to get that type of game under your belt before you hit the postseason.”

DiMillo has also become a student of the game at Maryland. He closely studies each opponent to pick up on their tendencies, and that dedication has translated to success on the field.

“We watch a lot of film as a team,” DiMillo said. “Individually, you try to watch as many games as you can to understand your opponent.”

That type of game-planning has been especially important in the Big Ten. Maryland, Johns Hopkins and Rutgers have all spent time in the top 10 of the national polls this season.

The Blue Jays got a measure of revenge for the setback in the regular-season finale by beating the Terps, 13-10, in the championship game of the Big Ten tournament.

“Nobody believed where the conference is today,” DiMillo said. “There were two Big Ten teams in the national championship last year. It just shows that lacrosse is getting better across the board. The Big Ten is right up there with the best conferences in lacrosse.”

As a senior, DiMillo tries to help some of the younger players improve their game. It’s a “pay it forward” concept, because DiMillo was able to get valuable advice as an underclassman from players such as All-American Isaiah Davis-Allen.

DiMillo, who has missed just one game in four seasons in College Park, Md., also has the type of experience and success that can inspire a younger player.

“I’ve had an opportunity to play in just about every game,” DiMillo said. “I’ve learned a lot from my mistakes. I passed that knowledge onto the young guys, especially with the short-stick middies.”

DiMillo, who is majoring in finance, is considering a career in sales after graduation. He also wants to eventually coach and help young players thrive in the game.

“I plan on giving back to the game as much as it’s given to me,” DiMillo said.

For now, he has the Terps focused on repeating as champions.

“Every year, we restart,” DiMillo said. “Our goal is to win the Big Ten regular season and tournament and then win the national championship. That’s been our goal every year since I’ve been here. There’s no pressure to repeat, but it is one of our goals we intend to accomplish.” •

# Historic Senior Class For Terps' Women's Lacrosse Ready For 'Last Go-Round'

★ SCOTT LOWE



As the University of Maryland women's lacrosse class of 2018 makes its final journey through the NCAA Tournament, there's a lot for the group to be nostalgic about. Now is not the time, though.

If Maryland's seniors have learned anything during their four years under head coach Cathy Reese, an 11-time national champion as a player and coach, it's to focus on playing the best lacrosse they possibly can.

“It's crazy how fast the four years fly by,” Maryland senior Tewaaron Award nominee and team captain Megan Whittle (McDonogh) said. “I'm really proud of our senior class and am excited for our last go-round. The last four years we've been a pretty dominant group, but I feel like there's so much more still to come. Being with this team I've learned to take things one day at a time and to just enjoy being with the team and my best friends.”

Those four years have been packed with achievements and accolades for the Terps seniors. The group helped Maryland capture four regular-season Big Ten championships, two Big Ten Tournament titles and two national championships. They also were part of last year's undefeated team that went 23-0 and led the Terps to an 84-3 record during the past four seasons entering the NCAA Tournament.

Individually, Whittle became Maryland's all-time lead-

ing goal scorer this season and entered the NAAs with 287 goals, third in NCAA history. She's also a three-time All-American, a three-time all-region selection, a Big Ten Distinguished Scholar, a Big Ten All-Tournament selection and the Big Ten Attack Player of the Year.

Also a team captain, attacker Taylor Hensh (Marriotts Ridge) entered the postseason with 75 goals in 65 career games, while fellow attacker Kacie Longo (Garrison Forest) had 35 goals in 60 outings.

On the defensive side, Julia Legar (Garrison Forest) has been a two-time Academic All-Big Ten honoree. Alex McKay had started 43 games and earned Academic All-Big-Ten accolades three times. Steff Holmes (McDonogh) missed a year because of an injury but has had 27 career appearances. Reserve goalie Emma Moss (North Hagerstown) was a 2017 Academic All-Big Ten pick.

The other senior, Kathy Rudkin, transferred from Syracuse for her final season and brings a fresh outlook to the postseason. She was a five-time member of the Athletic Director's Honor Roll playing for the Orange and has appeared in 89 career games. Rudkin has become a key component for one of the nation's top defensive units.

“They are all so different and each one of them brings something unique and special to the team,” Reese said of her seniors. “But that's where we are as a team. We are able to bring together all sorts of different personalities who happen to be amazing lacrosse players and athletes with different strengths and weaknesses to become the most complete team we can possibly be.”

In spite of all the accolades and championships, the

players struggle when it comes to what they will remember most about their time at Maryland. Usually the conversation moves away from athletic accomplishments and toward the friendships and family atmosphere.

“We are all completely different,” Hensh said. “But we are all pretty chill people who kind of just roll with whatever comes our way, so that helps us stay good friends. Getting the opportunity to not be forced to hang out with my teammates, but wanting to do it on my own off the field has been amazing. I'm so glad that we like each other so much that we choose to spend our time off the field pretty much 24/7 with each other.”

The off-the-field camaraderie translates to an on-field chemistry that has become nearly impossible to beat. Maryland, ranked second in the nation and 18-1 overall, lost its only game of the season, 16-15, in overtime to North Carolina Feb. 24. The Terps had reeled off 16 straight victories since then, but had been unable to overtake unbeaten Stony Brook for their usual top spot in the national rankings.

“Our senior class has only lost three games in four years,” Whittle said. “It's really incredible. Not many programs in the nation can say that. That loss brought us together early in the year and made us stronger and want to improve every day and against every single opponent we played so that hopefully we will peak at the right time.”

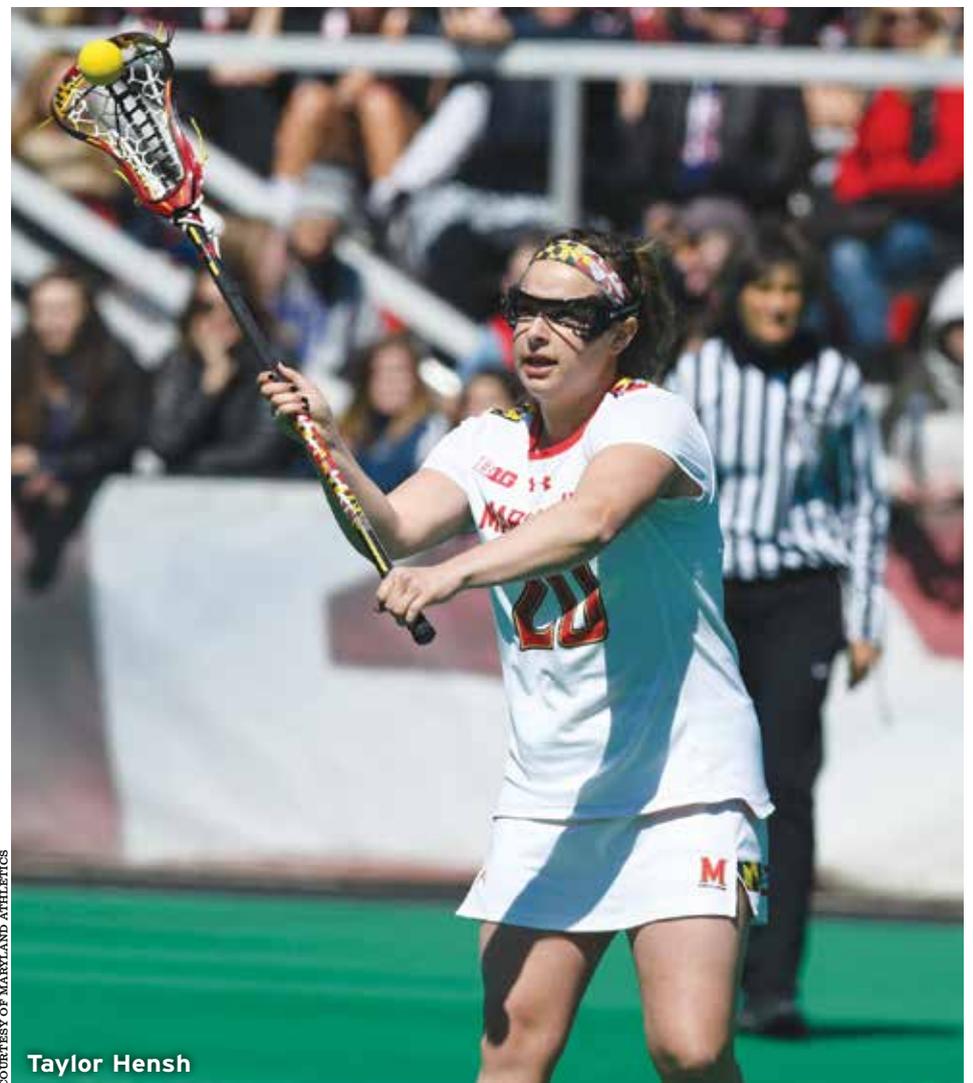
The national polls don't matter to Reese. What's important is the process of improving every day and getting her team mentally and physically prepared to be at its best the next time it takes the field.

“It all depends on how you do in that one game,” Reese said. “And at the end of the day, you play all season to get better and put yourself in position to win. I'm just excited to see us try to put together the best possible game of lacrosse that we can every time we play. The seniors have accomplished a lot here. They've grown up a lot as people and players. Now that we're down to this last little bit for them, hopefully they are ready to play the best lacrosse of their careers.” •



Megan Whittle

COURTESY OF MARYLAND ATHLETICS



Taylor Hensh

COURTESY OF MARYLAND ATHLETICS



PHIL HOFFMANN/NAVY ATHLETICS

Navy women's tennis

## At 10-Year Mark, Navy Tennis Just Keeps Getting Better

★ SCOTT LOWE

The Navy women's tennis team celebrated its 10th anniversary season this year, and the Midshipmen just keep getting better.

Playing for the only head coach the program has ever known, Navy set a school record for victories with 27 and rode a 15-match winning streak into a Patriot League championship loss to Army that ended its season.

"They just keep getting better and better," said U.S. Marine Corps Captain Brooke Campbell, the team's officer representative and a member of head coach Keith Puryear's first Navy team in 2008-09. "I'm proud to say that there is no way I would make the team now. They've come so far. There's no way I would even be recruited to play at this level."

Puryear has never had a down year even though he started the program from scratch as a club team in 2008 in what Campbell described as a "transition year." The Midshipmen then went 13-4 during its first varsity campaign in 2009-10. Puryear's teams posted a 67-18 record during the next three years and made three appearances in the Patriot League finals.

"I think I had some really good luck and got a really good recruiting class my first year," Puryear said. "We were able to get some players tennis teams would call sleepers, players who slipped through the cracks a little bit. They were really talented players, but also were people of great character. Now, looking back, I realize how difficult the task really was."

Puryear came to Navy from UMBC, where he had played, graduated and fashioned a UMBC Athletics Hall of Fame career coaching the men's tennis team for 19 years and the women for 17. Neither he nor his family

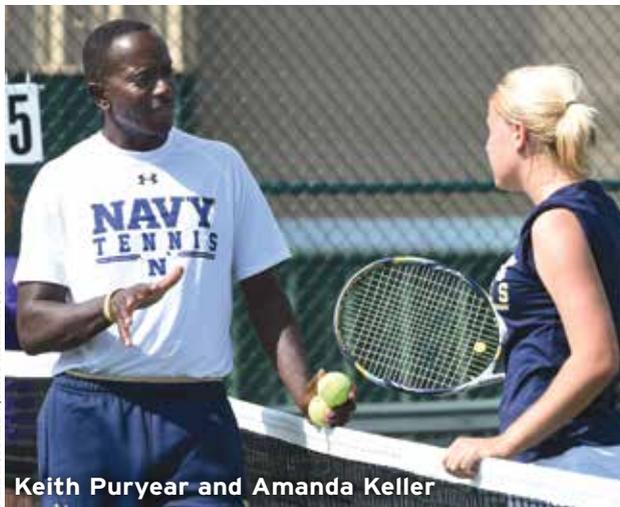
was 100 percent sure about making the move, but once he visited the Academy, the former Marine was sold.

"I was happy at UMBC," Puryear said. "We had just lost in the men's conference finals and had everyone back, and on the women's side, I believe we had lost in the finals as well. We had great teams and a great program, but when I came to Navy and interviewed for the job, I just loved it. I loved the challenge and the resources available but wasn't sure if I would get the position."

Puryear was called back in to meet with athletic director Chet Gladchuk a few days after the initial interview, and he knew: "They're going to offer me this job," he told his wife, Venida.

At that point, there was no turning back.

With his former player and UMBC assistant Alessandra Pedernana in tow, Puryear accepted the position, and the two have formed a dynamic coaching tandem ever since. Named the America East Coaching Staff of



Keith Puryear and Amanda Keller

PHIL HOFFMANN/NAVY ATHLETICS

the Year in 2008 while at UMBC, Puryear and Pedernana have had four recruiting classes ranked nationally among NCAA Division I mid-major programs. Still, he is most thankful for that first group, which set the tone.

"As freshmen or plebes, it was so challenging for them to come in," Puryear said. "I remember looking at my lineup and having five freshmen starting. It was incredible for them to be able to handle everything they had on their plate in terms of the requirements and the commitments here and being Division I athletes. And we were beating a lot of the teams that I was beating with my established teams at UMBC. I think that was the catalyst for the success to come."

That success has been staggering. That first recruiting class capped its four years with a 25-5 mark in 2012-13, a season that included a school-record 17-match winning streak and 23 victories in the final 25 matches. Since then, Puryear's teams have posted four more seasons of 20 wins or more and made three more Patriot League finals appearances.

This year's team may have been the best -- and came the closest to capturing that elusive league title. Led by senior team captain Amanda Keller and classmates Isabel Balsavage, Carlee Conway and Claudia Mackenzie, Navy knocked off Army, 7-0, in the Star Match in Annapolis, Md., March 31 before falling to the Black Knights, 4-2, in the Patriot League finals to finish 27-6.

Keller concluded her career as the program's all-time leader in doubles wins with 71 and combined singles and doubles wins with 160. She also ranks second in career singles victories with 89. Mackenzie ranks second in doubles wins with 68 and ninth in singles victories with 55. This group of seniors recorded the program's first wins against Army, going 2-2 against the Black Knights in regular-season play.

"Every year we seem to get better and better," said Keller, who will begin training to become a Marine pilot after graduation. "We were really close [to winning the Patriot League] this year, so I don't think the team needs to make any major changes in the future. If they just keep doing what they've been doing, strive to get better every day and make the team the focus to help each other improve individually, they can go a long way." •



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# Mya Lowe Named U.S. Army Impact Player Of The Month

★ WICK EISENBERG

**C**harles Herbert Flowers High School softball star Mya Lowe was named the U.S. Army Impact Player of the Month for May.

Lowe, a senior, was nominated for the award by Charles H. Flowers head softball coach Molly Bender.

"Mya's dedication has been evident to her teammates, and, in my opinion, she has set a high standard and been a role model to our young ninth-grade and junior varsity players," Bender said. "Mya has made a major impact on the CHF softball community, and she will serve as a motivational force for years to come due to all of the hard work, time, effort and passion she has displayed."

Lowe is the award's first recipient from Prince George's County.

"It still feels kind of amazing," Lowe said. "Coach Bender surprised me at practice by telling me she had nominated me for the award, and that I had actually won. I felt a whole bunch of emotions, but mostly just shock. I know there were lots of other athletes from all across Maryland competing for it, so it's an amazing feeling to win. I still smile from ear to ear when I think about it."

Lowe is a four-year varsity player for the Jaguars. She's enjoyed a strong start to her 2018 season, which has mirrored her team's success. Charles H. Flowers opened its season with 12 straight wins, and during that 12-game span, Lowe was one of the team's most dangerous hitters. She batted .455 with 13 RBIs and three home runs through 12 games.

She's also dominated from the pitcher's circle. Lowe has a 2.50 ERA over her first 50.1 innings, while recording 91 strikeouts and giving up just 30 hits.

As impressive as her stats are, Lowe has been an even better leader.

"I have to stay positive while in the circle no matter what the situation is," Lowe said. "If I'm getting down, upset or angry, it affects everyone. Even if I'm having a bad game, as a pitcher and a leader on the team I have to contain my frustrations. It can be a hard job at times, but I do my best to be positive for everyone and to always have a good attitude."

Lowe credits part of her team-first attitude to being a member of her school's Fire Cadet Academy, which is a two-year program that teaches students about what firefighters do and the value of teamwork. To Corrie Gray, a lieutenant with Charles H. Flowers' Fire Cadet Academy, Lowe is a standout member of the program who ensures her peers do



Mya Lowe

the best they can.

"Cadet Lowe shows true leadership both on and off the field," Gray said. "For example, I have witnessed her give words of encouragement to a classmate that struggled during physical fitness training. A leader understands the needs of the team and accepts that you will not always succeed the first time, but to never give up."

Lowe hopes to use those skills in the future, as well. She plans to play softball collegiately at Virginia Union, where she's accepted a scholarship, and then join the U.S. Army.

To Lowe, joining the Army would continue a proud family tradition. Her grandfather and father both served in the military and her older sister currently serves.

"When I was little, my grandfather and father told me their war stories, and I just loved it," Lowe said. "I love the family type of bonds they forged. I also love the legacy of it, and also that it'll be extremely challenging."

Lowe, who is a member of Charles H. Flowers' ROTC program, plans to continue her ROTC education in college. She hopes to be accepted to officer training school after college so she can begin her military career as an officer.

To those around her, there's no doubt that she'll accomplish her goals.

"Lowe is always ready to go and listens to direction, instructors barely need to repeat themselves when giving her an assignment," Gray said. "If I had to describe Lowe, I would say she is respectful, a leader, has a positive attitude and is a hard worker." •

*The Impact Player of the Month Award is given to an individual who has impacted his or her team in a positive way, both on and off the field.*

# VARSITY REPORT

## City Girls' Lacrosse Willing To Take On Anyone To Prove It Can Compete With The Best

★ WICK EISENBERG

There's little doubt which public school has the best girls' lacrosse program in Baltimore City.

The Baltimore City College Knights clinched the program's seventh straight Baltimore City championship with an 8-7 win against Western April 24. Through the first six games on the season, City outscored its opponents, 101-17.

The Knights haven't lost to a Baltimore City opponent since 2013.

"It does feel great being a part of the best team in Baltimore City and knowing that I'm capable of playing for this team," sophomore goalkeeper Maddie Reeser said. "City's catchphrase is 'City Forever,' and you really get that feeling when you're a member of the lacrosse team. I have no doubt when I graduate I'll keep up with my teammates and coaches because the energy we have together just makes you feel great."

Though City has dominated girls' lacrosse in recent seasons, it hasn't always been that way.

When Sedrick Smith took over the program nine years ago, the Knights were routinely in the upper half of Baltimore City's standings. It was a solid place to be, but the group was also a good distance behind Poly, which had won the previous 10 Baltimore City championships.

Smith, a City alum who had played lacrosse for just one season in high school, admits he didn't know much about the sport when he started coaching. He decided to approach lacrosse like he did with City's girls' soccer team, which he has coached for the past 10 seasons.

"I wanted to make sure my girls were the most fit and that they worked the hardest on the field," Smith said. "Skill would come over time, but we needed to be working harder than anyone else was. The first couple years were a struggle, and some girls decided they didn't want to be that committed but others got excited by it. Then we beat Poly my third year, and we've been off and running ever since."

City's dominance in league play isn't showing any signs of slowing down. While the Knights have benefited from the play of seniors -- like midfielders Eva Utzschneider and Josephine Schmollinger -- the core of the team is in its sophomore and freshmen classes.

It's a welcome sight for Smith, who's hoping City can eventually become a team capable of beating the state's elite programs. That's a tough task, though, because City regularly plays teams featuring players who are just learning the basics of lacrosse. When the Knights play games like that, the group tries to build a lead quickly so the rest of the game can be used to focus on getting better. It's not uncommon for City to set rules for its players midgame, such as newer players being the only ones allowed to score after the group's veterans have built a big lead.

"We do try to work on the things we need to work on," sophomore attacker Melia Scott said. "We work on our off-hand, improving our passing, ground balls and on plays we know we haven't mastered yet. We just try to work on our weakest spots always, whether if it's in a game or at practice."

Smith has begun to schedule more games against teams from outside of Baltimore City, predominately against private schools like Institute of Notre Dame, and Baltimore County schools like Kenwood and Overlea.

The Knights have won their fair share of games against teams from outside Baltimore City, including the past two seasons against Long Reach from Howard County. City has also taken a preseason trip to Calvert County the last couple years to scrimmage teams

from outside the Baltimore area.

Simply put, the Knights will play anyone.

"If a team wants to schedule us, we'll play that game," Smith said. "For me, it's all about exposure. I want teams outside of Baltimore City to know that you're in for a fight if you play us. We're not just going to roll over because we're from Baltimore City."

For the players, there's always extra motivation whenever the Knights face a team from outside Baltimore City.

"I know a lot of girls from surrounding counties and everyone seems to have this image of the city not being able to play good lacrosse," sophomore attacker Grace Pula said. "It feels good to prove them wrong and be competitive with those teams and also to beat a few of them."

For Smith, the next step for the program is to make a deep run in the Maryland Public Secondary School Athletics Association state playoffs. In the past, City has captured first-round wins -- most recently against Lansdowne in 2016 -- but the team has never put together a complete postseason run.

More than anything though, Smith hopes the girls' lacrosse program continues to be a point of pride for his alma mater -- both on and off the field.

"For me, this is where City is supposed to be," Smith said. "The school is known as an academic power, but we can be good at both academics and athletics. I take great pride in the fact that my girls are great athletes who play lacrosse very well, but then also go off to great schools like University of Pennsylvania, Yale or Virginia for college. That means a lot to me." •



COURTESY OF SEDRICK SMITH

Baltimore City College girls' lacrosse

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# COMMUNITY BEAT



## ★ WALKS/RACES

### MAY 19 -- RUNNING FOR RECOVERY IN HARFORD COUNTY

Harford United Charities invites you to run for recovery in Harford County at the Fifth Annual BG5K Run/Walk at Harford Community College. Proceeds will benefit nonprofit organizations supporting individuals and families experiencing homelessness and seeking treatment for addiction. Awards include cash prizes for the top male and female runners and medals for the top three runners in each class. All participants will be treated to a hot breakfast in the Auxiliary Gym and families are welcome. For more information or to register, visit [charmcityrun.com/calendar/2018/5/19/bg-5k-runwalk-running-for-recovery-in-harford-county](http://charmcityrun.com/calendar/2018/5/19/bg-5k-runwalk-running-for-recovery-in-harford-county).

### MAY 20 -- JOHNS HOPKINS 3RD ANNUAL BELOW THE BELT - STRIDE AND THRIVE 5K AND 1 MILE WALK

Every five minutes a woman in the U.S. is diagnosed with a "below the belt" gynecologic cancer. These cancers affect more than 100,000 women and cause over 30,000 deaths each year. Proceeds from this race will help fund innovative gynecologic cancer research, support local cancer survivors and benefit several local organizations. The race will begin at 8 a.m. at Homewood Field at Johns Hopkins University. For more information and to register, visit [charmcityrun.com/calendar/Hopkins](http://charmcityrun.com/calendar/Hopkins).

### MAY 20 -- KEEP PUNCHING 5K RUN, 1-MILE WALK & KIDS RACES

The fifth-annual Keep Punching 5K, 1-Mile Walk & Kids Races takes place at Goucher College. Opening ceremonies begin at 8 a.m. All proceeds assist patients, families and clinicians who wish to pursue integrative approaches to healing. For more information and to register, visit [runsignup.com/Race/MD/Towson/KeepPunching5K1MileWalkKidsRaces](http://runsignup.com/Race/MD/Towson/KeepPunching5K1MileWalkKidsRaces).

### JUNE 3 -- JEWISH CARING NETWORK WOMEN'S 5K CARE RUN & WALK

This event at the Maryland Zoo in Baltimore benefits the Jewish Caring Network, which is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing support services to families facing life-threatening, life-long or serious illnesses while preserving their privacy and dignity. For more information and to register, visit [wizathon.com/jcn5krun-women/?p=register](http://wizathon.com/jcn5krun-women/?p=register).

### JUNE 3 -- NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND 6 DOT DASH

The NFB 6 Dot Dash is an annual 6K race that is organized by the National Federation of the Blind. The goal of the event is to raise funds that are used to support our programs that help blind people live the lives they want. The race will begin at 8 a.m. at NFB Jernigan Institute in Baltimore. For more information and to register, visit [charmcityrun.com/calendar/2018/6/3/6-dot-dash](http://charmcityrun.com/calendar/2018/6/3/6-dot-dash).

### JUNE 17 -- MILES THAT MATTER PIKESVILLE 5K RUN & WALK

Help support two great causes: The Ulman Cancer Fund for Young Adults and the Pikesville Chamber. Your race entry will help the fight against cancer but also provide the chamber the opportunity to keep Pikesville a vibrant community where people want to live, work and shop. The race begins at 8 a.m. at the Woodholme Center. For more information and to register, visit [runsignup.com/Race/MD/Pikesville/MilesThatMatterPikesville5K](http://runsignup.com/Race/MD/Pikesville/MilesThatMatterPikesville5K).



## ★ BASEBALL/SOFTBALL

### JUNE 3 -- YOGA IN THE OUTFIELD

Join the Bowie Baysox for Yoga in the Outfield. Yoga in the Outfield is for all experience levels, as Sport Fit Bowie takes yogis through their workout. Admission to Yoga in the Outfield is included with a special package. The session will begin at noon, before the main stadium gates open to the public. To purchase tickets visit, [baysox-shop.com/special-events/](http://baysox-shop.com/special-events/).

### JUNE 9 -- BASEBALL CARD SHOW

A sports card and memorabilia show to benefit Monsignor Slade Catholic School will be held at Monsignor Slade Catholic School in Glen Burnie from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. For more details, call Leo at 443-416-6447.

### JUNE 15 -- IRONBIRDS OPENING NIGHT

The IronBirds host the Hudson Valley Renegades at 7:05 p.m. and will have a postgame fireworks display. For tickets visit, [milb.com/index.jsp?sid=t488](http://milb.com/index.jsp?sid=t488).

### BLUE DEVIL UMPIRE ASSOCIATION

New baseball umpires are needed to officiate in Baltimore, Carroll and Frederick counties. No experience is necessary. Email Bob Frank at [lawyerfrank@comcast.net](mailto:lawyerfrank@comcast.net) or call 410-493-7011, or contact Larry Silverman at [Bluedevilumps@comcast.net](mailto:Bluedevilumps@comcast.net) or call 410-484-2118.

### ADULT BASEBALL

Join the Eastern Baltimore County over-40 baseball league, which plays with wood bats on 90-foot diamonds. Players of all skill levels are encouraged to visit [over40baseball.org](http://over40baseball.org) or call Mike Lockett at 410-446-0443.



## ★ SOCCER/RUGBY/SQUASH

### SQUASH

SquashWise provides incentives for middle school students to excel academically, athletically and socially, as well as the opportunity to compete in local and national squash tournaments. No squash experience is necessary to become a tutor. Visit [baltimoresquashwise.org](http://baltimoresquashwise.org) to make your tax-deductible donation. To make equipment donations and/or become a volunteer tutor, email [abbym@baltimoresquashwise.org](mailto:abbym@baltimoresquashwise.org).

### MIGHTY KICKS PUP LEAGUE

The Pup League provides year-round soccer training for boys and girls of all abilities ages 2-7. It's designed to build motor skills, self-confidence and basic techniques. Ongoing programs are available around Baltimore. For more information, visit [mightykicksbaltimore.com](http://mightykicksbaltimore.com).

### RUGBY

The Baltimore-Chesapeake Rugby Club, the region's only Division I men's rugby club, is looking for experienced players or those new to the game. For more information, email [baltimorechesapeakerugby@gmail.com](mailto:baltimorechesapeakerugby@gmail.com) or visit [baltimorerugby.net](http://baltimorerugby.net).



## ★ FOOTBALL

### BALTIMORE TERPS YOUTH

Games are open to all players ages 4-14 regardless of weight or skill level. The games provide a platform for participants to play the proper position for their body size while also ensuring their success as they move on to high school and beyond. To register, visit [baltimoreterps.com](http://baltimoreterps.com) or call 443-863-TERP.

## ★ OTHER ACTIVITIES

### MAY 26-JUNE 3 -- BALTIMORE GOLF WEEK

Baltimore City golf courses will be holding events to celebrate golf and raise funds for YouthWorks. Events include a million-dollar hole-in-one contest at the Pine Ridge Driving Range, a \$50,000 hole-in-one contest at the Forest Park Golf Course, the Mayor's Cup and more. For more information, visit [classic5golf.com/Baltimore\\_Golf\\_Week/](http://classic5golf.com/Baltimore_Golf_Week/).

### JUNE 4 -- 18TH ANNUAL STEVE QUICK MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

A four-man scramble golf tournament featuring 18 holes, lunch at turn, post-game BBQ and a raffle will be held at Eisenhower Golf Course in Crownsville. The event benefits the family of Chris Bobbick. Chris and his parents were killed in a car accident in 2015. Chris' wife and 3-year-old daughter suffered severe injuries, while his 9-year-old daughter suffered minor injuries. Chris played in the Quick Tournament every year. For more information contact Tom Phelps at 910-583-9917

### JUNE 2-- RAPPEL FOR KIDNEY HEALTH

The National Kidney Foundation Serving Maryland and Delaware will take the fight against kidney disease 28 stories high. Its eighth annual Rappel for Kidney Health signature event will take place from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., at 201 N. Charles St. Up to 100 fearless souls of all ages have the chance to descend a Baltimore skyscraper with breathtaking views of the city skyline and the Inner Harbor. To register for Rappel for Kidney Health, support a Rappel participant, donate to NKFMDDE or learn about corporate sponsorship and volunteer opportunities, visit [kidneymd.org](http://kidneymd.org) or call 410-494-8545.

### BABE RUTH MUSEUM

The improved Babe Ruth Birthplace Museum has reopened next to Camden Yards. Babe Ruth's legacy shaped the sports and American life we live now. Consider making a tax-deductible donation. Visit [baberuthmuseum.org/donate](http://baberuthmuseum.org/donate) or call 410-727-1539, ext. 3012.

### HOMESCHOOL SPORTS

Baltimore-area homeschooled boys and girls in grades six-12 interested in playing interscholastic sports -- such as soccer, volleyball and baseball -- can register for the upcoming school season. For more information or to register, email [chensports@verizon.net](mailto:chensports@verizon.net).

### MARYLAND OFFICIALS CLUB

Interested in becoming a high school swimming official in the Baltimore-Anne Arundel area? Experience as a competitive swimmer or coach at the high school, college or masters level -- or prior experience officiating -- is strongly preferred. Email [mdcomish@comcast.net](mailto:mdcomish@comcast.net) or call Mike Connors at 410-653-7307.

### DUCKPIN BOWLING

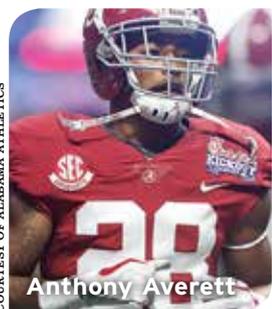
There are openings for youth duckpin-bowling leagues for ages 3-21 at various duckpin centers in Baltimore. Most programs run Saturday mornings and include bowling, shoe rental and coaching. For more information, visit [ndya.org](http://ndya.org), call Stacy Karten at 410-356-0936 or "like" duckpin bowling at [facebook.com/theduckpinnews](http://facebook.com/theduckpinnews).

### OFFICIALS WANTED

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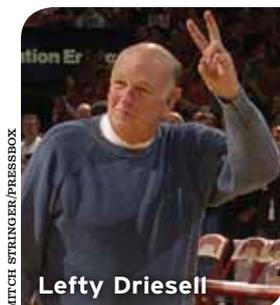


COURTESY OF ALABAMA ATHLETICS

"I wouldn't say it was a sad moment, but it was more a frustration like, 'OK, I'm going to show the doubters wrong.' It was just an emotional moment for me and my family. I tried to hold it together, but after that last pick of the third round, I just broke down, like, 'OK, we're going to see what's going to happen. Whatever team is going to pick me, they're going to feel how I feel when I start playing.' But it's definitely motivation."

- Ravens fourth-round pick/former Alabama cornerback Anthony Averett April 30 on having a chip on his shoulder because he wasn't picked in the first three rounds of the 2018 NFL Draft

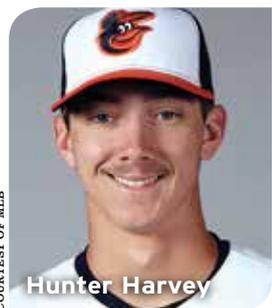
"... I'm 86 now, nobody would know who I was [10 years ago]. So now people know who I am. I've come back to life! So it worked out pretty good -- just thinking about all of my players. I'll be in the Hall of Fame for my grandchildren. I'm not going to be in there long for me, but for my grandchildren, great-grandchildren. It's just an honor. The biggest honor you can get as a basketball coach."



MITCH STRINGER/PRESSBOX

Lefty Driesell

- Legendary former Maryland men's basketball head coach Lefty Driesell April 3 on being elected to the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame



COURTESY OF MLB

"It was really a dream come true. It was something I've been working for my whole life and to finally experience it was awesome. ... I was really stunned, especially because I was supposed to be starting in Bowie that night for the first time."

- Orioles pitching prospect Hunter Harvey April 24 on getting his first major league call-up this season

"To be honest it wasn't a very hard decision for me. We love it here; my family loves it here. Any time in life when you're making a decision -- for me personally, I was taught by my parents, 'Don't follow money. Money's not what's going to make you happy.' It's the relationships with people. It's something that certainly we've started here and we're trying to grow."



GAIL BURTON/UMBC ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS

Ryan Odom

- UMBC men's basketball head coach Ryan Odom April 10 on why he decided to stay with the Retrievers after their historic NCAA Tournament win against Virginia



COURTESY OF TAMIKA CONLEY

Serrel Smith

"Their style of play is very similar to my high school and what I've been comfortable playing with and my passion for playing basketball. The screen and rolls, the spreading the floor, attacking the basket and getting a lot of shots up -- I fit very well with their style of play. I wouldn't say it's high expectations. We've got to come in and do what we do best and do what they saw when they recruited us. Come in, work, win, get in the Final Four."

- Four-star combo guard Serrel Smith (St. Petersburg, Fla.) April 13 on why he chose to commit to Maryland and his expectations for its highly touted incoming freshman class

"It's a surreal moment. I mean, you just look at how everything aligned itself. We ended up meeting each other at high school (Bolles in Jacksonville, Fla.), we ended up committing to the same college (Florida State). He played professional baseball first; I go to college. I go to professional baseball, he goes to college (South Carolina). And then we both end up 25th overall to the same city. You just don't see things like that ever, and it's honestly surreal. I hope the best for him, and I hope the best for me, and I hope we can do this together and bring multiple championships back to Baltimore in both sports."



STEVEN GOLDBURG/NORFOLK TIDES

DJ Stewart

- Top Orioles outfield prospect DJ Stewart April 30 on his friendship with Ravens first-round pick tight end Hayden Hurst

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## THE REALITY CHECK

# Orioles Should Retire Adam Jones' No. 10 When He Moves On

★ **GLENN CLARK**

**O**n May 4, Adam Jones became only the eighth player in Orioles history to play 1,500 games with the club.

In response to a Tweet the Orioles sent about the accomplish-

ment that day, Jones said, "Thanks for the opportunity!! Hopefully I could be higher on this list one day."

But here's the thing about that. Former outfielder Paul Blair is seventh all-time with 1,700 games played with the team. Since Jones isn't under contract after this year, it would take a new deal for him to be able to pass anyone else on the list.

Jones' interest in moving up the list would make you think he wants to stay in Baltimore long-term. But will he? That's far murkier. There are both baseball and non-baseball reasons to think it may or may not happen.

The Orioles might try to trade Jones this season, though the center fielder has the right to veto any deal thanks to 10 years of service and five with the same club, otherwise known as 10-and-5 rights. There's also the possibility of the club trading him, then trying to re-sign him after the season -- much like what they did with former shortstop Mike Bordick in 2000.

We'll have plenty of time to wax about our emotions if and when Adam Jones leaves Baltimore. But thinking about the possibility of a world where he isn't an Oriole has been less pleasant than thinking about a baseball team carrying three Rule 5 players on its roster at the same time. Yuck.

If you've read my work or listened to Glenn Clark Radio, you know about the affinity I have for Jones. That's obviously not unique. The many reasons I think so highly of him are the exact same reasons you do. They're also the same reasons his teammates have thought just as highly of him. Some of those teammates have even given him lofty comparisons.

"He cared about the team, and I'll always remember that: sitting on those little benches or up against the railing and looking down the dugout and he was always one of the first guys. It reminded me a lot of [former New York Yankees shortstop] Derek Jeter," former Oriole Jeremy Guthrie said during a Glenn Clark Radio interview April 18.

Guthrie would go on to add that if somehow Jones were to win a World Series in Baltimore, he would parallel Orioles icons like Cal Ripken Jr. and Jim Palmer. I don't think he's wrong. I'm starting to doubt that Jones will ever have that chance, but even being in that conversation is why I think we should have a conversation now about the possibility of the Orioles retiring Jones' number.

Look, Ripken and Palmer are Hall of Famers. Because of that, their numbers are retired in Baltimore and they have statues at Camden Yards. Jones seems like more than a long-shot to ever be recognized in Cooperstown, N.Y., based on any reasonable assumption of what might happen for the rest of his career. When you hear someone discuss the concept of the "Hall of Very Good," it seems like almost an exact definition of Jones' career.

For players who haven't been enshrined in the Hall of Fame, the Orioles have offered a lesser honor. The Orioles Hall of Fame gives former players a fun weekend of being recognized in Baltimore and forever having their name etched on a plaque near a Eutaw Street bathroom. Roberto Alomar, who played three seasons in Baltimore, and Bordick are among the players recognized in the team Hall of Fame.

The Orioles Hall of Fame isn't enough to truly recognize what Jones has done for Baltimore. The man has been the walking representation of turning around a franchise that had become a perennial loser to one that made playoff runs and deserved respect. Whenever his time in Baltimore concludes -- which could be imminent or still years from now -- he deserves more than to have his name recognized near a bathroom.

Guthrie suggested the team perhaps not formally retire Jones' number but instead simply choose to take it out of circulation for some time. It's a reasonable idea. But Jones deserves something more formal than that. The man chose to stay in Baltimore back in 2012 for less money than he could've gotten on the open market, and he has been insanely committed to the city even beyond the field since he arrived.

If you want to save statues for Hall of Famers, that's fine. But for everything he's done for this franchise and this community, whenever Jones' time in Baltimore comes to an end, no one should wear No. 10 in Baltimore again. •

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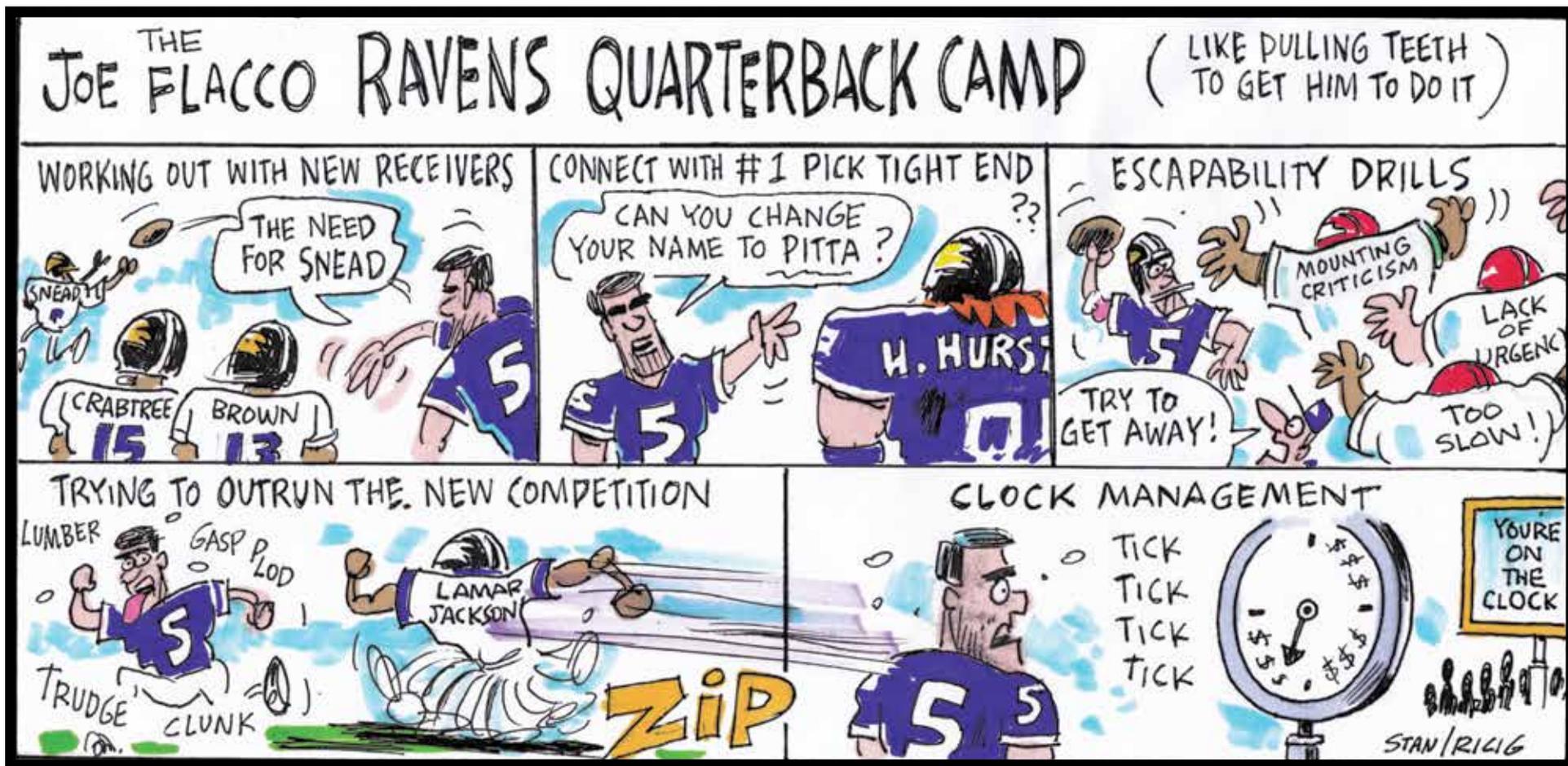


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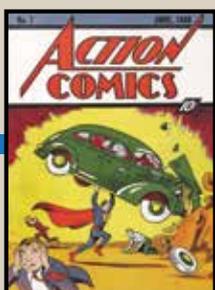
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