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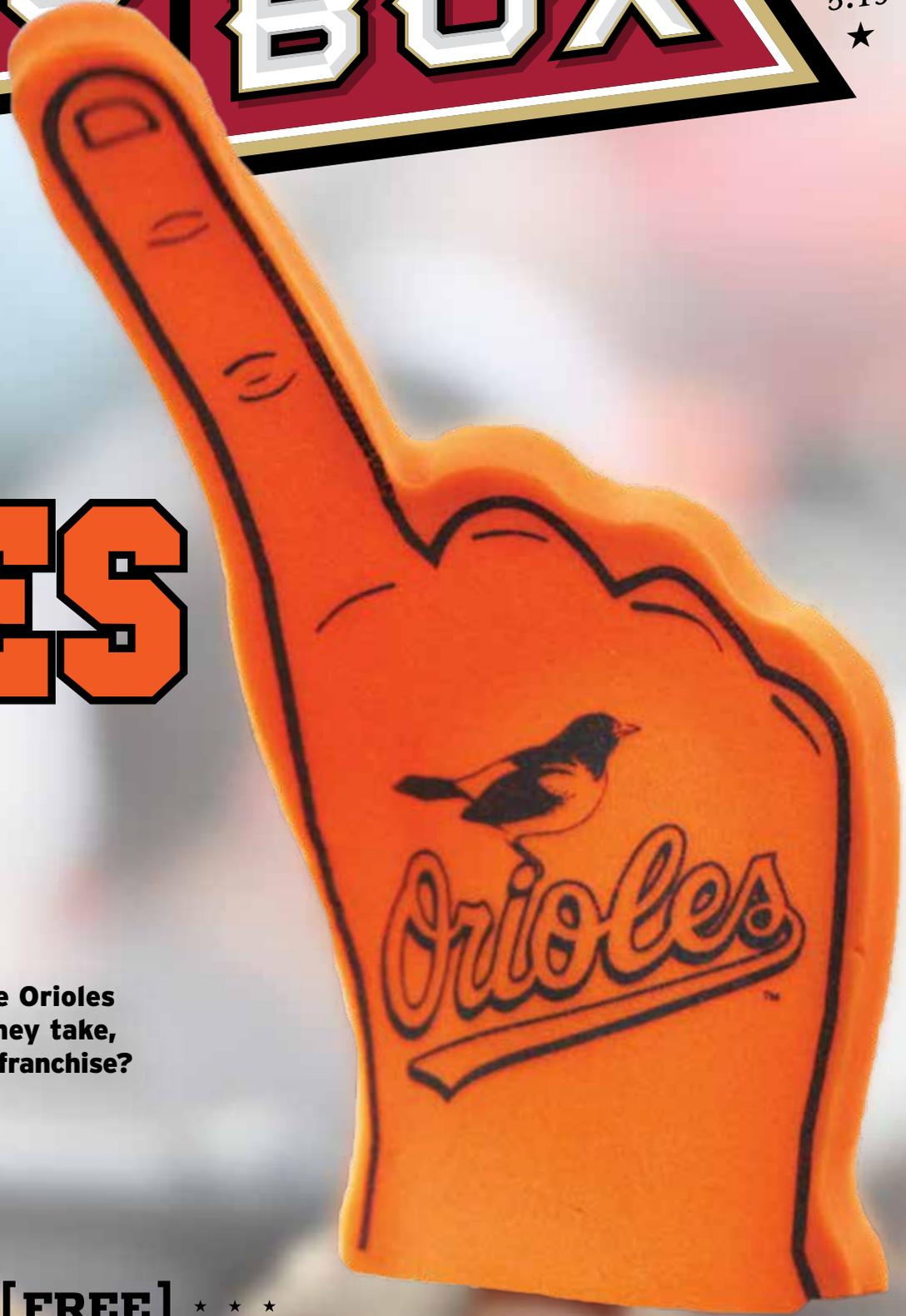
HIGH STAKES OF NO. 1

For just the second time in franchise history, the Orioles have the No. 1 pick in the MLB Draft. Who will they take, and how will the pick help shape the future of the franchise?

BY LUKE JACKSON | PAGE 16

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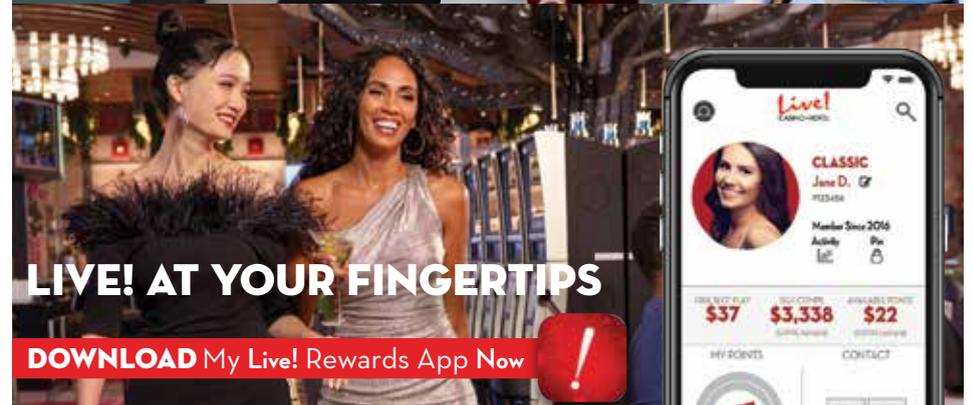
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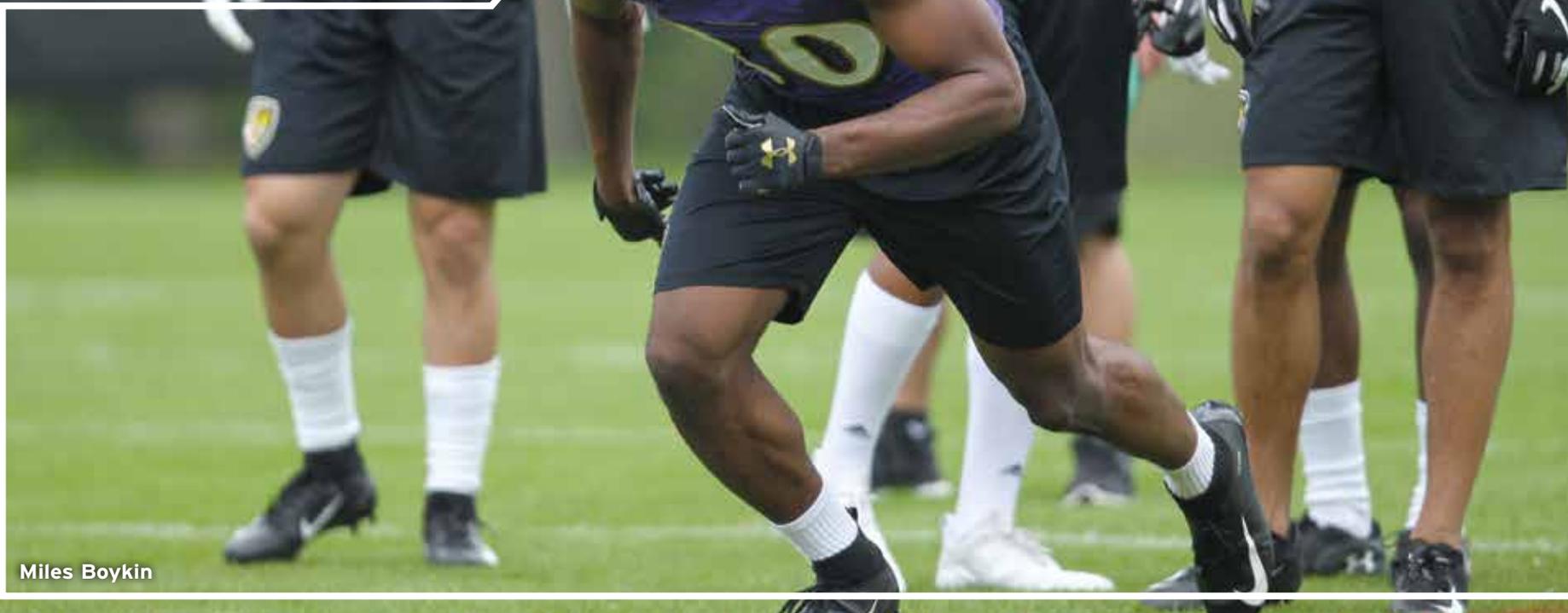
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Myles Boykin

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WIDE RECEIVER MILES BOYKIN, SELECTED IN THE THIRD ROUND OF THE 2019 NFL DRAFT BY THE BALTIMORE RAVENS, TAKES PART IN THE TEAM'S ROOKIE MINICAMP MAY 4. THE RAVENS ALSO SELECTED MARQUISE "HOLLYWOOD" BROWN IN THE FIRST ROUND, MARKING THE FIRST TIME IN FRANCHISE HISTORY THE TEAM USED MULTIPLE PICKS IN THE FIRST THREE ROUNDS ON RECEIVERS.

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ONE FAN'S OPINION

Orioles Need To Cash In On Trade Market

★ **STAN "THE FAN" CHARLES**



he Baltimore Orioles' quest to regain an upper-tier position on the field in MLB is an ongoing and moving target. General manager Mike Elias is wearing a lot of hats as he attempts to pattern

the organization after the two teams he worked for previously: the St. Louis Cardinals and Houston Astros.

Right now, the team rightly has its sights set on whom to pick in the June draft. After the draft, the focus will pivot to making the most of international scouting director Koby Perez's hard work and beginning to effectively use international bonus slot money for something other than trades that amount to small potatoes. That period begins each year in early July.

During the offseason, there will likely be a couple of low-end possibilities in free agency. But just as important, and maybe even more so, is trading fungible assets on hand now to teams fighting for the 2019 world championship. The Orioles would be wise to deal some veterans this summer when their value is high rather than wait.

So, who on the present Orioles' roster fits that mold? Who is potentially coveted by another team for the short-term goal of winning now?

DYLAN BUNDY

At one time, Bundy, 26, was a prospect worthy of being selected as the No. 4 pick in the 2011 MLB Draft, but the high school

phenom from Owasso, Okla., has not had an easy time of it.

Greatness seemed within his grasp after a very solid minor-league season in 2012 that saw him pitch in Low-A Delmarva, High-A Frederick, Double-A Bowie and even 1.2 innings in the big leagues. However, Tommy John surgery in 2013 changed the trajectory of his career. He pitched 41.1 innings at Short Season-A Aberdeen and Frederick after returning from Tommy John in 2014, but he dealt with more injuries in 2015, pitching just 22 innings at Bowie.

Due to the nature of the contract he signed as an amateur, he was guaranteed a 40-man roster spot. Bundy was out of options by 2016, meaning the Orioles risked losing him on a waiver claim if he didn't make the big-league club that spring. He made the team, and manager Buck Showalter figured out a way to utilize him out of the bullpen and in the rotation to the tune of 109.2 innings and 10 wins.

Since then, Bundy has had his ups and downs. But if he can string together a stretch of starts similar to the one he had May 4 -- seven shutout innings against the Tampa Bay Rays -- the Elias regime would be giddy to trade for a solid prospect who may actually be around in 2021 and beyond. Bundy is under club control through the 2021 season.

MYCHAL GIVENS

The Orioles drafted the right-handed, side-arming Givens as a shortstop with the No. 54 overall pick in the 2009 MLB Draft. After struggling offensively and showing

very little overall upside as a position player, Givens and the club agreed to convert to pitching in 2013. He got on the fast track and was in the majors by June 2015 after just about 160 innings in the minors.

Givens, 29, was brilliant at times in lower-leverage situations in the fifth and sixth innings, but with injuries to relievers Darren O'Day and eventually Zack Britton, he was quickly pitching later and later in ballgames. This year has been his first real opportunity to close games out -- the only problem being the number of opportunities to record saves.

Givens had a less-than-stellar start to the 2019 season, giving up five runs during his first nine innings. But he bounced back to record four saves and a 0.93 ERA during his next 9.2 innings.

If that keeps up, Givens could be seen by some World Series contenders such as the Philadelphia Phillies, Los Angeles Dodgers and Boston Red Sox as a major piece to help them in the more immediate future. Givens could bring back a serious prospect and maybe even a little more since he's under team control through 2021.

JONATHAN VILLAR

Former executive vice president of baseball operations Dan Duquette's trade of infielder Jonathan Schoop to the Milwaukee Brewers last summer seemed to be about acquiring prospects. But in reality, Villar -- a player the Brewers seemed eager to dump because of their own budgetary constraints -- may end up being one of the better acquisitions of Duquette's tenure in Baltimore.

Villar is making a very affordable \$4.8 million this season and has one season of arbitration eligibility remaining before hitting free agency. The 28-year-old could provide a contending team a versatile, productive and dynamic player for a stretch run this season. While I don't think Elias and Co. are dying to trade Villar, that fact places the Orioles in the catbird seat to extract a solid prospect for Villar.

ONE PLAYER NOT GOING ANYWHERE: TREY MANGINI

Mancini, 27, would bring the Orioles a decent return, but his new position as the quasi-leader of this team seems to supersede the need to move him for a so-so prospect. While I love a lot of the intangibles Mancini brings, I do not believe Mancini will have created enough value this summer that contending teams would give up a top 100-150 prospect for him.

My money is on Mancini being here for the duration of the rebuild, but if he posts a .300-plus batting average, 25-plus homers and 80-plus RBIs this season, Mancini could be used in an offseason package to bring back a couple of significant pieces from a team that sees Mancini as someone affordable and productive enough to be a difference-maker in their lineup. •



Dylan Bundy

KENYA ALLEN/PRESSBOX

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Damion Cooper (middle, pointing up)

COURTESY OF PROJECT PNEUMA

Project Pneuma Aims To Show City Youth Brighter Path

As an ordained minister in Baltimore, Damion Cooper has had the solemn duty to preside at more funerals for kids 20-and-under than for people older than 50.

He's seen kids bleed to death and shut their eyes for the very last time.

"This is why we break our necks, man, to do what we do," Cooper said. "This is why we gave up full-time jobs that paid us well to do what we do. By no means are we getting rich by this."

Cooper, 47, is the founder and executive director of Project Pneuma, a growing organization that tries to help improve the lives of boys in grades 4-8 physically, emotionally and spiritually.

The word pneuma is a Greek derivative for the word "breath." And that is exactly what Cooper, a Dunbar High School graduate and former wrestler for Coppin State, is looking to do: breathe new life and a new spirit into the lives of young people.

In 2014, Cooper started Project Pneuma on a \$10,000 grant and helped about 25 boys. Now, the organization serves close to 500 and has entered into long-term partnerships with the Baltimore Police Department, Baltimore City Public Schools and Under Armour.

One of Project Pneuma's central missions is to promote better relations between city youth and the Baltimore City police.

Twice a week, kids in the Project Pneuma program head to the Baltimore City Public Safety and Training Facility in Northwest Baltimore for three hours of activity, including martial arts, wrestling and yoga.

The facility houses the Baltimore City police academy, and it is here Cooper hopes to foster an environment of friendship, admiration and trust among young kids and police recruits as they grow together.

"We want to build that bridge between them," Cooper

said. "In 2014, we served 25 boys. The number grew to 46 in 2015. Now, we are serving close to 500. People are starting to take notice."

Project Pneuma has made martial arts and wrestling hallmarks of the program because it forces everyone to be accountable for themselves.

"In basketball and football, you can ride the pine and hide," Cooper said. "Not in martial arts and wrestling. You have to go out there and compete, and what you do directly affects your entire team."

Martial arts and wrestling also rely heavily upon the kind of discipline and self-control Cooper hopes to impart to his pupils.

"People are quick to get back at you for any kind of reason," he said. "They hold onto anger and things like that."

Cooper's life changed dramatically Oct. 13, 1992, when, as he returned home from wrestling practice at Coppin State, he was shot from point-blank range on the doorstep of his Baltimore home.

"The bullet hit me an inch above the heart. I can still smell the sulfur and my burnt flesh," Cooper wrote in a first-person essay on the Project Pneuma website. "I can still see the gaping hole in my chest. I can still feel the cracked sternum, three broken ribs and the biggest bullet fragment lodged under my right armpit and three smaller pieces lodged in the upper part of my chest."

"I can still feel myself choking on my own blood, but refusing to spit it out because I didn't want my mother to see her only son suffering like that."

Cooper survived the gunshot, but he spent the next four years of his life holding onto the anger and resentment for everything he had lost, including his wrestling scholarship at Coppin State.

Normally a happy-go-lucky person, he had become somewhat of a recluse. On the night of Dec. 31, 1996, a couple of concerned friends convinced him to attend a

church service with them, and it changed his life.

After listening to a gifted preacher, Cooper decided to let go of everything he was holding on to and open his heart to forgiveness. He went to seminary and began mentoring young men in prison.

By sheer happenstance, he began mentoring a prisoner who was serving time for a petty drug offense only to later discover through various channels that it was the same person who had shot him.

In a surreal and heavily monitored face-to-face encounter with the man, Cooper showed his assailant the bullet wound in his chest. He saw fear in the man's face. And then he forgave him, stepping around the table for an emotional embrace.

"I figured that if I could forgive the man that shot me, I can teach young boys in the city to forgive," he said.

Cooper is hoping to gradually expand his outreach, eventually making Project Pneuma a national and international organization.

"We don't talk about if, we talk about when," said Damien Myers, who gave up a medical practice in 2010 to begin helping young people and now serves as the chief operating officer for Project Pneuma.

Cooper wants to be smart about the way organization grows. He said mistakes can be made if they take on too much too quickly.

"These boys, they want to feel love. They want structure," he said. "We want them to know that it's ok to express emotion. It's OK to express anger. Most of them grow up believing that showing emotion makes you [weak]."

"Our main focus is on the mind and on the heart. Once you get to that, everything else is cake. You just need to break that barrier first."

-- GREG SWATEK

With Canter For The Cause, Marylanders Can Experience Pimlico And Help Horses

Two weeks after the 144th running of the Preakness Stakes -- the middle jewel of horse racing's Triple Crown -- Pimlico Race Course will host a fundraiser that will give horse enthusiasts of all ages the chance to walk, trot, canter or gallop on the historic race course.

The Maryland Jockey Club, the company that operates Pimlico, is hosting the fourth annual Canter for the Cause June 2. The event is a fundraiser for the Thoroughbred Aftercare Alliance, a Kentucky-based nonprofit that accredits about 75 thoroughbred aftercare organizations in North America, including six in Maryland.

Georganne Hale, the Maryland Jockey Club's vice president of racing development, came up with the idea four years ago after realizing the allure Pimlico's storied track could have for some riders who might watch races but never get to ride around the 9.5 furlongs (1 3/16th miles) of dirt track.

"I run into people every day that ride and they all just think it would be so cool and so neat to ride on the race track," said Hale, who is in her 37th year with the Maryland Jockey Club. "A lot of them have trail horses, they just ride in their backyards. So I thought, 'You know, if my bosses were game enough to let me do this, I think it would be fun to let people pay to ride on the track at Pimlico where the Preakness runs.'"

The track has seen some dramatic races in its 149-



JHA PHOTO

Riders at Canter for the Cause

year history: the match race between Seabiscuit and War Admiral in 1938, the comeback victory by the legendary Secretariat on his way to the first Triple Crown win in a quarter century in 1973, or more recent wins by Triple Crown winners American Pharoah in 2015 and Justify last year.

The inaugural event in 2016 “went off big,” Hale said, drawing about 400 participants to the course. Other years the total has been closer to 300, she said, and around the same number of people have registered for this year’s event.

Potential participants may be further encouraged by the possibility that aging Pimlico’s future is clouded and the Preakness might move to Laurel Park.

Participants pay \$50 to register. They are broken into four groups based on their riding ability and can choose to walk, trot, canter or gallop. Riders are sent out in batches of 10 to 15 at a time. They get about 20 minutes to walk through the starting gate, take laps around the course and then finish with a photo in the winner’s circle where Preakness winners through the decades have posed for photos with the iconic black-eyed susan flower blanket draped over their neck.

Hale said visitors as young as 3 and as old as 80 have participated during the event’s history. In past years, Baltimore Police has sent members of its Mounted Division to the event.

“Everybody loves it, and you see them, they have big smiles on their faces as they’re riding their horses around,” Hale said. “I would see neighbors in the neighborhood, they would be standing watching everybody with their kids on Sunday after church.”

The relationship between the Thoroughbred Aftercare Alliance, Maryland Jockey Club and Stronach Group -- the parent company of the Jockey Club -- began when the TAA was founded in 2013, according to TAA operations consultant Stacy Rogers, and the goal is simple.

“We want to do better things for our horses and for them after racing,” Rogers said, “to make sure that they get good jobs and have a happy landing after retirement.”

About 8,000 horses have benefitted from TAA-accredited organizers, Rogers said. Some of the funds raised by events like Canter for the Cause will go toward continuing to accredit more organizations while about 75 percent of the money raised will go to the organizations directly. About \$10,000 was raised by the event last year.

Rogers credited Hale and others in the Maryland equestrian community for raising awareness about thoroughbreds to show the “versatility” of a horse that some might think is only for racing but can serve many functions like hunting or therapeutic riding after they retire.

“It’s a very horsey community,” Rogers said. “The horses in Maryland can run one week and go foxhunting the next week. It’s a very sensitive, high-functioning horse that is used to being around people its entire life, so it adapts very well to most things you ask it to do.

“These kinds of initiatives are really beneficial to think outside the box and to get the community involved at the racetrack and the racetrack involved with the community.”

-- BROOKS DUBOSE

Like Father, Like Son: Loyola Lacrosse A Shared Passion For Ryan, Michael Eigenbrode

Michael Eigenbrode was on his way to elementary school in mid-April with his father, Ryan, who works as a sports information director for Loyola University Maryland. The then-second-ranked Greyhounds lacrosse team was scheduled to play Boston University the next day, and the team had an extra plane ticket because of an injured player.

Instead of going to school, Ryan told his 9-year old he’d be making the trip with the team that morning. Ryan caught the entire exchange on video, which he posted to his Facebook page.

“Yay!” Michael yelled before hugging his father, who has held his position in the Loyola athletic department for 12 years.

Ryan even surprised his son with a new green tie to match Loyola’s school colors and fit the team’s travel dress code.

“I love this,” Michael said as he held up the tie.

“He traveled with the team and ate meals with them,” Ryan said. “The folks at Boston University were great. They made him press credentials and a name plate for the press box.”

Loyola didn’t play well and lost, 18-11, to the Terriers April 13.

“They need to get rid of that game,” Michael told his father immediately after the loss. “Put it behind them. They need to play better the next time.”

Ryan says Michael knows who is playing well and what needs to happen. “He has good insights,” Ryan said. “He also knows how special this is.”

Michael plays baseball for the Towson Recreation Council and loves the Orioles and Loyola. His favorite subject is math.

“I like it because it is easy and hard at the same time,” he said.

Michael has spent most of his childhood with the Loyola lacrosse, basketball and volleyball teams. For the lacrosse team, he will do anything to help, like running stats, helping with the water bottles and doing anything to assist the team.

“We love having Michael around the program,” head men’s lacrosse coach Charley Toomey said. “He’s a great kid and to see him light up around our players is really fun to watch. What I enjoy most is giving Ryan the opportunity to spend time with his son. Ryan is a great father and to have my team see that wonderful father-and-son interaction is really what it’s all about.”

Michael spends the most time around his favorite players, co-captain and 2018 Jack Turnbull Award winner Pat Spencer and junior defenseman Alex Johnson. They play catch on the sidelines and talk.

“Michael is the first guy I give a high-five to after walking off the field,” Spencer said. “He is a ‘Hound for life and has made my experience much brighter and more enjoyable. He is 100 percent more mature than I was at his age. We do, however, share the same interest in sports. He is a watcher and learner, which is extremely important to understanding the game.”

Those sentiments were echoed by Johnson.

“He is a great kid and always has a smile on his face whenever I see him,” Johnson said. “Whenever Michael shows up at the field, I always like to play catch with him because I know doing small things like that can have a big impact on kids as they grow up. Also, I just wanted Michael to feel as included as possible within our team.”

Johnson is also a little jealous.

“I’m actually kind of jealous that Michael gets this experience of being around a Division I lacrosse team as he grows up,” he said. “I will also say he is always the best-dressed person at our games.”

-- DEAN SMITH



L-R: Michael and Ryan Eigenbrode

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IN FOCUS WITH BILL ORDINE

What Would The Preakness Look Like At Laurel Park?

★ BILL ORDINE



Many folks feel the likelihood of the Preakness Stakes running off to Laurel Park is as sure a thing as Smarty Jones in his stretch gallop in the 2004 edition of the legendary race. For a quick refresher, Smarty

Jones took the lead at the top of the stretch in that Preakness and when he crossed the finish line, there were nearly a dozen lengths between him and the closest colt.

Barring political and financial miracles, the chances of some version of Pimlico Race Course enduring on Baltimore's Northern Parkway -- and consequently, the Preakness staying in the city rather than moving 28 miles south to Laurel, Md. -- seem to be as remote as second-place finisher Rock Hard Ten's chances of catching Smarty Jones in the stretch.

And if it does happen that the Preakness winds up at Laurel Park, what might that look like?

"I put the over-under on attendance at 30,000," said Joe DeFrancis, who was part of the family that once owned the Maryland Jockey Club, which is the corporate umbrella that covers Pimlico Race Course, Laurel Park and the Preakness Stakes.

Currently, the Maryland Jockey Club is owned by a Canadian company, The Stronach Group, which also owns Santa Anita Park in California and Gulfstream Park in Florida.

DeFrancis' prediction on Preakness attendance at Laurel is startling.

Last year's announced attendance for the Preakness was 134,487. The previous year, the race crowd was an announced record of more than 140,000. The 2016 number was better than 135,000.

To be sure, a smaller Preakness attendance at Laurel is guaranteed, in part because it's impossible to have the infield throng that has been a trademark of the Preakness and a boost to attendance figures. The center of Laurel's racing oval is taken up with a picturesque pond that isn't there merely for aesthetics. It's primarily for stormwater management.

Even if the pond could be relocated, the current Maryland Jockey Club management has often said that the infield experience, as currently constituted, is not what it envisions for a 21st century Preakness. This management's goal is to cultivate the Preakness as a higher-end sports event that attracts more wagering money.

"The people that show up in the Preakness infield are there for a party," said Alan Foreman, the longtime counsel to the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Associa-

tion. "Those people aren't going to be betting on the races. After all, you really can't even see the races from that part of the infield."

If the Preakness moves to Laurel, Foreman said, "it's going to be in a ... state-of-the-art facility. There still will be a race called the Preakness, it'll still be the second jewel of the Triple Crown, the Kentucky Derby winner is still going to show up, and it's going to be a world-class sports event."

And while there will be some consternation because of the move from Baltimore, "over time, things will settle in as people get used to the change," Foreman said.

Foreman referred to the Orioles moving from Memorial Stadium, the New York Yankees shuffling off to a new version of Yankee Stadium and the Dallas Cowboys relocating from their iconic hole-in-roof home to a new stadium as examples of how things change in sports and fans adapt.

Meanwhile, DeFrancis believes the bitterness of a move will be profound for Baltimore.

"The folks making the decisions in Toronto don't understand the sports rivalry between Baltimore and Washington," DeFrancis said of The Stronach Group corporate leadership. "A lot of people will see this as a move to Washington and they won't go to the race. And I don't think they'll sell one more ticket to anyone from D.C."

If the race goes to Laurel, almost certainly there will be an emphasis on high-end spectator spaces. At Churchill Downs, the iconic twin spires still stand tall and the track still accommodates an infield crowd that takes attendance into the 150,000 range, but new luxury spectator spaces cater to high-end patrons.

Clearly, that will be in the Preakness' future with a move to Laurel. The most obvious high-end spectator space at Pimlico is the corporate village that's on the finish line side of the infield, but when the weather turns bad -- as it did in 2018 -- even that space can be less than comfortable. Luxury suites at Lau-

rel that are far plusher and provide far better sightlines than anything Pimlico can hope to offer will certainly accompany a relocated Preakness.

DeFrancis is a diehard and has his own vision for a successful coexistence between Laurel Park and Pimlico. As race fans know, the bulk of Maryland thoroughbred racing occurs at Laurel, and that is not changing. At the same time, there is the legendary site of the Preakness within the city.

DeFrancis suggests that Laurel be outfitted to deal with the smaller crowds of year-round daily racing and that \$100 million or so could give a restored Pimlico adequate luxury seating, such as the type used at major golf tournaments, for its once-a-year big weekend of the Preakness and Black-Eyed Susan Day.

While it may seem inefficient on the surface, the separation of sports venues for the purpose of better serving specific functions has been a winner for cities, DeFrancis said.

However, events in the weeks leading to this year's Preakness certainly seemed to presage a move to Laurel. In April, the Maryland Jockey Club took about 6,700 seats out of service at Pimlico due to deterioration. Meanwhile, early in May, the MJC broke ground on Laurel Park Station for 220 condominiums and townhouses. The grand plan is for 1,000 residential units that are served by a MARC rail station.

Retail and restaurants and offices are also planned, and central to this 63-acre mixed-used development is a new Laurel Park.

There is still an impediment for the MJC simply moving the Preakness -- a state law that prohibits taking the race out of the city barring "disaster or emergency." Therein lies an interpretation of "emergency" and the issue of politics.

Yet, there is a sense of inevitability regarding the Preakness' future, just like Smarty Jones striding the final half-furlong to the Preakness finish line. •



Laurel Park



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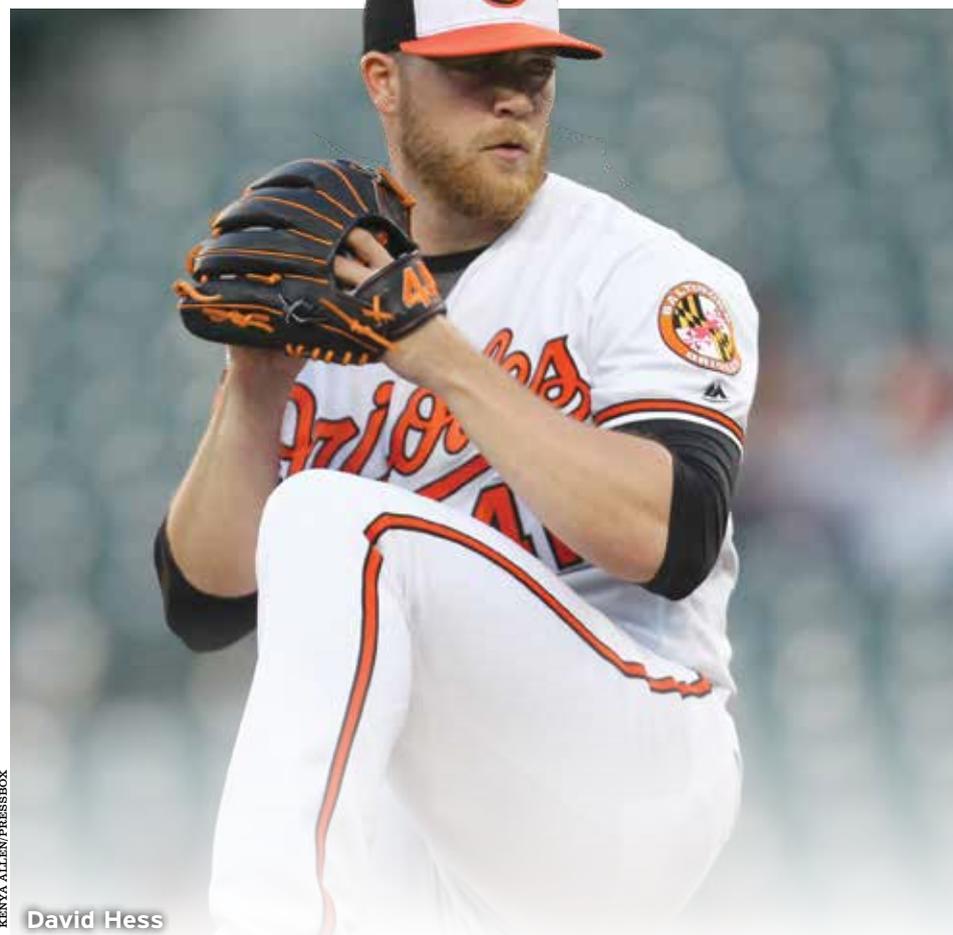
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10 Questions With Orioles Pitcher David Hess

By Todd Karpovich



David Hess

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Q1 What's your favorite "guilty" food?
Pizza and Oreos

Q2 What's your favorite pregame meal or snack?
Some type of protein; either chicken [or] beef with rice and vegetables.

Q3 Who was your favorite sports star when you were a kid?
Chipper Jones, hands down.

Q4 What was your favorite sport growing up?
I loved baseball growing up. If I had to pick another, I'd say football.

Q5 What was your favorite sports team growing up?
Atlanta Braves

Q6 What would you be if you weren't a baseball player?
I'd probably be doing something with science. I was a biochemistry major in college.

Q7 What's your favorite thing to do on a day off?
Pretty low key, play some video games and hang out with my wife. Maybe go see a movie.

Q8 What's your favorite movie of all time?
"Gladiator"

Q9 Is there an exercise you hate doing?
I love to run, but I hate to run.

Q10 What types of pets do you have?
When I got married, my wife had a cat. So I have a cat now, Buddy.



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Boomer Sooner: Ravens Taking On Distinct Oklahoma Flavor

★ **BO SMOLKA**



When offensive guard Ben Powers was drafted by the Baltimore Ravens in the fourth round of the 2019 NFL Draft, the loudest cheers at Powers' draft party in Wichita, Kansas, came from his former and future teammate, Ravens tackle Orlando Brown Jr.

"He was yelling more than I was," Powers recalled.

Brown, who established himself as the Ravens starting right tackle as a rookie last season, was on hand at Powers' draft party to see where his best friend and former Oklahoma teammate would land. The answer was Baltimore, as the Ravens added to the growing Sooner flavor of their locker room.

"We like Oklahoma," director of college scouting Joe Hortiz said shortly after the team drafted Powers. "It's our new Alabama."

Indeed, former general manager Ozzie Newsome might have been partial to players from his alma mater, Alabama, but new general manager Eric DeCosta said after the selection of Marquise Brown that he has "an affinity for Oklahoma players." The Ravens have drafted four Oklahoma players the past two years -- first-round wide receiver Marquise Brown and Powers this year, following Orlando Brown and tight end Mark Andrews, both third-round picks, last year.

"All of the Oklahoma players have a similar mentality," Powers said. "Our No. 1 goal is to win, and that's what we care about, and that's what we're going to do."

The selections of Marquise Brown and Powers this year brings the number of Sooners selected by the Ravens during their history to 11, tying Alabama for the most from one school. And current players from both schools quickly stoked a growing locker room rivalry on social media.

"Is OU about to take over the locker room," cornerback Marlon Humphrey (Alabama) tweeted.

"Already did," safety Tony Jefferson (Oklahoma) replied.

Humphrey also tweeted a popular Internet meme of a man holding one woman's hand while eyeing another woman walking the other way. The man is labeled "Ravens," the woman with him, who looks none too pleased, is "Alabama," and the woman the man is eyeing is "Oklahoma."

"What is this @Ravens?" Humphrey asked.

The current roster has six players from Alabama and five from Oklahoma. Alabama lost one with the departure of Pro Bowl linebacker C.J. Mosley, but gained one with the signing of running back Mark Ingram. In addition to the four draft picks from the past two years, the Sooners can claim Jefferson, who was not drafted by the Ravens but, like Ingram, was signed as a free agent.

It's clear Ravens evaluators value the Oklahoma pedigree, and, with a record of 46-8 during the past four years, they also recognize the Sooners' ability to play what head coach John Harbaugh frequently refers to as "winning football."

The Ravens aren't the only team seeing the talent that is immediately ready to translate to the NFL. Brown and Powers were two of eight Sooners drafted this spring, and Oklahoma became the first program ever with quarterbacks taken No. 1 overall in back-to-back drafts; Kyler Murray's selection by the Arizona Cardinals came a year after Baker Mayfield was taken first overall by the Cleveland Browns. Both those quarterbacks won the Heisman Trophy, meaning Marquise Brown and Powers will have the rare chance to play with a third different Heisman winner in Lamar Jackson.

Hortiz said the Ravens' affinity with the Sooners comes down to ability as well as fit.

"The offensive style they're running, that fits what we're doing here in Baltimore," Hortiz said. "I think that plays into it. But it's really just opportunity meeting our draft board, and it's just worked out great for us. We certainly love the mentality they come in with, so we're going to keep shopping there hopefully."

Last season, both Oklahoma draft picks made a significant impact.

After a disastrous combine, Orlando Brown, once viewed as a potential first-round talent, was still available when the Ravens selected at No. 83 overall in the third round. In the process, he became the first second-generation Raven; his father, Orlando Brown Sr., played for the Ravens from 1996-1998 and again from 2003-2005.

The younger Brown became the starter in Week 7 of his rookie year and started the final 11 games, including the playoff loss to the Los Angeles Chargers. He figures to be the starting right tackle until further notice.

Andrews was the second tight end taken by the Ravens in 2018, at No. 86 overall -- three picks after Brown. Tight end Hayden Hurst, the Ravens' first pick in the draft, was hobbled early in the season by a foot injury, and Andrews emerged as one of Jackson's favorite targets. He finished the season with 34 catches for 552 yards, by far the most ever by a Ravens rookie tight end.

Andrews' 74-yard catch-and-run from Jackson against the Oakland Raiders was the Ravens' longest play from scrimmage last year, and his 68-yard touchdown pass from Jackson against the Chargers during the regular season was the longest touchdown from scrimmage.

Both of this year's Oklahoma draft picks should be impact players as well. Marquise Brown, the cousin of former Pittsburgh Steelers receiver Antonio Brown, is likely to start at one wideout position, and the Ravens see his speed as a game-changer.

"He's a playmaker," DeCosta said. "He's a guy who can do a lot of different things with the ball in his hands. He can catch screen passes, he can run reverses, he can run deep. He has outstanding hands. I think he's tough, and he's electric."

The Ravens won't see much of Brown through spring OTAs, as he is recovering from a Lisfranc foot injury, but the Ravens have no long-term concerns about the injury, and Brown said he expects to be ready for training camp.

Powers (6-foot-4, 307 pounds) could compete immediately for the starting spot at left guard, where he started all 13 games last year en route to All-America honors. Alex Lewis and James Hurst each started there at times last season for the Ravens, but Lewis has not been able to stay healthy, and the door is presumably open for Powers to challenge right away.

So it's certainly possible that when the Ravens' offense takes the field, four of the 11 starters could be former Oklahoma Sooners.

"There are a whole bunch of Oklahoma players [in Baltimore]," Powers said. "It's going to be a lot of fun. It's going to be a fun offense to watch, I can promise you that." •



Marquise Brown



Ben Powers

COURTESY OF OKLAHOMA ATHLETICS

COURTESY OF OKLAHOMA ATHLETICS



COURTESY OF LOUISIANA TECH ATHLETICS

Jaylon Ferguson

For New Raven Jaylon Ferguson, Tornado Cleanup Took Precedence During NFL Draft

★ RYUN ANDERSON

Early on the morning of April 25, a series of tornadoes tore through the town of Ruston, La., home of Louisiana Tech University. Soon-to-be Baltimore Ravens defensive lineman Jaylon Ferguson had been preparing for the biggest moment of his life -- the NFL Draft --

when the storms reached Ruston, where he had been waiting with his family.

As the city spent the weekend trying to recover from the storms that had leveled homes and businesses and claimed two lives, Ferguson put his NFL Draft plans on hold to help the community pick up the pieces left behind.

"These are the same people that took me in and supported me for the last five years," Ferguson told Glenn Clark Radio. "One of the best things I've seen about everything was the immediate response of the community; everybody was out immediately helping each other out. I'm grateful and appreciative of that, and I just want to be part of the effort."

The relief effort not only helped Ferguson take his mind off the suspense of the draft's first few rounds, it offered him a bit of perspective as well.

"It's really a humbling experience because I'm waiting on the call of a lifetime, but at the same time somebody is waking up and their house is gone," Ferguson said.

Shifts in perspective are something Ferguson has experienced with regularity in recent years. Ferguson has a 17-month-old son, and starting a family has changed the way he views his place in the game of football.

"It gives everything a sense of purpose, everything you do," he said. "It's OK to say, 'I'm doing it for me. I'm doing it for the money.' But it's a whole different level when you're doing it for your family."

Having an impressionable son also forced Ferguson to address what some NFL teams may have viewed as a red flag in his profile: character issues, largely stemming from a battery charge from a fight during his freshman year at Louisiana Tech. In fact, per league policy, Ferguson's invitation to this year's NFL Scouting Combine was rescinded due to the "conviction of a felony or misdemeanor involving violence."

For Ferguson, the league's decision was a reminder of the lasting nature of past mistakes. Now that he has a young son, he knows he has to take the responsibility of being a role model more seriously.

"Everything I do is a direct reflection of [my son]," he said. "And it's really brought it to light, like, 'This is your life, this is your son. This is what your son is going to see when he gets older.' And it started to make me realize: watch yourself. Watch how you treat people. It's time for you to grow up."

Regarded by some as a first-round talent, Ferguson slipped to the third round, where the Ravens took him with the 85th pick. When Ferguson was told that he was drafted by Baltimore, he couldn't help but feel that fate had to have been involved.

Earlier this offseason, longtime Ravens outside linebacker and sack artist Terrell Suggs left as a free agent and signed with the Arizona Cardinals. During his four years at Arizona State University, Suggs racked up 44 sacks, an FBS record that stood until last fall, when Ferguson broke it.

The Ravens' 2019 DRAFT CLASS

> ROUND 1:

WR MARQUISE BROWN
OKLAHOMA

ROUND 3:

EDGE JAYLON FERGUSON
LOUISIANA TECH

ROUND 3:

WR MILES BOYKIN
NOTRE DAME

ROUND 4:

RB JUSTICE HILL
OKLAHOMA STATE

ROUND 4:

OG BEN POWERS
OKLAHOMA

ROUND 4:

CB IMAN MARSHALL
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

ROUND 5:

DT DAYLON MACK
TEXAS A&M

ROUND 6:

QB TRACE MCSORLEY
PENN STATE

"It's weird because I grew up watching Terrell Suggs and all the amazing stuff he's doing on the football field; then I got older and broke his record, and now I'm almost stepping into his shoes in Baltimore," Ferguson said.

Then he added: "Pretty big shoes to fill."

If anybody in the draft has a shot at filling Suggs' shoes on the Ravens' defense, it may be the "Sack Daddy," as Ferguson is known. His Louisiana Tech teammates gave him the nickname as he started to close in on Suggs' record, and Ferguson was hesitant to embrace it.

"The first time I was like, 'What? That's not going to catch on,'" Ferguson recalled.

However, he warmed up to the nickname as his career wore on.

"When I started seeing the numbers and started creeping closer and closer to the record, I thought, 'OK, maybe it's all right, a bunch of grown men calling me Sack Daddy. I'm cool with that.'"

Ravens fans can only hope his quarterback-chasing skills translate from Louisiana Tech to the NFL. There were questions regarding the level of competition he played against in college, but a glance at his 2018 game log features some notable performances against strong opponents: two sacks against Mississippi State, a strip sack against LSU and 2.5 sacks in a Hawaii Bowl victory against Hawaii.

"I've put in twice the amount of work as anybody from any level of competition," Ferguson said. "When I played up against bigger competition, the same thing happened."

"I like the challenge of having to step in [to Suggs'] role and try to do what I can for it," he added. "I'm coming in to work, coming and doing everything that he did, just a little bit more." •



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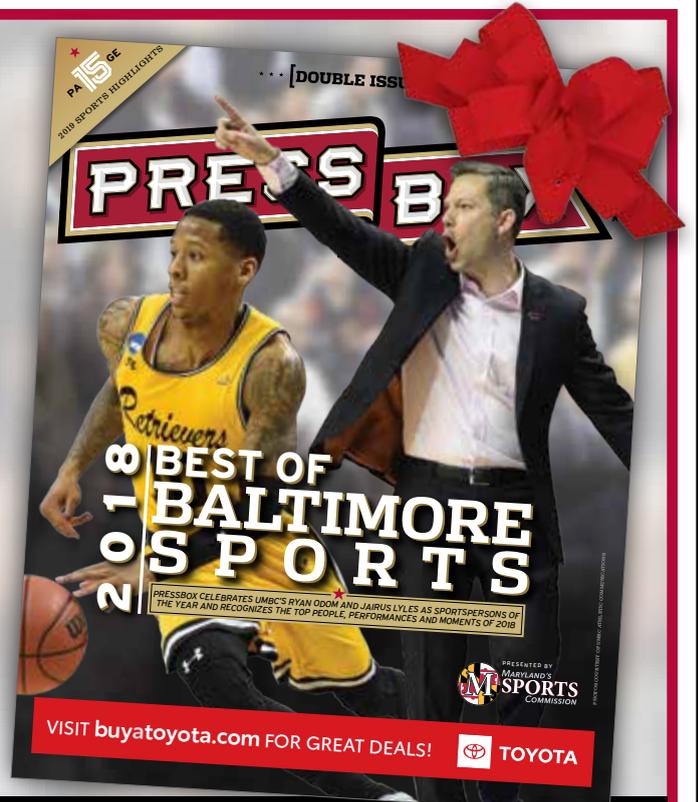
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With the Orioles poised to make what might be the most important pick in team history, we decided to revisit some of the tougher selections in Orioles history and what they missed out on. Reminder: We recognize that the Orioles have made a number of very good first-round picks throughout the years, and we know we could perform this exercise with almost any MLB team. We're just having fun. Or perhaps it's more appropriate to say we're having "fun."

Given that the MLB First-Year Player Draft is even more of a crapshoot than the NFL's version, we only considered actual first-round picks, not compensatory or competitive-balance selections. This all dates back to the last time the Orioles had the first overall selection (1989).

Here are "The 15 Orioles Draft Do-Overs."



ORIOLES DRAFT DO-OVERS

[01] 1991: PICK 9
PICK: OF MARK SMITH
COULD HAVE BEEN: OF MANNY RAMIREZ (PICK 13)

This one stings. Smith reached the major leagues but played just 67 total games during three years with the Orioles and 414 games throughout an eight-year career. Ramirez was ... pretty decent. At least when he wanted to be.

[02] 1993: PICK 19
PICK: P JAY POWELL
COULD HAVE BEEN: OF TORII HUNTER (PICK 20)

While Powell never played a game for the Orioles, he had a decent enough 11-year career in the bigs, including playing a role for the 1997 Florida Marlins team that won the World Series. But just one pick later went Hunter, a future five-time All-Star and nine-time Gold Glove winner (who ironically made his MLB debut in Baltimore).

[03] 1995: PICK 21
PICK: P ALVIE SHEPHERD
COULD HAVE BEEN: OF CARLOS BELTRAN (PICK 49)

While Shepherd never made the majors, his story is fascinating. He battled depression but saw his fortunes take a turn for the better following a 2013 brain aneurysm. He's now in great shape and coaching high school football. It took awhile for another good player to be selected in '95, but Beltran, a nine-time All-Star who slugged 435 home runs, would have been a good choice.

[04] 1997: PICK 26
PICK: OF DARNELL MCDONALD
COULD HAVE BEEN: THIS DRAFT WAS A BLOOD BATH. SO WE'LL GO WITH P TIM HUDSON (PICK 185)

This was a strange draft because the Orioles actually made a very good selection just four picks earlier in then-catcher Jayson Werth, whom the team gave up on in 2002 to acquire pitcher John Bale. Eek. McDonald played just 17 games as an Oriole and 331 during his entire MLB career. But it was a long time before another good pick was made in '97.

[05] 1998: PICK 26
PICK: OF RICK ELDER
COULD HAVE BEEN: OF ADAM DUNN (PICK 50)

Not only did Elder never make the majors, he never reached anything above High-A. He finished with 462 fewer home runs than Dunn.

[06] 1999: PICKS 13, 18, 21 AND 23
PICKS: P MIKE PARADIS, P RICHARD STAHL, OF LARRY BIGBIE AND OF KEITH REED

COULD HAVE BEEN: AGAIN, NOT A TON. MAYBE OF ALEX RIOS (PICK 19) OR 1B JUSTIN MORNEAU (PICK 89)

Obviously, most of the first round was historically bad for the O's in '99. Neither of the pitchers the Orioles drafted ever made the bigs, and Reed made six total MLB plate appearances. But they actually made up for it by taking Brian Roberts with their final first-round pick (50th overall, a supplemental selection). Few teams did much better after lefty Barry Zito (ninth overall) went to the Oakland Athletics.

[07] 2000: PICK 14
PICK: P BEAU HALE
COULD HAVE BEEN: 2B CHASE UTLEY (PICK 15)

This is one of the ultimate "what-ifs" in Orioles history. Hale bounced around the minors for seven years, never making it above Double-A. Selected just one pick later, Utley could end up reaching the Hall of Fame once he's eligible (2024).

[08] 2001: PICK 7 AND 19
PICKS: P CHRIS SMITH AND 2B MIKE FONTENOT
COULD HAVE BEEN: 3B DAVID WRIGHT (PICK 38)

Smith was gone from the Orioles' system by 2005, having never even made it to High-A. Fontenot became a decent player for a couple of years with the Chicago Cubs. Wright, the future seven-time All-Star third baseman, would have been really nice late in Round 1 with Cal Ripken Jr. set to retire.

[09] 2002: PICK 4
PICK: P ADAM LOEWEN
COULD HAVE BEEN: P ZACK GREINKE (PICK 6)

Loewen's career story is absolutely fascinating; he made it to the big leagues as a pitcher with the Orioles and as a hitter with the Toronto Blue Jays, then transitioned back to pitching. But his career never involved him being a pro-

ductive major leaguer. In 35 appearances as an Oriole, he pitched to a 5.38 ERA. Greinke, taken just two picks later, pitched to a sub-4.00 ERA in 11 of his first 15 seasons.

[10] 2004: PICK 8
PICK: P WADE TOWNSEND
COULD HAVE BEEN: P JERED WEAVER (PICK 12)

Somehow Townsend is actually the Orioles' worst pick on this list, as they were unable to even sign him out of Rice. But they didn't miss out on anything; after being drafted again by the then-Tampa Bay Devil Rays the next year, he never made it above a brief stint at Double-A. Weaver was exceptional for the Los Angeles Angels from 2006-2014.

[11] 2005: PICK 13
PICK: C BRANDON SNYDER
COULD HAVE BEEN: OF JACOBY ELLSBURY (PICK 23)

Snyder neither stuck at catcher nor became a productive major-league first baseman. He finished with 37 plate appearances for the Orioles before the team unceremoniously parted ways with him in 2011. He was even briefly teammates with Ellsbury on the 2013 Boston Red Sox. Which is about the only reasonable comparison between the two.

[12] 2006: PICK 9
PICK: 3B BILLY ROWELL
COULD HAVE BEEN: P TIM LINCECUM (PICK 10) OR P MAX SCHERZER (PICK 11)

You read that right. Instead of getting one of the best big-game pitchers in baseball history or ... just one of the best pitchers in baseball history (both of whom were taken with the next two picks), the Orioles got Billy Rowell. The Lincecum-Scherzer duo has three World Series titles and five Cy Young Awards to their combined names, and Scherzer isn't done yet. Rowell once hit .275 at High-A. So that's nice.

[13] 2008: PICK 4
PICK: P BRIAN MATUSZ
COULD HAVE BEEN: C BUSTER POSEY (PICK 5)

Matusz was a can't-miss prospect who will always be able to say he allowed just four hits and one walk in 30 career matchups against David Ortiz, whom he struck out 13 times. Sadly, he had to face non-David Ortiz hitters sometimes too. Just one pick later ... a three-time World Series champion and four-time Silver Slugger Award winner and 2012 National League MVP. But to my knowledge, Posey never struck out Ortiz. So advantage Matusz there.

[14] 2009: PICK 5
PICK: P MATT HOBGOOD
COULD HAVE BEEN: OF MIKE TROUT (PICK 25)

Hobgood is a really good guy who never made it above the Double-A level in part due to injury. And to be fair, a ton of teams missed on the New Jersey high schooler who ... might end up going down as the best player in baseball history. But again, Hobgood is a really good guy.

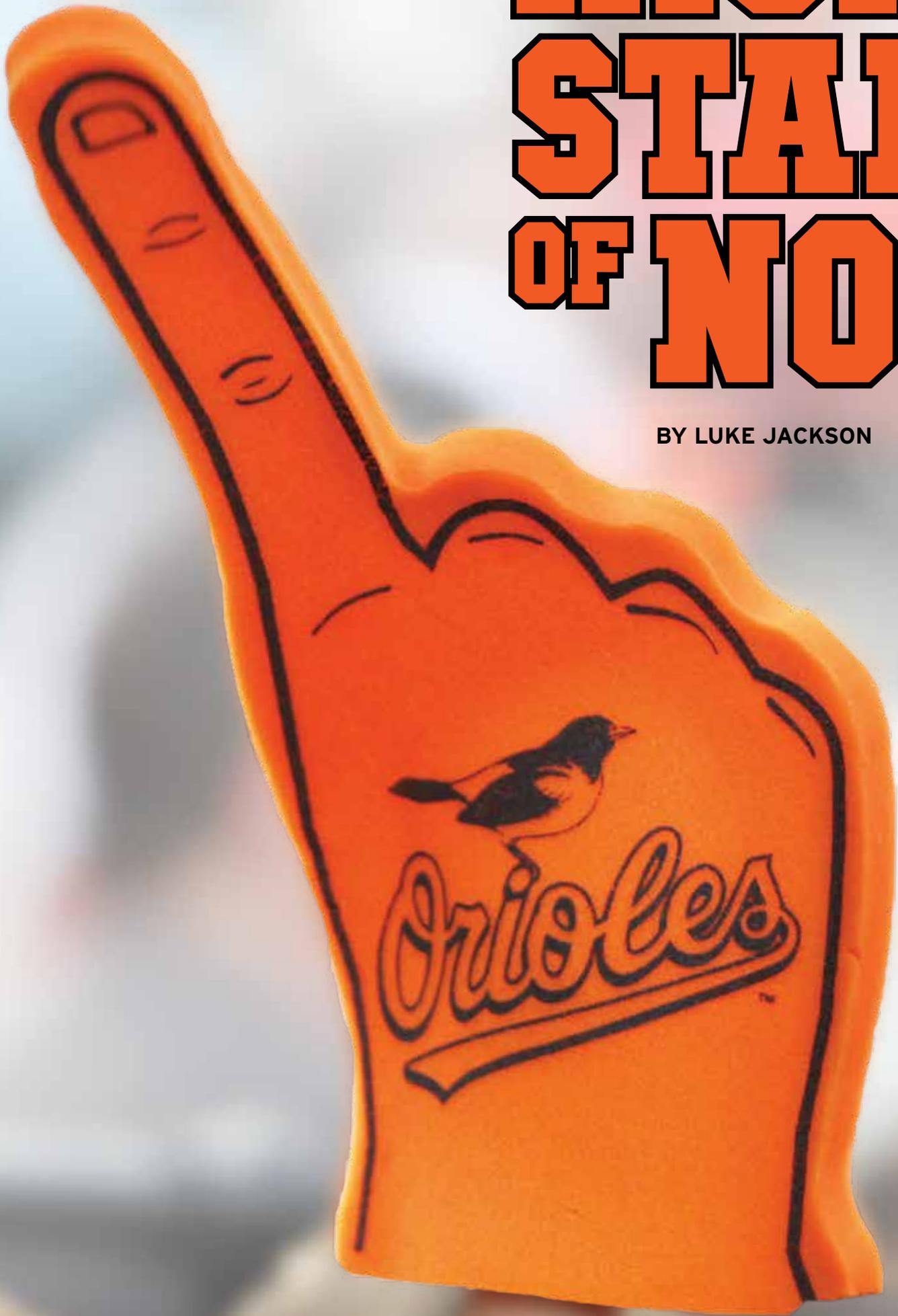
[15] 2013: PICK 22
PICK: P HUNTER HARVEY
COULD HAVE BEEN: OF AARON JUDGE (PICK 32)

Hopefully Harvey will still end up panning out for the Orioles. It's been a rough start due to injuries, but there's still some promise there. It's tougher to fathom he'll end up being anything like Judge, however. •

[BY GLENN CLARK | PRESSBOX IS AVAILABLE EVERY MONTH ON THE 15TH]

HIGH STAKES OF NO. 1

BY LUKE JACKSON



NEARLY 30 YEARS AGO, BEN MCDONALD WALKED INTO THE BALTIMORE ORIOLES' CLUBHOUSE FOR THE FIRST TIME AS A MAJOR LEAGUER.

The right-handed pitcher from Louisiana State University had been a key figure in leading the United States to the gold medal in the 1988 Olympic Games and won the Golden Spikes Award as the nation's top college player in 1989. He was drafted No. 1 overall by the Orioles in June 1989 after being given the highest grade ever issued by the Major League Scouting Bureau.

McDonald went through a protracted contract negotiation with the club; his agent, Scott Boras, wanted McDonald to become the first amateur to ever sign a major-league contract. Boras got his wish: McDonald's three-year, major-league deal netted the pitcher the largest-ever guarantee (\$1.2 million) and signing bonus (\$350,000) for an amateur. McDonald made two minor-league starts before getting the call to the big leagues, where catcher Mickey Tettleton awaited.

"I remember Mickey Tettleton hollering out real loud when I first walked in -- I hadn't even met anybody yet -- and he goes, 'Oh God, here comes our \$1.2 million A-ball pitcher.' And that didn't sit well with me at the time because I hadn't even met anybody yet," said McDonald, who explained that the big-league minimum salary was about \$45,000 at the time.

"My year's salary was going to be a lot more than a lot of guys on that young '89 Orioles team, so there was some animosity there between the players, too, when I first walked in," McDonald said. "... For me, it was a lot to deal with."

On the evening of June 3, 2019, McDonald's 30-year reign as the lone No. 1 overall pick by the Orioles will come to an end. When the Orioles' next No. 1 pick walks into the clubhouse at Camden Yards to prepare for his major-league debut in the coming years, he may not face the pressure of a record contract, nor will he have had the same folkloric amateur career as McDonald.

However, with a bare-bones big-league team and a farm system generally considered to be among the bottom third of baseball, the player the Orioles select will instantly become the face of the Orioles' rebuilding project, a beacon of hope for fans and a symbol for better days ahead.

"All the experts are saying that the Orioles are probably going to lose 100 games again this year, so he's going to be walking into situation where the Orioles have lost 100 games possibly two years in a row," McDonald said. "That kid could very well be the face of the franchise. It's going to be interesting to see what happens, and I hope whoever it is can deal with the expectations."

IS IT RUTSCHMAN?

The consensus top prospect in the 2019 draft is Oregon State catcher Adley Rutschman, a switch hitter who led the Beavers to the College World Series title in 2018. Originally drafted by the Seattle Mariners in the 40th round in 2016, he became a candidate to go first overall in 2019 after exploding as a sophomore. Rutschman hit .408/.505/.628 in 2018, and those numbers are up across the board as a junior.

"If there's ever been anybody that should be clear cut the No. 1 pick in the draft, I think it's Adley," said LSU

head coach Paul Mainieri, who coached Rutschman on USA Baseball's collegiate national team during the summer of 2018. "When you evaluate his game offensively and defensively, you've got to give it a 10, whatever you're looking at."

Orioles shortstop prospect Cadyn Grenier, the club's second-round pick in 2018, was teammates with Rutschman at Oregon State in 2017 and 2018. Grenier said Rutschman's production skyrocketed as a sophomore once he gave up playing football and shifted all of his focus to baseball; Rutschman was Oregon State's kickoff specialist as a freshman.

The 6-foot-2, 216-pound Rutschman might have given up football, but perhaps not his football mentality behind the dish.

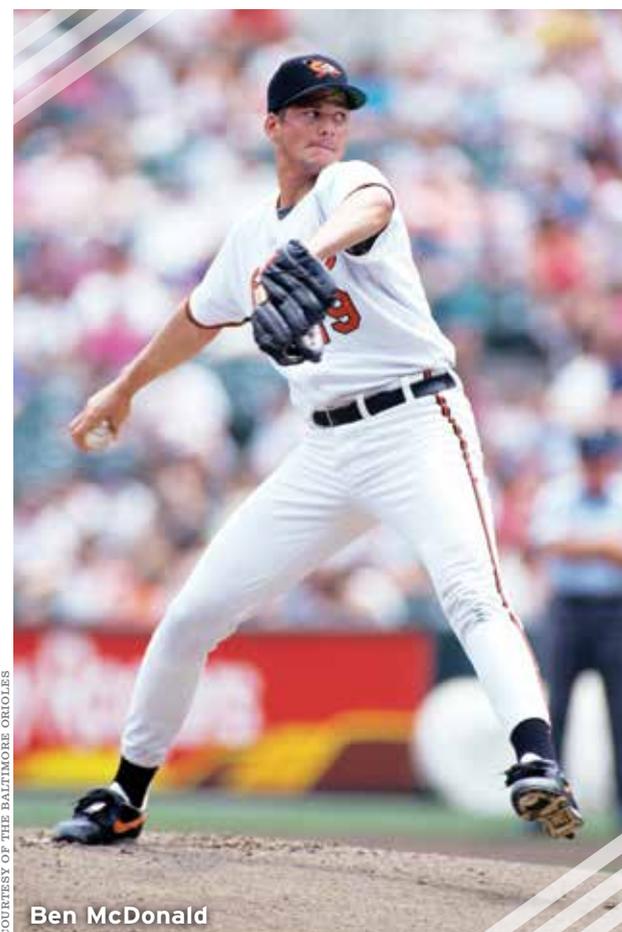
"One of the funnier things I saw him do is he caught a catcher pop-up over by our dugout," Grenier said. "He catches the pop-up and he runs into a wall that we had, an overhang over our dugout and hit his face on it and still held the ball. And you're just like, 'Dude, are you serious?' And we ended up having to put a safety pad there because the guy went face-first into a cement wall and still caught a pop-up. We kind of joked about that for awhile."

Rutschman joined Team USA shortly after winning the College World Series in Omaha, Neb., last June and played against Japan and Cuba. Mainieri described him as "a coach's dream."

"I just marveled last summer. Here's a young man who just won the national championship in college baseball in Omaha, joins our team and he wants to be in there right away," Mainieri said. "I looked at a video of our pitcher striking out the Japanese batter to end the game, a 1-0 game, and you thought Rutschman had just won the national championship again with the way he reacted -- the fist pump, the sprint out to the pitcher and giving him the big hug."



Adley Rutschman



Ben McDonald

OTHER OPTIONS

Shortstop Bobby Witt Jr., from Colleyville Heritage High School in Texas, has been on the 2019 radar for years because of both his bloodlines and his own exploits. His father won 142 games as a right-handed pitcher for seven big-league teams from 1986-2001.

The 6-foot-1, 185-pound Witt, a right-handed hitter, has a chance to carry five above-average tools -- the ability to hit for average, hit for power, throw, run and defend -- at the big-league level. Witt showed off his power at the High School Home Run Derby during the 2018 MLB All-Star festivities in Washington, D.C., winning the contest by hitting eight home runs in 90 seconds.

"... [From] what I have seen, there has been no stage too big," said Alan McDougal, Witt's high school coach. "I think that was kind of on display at the All-Star Game with the home run contest. To be able to go in there in 90 seconds in front of 40,000 people and do that takes obviously great athletic ability, but just ➔



Bobby Witt Jr.



Andrew Vaughn

COURTESY OF USA BASEBALL

someone that's got it between their ears and can slow things down. That's Bobby Witt."

University of California first baseman Andrew Vaughn, a 6-foot, 214-pound right-handed hitter, won the Golden Spikes Award in 2018 and has a claim as the top hitter in college baseball this year. He hit .402/.531/.819 as a sophomore and has kept up the pace as a junior. He made 10 appearances on the mound as a freshman, but his future is in the middle of a big-league lineup.

Vaughn played on Mainieri's collegiate national team in 2018 along with Rutschman, and the coach was impressed by Vaughn's ability to hit.

"He's got a beautiful right-handed swing and he's got great bat speed," Mainieri said. "... He hits the ball hard. He hits it to all fields and [has] good pitch recognition. As you might imagine, he's seen a lot of breaking balls and off-speed pitches throughout his career, and I think it's helped him in his development as a hitter to recognize pitches. But trying to sneak a fastball by him is virtually impossible because of his bat speed."

FINDING MR. RIGHT

Dan O'Dowd, the general manager of the Colorado Rockies from 1999-2014, had two top-five picks during his tenure in Denver. In 2006 the Rockies selected Stanford right-handed pitcher Greg Reynolds with the second overall pick, and in 2013 the team selected Oklahoma right-hander Jon Gray, who has been a part of the Rockies' rotation for parts of the past four seasons, with the third overall pick.

O'Dowd is prouder of the process that led to Gray. Long Beach State infielder Evan Longoria was the top player on the Rockies' board in 2006, but they opted for Reynolds because of the dearth of starting pitching depth in the organization. The Rockies thought they were covered on the left side of the infield; not only had they drafted Troy Tulowitzki a year earlier, but they had Garrett Atkins, Ian Stewart and Jeff Baker as well.

"The lesson learned out of that is that you never take based upon need," said O'Dowd, now an analyst for MLB Network. "You always take who you think is the most impactful, talented player that you have evaluated a particular way because ultimately, that's the sustainability. That will make the draft a good draft."

O'Dowd said teams with high picks typically start to zero in on potential targets the summer before the draft once it becomes obvious the major-league team's season is heading in the wrong direction. However, the Orioles'

front office was overhauled this past offseason, and general manager Mike Elias, hired in November, is taking on a large role in the club's preparation for the June draft.

O'Dowd said teams evaluate draft targets through traditional scouting and analytical studies, as well as doing background work on the player's character and medical history.

"What you try to do is check off all the questions within each of those silos so you have a complete look at the player from every possible prism that there could be," O'Dowd said.

Jim Duquette, the New York Mets' GM in 2004 and the Orioles' vice president of baseball operations from 2005-2007, is intrigued by what advances Elias and assistant general manager Sig Mejdal will make regarding the analytical and research side of the draft.

TrackMan -- a radar system that measures a batted ball's exit velocity, a pitched ball's spin rate and more -- has been installed at college ballparks across the country and at the USA Baseball and Perfect Game facilities used for high school events. In turn, TrackMan and other sports technology can be used to help evaluate the chance of an adolescent developing into an impact player at the big-league level.

"What I'm curious about is there's more sports tech than we've ever seen right now, and there are ways to measure even athleticism now that you didn't have even two years ago," said Duquette, a host on SiriusXM's MLB Network Radio. "That landscape has changed. How much are they going to incorporate that? Because they're tech-savvy, obviously. ... I expect that that's going to be a big part of the decision making."

The Orioles can also take advantage of the second-highest draft bonus pool in the league. Baltimore will be allotted about \$13.8 million to sign its draftees from the top 10 rounds, according to *Baseball America*, with a slot value of approximately \$8.4 million assigned to the first pick in the draft.

Teams can use their bonus pools creatively to coax value out of all corners of the draft. The Houston Astros did that shrewdly during Elias and GM Jeff Luhnow's first year with the club in 2012. Houston selected shortstop Carlos Correa with the top pick in the draft, paid him significantly less than slot value and used the savings to sign right-hander Lance McCullers and infielder Rio Ruiz, two well-regarded high school talents with strong college commitments.

What it will cost to sign the top pick will be a consideration for the Orioles as well, according to Ben Reiter, the author of "Astroball: The New Way To Win It All," which details the Astros' rise from worst to first.

"Once they have all the information, it's going to be Mike and Sig and maybe a couple other advisers who are ultimately going to make this call, and interesting to me, they always kind of make it the morning of the draft," Reiter said. "Things are really undecided until as late as that, if not even into the afternoon. It's really a fluid process right up until the guy's name is called."

FACE OF THE REBUILD

The Orioles won the most regular-season games in the American League from 2012-2016, and in 2014, had their highest average attendance since 2005. Manny Machado, Nick Markakis, Matt Wieters and Zack Britton were drafted and developed by the organization, then became keys to the club's success and fan favorites to boot. Adam Jones, whose impact in the community matched his achievements on the field while he played for the club from 2008-2018, was the face of the franchise for much of his tenure in Baltimore.

Those players are all gone now, and it's unclear whether any players on the current big-league team will be around when the Orioles next field a competitive club. The No. 1 pick in June could not only be the first building block to the next

era of winning baseball, but also a player fans can wrap their arms around.

"That player is going to have to be someone that has both the personality and that contagious enthusiasm that other people want to be around," O'Dowd said, "because he is going to wear a little bit of a mantra that just goes beyond his performance on the field. That's going to be very, very important for that organization as they move along."

"This is the player that will be the opening statement, in many ways, of the new regime in Baltimore," Reiter said. "They're drafting for nothing less than a cornerstone and the face of the rebuilding effort."

The consensus top prospect currently in the Orioles' farm system is left-handed pitcher DL Hall, who was drafted 21st overall by Baltimore in 2017. After posting a 2.10 ERA and striking out 100 hitters in 94.1 innings in 2018, Hall has established himself as the crown jewel of a thin farm system.

Hall admitted there's pressure associated with being a first-round pick, mostly due to the expectations of outsiders, but he believes being the face of the rebuild will be a "huge opportunity" for the Orioles' top pick.

"It's going to change a kid's life to be able to have that stamp on it," Hall said. "... I think that it's going to be life-changing, for sure, and I think that you've just got to see it as more of an opportunity to do something great versus an opportunity to try to deal with a lot of pressure."

Pressure is what Ben McDonald felt from all angles when he walked into the Orioles' clubhouse for the first time 30 years ago. McDonald, though, settled in. He pitched for the Orioles from 1989-1995 and established himself as a mid-rotation starter in the early '90s, going 58-53 with a 3.89 ERA as an Oriole.

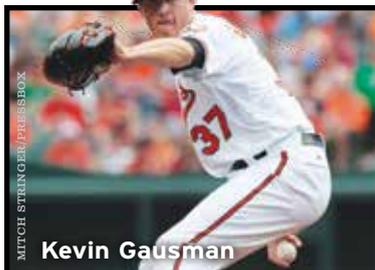
Though Mickey Tettleton -- with whom McDonald became friends -- made the initial jarring comment toward McDonald when he walked into the clubhouse for the first time, another interaction stood out, too. Hall of Famer Cal Ripken Jr. gave McDonald advice that turned out to be prescient, and it may still resonate ahead of the June draft.

"Go out and bust your butt every day. Be the hardest worker on the field," McDonald remembered Ripken saying. "If you can do that, with your talent level, the results will be there and people will respect that in the end, especially here in Baltimore."

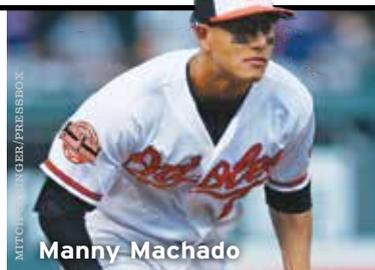
"Baltimore's a blue-collar city that if you go out and bust your butt and you try hard every day, you be the hardest worker, everything's going to be fine. And dadgummit, wasn't he right." •



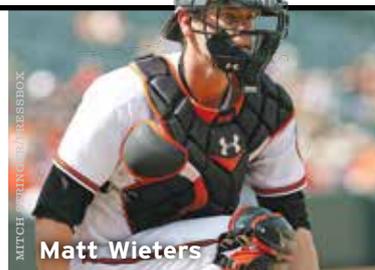
JOHN PENNISI FOR PRESSBOX



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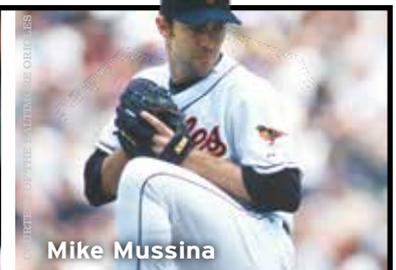
Manny Machado



Matt Wieters



Nick Markakis



Mike Mussina

★ | **ORIOLES FIRST-ROUND DRAFT PICKS SINCE 1989**

| YEAR | PICK | PLAYER | POSITION | SCHOOL | MLB GAMES PLAYED (AS OF MAY 13, 2019) |
|------|------|-------------------|----------|-------------------------------------|--|
| 2018 | 11 | GRAYSON RODRIGUEZ | RHP | CENTRAL HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL (TEXAS) | 0 |
| 2017 | 21 | DL HALL | LHP | VALDOSTA HIGH SCHOOL (GA.) | 0 |
| 2016 | 27 | CODY SEDLOCK | RHP | ILLINOIS | 0 |
| 2015 | 25 | DJ STEWART | OF | FLORIDA STATE | 17 |
| 2015 | 36 | RYAN MOUNTCASTLE | INF | HAGERTY HIGH SCHOOL (FLA.) | 0 |
| 2013 | 22 | HUNTER HARVEY | RHP | BANDYS HIGH SCHOOL (N.C.) | 0 |
| 2012 | 4 | KEVIN GAUSMAN | RHP | LSU | 168 |
| 2011 | 4 | DYLAN BUNDY | RHP | OWASSO HIGH SCHOOL (OKLA.) | 105 |
| 2010 | 3 | MANNY MACHADO | INF | BRITO PRIVATE (FLA.) | 966 |
| 2009 | 5 | MATT HOBGOOD | RHP | NORCO HIGH SCHOOL (CALIF.) | 0 |
| 2008 | 4 | BRIAN MATUSZ | LHP | UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO | 280 |
| 2007 | 5 | MATT WIETERS | C | GEORGIA TECH | 1,093 |
| 2006 | 9 | BILLY ROWELL | INF | BISHOP EUSTACE PREP (N.J.) | 0 |
| 2005 | 13 | BRANDON SNYDER | C | WESTFIELD HIGH SCHOOL (VA.) | 122 |
| 2004 | 8 | WADE TOWNSEND | RHP | RICE | 0 |
| 2003 | 7 | NICK MARKAKIS | OF | YOUNG HARRIS COLLEGE (GA.) | 2,042 |
| 2002 | 4 | ADAM LOEWEN | LHP | SURREY, B.C. | 77 |
| 2001 | 7 | CHRIS SMITH | LHP | CUMBERLAND UNIVERSITY (TENN.) | 0 |
| 2001 | 19 | MIKE FONTENOT | INF | LSU | 582 |
| 2000 | 14 | BEAU HALE | RHP | TEXAS | 0 |
| 1999 | 13 | MIKE PARADIS | RHP | CLEMSON | 0 |
| 1999 | 18 | RICHARD STAHL | LHP | NEWTON COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL (GA.) | 0 |
| 1999 | 21 | LARRY BIGBIE | OF | BALL STATE | 392 |
| 1999 | 23 | KEITH REED | OF | PROVIDENCE COLLEGE | 6 |
| 1998 | 26 | RICK ELDER | OF | SPRAYBERRY HIGH SCHOOL (GA.) | 0 |
| 1997 | 22 | JAYSON WERTH | C | GLENWOOD HIGH SCHOOL (ILL.) | 1,583 |
| 1997 | 26 | DARNELL McDONALD | OF | CHERRY CREEK HIGH SCHOOL (CO.) | 331 |
| 1995 | 21 | ALVIE SHEPHERD | RHP | NEBRASKA | 0 |
| 1993 | 19 | JAY POWELL | RHP | MISSISSIPPI STATE | 512 |
| 1992 | 4 | JEFFREY HAMMONDS | OF | STANFORD | 957 |
| 1991 | 9 | MARK SMITH | OF | SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA | 414 |
| 1990 | 20 | MIKE MUSSINA | RHP | STANFORD | 537 |
| 1989 | 1 | BEN McDONALD | RHP | LSU | 211 |

*THIS LIST DOES NOT INCLUDE PICKS IN THE COMPENSATION OR COMPETITIVE-BALANCE ROUNDS.

ORIOLES REPORT

For Young Orioles, Opportunity Knocks ... And They're Responding

★ TODD KARPOVICH

Baltimore Orioles manager Brandon Hyde is impressed by several players who are seizing the opportunity to show they can become cornerstones of the rebuilding franchise.

Whether they've been overlooked, designated for assignment or simply did not fit into the plans of other big-league clubs, the door is open at Camden Yards.

"A lot of our guys have a lot to prove," Hyde said. "They're getting an opportunity to play in the big leagues and getting an opportunity to play consistently. Maybe they haven't had that chance. I feel great about our guys taking advantage of the playing time they're getting. I hope they're taking every opportunity to take advantage of it because they don't know if it's ever going to happen again."

Infielders Renato Nunez and Rio Ruiz, outfielder Dwight Smith Jr. and catcher Pedro Severino are headlining the new wave of positional talent. While this group has performed well so far, the margin for error remains thin because the Orioles have several prospects in the minors pushing for roster spots.

The fierce competition for playing time that began in spring training has carried over to the regular season. Hyde faces a delicate balance: developing talent while trying to win games.

"Our guys in there know that I'm going to continue to support them," Hyde said. "I'm honest. I have their backs. I want them to believe in what we're doing. I want them to believe in the coaching staff. I want them to believe in each other. I think we have a really good clubhouse. I think our guys like playing the game and like playing the game as our club. There's a good feel."

General manager Mike Elias has said numerous times the focus is getting better each day rather than competing for a division title. The Orioles are not going to jeopardize the long-term strategy to win games in April, May and June.

Still, Hyde conceded it's no fun being on the wrong side of the scoreboard.

"You want to win," said Hyde, who was on the Chicago Cubs' coaching staff from 2014-2018. "I have been to the post-season four years in a row. And it feels good to win. ... I have been through the other side also where I've been through a 100-loss team with a group of young guys that were getting their feet wet in the big leagues. I have seen the light-at-the-end-of-the-tunnel type of situation. I feel like this is where we're at right now."

Smith, a former first-round pick by Toronto, was acquired from the Blue Jays in exchange for international signing bonus slots in March. The 26-year-old has thrived as an everyday player and made some highlight-reel plays in left field.

"I've been used to playing every day since I got drafted. It's nothing different to me," Smith said. "Just a bigger stage, just got to stay calm at all times and just be the same person that you always were."

Nunez has also found a consistent role because of his versatility and production. The 25-year-old has played first base, left field and served as the designated hitter. Nunez was tied with Trey Mancini for the club lead with six home runs after the first month of the season.

Last year, he appeared in 60 games for the Orioles, hitting .275 (55-for-200) with 13 doubles, seven home runs and 20 RBIs. If he continues to play well, Nunez very well could

have a role with the franchise long term.

"What I really want is to be in the lineup, even DHing," he said. "I don't mind. But if I'm in the lineup, of course I'm going to be happy."

Ruiz has also been a pleasant surprise. The 24-year-old third baseman has shown versatility as a hitter and a willingness to get on base however possible. Sometimes that entails bunting against the shift, which ultimately can produce an effective at-bat.

"... Whenever I had the opportunity to bunt or work on bunting, I kind of took some pride in that," Ruiz said. "Made sure that I was doing things right and my technique was right and made sure the bunts were down."

The Orioles opted to keep Severino on the roster rather than Jesus Sucre when the injured Austin Wynns was ready to rejoin the team. Severino, who was claimed off waivers from the Washington Nationals in March, has been solid managing the pitching staff and has shown some power with his bat.

"You have to prepare yourself to be an everyday player," Severino, 25, said. "My confidence is back, and I feel really good here with my teammates. I think we're doing a pretty good job."

Hyde said Severino is a perfect example of a player who has made the most out of his opportunities. In return, the club has a catcher who can be productive in the bottom third of the lineup.

"Pedro plays with a lot of life," Hyde said. "He's got an abundant amount of energy, fantastic in the clubhouse, loves to play. I like the way about him. I think he's really competitive. I think he battles. He's just a super-tough kid that likes to play the game, and it shows, how he goes about things. He's tough on himself, lives and dies with the pitcher who's out there, tries to get through innings. It matters to him to put a zero up. He shows it and it's fun to watch."

Hyde served as Rick Renteria's bench coach with the Cubs in 2014, and the two still have a close bond. Renteria is facing a similar rebuilding challenge now with the Chicago White Sox -- albeit in a much more forgiving division, the American League Central.

"You are always trying to give guys opportunities to learn certain things through particular experiences," Renteria said. "Sometimes, I think you're trying to balance out everything while trying to win ballgames at the major-league level, which can be trying at times."

"... I always say if you're developing, you're winning because at the end of the day, when it's all said and done, when they're doing what they're supposed to be doing, you give yourself a really good chance in the long run of winning," Renteria added. "I think you find a way to make sure that you keep encouraging, teaching, motivating and, by the same token, keeping a perspective on what's going on in the process."

Even the more seasoned players for the Orioles are buying into the plan. They understand the growing pains that accompany this strategy.

Still, the vets have been impressed by the way the team has responded to some of the early adversity.

"I think we've shown some flashes of being really good in some certain areas, and I just think we've been really inconsistent," starting pitcher Andrew Cashner said. "I think the biggest thing for us is trying to find a way to be more consistent. If we can be more consistent, I think we'll be a pretty good ballclub." •

- PHOTOGRAPHY -
ALL PHOTOS BY KENYA ALLEN/PRESSBOX



Renato Nunez



Rio Ruiz



Dwight Smith Jr.



Pedro Severino

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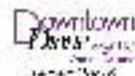
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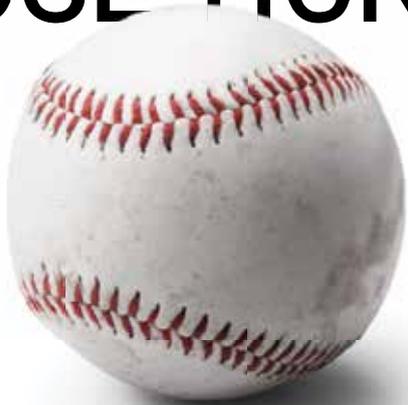


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INSIDE THE NUMBERS

Is Adley Rutschman The Right Choice At No. 1 For Orioles?

★ MATT KREMNITZER

In a way, this first season of the Baltimore Orioles' rebuild is extremely important. Not so much for the final win-loss record of the major-league club, but for what happens to improve the outlook of future seasons.

Can the Orioles get the most out of right-hander Dylan Bundy and some of the underachieving bullpen arms? With the ability to offer playing time to fringe major leaguers, can they find some undervalued assets? (Outfielder Dwight Smith Jr. and catcher Pedro Severino are early, intriguing options.) And can they get some better performances to beef up their current selection of trade chips?

But in another way, anything that's happening in Baltimore pales in comparison to what's going on in the Orioles' farm system. Not only for the ongoing development of the handful of players who are getting close to the major leagues, like outfielders Yusniel Diaz and Austin Hays, infielder Ryan Mountcastle, lefty Keegan Akin and others, but also for the growth taking place in the lowest levels of the system. The Orioles' previous two first-round selections, left-handed starter DL Hall (High-A Frederick) and right-handed starter Grayson Rodriguez (Low-A Delmarva), have looked particularly impressive.

There's some talent in all levels of the Orioles' system; it would be rather ridiculous if there wasn't, considering the Orioles traded away infielders Manny Machado and Jonathan Schoop and pitchers Kevin Gausman, Zack Britton,

Brad Brach and Darren O'Day at the trade deadline last season. But there is not nearly enough talent, something Orioles executive vice president and general manager Mike Elias made perfectly clear during his introductory news conference when he shared his goal of building an "elite talent pipeline."

Cultivating the team's existing talent is one thing. But Elias will get the chance to really make his mark in June, when the Orioles select first in the 2019 MLB Draft. Besides player development and any future trades, there are two things that will help the Orioles return to relevance: actually participating and putting resources toward international spending (which the Orioles are preparing to do under Elias) and hitting on a large number of draft picks throughout the next few years. The most valuable of those, of course, is that upcoming top selection.

A top draft pick is an extremely valuable commodity. It also may be a relatively easy one to make this year, as Oregon State catcher Adley Rutschman is the clear frontrunner among the major prospect-ranking resources. A switch-hitter who's offensively and defensively advanced, Rutschman is seen as a player who could move quickly through a team's system. His sophomore season was phenomenal enough, with a .408/.505/.628 batting line, but his junior year has been even better: .433/.582/.793 through May 13, and he's hit more home runs and drawn more walks than he did as a sophomore. College stats can certainly be deceiving, but Rutschman's projection seems to match the production.

There are other intriguing draft options, including high school shortstop Bobby Witt Jr., University of California first

baseman Andrew Vaughn and high school shortstop C.J. Abrams. But there's nothing out there at the moment to suggest Rutschman isn't the likely pick for the Orioles.

The Orioles have only ever selected first overall one other time in their history: in 1989, when they selected right-hander Ben McDonald out of LSU. Since then, the highest they've selected is third overall in 2010, when they drafted Manny Machado. Between 2007 and 2012, the O's selected in the top five each year. This year's selection is their first top-five pick since 2012.

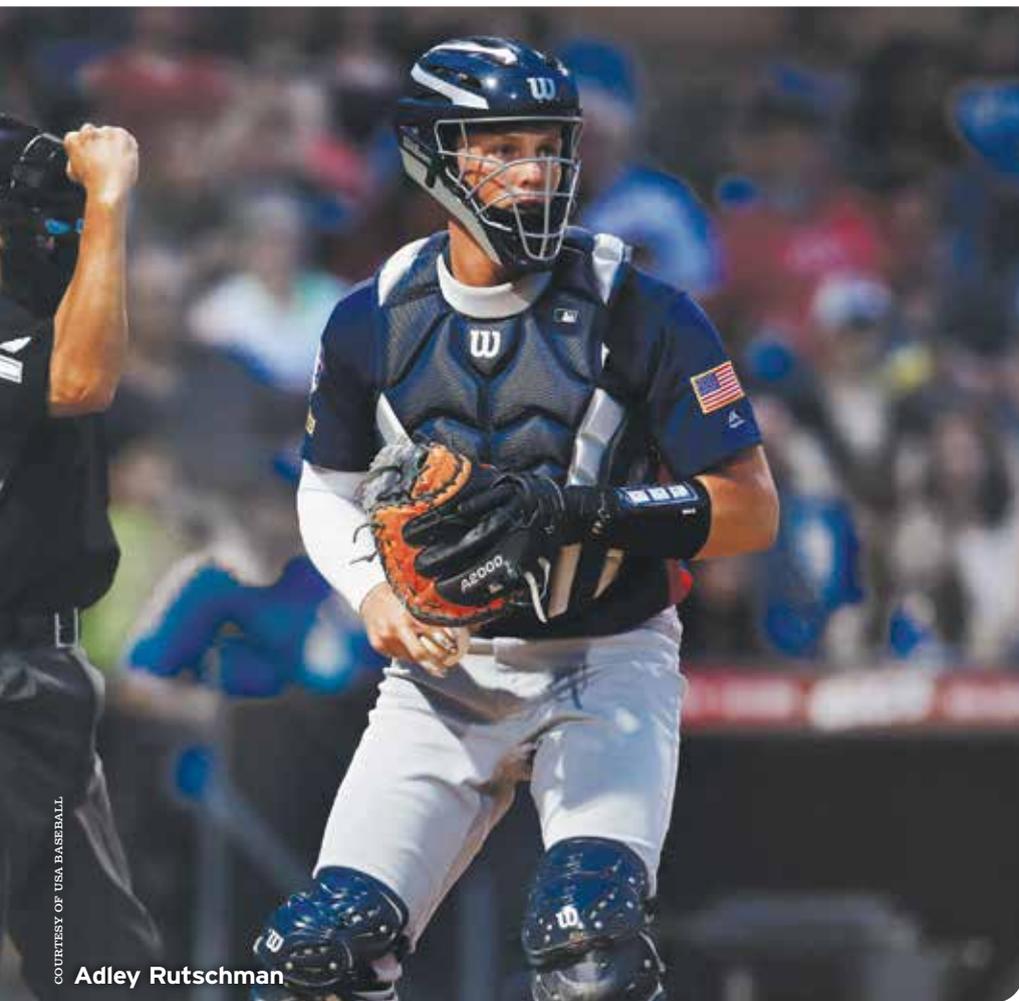
It's worth noting that in the last 33 years, only one catcher has been picked with the top overall selection: Joe Mauer in 2001. Before him, the last catcher selected in the top spot was B.J. Surhoff in 1985.

Among the Orioles' history of first-round picks, just five have been catchers. And of those five, only one was selected with a top-10 pick: Matt Wieters in 2007. Wieters was a much-hyped prospect and had a few very good seasons, but he never ended up as the star player that many fans hoped he would be. As a switch-hitting catcher with a rocket arm and power at the dish, Rutschman's comparison to Wieters is obvious.

Looking back at the best No. 1 draft picks of all time, many of them are high schoolers: Alex Rodriguez, Ken Griffey Jr., Chipper Jones, Darryl Strawberry, Justin Upton, Mauer and more. Does that make it concerning that the Orioles may be leaning toward the college ranks with their first pick? In a word, no.

In a 2017 analysis for FiveThirtyEight, Neil Paine concluded that the trend of focusing on undervalued college talent wasn't as beneficial as it had previously been, and that "most recent results say it's now a toss-up whether high school or college prospects are more likely to pay off." However, he also noted that "college hitters still appear to be far better bargains than high school ones." College isn't the advantage it used to be for pitchers, but it still appears to be one for position players.

It's unclear how much that research matters in the case of Rutschman, who's at the top of almost everyone's draft board. Even at catcher, he's the top-tier talent in the upcoming draft. That doesn't mean there's any kind of guarantee he's going to be great. But, by all accounts, he represents the Orioles' best chance to add an excellent player. There's no question they need some of those. •



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Adley Rutschman



COURTESY OF USA BASEBALL



UPON FURTHER REVIEW

Calvert Hall's Augie Miceli: A Man For All Seasons

★ JIM HENNEMAN



hose of you who regularly hang out here probably don't think of this as the analytical corner of PressBox. Consider this a change of pace, or perhaps even a curveball, both of which have been thrown from this direction in the past.

We're stepping outside the box this month -- way outside, in fact -- to introduce (or reintroduce in some cases) a person as analytical as anyone you're ever likely to meet, or as versatile, dedicated and passionate.

You can add loyalty to the equation, another term with which Augie Miceli is very familiar.

Miceli has been a teacher, coach, mentor, tutor, counselor -- you name it, he's done it -- at Calvert Hall College High School for 60 years. That's exactly how long it's been since

the school moved from its previous downtown location, which means Miceli has been there as long as the oldest building on the Towson campus.

In the interest of full disclosure, I've known Miceli even longer. He was a teenager and I wasn't quite yet. His father was a barber who gave me "cue ball" haircuts, and we probably first met in the shop. He somehow became a coach for my first organized baseball team -- and we can fast forward from there.

When he announced earlier this year that he would retire at the end of this semester it wasn't exactly a shock, since his last birthday cake would've required 87 candles if fully lit. But it was probably a bit surprising to some, and to fully understand why, you really had to know him.

Several years ago, more than a few, I asked Miceli how he maintained his enthusiasm. It was at a time frame when many would have moved on, or at least cut back. But that wasn't his style and he didn't hesitate with his response.

"I love my job," he said. "I can't wait to go to school in the morning." Note that he said "go to school." You'll understand in a couple of paragraphs.

When I decided it was time to write something about our relationship, I Googled Miceli, just for the fun of it, to see if I had missed anything. I hadn't, but one story in particular caught my attention. It was written by Keith Mills for PressBox in November 2006, and there was a quote that seemed to jump off the page.

"I never feel like I go to work in the morning," Miceli told Mills. "Teaching is what I do."

Put those quotes together and you have the essence of Augie Miceli, sometimes a coach, always a teacher.

Many, if not most, know of him as Calvert Hall's varsity football coach from 1974-1987, including the undefeated (11-0) 1979 team, maybe the best in school history. The Cardi-



Augie Miceli (bottom right)

nals won six straight league championships and seven straight games against Loyola Blakefield, the longest such streak in Turkey Bowl history.

But that is only part of the story. Before that stretch, he served the same number of years as a junior varsity coach in three different sports -- baseball and basketball in addition to football. He also had a stint as varsity basketball coach.

Augie Miceli is a man for all seasons -- with the classroom always open.

But always he was a teacher -- as familiar with equations as he was with X's and O's. His door routinely opened at 7 a.m., his room available before regular school hours for all who felt the need for extra work. Teaching was always his passion; coaching was just an extension.

It was apparent at an early age, even to a wet-behind-the-ears preteenager getting his first taste of competition. Miceli and Bill Maskell, both 15 years old and classmates at City College at the time, were the coaches of my first organized baseball team.

"We were too young to register a team," recalled Maskell, also still a close friend. "We had to get the father of one of the players to sign us up, which he did -- and then let us take over."

Years later Miceli and I would cross paths again, also in unlikely fashion. His career was already in full motion while mine was still in the developmental stage. As a young (translated: inexperienced) writer for *The News American*, where part-time work was not only encouraged but often necessary, I inquired about Calvert Hall's thought to be vacant varsity baseball coaching job, which as it turned out had already been filled.

Instead, because of circumstances I'm still not sure I completely understand, I was offered the job to coach the basketball team and I accepted. That meant, as the junior varsity coach, Miceli had been passed over for a job he could rightfully feel should have been his. It personally presented an awkward situation -- that lasted about 30 seconds.

Let's just say it was a learning experience. You can guess who was the teacher.

I'm not sure how many times he's been honored -- Brooks Robinson might be the only one around here who has him beat -- but Calvert Hall is hosting "An Evening with Augie Miceli" May 18.

Bill Maskell will be there. So will I. It will be a nice reunion. ★

Jim Henneman can be reached at JimH@pressboxonline.com



Augie Miceli

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For Salisbury Men's Lacrosse, Playing Deep Into Postseason Always The Goal

★ TODD KARPOVICH

Salisbury men's lacrosse coach Jim Berkman has set a high standard during his 31 years at the helm.

Players come and go, but the goal is always the same: competing for a national championship during Memorial Day weekend.

The seniors on this year's team earned a spot in the championship game in each of their first three years, an impressive feat even for a program that has already established itself as the model in Division III college lacrosse. Entering this year's NCAA Division III Tournament, which began May 7, the Sea Gulls were considered one of the favorites to win the title.

"The bar is pretty high at Salisbury, considering the success we've had over the last 30 years," said Berkman, who was inducted into the National Lacrosse Hall of Fame in 2013. "The players know what's been done before them. They know what a good season is here as far as the eyes of the alumni. They know how hard they have to work to keep the legacy going."

The Sea Gulls won the title in 2016 and 2017 before losing to Wesleyan last year. Now, there is added motivation to go out on top. Throughout the season, the players have stayed focused on the game in front of them, and they entered the NCAA Tournament at 19-1.

"Our end goal is always to get to the national championship and hopefully end up winning it," senior faceoff specialist Brett Malamphy (Arundel) said.

Malamphy transferred from UMBC after two seasons and has been a key contributor for the Sea Gulls, winning 309 of 419 (73.7 percent) of his draws during the regular season this year. He has been named to the Division III Team of the Week by the United States Intercollegiate Lacrosse Association three times this season.

"As a group, we always know the faceoffs set the tone," Malamphy said. "Once we get the ball on offense, we can get into a groove."

Entering this year's NCAA Tournament, Salisbury had scored 337 goals and allowed just 137. The Sea Gulls have six players -- seniors Corey Gwin (Stephen Decatur), Zach Pompea, Tyler Snyder (Mount Saint Joseph), juniors Josh Melton and Pierre Armstrong and sophomore Cross Ferrara -- with 50 or more points.

Junior goalie Brandon Warren (Calvert Hall) went 15-1 and allowed just 7.2 goals per game.

"He's developed as a player and is having a pretty good career," Berkman said.

While this year's group of players tries to reach new heights, Berkman is simply adding to his legacy.

He is the all-time winningest coach in

NCAA men's lacrosse history and has won 12 national championships with Salisbury. He broke the NCAA mark for all-time coaching victories in the 2008 NCAA Tournament with a win against Ohio Wesleyan University, surpassing the former mark of 326 wins held by U.S. Military Academy coach Jack Emmer.

In 2017, Berkman led the Sea Gulls to back-to-back titles for the first time since 2011-2012 with a 15-7 win against the Rochester Institute of Technology at Gillette Stadium in Foxboro, Mass. It was the 12th national championship for Berkman since his arrival at Salisbury in 1989.

Berkman was also the first NCAA lacrosse coach to record 500 wins. While the game of lacrosse has changed throughout the years, the high standards of the Salisbury lacrosse program have stayed the same.

"That tradition is definitely a driving factor and motivator here," Berkman said.

The Sea Gulls avenged their only loss of the season to York College by knocking off the Spartans in the Capital Athletic Conference championship, 13-7, May 4. Warren had 16 saves and Ferrara finished with three goals, leading the way for Salisbury to claim its 22nd conference title and fifth in six seasons.

With the win, the Sea Gulls earned a first-round bye and entered the national tourney as the No. 2 seed behind Tufts. The field has gotten stronger throughout the years.

"There is just good players everywhere and there is a lot of them," Berkman said. "Every part of the country you go to, there's a lot of talent. With the top eight or nine Division III teams, I don't think a lot of Division I teams would want to play them at this point of the season."

Berkman and his assistant coaches have been effective at tapping into the growing talent pool.

The Sea Gulls have players from 15 states, including California, Illinois, Michigan, Colorado and Ohio. Berkman and his staff will visit at least 30 camps across the country during the summer to scout players.

"I'm going to be at the Denver Showcase in the second week of June," Berkman said. "It's not like we don't scan the country. We've had kids from all over the U.S. that have played here, especially in the last 10 or 12 years. They've come here and had great careers at Salisbury."

Throughout his career at Salisbury, Berkman has coached 11 National Players of the Year. He has also coached 220 All-Americans, including a school-record 12 All-Americans in 2012.

For now, though, the focus is on bringing home another national championship to the Eastern Shore school. The coaches and players understand the unique opportunity in front of them.

"This senior class has an opportunity to make it to four national championship games, if we can get there," Berkman said. "That's kind of unheard of at any level." •



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Kelly Larkin More Than Navy Women's Lacrosse's All-Time Leading Scorer

★ MIKE ASHLEY

Someday Kelly Larkin hopes to be a Naval Flight Officer.

And don't look now, but the junior stick star has already taken wing, becoming the United States Naval Academy's all-time leading scorer in women's lacrosse, a distinction she also holds in the Patriot League.

Larkin tallied 69 goals and 52 assists this year while leading the Midshipmen to 16 wins and a runner-up finish in the Patriot League. Prior to the season, Navy was thought to be in rebuild mode, as everyone wondered just how the Mids would replace the scoring punch of Jenna and Julia Collins, the much-decorated twins who graduated in 2018.

The answer proved to be simple: Put the ball in Larkin's lacrosse stick pocket and turn her loose. The results were record-setting and season-making. Larkin's 121 total points (goals and assists) led the nation as of May 13. She was tied for 10th in goals and seventh in

assists, and that versatility -- as a scorer and a distributor -- is what truly sets Larkin apart.

"Kelly is the one and only of her kind," Navy junior Kayla Harris said. "She is so smart and wants her teammates to succeed. She's selfless on and off the field."

Larkin, who grew up around several Navy families in Alexandria, Va., loves all things Midshipmen, especially the camaraderie.

"We built momentum late in the season because of the talent and work ethic we have," Larkin said.

Navy won its last five regular-season games, then added a 20-10 victory against Army in the Patriot League tournament semifinals before running into 11th-ranked Loyola's buzz saw in the championship game. Despite an early 3-1 lead, the 14th-ranked Mids were dispatched, 21-9.

The Greyhounds dogged Larkin all day, holding the high-scoring attacker to just five shots and two goals, though those scores were enough to push her past former all-time scoring leader Jasmine DePompeo's 2010-13 Navy mark of 336 career points.

Loyola, the top defensive unit in the Patriot League, did what most teams do against Larkin, often double-teaming her and almost always faceguarding her to try to keep her away from the ball and away from all those opportunities to create scoring chances for herself and teammates.

"This year, with the Collins twins gone, I've seen a little bit more from the defenses," Larkin said. "Overall, they faceguard a lot more, but nothing we don't practice and that I'm

not ready for."

Larkin has put up amazing numbers ever since she came to Annapolis, Md. She is the first Mid to tally 100 points in three consecutive seasons. She had the perfectly-balanced 54 goals and 54 assists as a freshman, then 62 goals and 55 helpers last year. The Mids won back-to-back Patriot League titles in the process.

She was the *Inside Lacrosse* Division I and the Patriot League Rookie of the Year in 2017 and quickly garnered a reputation for being at her best in the biggest games during that year's NCAA Tournament. When the Mids upset defending national champion North Carolina in the NCAA quarterfinals, Larkin notched six points. She then added six goals in the semifinals against Boston College.

Larkin was an *Inside Lacrosse* second-team All-American in 2018, and she was recently named first-team All-Patriot League (for the second straight season) and the conference's Attacker of the Year.

But Larkin's individual numbers have never defined her idea of success. In fact, she'd prefer to tell you why her teammates have made her so successful rather than talk about her own skill set.

"I had more of a developmental role the last couple of years with [Jenna and Julia] Collins setting me up," Larkin said. "And I would feed them because they were so good at finding openings. This year it has shifted to me

cutting [to the goal more], and my teammates are finding me."

Part of what has put Larkin in the lacrosse record books is very simple: She's left-handed, an edge she knows how to exploit. Righties can be told her tendencies, but it's a different thing to stop her on the field given the unique angles she comes from in attacking or passing.

"It's a huge benefit for me, there just aren't as many lefties on the field," she said. "Most girls are right-handed so right-handers cutting are more comfortable with their right hand open to me, and that just kind of opens it up."

Larkin says she has seen "huge benefits" from her choice to attend Navy. At an early age, family friends were "dragging" her along to football games in Annapolis, something that sparked her interest in visiting the campus and town. She loved the waterside setting and adored the inviting downtown scene of food and fun.

One of the nation's top lacrosse recruits coming out of Bishop Ireton High School (Va.) as a two-time All-American, Larkin was encouraged by her parents to keep an open mind to all the schools that were wooing her, including the nearby service academy.

"They emphasized how I could be most successful, not only in college, but also in life," she said. "I just tried to look at the Academy as a different opportunity from any other school, a place where I was going to be able to get a great education, play Division I lacrosse and then also be a part of something that wasn't just going to school and playing lacrosse. It has so much more meaning than that."

Larkin picks up momentum talking about the "amazing opportunities" she wants to pursue at Navy.

"Coming into the Academy, I pictured myself in the Surface Warfare Community [on a ship], but there are so many options," she said. "During the summer, the school has you do different training and that has really opened things up for me. I don't have to declare my [post-grad] preference until next year, but right now I'm leaning toward Navy Flight Officer."

The Mids earned an at-large bid to the NCAA Tournament, just the second time ever a Patriot League team has achieved that feat. Navy lost to Virginia, 15-

12, in the second round. It was

Navy's seventh NCAA appearance and third in a row. The junior class led by Larkin and Harris is no small reason for the Mids' recent success.

"Going in it was kind of intimidating playing for a team of such high caliber," Harris recalled. "We looked to each other for confidence and just to let each other know we could handle the pressure. I know I can go to Kelly about anything, whether it's [that] I just need someone to talk to after practice or I need someone to shoot with before practice. When I need a friend I can always turn to Kelly."

"Kayla is one of my best friends off the field and that chemistry helps us on the field, too," Larkin said. "I love working with her. She has the best speed and agility, just one of the quickest girls out there and the way she gets open really helps me. We're pretty familiar with each other on the field -- [senior Andie O'Sullivan], too. They know what I'm thinking out there."

Harris' chemistry with Larkin is apparent on and off the field. But Larkin has a lot more support on the field in Annapolis, and not just from appreciative teammates. Last year, her older sister Jill, who had enlisted out of high school as a hospital corpsman, enrolled at the Academy.

Jill, who is suddenly outranked by her younger sister, is a manager for the women's lacrosse team.

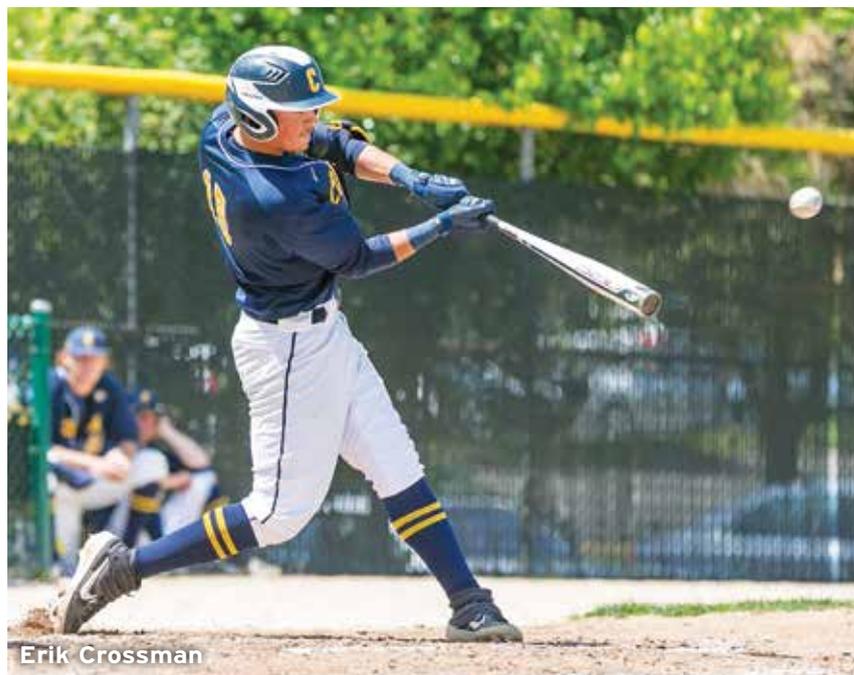
"It's awesome having her here," Kelly said. "She's out there at practice every day with us, and it's really brought us closer. She's my biggest fan and my best friend." •



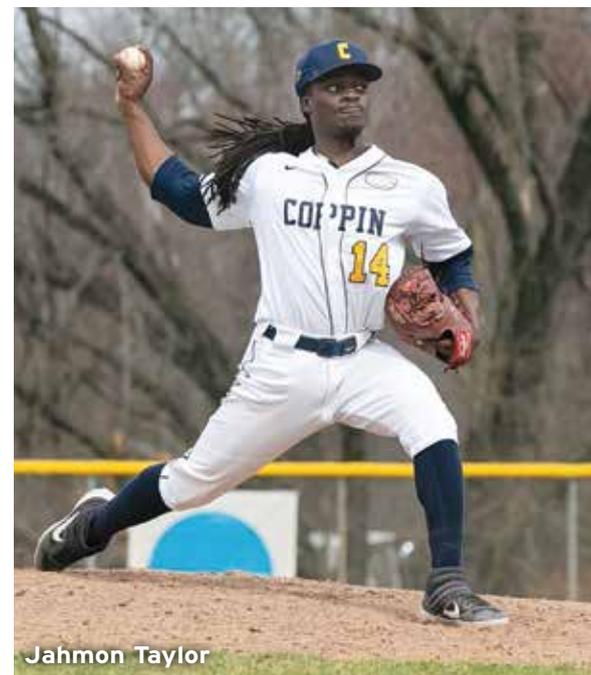
PHOTO BY JEFFREY MANNING FOR THE PRESS BOX



Devin Rivera Ozuna



Erik Crossman



Jahmon Taylor

Coppin State Baseball Rebuilt On Strength Of Historic Senior Class

★ ZACH SELBY



It wasn't a secret that for the better part of two decades, the baseball team at Coppin State University was struggling badly.

When head coach Sherman Reed took over the program in 2011, expectations were extremely modest, and it was not hard to see why. The team had won a total of 18 games the previous four years,

including two winless seasons, and just seven games in the conference.

After hitting the recruiting trail hard during his first two seasons, Reed brought new success to the team. The 2013 and 2014 campaigns featured back-to-back double-digit wins, a feat that hadn't been accomplished in several years.

But 2015 brought more losing. The Eagles looked more like the Coppin State of old rather than a team on the rise, winning just three games and losing their final 13.

But Reed could see beyond those results. Coppin was the youngest baseball team in Division I history with seven freshmen starting. And as Reed started recruiting players for the 2016 season, he preached patience to prospective players instead of dwelling on the recent record.

"It was really nerve-wracking, because coming off a three-win season, even if you have kids semi-interested, you have to wonder if they kept up with the record [and] whether or not these guys would stick to their commitment," Reed said.

Four years later, just five of the 16 players Reed brought in ahead of the 2016 season are still with the team, but they have become the most successful group in program history. Those five players are pitchers Jahmon Taylor, Devin Rivera Ozuna and Aaron Rea and infielders Erik Crossman and Nazier McIlwain. Rea is a redshirt junior, while the rest are seniors.

Heading into this year's MEAC tournament, the group had accumulated 70 wins, which is the most in Coppin history during a four-year stretch. In 2018, the quintet played a vital role in the Eagles claiming their first North Division title in 22 years.

They have piled up accolades and shattered school records that will stand long after they are gone. And finally, this year they led the team to a winning record in the regular season -- 24-22 -- for the first time in decades.

"These guys came in when we had won no championships in decades," Reed said. "We had no prior success recently. They came in believing that was going to change.

They never took it lightly, the legacy they want to leave."

Finding those players wasn't easy, especially when looking in the local talent pool. Reed found out quickly in his first year that local players didn't want to play for the Eagles, and a lot of phone calls went unanswered.

That meant Reed had to look to other places, sometimes hundreds of miles away, for players to fill his roster.

"When you have decades of losing seasons, there's a generation of folks in the area that haven't witnessed success at Coppin," Reed said. "They can't imagine anything but what it's been. So, we decided to go more national."

One of the few players who seemed interested was Ozuna, a pitcher and outfielder from Woodrow Wilson High School in Washington, D.C. Reed heard about him after Ozuna's cousin, who also attended Coppin, told the coach he had talent but wasn't getting recruited heavily.

Two days later, Reed went to one of Ozuna's games and clocked his fastball at 87 mph for the entire game. Ozuna had already committed to VCU but later signed with Coppin.

"I was just happy for the opportunity," Ozuna said. "I know Coach has to get that kind of thing from people all the time. I didn't pitch that much, but he came on the day that it was my turn in the rotation."

Ozuna has become one of the Eagles' best starting pitchers. His 3.04 ERA was the lowest mark among starters on the team during the regular season, and he led the rotation with 68 innings pitched.

"He never looked back," Reed said. "It's been a great decision for him, and it certainly worked out for us."

Crossman, an infielder from Anaheim, Calif., is an example of Coppin's national brand of recruiting. Like most of the players Reed recruited, Crossman saw a chance to play early in his career with the Eagles, but his first two years were a struggle. Despite his talent as a shortstop, he barely managed to keep his batting average at .200.

It got to the point where Reed gave Crossman two options: get better or explore other options.

"To be honest, I agreed," Crossman said. "I needed to get better, because my sophomore season was pretty bad. I was really just riding pine, and when I did get in there, I didn't really perform."

After what Reed described as a "come-to-Jesus meeting," Crossman worked on the mental aspects of the game and stopped worrying about failing in front of his coaches. Now, he's become one of the more consistent hitters in the lineup, posting a .270/.372/.362 line with 28 runs this year.

He's also become one of Reed's favorite all-time players.

"I was almost on my way out of here," Crossman said. "But he stuck with me and believed in me, and that means a lot."

When these seniors first came to Coppin, they knew the situation they were getting themselves into. They were all very aware the team wasn't a winning program. But that didn't keep them away.

"I think the first step was acknowledging that challenge and stepping up to it," Taylor said. "We couldn't be ones to walk away or feel defeated. We had to have the confidence and the will to compete and get better."

The team immediately improved from its three-win season in 2015. The class won 14 games in 2016 and advanced to the semifinals in the MEAC tournament, which was unheard of for Coppin.

But the group didn't really hit its stride until 2018, when the Eagles won the North Division with a 18-4 conference record. After starting 1-11-1, Coppin State won 19 of its next 29 games. Eighteen of those wins were against conference opponents.

Despite the team's rough start, the players kept their confidence because they felt they were better than their record.

"That was the key," Rea said. "We knew we could win these ballgames. If you looked back, you could see we weren't getting killed by these teams. And Coach Reed kept telling us that we were still the team to beat. On paper, we were a team that could go far."

It was after a 12-2 win in a doubleheader against Maryland Eastern Shore that the effort and belief started to pay off.

"Everything just started working," said McIlwain, who broke Coppin's all-time hits record. "It all started clicking. There was no quit in the team. In prior years, whenever we got down, we weren't confident enough in each other. It was, 'Here we go again.' Even when we started off 1-11, we didn't let that affect us, we knew we were a better team than that."

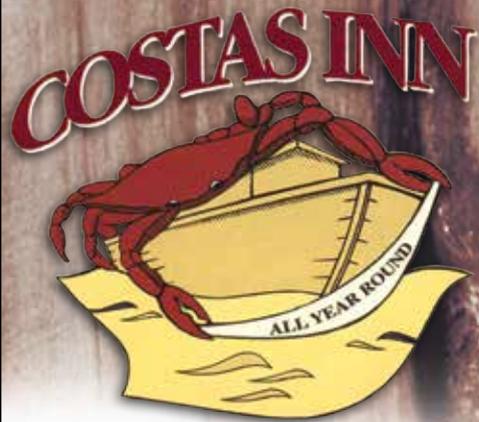
Reed said the group wanted to be the catalyst for change within the program.

"They came in wanting to leave a legacy," he said. "We often tell our guys, 'Shame on you if you're on a team and you're not able to imagine being a part of doing something that hasn't been done before.' They didn't come here to be a part of what was the past."

Coppin State has had an unprecedented amount of success with these seniors, and it's enough to earn some bragging rights. But they don't see it that way.

"It isn't just the senior class that's winning these ballgames," Rea said. "We have young guys who are working hard to get these wins. It's a blessing. It feels good, but this team's mindset right now is trying to win a ring. That's all we think about." •

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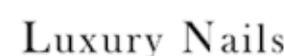
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For Calvert Hall Baseball, Success Is Fundamental

★ JEFF SEIDEL

In baseball, regardless of the level, the statistics usually don't lie, and the Calvert Hall numbers truly tell the story of the Cardinals' dominance throughout a long period of time.

Calvert Hall has won 27 championships (first in the Maryland Scholastic Association before it changed to the Maryland Interscholastic Athletic Association in the early 1990s). The Cardinals have captured 11 of those titles since 1995, including five in a row from 2005-2009.

Lou Eckerl has been the head coach for 18 seasons and has guided the team to seven championships. Eckerl also won a title at Cardinal Gibbons in 1982 before leaving to come to Calvert Hall and serve as athletic director, a position he's now been in for 37 years.

But Eckerl and his team really want to add to that number. The reason? The Cardinals have not won since 2013, and last year, in the double-elimination MIAA A Conference tournament, they were bounced immediately after losing their first two games. This came one year after losing to Loyola Blakefield in the championship round.

Calvert Hall made the A Conference playoffs in each of its first 17 years under Eckerl, and last year was just the second time the Cardinals have been knocked out after their first two games.

"I talk to people sometimes and say, 'We're like the New York Yankees, and everybody hates us because we win,'" Eckerl joked. "To me [winning] is a good feeling.

I'm extremely proud that people don't hate us -- because we act correctly."

Though baseball has evolved throughout the years, Eckerl and his staff, led by assistant Brooks Kerr (he's been there all 18 seasons), have long taught their team the game the same way: working tirelessly on fundamentals and doing the little things correctly.

"We have a hard-work tradition," Eckerl said. "I just think that we work hard here, and the guys know that. We expect them to come in and have a passion for the game. We ask them, 'What are you going to bring today to make the team better?' That's the competitive edge our guys have."

Shortstop Jose Torres has been a starter for four years with Calvert Hall and echoed many of his coach's sentiments.

Torres is headed for North Carolina State after graduation -- unless something interesting comes up in the 2019 MLB Draft. He said the Cardinals understand there's no magic formula and focus on doing the work to earn their goals. Calvert Hall knows opponents usually bring their "A" game to the field.

"We grind it out," he said. "We work, we work, we work until we perfect our craft. We know we're going to get their best so we try to feed off of the other team's best so we can try to beat them."

John Carroll head coach Darrion Siler is very familiar with the Calvert Hall program and agreed about the importance of hard work, but he said other things go into the mix.

Siler likes their strong leadership, starting with Eckerl and assistants like Kerr plus their state-of-the-art

facilities. He also believes winning begets winning, and that's been happening with Calvert Hall for a long time.

"I think that winning is contagious, and confidence breeds confidence," Siler said. "I think they do a very good job with their guys and coaching them up in their fundamentals. They play solid defense. They're a well-coached team and do the little things very well."

Calvert Hall also does what some good teams don't like to do -- the Cardinals have no problem with playing a rough schedule. In fact, they like it.

Eckerl said they played St. John's (Washington, D.C.), Malvern Prep (Pa.), Georgetown Prep (Md.) and took a trip to Florida to play four good teams this season.

"We don't turn anybody down," he said. "Anybody that calls us, we play."

And they've played well this season. They finished the regular season 21-6 overall and 16-2 in the MIAA A Conference, which locked up the top seed and a first-round bye in the league playoffs. The playoffs began May 10, and the championship round, which is where the Cardinals want to find themselves again, is scheduled for May 20 at Harford Community College.

Through the end of the regular season, Calvert Hall had posted a 303-83 record under Eckerl, but the team is still smoldering about the quick exit from last year's playoffs. The Cardinals fell to Gilman and Archbishop Spalding in the first two games and were gone.

That loss gave the team motivation for this season.

"I think it fired us up a lot," Eckerl said. "The underclassmen were very upset that we were two and done. That really hurt."

Torres agreed with his coach that the sudden exit from last year's playoffs may have given the team the kick-start to a good 2019 season.

"That was just everything," Torres said. "We just hate going to the playoffs feeling good and ... getting knocked out. You work all season for something and you don't get it. That gives you all the motivation for this year."

The team already had motivation because of not winning the title since 2013, but the bad ending to last year just gave the Cardinals a little bit more, and that could be bad news for the rest of the A Conference. After all, winning is what Calvert Hall has found a way to do for so many years now. •



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MATT STOWALL/PRESSBOX

Autumn Weinig (center)



JOHN COULSON/PRESSBOX

Kendra (center left) and Orlandra Chambers (center right)

Autumn Weinig, Kendra and Orlandra Chambers Named U.S. Army Impact Players Of The Month

★ LUKE JACKSON

Autumn Weinig, a senior defender for the Wilde Lake girls' lacrosse team, was named the U.S. Army Impact Player of the Month.

Weinig -- who has taken a leading role in several extracurricular activities, including one to raise awareness about sexual assault on college campuses -- was nominated for the award by Wilde Lake girls' lacrosse head coach Michael Rhodovi.

"Character is what you're doing when nobody's watching. I'm a firm believer in trying to acknowledge that so that others can see her example that she leaves," Rhodovi said. "She's a big part of that, too. She wants to lead by example. She wants to show others, 'Hey, this is how things can be done and there's always a better way and don't ever count yourself out.'"

Weinig has played on Wilde Lake's varsity lacrosse squad the past four years -- but she wasn't always a defender. She was a goalie on the junior varsity team as a freshman when Rhodovi brought her up to play in two games toward the end of the varsity squad's season. Rhodovi then moved her to defense the following year to take advantage of her athleticism, and she's remained at that spot since -- all while being active in the community.

"[Rhodovi] kind of gives me free reign to work and to improve the team and to improve our community connection," Weinig said. "Everything else I do tends to eventually make its way back to lacrosse."

Weinig has taken part in projects with Leadership U in Howard County, the HEADstrong Foundation, National Honor Society, French Honor Society and Wilde Lake's student government. Her work with Leadership U was particularly impactful.

She interviewed for a position in Leadership U, a program designed to help kids solve

real-world problems and develop leadership skills, as a junior at Wilde Lake and was accepted. Those who were accepted into the program were split into groups, and each group was assigned a topic to delve into. Weinig's group was tasked with domestic violence, and the students eventually had to present what it learned about the topic to more than 200 people.

The group teamed up with HopeWorks of Howard County, which provides support for victims and survivors of domestic and sexual assault. The group met with HopeWorks' staff for advice on what direction to take regarding the domestic violence topic, and the students decided to focus on sexual assault on college campuses. HopeWorks helped educate them about sexual assault on college campuses and advised them on how to discuss the topic.

"They basically explained that it's such an underreported thing that this category of people, they haven't been able to break through to and get to come in and get to speak about it," Weinig said. "What they wanted to do was they wanted more youth to get involved with talking about it and starting a conversation." The group eventually decided to show "The Hunting Ground," a Netflix documentary about sexual assault on college campuses, and held a forum after the film for everyone watching to discuss. Weinig led the forum.

"[There] were just difficult questions for students to have to discuss with their parents in the room, and I thought she handled herself really well and was able to lead discussions," Weinig's mother, Trish, said. "I think at that point is when we really started to realize her leadership skills."

Weinig will attend Clemson University in the fall as part of their Captain Honors program; she has a cumulative 4.6 GPA at Wilde Lake. She'll study political science and would like to become a lawyer after college. She also hopes to play club lacrosse.

"She doesn't have an off switch," Rhodovi said. "There's not one particular story. She is

the story. She's constantly looking for ways to improve or help those around her."



Kendra and Orlandra Chambers, twin sisters and senior captains on Largo High School's cross country, indoor track and outdoor track teams this year, were also named U.S. Army Impact Players of the Month.

"They just became more mature runners and mature kids as the years went on and became leaders by just helping the young kids, the ninth graders and 10th graders and showing people what to do and letting people understand how our program runs," said Darryl Hamilton, the head coach of all three running teams at Largo.

Kendra and Orlandra began running during their freshman year at Largo once they saw how much fun their cousin, Shandae Henry, had running at Potomac High School. Throughout the course of their four years at Largo, the twins became stalwarts for Hamilton.

Kendra and Orlandra each ran three-mile races in cross country, specialized in the 300- and 500-meter races in indoor track and a variety of events for outdoor track. Kendra's favorite outdoor event is the 200-meter, while Orlandra's is the 400.

Kendra and Orlandra have led exercises and drills for the running teams throughout the school year, but their leadership extends beyond the team to the next generation of runners in Prince George's County. They take part in Hamilton's "Fast Track Club," which meets at Largo after the high school team's practices and during the summer. The club is for ages 8-14.

"When we come, the kids are there and they're like, 'Oh my God, you guys are so good,'" Orlandra said. "Kids are always interested in people that are a lot older than them, and since they're interested, why not help them learn? Because kids grasp a lot of information quickly."

Kendra and Orlandra will soon attend Chicago State University, but they have other duties to attend to first.

Both have enlisted in the Army Reserve, a track their mother, Mackeda, has long encouraged. They joined the Air Force Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps in high school to get a feel for the military.

The twins eventually met an Army recruiter, who helped them out with the process of enlisting in the Army Reserve. Both will go to basic training toward the end of the summer and will graduate in December; they plan to become bridge crewmembers and work alongside engineers.

"My mom was aiming for us to go into the military, so I decided to incorporate me wanting to go to college and my mom wanting me to go into the military all in one," Kendra said.

Hamilton, 57, was in the Air Force Reserve from 1981-1987, and he knows Kendra and Orlandra have the qualities to be successful in the Army Reserve.

"Discipline, hard work and being committed," Hamilton said. "That's what it takes to be in the service."

The twins will begin attending Chicago State in January 2020. Kendra will study biology, while Orlandra plans to enter a pre-dental track. They both plan to run for the Cougars.

"Track is a huge part of my life. If I didn't run track, I don't know how I would be right now," Kendra said. "It's something I like mainly because it challenges me to do better, and I incorporate it in my life doing everything." •

To nominate a student-athlete for the U.S. Army Impact Player award, visit PressBoxOnline.com/Impact.

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

SPORTS BUSINESS

With Two Teams Added, AFL Poised For More Competitive Season

★ **AMANDA YEAGER**
BALTIMORE BUSINESS JOURNAL

With five games against the Washington Valor last season, Baltimore Brigade fans had plenty of opportunities to catch a matchup featuring their regional rival.

This year, as two new competitors join the growing Arena Football League, just three meetings between the teams are guaranteed. That's a good thing, says Jeff Bowler, vice president of business operations for Monumental Sports, the Ted Leonsis-led sports and entertainment group that owns the Brigade and the Valor as well as the Washington Capitals, Wizards and Mystics.

"Frankly, the league has been dealing with a credibility issue," Bowler said.

Last year, each of the AFL's four teams made the playoffs, and the Valor -- which had the worst record of the regular season -- ended up winning the championship with a 69-55 win against the Brigade.

Now that there are six teams in the league, not every team will make the four-team postseason tournament.

"We feel like that will add a little bit more competitive nature to the season," Bowler said.

The two teams joining the AFL this season are the Atlantic City Blackjacks and Columbus Destroyers. The Destroyers formerly played in the AFL, first as the Buffalo Destroyers and then as the Columbus Destroyers, until 2009 when the league suspended operations

due to financial difficulties.

Bowler hopes the AFL's expansion will generate some buzz and interest in the new season that kicked off for the Brigade April 26. This season, Monumental Sports is dedicating a sales and marketing team exclusively to its Arena League properties.

While the Brigade saw its attendance hold steady in 2018 compared to its inaugural season in 2017, Bowler is hoping to grow crowds during the team's third season. Last year's AFL championship game at Royal Farms Arena was the best-attended Brigade game yet, with about 8,800 spectators.

The team has grown its number of season-ticket holders by 104 percent year over year, he said. More than 80 percent of inaugural season-ticket holders are still season-ticket holders today. •



PRESS BOX



HIGH SCHOOL UNSUNG HERO OF THE MONTH



Each month during the school year, PressBox and the Masonic Charities of Maryland will honor a high school student-athlete who demonstrates the following criteria:

**SPORTSMANSHIP • SCHOOL SPIRIT
HARD WORK • GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY**

To nominate a local high school student-athlete and see some of the past winners go to
PressBoxOnline.com/hero

Nominees will be accepted from any Maryland high school, and nominations can be submitted by parents, coaches, teachers or fellow students. Each honoree will receive a custom trophy and the opportunity for award presentation at his/her school.

COMMUNITY BEAT



★ BASEBALL/SOFTBALL

BABE RUTH BIRTHPLACE AND MUSEUM

The Babe Ruth Birthplace and Museum is located at 216 Emory St. in Baltimore, three blocks west of Camden Yards. It's open Monday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. from April until September. The museum will stay open until 7 p.m. on the days of Orioles home games. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors and military personnel and \$5 for children. Visit baberruthmuseum.org for more information. Also consider making a tax-deductible donation. To do so, visit baberruthmuseum.org/donate or call 410-727-1539, ext. 3012.

MUSEUM OF NEGRO LEAGUES BASEBALL

Visit the Hubert V. Simmons Museum of Negro Leagues Baseball in the Owings Mills branch of the Baltimore County Public Library. The museum is named after Bert Simmons, who played for the Baltimore Elite Giants. The museum is open daily, and admission is free. Volunteers are always welcome. For more information, visit smnlbinc.org.

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 or call Mike Lockett at 410-446-0443.

JUNE 1 -- CHALK NIGHT BASEBALL FUNDRAISER

Join the 10U Carroll Rebels travel baseball team at 7 p.m. at 1231 Tech Ct., in Westminster, Md., for a Chalk Night fundraiser event to support the team. The event is similar to a paint night -- participants will leave with a finished piece of art. All ages are welcome. For more information and to reserve a seat, email fundraising@carrollrebels.com by May 24.



★ BASKETBALL

VOLO CITY BASKETBALL

Volo City's Baltimore basketball leagues run throughout the year in neighborhoods including Canton, Federal Hill, Mt. Washington and more. Men's and coed leagues present full-court competition in a fast-paced, competitive yet social atmosphere. Volo City will provide referees and team shirts. Players can register as individuals or as part of a team. Teams require at least nine players. For more information and to register in a league, visit volocity.org/baltimore/basketball.



★ GOLF

MAY 18-19 -- CLASSIC FIVE TOURNAMENT SERIES

The Baltimore Classic Five Tournament Series will include the Two-Man Championship May 18-19 at Mount Pleasant Golf Course,

the Match Play Championship at Mount Pleasant July 6-14 and the Amateur Championship at Mount Pleasant and Pine Ridge Golf Course Aug. 10-11. For more information and to register, visit classic5golf.com.

JUNE 3-9 -- SECOND ANNUAL BALTIMORE GOLF WEEK

Classic 5 Golf Courses are holding events to raise money for YouthWorks, Baltimore City's summer jobs program, including Casino Night, hole-in-one contests and the 2019 Mayor's Cup. For more information about Baltimore Golf Week events, visit classic5golf.com/Baltimore_Golf_Week/.



★ SOCCER/SQUASH/RUGBY

CRAB KICKERS

Register now for Crab Kickers summer programs. Crab Kickers, powered by Mighty Kicks, is a one-of-a-kind soccer program developed to provide a dynamic environment where children can develop soccer skills, social skills, coordination, confidence and self-esteem built on a solid foundation of fun. For more information or to register, visit mightykicksbaltimore.com/index.cfm.

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 to make your tax-deductible donation. To make equipment donations and/or become a volunteer tutor, email Abby Markoe at abbyn@baltimoresquashwise.org.

RUGBY

The Baltimore-Chesapeake Rugby Football 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 baltimorechesapeakeclubrugby@gmail.com or visit baltimorerugby.net.



★ WALKS/RACES

JUNE 2 -- BEL AIR TOWN RUN

The Harford County Running Club, an affiliate of the Road Runners Club of America (RRCA), conducts the Bel Air Town Run 5K to promote health, fitness and running. The race begins at 8 a.m. at 20 S. Main Street. Registration costs \$30 through May 29 and \$35 from May 30 to race day. The concurrent 1-mile fun run/walk costs \$25. The race benefits the HCRC, the oldest running club in Maryland. To register, visit belairtownrun.com.

JUNE 9 -- MCVET 5K/10K

The Maryland Center for Veterans Education and Training, Inc. is set to hold its 24th annual 5K/10K event. The MCVET helps homeless veterans heal and achieve independence. More than 1,000 runners are expected to gather for the races, which start and end at War

Memorial Plaza in front of Baltimore City Hall. On-site registration will take place from 5:30-7:30 a.m. at the Lexington Street entrance to the War Memorial Building (101 N. Gay Street). The 5K starts at 7:30 and the 10K at 8:30 a.m. Registration costs \$35 for the 5K ahead of race day and \$40 for the 10K. To register, visit charmcityrun.com/calendar/mcivet-5k10k-walk-or-run.

JUNE 15 -- RAPPEL FOR KIDNEY HEALTH

The National Kidney Foundation Serving Maryland and Delaware will hold its ninth annual Rappel for Kidney Health signature event from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at One Charles Center in downtown Baltimore. Up to 100 people of all ages have the chance to descend the skyscraper and enjoy views of the city skyline and the Inner Harbor. All participants will receive a fundraising webpage to help raise the required \$1,500 minimum to participate in the event. Once the money is raised, they will undergo Rappel training. Visit kidneymd.org or call 410-494-8545 for more information.

JUNE 16 -- 31ST ANNUAL GBMC FATHER'S DAY 5K AND 1-MILE FUN WALK

The 5K and 1-mile walk begin at the South Chapman building on GBMC's Towson campus. Registration costs \$30 until June 13, \$35 until June 15 and \$40 on race day. Online registration closes June 13, and on-site registration the day of the race begins at 6:30 a.m. The run and walk begin at 8 a.m. Proceeds support GBMC's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). To register, visit gbmc.healthcare/5k.

JUNE 23 -- BALTIMORE WOMEN'S CLASSIC 5K

The Baltimore Women's Classic 5K is the second-oldest women's race in the country. The race begins and ends at Rash Field, and participants are encouraged to attend the Finish Line Festival at the end of the race and connect with local businesses that cater to women. Registration costs \$40 through June 16 and \$45 thereafter. The race begins at 8 a.m. To register, visit baltimorewomensclassic.com.

JULY 4 -- 37TH ANNUAL ARBUTUS FIRECRACKER 10K

The race will start at 8 a.m. at Arbutus Middle School and pass through several neighborhoods in Arbutus. Registration costs \$25 through June 19, \$35 from June 20 to July 3 and \$40 on race day. To register, go to bullseyerunning.com or find race fliers at Falls Road Running in Baltimore, Feet First in Columbia or Tri Sport Junction in Sykesville. This year's race features three college scholarships and prize money. For more information, contact Martin Goode at 410-218-7262 or runcoach5200@yahoo.com.

★ OTHER ACTIVITIES

LACROSSE AT TIERNEY FIELD

More than 60 high school and college lacrosse games will be played this year at Tierney Field at the U.S. Lacrosse national headquarters in Sparks, Md. The Baltimore County all-star games for high school boys and girls will take place May 23, and college all-star games will take place May 24 and June 1. Tierney Field can host 2,000 fans, and seating is first come, first served. For more information, visit uslacrosse.org/about-us-lacrosse/headquarters/tierney-field-game-schedule.

B'MORE FIT

B'more Fit Studio, Inc., located in Windsor Mill, Md., is a nonprofit company that aims to empower families with healthy living by providing fitness and dance programs and services regarding health, wellness and nutrition that foster family and community interaction and preservation. To find out more about B'More Fit, visit bmore-fit.com, call 443-579-5805 or email bmore.fit.studios@gmail.com.

PRESS BOX

★ To submit your event listing to Community Beat, visit PressBoxOnline.com/Community ★

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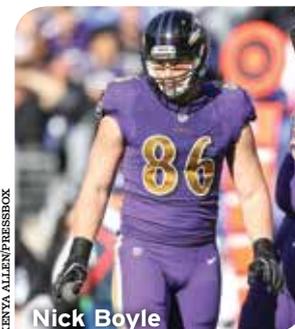
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"I guess they did play a part. I wasn't going to fly them because I don't think they could sit on my lap, and I'm not going to put them in cargo because that would make me feel bad. I would have been having a heart attack on the plane. I'm so glad it all worked out to stay here. The dogs are probably happy because they didn't know what they were going to get into if they had to go across the country."

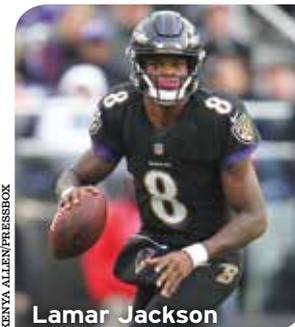
- Ravens tight end Nick Boyle April 19 on the role his two rescue dogs played in his decision to re-sign in Baltimore



Nick Boyle

"From my conversations with them, we are on the same page that we're thinking long term with Lamar. ... All of our objectives [are] to make Lamar Jackson the ultimate weapon who can throw [and] who can run."

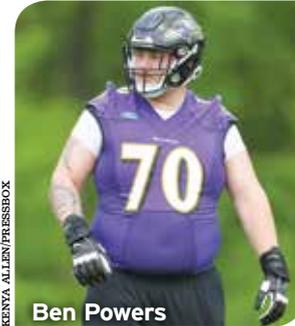
- Lamar Jackson's personal quarterback coach Joshua Harris April 18 on his and the Ravens' priority this offseason



Lamar Jackson

"Every offensive lineman is so grateful for an explosive wide receiver like that because there'll be big plays and you'll be like, 'Hell yeah, man, I get off the field, head to the sideline, we scored a touchdown.' You go catch a breather. That's why an explosive wide receiver like that is one of an offensive lineman's best friends, because they could score from anywhere on the field."

- Ravens fourth-round pick and former Oklahoma left guard Ben Powers May 1 on Ravens first-rounder and fellow Sooner Marquise Brown



Ben Powers

"The first time I was like, 'What? That's not going to catch on.' When I started seeing the numbers and started creeping closer and closer to the record I thought, 'OK, maybe it's all right, a bunch of grown men calling me 'Sack Daddy.' I'm cool with that.'"

- Ravens third-round pick, former Louisiana Tech edge rusher and all-time FBS sacks leader Jaylon Ferguson April 30 on his "Sack Daddy" nickname



Jaylon Ferguson

"A lot of different emotions and almost too short of a time frame to really express in words. It's just an iconic race, it's where the wheelchair marathons got started. I think it's on pretty much everyone's list of races to win. It's just an incredible experience."

- Mt. Airy, Md., native Daniel Romanchuk April 16 on winning the Boston Marathon men's wheelchair division for the first time



Daniel Romanchuk

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THE REALITY CHECK

No Battle Left To Fight To Keep Preakness In Baltimore

★ GLENN CLARK



t's over, obviously.

The last real hope (and it was still a Hail Mary) of Baltimore keeping the Preakness long term was for strong Baltimore leadership to successfully compel state leadership to not waver on the state law that prevents the

Preakness from being run anywhere but Baltimore, save for emergency. That strong leadership needed to compel state politicians into understanding that while a move to Laurel, Md., would keep the race in the state, it would cost the state significant money because a significant amount of tourism money would shift to Washington, D.C., with the race's move.

That push came up lame before it even got out of the starter's gate.

As former Mayor Catherine Pugh was (rightfully) brought down by the "Healthy Holly" scandal, the hope of "strong Baltimore leadership" went right along with it. With all due respect to Mayor Jack Young, a stand-in leader arriving in the midst of overwhelming turmoil wouldn't even get 100-1 odds to get this to the finish line.

That, combined with the closing of Pimlico's northern grandstand, has given the track's owners a clear path to relocating the classic American race. Without strong leadership in the city to fight back, the state will likely work with The Stronach Group to negotiate around the state law. Remember, Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan has never really been of the belief that what's best for a state's biggest city is best for the state (see Line, Red), and earlier this year he told WBAL he believed "the overwhelming number of people in Maryland don't really care where [the Preakness] is. They would just like to keep it in Maryland."

No matter how true or untrue that statement is -- and it's not at all unreasonable to assume it's significantly true in many places of the state that aren't Baltimore -- Hogan was reelected by an overwhelming majority and enjoys a significant approval rate. There's been no major pushback to his comments and no reason to believe they won't be a basis for his policy decisions.

But even if the state were to put up some sort of fight, the condition of the grandstand -- which we all know isn't the only infrastructure issue at the Pimlico facility -- will certainly become a ploy to allow the owners their chance to pursue the wiggle room that exists within the "only as a result of a disaster or emergency" phrasing in

that law. While deteriorating facilities aren't a natural disaster, the argument will be strong that it has become an emergency to no longer run the race there.

I repeat, it's over. And it will hurt us. Badly.

An event that has been estimated to be worth \$50 million not only can't quickly be replaced, it can't be replaced at all. And it will hurt the state, too. As mentioned earlier, undoubtedly some of the incoming money that has gone to various Maryland businesses will now trickle toward the District because visiting spenders will choose to make D.C. their base for the week since Laurel is so close. And the "potential" costs may be just as harmful as the tangible ones, with the city losing invaluable publicity forever.

Strangely, some will celebrate this moment. The short-mindedness of such opinions is staggering. Yes, the city has bigger problems than "just a horse race," per se. At no point should the fight to keep the Preakness have distracted anyone from continuing to pursue better schools, an improved economy and more. Some of us believe an event worth \$50 million annually could help address other significant problems.

Others in the area will hope the consistent, sustained failures of Baltimore politicians to fix Pimlico and save Preakness long term might lead to the city changing its mind about the political party that has held the city's executive position since the 1960s. Can you even imagine that? Rooting for something to happen that would be terrible for the city in the long-shot hope that it can get your political party an office it hasn't held for five decades?

Look, if there's any fight to still be fought, I support it. I think this is a disaster for our city. I don't care whose fault it is or it isn't. It's a mess, and the fight has always been one worth putting up.

I just don't think there's actually a fight anymore. I think it's over. And it's borderline criminal that we've let it happen. •

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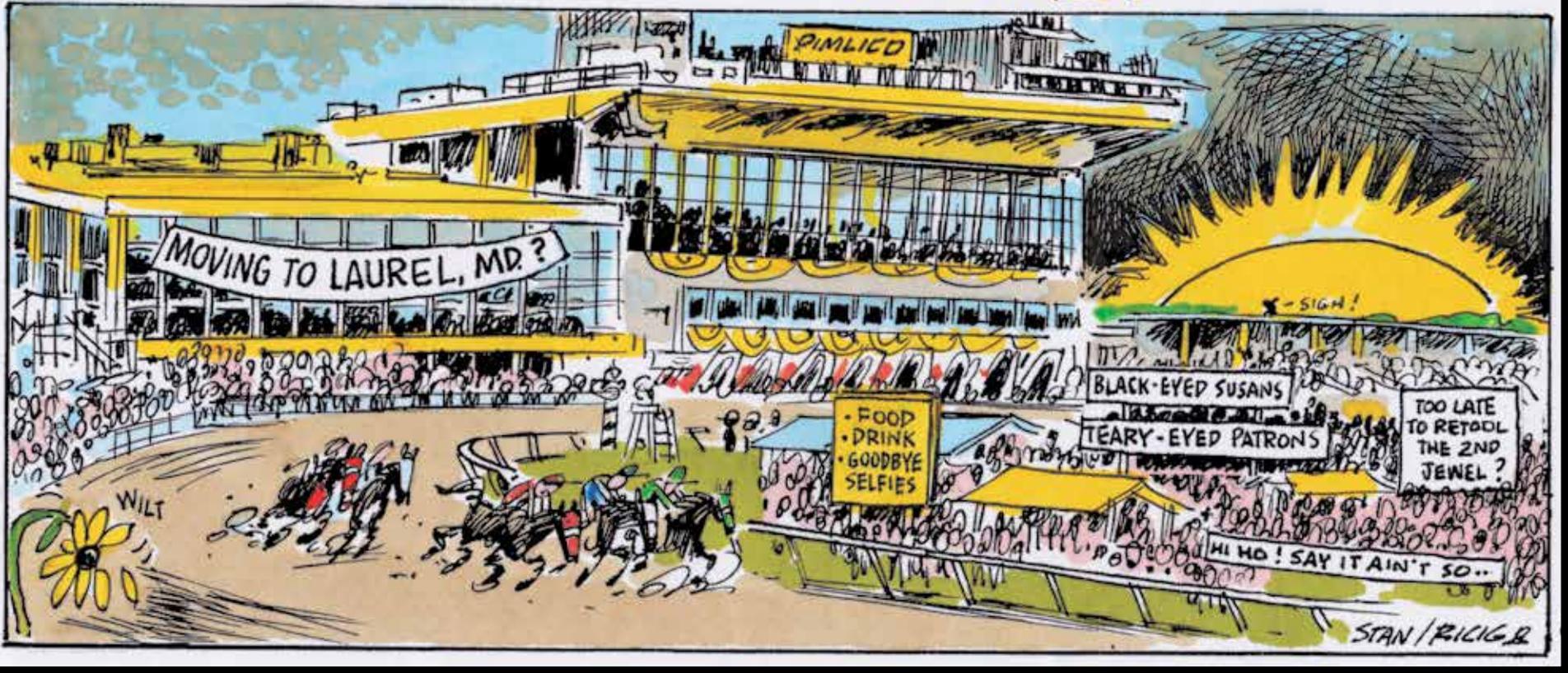


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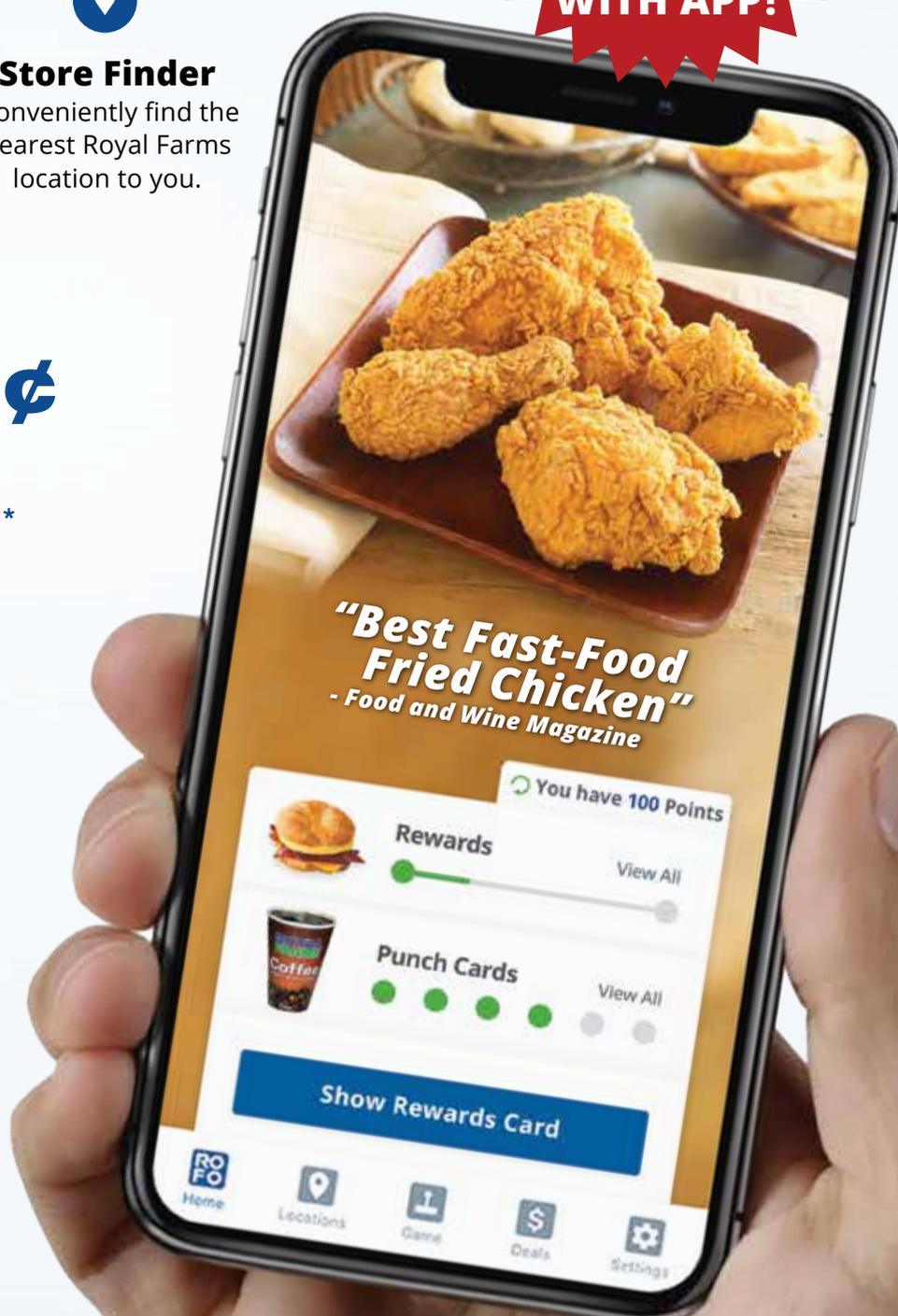
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