

A Team Worth Watching



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2005 USA Baseball Youth National Team

Phoenix, AZ – Every year USA Baseball has a tournament to help locate young players and mold them into a team that will represent our country in the World Youth Baseball Championship.

This year the trials were held in Phoenix Municipal Stadium in Arizona. From June 26th to July 1st thirty-six sixteen-and-under ball players were invited to show their skills and compete for a spot on the roster. Along with training sessions in the morning, consisting of batting practice, bullpens, and infield/outfield, the players were divided into a blue team and a red team. Thus, allowing them to demonstrate their talent in a five game series. The end result, the eighteen man roster that will participate in the IBAF “AA” World Youth Baseball Championship in Monterrey, Mexico, in August.

The selection process began the week prior to the trials. USA Baseball hosts two seventy-two-team tournaments. The west coast tournament is held in Arizona and the east coast is in Florida. From each site eighteen of the top prospects are selected and given formal invitations to the Youth National Trials. Not only do teams have a chance to play for the gold, but also all players are scouted and entered into the USA baseball database. In order to be an invitee, a player must meet the age requirements, born in 1989, as well as be a citizen of the USA. The tournaments are open to any team who wishes to participate.

The weeklong trials were very exciting. According to David Webb, Red team coach, “The cream really rises to the top. You can definitely see the gamers separating themselves. Which makes it easier to decide who’ll make it.”

The selection of the team is based on overall performance, a presence in the field, and statistics from the games. As well as work out performance, sixty times, and general attitude toward other players and the coaching staff. Two returning players from the 2004 team were invited to try-out again, Robert Stock, right-handed pitcher, from Westlake Village, CA, and Iden Nazario, first baseman from Miami, FL.

Asked how the teams were divided, assistant coach George Sanchez replied, “The Red and Blue teams were broken up random by position. Each team is pretty even. There are some real players here.”

The fact that there were some real gamers at the trials became obvious even in game one, when the Blue team defeated the red 7-2. Robert Stock started the game for the blue team and allowed the two runs on five hits, two walks and two strikeouts in three innings of work. Kyle Brule (Chandler, AZ) came in to get the win only allowing two hits and striking out five in three innings.

Standouts at the plate were Freddie Freeman (Villa Park, CA), Blue team first baseman, who went 3 for 3 with a double, 2 runs and 2 RBI’s. Not to mention Franco Valdes, Blue team catcher and return invitee, who went 3 for 4 with a double, one run and 2 RBI’s. Helping his team battle was Brett Krill (Laguna Niguel, CA), Red team outfielder, who went 2 for 2 with one RBI and a stolen base, as well as Matt Dominguez

(Van Nuys, CA), Red team third baseman, who was also 2 for 2 with a double and an RBI.

Brett Krill, who hit two grand slams in a comeback victory for the Red team, dominated game two. Also making his presence known was Iden Nazario, Red team first baseman, who went 2 for 3 scoring 3 runs, with 2 walks and an RBI. For the Blue team Sequoyah Stonecipher (San Diego, CA), outfielder, had a 2 for 3 day, with a home run, and Josh Vitters (Anaheim, CA), third baseman, went 2 for 2 with 2 RBI's.

The red team was down 8-1 in the second inning, when Krill's first bomb in the third inning made the game 8-5. With the help of Blake Beavan (Irving, TX), outfielder, and Matt Dominguez, the Red team was able to take the win, 17-11, and tie the series at one game apiece.

Game three had the Blue team trailing until the sixth and seventh innings where they combined to score six runs to tie the game. The Red team was lead by catcher Chad Nacapoy (La Crescenta, CA), whose two-run single in the first inning scored Mike McGee (Port St. Lucie, FL) to open the floodgates. However, the Red team had two crucial errors and three straight walks to allow the Blue team to tie it up in the seventh.

Due to a lack of pitching the game ended in a tie, 6-6. Although Blake Beaven, starting pitcher for the Red team, did throw three scoreless innings giving up only two hits, and striking out three. Krill and Nacapoy both went 2 for 3 with 2 RBI's, and Krill put his third ball over the wall in two consecutive games.

With each team's record at 1-1-1, game four was bound to be exciting. It was tied up going into the bottom of the eighth inning when DJ Hicks (Altamonte Springs, FL) sent one to center field for a two-run double. After Hicks opened the door, the Blue team went on a five run rally to win game four, 12-7.

Hicks had an impressive evening going 2 for 2, while Josh Vitters went 3 for 3 with 3 RBI's and a run, for the Blue team win. Brett Krill, Matt Dominguez and Christian Rodriguez (Salt Lake City, Utah), shortstop, helped the Red team stay in contention by each going 2 for 3 and a shared 7 RBI's. Rodriguez, who had been quiet at the plate most of the week, stepped it up by hitting a home run and a triple.

"Rodriguez is just to smooth up the middle. He's got a great glove. He's just a guy you want around." Said Jeff Singer, Youth National Team Director, when asked about concerns with Rodriguez at the plate. Plus if he continues to hit like he did in game four, big things can be expected.

Having battled hard all week, each player had a chance to show the coaching staff what they were capable of, and coming into game five the coaches were still unsure of who would make the squad. Making a statement on the mound for the Blue team was Seth Blair (Rock Falls, IL). Blair pitched two perfect innings. Facing six batters and striking out two.

Josh Vitters had a day going 4 for 5 with an RBI, as did Franco Valdes, 3 for 4 with 3 RBI's, leading the Blue team to a 13-4 win. With the victory the Blue team had a 3-1-1 record while the Red was 1-3-1.

After the announcement of the sixteen-and-under Youth National Team the players and coaches will return to their homes. They will meet again in Texas in August when they will begin working out as a team, and continue to play in exhibitions until they head to Mexico for the Championships. The tournament will begin on August 19th and continue until the 28th.

Congratulations to all the invitees. Good luck to the coaches and players going to Mexico, bring us back the gold!

By David A. Himmelstein

2005 YOUTH NATIONAL TEAM ROSTER

#	Player	Pos.	B-T	Ht.	Wt.	DOB	Hometown	High School	Class
13	Blake Beavan	RHP	R-R	6-6	200	01-17-89	Irving, TX	Irving	2007
1	Seth Blair	RHP	R-R	6-2	180	03-03-89	Rock Falls, IL	Rock Falls	2007
13	Kyle Brule	RHP	R-R	6-3	185	06-09-89	Chandler, AZ	Marcos De Niza	2007
2	Tyler Chatwood	RHP	R-R	5-11	170	12-16-89	Yucaipa, CA	Redlands	2008
14	Matt Dominguez	3B	R-R	6-1	175	08-28-89	Van Nuys, CA	Chatsworth	2007
16	Freddie Freeman	RHP-1B	L-R	6-4	195	09-12-89	Villa Park, CA	El Modena	2007
17	John Gast	LHP	L-L	6-1	195	02-16-89	Longwood, FL	Lake Brantley	2007
20	Brett Krill	OF	R-R	6-4	195	01-24-89	Laguna Niguel, CA	Aliso Niguel	2007
6	Mike McGee	OF/RHP	R-R	5-10	170	03-07-89	Port St. Lucie, FL	Port St. Lucie	2007
25	Tim Melville	3B/RHP	R-R	6-3	185	10-09-89	St. Louis, MO	Holt	2008
8	Chad Nacapoy	C	R-R	5-8	190	07-28-89	La Crescenta, CA	Crescenta Valley	2007
7	Iden Nazario	1B	L-L	6-0	190	03-28-89	Miami, FL	Miami Senior	2007
10	Christian Rodriguez	SS	R-R	6-0	170	05-14-89	Salt Lake City, UT	Taylorville	2007
7	Robert Stock	RHP	L-R	6-2	185	11-21-89	Westlake Village, CA	Agoura Hills	2007
8	Sequoyah Stonecipher	OF-C	R-R	6-0	185	11-16-89	San Diego, CA	Mission Bay	2007
9	Riccio Torrez	2B	R-R	5-10	175	10-14-89	Phoenix, AZ	Brophy College Prep	2008
10	Franco Valdes	C	S-R	5-10	195	02-28-89	Miami, FL	Msgr. Edward Pace	2006
24	Josh Vitters	3B	R-R	6-2	185	08-27-89	Anaheim, CA	Cypress	2007

Youth National Team Staff

22	Phil Bodine	Head Coach (Mendota, IL)	Jeff Singer	Youth National Team Director (Durham, NC)
21	Bill Krejci	Coach (Creston, IA)	Steve Patterson	Athletic Trainer (Ft. Lauderdale, FL)
27	Garye LaFevers	Coach (Mesa, AZ)	Alissa Zito	Media Coordinator
23	George Sanchez	Coach (Gilbert, AZ)		