

Covering All Bases

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Sergakis, Washington Named Captains

Nick Sergakis and Jalen Washington have been named captains of the 2016 Ohio State baseball team. The duo, selected as captains by their teammates, has combined to appear in 117 career games.

“Throughout this fall, Nick and Jalen demonstrated their leadership abilities on a daily basis and were recognized by their teammates,” head coach Greg Beals said. “We’ve got great leadership on this ball club, but these two guys exemplify this team and the things we are looking to accomplish. They are hard-working young men.”

A native of Columbus, Ohio, Sergakis has appeared in 95 games, making 88 starts for the Buckeyes last two seasons. The OSU infielder has a .281 career average to go along with 17 doubles, two triples, two home runs, 37 RBI and nine stolen bases. Sergakis is one of the top fielders for the 2016 squad and was named the team’s “Gold Glove Award” for the fall. Last spring, he made this incredible play at third base to be named



Nick Sergakis



Jalen Washington

“SportCenter’s Top Play” April 15, 2015.

“It’s truly an honor to be named captain but to be seen in that light by my teammates means more to me than the title,” said Sergakis.

Washington, a native of Twinsburg, Ohio, has appeared in 22 games with six starts. A utility player last season, Washington has taken over the catching duties for the upcoming campaign. After seven appearances as a freshman, Washington batted .280

with six RBI and four stolen bases with a .978 fielding percentage in 2015. The OSU junior earned the team’s “Most Improved Player” this fall. Washington batted .455 (5-for-11) with a double, two home runs and four RBI during the Scarlet & Gray World Series.

“It’s an honor to be named captain along my teammate Nick Sergakis,” Washington said. “It’s truly a blessing. It’s a privileged my teammates see me as a leader and I’m ready to lead this team and achieve our goals in the upcoming season.”

Meet the Team

The 2016 edition of Meet the Team is schedule for February 6th at Fawcett Center on the campus of The Ohio State University. This year’s event will be a lunch. Registration will begin at 11:30 with the lunch beginning at 12:30 and the program at 1:00.

This year’s event will celebrate the 50th anniversary of Ohio State’s baseball National Championship. It is also a time to meet this season’s team and hear from head coach Greg Beals as he discusses his team’s road to the Big Ten championship.

Ticket’s for this year’s lunch are \$ 30.00 for Diamond Club members and their families. Tickets for all others are \$ 40.00.

For tickets, complete the attached order form and return it to the Buckeye Diamond Club or call 614-292-1075 with your reservation as soon as possible.

Buckeyes Picked Seventh

The 2016 pre-season polls are starting to roll in. Collegiate Baseball has selected the Buckeyes to finish seventh this season.

The newspaper has tabbed Michigan as the team to beat in the conference. Maryland is picked second with Iowa and Illinois rounding out the top four spots.

In the fifth position is Indiana, followed by Minnesota, Ohio State, Nebraska, Michigan State, Purdue, Northwestern, Rutgers and Penn State.

Three Buckeyes have been named Players to Watch this season. Outfielders Ronnie Dawson and Troy Montgomery and pitcher Tanner Tully made the list.

The paper selected Maryland’s Mike Shawaryn as Pre-season Pitcher of the Year and Michigan’s Cameron Benedetti as the Pre-season Player of the Year.

COACHES CORNER

“The boys are back in town” and we are fast at work in preparation for the 2016 season. Despite frigid temperatures we have been getting a lot of baseball accomplished. This time of year it is critical to move our pitching staff along at the proper pace to have them ready for the season. We want to work a pitch count that will have them able to go 5 innings opening weekend. This year we will be making a trip to Florida the weekend before the season begins to practice and scrimmage. This is something that is not being done elsewhere, thank you to Buckeye Nation for allowing us this opportunity.

Our 2016 season begins on February 19 in Vero Beach, FL, with 4 games against Toledo, Niagara and Pitt. Our home opener will be on Friday March 18 with a 3 game series against Hofstra. The Big 10 schedule begins the following weekend at home with Northwestern. Once again our schedule is strong and back loaded with 2 tough mid-week series in May with UAB and Florida Atlantic here in Columbus. We also return to competition with TTUN May 13-15 here at home. The Big Ten Tournament will be held back in Omaha, NE at TD Ameritrade Park – the home of the College World Series.

We have a lot of returning starters and 20 total returning lettermen. The strength of this team will be our maturity and experience. We are going through extensive cultural development in efforts to play on our strengths – we have a very tight unit of brotherhood in our locker-room. As a program we have gone through a lot together in the past year and we have bonded through those experiences. Throughout the fall and winter workouts it has been exciting to see this team prepare at an elite level.

The priority of our coaching staff is the development of our players and team, followed closely by the search for future Buckeyes. We continue to see dividends for our tireless effort on the recruiting trail. We have 13 student-athletes from the 2016 graduating class signed to be Buckeyes and we have already received 7 commitments from the 2017 class. The 2017 recruiting class will be our best to date – we made 7 offers and received commitments from all seven. Never before in my career have I heard of a clean sweep anywhere. More importantly we are keeping the best players from Ohio here at The Ohio State University. Six of the seven commits are Ohioans. This has been a tough task keeping these players from heading south. Our excitement for the future is only overshadowed by the opportunity that lies in front of this Buckeye Team in 2016.

I look forward to seeing you at the ball park! Go Bucks!

Greg Beals

KREMBLAS NAMED RIPKEN YOUTH COACH OF THE YEAR

Mike Kremblas thrives in his role as a youth coach: “What you learn, you try to teach.”

When your dad wore No. 23 before LeBron James at St. Vincent-St. Mary High in Akron, Ohio, and then led Ohio State football to a national championship as its quarterback in 1957, the bar for family athletic achievements has been set high.

Mike Kremblas is doing his best to match his father Frank’s accomplishments.

Kremblas is the recipient of the 2015 Ripken Baseball Youth Coach of the Year Award for his stewardship of the Knoxville Stars baseball team. The award is a joint venture of Ripken Baseball and Baseball America and is given to the youth coach who represents traits of The Ripken Way—character, commitment, community, family, fun, integrity, passion, perseverance and teamwork.

“On behalf of Ripken Baseball and Baseball America, we are thrilled to name Coach Mike Kremblas as the Ripken Baseball Youth Coach of the Year,” said Colin Clark, vice president of brand marketing at Ripken Baseball. “His impact on his team is evident in the immense support he has received.”

A catcher at Ohio State from 1995-98 and an eighth-round pick of the Blue Jays in 1998, Kremblas, 40, played five years in the minors and displayed many of those traits.

He credits that to competitive sports, which were in his blood from youth. Frank Kremblas was a three-sport star in high school before becoming a football hero at Ohio State, and Frank Jr.—nine years older than Mike—played at Eastern Kentucky before he was drafted by the hometown Reds in the 23rd round in 1989.

“Baseball was my sport. It was pre-determined. I was the batboy when the older kids played. It was a natural fit.”

At Ohio State, Kremblas played for Bob Todd, “Bob Todd was a great coach,” Kremblas said. “He instilled in me discipline, concepts of teamwork, you know, the concept that not one person is above anyone else. But he also challenged you.

“If anyone asks you about Bob Todd and developing as a young man, it’s not just about the baseball. It goes beyond that. Lord, I mean, how I played the game, everything. I made the right decision (going to Ohio State). I wouldn’t change anything. I credit him a lot.”

Not surprisingly, Kremblas takes a lot of his coaching tenets from Todd. “It’s full circle,” Kremblas said. “What you learn, you try to teach. If you learn something, you’re going to teach it. That’s what I try to do, I try to be like Coach Todd. It’s not just about the game, it’s about life. If they can win at the game of baseball, they are going to be good in other parts of life.”

In terms of his coaching style, Kremblas tries to tailor it to his young club. “It’s basic, but then it can be advanced, too,” he said. “I believe every individual is unique. If you clone your team, you take away their athleticism. You want to instill confidence in the kids, instill in them to be themselves, but within a system, within a team culture.”

Those are the values Cal Ripken had as well, despite his individual success, as that’s why the award means so much to Kremblas.

“It’s my goal to continue making a positive impact on our team both on and off the field,” he said. “A huge thank you to Ripken Baseball for putting this together and for its continued service to youth baseball and softball programs.” -Baseball America



Buckeyes Sign Nine

The Ohio State baseball program has signed nine new recruits for the 2017 season. Five signees are Ohioans, three are from Texas and one from Indiana

"Along with versatility of the position players, the strength and depth of our pitching staff is the key to this recruiting class," Beals said. The thing I especially like is that they are winners, coming from winning programs and are used to winning. Finally and most importantly, this is a group of high character young men."

Dominc Canzone - OF - L/R - 6-1, 175 Hudson, Ohio - Walsh Jesuit HS. Canzone was a Louisville Slugger High School All-American, batting .520 with two home runs and 28 RBI.

Reece Calvert - RHP - 6-6-, 210 Plano, Texas - Plano East HS - McLennan CC. Calvert was a 2015 JUCO All-Star selection and a member of the NJCAA All-Academic Team.

On the mound he was 9-4 with 5.45 ERA and 60 strikeouts
Dustin Jourdan - RHP - 6-0, 170 Austin, Texas - James Bowie HS - McLennan CC. Jourdan was first-team All-district and earned a 6-2 mark with four saves and 26 strikeouts at McLennan

Collin Lollar - RHP -6-1, 190 Columbus, Ind. - Columbus North HS. Collin was All-county, All-conference and All-sectional during his junior year at Columbus North. On the mound he was 6-1 record with a 1.06 ERA and hit .409 with three home runs

Gavin Lyon - RHP - 5-11 -175 Westerville, Ohio - Westerville Central HS. Gavin was OCC Cardinal Player of the Year, first team All-district, All-metro and All-state honoree. He was 9-0 with a 0.49 ERA and 111 strikeouts in 57.1 innings pitched.

Michael McDonough - LHP - 6-0, 175 Columbiana, Ohio - Crestview Local HS. Michael holds school records for strikeouts in a game with 19, strikeouts in a season (92) and career strikeouts (217). He was 5-2 record with a 1.58 ERA.

Noah McGowan - INF/OF -R/R - 5-11, 205 Magnolia, Texas - Magnolia HS - McLennan CC. Noah is the third incoming Buckeye that was on the Highlander squad. He was named an NJCAA All-Academic Team. On the field he 14 doubles and 37 RBI

Jake Vance - RHP - 6-3, 180 Massillon, Ohio - Canton Central Catholic HS. Jake was a 2014 and 2015 Underclass All-American. In 2015, he was 8-1 with a 1.34 ERA, 86 strikeouts in 68 innings pitched with one no-hitter

Noah West - INF - R/R - 5-11, 170 Westerville, Ohio - Westerville Central HS. Noah was ranked No. 1 shortstop in Ohio by *Prep Baseball Report*. He hit .400 one home run, 17 RBI.

BUCKEYE BITS

Former Buckeye Tyler Engle has been hired as an assistant coach with the Marietta College baseball team.

Congratulations to former Buckeye Mike Madsen and his wife Lauren on the birth of their daughter Madelyn.

Fryer Signs With New Team

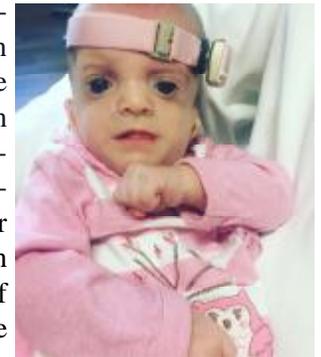
Former Buckeye Eric Fryer has signed a minor league contract with the St. Louis Cardinals. Fryer will be invited to Major League Spring Training.

Fryer spent last year in the Twins' organization. He hit .293 with a .727 OPS in 67 games for Triple-A Rochester and played 15 games at the big league level. While with the Twins, Fryer hit .227 with two home runs.

St. Louis manager Mike Matheny is a native of Fryer's hometown of Reynoldsburg.

Little Buckeye Fights On

The plan was for the newest member of the Nelson family to arrive on November 5th, but Leightyn decided to arrive early. She was born October 3rd to former Buckeye Ron Nelson and his wife Danielle with a rare genetic condition called Treacher Collins Syndrome which they were unaware of until her birth. Treacher Collins syndrome is a condition that affects the development of bones and other tissues of the face. It affects about one in 50,000 people.



In the three and half months since transferring to Akron Children's Hospital, Leightyn has undergone a number of surgeries including to help her with her breathing and the insertion of a feeding tube.

Just before turning two months old, Leightyn was rushed into emergency surgery because of an infection on the wall of her intestine forcing doctor's to remove part of her intestine. It was one of five surgeries over an eight-day period.

The Nelsons' are hoping that Leightyn will be able to come home in mid-March. "She has a long road ahead and will have challenges the rest of her life, but she's a little fighter." Nelson says. Leightyn is scheduled for six more surgeries in the next six months.

The latest triumph for Leightyn was also a birthday present for her mother. Leightyn was able to hear for the first time with the assistance of a BAHA hearing aid system.

"The amount of support we have received from everyone has genuinely touched Danielle, myself and our family." Said Nelson. "We are lucky to have such supportive and loving family and friends."

GOLDBERG GETS DEGREE

The following is a part of an article was written by Brad Goldberg, a pitcher in the Chicago White Sox system, as a part the Chicago White Sox ongoing Prospect Perspective series.

This is my story of finishing my degree as an undergraduate at The Ohio State University while playing for the Chicago White Sox Hi-A affiliate Winton-Salem Dash.

I was recruited to go play baseball at Coastal Carolina University. While at Coastal, academics were a breeze. I was there to play baseball.

After spending two years there, I transferred to Ohio State. At Ohio State, it quickly became evident that academics were much more rigorous. I became academically ineligible in 2012 due to a credit shortage in my major classes due to the vast majority of credits from Coastal Carolina not qualifying. Essentially those 2 years at Coastal were for naught, academically.

Athletics have always come naturally to me. Academics have not. Whenever I applied myself I did pretty well in school. I consistently would do just the bare minimum to get by. I just always wanted to play baseball. I became eligible to pitch in 2013 and finished my senior season one semester and an internship away from graduating. I was then drafted in the 10th round of the MLB draft that June and began my professional career.

As I mulled over the decision whether to play winter ball, focus strictly on training or go back to school – I thought, what would the "Old Brad" do? He would say "the heck with school, you'll finish eventually. you're a baseball player!" The decision was made mid-way through the near-six-month minor league season, I was going back to finish my degree and complete the challenge that many baseball players who turn pro end up do not finishing.

I knew that the longer I waited to finish my degree, the harder it would actually be to get back into the world of academia and I probably wouldn't remember much about sociology or how to even manage going back to college. I wanted to prove to myself that I can finish my degree and become a graduate of the University I have grown to love and take much pride in.

Fast forward to August 25th, 2015. I'm pitching for the Winston-Salem Dash and we're in the thick of a playoff push. Late August also signifies the beginning of classes at OSU for the Autumn semester. That morning I emailed with professors trying to make sure I stayed on top of my school work as I was enrolled to be in classes, but would not physically be there until our season was over.

For the next two-plus weeks I would wake up early – knock out papers, do research, online quizzes and readings – while still having to play games. My downtime changed to reading assignments and homework. My laptop now came with me to the ballpark for academic purposes.

I told my professors in early August that I would be back in Columbus and in class on the day after the season ended. One problem – the Dash were red hot and we made the playoffs. I was ecstatic we made the playoffs and that our season-long journey paid off, but also knew that this was a pretty big obstacle in my semester to complete my degree by missing another couple days of lectures and in-class notes. Unfortunately, the season ended on a Friday night. The following Monday I was sitting in class.

For those 2 weeks in September, I wasn't just an athlete or ballplayer. I was what the NCAA propagandizes against: an athlete-student. Baseball came first, then school. That juggling act is one I will never forget and am now proud that I took part of. I graduated on December 20th with a bachelor's degree in Sociology from The Ohio State University.

To read the entire article, go to: <http://www.chicagonow.com/future-sox/2016/01/prospect-perspective-brad-goldberg-on-finishing-a-degree-while-playing-pro-ball/>



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