A Senior Season Lost

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With high school spring sports officially cancelled and college sports long in the rearview now, the baseball landscape has hit a temporary, indefinite pause. While there are far more severe issues surrounding our everyday lives, there’s nothing wrong with understanding what many student athlete seniors are missing out on. For many, whether high school or college, this was it. No next year, no professional contracts to sign. This was always their ceiling. For select others, the opportunity to play collegiately awaits. And for an even slimmer select group, the chance to be drafted and sign professionally may be waiting in the wings.

Then there are those who really, really needed this senior season. This could have been, should have been the year they broke out, caught the eye of that college coach or amateur scout. Call it unlucky or maybe just an extra hurdle for them to jump. Either way, many seniors are ending a stage of their lives in an anticlimactic way none of us saw coming.

My home, the State of Maine, carries deep, rich and humble roots in our great game of baseball. From Billy Swift’s electric year in 1993, to the life’s work of Clyde Sukeforth; families like the Butterfields and Flahertys who have multiple generations working or playing in the game; and to the healthy national rise of numerous NCAA DIII Maine baseball programs and a continuing strong program at UMO...baseball is very alive and well here.

There are probably more people from Maine that have graced a MLB field than many would realize. And there will be more to come. With that said, I want to recognize those Northern New England seniors who will be lucky enough to play NCAA baseball next spring. In writing this, I hope to give those interested a reason to pay attention. Some of these kids have a legitimate chance to play professionally someday. It will be fun to follow their next steps and see their potential flourish.

By no means will this be an exhaustive list. For any players, parents or coaches, if I’ve missed someone or you have a player working towards that next step, I’d be happy to hear from you.

**-Hunter Owen, LHP, South Portland, ME: Vanderbilt University**

Anyone following high school sports in Maine will surely be familiar with this 6’5” lefty. Mechanically he is consistent, with a downhill follow through on his delivery. Release points, again, are consistent and deceptive. Ranked the 2020 #1 baseball prospect in New England by Prep Baseball Report. And from my sources, he’s a humble and good natured young man. High draft potential.

**-Adrian Siravo, RHP/OF, Gilford, NH: University of Connecticut**

A player on the rise, Adrian is throwing in the low 90s and mixes his FB with a slider and changeup. There are times where his front shoulder appears offline, which affects his arm slot. Correctable issue. At 6’3” and 195, his body comp is similar to Orel Hersheiser. He carries a loose and athletic approach in the box. He will be a fun player to follow and has professional potential.

**-Calvin Hewitt, OF, Portsmouth, NH: Vanderbilt University**

Another New England kid is heading to Vandy! He has plus speed, which serves him well on the basepaths (4.15 H to 1B) and in the outfield. With a slightly open stance, he keeps his hands still in the box. Excellent ability to barrel the ball with strong contact. Plus bat speed. He has some nice potential for the next level and will be in good hands at Vandy.

**-Conner Caverly, C/1B, Marshwood HS, South Berwick, ME: University of Maine**

A catcher & 1B, Conner carries a strong build at 6’4”/217lbs. He is athletic behind the plate and has soft hands. Excellent pop time (1.91 seconds). His footwork in the field is clean and squares himself up consistently with approaching batted balls. He has a clean swing and keeps his hands under control. Most importantly, he has improved his hitting mechanics from year to year. This is an indicator of a coachable player who reacts well to criticism. No reason to not see him play next year for those within driving distance to Orono.

**-Conner Hujsak, SS/P, Goffstown, NH: Virginia Commonwealth University**

With a slight open stance at the plate, he keeps his hands quiet and ready. Clean & level swing. Feet are consistent and quiet. There’s no wasted movement in the box. Defensively, his footwork is clean and has soft hands at SS. Throws to 1B require two full steps before getting set. May just be a habit and may not be a problem. As a pitcher, he uses a ¾ arm slot with downhill motion. Clean delivery with no wasted movement. He was also clocked at 6.97 seconds during the 60 yard dash. Will be another fun player to follow!

**-Brett Anderson, LHP/OF, Bishop Guertin HS, Nashua, NH: University of Hartford**

A powerful and aggressive pitcher, Brett uses a ¾ arm slot and has deception with his change up. There are some inconsistencies with his glove side shoulder, which can open up and pull him off track. This tends to raise his arm angle and makes him off balanced as he lands. He’ll have the ability to correct this at the next level. At the plate, he has quick hands and a long athletic swing. His front foot action is short and quick. Stays centered through his swings. Above average footwork in the outfield, which allows him to set up consistently for throws back to the infield. Aggressive arm and doesn’t have any wasted movements during the throwing motion.

**-William Shapleigh, 1B, Noble HS, North Berwick, ME: Undecided**

The little bit I’ve seen of William, he appears to have D1 potential. His footwork around the bag is consistent and he has a quick and short throwing motion. He pats the ball to his glove before throwing. This could be a simple habit or his way of securing a better grip on the ball. He carries a power laden swing in the box. With a slight open stance, he sits up in the box. Solid barrel ability through the zone. I’ll be curious to see where he plays next season.

**-Jack Ambrosino, RHP, South Burlington, VT: College of the Holy Cross**

With a high ¾ slot and a high leg kick, Jack’s arm action is clean and smooth. He has a wide frame, which will help him develop further velocity down the road. He has continued to improve his front shoulder movement, which can dip at times. There are some slight variations with the release points, which could lead to tipped pitches. I believe there is more power in his lower body, which will continue to help him build velocity.

**-Spencer Hill, RHP/OF,  Bridgton Academy, ME: Northern Illinois University**

From the mound, he has a lean and athletic build. Uses a ¾ arm slot and utilizes his lower body well to develop power. Quick, downhill delivery. Release points are improving with consistency. From the box, use of his hands is excellent, as he allows his hands to lead his swing. Stays balanced with consistent hip movements. Footwork is consistent, with a small toe tap with his front foot before each swing. From the OF, he has a dynamic arm. Delivers the ball with quick and powerful action. Through the roof potential!

**-Nicholas Thompson, LHP/OF, Scarborough, ME: Colby College**

He pitches from a high ¾ slot with consistent downhill motion & landing. His power is developed with a high leg kick and long stride. His release points are repeatable! Clean delivery and athletic. When hitting, his hands and bat bounce pre-pitch but settle down as the pitch is thrown. He has a quick swing, but it isn’t always balanced all the way through. Front shoulder gets out in front of his hands at times. This leads to him getting the bat on top of the ball. This can be corrected. From the OF, he has soft hands and clean arm motion. He has D1 potential and will be interested to see his first year at Colby.

**-Brady Green, SS/OF, Exeter, NH: Northeastern University**

**-Daniel Trzepacz, 1B/LHP, Souhegan Coop, Amherst, NH: University of Delaware**

**-Noah Lewis, P, South Portland, ME: University of Maine**

**-Quinn McDaniel, SS, Marshwood HS, South Berwick, ME: University of Maine**

**-Cade Thompson, RHP/OF, Phillips Exeter Academy, Exeter, NH: Stony Brook University**

**-Daniel Trzepacz, 1B/LHP, Souhegan Coop, Amherst, NH: University of Delaware**

**-Camden New, 1B/3B, Bridgton Academy, ME: Amherst College**

**-Caleb Tibbitts, INF, Morse HS, Bath, ME: University of Maine, Farmington**

**-Isaak Flaming, P/INF, Morse HS, Bath, ME: Grove City College, PA**

I wasn’t able to see all these players, so apologies for no comments for the end of the list. It is clear to see that Northern New England, while not represented with large populations, has plenty of talented baseball players. This is just a small sample of the kids we have moving onto the next level.

To these young men, I will say be proud of this accomplishment. Not everyone gets this opportunity. Work hard on the field and in the classroom. Enjoy these years, as they will be some of the most fun of your lives. Baseball ends for all of us, so take advantage of this time. I look forward to following your next steps and seeing how each of you progress in your game.

The pause button has been hit for all of us. I don’t know of any industry that hasn’t been affected in some shape or form. The beauty of sports has always been that pleasant distraction from the toils of everyday life. Go to a ballpark or flip the TV on to watch a game. For two or three hours we can forget our worries and cares. We don’t have that right now.

My big hope, as we work towards a resolution to this pandemic, is that we will learn not to take for granted the things we love. When sports are able to safely return, let’s do our part to truly appreciate their place in our lives and world.

With that said, here are a few players from the classes of ‘21 & ‘22 to keep an eye on as we move forward:

-Yechiel Saint, SS/OF, Bridgton Academy, ME: Undecided

-Ryan Minckler, RHP, Portsmouth, NH: University of Virginia

-Zach Fletcher, LHP/OF, Bedford, NH: Purdue University

-Jonah Wachter, RHP/1B, Concord, NH: University of Hartford

-Asa Runge, LHP/1B, Pinkerton Academy, Derry, NH: College of Charleston

-Michael Pratte, OF/LHP, Bedford, NH: University of Maine

-Cody Bowken, RHP/SS, Thornton Academy, Saco, ME: Undecided

-Nic Frink, C, Scarborough, ME: Undecided

-Joe Allen, RHP, Winnacunnett HS, Hampton, NH: University of Michigan

-Liam Doyle, LHP/1B, Pinkerton Academy, Derry, NH: Undecided