



Iowa Baseball Contact: Chris Brewer
November 20, 2003

IOWA BASEBALL **PITCHING DOMINATES IOWA RECRUITING CLASS**

IOWA CITY – The University of Iowa baseball program and head coach Jack Dahm have announced its 2003 recruiting class. Dahm and his staff signed 10 players, including the top four high school pitchers in the state of Iowa. Dahm and recruiting coordinator Ryan Brownlee feel their first recruiting class at Iowa will provide a solid foundation to build a perennial conference contender. Inking six of the top eight high school prospects in the state of Iowa is a good start.

Dahm's first recruiting class has draw national attention from Jerry Ford, National Director of Perfect Game USA. "Jack Dahm is off to a running start. He glued in on the Iowa high school players with pitching being the biggest concern. This is the best class of recruits going to Iowa in well over 10 years. Dahm and his recruiters signed nearly all the top in-state pitchers. This is a very rare class that ranks in the top 50 nationally, and perhaps the top 25. It shouldn't be too long before Iowa baseball regains its reputation as a strong program."

During Dahm's 11-year coaching career, he has proven to have a keen eye for talent. Eighteen of Dahm's former players have been selected in the Major League draft since 1994, four of which have played at the Major League Level. Since 1994, Dahm has produced 16 first-team all-conference players and seven freshman all-Americans.

"A lot of credit has to go out to assistant coaches Ryan Brownlee and Nick Zumsande. I think it's amazing we were able to land such a talented recruiting class in so little time. The current players played a big role in helping Brownlee and Zumsande sell our program; we could not have done it without their enthusiasm. I think the excitement they displayed in the recruiting season is a reflection of the direction this program is heading."

Dahm and his staff focused on strong pitching and recruiting from within the state while building this impressive class. By landing the top four pitchers in Iowa, the coaching staff immediately answered its wishes. According to *Perfect Game USA*, that pitching quartet includes Daniel Bales, David Conroy, Travis Sweet and Josh Wheatley.

Danny Bales, a Cedar Rapids, IA, native, is the lone lefthander among the seven pitchers signed during the National Letter of Intent early signing period. Bales is a 6-3, 210-pound south paw from Kennedy High School. Bales has been the ace for Kennedy and the top pitcher in the Perfect Game Scout Leagues for the past three years.

"Danny is an extremely talented left-handed pitcher. We feel he can come in and make an immediate impact. He is extremely competitive and capable of throwing three pitches for strikes. We were very fortunate to have Danny commit in August because it gave us instant credibility that helped us land the other Iowa kids."





David Conroy is a 6-4, 195-pound right-handed pitcher from Mount Vernon, IA. Conroy is ranked among the top 300 prospects in the nation after topping 90 MPH from the hill in his junior season.

“David’s future is very bright. He has the whole package in terms of size and arm strength. The only thing he lacks is experience, but once he gets some innings under his belt he has the potential to be a very special player. He already has a big league body so once he masters the art of pitching, the sky is the limit for David.”

Cedar Rapids, IA, native Travis Sweet is a 6-0, 170-pound outfielder and pitcher. Sweet attends Xavier High School, where he was named first team all-district and all-conference and second team all-state. Sweet posted a 7-1 record on the mound in 2003 and batted .411 with 22 extra-base hits and 40 RBI.

“One word to describe Travis is ‘competitor’. I really can’t say enough about his talent and competitive nature. He’s coming in as a right-handed pitcher but he can also swing the bat. He has two above average pitches that he can throw for strikes and we expect him to make an immediate impact. His competitive attitude makes him a possible candidate for our closer’s role. He really has a bright future.”

Right-handed pitcher Josh Wheatley is a 6-1, 180-pound native of Pocahontas, IA. As a junior in 2003, Wheatley set the school record for strikeouts in a single season. Wheatley surrendered just 26 hits in 47 innings pitched and struck out 97, more than two per inning. Wheatley was a 2002 Baseball Factory Rookie All-American and an all-conference and all-district selection.

“Josh is a very athletic pitcher, and I believe he can come in and help right away. He is a power pitcher with a great knuckle-curve. Our goal was to bring in impact players and Josh is certainly one of them. He will play a valuable role in the development of this program.”

Finding signal callers to catch its freshly signed pitchers was another priority addressed by Dahm and his staff. The program addressed its catching needs by signing a top-ranked Iowa prep, Ben Geelan and one of Illinois’ top prep recruits, Dusty Napoleon.

Geelan is a 6-1, 180-pound catcher and right-handed pitcher from Algona, IA. Geelan attended Bishop Garrigan High School, where he was first team all-state, all-conference and all-district honoree. The versatile Geelan was honored for his impressive .494 batting average at the plate and 1.10 earned run average on the mound.

“Ben is coming here as a right-handed hitting catcher, but he has the potential to see some mound time as well. We want him to concentrate on catching initially because he has great arm strength. I think with some hard work, Ben may become one of college baseball’s top defensive catchers. The thing Ben needs to do is gain experience at the Division I level so he can mature both physically and mentally.”





Dusty Napoleon is a 6-1, 185-pound left-handed hitting catcher and first baseman from Wilmette, IL. *Baseball America* ranked Napoleon as one of its top 30 Illinois prep recruits after a junior season that included a Junior All-Star game appearance and an invitation to play for the Area Code Baseball Team. The New Traer High School standout batted .410 with 25 RBI last spring and hit .400 with 11 doubles, one homerun and 21 RBI during his summer league. Napoleon was a combined 25-for-25 in stolen base attempts during the 2003 season.

“Dusty is a great athlete and an excellent baseball player. He is a three-sport athlete at one of the top high schools in the Chicago area. Dusty gives us a left-handed bat and anytime you can find a left-handed hitting catcher it’s a bonus for your program. He is an outstanding hitter and we believe he can find a spot in the lineup immediately. His versatility is also a plus for us. We know he is a winner no matter what position he plays and we anticipate he may get some innings at first base. Dusty has grown up around the game of baseball his entire life as his father (Mike Napoleon) is one of the top high school coaches in the state.”

While searching for hurlers with collegiate experience to come in and make an immediate impact, the Hawkeyes found Kirkwood’s Cody Doonan and Indian Hills’ Justin Berg.

Antigo, WI, native Justin Berg is a 6-5, 215-pound right-handed pitcher and was recently drafted in the MLB amateur draft by the New York Yankees.

“Justin is a very talented right-hander. He possesses college experience and we feel he can come in and fit into our rotation immediately. He gives the hitters a different look than any of our other pitchers by throwing at a three-quarter arm angle. He pitched in the Junior College World Series with Indian Hills a year ago and his summer team won the Northwood’s League Championship, so we know he has big game experience.”

Kirkwood Community College transfer Cody Doonan is a 6-3, 200-pound right-handed pitcher from Cedar Rapids, IA. Doonan is a former draft pick of the Pittsburgh Pirates and played high school baseball at Jefferson High School, where he was a three-year varsity letterman. Doonan earned all-metro and all-Mississippi Valley Conference honors three straight years and was a two-time all-district and honorable mention all-state selection. Doonan posted a 4-1 record on the mound in his lone season at Kirkwood.

“Doonan is another guy with experience that drew a good deal of attention from professional scouts last season. He had great coaches at Kirkwood Community College and we feel like he is physically and mentally prepared to pitch at the Division I level. He is very capable of filling a spot in our starting rotation.”

Dahm and his staff continued to focus up the middle in their initial recruiting class by signing two middle infielders to compliment Iowa’s improved pitching and catching. Iowa high school prep T.J. Cataldo and Montana high school prep Kody McManis give the Hawkeyes the stability up the middle that is necessary to compete at the Division I level.





T.J. Cataldo is a 6-0, 170-pound infielder from Carlisle, IA. In 2003, Cataldo was named first team all-conference and all-district and second team all-state by the Newspaper Association. Cataldo batted .486 his junior season and belted two homeruns in the state championship game to give Carlisle the 3A state championship.

“T.J. is an extremely talent left-handed hitter with a bright future in this program. His high school team won a state championship last year and he contributed with two homeruns in the title game. We know he can handle the big stage and anytime you can get a left-handed hitting middle infielder it give your lineup added balance.”

Bozeman, MT, native Kody McManis is a 6-1, 175 pound infielder *Baseball America* ranks as the second best prep recruit in Montana. McManis attends Bozeman High School, where he developed into star at the Perfect Game Midwest Showcase.

“Kody has a tremendous amount of passion for the game. With his work ethic and determination, there’s no telling how good he’ll be in four years. He has the potential to become one of the best all-around players we’ve seen, offensively and defensively.”

What other are saying about the Iowa recruiting class?

Here is what Jerry Ford, the National Director of Perfect Game USA, had to say about each of the Hawkeye recruits.

“A couple of top JUCO players signed with the Hawkeyes during the early signing period. Justin Berg from perennial power Triton, IL, was drafted by the New York Yankees and former Iowa high school all-stater Cody Doonan from Kirkwood was drafted by the Pittsburgh Pirates. Doonan has progressed nicely at Kirkwood and in some ways reminds us of former Kirkwood, then Hawkeye and now Milwaukee Brewer, Wes Obermueller.”

Danny Bales, LHP, Kennedy H.S. – “Bales is ranked among the top 200 prospects in America. He is one of the nations very best lefties. He is going to have a very positive effect on Iowa Baseball. He throws in the mid to upper 80’s with perhaps as good a breaking ball as any prep pitcher in the country. He has had a great career at CR Kennedy and has been a top pitcher for three years in the Perfect Game Scout Leagues. He threw a one hit shutout in the recent World Wood Bat Championship.”

David Conroy, RHP, Mt. Vernon, H.S. – Conroy could end up being the best recruit in this class. He throws upper 80’s, touching 90 at times with good life. His breaking ball and developing change up are devastating at times. Best of all he projects very well with a perfect 6’4” body. Conroy ranks among the top 300 prospects in the nation. He pitched very well for both his high school and in the Perfect Game Scout Leagues.”





Travis Sweet, RHP/OF, Xavier H.S. – “Sweet is an outstanding athlete, who has become one of the state’s very best pitchers. He throws around 90 with an excellent sharp breaking ball. He really came on over the past year in the Perfect Game Scout Leagues and he threw 90 in the World Wood Bat Championships in Florida.”

Ben Geelan, C/RHP, Algona Garrigan H.S. – “Geelan has opened a lot of eyes in the past two years playing in the Perfect Game Scout Leagues. He’s a quick catcher with a very strong arm. He hits very well and with some power. He also pitches in the mid-80’s and best of all he projects in a big way. Ben should end up being a nice draft pick out of college.”

T.J. Cataldo, INF, Carlisle H.S. – Cataldo is a sure handed infielder who really know how to play. His number one tool is an advanced bat. He’s one of the better hitters in the entire Midwest. He has been one of the leading hitters for three years in the Perfect Game Wood Bat Leagues.”

Josh Wheatley, RHP, Pocahontas H.S. – “Wheatley has become the biggest surprise in Iowa this year. Pitching in the Perfect Game Scout League, he showed high 80’s velocity and a real hard breaking ball. The breaking ball ranks with any in the country. Wheatley is a big sleeper and after a couple of years of DI baseball, he could become a real good draft pick.”

Dusty Napoleon, C/1B, New Trier H.S. – “Dusty is an outstanding left-handed hitting catcher who was one of the top hitters at the Area Code Games in California. He should make an instant impact in the program.”

Kody McManis, INF, Bozerman H.S. – “McManis was first spotted at the Perfect Game Midwest Showcase. The native of Montana showed exceptional ability despite being injured at the event. He brings a good baseball mind and some MLB tools.”

“Overall, this class brings in the top four Iowa high school pitchers and a couple of top JUCO transfers, two top infielders who can really hit and two catchers that scouts claim are the best in their states. However, the big news is, for the first time, in a long time, the best Iowa players are going to be Hawkeyes. Congratulations to Jack Dahm and his staff.”

Jerry Ford, National Director of Perfect Game USA

