

Midwest Classic Baseball Tournament – 2008

Team Wisconsin Highlights

Team Wisconsin Rolls Again!!

Team Wisconsin once again claimed the Championship Crown at the 8th Annual Midwest Classic Baseball Tournament at Plainfield South High School in Illinois. The tournament was held August 1st – 3rd and featured the top baseball prospects from 8 Midwestern states including Nebraska, Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, Kentucky, Indiana, and Ohio. The players for Team Wisconsin were selected from a series of tryouts involving over 275 players (all of them 2009 high school graduates) in six different locations throughout the state.

The atmosphere was electric as these elite players were showcased in front of over 50 college coaches from all over the country. The tournament featured a number of pitchers throwing in the low to mid 90's, and hitters capable of meeting this challenge.

Team Wisconsin was the most explosive offensive team in the tournament blasting fourteen home runs and ten doubles over the five games played. A hefty .357 batting average and scoring over nine runs per game proved to be too much for the competition. On the defensive side, the pitching staff held the opposition to a .216 batting average while striking out more than one batter for each inning played. They scattered only 29 hits over 35 innings of work.

E.J. Sexton (West Bend East) put on an offensive barrage that will surely be remembered for years to come. He left the players, fans, parents, umpires, and coaches standing in awe after nearly every plate appearance. He finished the tournament with a batting average of .800 going 12 for 15. He set the all time home-run record pounding out six home runs. He also added two doubles which contributed to the 18 RBI's he accounted for. Other offensive leaders were Adam Walker II (Milwaukee Lutheran) batting .625 with a double, triple, home run, and six RBI's to his credit; Daniel Gulbransen (Fox Valley Lutheran) batting .600 with two doubles and a home run; Jared Fon (Germantown) batting .500 with two doubles; and Chris Ritter (Madison Edgewood) batting .455 and knocking in five runs. Other players homering for Wisconsin included: Kevin James (Whitefish Bay) Matt Lewer-2 (Kenosha Bradford) Charlie Markson (Whitefish Bay) and Josh Meade – 2 (Hayward)

The pitching staff was led by Joel Effertz (Ladysmith) who led Team Wisconsin to it's first ever win over Illinois. Joel was absolutely dominating with his 92 mph fastball and sharp breaking curve ball. He sent 9 hitters back to the pine via strikeout and allowed only one check swing bloop hit to right field over five innings of work. Kevin James (Whitefish Bay) came in to record the save adding another strike out while giving up

only two hits. Other great performances were turned in by Jack Jorgenson (Milwaukee Lutheran) getting the win over Iowa with Jared Fon (Germantown) getting the save, Cody Loertscher (Rib Lake) getting the win over Kentucky with E.J. Sexton (West Bend East) coming in for the save, and Eric Semmelhack (Oak Creek) getting the win over Ohio with Ryan Giesen (Hartford) coming in for the save.

By the conclusion of the tournament there was no doubt in the minds of the more than 65 scouts who came to watch this event that Wisconsin brought a powerhouse of talented players to the tournament this year, once again leaving with the championship title.

Game #1: 8-1-08 Wisconsin 6 – Nebraska 11

Wisconsin gives one away early

It took Team Wisconsin one game to calm their nerves and settle down before they were able to demonstrate their dominance on the baseball field. Playing in front of over 65 scouts proved to be nerve-racking and the players were tight early on. Twelve walks and six errors were just too much for Wisconsin to overcome in this disappointing defeat. Wet playing conditions led to a sloppy game with errors committed by both teams. Daniel Gulbransen (Fox Valley Lutheran) and E.J. Sexton (West Bend East) led Wisconsin with two hits apiece. Gulbransen crushed a towering home run and E.J. Sexton drove in four runs with two doubles. Logan Peot (Bayport) came in the final inning of the game and struck out four batters, with one of them reaching first base.

Game #2: 8-1-08 Wisconsin 11 - Iowa 6

Wisconsin gets back on track

Team Wisconsin was able to shrug off the first loss by defeating Iowa in game two. It was a back and forth battle with Iowa until the fifth inning when E.J. Sexton (West Bend East) blasted a three run home run to bust the game wide open. Sexton finished the game with 8 RBI's. Daniel Gulbransen (Fox Valley Lutheran) went two for three with a double and 2 RBI's. Matt Lewer (Kenosha Bradford) also homered for Wisconsin.

Jack Jorgenson (Milwaukee Lutheran) got the win scattering only five hits while striking out four. Jared Fon (Germantown) got the save allowing one hit while striking out three. The two pitchers held Iowa to an anemic .230 batting average, which was a huge feat since Iowa finished second in the star-studded tournament.

Game #3: 8-2-08 Wisconsin 12 – Kentucky 1

Hitting on all cylinders

The offensive trend continued in game three as Wisconsin obliterated Kentucky pounding out 15 hits including three home runs. E.J. Sexton (West Bend East) continued his blistering home run pace by crushing two more long balls and knocking in five runs. Adam Walker II (Milwaukee Lutheran) scorched a triple and added a home run blast of

his own estimated at 425 feet into a moderate wind. Josh Meade (Hayward) homered and Charlie Markson (Whitefish Bay) started to heat up adding two sharply hit singles.

Other than Sexton who continued his home run onslaught, the story of the game may have been Chris Ritter's (Madison Edgewood) impeccable performance at Short stop. Ritter had eleven put-outs and accounted for over half the defensive plays made in the entire game. He made three plays in the hole and two plays up the middle that were nothing short of remarkable. Watching Ritter play in the field is a thing of beauty with his quick footwork, soft hands, and strong arm. With the help of Ritter, Cody Loertscher (Rib Lake) recorded the win allowing only one hit. E.J. Sexton came in for the save. The stellar pitching and defensive work resulted in a .136 batting average for the Kentucky hitters.

Game #4 8-2-08 Wisconsin 6 – Illinois 3

The monkey is gone

Thanks to a dominating pitching performance by Joel Effertz (Ladysmith) Team Wisconsin was able to get the Illinois monkey off their back. Wisconsin recorded it's first ever win against Illinois in convincing fashion. The 6-3" right hander was blowing the Illinois hitters away with 92 mph heat. He finished after five innings of work striking out 9 and only giving up one check swing bloop single to right field. Kevin James (Whitefish Bay) came in relief and finished strong allowing only two hits and fanning one. This hard throwing duo was just too much for Illinois to handle- as James a 6-4" left hander- who will be playing for Boston College after high school, was also clocked in the upper 80's. The three hit gem was the best pitching performance Wisconsin has ever had against Illinois as they always have a loaded team of D1 prospects.

Matt Lewer (Kenosha Bradford) got Wisconsin off to a great start by blasting a two run homer in the first inning off a 91 mph fastball. Adam Walker II (Milwaukee Lutheran) was 2 for 2 with a double and 2 RBI's.

The game was played in front of a very large crowd of both fans and college coaches and professional scouts. Nobody left the park disappointed after watching the performances put on by these two teams.

Game #5 8-3-08 Wisconsin 11 – Ohio 3

The Cream Rises to the Top

Wisconsin closed out the tournament by handing a bruising defeat to Ohio and putting an exclamation mark on a dominating showing in this tournament. E.J. Sexton (West Bend East) started things off for Wisconsin in the second inning by blasting a towering home run- his 6th of the tournament- an estimated 430 feet into the adjacent ball park almost hitting the on deck batter for Indiana. This sparked the team and led to subsequent home runs from Kevin James (Whitefish Bay) Josh Meade (Hayward) and Charlie Markson (Whitefish Bay) who also added a double, stolen base, and finished with three RBI's.

Turning in a stellar performance on the mound was Eric Semmelhack (Oak Creek) who gave up only one earned run on six hits while striking out seven. Coming in for the save was Ryan Giesen (Hartford) who allowed only one hit while striking out two.

Team Wisconsin Roster 2008

Joel Effertz- Ladysmith- Pitcher
Jared Fon- Germantown- Infield
Ryan Giesen- Hartford- Outfield
Daniel Gulbransen- Fox Valley Lutheran- Outfield
Kevin James- Whitefish Bay- Pitcher
Jack Jorgenson- Milwaukee Lutheran- Pitcher
Matt Lewer- Kenosha Bradford- Outfield
Cody Loertscher- Rib Lake- Pitcher
Charlie Markson- Whitefish Bay- Outfield
Josh Meade- Hayward- Catcher
Logan Peot- Bayport- Pitcher
Chris Ritter- Madison Edgewood- Infield
Ryan Schilter- West Bend West- Catcher
Eric Semmelhack- Oak Creek- Pitcher
E.J. Sexton- West Bend East- Infield
Adam Walker II- Milwaukee Lutheran- Infield

MLB scouts in Attendance

Dodgers
Braves
Red Sox
Phillies
Toronto
Mets
Reds
Cubs
White Sox
Athletics
Twins

**Royals
Giants
Indians
Yankees**

College Coaches in Attendance

**Purdue
Louisville
Kansas State
Indiana University
Boston College
Saint Louis University
Oakland University
Minnesota State
Bradley
Missouri
Nebraska
Cincinnati
Notre Dame
Villanova
Illinois State
North Park University
Valparaiso
Saint Joseph College
Parkland College
Southeastern Community College
Illinois Tech
Evansville
Miami (OH)
Michigan
Michigan State
Eastern Illinois
Indiana Tech
North Dakota
Western Kentucky**

Illinois
Blackburn College
Indiana State
Northwestern
Northern Illinois
Lewis University
Western Carolina
Northern Iowa
Duke
UW-Whitewater
North Central College
Southern Illinois
Iowa
Heartland College
Harvard
Wabash College
MATC- Madison
University of Illinois-Chicago