Fifteenth
Season Report: 2019
TEAMs FOR 2019 & 2021 SEASONS

Alexandria Aces alexandriaaces.org
315 Vassar Road, Alexandria, VA 22314
General Manager: Paul Johnson
pjohnson@gm.aces@gmail.com
Home Ballpark: Frank Mann Field
at Four Mile Run Park
3700 Commonwealth Ave., Alexandria, VA 22305

Bethesda Big Train bigtrain.org
6400 Goldsboro Rd, Ste. 220, Bethesda, MD 20817
301-254-2698
General Manager: David Schneider
davids@bigtrain.org
Home Ballpark: Shirley Povich Field,
10600 Westlake Drive, Rockville, MD 20852

DC Grays dcgrays.com
1800 M Street, NW, 500 South Tower,
Washington, DC 20036
202-315-6945
General Manager: Antonio Scott
antonio@dcgrays.com
Home Ballpark: Washington Nationals Youth
Academy, 3675 Ely Place, SE, Wash., DC 20019

FCA Braves fcabraves.com
8925 Leesburg Pike, Vienna, VA 22182
702-909-2750
General Manager: Todd Burger
fcabraves@gmail.com
Home Ballpark: South County High School,
8501 Silverbrook Road, Lorton, VA 22079

Gaithersburg Giants gaithersburggiants.org
18221A Flower Hill Way, Gaithersburg, MD 20879
240-793-3367
General Manager: Matt Cangas
gaithersburggiants@gmail.com
Home Ballpark: Criswell Automotive Field
400 Victory Farm Dr., Gaithersburg, MD 20877

Silver Spring-Takoma Thunderbolts tbolts.org
7110 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912
301-983-1358
General Manager: Brian Brewer
bbrewer2323@gmail.com
Home Ballpark: Blair Stadium at Blair HS
51 University Blvd. East, Silver Spring, MD 20901

CRCBL Officers
Commissioner: Jason Woodward
President: Brad Rifkin
Deputy Commissioner: Jerry Wargo
Secretary: Edward Sharp
Treasurer: Rebecca Crowley

CRCBL Board Members
Alexandria Aces
Donald Dinan, Frank Fannon
Bethesda Big Train
Sal Colangelo, David Schneider
DC Grays
Mike Barbera, Antonio Scott
FCA Braves
Todd Burger, Chris Warren
Gaithersburg Giants
Matt Cangas, Jeff Rabberman
Silver Spring-Takoma Thunderbolts
Richard O’Connor, Edward Sharp
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Alex Thompson
Ripken Baseball Inc.
Glenn Valis
Emeritus Director
Bruce Adams
Emeritus Director
Dean Albany

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www.valleygs.com

Program Cover Photos
Clockwise from upper left
League President Brad Rifkin presented Cal
Ripken, Jr. a copy of his father’s Hall of Fame
plaque on March 5, 2020; San Diego Padre
Hunter Renfroe shared hitting tips with Big
Train players June 24, 2019; Gaithersburg
Giants won Annual Ripken League Feed the
Hungry Challenge on July 13, 2019; ESPN’s
Tim Kurkjian spoke with Thunderbolt players
on June 20, 2019; Darius Foster scored the
go-ahead run in the League Championship
Series final game on July 31, 2019 (©Niamh B.
Photography).
A LETTER OF WELCOME FROM THE COMMISSIONER & PRESIDENT

While we all wanted nothing more than to throw out the first pitch for the 2020 summer season, the COVID-19 pandemic forced the Cal Ripken Collegiate Baseball League to cancel our 2020 season. The safety of our League participants is and will always be our paramount concern. Sadly, given the facts associated with COVID-19, we decided we simply could not jeopardize the health and safety of those affiliated with the CRCBL as well as the local communities we call home. That said, we have already focused our collective efforts on making 2021 our best season to date.

Before looking ahead to 2021, we would like to take a moment to reflect upon our on and off-field achievements from the 2019 season, which included: 36 players with ties to the CRCBL drafted during the 2019 Major League Baseball Amateur Draft; another championship run for the storied Bethesda Big Train franchise; Congressional recognition of the DC Grays for their commitment to inner city baseball; the CRCBL’s Inaugural Hall of Fame Inductee Class of the legendary Cal Ripken, Sr., league visionaries Bruce Adams and Dean Albany, coaching stalwart Sal Colangelo, and star players Brian Dozier and Brett Cecil; reaching the milestone of collecting more than 60,000 pounds of food for those in need over the last decade; and being ranked the fifth best summer collegiate baseball league in the nation. For these things we are proud, and we will continue striving to make the CRCBL the preeminent experience for our players and fans both on the field and in the community.

To college players and coaches: we have your back. From pitch counts to schedules, we are dedicated to placing player safety above all else. The CRCBL prides itself on our competitive – but not overtaxing – 36 game regular season schedule (playoffs end not later than August 1). With no team located more than 40 miles from another, we do our best to minimize travel time and work diligently within our communities to find exceptional host families. Ultimately, we believe a summer spent with the CRCBL in the DC metropolitan region offers a competitive and unique experience when compared to all other summer leagues across the country. With a myriad of things to do and places to see in and around our Nation’s Capital, a summer with the CRCBL is ripe for exploration and education beyond the diamond.

Summer baseball is for those on the cusp of living out their dreams. By giving us the opportunity to provide a platform for college baseball players from coast to coast to showcase their talents, we are forever grateful and look forward to seeing you at the ballpark next summer.

Finally, our thoughts and prayers will continue to be with those impacted by the serious nature of this disease. We express our appreciation to all of the health workers and first responders on the frontlines of our battle against COVID-19. The more we all do our part now, the better we will be down the road. Stay safe and stay healthy.

See you in 2021!

Jason Woodward, Commissioner
Brad Rifkin, President

About Cal Ripken, Sr.

The Cal Ripken Collegiate Baseball League was named to honor the man who personified the commitment to playing baseball the right way, the Ripken Way. Cal Senior’s maxim was simple: “Practice doesn’t make perfect. Perfect practice makes perfect.” The Maryland native began managing his way up the minor league system of the Baltimore Orioles in the Class D Florida League in 1961 to become manager of the big league club in 1987. Cal Ripken, Sr. left a legacy of excellence admired by all who love the game.

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Note: The Cal Ripken Collegiate Baseball League has a license agreement with the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation for the use of the name Cal Ripken, Sr. and is not affiliated with nor sponsored by the Foundation or by Ripken Baseball.
OFFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR
Kobe Kato, Bethesda Big Train
– Led league in hitting with .441 BA
– Led league in hits with 49
– Led league with .612 on base percentage
– Led league in walks with 48
– Second in stolen bases with 26
– Attends University of Arizona
– Comes from Aiea, Hawaii

NEW RIPKEN LEAGUE RECORDS SET IN 2019
Batting Average .441 Kobe Kato - Big Train
On-Base Percentage .612 Kobe Kato - Big Train
Walks 48 Kobe Kato - Big Train
Stolen Bases 39 Gio Diaz - Big Train
Team On-Base % .437 Big Train
Team Runs Scored/Game 8.24 Big Train
Team Walks 286 Big Train
Team Stolen Bases 152 Big Train

ALL-LEAGUE FIRST TEAM
1B Austin Deming Grays BYU
2B Gio Diaz Big Train St. Mary’s (CA)
SS Keith Torres Big Train Sacramento State
3B Kobe Kato Big Train Arizona
C Jacob Southern Big Train Jacksonville
OF Scotty Morgan Aces George Mason
OF Jordan Wiley Grays Louisiana-Lafayette
OF Noah Searcy Grays Georgia Southern
OF Brady Pearre Thunderbolts High Point
OF Christian Jayne Big Train East Carolina
DH Cade Doughty Giants LSU
UTIL Matt Thomas Big Train William & Mary
SP Jared Lyons Aces George Mason
SP Dalton Ponce Big Train St. Mary’s (CA)
SP Ben Jordan Giants Kentucky
SP Jack Cone Braves William & Mary
SP Ryan Okuda Big Train Virginia Tech
RP Anthony Piccolino Big Train James Madison
RP Brandon McGraw Aces Georgetown
RP Elliot Zoellner Big Train Maryland
Closer Chase Lee Big Train Alabama

PITCHER OF THE YEAR
Chase Lee, Bethesda Big Train
– Led league in strikeouts with 48, while yielding only six walks
– As a closer, led league with seven saves
– Posted a stingy 1.08 ERA in 25 innings pitched
– Attends University of Alabama
– Comes from McCalla, Alabama

LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES MVP
Matt Thomas, Bethesda Big Train
– Led the Big Train to the Championship with a .563 batting average, a home run, a triple, two doubles, and nine RBIs
– Also walked eight times during the series and was hit by pitch once
– Played 1B, catcher, and outfield
– Attends the College of William & Mary
– Comes from Lovettsville, Virginia

ALL-LEAGUE SECOND TEAM
1B Tony Gallo Thunderbolts Lehigh
2B Brandon Greim Giants San Francisco
SS Ian McMillan Thunderbolts Houston
3B Stephen Hill Aces Morehead State
C Luke Trainer Thunderbolts Millersville
OF DaVonn Griffin Thunderbolts James Madison
OF Casey Mayes Aces Michigan State
OF Jordan Ebersole Braves VMI
OF Tate Soderstrom Big Train Arizona
OF Braden Odom Braves Trevacca Nazarene
DH Max Romero Aces Vanderbilt
UTIL Lyle Miller-Green Thunderbolts George Mason
SP Luke Rettig Thunderbolts Lehigh
SP Thomas Burbank Giants Texas
SP Lathan Todd Braves Citadel
SP Cam Fowler Grays Nebraska-Omaha
RP Tyler Dyball Thunderbolts Hawaii
RP Kyle Subers Grays Lafayette
RP Tyler Naumann Big Train Jacksonville
Closer Matt Watters Giants Towson

Records, Awards and Recognition

Photos: © Niamh B. Photography
2019 was a season of new records and no-hitters. Big Train won its tenth regular season championship by a wide margin but needed to mount a dramatic comeback to defeat the Thunderbolts in the league championship game.

On June 6, Big Train pitchers Dalton Ponce (St. Mary’s) and Jack Weeks (Georgetown) tossed a no-hitter in an 8-0 win over the Aces.

The early season leaders were the Gaithersburg Giants with a 3-1 record on June 9. That day they erased a second inning T-Bolts 4-0 lead and finished with a 13-6 victory. The Giants were led by Cade Doughty’s (LSU) 4 for 4 and Jared Johnson’s (Coastal Carolina) 2 for 3 including a homer and four RBIs.

On June 14, Big Train took sole possession of first place by edging the DC Grays 13-12. The next day six Big Train hurlers combined to toss a second no-hitter — Jacob McCarvel (California Baptist), Michael Bechtold (James Madison), Jared Billen (California Baptist), Jack Weeks (Georgetown), Elliot Zoellner (Maryland), and Carter Spivey (East Carolina).

Thunderbolts moved into second place with a 5-4 extra inning win over the Grays on June 22. Ryan Roell (Frostburg State) tied the game with a two-run single in the bottom of the ninth and Luke Trainer (Millersville) drove home the winning run. From July 5 to 14, the Thunderbolts went 6-2 in a move toward locking up second place. But some drama remained when they faced the Grays on July 19 at Blair Stadium. The T-Bolts came from behind to win a 9-7 seesaw battle to clinch second place and earn a first-round bye in the playoffs.

Big Train captured the regular season title with a 30-7 mark, ten and a half games ahead of the T-Bolts. Kobe Kato (Arizona) set new league records for batting average, on-base percentage, and walks. Gio Diaz (St. Mary’s) and Jacob Southern (Jacksonville) sparked a record setting offense that averaged 8.24 runs per game. The team’s pitching was led by starters Dalton Ponce (St. Mary’s) and Ryan Okuda (Virginia Tech) and closer Chase Lee (Alabama).

Playoffs began on July 25 with two play-in games. Aces defeated FCA Braves 6-4 behind starter Brandon McGraw (Georgetown). Grays edged Giants 6-5 as a promising comeback fell short. Semifinals began on July 26 with Aces facing Big Train and Grays against the Thunderbolts. Big Train beat Aces 11-4 and 24-4. T-Bolts edged Grays 2-1 in a pitcher’s duel with the winning run scoring in the bottom of the ninth without the benefit of a hit. The next day, the T-Bolts won another squeaker, 10-9.

The Championship Series began on July 29 with the Thunderbolts routing the home team 9-0. T-Bolt starter Nicholas Charleson (Queens-Charlotte) surrendered only two hits over seven innings. Brady Pearre (High Point) tripled and drove in three runs. Lucas Donlon (Virginia Tech) went 3 for 4, including a homer and two RBIs. Big Train took revenge the following day downs the T-Bolts 6-3. The 3-3 game through seven innings became a battle of the bullpens. Ryan Metz (Virginia Tech), Elliot Zoellner (Maryland), and Chase Lee (Alabama) held the T-Bolts scoreless for nearly five innings. Drew Hamrock (Virginia) hit a triple to spark Big Train’s two run seventh.

The championship game on July 31 began with the T-Bolts jumping off to a 3-0 first inning lead. With a run in the sixth, T-Bolts headed into the bottom of the eighth with a 4-0 lead. Walk. Single. Matt Thomas (William & Mary) slammed a home run. With the game 4-3, another walk. Strikeout. Two stolen bases and a fielder’s choice. Two outs. Wild pitch. Walk. Another walk. Single, two runs score. 5-4 Big Train. Double, another run scores. The damage ended on a flyout with Big Train ahead 6-4. Chase Lee, Big Train’s superb closer, shut the T-Bolts down to seal the Big Train’s fourth straight league championship.

### 2019 REGULAR SEASON STANDINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>W-L</th>
<th>PCT.</th>
<th>GB</th>
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<td>30-7</td>
<td>.811</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Silver Spring-Takoma Thunderbolts</td>
<td>20-18</td>
<td>.526</td>
<td>10.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>DC Grays</td>
<td>17-19</td>
<td>.472</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCA Braves</td>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>.444</td>
<td>13.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gaithersburg Giants</td>
<td>14-22</td>
<td>.389</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexandria Aces</td>
<td>13-24</td>
<td>.351</td>
<td>17</td>
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RIPKEN 2019 ALL STAR GAME
Maryland All Stars Post 12-3 Win Over DC/Virginia

By Matt Cohen

Gio Diaz’s performance as the leadoff hitter for the Maryland All Star team stood alone among the rest of the best players in the CRCBL as his team won 12-3 over the DC/Virginia All Stars on July 10 at Shirley Povich Field.

Diaz (Big Train/St. Mary’s) went four-for-six, scored three runs, and had four RBIs. He had a home run, two doubles, and a single, finishing just a triple shy of the cycle.

Diaz’s MVP night started right from the first pitch in the bottom of the first inning. He led off the inning with a double and quickly scored when Brandon Greim (Giants/San Francisco) singled. That was the first of 12 unanswered runs for the Maryland All Stars.

In the first five innings, Diaz, Greim, and Cade Doughty (Giants/LSU) each had three hits. Greim was three-for-four with three RBIs and two runs scored. Doughty was three-for-four with two RBIs and one run scored.

The Maryland All Star pitchers carried a no-hitter into the sixth inning. Chase Lee (Big Train/Alabama), Luke Rettig (T-Bolts/Lehigh), Jack Weeks (Big Train/Georgetown), Tyler Dyball (T-Bolts/Hawaii), and Nick Parker (Giants/Coastal Carolina) combined for five full innings of no-hit baseball. Rettig went on to be the winning pitcher.

The Virginia/DC All Stars got their first offense thanks to two players on the Braves. Jordan Ebersole (Braves/VMI) got the first hit of the game for his team. Marcos Pujols (Braves/Dayton) doubled off the very top of the 20-foot center field wall to drive in Ebersole. Ryan M. Davis (Braves/Georgetown) added two more RBIs on his own college home field as DC/Virginia cut the deficit to 10-0 in the seventh inning.

In game two on July 16, the Ripken League outhit the Southern League 9-3 but lost 2-1. Tate Soderstrom (Big Train/Arizona) pushed across the only Ripken run of the game as he doubled to the left-centerfield gap driving in Scotty Morgan (Aces/George Mason). Ryan Okuda (Big Train/Virginia Tech) and Ben Jordan (Giants/Kentucky) held the Southern League hitless through the first four innings. The difference maker was a two-run double in the top of the sixth inning that put the Southern League ahead to stay. Ripken pitchers struck out 14 for the game with Chase Lee (Big Train/Alabama) notching three while pitching perfect innings in the eighth and ninth.

SOUTHEAST COLLEGIATE BASEBALL SHOWCASE
Ripken League Cruises in Showcase Opener; Drops Second Game 2-1

By Matt Cohen

As an Instagram and Twitter follower of USA Baseball, Jared Lyons (Aces/George Mason) had seen photos of the USA Baseball National Training Complex in Cary, NC. When he walked into the facility on July 15, he saw banners showcasing the stars who had played there with Mike Trout, Bryce Harper, and David Price among the famous faces.

Now it was Lyons’s turn to play on that field. His pitching highlighted a night where the Ripken League showcased its talent in front of MLB scouts, winning 13-5 over the Sunbelt League. Lyons, Michael Betchold (Big Train/James Madison), and Dalton Ponce (Big Train/St. Mary’s) combined to shutout the Sunbelt League and hold them to just one hit over the first seven innings.

Gio Diaz (Big Train, St. Mary’s), Christian Jayne (Big Train/East Carolina), and Cade Doughty (Giants/LSU) got the Ripken League off to an early lead that increased to 10-0 in the eighth. The Sunbelt League scored five runs on six hits in the bottom of the eighth, but the Ripken League added three runs in the top of the ninth to extend the lead to the 13-5 final score.

In game two on July 16, the Ripken League outhit the Southern League 9-3 but lost 2-1. Tate Soderstrom (Big Train/Arizona) pushed across the only Ripken run of the game as he doubled to the left-centerfield gap driving in Scotty Morgan (Aces/George Mason). Ryan Okuda (Big Train/Virginia Tech) and Ben Jordan (Giants/Kentucky) held the Southern League hitless through the first four innings. The difference maker was a two-run double in the top of the sixth inning that put the Southern League ahead to stay. Ripken pitchers struck out 14 for the game with Chase Lee (Big Train/Alabama) notching three while pitching perfect innings in the eighth and ninth.
INAUGURAL RIPKEN LEAGUE HALL OF FAME

Dick O’Connor, founder of the Silver Spring-Takoma Thunderbolts and a founding member of the Cal Ripken Collegiate Baseball League, had an idea. There has been a National Baseball Hall of Fame since 1939. The Cape Cod Baseball League inducted the first members of its Hall of Fame in 2001. It was time the Ripken League had a Hall of Fame. It didn’t happen overnight, but a persistent Dick O’Connor made sure it did happen.

At a July 10, 2019 ceremony at Shirley Povich Field, the Ripken League inducted the six members of its inaugural Hall of Fame class. The Hall of Fame was dedicated in the name of Cal Ripken, Sr. in whose honor the Ripken League is named. Cal Ripken, Jr. said of his dad: “This honor would have meant the world to him, and he would be blown away just knowing that there is a league of talented college ballplayers competing under his name.”

The first inductee was Cal Ripken, Sr., the iconic Baltimore Orioles manager and coach whose straightforward maxim said everything you need to know about the man: “Practice doesn’t make perfect. Perfect practice makes perfect.”

The other five members of the inaugural class were:

- Brett Cecil, an MLB All Star with the Toronto Blue Jays who played for the Silver Spring-Takoma T-Bolts in the Ripken League’s 2005 inaugural season.
- Brian Dozier, an MLB All Star with the Minnesota Twins who played for the Bethesda Big Train in 2006.
- Sal Colangelo, manager of the Bethesda Big Train who posted a 392-168 winning record and National Championship over his first 13 seasons.
- Dean Albany, co-founder of the Ripken League who managed his Youse’s Orioles to six All-American Amateur Baseball Association (AAABA) titles.

The League thanks John McMahon of Miller & Long, John Ourisman, and Maury Povich for their generous support that made possible the elegant Hall of Fame wall at Shirley Povich Field. Thanks also to Text Design and Gelberg Signs for producing the Hall of Fame plaques.

LEAGUE CHAMPIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Regular Season</th>
<th>League Championship</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Bethesda Big Train</td>
<td>Bethesda Big Train</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Bethesda Big Train</td>
<td>SST Thunderbolts</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Youse’s MD Orioles</td>
<td>Rockville Express</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>Youse’s MD Orioles</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Rockville Express</td>
<td>Baltimore Redbirds</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Bethesda Big Train</td>
<td>Bethesda Big Train</td>
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All six of the teams in the Cal Ripken Collegiate Baseball League are grassroots based organizations dedicated to serving the broader community. Our organizations and our players thrive because of our deep connections to the community. Yes, we provide affordable family fun with baseball at its most genuine right near home, but we are about much more than the baseball. For players and fans alike, the Ripken League experience includes service to the community.

On September 10, 2019, Montgomery County Councilmembers Gabe Albornoz and Andrew Friedson presented league and team officials and our partners from the Manna Food Center, Giant Food, and Text Design with a proclamation recognizing ten years of service to the community. Since the summer of 2010, Ripken League teams based in Montgomery County have collected 60,846 pounds of food for the Manna Food Center for Montgomery’s neighbors in need. On July 13, 2019, players from the Big Train, Giants, and Thunderbolts collected 7,675 pounds of food with the Giants winning the annual Feed the Hungry Challenge for the second year in a row.

The Gaithersburg Giants and DC Grays were both honored for their efforts to grow interest among youth in baseball. The Gaithersburg City Council issued a proclamation in appreciation of the Giants’ Play Ball initiative, and U.S. Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton presented the Grays with a proclamation commending the DC Grays Baseball organization for its ongoing efforts to promote inner-city baseball and softball.

Representative Norton’s statement saluted the Grays for its free baseball and softball clinics, as well as its ongoing commitment to the DC Grays RBI program—the Grays cooperative effort with Major League Baseball to promote baseball and softball in underserved areas of the city. The Grays support three travel baseball teams, a travel softball team, and a summer baseball league in Wards 7 and 8. In all, 290 kids—most of them from Wards 6, 7, and 8—participated in DC Grays RBI programs in 2019. All participation is free for all participants. At each home game, the Big Train’s Nonprofit of the Night Program gives two or three community groups a chance to showcase their good work and help Big Train fans connect with their work.

With the support of the Jim and Carol Trawick Foundation since 2009, the Big Train has hosted more than 40 community organizations each season. Each nonprofit receives 100 free tickets, a promotional table on the concourse to display items for fans, and an opportunity to describe the organization and throw out a first pitch during pregame ceremonies. Big Train donates about fifty season passes each year to community and school fundraisers.

The Thunderbolts established the Gordon Pavy Camp Scholarship Program to provide funds for disadvantaged youth in Silver Spring and Takoma Park to attend the T-Bolt summer baseball camp free of charge. Ten scholarships were awarded in 2019. The program honors the late Gordon Pavy, a founding member of the Thunderbolts board of directors and a beloved youth baseball coach in our community.
The Alexandria Aces ended a roller coaster season with a play-in, playoff victory over the FCA Braves but ultimately were defeated by the reigning champions, Bethesda Big Train, in the semifinals of the Ripken League. Manager Chris Berset led his team to a 14-25 record with a season mired by injuries and defensive miscues. The Aces started the season slow out of the gate losing their first six games to start the uphill battle. They stayed the course and battled to the very end, earning the first playoff victory in Alexandria in more than five years when they upset the fourth place FCA Braves 6-4 in a thrilling contest. Many great accolades were attained by the 2019 Alexandria Aces, including the Home Run Champion in the Cal Ripken League, Scotty Morgan out of George Mason University. Scotty finished the season with nine home runs in 36 games! He also led the team with 29 runs batted in, good for fifth in the league. Another standout, whose season ended prematurely, was Jared Lyons also out of George Mason University. Jared finished second in the league in strikeouts with 45, six behind the leader.

Overall, this was a wonderful season. The purpose of summer baseball is to improve and hone the skills of the ball players. While adversity was present, these boys overcame it. The Aces and Manager Chris Berset look forward to another crop of talented ballplayers in 2021 to carry on the beautiful tradition of Aces Baseball!
Two no-hitters, a record-setting winning streak, numerous league records, a come-from-behind league championship victory, and much more. Kelli Jenkins, the first female to play in a Ripken League game, made two appearances on the mound. The 2019 Bethesda Big Train left their mark in Cal Ripken League history, capping it off with their fourth consecutive league title.

Big Train set five Cal Ripken League individual records (while tying a sixth) and four league team records. Kobe Kato, the league MVP, set three new marks himself. His .441 batting average, .612 on-base percentage, and 48 walks shattered old records, some of which dated back more than a decade. Gio Diaz’s 39 stolen bases not only shattered the league’s single season record (31), but broke the Big Train career record (38), which had been set over two seasons. Drew Hamrock went a perfect 16-for-16 on the basepaths, tying a league record for stolen base percentage.

Kato and Diaz’s penchant for reaching base (both had 20-game-plus on-base streaks) helped set some team league records as well. The 2019 Big Train stole more bases, drew more walks, got on base at a higher rate and scored more runs per game than any other team in Cal Ripken League history. Big Train won 13 games in a row from July 1-21, setting a franchise record for consecutive victories.

Not to be overshadowed by the offense’s achievements, the Big Train pitching staff threw two combined no-hitters. On June 6, Dalton Ponce and Jack Weeks combined to no-hit the Alexandria Aces. Less than two weeks later on June 15, six pitchers, including Weeks, blanked the Gaithersburg Giants.

After their record-setting regular season, Big Train took the league semifinals by storm, sweeping the Alexandria Aces in two games, 11-4 and 24-4, to advance to the League Championship Series for an 11th straight year. Bethesda’s opponent, the Silver Spring-Takoma Thunderbolts, took game one decisively, 9-0, before Big Train rallied late in game two to win 6-3 and force a winner-take-all third game at Povich Field. Down 4-0, Matt Thomas’s eighth-inning three-run homer sparked a six-run rally, and Chase Lee — the CRCBL Pitcher of the Year — shut the door in the ninth to clinch Big Train’s eighth Cal Ripken League title.
The DC Grays’ 2019 campaign was an up and down affair—with winning streaks followed by losing streaks and low-scoring pitchers’ duels following high-scoring slugfests. It all added up to a regular season record of 17-19—good enough for third place in the Ripken League—and an exciting post-season that ended with two white-knuckle losses in the league semifinals. The Grays 2019 roster included three players from Southern Conference power Wofford University, as well as players from DC’s other core programs like BYU, Richmond, Boston College, Eastern Kentucky, and Lafayette—providing manager Reggie Terry with a much-needed talent upgrade. The Grays also recruited a full complement of ten African American ballplayers, as part of their effort to support inner-city baseball and black college baseball.

The Grays got off to a fast start—winning their first four games. But success was fleeting, as the team immediately dropped its next four. That set the tone for a roller coaster season. The Grays played well in the middle of the season, stumbled to a 3-7 finish, and settled into third place by the end of the regular season. Excellent performances by a handful of Grays kept the team in the race. Right hander Reid McLaughlin (BYU) proved to be one of the top hurlers in the Ripken League, compiling a 0.45 ERA over 20 innings and five starts—with 17 strikeouts against just two walks. Reliever Magnus Ellerts (Harford CC) was dominant down the stretch after settling into the closer’s role—striking out 18 in 12 innings of work and notching two saves. Kyle Subers (Lafayette) notched four wins in relief, striking out 35 batters in 28 innings. Outfielder Jordan Wiley (Louisiana-Lafayette) turned in one of the league’s top slugging performances—batting .380 with five homers, 27 RBIs, and eight stolen bases. First baseman Austin Deming (BYU) tallied seven homers and 33 RBIs to go along with a .315 BA, and outfielder Noah Searcy (Georgia Southern) batted .355 with four homers and 17 RBIs. The Grays defeated the Gaithersburg Giants 6-5 in the opening round of the playoffs—the team’s first post-season victory in the Ripken League. That set the Grays up for a best of two of seven series with the Silver Spring-Takoma Thunderbolts. The Grays lost two nail-biters to the T-Bolts—the first a taut 2-1 affair in Silver Spring and the second a 10-9 slugfest in DC which saw the Grays close a five-run gap to just a single run in the final two innings. An exciting end to the season, if ultimately an unsatisfying one.

**2019 DC GRAYS AWARDS**

- **MVP:** Jordan Wiley, Louisiana Lafayette
- **Starting Pitcher:** Reid McLaughlin, BYU
- **Reliever:** Magnus Ellerts, Harford CC
- **Hitter:** Austin Deming, BYU
- **Defender:** Robby Wacker, Richmond
- **Hustle:** Noah Searcy, Georgia Southern

**2019 DC GRAYS 2019 ROSTER**

**Catchers**

- Josh Cowden ..................................................BYU
- Alex Vasquez ..............................................Delaware State
- Reece Yeargain ........................................Randolph-Macon

**Infielders**

- Bryan Call ..................................................BYU
- Joshua Congdon ........................................Wofford
- Austin Deming ........................................BYU
- Justin Johnson ........................................ Lafayette
- Blake Martin .............................................Southern
- Robby Wacker ..........................................Richmond

**Outfielders**

- Miguel Cameron ..........................................Norfolk State
- Matthew Day ............................................Coppin State
- Jay Hester ...............................................Eastern Kentucky
- Noah Searcy .............................................Georgia Southern
- Tre Terry ................................................Thomas Nelson CC
- Jordan Wiley ........................................Louisiana Lafayette
- Michael Wynne ........................................Wofford

**Pitchers**

- Frank Craska ..........................................Louisiana Lafayette
- Magnus Ellerts ........................................Harford CC
- Cam Fowler ..............................................Nebraska-Omaha
- Tyler Gaul .............................................Notre Dame Col
- Jacob Hardney .........................................Marymount
- John Lamont ...........................................Williams
- Jake Lewis .............................................Eastern Kentucky
- Reid McLaughlin .......................................BYU
- Jarren Norman ..........................................Virginia State
- Issac Olson ..............................................Cincinnati
- Rasesh Pandya ........................................Wofford
- Bryce Ross ................................................Southern
- Edmund Ruffin .........................................William & Mary
- Kyle Subers .............................................Lafayette
- Hayden Wynja .........................................Purdue

**Utility**

- Colin Cain ..................................................Slippery Rock
After relocating from the western part of Fairfax County, the FCA Braves began their first year of play in 2019 at the new venue of South County High School. Despite the move and frenzied efforts to transition the organization from Herndon, Virginia to a new community based twenty miles away in Lorton, Virginia, the team experienced a successful 2019 season, finishing fourth in the regular season before losing in the first round of the playoffs.

With a diverse roster composed of players from thirteen different U.S. states and territories representing fifteen Division I schools, three Division II schools, three Division III schools, and one NAIA school, the team came together quickly. Ten Braves made the CRCBL South All Star team, representing the league in the annual All Star Game and four Braves were selected to the end of the year CRCBL All League team.

Local product Jack Cone (South County HS/William & Mary) led the team in wins, saves, ERA, and strikeouts with fellow Northern VA native Jack Nathan (South Lakes HS/High Point), and Lathan Todd (The Citadel) both also tallying three wins for the Braves. Bullpen standouts included Carson McClure (Trevecca Nazarene), Austin Gilpin (Lock Haven), Cade Owens (Presbyterian), and John Reynolds (Randolph Macon). Offensively, Ryan M. Davis, (Georgetown) and Ryan P. Davis, (Oakton HS/Georgetown) as they were referred to by their teammates “R1” or “R2,” were among the team leaders in hits, RBIs, stolen bases, and runs. Other offensive standouts included Charlie Ludwick (Eastern Kentucky), Ryan Morash (Hofstra), Braden Odom (Trevecca Nazarene), and Jordan Ebersole (Madison HS/VMI), whose trademark walk up song, “Cheeseburger in Paradise”, made him a team and crowd favorite.

The team continued our long standing tradition of supporting faith oriented sports initiatives with a number of our players representing the local FCA chapter as camp counselors at various baseball specific camps held during the month of June and July in Loudoun County.
The Giants headed into their seventh year of the Cal Ripken League in 2019. The season started off great for the Gaithersburg Giants, going 5-1 through the first six games of the season. When everything looked as if the stars aligned for a great year, four key players were injured. The team lost the next six games.

Despite the key losses, the Giants bounced back and started putting together wins. The team bonded and began playing well together. The Giants offense kept them in many close games, but the batters they faced proved to be too strong for the Giants pitching staff. The Giants ended the season 14-22. They made a last push in the playoffs and pulled off a few wins but fell short of making it to the League Championship.

The team’s pitching staff was led by Ben Jordan, (Kentucky) with 26.2 IP and an ERA of 2.70 and Thomas Burbank, (Texas) with 35 IP and an ERA of 5.14. The Giants pitching staff . Th e Giants off ense kept them in many close games, but the batters they faced proved to be too strong for the Giants pitching staff. The Giants ended the season 14-22. They made a last push in the playoffs and pulled off a few wins but fell short of making it to the League Championship.

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On the offensive side, the team was led by incoming freshman Cade Doughty, (LSU) with an average of .346 with 127 AB and Brandon Greim, (San Francisco) with an average of .301 with 93 AB.

The season may not have ended the way it was expected, however the 2019 Giants team was a great group of players that loved playing baseball. No matter the ups or downs, they played competitively in every game and gave their all on the field. The Giants have high hopes for the 2021 season and look forward for the season to begin.
The 2019 Thunderbolts finished a strong second in the Cal Ripken Collegiate Baseball League (CRCBL) and came within a whisker of winning the League Championship.

The team tied its CRCBL regular season record for wins with 20. In the playoffs, they swept the DC Grays in the semifinals, and nearly defeated Bethesda in the League Championship Series (LCS). In that series, the T-Bolts held Bethesda scoreless at Povich Field for 16 consecutive innings behind the pitching of Nicholas Charleston and Alex Mykut.

At Blair Stadium, the T-Bolts posted a stellar 13-6 record; 7-12 on the road. In the LCS, the T-Bolts were two for three on the road and 1-1 at Blair. They finished second in the league in attendance and set a franchise record when 460 fans watched Game Two of the LCS at Blair.

Offensively, the team was led by Tony Gallo who finished third in the league in batting with a .364 average, tied for second with 33 RBIs. Zeke Gongola third with seven home runs, and tied in batting with a .364 average, tied for second in the league in attendance and set a franchise record when 460 fans watched Game Two of the LCS at Blair.

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Thank you to our Ripken League Sponsors

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Congratulations to Manager Sal Colangelo and our Big Train Boys of Summer on another championship season.

Bruce Adams & Peggy Engel

PLAY BALL!

TXT DESIGN is proud to support CRCBL

The Law Office of Rifkin Weiner Livingston is a proud supporter of the Cal Ripken Collegiate Baseball League.

We applaud the CRCBL for its focus on giving back to local communities across Maryland, DC and Virginia while also providing a platform for aspiring student athletes across the country.
A Monumental Summer

Each summer since 2005, outstanding college baseball players from across America have come to the Washington-Baltimore region to play wooden bat baseball in the Cal Ripken Collegiate Baseball League. Players benefit from excellent competition and minimal travel to opponents’ ballparks, as well as welcoming host families and vibrant communities with so many attractions to explore.

Stadium Distances (miles by car)

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Attractions Key:
1. Udvar-Hazy Air & Space Museum
2. Great Falls Park
3. Pentagon
4. White House
5. Washington Monument
6. U.S. Capitol
7. Nationals Park
8. Mount Vernon

Map Layout & Design by Chris Rogers | Monument Art by Kathleen Rogers