

2017 BIG TRAIN SWEEP RIPKEN LEAGUE TITLES

Ranked Fourth Best Team in the Nation



2017 Big Train celebrating victory in league championship series. ©Eye on the Ball www.eyeball.com

Only three of the nineteen Big Train teams have finished their regular season with fewer than ten losses. The national championship team of 2011 that swept the Ripken League regular season and league championship finished with a regular season record of 33-9. The 2014 team at 31-9 won the league's regular season title but then lost in the playoffs. So when the 2017 team posted a 31-9 regular season record with an eye-popping winning percentage of .775 and swept the Ripken League regular season and league championship titles while achieving a number four national ranking, they made a strong statement as possibly the second greatest team in two decades of Big Train baseball. Only five Big Train teams — 2009, 2011, 2013, 2014, and 2017 — have notched 30 or more regular season wins in the June and July grind that is the Cal Ripken Collegiate Baseball League. And only four Big Train teams — 2005, 2009, 2011, and 2017 — have won both the Ripken League regular season and league championship titles.

True to form, the Big Train roared out of the gate winning its first five games and starting the season 7-1. The 2017 Big Train team compiled an astonishing record of 14-3 away from Povich Field. The team did not lose a game on the road until the fifteenth game of the season. Showing an extraordinary consistency throughout June and July, the team lost back-to-back games only twice all season. With a loss to the Redbirds on the road on July 11, the Big Train stood at 23-9 and trailed Alexandria in the league's South Division. Bethesda finished the season with eight straight wins including two wins over the Alexandria Aces allowing the Big Train to capture the league's South Division by a margin of three games.

The Big Train got the season started on June 6 with a 6-1 road win over the Herndon Braves. Starting pitcher **Blake Sanderson** (Florida Atlantic) allowed just one run in five strong innings. On June 8, the Big Train won 5-4 over the Baltimore Dodgers in their home opener at Povich Field to start the season at

3-0. The Big Train raced to a 3-0 lead in the second inning, but the Dodgers tied the score at four in the top of the sixth. **Gaby Cruz** (Bryant) singled and later scored the go-ahead run in the bottom of the sixth on a wild pitch. Relievers **Jack Alkire** (VCU) and **Stephen Schoch** (UMBC) held the Dodgers to one earned run in five innings. The first loss came on June 11 to the Alexandria Aces 7-3 at Povich Field. Two one run home wins over the Loudoun Riverdogs and the Baltimore Redbirds stretched the record to 7-1. **Logan Driscoll** (George Mason) led the offense in the 5-4 win over the Redbirds on June 14 with three runs batted in, but it was **Stephen Schoch** who was the hero of the game. Schoch entered the game in the top of the eighth with the Big Train ahead 5-4 but the bases full of Redbirds and no outs. Schoch struck out the next six batters to preserve the victory.

The dramatic victory over the Redbirds was followed by two straight home losses to the Baltimore Dodgers and the Herndon Braves. The team responded by posting wins of 11-1, 14-1, 10-1, and 8-2 in the next four games to improve their record to 11-3. Pitchers **A.J. Jones** (State College of Florida) and **Ken Waldichuk** (St. Mary's CA) each pitched six innings of shutout ball during this stretch. **James Outman** (Sacramento State), who exploded for six hits and five runs-batted-in to lead the June 18 doubleheader sweep over the Loudoun Riverdogs, was named Ripken League Offensive Player of the Week. It wasn't until June 21 that the Big Train suffered its first loss on the road blowing a 5-0 lead and falling to the Gaithersburg Giants 7-6 in 11 innings at Kelley Park in Gaithersburg. A mid-week 8-2 win over the Alexandria Aces on the road on June 22 moved Bethesda within a game of the South Division leading Aces. But it was more than just another win as Manager **Sal Colangelo** explained to the players in their post game meeting — it was the 500th regular season victory in Big Train history. The next night at the Nationals Youth Baseball Academy in

the District, Bethesda fell behind the D.C. Grays 3-1, but bounced back for a 7-3 win largely on the strength of two home runs by **James Outman** that had people comparing Outman to Hunter Renfroe, the Big Train's all-time hitting record holder.

After two losses at Povich Field, the Big Train headed into the second half of the season with a record of 13-6 and an opportunity to post a successful season. What was worrisome was a mediocre record of 5-5 at home at Povich Field. But then the Big Train bats got red hot winning eight straight games. The win streak began on June 26 with **Garrett Kuebler** (Austin Peay) driving in four runs in an 11-1 victory over the Riverdogs. On June 28, **Kirk Sidwell** (Stetson) reached base four times and drove in the tie-breaking run in the seventh inning to help Bethesda edge Herndon 8-6. The most exciting win during that stretch came on June 30 at Povich Field with a bases loaded walkoff blast off the outfield fence by **Zach Jancarski** (Maryland) in the bottom of the tenth inning. On July 2, **Stephen Schoch** continued his flawless summer with two and one-third scoreless innings of relief to save a 5-4 victory over the Dodgers. Schoch was named Ripken League Pitcher of the Week.

2017 Final Regular Season CRCBL Standings

NORTH DIVISION			
	W-L	%	GB
Baltimore Redbirds	26-14	.650	-
Gaithersburg Giants	19-21	.475	7
Baltimore Dodgers	18-22	.450	8
Silver Spring-Takoma Tbolts	17-23	.425	9
Rockville Express	15-25	.375	11
SOUTH DIVISION			
	W-L	%	GB
Bethesda Big Train	31-9	.775	-
Alexandria Aces	28-12	.700	3
Loudoun Riverdogs	17-23	.425	14
Herndon Braves	16-24	.400	15
D.C. Grays	13-27	.325	18
2017 Montgomery Cup			
	W-L	%	GB
Bethesda Big Train	10-2	.833	-
Silver Spring-Takoma Tbolts	6-7	.462	4.5
Rockville Express	6-8	.429	5
Gaithersburg Giants	4-9	.308	6.5

For the ninth straight season, the Bethesda Big Train and the Baltimore Redbirds faced off for the league championship. After winning the first three years, the Big Train dropped the next four in a row before reclaiming the crown in 2016. In 2017, Bethesda won its eighth regular season title and sixth league championship in the Ripken League's thirteen year history. At season end, the 2017 Big Train was ranked the fourth best team in all of summer college baseball.

The eight game winning streak ended with an 8-7 extra inning loss to the Redbirds on July 5 in Towson. **Logan Driscoll** was named Ripken League Offensive Player of the Week going four-for-four with his sixth home run of the season in a 9-0 romp over the Herndon Braves in Herndon on July 7 and three-for-three with a double in a 13-0 win over the Giants in Gaithersburg on July 9. **Justin Morris** (Maryland), **Michael Emodi** (Creighton), and **Luke Heyer** (Kentucky) homered and 2016 MVP **Vinny Esposito** (Sacramento State) blasted a grand slam in the Sunday night blowout over the Giants. The Big Train was back on I-95 for a trip to Towson to face the Redbirds again on July 11. The Redbirds hit solo home runs in the first and second innings and held on for a 2-0 win, their third win in the four regular season games between the league's premier teams.

With a record of 23-9, Bethesda sat one-and-one-half games back of the Alexandria Aces in the South Division competition for the league's coveted number one seed with eight regular season games to play. Fortunately, the team had one more hot streak in its arsenal. It began with a doubleheader 7-2 and 3-0 sweep of the Baltimore Dodgers at Povich Field on July 12. On July 13, the Big Train faced the most consequential regular season game of the summer. Bethesda trailed Alexandria by one game with six to play. A loss would have put the Big Train in a tough spot. Bethesda jumped on top 3-0, but the Aces knotted the score at four in the seventh. The bullpens took over and did not allow a run for seven innings. The Big Train blinked first giving up a home run in the top of the 15th inning. The Aces retired the first two Big Train batters in the bottom of the 15th, but allowed **Vinny Esposito** to reach first base on a dropped third strike. **Zach Jancarski** singled

and **Fox Semones** (James Madison) walked to load the bases. The Aces then walked **Logan Driscoll** on four pitches to tie the game. **James Outman's** walk-off single sealed the 6-5 victory that put Bethesda in a tie for first place with Alexandria. **Nash Eppard** (Bryant) pitched all six extra innings allowing just one run and getting the win.

The night after the 4 hour and 21 minute 15 inning marathon win, the Big Train was cruising to victory over the Grays in D.C. with a 6-1 lead at the seventh inning stretch. The Grays rallied to tie the game in the eighth and looked like they would win it in the ninth. Back-to-back singles put runners on first and third with no outs. **Cam Vassar** (James Madison) struck out the next batter, issued an intentional walk to load the bases, and retired the side on a pitcher-to-catcher-to-first base double play. On the scorecard, it looked as easy as 1-2-3. **Logan Driscoll** won the game 9-8 with a home run in the top of the eleventh inning to give the Big Train sole possession of first place with four games left. A 3-1 win over the Riverdogs set the stage for another matchup with the Aces in Alexandria on July 19. The Big Train took a 6-0 lead in the fourth inning and cruised to victory behind **Kevin Milam** (St. Mary's CA) who allowed just one earned run in six innings. Victories over Silver Spring-Takoma and Herndon allowed the Big Train to close out the regular season with a 31-9 record capturing the South Division over the Aces (28-12) by three games and besting the North Division champion Redbirds (26-14) by five games.

James Outman was named National Summer Collegiate Player of the Year by Rawlings and Perfect Game and was named the Ripken League's Most Outstanding Player. Outman led the league in home runs with 9 and runs batted in with 36 during

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2017 Cal Ripken Collegiate Baseball League Honors

League Offensive Player of the Year

James Outman (OF, Sacramento State)

League Championship Series Most Outstanding Player

Justin Morris (C, Maryland)

League All-Star Game Most Outstanding Player

Kevin Milam (RHP/DH, St. Mary's CA)

First Team All-League

Logan Driscoll (3B, George Mason)

Kevin Milam (RHP/DH, St. Mary's CA)

Justin Morris (C, Maryland)

Ty Madrigal (LHP, St. Mary's CA)

James Outman (OF, Sacramento State)

Stephen Schoch (RHP, UMBC)

Zach Jancarski (OF, Maryland)

Honorable Mention All-League

Vinny Esposito (1B, Sacramento State)

John Murphy (RHP, Maryland)

League South All-Star Team

Logan Driscoll (3B, George Mason)

Vinny Esposito (1B, Sacramento State)

Zach Jancarski (OF, Maryland)

A.J. Jones (RHP, State College of Florida)

Kevin Milam (RHP/DH, St. Mary's CA)

Ty Madrigal (LHP, St. Mary's CA)

Justin Morris (C, Maryland)

John Murphy (RHP, Maryland)

James Outman (OF, Sacramento State)

Stephen Schoch (RHP, UMBC)

Kirk Sidwell (OF, Stetson)

Ken Waldichuk (LHP, St. Mary's CA)

Ripken League

Offensive Players of the Week

Week 2 **James Outman** (OF, Sacramento State)

Week 5 **Logan Driscoll** (3B, George Mason)

League Pitchers of the Week

Week 4 **Stephen Schoch** (RHP, UMBC)

Perfect Game Ripken League 2017 Player of the Year

James Outman (OF, Sacramento State)

Perfect Game Ripken League 2017 Top Prospects

#8 **Zach Jancarski** (OF, Maryland)

#9 **James Outman** (OF, Sacramento State)

Baseball America Ripken League 2017 Top Prospects

#5 **James Outman** (OF, Sacramento State)

#9 **Zach Jancarski** (OF, Maryland)

#10 **Ken Waldichuk** (LHP, St. Mary's CA)

Sal Colangelo's 2017 Big Train Manager's Awards

Most Valuable Player

James Outman (OF, Sacramento State)

Most Outstanding Hitter

Logan Driscoll (3B, George Mason)

Most Outstanding Pitcher

Ty Madrigal (LHP, St. Mary's CA)

Most Outstanding Relief Pitcher

Stephen Schoch (RHP, UMBC)

Most Outstanding Fielder

Justin Morris (C, Maryland)

Most Outstanding Utility Player

Kevin Milam (RHP/DH, St. Mary's CA)

Hustle Award

Jacob Koos (OF, Stetson)

National Summer Collegiate Player of the Year

James Outman

(OF, Sacramento State)

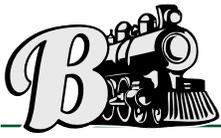


Perfect Game

First Team All-Americans

Ty Madrigal (LHP, St. Mary's CA)

James Outman (OF, Sacramento State)



2017 SEASON RECAP

the regular season, just ahead of teammate **Logan Driscoll** who hit 7 home runs and had 34 RBIs. Eight players hit above .300, the most in team history. Led by Outman and Driscoll, the 2017 Big Train team was an offensive powerhouse. It tied the league record for home runs during the regular season with 43. The team's batting average of .293 is the second highest in our 19 seasons and tied for third best in league history. Outman, Driscoll, and **Kevin Milam** finished in the top six in the league in batting average. The 2017 team smashed the previous Bethesda record with 105 stolen bases. Left-handed starting pitcher **Ty Madrigal** led the league with a regular season earned run average of 0.55 and tied for second with five wins. Closer **Stephen Schoch** appeared in 16 games and did not issue a single walk in more than 26 innings pitched. Led by **Joe Nahas** (UMBC) who struck out 35 batters in 22+ innings, the Big Train pitching staff broke the previous Bethesda record with 363 strikeouts (the second highest in league history).

LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES

2017 was the third year of a new format for the League Championship Series with six of the league's ten teams qualifying for the playoffs. The two division champions in the regular season — #1 seed Big Train (31-9) and #2 seed Redbirds (26-14) — received byes and the next four teams in the standings played single games for the right to compete in the two semifinal series. On Upset Monday July 24, the #6 seed Thunderbolts (17-23) defeated the #3 seed Aces (28-12) 15-14 to win the right to play the Big Train, and the #5 seed Dodgers (18-22) beat the #4 seed Giants (19-21) 5-4 at Kelley Park in Gaithersburg to advance to the other semifinal series with the Redbirds.

In game one of the semifinal series on July 25, Bethesda beat the Silver Spring-Takoma Thunderbolts 2-0 at Povich Field. **Ty Madrigal** was masterful through eight innings before handing the ball to **Stephen Schoch** for a 1-2-3 ninth inning to nail down a Bethesda victory. A home run by **Kevin Milam** and an RBI double from **Jordan Sergent** (High Point), both in the sixth inning, were all the offense Madrigal and Schoch needed. On July 26, the Big Train traveled to Blair Stadium in Silver Spring and swept the series with a 8-0 victory. The Big Train jumped on top 2-0 in the first inning highlighted by a **Jacob Koos** (Stetson) RBI triple, scored three more in the third, and never looked back. **Blake Sanderson** pitched five shutout innings and three relievers kept the shutout intact. The Baltimore Redbirds swept the Baltimore Dodgers winning 4-0 at home in Towson on July 25 and 8-3 on the road on July 26. This set up a Redbirds-Big Train championship matchup for the ninth year in a row.

The League Championship Series matchups between the Big Train and the Redbirds over the last eight seasons have been notable for the number of hard fought, nail-biters between two extraordinarily

well matched teams. Not so in 2017. In game one of the best of three championship on Thursday July 27 at Shirley Povich Field, the Big Train clobbered the Redbirds 14-3. Bethesda scored two runs in each of the first three innings, and the Redbirds were never in the game. **James Outman** got the party started with a booming RBI double to centerfield in the first, and **Kevin Milam** and **Vinny Esposito** both homered in a four run fifth inning. **Justin Morris** reached base in all five plate appearances. Starter **John Murphy** (Maryland) allowed just two runs through five innings before a rain delay ended his night. Relievers **Nash Eppard**, **Cam Vassar**, and **Stephen Schoch** finished the game.



Stephen Schoch, (RHP, UMBC)
© Nicole K Kittay photography



Justin Morris, (C, Maryland)
© Nicole K Kittay photography

Rain pushed game two to Saturday July 29, and the Redbirds returned the favor with a 15-4 romp at Carlo Crispino Stadium at Calvert Hall High School in Towson. The Redbirds jumped in front with two runs in the home half of the first inning and led 3-1 in the middle of the fifth inning. Baltimore scored four in the bottom of the fifth, gave up three in the top of the sixth, but pulled away for good with six runs in the seventh.

In the decisive game three on Sunday July 30, the teams returned to form after two uncharacteristic blowouts and gave the more than 600 fans at Shirley Povich Field the closely contested game they had come to expect when these two championship caliber teams match up. Big Train starter **Tyler Smith** (East Carolina), who had not seen action in the playoffs and had not pitched in 13 days, retired the first ten Redbirds he faced and threw 5 innings of shutout baseball. Catcher **Justin Morris** delivered the game's big blow, a three RBI double in the fourth inning and then scored to put Bethesda in the lead at 4-0. The Redbirds responded with two runs in the top of the seventh inning. **Stephen Schoch** came in and did what he had done all season long. Schoch closed out the championship victory, completing an amazing summer where he allowed no runs in 30+ innings. With his game winning hit and a game saving caught stealing in the eighth inning, Justin Morris was named the LCS Most Outstanding Player. Morris hit .500 with four RBIs, two doubles, and five runs scored in four playoff games.

Collegiate Summer Baseball ranked the Big Train number four in the nation for 2017 as Bethesda captured its eighth regular season title and sixth league championship in the Ripken League's thirteen year history. Big Train Manager Sal Colangelo said: "These guys stepped up to every challenge. We could be down a couple of runs, but we were going to win. If we needed to get a big hit, we got it; needed a walk-off home run, we got it. These guys did everything they needed to do. You have your ups and downs, but these guys showed their character time and again this summer. That's why they are the champions."

Cal Ripken Collegiate Baseball League		
YEAR	REGULAR SEASON TITLE	LEAGUE CHAMPION
2005	Bethesda Big Train	Bethesda Big Train & Silver Spring-Takoma Thunderbolts
2006	Bethesda Big Train	Silver Spring-Takoma Thunderbolts
2007	Youse's Maryland Orioles	Rockville Express
2008	Youse's Maryland Orioles	Youse's Maryland Orioles
2009	Bethesda Big Train	Bethesda Big Train
2010	Youse's Maryland Orioles	Bethesda Big Train
2011	Bethesda Big Train	Bethesda Big Train
2012	Rockville Express	Baltimore Redbirds
2013	Bethesda Big Train	Baltimore Redbirds
2014	Bethesda Big Train	Baltimore Redbirds
2015	Bethesda Big Train & Baltimore Redbirds	Baltimore Redbirds
2016	Baltimore Redbirds	Bethesda Big Train
2017	Bethesda Big Train	Bethesda Big Train