

BIG TRAIN BEACON

The Official Magazine of Bethesda Big Train Baseball



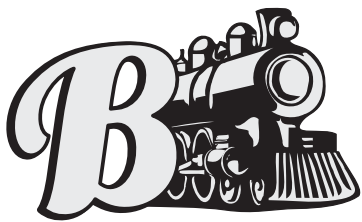
Issue 1: June 15, 2020

www.bigtrain.org

INSIDE:
A Look Back at 2019

PLUS:
Meet the New Board
AND
Counting Down the Best
Games in Big Train
History





Help Us Preserve Big Train Baseball at Shirley Povich Field

Small town charm, Big League talent

A message from Big Train Founder, Bruce Adams

We have reestablished the Bethesda Community Base Ball Club (BCBBC) that John Ourisman and I and others incorporated in 1998 as the community nonprofit organization that built Povich Field, launched Big Train baseball, and ultimately raised \$600,000 to improve youth baseball and softball fields across the Washington region.

I want to assure you that once health officials approve, Bethesda Big Train baseball at Shirley Povich Field will be here as the community jewel you count on to provide the small town charm and big league talent you have valued for more than two decades.

We have set a goal of raising \$60,000 in the next three months to position us for a successful return of Big Train baseball to Shirley Povich Field in 2021. We need your help and will value your support.

Help support the BIG susTRAINability campaign

- ☐ I don't need a season pass, or a mask, or a seat plaque.
I just want to support Big Train baseball with a contribution of \$ _____.
- ☐ \$100 - Individual 2021 Big Train Season Pass and one mask;
- ☐ \$150 - Family 2021 Big Train Season Pass and one mask;
- ☐ \$250 - Family 2021 Big Train Season Pass and one Povich Field seat plaque and one mask;
- ☐ \$500 - Family 2021 Big Train Season Pass and two Povich Field seat plaques and two masks;
- ☐ \$1,000 - Family 2021 Big Train Season Pass, four Povich Field seat plaques, four masks, a picnic for four, and an opportunity to throw out a first pitch at a 2021 Big Train game.

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Please Act Now to Get Your Big Train Mask

Don't put this request in a drawer. As an incentive, the first 100 donors of \$100 or more will receive a handsome Big Train cloth face mask (you won't want to be out this summer without it!), and we will donate \$25 to the Manna Food Center in your name.



**Please make checks payable to
"Bethesda Community Base Ball Club"
and mail your check with
this form to:**

**Bruce Adams
Bethesda Community Base Ball Club
7211 Exeter Road
Bethesda, MD 20814**

If you are able to donate more than \$1,000 to our BIG susTRAINability campaign, please email Bruce Adams at bruce@greaterwash.org to discuss how best to recognize your contribution.

**www.bigtrain.org
@GoBigTrain**



A Message from Big Train Founder Bruce Adams

To Our Big Train Community:

Most importantly, I hope all of you and your families and loved ones are healthy and safe. Our nation is hurting. History teaches us that baseball can be part of the healing process.

A friend once told our co-founder John Ourisman: *"John, when I come to Povich Field, I feel like I live in a small town."* Well, we all live in a small town now. More than ever, we understand how dependent we are on each other. *I promise you that the small town charm and big league talent of Big Train baseball at Povich Field you have come to love will continue.*

Once it is appropriate, Bethesda Big Train baseball at Shirley Povich Field will be here as the community jewel you count on for baseball at its most genuine at affordable prices right near home. That's the promise **John Ourisman** and I made to you when we announced our plans to build our beloved Povich Field in 1998. And that's the pledge I make to you today.

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the *Big Train Beacon*. Circumstances have taken the 2020 season from Big Train fans, but our new leadership team is pledged to provide you with enough baseball to help you get through the summer. Acting General Manager **Chris Rogers** and his team of talented interns will bring you Big Train quality entertainment and engagement all summer. In addition to five issues of the *Beacon*, we are providing three nights of baseball each week in June and July on bigtrain.tv.

I want to express my appreciation to **Bethesda Chevy Chase Baseball** for continuing the Big Train's traditions of championship baseball and service to our community through eight seasons.

We have reestablished the Bethesda Community Base Ball Club (BCBBC) that John and I and others incorporated in 1998 as the community nonprofit organization that built Povich Field, launched Big Train baseball, and ultimately raised \$600,000 to improve youth baseball and softball fields across the region.

We are elevating our legendary Hall of Fame manager **Sal Colangelo** to the position of Director of Baseball Operations. Most importantly, Sal has committed to continue to serve as our manager on the field.

Since February, a talented team of volunteers has been working to prepare for the 2021 season. Fans of Big Train baseball will be forever grateful for the work of the members of the Big Train Brain Trust – **Sal Colangelo, Eric Cole, Becky Crowley, Bill Hickman, Dick Lipsky, Melissa Riemer, Alex Thompson, and Dick Walker**. BCC Baseball President **Doug Cashmere** and Big Train General Manager **David Schneider** worked with us to ensure a smooth transition. We are grateful to them. In recent weeks, long time Big Train fans **John Daniel** and **Rachel Northridge** joined us on the inaugural board.

After this difficult year, we really need to bring the fun back to Povich Field next summer. This fall, we will be scheduling Zoom Fan Fest focus groups to brainstorm ideas for 2021.

If you are interested in getting involved, I want to hear from you. Please send me an email at bruce@greaterwash.org.

Stay well. Be strong. Roll train!

Bruce Adams
Founder & President
Bethesda Community Base Ball Club
bruce@greaterwash.org

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2019 SEASON RECAP

Big Train rallies late to win 2019 title

Bethesda caps record-setting year with fourth straight championship

By **Chris Rogers**

Matt Thomas (William & Mary) watched the ball fly off his bat toward left-center field as he ran to first. He pointed his bat upward toward the sky, as if it was an extension of his right arm. As the ball disappeared over the Shirley Povich Field scoreboard and Thomas began his trot around the basepaths, the Big Train faithful erupted. Thomas's first long ball at the collegiate level—a three-run shot—brought Bethesda within one run of the Silver Spring-Takoma Thunderbolts in the eighth inning of the decisive Cal Ripken League Championship game. Big Train plated three more in the frame to take a 6-4 lead. Three outs later, the team dogpiled to celebrate a fourth straight championship.

Finishing with a 30-7 record, Big Train clinched a third consecutive regular season title as part of a summer that they dominated from start to finish. The team won a franchise-record 13 straight games from July 1 to 21, and set Cal Ripken League team records in walks drawn (286), on-base percentage (.437), runs per game (8.24) and stolen bases (152). Not to be outshadowed by the offense, the pitching staff shined all season long, highlighted by two combined no-hitters.

Individually, **Kobe Kato** (Arizona) had a season to remember, setting league records in average (.441), on-base percentage (.612) and walks (48) en route to the 2019 Cal Ripken League Offensive Player of the Year Award. A Big Train player has won the award for nine straight seasons now, dating back to Adam Barry in 2011. **Gio Diaz** (St. Mary's CA) set both the league single-season record and the Big Train career record with 39 stolen bases, and set a new Big Train record by reaching base in 26 consecutive games. **Chase Lee** (Alabama) shut the door on teams every time he entered the game, tallying 48 strikeouts and a 1.08 ERA in 25 innings of work to earn the Cal Ripken League Pitcher of the Year Award.

Kelli Jenkins (St. Mary's MD) debuted in July, becoming the first female player in Cal Ripken League history.

REGULAR SEASON

Big Train kicked off the season on a high note, storming out of the gate to defeat



The 2019 Bethesda Big Train team poses with the Cal Ripken League Championship trophy after winning the title with a comeback victory at Povich Field on July 31. Photo by Niamh Brennan

the Silver Spring-Takoma Thunderbolts 10-1 on the road at Blair High School on Wednesday, June 5. **Ryan Okuda** (Virginia Tech) dominated, allowing just three baserunners across six shutout innings, while whiffing nine Thunderbolts. **Sebastian Martinez** (Austin Peay State) followed with two scoreless frames of his own. **Tate Soderstrom** (Arizona) drove in three, while **Drew Hamrock** (Virginia) and **Diaz** each stole multiple bases, setting a tone for a season of wreaking havoc on the basepaths.

A night later, Big Train returned to Povich Field to host the Alexandria Aces in the 2019 home opener. **Dalton Ponce** (St. Mary's CA) tossed six no-hit innings, and **Jack Weeks** (Georgetown) followed with three perfect innings of his own to complete the no-hitter. **Diaz** had three hits and **Jacob Southern** (Jacksonville) launched his first homer of the summer in the 8-0 victory.

After a 2-0 start, Big Train momentarily slid off the tracks, dropping two straight for the only time all season. Southern's three-hit effort couldn't dig Big Train out of an early hole as they fell to the Thunderbolts, 13-4, on June 7. The next night, **Jacob McCarvel** (California Baptist) threw four shutout innings, but a four-run rally by the Grays knocked off Big Train, 4-3.

But after a pair of off days, Bethesda hosted the Thunderbolts on June 11 and returned the favor from their last meeting.

Big Train put up four runs in the first, all on walks and hit batsmen, and never looked back. Okuda threw six shutout frames, Thomas doubled twice and Soderstrom drove in three in an eventual 12-0 victory. In Gaithersburg the following evening, Ponce picked up his second win of the season, striking out nine in five innings, while **Christian Jayne** (East Carolina) tallied three hits in his season debut. **Anthony Piccolino** (James Madison) helped in the middle innings with 1½ hitless frames.

The Train rolled into the weekend and picked up three more wins at home. Friday night, the Grays jumped out to an early 7-3 lead, but Big Train rallied for four in the third, highlighted by **Kris Kremer's** (Penn State) game-tying three-run homer. **Southern** doubled in two in the fourth and three in the fifth to cap a five-RBI night and a 13-12 win. The next night, McCarvel, **Michael Bechtold** (James Madison), **Jared Billen** (California Baptist), **Weeks**, **Elliot Zoellner** (Maryland) and **Carter Spivey** (East Carolina) combined to throw the team's second no-hitter of the season, this time blanking the Giants 10-0.

On Father's Day, Big Train split a doubleheader with the Aces to finish the weekend. They won the first game 10-5 thanks to **Andrew Vail's** (Maryland) hitless, scoreless three-inning start and Thomas's go-ahead two-run single in the top of the

2019 SEASON RECAP



seventh, but dropped the nightcap, 8-4.

Tuesday, June 18, Big Train hit the road and beat the Grays, 8-2, in a rain-shortened affair. Ponce struck out five hitters in a five-inning complete game. At home the next night, **Tyler Naumann** (Jacksonville) picked up his first of five wins out of the bullpen in a 7-5 victory over the Braves. On Thursday, Big Train again hosted the Thunderbolts, defeating them 8-1. Bechtold picked up the win in his first start, and Southern and Kato each collected three hits.

Back in D.C. for a doubleheader on Friday, Big Train rode three separate three-run innings to a 9-2 victory in the first game. Southern launched his fourth homer of the season in the first inning and Bethesda never looked back. **Martin Vincelli-Simard** (Sacramento State) hit his first long ball of the summer in the nightcap, but despite pairs of scoreless innings in relief from both Zoellner and **Maceo Campbell** (Longwood), Big Train fell in extra innings as the Grays walked off, 5-4.

In Gaithersburg Saturday for another doubleheader, **Darius Foster** (San Francisco) led off the first game with a home run, but the Giants plated four runs of their own in the early frames to take a lead. Big Train rallied in the seventh, as Thomas and **Ryan Daugherty** (St. Mary's CA) drove in the tying and go-ahead runs, respectively, in a 6-4 Bethesda victory. **Logan Barker** (Liberty) struck out six over four innings in the nightcap, but for the second straight night, Big Train fell on a walkoff, this time splitting the doubleheader with the Giants.

After dropping two of four, the Bethesda offense exploded over the next three contests, plating double-digit runs in each game. On

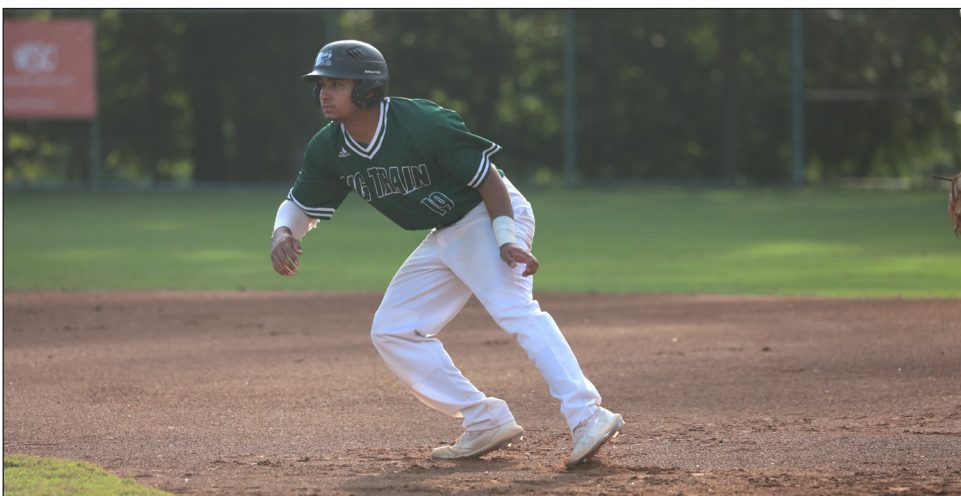
Sunday, June 23, in Alexandria, the Aces held Big Train to just three tallies over the first eight frames, and Bethesda entered the ninth facing a two-run deficit. Down to their last out with the bases loaded, Thomas delivered a game-tying two-run single to right field, sending the game to extras. In the tenth, Kato, Southern and Thomas all walked with the bases loaded to plate three runs; Soderstrom followed with a two-run single and Jayne capped the late outburst with a three-run homer, sealing the 13-5 win.

Monday in Bethesda, Kato and Southern combined to score seven runs in a 13-3 drubbing of the Braves; Kato's 1-for-2 effort raised his season batting average to .491. Ponce turned in another fine outing, whiffing six over five innings of two-run ball, and **Trey Shepard** (UMBC) threw a scoreless inning in his season debut. A pair of off days did nothing to cool the Big Train bats, as they beat the Thunderbolts in Silver Spring on June 27, 15-5. Southern tallied four hits, homering for the second straight game, while Soderstrom and **Keith Torres** (Sacramento State) each collected three hits.

Friday, June 28, Big Train opened the weekend with a doubleheader sweep of the Braves in Lorton, outscoring them 20-4 in the two contests. **Hunter Cooley** (Florida Atlantic) struck out seven across 4⅔ innings in the first game. Diaz hit his first homer of the season in the second game, and Okuda and Lee combined to strike out 14 Braves in the seven-inning affair.

After an off day Saturday, Big Train closed out June with a 9-4 loss to Gaithersburg at Povich Field, which would turn out to be

Continued on Page 4



Gio Diaz (St. Mary's CA) leads off first base at Shirley Povich Field. Diaz stole 39 bases in 2019, setting both the Cal Ripken League single season and Big Train career records. Photo by Niamh Brennan

CAL RIPKEN LEAGUE AWARDS

Offensive Player of the Year

Kobe Kato (3B, Arizona)

Pitcher of the Year

Chase Lee (RHP, Alabama)

League Championship Series

Most Outstanding Player

Matt Thomas (OF, William & Mary)

League All-Star Game

Most Outstanding Player

Gio Diaz (2B, St. Mary's CA)

CAL RIPKEN LEAGUE HONORS

First Team

Gio Diaz (2B, St. Mary's CA)

Christian Jayne (OF, East Carolina)

Kobe Kato (3B, Arizona)

Chase Lee (RHP, Alabama)

Ryan Okuda (LHP, Virginia Tech)

Dalton Ponce (RHP, St. Mary's CA)

Anthony Piccolino (LHP, James Madison)

Jacob Southern (C, Jacksonville)

Matt Thomas (UTIL, William & Mary)

Keith Torres (SS, Sacramento State)

Elliot Zoellner (RHP, Maryland)

Second Team

Tyler Naumann (LHP, Jacksonville)

Tate Soderstrom (OF, Arizona)

All-Star Team

Logan Barker (RHP, Liberty)

Michael Bechtold (RHP, James Madison)

Gio Diaz (2B, St. Mary's CA)

Christian Jayne (OF, East Carolina)

Kobe Kato (3B, Arizona)

Chase Lee (RHP, Alabama)

Jacob McCarvel (RHP, California Baptist)

Ryan Okuda (LHP, Virginia Tech)

Dalton Ponce (RHP, St. Mary's CA)

Anthony Piccolino (LHP, James Madison)

Tate Soderstrom (OF, Arizona)

Jacob Southern (C, Jacksonville)

Matt Thomas (UTIL, William & Mary)

Jack Weeks (LHP, Georgetown)

Elliot Zoellner (RHP, Maryland)

Hitter of the Week

(2) **Kobe Kato** (3B, Arizona)

(5) **Christian Jayne** (OF, East Carolina)

(6) **Matt Thomas** (OF, William & Mary)

Pitcher of the Week

(1) **Dalton Ponce** (RHP, St. Mary's CA)

(5) **Dalton Ponce** (RHP, St. Mary's CA)



2019 SEASON RECAP

their final defeat for the next three weeks.

Looking to avoid back-to-back losses, Big Train opened July with a trip around the Beltway to Silver Spring. The Thunderbolts put their home fans in a good mood early, jumping out to a 7-0 lead after two innings, and countering after a Bethesda rally to make it 11-6 after five frames. Still down five in the late innings, the Big Train dugout knew they still had a fight in them. Vincelli-Simard, Jayne and Diaz opened the top of the eighth with three straight singles, plating a run. Kato followed with a towering three-run homer, cutting the deficit to one. After reloading the bases, Torres tied the game with a sac fly, and **Cade Hunter** (Virginia Tech) gave Bethesda the lead with a two-run triple. Big Train won, 15-11, in their greatest comeback of the season, which kicked off a 13-game winning streak in July.

Two days later, Big Train took down the Aces, 10-0, thanks to a strong performance on the mound by Bechtold and the bullpen, and a three-hit effort from Torres. After an Independence Day break, Big Train returned to action on July 6 with a 4-2 win over the Braves. **Ryan Metz** (Virginia Tech) made his season debut with three strong innings in relief, and Foster's sixth-inning homer proved to be the deciding blow. The following evening, Ponce struck out ten over five no-hit frames and Southern hit his seventh home run of the summer as Big Train downed the Thunderbolts, 7-1.

July 8 in D.C., Big Train rode a five-run fifth to a 6-5 win. The next night, Big Train demolished the Aces at home, 15-5. Jayne, Diaz and Hunter combined for eight hits and nine RBIs. **Greer Holston** (Ole Miss) threw a scoreless frame in his season debut, and **Nathan Schneider** (St. Mary's CA) closed out the win with two shutout innings.

On Saturday, July 13, Kato collected three hits and Hunter hit his first homer of the summer in a 9-6 home win over the Grays. Sunday, Hamrock walked off the Braves in the first game of a doubleheader, doubling home Foster to give Bethesda a 5-4 win. Thomas went 4-for-4 with two RBIs and Daugherty picked up his first win on the mound in a 7-1 victory in the nightcap.

Big Train swept the Aces in another twin bill on Thursday, July 18. **Pete Costigan** (Charleston) debuted in the first game, going 1-for-3 with an RBI double in a 6-4 victory. In game two, Daugherty, Naumann and Zoellner combined to shut out Alexandria, 6-0.

Friday night, Big Train played comeback kids again, rallying for a 9-7 victory over the Giants. Diaz scored four times, Thomas drove in four and Lee struck out five in the final two innings to close out the victory. Jenkins tossed a scoreless frame in her debut.

Looking for a franchise-record 13th straight victory, Big Train traveled to Silver Spring on Sunday, July 21. Bethesda took a 1-0 lead on a Hamrock home run before Mother Nature unleashed a torrential downpour, suspending the game in the second inning. The game was ultimately rescheduled for Wednesday.

Tuesday at home, the Big Train bats couldn't figure out the Grays' arms, falling 8-4 for their first loss in July. Kato drove in two of the four Bethesda runs. Back in Silver Spring Wednesday for the continuation of Sunday's rainout, Big Train pulled out a 10-7 victory. This extended their winning streak to 13 games, since the victory went into the books as Sunday's contest. Jayne finished a home run short of the cycle and Hamrock went deep again in the ninth, homering twice in the same game—on two separate days.

LEAGUE SEMIFINALS

Finishing with the CRCBL's best record for the third straight season, Big Train clinched a first-round bye and home-field advantage throughout the playoffs. Meanwhile, the 6-seed Alexandria Aces upset the FCA Braves in the single-game Wild Card round, setting up a three-game semifinal series between the Aces and Big Train, starting Friday, July 26 at Povich Field.

Alexandria roared out of the gate in game one, going up 4-0 after three innings. But after

Metz relieved his Virginia Tech teammate Okuda with a scoreless fourth, the Big Train bats woke from their slumber. With men on the corners, they executed a double steal, as Kato swiped home to get Big Train on the board. Hunter followed with an RBI single, and Soderstrom's RBI groundout cut the deficit to 4-3. The next inning, Thomas drew a bases-loaded walk to force home the tying run and it was a brand new ballgame.

Still tied entering the bottom of the seventh, Diaz and Kato singled and Thomas walked to load the bases with one away. Jayne grounded out to score the go-ahead run from first, and after Hamrock's two-run single, the train was rolling. Hamrock stole third and scored on an error, and after a pair of walks, Foster hit a little-league home run—a triple and a miscue—to make it 11-4 Big Train. On the mound, Metz turned in six impressive shutout innings in relief, which kept Big Train in the game and set the stage for the late rally. He closed out the victory and put his team one win away from another trip to the League Championship Series.

Saturday, the series shifted to Alexandria's Frank Mann Field, with the southpaw Daugherty on the mound for Big Train. His teammates spotted him an early lead, scoring one in the first and five in the second. Kato and Thomas picked up back-to-back two-run hits in a five-run third inning, and Soderstrom hit Bethesda's first long ball of the playoffs to make it 12-0 in the fourth. Big Train plated another four in the sixth, and after the Aces put up a four-spot of their own in the bottom half, Bethesda plated two more in the seventh and six in the eighth to make it 24-4. This set a new team record for

SAL COLANGELO'S 2019 BIG TRAIN MANAGER AWARDS

Most Valuable Player

Kobe Kato (3B, Arizona)

Most Outstanding Hitter

Matt Thomas (OF, William & Mary)

Most Outstanding Starting Pitcher

Ryan Okuda (LHP, Virginia Tech)

Most Outstanding Relief Pitcher

Chase Lee (RHP, Alabama)

Most Outstanding Defender

Keith Torres (SS, Sacramento State)

Most Outstanding Hustle

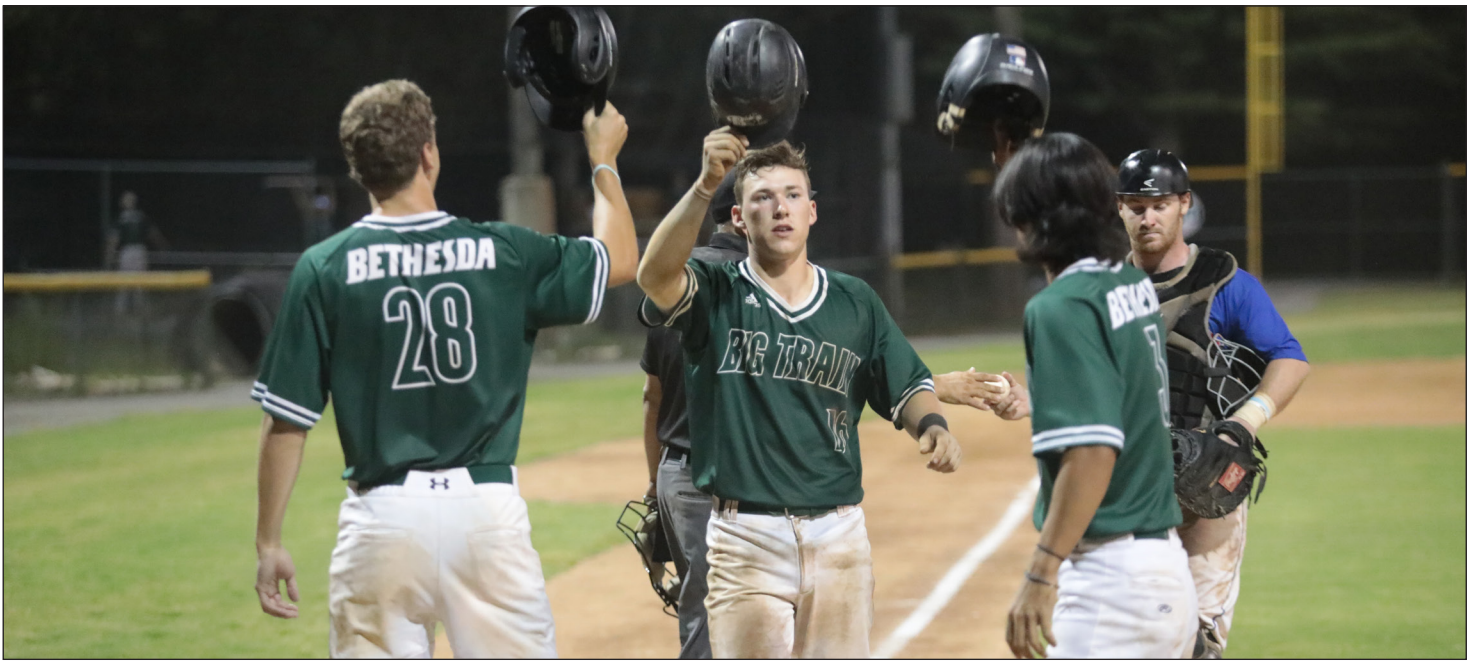
Gio Diaz (2B, St. Mary's CA)

2019 CRCBL STANDINGS

Team	W-L	Pct.	GB
Bethesda Big Train	30-7	.811	—
Silver Spring T-Bolts	20-18	.526	10.5
D.C. Grays	17-19	.472	12.5
FCA Braves	16-20	.444	13.5
Gaithersburg Giants	14-22	.389	15.5
Alexandria Aces	13-24	.354	17

MONTGOMERY CUP STANDINGS

Team	W-L	Pct.	GB
Bethesda Big Train	11-3	.786	—
Silver Spring T-Bolts	5-9	.357	6
Gaithersburg Giants	4-8	.333	6



Matt Thomas (William & Mary; center) celebrates with Christian Jayne (East Carolina; left) and Kobe Kato (Arizona; right) after hitting a three-run homer in Game Three of the LCS. Thomas's home run sparked a six-run eighth inning, leading Big Train to their fourth straight league title. Photo by Niamh Brennan

runs scored in a playoff game.

When all was said and done, every Big Train starter reached base at least twice. Thomas reached seven times on four hits, two walks and a hit by pitch, and Kato and Soderstrom turned in four-hit performances of their own. Holston, Zoellner and Lee each tossed scoreless innings to close out the victory, sending Big Train to the Cal Ripken League Championship Series for the 11th straight season.

LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES

This year, Big Train faced a new foe in the LCS: the Silver Spring-Takoma Thunderbolts. The two teams had faced off with the league title on the line once before, in 2005, when heavy rains led the cross-county rivals to be named co-champions.

The series opened on Monday, July 29, and Big Train sent Michael Bechtold to the mound in game one. The James Madison right-hander turned in a solid start, allowing three runs over five innings. But his teammates couldn't solve his Silver Spring counterpart, Nicholas Charleson, who threw seven shutout innings. Bethesda got a man in scoring position with less than two out in both the second and third but couldn't cash in, and ultimately fell in the series opener, 9-0.

With their backs against the wall, Big Train needed to win two straight to capture their fourth straight CRCBL title. They traveled to Silver Spring on Tuesday for game two, with

one of their aces, Dalton Ponce, on the mound. This time, the bats came alive early, taking a 3-0 lead on RBI hits from Thomas, Hamrock and Diaz. The Thunderbolts fought back, however, plating one in the fourth and two in the fifth to even the score.

Still even in the top of the seventh, Hamrock lined a triple into the right-center field gap, scoring Kato to put Big Train back on top. Later in the frame, Torres executed a squeeze play to bring in Hamrock from third, making it 5-3 Bethesda. Big Train plated another on a wild pitch in the ninth.

Meanwhile, Big Train skipper Sal Colangelo expertly navigated the late innings, using a bullpen trio of Metz, Zoellner and Lee to get the final 14 outs without surrendering a run. Metz turned a crucial double play in the sixth inning to keep the game tied, and Zoellner worked out of a bases-loaded, one-out jam to keep the two-run lead intact in the seventh. Lee closed out the game in the ninth to send the series back to Povich Field for a decisive game three on Wednesday.

Anthony Piccolino took the mound for Big Train in the winner-take-all contest, but when he allowed the first three hitters to reach base, Colangelo pulled him in favor of Okuda. Bethesda left the first inning down 3-0, but Okuda was locked in. The southpaw allowed just one more run over the next five innings, keeping Big Train in the game.

The Bethesda bats struggled to heat up,

though, getting just one man into scoring position through the first five frames, and not tallying a hit until the sixth. Heading into the bottom of the eighth, they trailed 4-0 with just six outs left to mount a rally.

Jayne and Kato led off the frame with a walk and a single, respectively. Then, Thomas launched his first home run of the summer over the scoreboard in left-center, bringing Big Train within one run and sending the crowd into a frenzy. With one out in the frame, Hamrock walked and stole two bases, but was gunned down at home on a fielder's choice, seemingly squashing Big Train's rally to even the score.

But with two away and down by one, Bethesda refused to back down, loading the bases for leadoff man Diaz. The California native delivered, bringing home the tying and go-ahead runs with a single to center. Jayne, the tenth man to bat in the frame, followed with a double, scoring Hunter.

All in all, Big Train plated six in the frame to lead 6-4, and needed just three outs to secure a title. Lee, who had not surrendered an earned run since June, came in and shut down the Thunderbolts in order in the ninth.

When Lucas Donlon swung and missed for the final out, the crowd jumped up in jubilation, Hunter and Lee embraced on the mound, and their teammates poured out onto the field. For the fourth year in a row, the Cal Ripken League championship belonged to the Bethesda Big Train.



Big Train's Best: Games 25 through 11



The 2000 Big Train team at the National Amateur Baseball Federation College World Series in Dayton, Ohio. The team finished second in the tournament, and our panel ranked their semifinal victory over the Maryland Bombers as the 13th greatest game in Big Train history.

By Patrick Sanderson and Erin Byard

Each week on bigtrain.tv, we'll be counting down the top ten greatest games in Big Train history, out of more than 900 total. The countdown began on Thursday, June 11 with Game #10, but we wanted to look back at the 11th through 25th best games in team history, as voted by founder Bruce Adams, manager Sal Colangelo and historian Bill Hickman.

#25 – July 31, 2001: Big Train 7, Germantown Black Rox 3
Big Train rally late to beat Black Rox in '01 season finale

The Big Train, once seven games under .500 after 29 games in the 2001 season, won nine out of their final 11 games. This streak was capped off by a thrilling win in the regular season finale against the Germantown Black Rox, preventing what would have been the Big Train's only losing season in program history.

The Black Rox were rolling off Matt Scheuing's one-hitter through five innings, cruising to a 2-0 lead. **Jim Burt's** (Miami) sixth-inning grand slam proved to be the difference for the Big Train. Even after the Black Rox added a run in the following half

inning, the Big Train never looked back, adding two more runs in the seventh and one in the ninth, closing out a 7-3 victory away from home.

#24 – June 6, 2004: Big Train 5, Reston Hawks 4
Cleckler's eleventh-inning RBI seals opening day win over Reston

Opening Day of the 2004 season at Povich Field saw Bethesda and the Reston Hawks give Big Train fans a treat with an extra-inning thriller. The game quickly fell in the Big Train's favor, jumping on the Hawks' starting pitcher Brian McCullough for four runs in the first three innings while shutting them down at the plate behind Big Train starter **Chris Rhoades'** (Towson) four-hit shutout through seven innings.

However, the bullpen couldn't hold down the 4-0 lead as Reston's four-run eighth inning tied the game. The game went to extras and, with the bases loaded in the bottom of the 11th inning, **Nick Cleckler** (Lipscomb) played hero for the Big Train with a walk-off infield hit to score **Trey Cuevas** (Southern Mississippi), icing the team's first win of the 2004 season in dramatic fashion.

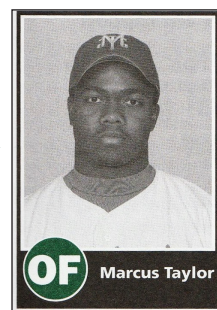
The victory proved to be especially

meaningful later in the summer, as Big Train went on to win the 2004 regular season by one game.

#23 – June 26, 2003: Big Train 7, Herndon Braves 6
Marcus Taylor's three home runs stand out in Big Train win

In a dominating performance at the plate, **Marcus Taylor** (Middle Tennessee State) hit three home runs in an extra-inning Big Train win on the road in Herndon. Taylor knocked in five runs in the 7-6 win. This was the first and only time in Big Train program history that a player hit three home runs in a single game.

Taylor's first of the game came in the second inning as he put Big Train ahead 2-0, crushing a fastball over the right field fence. Then in the fourth inning, Taylor hit a solo home run over the right field fence. However, the Braves caught the Big Train, sending the game to extra innings at 6-6. In the top of the 11th inning, in fitting fashion, Taylor stepped up once more and delivered the go-



GREATEST GAMES 25-11



ahead home run that clinched the Big Train win.

The only other Griffith League player in the wooden bat era to hit three home runs in a game was Mark Teixeira, a future major leaguer.

#22 – June 9, 2000: Big Train 8, Arlington Senators 7

Big Train scores six in bottom of the ninth in comeback win

Big Train hosted the Arlington Senators in this exciting battle for the lead of the Griffith League. Big Train went into the bottom of the ninth down 7-2. The home team gave the crowd at Povich Field a thrilling ninth inning, scoring six runs to come back and defeat the Senators 8-7. This win lit a fire for Big Train, and they proceeded to rattle off eight straight wins.

#21 – July 20, 2006: Big Train 4, Rockville Express 3

Brian Dozier's extra-inning heroics down Rockville

In a mid-July battle between the first place Big Train and second place Rockville Express, just one game out of the top spot, the Povich Field crowd saw a ten-inning battle end with a walk-off single by infielder **Brian Dozier** (Southern Mississippi).

His late heroics snatched a pivotal game in the race for first in the Cal Ripken League. Dozier went 3-for-4 with a walk and that crucial RBI, as the Big Train won 4-3 in a critical game in the final stretch of the season as the team subsequently pulled away to win the regular season title by three games.

#20 – July 20, 2001: Big Train 5, Silver Spring-Takoma Thunderbolts 0

Mark Galvin pitches near-perfect game

Mark Galvin's (Kentucky) stellar performance atop the mound was the difference in this Big Train win.

His outing was near-perfect, throwing a no-hitter and allowing only one walk. The batter who was given the free pass was doubled up in the next play.

Big Train went on to win the game 5-0, besting the Silver Spring-Takoma Thunderbolts at Povich Field.

#19 – June 23, 1999 (Game 2): Big Train 7, Arlington Senators 0

Little's seven-inning no-hitter

Following a loss in game one of a mid-June doubleheader on the road against the Arlington Senators that cost them their status at the top of the league, Big Train's starter **Jeff Little** (Vanderbilt) pitched a seven-inning no-hitter en route to a bounce-back win, propelling Bethesda to the top of the league in the team's inaugural season. The split doubleheader would be their final time at the league's summit in 1999.

#18 – July 20, 2002: Big Train 4, Arlington Senators 3

Big Train defeats Arlington in pitcher's duel

The Big Train and the Arlington Senators, the top two teams in the Griffith League, faced off before a packed crowd of 834 at Povich Field. Starting pitchers **Matt Foster** (Navy) of Bethesda and **Risley St. Germain** of Arlington controlled the game through eight innings. St. Germain held Bethesda to two runs, retiring 17 batters in a row; while Foster allowed no runs and only two hits.

In the top of the ninth, **Gus Hlebovy** (Kent State) relieved Foster after Arlington brought the score to 2-1. Arlington ended the inning up 3-2 after an RBI groundout and a go-ahead RBI single. In the bottom of the ninth, Bethesda tied up the game after **Casey Gilvin** (Morehead State) ripped an RBI double over the first baseman's head. With bases loaded and two outs, Big Train's **Nate Jagers** (Middle Tennessee State) clinched the win with a walk-off RBI single.

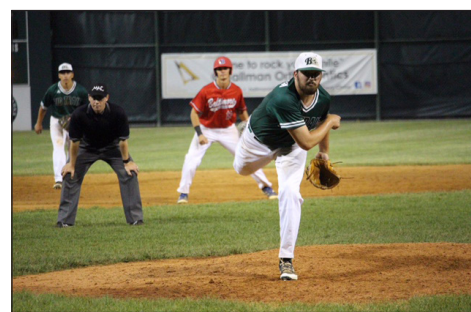
#17 – June 14, 2017: Big Train 5, Baltimore Redbirds 4

Early season battle against Redbirds ends in gutsy Big Train win

Tied 4-4 after six innings against the rival Baltimore Redbirds at Povich Field, outfielder **Matt Green** (Saint Mary's CA) stepped up to deliver a go-ahead RBI double in the bottom of the seventh to give the Big Train a one-run lead heading into the final two frames.

However, the Redbirds responded in the following half-inning, loading the bases with three consecutive batters to put the Big Train in a bases loaded, no-out situation, and calling upon the bullpen to perform damage control in a one-run game. Relief pitcher **Stephen Schoch's** (UMBC) mind was set: take it one batter at a time.

With nerves of steel, the Maryland native



Stephen Schoch pitches. Photo by Allison Druhan.

struck out the first batter on four pitches, and followed with another strikeout for the crucial second out of the inning. Then, Baltimore's **Austin McNicholas**, who had homered earlier in the game, became the third consecutive Redbird to be rung up on strikes to end the inning, stranding the bases loaded. The Big Train closed out the game, winning 5-4 in a tense finish.

#16 – July 28, 2010: Big Train 3, Baltimore Redbirds 2

Big Train rallies to beat Redbirds in opening round of league playoffs

After falling behind 2-0 early, Big Train came back in the eighth inning to narrowly edge out the Redbirds 3-2. The Redbirds' pitchers had given Big Train trouble all night, until **Danny Stienstra** (San Jose State) started a rally, leading off with a single, then advancing to second on a sacrifice bunt. Stienstra scored the tying run on a single from **Ryan Collins** (Mississippi State). Big Train then loaded the bases on two walks and **Nick Schneeberger** (Tulane) drove in the go-ahead run.

Big Train closer **Bryan Hamilton** (UNC Charlotte) dominated the ninth inning, striking out three Redbird hitters to seal the win for Bethesda. Following this exciting win, Big Train went on to win the League Championship, beating the Redbirds once again in the final.

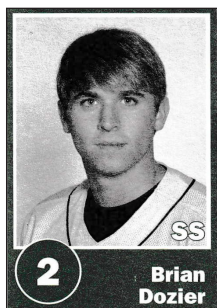
#15 – June 12, 2001: Big Train 8, Reston Hawks 0

Hayhurst fans 18 Hawks in record-breaking performance

An eight-run inning would typically be the main highlight of a game, but not for the Big Train on June 12, 2001 against the Reston Hawks.

Their eight-run sixth inning, which would be the only runs scored all game, was led by **Mike Sweeney's** (Florida)

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July 31, 2005: Big Train 7, Express 4

Extra-inning heroics bring Big Train closer to inaugural CRCBL title

By Noah Ziegler

Top Ten Thursdays is a weekly bigtrain.tv show that highlights the top 10 games in Bethesda Big Train history, as voted on by team historian Bill Hickman, manager Sal Colangelo and founder Bruce Adams. As each game is unveiled, we will bring you a written flashback here in the Big Train Beacon.

Host Alex Drain, with the help of Colangelo and various guests, will break down each game, as those involved discuss what they remember and the significance of each contest. Each episode will serve as a flashback to classic moments in Big Train history, in lieu of actual games during the 2020 summer.

Today, we look at Game #10, from July 31, 2005 against the Rockville Express.

As the inaugural season of the Cal Ripken Collegiate Baseball League came to a close, the Bethesda Big Train found themselves in the midst of teams vying for the 2005 regular season championship. Their path to obtaining the crown was simple: with three games remaining, the Big Train needed three wins.

With each opponent wanting to play spoiler, the Big Train had no room for error. In the penultimate game of the regular season, the Rockville Express nearly put Bethesda's title hopes to bed, but an extra-inning boost on July 31, 2005, inched the Big Train another game closer to the season championship.

Just the day before, in the 14th greatest game in Big Train history, **Jonnie Knoble's** (San Francisco) walk-off RBI in the bottom of the tenth inning lifted Bethesda to a 7-6 victory over the Silver Spring-Takoma Thunderbolts. The final three games weren't going to be easy, and the T-Bolts proved just that.

But as the Big Train battled the Express, one thing became clear: While not every team was challenging for the title, pride was on the line to take down one of the top dogs in the CRCBL's first season. The intense rivalry present between the Express and Big Train added fuel to the fire in what would be an energetic ending.



Derek Caldwell (Rider; left) tossed seven strong innings in the July 31 game against the Express, and Nick Cleckler (Lipscomb; right) drove in the winning run in the tenth inning, sending the Big Train ever closer to the first Cal Ripken League regular season championship. Photos courtesy of Alex Thompson.

"Bethesda Big Train is the New York Yankees of summer baseball," manager **Sal Colangelo** said on Thursday's show. "Everybody wants to play in Bethesda, everybody wants to beat the Big Train, and [Rockville Express] took it to another level. It was exciting every time we played them."

The Big Train came in at 23-15 and started trusted pitcher **Derek Caldwell** (Rider) against the Express, who sat at an even 19-19. After a scoreless first inning, Bethesda broke the deadlock in the top of the second when **Bryan Thomas** (Virginia Tech) scored following a throwing error.

In the fourth, Big Train's **Ken Beamer** (Findlay) and **Greg Lemon** (Salisbury) reached base after each hit singles, and a throwing error by the Rockville pitcher allowed both to score, extending the Bethesda lead to 3-0.

In the bottom frame of the inning, the Express cut the deficit to two, but Bethesda answered with another run of their own in the top of the seventh to make it 4-1. Going into the bottom of the eighth down three, Rockville needed a spark to continue its hopes of playing spoiler. With the bases loaded, Mike Murphy's two-RBI single pulled the Express within one. The upset watch was alive and well.

With runners on first and third, Big Train pitcher **Brett Tidball** (Maryland) picked off the runner at first, but a well-placed hit to left field brought home the tying run, notching the game at four apiece.

Neither team could find the winning run in the ninth, sending the game to extras. Lemon opened the top of the tenth with a

single — his fourth of the game — and then advanced to second via a rare **Rhett Teller** (Saint Leo) sacrifice bunt. After **Andrew Smith** (San Francisco) was intentionally walked, Thomas singled to juice the bases.

"I was praying, because Rhett, I don't think he's ever bunted in his life," Colangelo said. "We still laugh about that. Sometimes as a coach, you go with your gut. I just knew Rhett coming up, if he can get it down, we have a chance to get him over."

Then, the Big Train started rolling.

Nick Cleckler (Lipscomb) drove home Lemon and **Drew Carson** (Southern Mississippi) hit a sac fly to center to score Smith. Thomas made it 7-4 on a passed ball, showing the clutch gene and mental toughness of the Bethesda squad that did everything it needed to obtain the 2005 regular season crown.

Big Train closer **Wyatt Stewart** (Richmond) gave up two singles in the bottom half of the 10th, but eventually earned his sixth save of the season. The win over Rockville meant the Big Train were one win away from the CRCBL season title, with only one game remaining in the regular season.

"We really had a true blue-collar, just work a day, group of guys, tremendous bullpen, and we had a good defense as well," Lemon said. "We really had a great group, a fun group, and I'm glad to see that the sort of foundations we laid in '04 and '05 have been carried on now for 15 years."

This Thursday on bigtrain.tv, Drain will highlight Game #9, which took place in July 2004.



Meet the Big Train Board: Bill Hickman, Historian

By Alex Murphy

Baseball is deeply ingrained in Chicago's identity. With the White Sox on the South side of town and the Cubs nestled in the north, the city has a deep-rooted history and love for the game.

That love of baseball enthralled Bethesda Big Train historian **Bill Hickman**, who attended scores of games at old Comiskey Park and Wrigley Field growing up.

Of the two, it was the Bleacher Creatures and the Cubs that he frequented the most.

"I used to come home from school, drive over to the stadium, probably around the seventh inning or so, and I would just go in because the ushers, by that point, didn't care," Hickman said.

Decades later, he still frequents the baseball diamond, but now along with watching games, he's archiving them.

Hickman has spearheaded a project to rank the Top 25 games in Bethesda Big Train history, which will roll out over the course of this summer. This idea was originally to compile the top ten games, but that list eventually more than doubled in size.

"That project is the essence of Bill Hickman," Big Train President & Founder **Bruce Adams** said. "One of us gets an idea that requires some research and we just say, 'Hey Bill, what about?' and he jumps right in. It's incredible...The projects always grow, and he always responds."

While this most recent project is one of the highlights of this summer, Hickman's history with the Big Train dates back to the organization's inception in 1999.

"It's been since year one, or at least pretty close to that, that I ran into Bill," Big Train manager **Sal Colangelo** said. "He was that guy that when you walked into the ballpark, you would see him every day. He would welcome you to the ballpark, support you, do whatever you needed that you asked. He was very accommodating and that was just Bill."

Hickman started as an usher for Big Train games at Shirley Povich Field, mostly keeping an eye on the fans' safety as originally the foul netting didn't extend past the home plate area.

In 2001, Hickman took over as the Big

Train's first Volunteer Coordinator. Leading a mostly volunteer-run organization, he had a lot of responsibilities and a hefty game day staff of all ages to oversee.

"In those days, it was very different from the volunteering that goes on at Big Train now," Hickman said. "There were up to as many as 40 volunteers used per game, so it was a pretty complex thing."

He manned the position for a decade, and took over as the souvenir program editor, which he has continued on until this day.

Around 2005 or 2006, while serving as Volunteer Coordinator, he first got the idea to keep track of statistics, players and records for the Big Train.

"Bruce had put together binders of each season," Hickman said. "They had box scores and league statistics on paper. He had kept them up in the press box in the glass trophy case. I looked through the binders from the 1999 season through 2005 and that became the core of keeping track of statistics of Big Train for each season."

Once he stepped down as Volunteer Coordinator in 2011, his focus fully turned to his current position as team historian.

Hickman was also the first person to officially track Big Train alumni through their collegiate, minor, major league, international and even post-playing careers.

"That was natural to me," Hickman said. "I've always been interested in who the players were...We are sort of a family in Big Train, and we're proud of what they've done in life. The success doesn't have to come only on the ball field."

Hickman has a knack for spotting players. It comes in part from his involvement with the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR), of which he has been an active member of since 1994, after a brief stint between 1984 and 1985.

Flipping through the pages of the sports section of newspapers growing up, Hickman tried to remember the names of the players.

At SABR, he took that hobby into a full-fledged project, helping develop the organization's Player Image Index as the chair of SABR's Pictorial History Committee.

The committee has catalogued images for about 98 percent of the players who have



Bill Hickman (left) at Povich Field with Big Train Booster Club President Randy Schools.

played in the majors since 1871, from Hall of Famers to those who appeared in just one game.

"Bill's reach is incredibly wide," SABR member and colleague T. Scott Brandon said. "...He was and is a wealth of information and a nurturing leader."

Early on, the index was separate collections from individual members, but once Hickman took the reins, that all changed. It's a testament to the person he has always been as he's continued his tireless research now for the Big Train.

"I had hoped to do something related to baseball and this turned out to be a perfect opportunity," Hickman said.

This winter, Hickman and Adams teamed up to write a piece on the history of collegiate summer baseball in Maryland and Washington D.C. for what was to be a special issue of *The National Pastime*, a SABR magazine, for its 2020 convention in Baltimore.

The convention was postponed to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the issue and article are still scheduled to be published this summer.

"I learned an enormous amount from doing this project," Hickman said. "...We gathered more information than we could share in the article because of the word cap we were under, and we hope there will be future opportunities in which we may provide oral briefings to let interested audiences know even more about the rich history of summer baseball in Maryland and the D.C. area for college-age players."

Hickman has no plans of stopping anytime soon. Each new season brings a youthful jolt back into his life.

It's fitting for what has become a perfect fit: Bill Hickman and the Bethesda Big Train.

Mike Veeck: "Fun is good!"

By Patrick Sanderson

In the debut episode of *Safe at Home Tuesdays*, Bethesda Big Train founder **Bruce Adams** spoke with St. Paul Saints owner **Mike Veeck** about his Hall of Fame father, Bill, and his own exploits in the baseball world.

The younger Veeck's work with the independent St. Paul Saints has influenced minor league entertainment around the country, and helped inspire Adams' vision for Big Train baseball.

"The things that you and I practice, {my father, Bill} really started. The best operators are those who listen to the fans," Veeck said. "He understood innately that the fans are the basis for everything that we do. So, every decision was made based on something that would make them laugh, something that would make them more attentive, and something that would make them more comfortable attending a game."

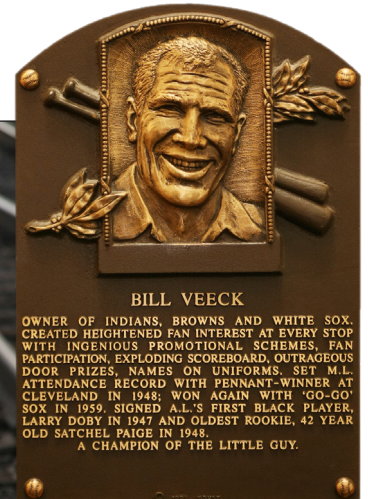
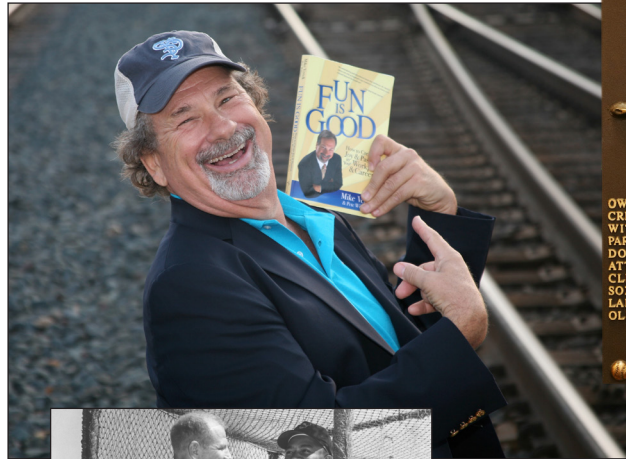
Bill Veeck, who died in 1986, owned several Major League Baseball organizations including the Cleveland Indians, for which he served as owner and president, St. Louis Browns and Chicago White Sox. One of his major accomplishments in his illustrious career was the signing of **Larry Doby**, the second black player to break the color barrier in Major League Baseball, which paved the way for the integration of the American League.

"It was a very serious point the old man was making," explained the younger Veeck. "We have kept them out. They have not been allowed to play. The field was not level."

The signing of Larry Doby, according to Veeck, was based on his dad's commitment "to find the best ballplayers we can.... if we happen to blaze a trail, so much the better."

Further in the interview, Veeck, who was named one of *Baseball America's* most influential people in 2005, dove into his work with the Saints.

He shared some of his favorite promotions in St. Paul, including a record-breaking pillow fight in the middle of the third inning of a game and a mime night which turned disastrous when fans started throwing hot dogs at the mimes. All of these were designed to give fans a unique and memorable experience at the ballpark.



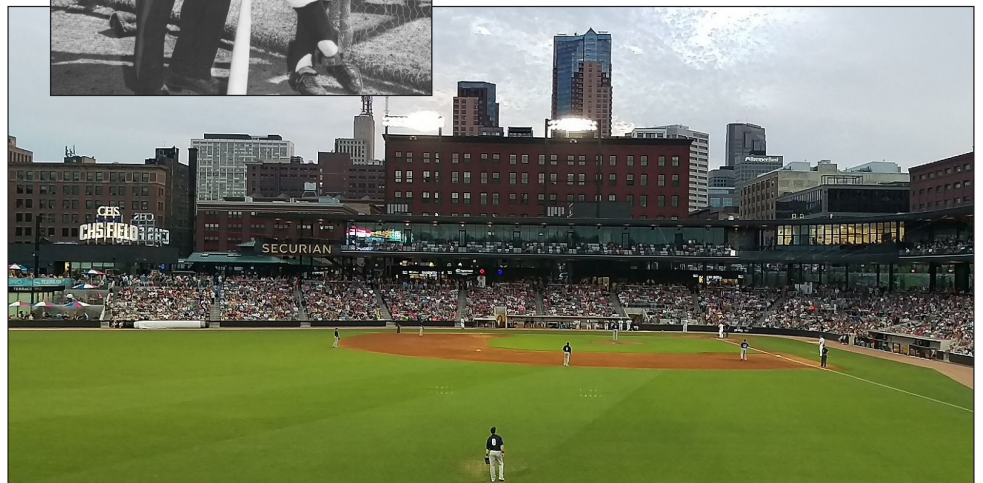
TOP LEFT: Mike Veeck poses with his book, *Fun is Good*.

TOP RIGHT: Bill Veeck's Baseball Hall of Fame plaque.

LEFT: Bill Veeck and Larry Doby. In 1947, Veeck signed Doby to play for the Cleveland Indians, making him the American League's first black player.

BOTTOM: CHS Field, home of Mike Veeck's St. Paul Saints.

Top three photos courtesy of Mike Veeck. Bottom photo via Wikimedia Commons



He highlighted fan-first ownership, revealing how important the relationship between the management and fans is for a sports organization to run a successful operation.

"For 27 years, I have written thank-you notes to every customer, and it's personal," Veeck said. "People are surprised. They ask, 'Don't you have more important things to do with your time?' and I say, 'What could be more important than communicating with my customers who year-after-year support me? Not a single thing.'"

He learned from his father that creating

an enjoyable environment began with understanding that he won't please everyone, but that forming relationships and connecting with fans was a simple way to gauge how to make a night at the ballpark fun for everyone because, like the title of his book and slogan, "fun is good."

"He was a fan," Veeck said of his father, "and the fans felt comfortable with him at the helm because they knew he was one of them."

Visit bigtrain.tv and click "View Full Archives" to see the entire interview with Mike Veeck.

Burleson, Taylor taken in 2020 Draft

By **Matthew Gilpin**

Former Big Train standouts **Alec Burleson** and **Carson Taylor** were selected on Day Two of the 2020 Major League Baseball Draft.

Burleson (Big Train 2018), a two-way star and former Ripken League Most Outstanding Player, was taken by the St. Louis Cardinals in the second round while **Taylor** (BT 2018), a catcher, was selected by the Los Angeles Dodgers in the fourth round.

Big Train manager Sal Colangelo knows firsthand what kind of players Burleson and Taylor are and is excited to see them hit the next level.

"I'm thrilled for those two young men," Colangelo said. "They represent what a true baseball player should represent."

In 2018, his lone summer in Bethesda, Burleson was the top performer on the Big Train and in the entire Cal Ripken League, batting .383 and with a team-leading 10 home runs and 44 RBIs.

Burleson also starred on the mound, striking out 23 batters over 26.1 innings along with a 0.34 ERA en route to a 5-1 record.

Outside of his time in Bethesda, Burleson starred for the East Carolina Pirates. Even with his junior season cut short, Burleson compiled a 13-5 career record with a 3.46 ERA on the mound, and was formidable at the plate, where he hit .341 with 12 home runs and 91 RBIs over his time in Greenville, North Carolina.



Alec Burleson (Big Train 2018, East Carolina). Photo by Niamh Brennan.

Colangelo believes that Burleson's approach to the game and his mindset is what will allow him to have a lengthy professional career.

"One thing about Alec is that he's a competitor," Colangelo said. "When the first pitch is thrown until the last pitch, Alec is ready to roll. He wants to win, he wants to get better, and he's just a quality individual."

Taylor, meanwhile, was steadfast at the plate for Bethesda in 2018, batting .318 with 3 home runs and 41 RBIs while seeing time both behind the plate and in the infield.

After his successful summer with the

Big Train, Taylor appeared in 37 games as a freshman for the Virginia Tech Hokies in 2019, hitting .290 with 2 home runs and 19 RBIs.

Before the COVID-19 Pandemic cut his sophomore season short, Taylor was off to a blistering pace. Through just 16 games, Taylor was batting .431 with 2 home runs and 20 RBIs.

Taylor came to the Big Train out of high school and Colangelo believes that his stint in Bethesda greatly prepared him for the rigors of college baseball and now, professional baseball.

"He was out of his comfort level here since he's from Georgia," Colangelo said. "The game was much faster and here he faced guys that have real pitching repertoires. That really helped him with his approach at the plate as a hitter."

Burleson and Taylor were the only Big Train players to be taken this year. The draft was pared down from its usual 40 rounds to just five this year due to the ongoing financial situation regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

Colangelo knows that both St. Louis and Los Angeles are getting high quality baseball players but he's more excited about the fact that they are getting high quality individuals. "They're both mentally strong," Colangelo said. "They treat baseball as if it's their business."



Carson Taylor (Big Train 2018, Virginia Tech). Photo by Niamh Brennan.

Ripken League cancellation statement

May 4, 2020

In consultation with all Cal Ripken Collegiate Baseball League Franchises and League Officials, the Board of Directors met this evening and voted unanimously to cancel the 2020 summer season. This decision was made after reviewing health official guidance, regional trends as well as state and local directives (that will directly impact League logistics).

"The safety of our League participants, is and will always be our paramount concern," said CRCBL President Brad Rifkin. "Sadly, given the facts associated with COVID-19, we simply cannot jeopardize the health and safety of those affiliated with the CRCBL as well as the local communities we call home."

The CRCBL wants to thank our players, coaches, host families, fans, sponsors and staff for your unwavering commitment. We appreciate your patience as we attempted to explore all contingency plans before making this final decision.

"While we all wanted nothing more than to throw out the first pitch to the 2020 summer season, the CRCBL will now focus our collective efforts on making 2021 our best season to date," said CRCBL Commissioner Jason Woodward.

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

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Fifteenth
SEASON REPORT: 2019

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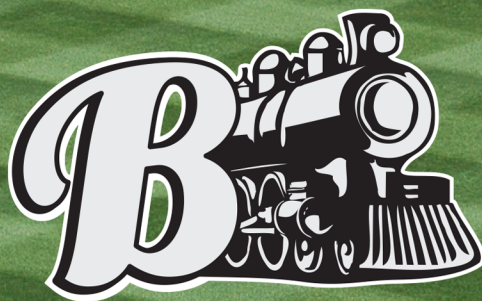
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Contact Chris Rogers at crogs@bigtrain.org for more information!



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All shows streaming at **7 pm ET** on **bigtrain.tv**

The fact that we can't watch baseball at Povich Field does not mean that Big Train baseball will go dark this summer. Acting General Manager Chris Rogers and his team of talented interns will be bringing you quality Big Train entertainment and engagement this summer. Many of you pencil Big Train baseball in on your calendars two or three nights a week for all of June and July. So you can stay safe at home, we will bring you three nights of Big Train programming on our new initiative **bigtrain.tv** each week this summer.

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