



NEWS

Media Contact:
Brooks Hatch
(541) 752-5656

For Immediate Release

www.oregonallstarseries.com

Pitcher Jace Fry of Oregon State and infielder/pitcher Austin Hamilton of Linn-Benton CC look back at their Oregon All-Stars Series experience.

Corvallis, Oregon, April 27, 2012 – Two of the stars from the 2011 Reser's Oregon All-Star Series have both succeeded in their jumps to college baseball, albeit at different levels.

Pitcher Jace Fry of Southridge High School was named the Most Valuable Player and the North's Most Outstanding Pitcher after the 2011 series in Corvallis. He eschewed an offer from the Oakland Athletics to turn professional, enrolled at Oregon State and was one of the premier freshmen in the Pacific-12 Conference this past spring.

Shortstop Austin Hamilton of North Salem, the South's Outstanding Player, enrolled at Linn-Benton Community College in Albany and flourished as a two-way player by becoming one of his team's top pitchers.

Both players have fond memories of the 2011 event, when the North swept the South 10-7, 6-4 and 4-0 in the first series to be staged at Oregon State's Goss Stadium.

"It was one of my favorite experiences as a player so far in my career," Hamilton said. "It was awesome."

Added Fry: "I would definitely recommend it. It was fun, I had a blast so I'd think anybody should do it," given the chance.

A fresh group of Oregon's top Class 6A/5A players convene for this year's series, again at Goss Stadium. They'll clash in a 1 p.m. doubleheader on June 16 and in a noon single game on June 17.

The series is run by the Corvallis Knights of the West Coast League, and co-sponsored by Nike and Reser's Fine Foods.

Last year Fry won the opening game, threw four shutout innings overall, and added four hits to earn Outstanding Player honors.

"I had a lot of fun, I thought it was put together very well," said Fry, a left-hander who was drafted the week before playing in the series. "We got really nice gear and it was a welcoming feeling for all the kids to come to from different places and still be able to play together.

"I didn't know the big names from Southern Oregon, so I got to meet those kids. Seeing all the talent from Medford and other places was eye-opening, they had a lot of talent I didn't know about."

Hamilton had at least one hit in all three games, and four total hits.

"My favorite thing – and it's kind of weird – was feeling like I was being treated as a celebrity," Hamilton said. "They catered to everything; they were so awesome and so nice.

"It was an all-star series, and we were treated [like all-stars]. The whole crew was awesome. I had played against a lot of the guys but had never had the chance to meet them. We had a dinner after the Saturday game and met a bunch of them, and that was a great experience as well."

A fresh group of Oregon's top Class 6A/5A players will receive star treatment at this year's series, set for June 16-17 at Goss Stadium. They will clash in a 1 p.m. doubleheader on June 16 and in a noon single game on June 17.

Fry and Hamilton have progressed to different levels of competition but the intervening year has taught both players that college baseball is a huge step up the ladder from high school ball.

“Physically you can be the same person, but mentally you have to will yourself to do things differently,” Fry explained. “You have to be independent, you have to get your stuff done and you have to be disciplined. You have to grow up.

“The biggest jump on the field is that I demand perfection,” and that’s impossible to achieve in the Pacific-12 Conference, one of the country’s top leagues. “When you do fail you have to keep your confidence. A lot of kids lose their confidence at this level. The hardest thing is to keep your confidence, and to stay riding.”

LBCC plays in the Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges (NWAACC), a wood-bat league with teams throughout Washington and Oregon. It’s not the Pac-12, but NWAACC players regularly move on to four-year schools or professional teams after two seasons.

“It’s a different game, the speed is different,” there is far more strategy, more to know and the players are smarter, Hamilton said. “You’re playing with guys who want to be at this level and want to try and keep moving up. The level of ball has gotten much better.”

Unlike Fry, Hamilton garnered no professional interest and wasn’t recruited by area Division III programs, much less Division I programs such as OSU, Portland or Oregon.

“I don’t know if I had to approach them more, but (four-year schools) didn’t seek me out very much after high school,” Hamilton said. “[LBCC] is a good fit, I’m enjoying getting as much playing time as I am, and we’ve got a great group of guys here.

“I told coach I just wanted to help the team any way I could and if that meant (pitching) that’s what I’d do. I’m enjoying it and just having a blast.”

For more information about the Reser’s Oregon All-Star Series, please visit: www.oregonallstarseries.com

ABOUT THE OREGON ALL-STAR SERIES

The Oregon High School Baseball All-Star Series showcases elite senior players from the state's 5A and 6A classifications over a three-game set held each third weekend in June. The All-Star Series thrived in The Dalles for decades (1971-2007) as the State-Metro Series and celebrated its 50th anniversary in its last year at Quinton Street Ball Park in The Dalles. Bend hosted the 5A Series in 2008 and 2009 while the 6A Series was held in McMinnville those same years before the two classifications combined to play a 5A/6A All-Star Series last year in McMinnville. The Oregon High School Baseball Coaches Association moved the All-Star Series to Corvallis in 2011. A total of 1,099 fans attended last June's series with a single-game high attendance of 677 on Sunday.

ABOUT GOSS STADIUM

Goss Stadium at Coleman Field is home to the two-time national champion Oregon State Beavers and Corvallis Knights of the West Coast League. The Stadium was built in 1998 and expanded in 2008. Summer capacity is 2,930. Goss Stadium features a video scoreboard, the Omaha Club Room and FieldTurf in the infield. The Stadium has hosted three NCAA Super Regionals and four West Coast League Championship Series. For more info on Goss Stadium, visit: www.osubeavers.com/facilities/goss-stadium.html.

ABOUT THE CORVALLIS KNIGHTS

The Corvallis Knights are a member of the nine-team wood-bat West Coast League. The club is dedicated to accelerating prospect development, bettering its community and delivering affordable family entertainment. Based in Corvallis, the team plays June through August at Goss Stadium on the campus of Oregon State University. Established in 1990, the club relocated to Corvallis in 2007. The team features top collegiate players and a full slate of entertaining promotions including fireworks. For more info on the Knights, visit: www.corvallisknights.com.

ABOUT THE WEST COAST LEAGUE

The West Coast League, established in 2005, is the west's premier summer collegiate wood-bat league. Member teams include the Bellingham Bells, Bend Elks, Corvallis Knights, Cowlitz Black Bears, Kelowna Falcons, Kitsap BlueJackets, Klamath Falls Gems, Walla Walla Sweets and Wenatchee AppleSox. Teams feature top players from schools from major conferences like the Pac-10, Big West and Big 12. The league's 54-game 2012 regular season opens June 1 and concludes August 9. For more info on the West Coast League, visit: www.wccbl.com.

ABOUT CORVALLIS

Corvallis, Oregon, population 51,110, is in the heart of the Willamette Valley. Home to Oregon State University, it is the quintessential college town. Wide streets, sheltered by ancient trees, red brick or white masonry buildings and its location along the Willamette River make Corvallis a handsome city. Corvallis is close to the Coast Range and wildlife areas. The city is within 90 minutes of the beach, the Siuslaw National Forest and Portland. For more info on Corvallis, visit: www.visitcorvallis.com.