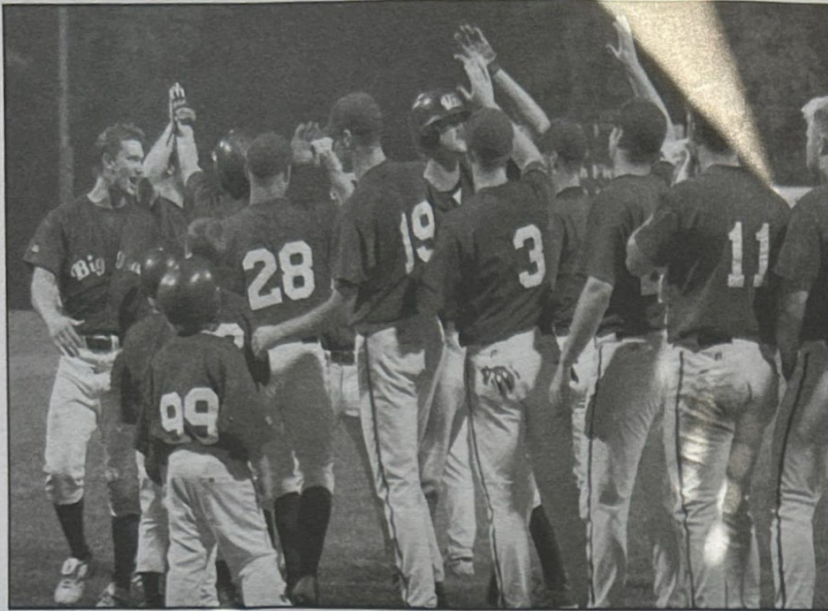




Season Re-Cap **BIG TRAIN '05**

2005 Cal Ripken, Senior League Inaugural Regular Season Champs



The opening night of the Inaugural Season of the Cal Ripken, Sr. Collegiate Baseball League on June 10, 2005 featured the reigning All-American Amateur Baseball Association (AAABA) champion Youse's Maryland Orioles against the 2004 Clark Griffith Collegiate Baseball League champion Bethesda Big Train. Nearly 700 fans packed Shirley Povich Field to see the Orioles win 4-0 and pick up most of the important firsts in the Cal Senior League's history – the first hit, run, home run, and win.

The Maryland Redbirds defeated the Orioles three times the first weekend and raced to an early season lead with a record of 6-2. At the other end of the standings after the first eight games stood the Bethesda Big Train at 3-5. But then the Big Train got on track, winning the next nine games to jump from last to first place by June 30. Big Train hurler Adam Redd (Virginia Tech) shut out the Orioles and beat the Redbirds to pick up two of the wins in Bethesda's streak. Nick Cleckler (Jacksonville State) had a ten-game hit streak for the Big Train. The Redbirds dropped six of eight to allow both the Orioles and Big Train to pass them in the standings.

At the halfway point of the league's regular season, the Big Train at 14-6 held a two game margin over the 12-8 Orioles. But in the first week of July, the Big Train split six games and allowed the Orioles, winners of five of six, to pull almost even. With the Big Train up by just one-half game, it was time for another Friday night Povich Field showdown between the league's heavyweights. On an uncharacteristically crisp and cool July night, two of the league's unbeaten pitchers -- the Orioles' Bernard Robert and Big Train's Derek Caldwell (Rider) -- treated a full house to a two hour pitching clinic. A ninth inning home run by Danny Williams gave the Orioles a 1-0 win and first place.

The Big Train pounded the Redbirds the next day to retake the league lead as the Thunderbolts beat the Orioles. Heavy rains played havoc with the schedule for four days in mid-July. When the rains subsided, the Big Train lost three in a row and, after a break for the All-Star Game at Ripken Stadium in Aberdeen, a fourth to fall

two games behind the Orioles with ten games left in the regular season.

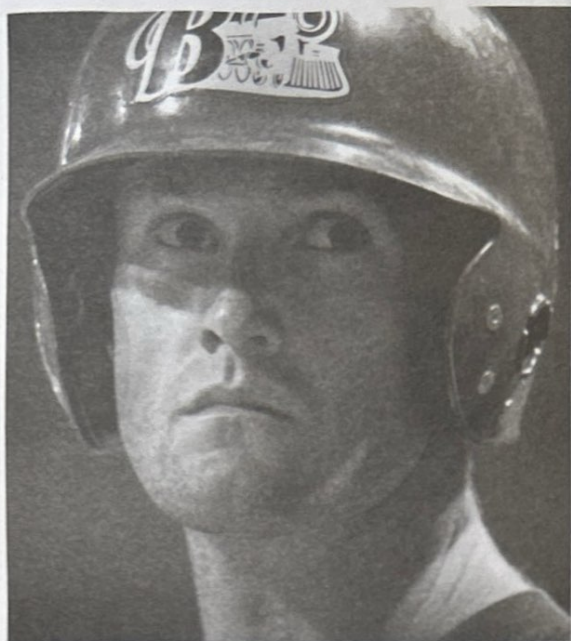
On Friday, July 22, the Orioles returned to Povich Field with a one game margin that increased to two as Bernard Robert maintained his mastery over the Big Train, winning the front half of a doubleheader 2-1. With his team's back against the wall, Big Train starter Dustin Pease (Mount St. Mary's) recorded a complete game 2-0 shut out to pull Bethesda back within one game with seven left to play.

Playing three doubleheaders in four days to make-up the rainouts of mid-July and be able to travel to Zanesville, Ohio to begin defense of their AAABA crown, the Orioles won four games and lost three. The Big Train knew what they needed to do – win all three of their remaining regular season games. The cardiac kids made it interesting. First up were the Thunderbolts on Saturday, July 30. A standing-room-only crowd at Povich Field was treated to a thriller as the Big Train took an early lead, fell behind, caught up, fell behind again, and knotted the score at six with two runs in the bottom of the eighth. In the bottom of the tenth, the T'Bolts walked the Big Train's speedster Nick Cleckler. But two Bethesda batters couldn't advance him so, with two out, Cleckler stole second. Jonnie Knoble (San Francisco) slashed a walk-off base hit down the rightfield line scoring Cleckler to pull the Big Train into a tie for first place.

2005 Final Regular Season Standings

| | W | L | PCT | GB |
|--------------------------|----|----|------|-----|
| Bethesda Big Train | 25 | 15 | .625 | — |
| Youse's Maryland Orioles | 24 | 16 | .600 | 1 |
| Rockville Express | 19 | 20 | .487 | 5.5 |
| SS-T Thunderbolts | 18 | 19 | .486 | 5.5 |
| College Park Bombers | 17 | 23 | .425 | 8 |
| Maryland Redbirds | 14 | 24 | .368 | 10 |

Next up were the red hot Rockville Express who had won five in a row to jump from last place to third. As Monday afternoon turned to Monday night in Rockville, the Express scored three times in the eighth but left a runner stranded on third in the bottom of the ninth to send the game to overtime with the light growing dim and possibilities for additional innings growing slim. But with his fourth hit of the day by Greg Lemon (Salisbury), a sacrifice bunt, an intentional walk, a smash back at the pitcher, a swinging bunt, a sacrifice



fly, and a passed ball, the Big Train scored three to win again in the tenth. The next night, in front of another standing-room-only crowd at Povich Field, the Big Train defeated the Bombers 4-0 to capture the Inaugural Regular Season crown of the Cal Ripken, Sr. Collegiate Baseball League with a final record of 25-15.

In the regular season, the Big Train pitching staff led the league in team ERA (2.10) and strikeouts (270). Wyatt Stewart (Richmond) led the league in saves with six. Opponents hit just .206 off Bethesda pitchers. The Big Train edged the Thunderbolts for best fielding percentage (.966). The Big Train offense scored the most runs (205) and Greg Lemon led the league in walks with 24.

With Youse's Orioles in Johnstown, PA successfully defending its AAABA crown, Jonnie Knoble went 3-for-5 to lead the Big Train to victory over the College Park Bombers 8-6 in Bethesda's first CRSL playoff game. The next night, the Silver Spring-Takoma Thunderbolts crushed Bethesda 9-1 at Blair Stadium to gain a significant advantage in the double elimination League Championship Series. Back at Povich Field, Bethesda beat College Park 10-1 to force a rematch with Silver Spring. Facing elimination at Blair Stadium, the Big Train won a 3-0 rain-shortened victory over the T-Bolts at Blair Stadium as Derek Caldwell allowed just two hits and Jonnie Knoble made a game saving running catch. Heavy rains washed out the championship game and Bethesda and Silver Spring were declared co-champions.

Bethesda Big Train 2005 Season Awards

Big Train MVP

Greg Lemon (*Salisbury*)

Big Train Most Outstanding Pitcher

Adam Redd
(*Virginia Tech*)

Big Train Most Outstanding Fielder

Nick Cleckler (*Jacksonville State*)

Big Train Leadership Awards

Jonnie Knoble (*San Francisco*)
Andrew Smith (*San Francisco*)

CRSL 2005 All-League Team

OF Jonnie Knoble (*San Francisco*)
2B Greg Lemon (*Salisbury*)
3B Bryan Thomas (*Virginia Tech*)

CRSL League Championship Series Co-MVP

Jonnie Knoble (*San Francisco*)

CRSL All-Star Game Co-MVP

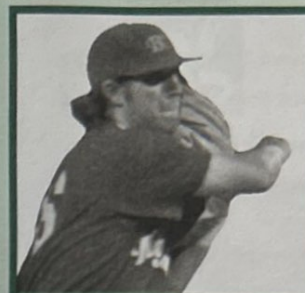
Greg Lemon (*Salisbury*)

CRSL Pitcher of the Week

Adam Redd (*Virginia Tech*) (June 21-26)
Dustin Pease (*Mount St. Mary's*) (July 19-24)

CRSL Hitter of the Week

Jonnie Knoble (*San Francisco*) (July 19-24)



**Greg Lemon
MVP**

Bethesda Big Train MVPs

| | |
|-------------|--|
| 1999 | Gregg Davies, 1B/OF, Towson |
| 2000 | Pat Boran, 3B/SS, Princeton |
| 2001 | Casey Gilvin, OF, Kentucky/Morehead State |
| 2002 | Byron Binda, RHP, Coastal Carolina Gus Hlebovy, RHP, Kent State |
| 2003 | Mike Costanzo, 3B/RHP, Coastal Carolina |
| 2004 | Jonnie Knoble, CF, San Francisco Greg Lemon, 2B, Salisbury |
| 2005 | Greg Lemon, 2B, Salisbury |