

BETHESDA BIG TRAIN



2007 Season Recap



Bert Smith (Big Train/Jacksonville State) sparked the Big Train all season with his nifty glove work and full-throttle offense.

The 2007 Big Train season started off inauspiciously when the opening night game was rained out, and the team lost more games than they won in the first two weeks of the season. Three impressive win streaks of six, five, and four games in late June and in July propelled the team to the brink of a third straight regular season championship. But it was not to be as the Big Train dropped back-to-back doubleheaders on the final weekend to finish the regular season at 24-18, three games behind the co-champion Orioles and Express. In August, the Big Train fell one run short of a championship in the Cal Ripken, Sr. Collegiate Baseball League playoffs. More than 15,000 fans attended Big Train games at Shirley Povich as the team averaged more than 700 fans for league home games for the first time.

On Saturday June 9, a standing-room-only crowd of 795 saw the Big Train start the season with a 13 hit 9-3 romp over our cross-county rivals, the Silver Spring-Takoma Thunderbolts. Brian Anderson (San Francisco) picked up the win. Centerfielder Pat Minogue (Northern Illinois) and designated hitter Andrew Foster (Bowling Green) led the Bethesda attack with three RBIs each. The team lost away games to the College Park Bombers and Youse's Orioles before getting back to .500 with a 5-3 road come-from-behind win over the Maryland Redbirds sparked by a two run RBI in the eighth inning by catcher Travis Owens (Bowling Green) and a solid performance by relief pitcher Quinn Ewert (Michigan State). On Thursday June 14, the Big Train returned home and Jimmy Saris (Georgetown), Brian Anderson, and Collin Cargill (Southern Mississippi) treated the crowd of 722 to a pitching clinic, blanking the Redbirds in a 2-0 win. The Redbirds revenge the loss the next night at Joe Cannon Stadium as the Big Train finished the first week of league play at 3-3.

On Saturday June 16, Bethesda fell behind the Herndon Braves 4-0 but rallied to win 6-5. The next night, the team celebrated Father's Day on a perfect June night. But the Big Train was less than perfect and suffered a rare blow-out loss, 16-3, to the Rockville Express. A Monday night 11-inning loss to Herndon on the road dropped Bethesda below .500 for one of the few times in franchise history, just one game out of the league cellar. A six game win streak catapulted the team into second place just two games behind Youse's Orioles. The win streak began on Wednesday June 20 with a 3-2 victory over the Orioles on the road behind an outstanding pitching performance by Jimmy Saris and an RBI triple by

catcher Chance Harst (Southern Mississippi). The next night, Bethesda revenge the June 17 blowout by besting the Express 10-3 at Knights Field as starter Ben Tootle (Jacksonville State) notched his second win. Povich Field was packed with 962 fans for a Saturday doubleheader, and the players responded with a 9-1 and 10-2 sweep. On Sunday, Montgomery County native Connor Hoehn (St. John's CHS/Alabama) picked up his first career Big Train win as the Train put a 7 spot on the board in the seventh to defeat the Thunderbolts 14-0. On Monday June 18, Jimmy Saris carried a no-hitter into the fifth inning and picked up his third win of the season, 3-0 over the Herndon Braves. Amazingly, all three Bethesda runs were scored on wild pitches.

On Tuesday night June 26 when the Big Train hosted the United States Military All-Stars, it felt like a reunion. On the mound for the USA was Jahsan Page who was a Big Train hurler in 2001 and 2002. Page and his All-Stars took a 3-0 early lead, but the Big Train rallied for an 8-3 victory.

The Big Train fell into a mid-season funk losing four of its next five games. The lone win was a 3-0 victory by Montgomery County native Keith Moreland (UNC Charlotte) on the road over the Rockville Express. Two losses to the sixth-place College Park Bombers helped drop the Big Train record to 11-9, a full five games behind the front running Orioles. The Rockville Express at 7-9 were seven games behind the Orioles at the Fourth of July break.

With many family members in town from across the country for our annual Family Weekend, the Big Train won three games in a row at Povich Field. On Thursday July 5, reliever Brett Smalley (Middle Tennessee State) picked up the win over Herndon. The highlight of the weekend was a 5-4 victory over the Orioles on Saturday July 7 in front of a standing-room-only crowd of 970. The Orioles took a 3-0 lead in the first, but a two run double by Chris Duffy (Central Florida) in the second and an RBI double by Chance Harst in the third put the Train ahead 4-3. Pitcher Keith Moreland shut the Orioles down from the second through the fifth and notched another big win. After sweeping the Thunderbolts 9-4 and 4-2 on Sunday at Silver Spring's Montgomery Blair Stadium, the Big Train were back within two games of the Orioles at 16-9. Second baseman Bert Smith (Jacksonville State), the Big Train's spark plug all season, scored four times from the leadoff position in the Sunday sweep.

Another painful loss, 4-3 in 11 innings, to the College Park Bombers at the University of Maryland's Shipley Field on

2007 Final Regular Season Standings

	W	L	Pct	GB
Youse's Maryland Orioles	26	14	.650	-
Rockville Express	27	15	.643	-
Bethesda Big Train	24	18	.571	3
Silver Spring-Takoma Thunderbolts	19	19	.500	6
Herndon Braves	19	22	.463	7.5
College Park Bombers	15	24	.385	10.5
Maryland Redbirds	12	30	.286	14

Monday July 9 halted the momentum. Jon Karcich (Santa Clara) and Clay Whittemore (Jacksonville State) each pounded out four hits on Tuesday July 10 to power a 17-6 road rout of the Rockville Express. A 6-5 loss to Herndon on the road and a 3-2 win over Silver Spring at Povich Field set the stage for a doubleheader with the first place Orioles on Saturday July 14. Friday the 13th had proven unlucky for the visiting T-bolts. The 892 Big Train fans saw Bethesda win on a botched pick-off play in the bottom of the eighth. The next night, the Big Train drew within one game of the Orioles by winning game one 5-4 by scoring twice in the bottom of the tenth inning with RBI singles by Steven Leach (Jacksonville State) and Eli Boike (Michigan State). But with 921 fans hoping to see the Big Train grab a share of first place, the Orioles scored three runs in the second inning and held on for a 4-1 win.

The last place Redbirds surprised the Big Train with a grand slam home run in the bottom of the eighth for a 9-8 win on Monday July 16. Brian Anderson won another big victory on Tuesday night July 17 at Povich Field, but not without some last minute excitement. The Big Train took a 2-1 lead into the top of the ninth. Submarine hurler Collin Cargill (Southern Mississippi) worked his way out of a bases loaded, nobody out pickle to record a save and Bethesda's 20th win. For the fourth time in the 2007 season, the Big Train went to Shipley Field and for the fourth time lost to the College Park Bombers. The 11-19 Bombers bested the 20-12 Big Train 6-5 on an unearned run in the seventh inning.

On Monday July 23, ten Big Train players and Manager Sal Colangelo traveled north to Ripken Stadium in Aberdeen, Maryland where 2,406 fans watched the West All-Stars beat the East All-Stars 6-0 in a game cablecast by Mid-Atlantic Sports Network (MASN). Brian Anderson was the winning pitcher striking out the side in the second inning. West starter Keith Moreland, Matt Heiserman (Santa Clara), and Mitch Herold (Central Florida) each pitched a scoreless inning to contribute to the shutout win.

Bethesda began the season's last week cruising to four victories at Povich Field - 5-0, 9-1, 11-2, and 7-2 - to catch the Orioles at 24-14. Evan Frederickson (Virginia Tech) struck out 9 of the 16 batters he faced to get a 5-0 win over the Thunderbolts on Saturday July 21. Mitch Herold picked up his third win of the season without a loss besting the Herndon Braves 7-2 on Thursday July 26. But dreams of a third consecutive Cal Ripken, Sr. Collegiate Baseball League regular season championship died on Friday July 27 as the Orioles swept a doubleheader, 7-2 and 10-6. With six runs in the top of the second inning of game one, the Orioles made it clear that they would not let the Big Train capture a third straight title. The next afternoon, Bethesda traveled to Rockville for a doubleheader with the red hot Express that had overcome a slow start to pull within two games of the Orioles (winning 21 of their last 27 games, including their final nine games). Bethesda took a 2-0 lead into the home half of the final inning on a Evan Friedland home run, but the bullpen couldn't hold the lead and the Express plated three runs for the victory. Playing their fourth game in 24 hours, the Big Train players fell

behind quickly and lost 7-0 in the nightcap to end the season at 24-18 in third place three games out of first place. The sweep allowed the Express to tie the Big Train for the Gazette's Montgomery Cup with records of 9-5. The Thunderbolts finished the competition among the Montgomery County-based teams at 4-10.

With the Orioles opting to defend their national AAABA championship in Johnstown, PA, the streaking Rockville Express held the number one seed in the CRSL playoffs. The last place Redbirds ended the Express winning streak with a 2-1 victory on Wednesday August 1. The Big Train edged the Herndon Braves 3-2 behind the pitching of Keith Moreland and Brian Anderson and a first inning two run home run by Jon Karcich. After knocking off the high-flying Express in the afternoon, the Redbirds scored 7 runs in the top of the first inning to take a commanding lead in the night's semifinal game. An amazing relief appearance by Matt Hiserman, including 16 strikeouts in 8 plus innings, held the Redbirds in check and a walk-off RBI single by Stephen Leach in the bottom of the eleventh gave the Big Train an 8-7 victory and a berth in the championship game. On August 2, the Express beat the Redbirds 7-5 and then pounded the Big Train 9-0 in the night game to force a final game for the CRSL championship on Friday August 3 at Povich Field. The Big Train built a 3-1 lead over the Express by the fifth inning on RBIs by Clay Whittemore and Eric Roof (Michigan State). A two run home run by Rockville's catcher triggered a three run sixth inning, and the Express held on for a 4-3 win.

At season's end, Big Train Manager Sal Colangelo named second baseman Bert Smith the team's Most Valuable Player. "Bert was electrifying, hardworking and one of the most exciting players I saw all summer. Each night he set the tone, and the Big Train rolled as he went. In the field, on the base paths, and at the plate he was our catalyst."



2007 MVP
Bert Smith

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
- 2006 Matt Long, OF, Santa Clara
- 2007 Bert Smith, 2B, Jacksonville State

2007 Big Train Honors

BIG TRAIN MVP

BERT SMITH (JACKSONVILLE STATE)

MOST OUTSTANDING PITCHERS

BRIAN ANDERSON (SAN FRANCISCO)

KEITH MORELAND (UNC CHARLOTTE)

MOST OUTSTANDING RELIEF PITCHER

MATT HISERMAN (SANTA CLARA)

MOST OUTSTANDING HITTER

JON KARCICH (SANTA CLARA)

MOST OUTSTANDING FIELDER

EVAN FRIEDLAND (MICHIGAN STATE)

CRSL 2007 ALL-LEAGUE TEAM

INF BERT SMITH (JACKSONVILLE STATE)

INF JON KARCICH (SANTA CLARA)

P BRIAN ANDERSON (SAN FRANCISCO)

CRSL 2007 LEAGUE LEADERS

RUNS - BERT SMITH (JACKSONVILLE STATE), 39*

HITS - BERT SMITH (JACKSONVILLE STATE), 49

SB - BERT SMITH (JACKSONVILLE STATE), 20

WALKS - CHANCE HARST (SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI) 28

* CRSL ALL-TIME RECORD

BASEBALL AMERICA'S TOP TEN CRSL PROSPECTS

#5 CONNOR HOEHN (ALABAMA)

#6 BRIAN ANDERSON (SAN FRANCISCO)

#8 JON KARCICH (SANTA CLARA)

#10 EVAN FREDERICKSON (VIRGINIA TECH/SAN FRANCISCO)

CRSL HITTERS OF THE WEEK

JUNE 19 - ANDREW FOSTER (BOWLING GREEN)

JULY 3 - BERT SMITH (JACKSONVILLE STATE)

JULY 11 - JON KARCICH (SANTA CLARA) &

PAT MINOGUE (NORTHERN ILLINOIS)