



# 2022 SEASON RECAP



Having captured the League Championship for five straight years, the Big Train entered the 2022 season looking forward to another banner year. It turned out to be a season in which Bethesda and the Alexandria Aces locked horns for dominance over the rest of the Cal Ripken Sr. Collegiate Baseball League. The two teams finished the regular season with identical 26-10 records, but the nod went to the Aces for first place because they prevailed in head-to-head competition. In the playoffs, the Aces swept the Big Train, winning two close games to capture the League championship. Big Train took the Montgomery Cup trophy, which goes to the best of the Ripken League teams based in Montgomery County, for the 18<sup>th</sup> time out of 21 years of competition.



## Regular Season

The Big Train got off to a hot start by winning its first four contests. The Big Train started its season on June 7, when they edged the Silver Spring-Takoma Thunderbolts 3-2 with a two-run rally in the ninth inning. Peyton Schultze (Long Beach State) hit a walk-off single with two outs to drive in Sean Lane (Maryland). Émilien Pitre (Kentucky), who would lead the team in batting for the year, went 2 for 4 and drove in the other two runs. Another 3-2 victory by the Big Train ensued on June 9. This time the losers were the Cropdusters, the League's newest team based in Olney. The key play in this game occurred when T.J. Rogers (Austin Peay State) scored as the Cropduster shortstop booted a ball off the bat of Clay Wargo in the eighth inning to give the Big Train a 3-1 lead. Connor Ball (Alabama) hurled the first three innings for Big Train and gave up only one hit and no runs. Erik Ritchie (East Carolina) pitched the next two innings. He registered no hit ball and was credited with the win. On June 10, Bethesda managed only four hits against the D.C. Grays, but won the game 5-2, partly with the help of two errors by their opponents. Ryan Sanders (St. Mary's - CA) started for the Big Train and pitched five innings, yielding only one run. Kai Burdick (San Francisco) earned the win for his two innings of hurling. Andrew Johnson (Maryland) struck out five in two innings and did not give up a run.

On June 11, the Big Train and the Aces faced off in a pitchers' duel at Povich Field. The Aces had only one hit; Big Train but two. The Aces held a 1-0 lead until the ninth inning. In the last of the ninth, the Aces imploded and the Big Train came from behind to win the game without achieving a hit. The first batter, Baylor Cobb (Louisiana Tech) walked. The second batter, Trey Winget (St. Mary's - CA), was hit by a pitch. With the third batter, Colton Hegwood (Louisiana Tech) at the plate, a passed ball allowed Cobb and Winget to advance. Hegwood struck out. Jason Schiavone (James Madison) walked to load the bases. Before the next batter could take any action, the Aces hurler threw a wild pitch that scored both Cobb and Winget, bringing an end to the game.

The first Big Train loss came on June 12 against the Gaithersburg Giants, 6-3. Then came another winning streak, this time for eight games. On June 14, it was a 7-6 victory over the Braves, thanks to four hits and 10 walks, plus three Braves' errors. The next three games were runaways. It was 11-2 over the Thunderbolts, 12-0 over the Grays, and 12-0 against the Giants. In that last game, which was on June 18, Luke Nowak (East Carolina) made his Big Train debut and went 2 for 4, while Nick Del Prado (Florida Atlantic) hurled five innings of one-hit ball and chalked up the win. In the June 19 game against the Thunderbolts, Big Train's fast four-run start in the first inning was the key to the game. Peyton Schultze drove in two with a double and Baylor Cobb drove in the other two with a single. The final score was 6-4. Jordan Little (East Carolina) earned the save with two shutout innings. Colby Frieda (Kentucky) had hurled two innings of shutout ball earlier in the game. On June 21, Big Train conquered the Aces for the second time with a 7-5 win. Peyton Schultze was the hero, driving in four runs. Ryan Sanders got the win, going five innings, while yielding only one run. On June 23, Big Train edged the Giants, 3-1. Brayden Jones (Mississippi) started and hurled five innings, while giving up only one hit and one run. The Big Train's winning streak ended with a 13-4 loss to the Aces on June 25.

On June 26, the Big Train edged the Grays 4-3. Outfielder D. M. Jefferson (Notre Dame) went 3 for 4 and homered. Kade Woods (Alabama) started the game and pitched 1.2 innings of shutout





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ball. Kai Burdick hurled three innings of shutout ball in relief and earned the win.

On June 27, the Big Train traveled to South County to take on the Braves for a partial doubleheader. First, in a resumption of a game that began on June 8, Bethesda won 10-3, with Clay Wargo (Coastal Carolina) leading the way. Wargo went 2 for 5 and drove in 5 runs. Evan Marcinko (UNC Wilmington) earned the win, hurling 1.2 innings in relief without yielding a run. Jordan Little was awarded a save for his two innings of shutout ball. In the nightcap, the Braves shut out Big Train, 2-0.

On June 28, Ryan Sanders pitched a shutout beauty for six innings, and Luke Baker (Dayton) earned the save as Big Train squelched the Thunderbolts on a two-hitter, 5-3. On June 30, the Big Train and Cropdusters played the rarely seen partial triple-header. In the first game, Big Train beat the Cropdusters, 8-6, and Colton Hegwood went 2 for 5 with one RBI. Sean Lane also had an impressive game, going 3 for 4 and homering. In the second game, which was the resumption of a previously suspended game, the Cropdusters prevailed 15-12. In the third game, Big Train won 3-0. Nick Del Prado pitched five innings and only gave up one hit. Merritt Beeker (East Carolina) hurled the other shutout four innings and struck out seven.

July began unhappily with a 9-3 loss to the Aces on the 1<sup>st</sup>. The Big Train returned to winning ways with a 3-2 squeaker over the Grays on July 3. Bryce Greenly (Delaware) scored the winning run when D.M.

Jefferson drew a walk with the bases loaded in the eighth inning. After a break for the Fourth of July, Big Train overwhelmed the Thunderbolts, 13-1, on July 7. Sean Lane scored three runs, while Warren Holzemer (Virginia Tech) and Jason Schiavone tallied two each. Connor Ball started and allowed only one hit and no runs over five innings. The next day, Bethesda shut out the Braves 7-0, mainly behind the pitching of Nick Del Prado. Jackson Ritchey (Virginia Tech) also hurled an impressive

two innings, striking out six batters. On July 10, the Grays topped Big Train, 6-1. Big Train rebounded the next day with a dominant 15-5 win over the Cropdusters. The batting stars were Luke Nowak, who went 5 for 7, Garrett Felix (Nicholls State), who scored three runs, John Kramer (Mississippi), who went 3 for 3, and Trey Winget, who drove in three runs. Brandon Clarke (Alabama) earned the win.

On July 13, Big Train handily took both ends of a double-header against the Giants. With Peyton Schultze going 4 for 4 and driving in four runs, the Big Train triumphed 11-1 in the first game, using five pitchers to keep the Giants at bay. In the nightcap, Schultze drove in another three runs and Émilien Pitre went 3 for 4, as the Big Train posted a 7-1 victory. Ryan Sanders was credited with the win, as he pitched six innings while yielding just the one run and one hit. On July 15, Big Train played another double-header, but this time they came up short in both games losing to the Braves, 8-1 and 6-2. They recovered on July 16 by topping the Cropdusters, 6-3. Four of the six Big Train runs were driven in by Peyton Schultze and John Kramer. Merritt Beeker earned the win by hurling 4.1 relief innings of shutout ball. The next day, the Big Train edged the Thunderbolts, 6-4. Émilien Pitre went 2 for 4 and drew a walk, while driving in two runs. Luke Baker earned the win by pitching four innings and yielding only one run. On July 19, the Big Train won again, this time by 8-4 over the Giants. The big blow in the game was a three-run homer by John Kramer in the top of the seventh inning.

July 21 brought end of season drama with the League's two top teams facing off in a double-header at Povich Field. The Big Train started the day with the better overall record, but the Aces had been on a hot streak and had a chance to catch up. The day did not go well for the Big Train. The Aces prevailed in both seven-inning games, 5-4 and 13-7. The first game was particularly tough because the Big Train took a 4-3 lead into the last of the seventh

## 2022 Final Regular Season CRSCBL Standings

|                     | W-L   | %    | GB |
|---------------------|-------|------|----|
| Alexandria Aces     | 26-10 | .722 | -- |
| Bethesda Big Train  | 26-10 | .722 | -- |
| Gaithersburg Giants | 17-19 | .472 | 9  |
| Cropdusters         | 16-20 | .444 | 10 |
| Metro SOCO Braves   | 15-21 | .417 | 11 |
| D.C. Grays          | 15-21 | .417 |    |
| SS-T Thunderbolts   | 11-25 | .306 | 15 |

## 2022 Montgomery Cup Standings

|                     | W-L  | %    | GB   |
|---------------------|------|------|------|
| Bethesda Big Train  | 16-2 | .889 | --   |
| Cropdusters         | 9-9  | .500 | 7    |
| Gaithersburg Giants | 7-10 | .412 | 8.5  |
| SS-T Thunderbolts   | 3-14 | .176 | 12.5 |

## Sal Colangelo's 2022 Big Train Manager's Awards

### Most Valuable Player

Nick Del Prado (Florida Atlantic)

### Most Outstanding Hitter

Luke Nowak (East Carolina)

### Most Outstanding Starting Pitcher

Ryan Sanders (St. Mary's-CA)

### Most Outstanding Relief Pitcher

Jordan Little (East Carolina)

### Most Outstanding Defender

Jason Schiavone (James Madison)

### Golden Spikes Award

Émilien Pitre (Kentucky)



## CRSCBL Most Outstanding Pitcher

Nick Del Prado



Congratulations to Bethesda Big Train starting pitcher Nick Del Prado (Florida Atlantic) for being named the Ripken League's Most Outstanding Pitcher. Nick had a 3-0 record with one save in eight appearances. Nick had an ERA of 0.69, striking out 37 batters in 26 innings. Del Prado was named the League's Pitcher of the Week for Week Four. Manager Sal Colangelo said "Nick set the tone. His tempo and ability to throw strikes and command his pitches was a key to our team's success."





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inning but could not hold it. On July 22, Bethesda played its final regular season game, beating the Grays, 4-3, at the Washington Nationals Academy in Washington, DC. Sean Lane homered. Brandon Clarke earned the win, and Todd Mozoki (James Madison) was credited with the save.

## League Semifinals

As the #2 seed in the playoffs, Bethesda sat for a bye in the first round. The third place Gaithersburg Giants beat the sixth place DC Grays to earn the right to face the Big Train in the semifinal round. Game One was a close one. The Big Train got off to a 2-0 lead on a single by Luke Nowak and some heads-up base-running as the Giants committed an error. The Giants tied it in the top of the third with a two-run homer. Sean Lane responded for Big Train with a homer of his own in the bottom of the third. The Giants opened an 8-3 lead in the top of the fourth with a six spot in that half inning, brought about mostly by a three-run homer and two-run double. Big Train came back with one run in the bottom of the fourth on a sacrifice fly. The Giants posted another run in the top of the fifth, but Big Train rebounded more strongly in the bottom of the inning, scoring three runs thanks to Gaithersburg mistakes. One run came on a walk with the bases loaded, and two were caused by an error by the shortstop. The Giants led 9-7. In the top of the sixth, Gaithersburg scored another run. The Big Train really came alive in the bottom of the seventh scoring five runs to take a 12-10 lead. Warren Holzemer walked with the bases loaded to score one. Clay Wargo singled to drive in two. Luke Nowak singled to push in two more. The Giants fought on to tie it up, 12-12, in the top of the eighth. With two outs in the bottom of the eighth, Garrett Felix drew a walk. The next two Big Train batters got on base to load them up. Felix scampered home on a balk to score the winning run. Jordan Little was credited with the win after pitching two hitless innings and striking out two in the ninth. The second game between Bethesda and Gaithersburg began as a close contest, but that didn't last. After five innings, the Big Train had a 2-0 lead. In the top of the sixth, Bethesda broke the game open with 8 runs. The scoring was all done by "small ball" -- singles, walks, hit by pitch, and a sacrifice fly. The Giants tried to come back with one run in the bottom of the sixth and two runs in the bottom of the seventh, but that was all they could muster. The final score was 12-3. Nick Del Prado pitched five innings of one hit shutout ball, and Todd Mozoki hurled 2.2 innings of the same.

## League Championship Series

The Alexandria Aces entered the playoffs as the #1 seed. In the semifinals, they topped the Braves 4-2 and 12-4. It was clear that

the League's top two teams were meeting for the championship. It was also evident that this would be a particular challenge for Big Train because several of its regular players would be unavailable due to injuries.

Game One was held at Frank Mann Field in Alexandria on July 29. Kade Woods was sent to the mound to start for the Big Train. The Aces' lead-off man, Eddie Hacopian, son of former Big Train manager Derek Hacopian (BT 1999-2004), began the bottom of the first with a single and advanced around the bases to score an unearned run to get his team off to a 1-0 lead. Eddie would go 3 for 5, score three runs, and be a pest all night. The Aces scored again in the second on two walks, a single, and a fielder's choice. In the fifth, Hacopian doubled, and that was followed by an Adam Tellier home run. At that point, the Aces led 4-0. In the top of the sixth, the Big Train began attempting a comeback by scoring two runs. Sean Lane drew a pass and T.J. Rogers singled. The two advanced on an out. Lane scored on a balk. Jason Schiavone drove in Rogers with a base hit. Unfortunately, in the bottom of the sixth, the Aces responded by scoring four unearned runs to widen their lead. Undaunted, the Big Train came back in the top of the seventh with four runs of their own. Warren Holzemer and D.M. Jefferson walked. Sean Lane singled to load the bases. T.J. Rogers kept fouling off pitches until he drew a walk scoring Holzemer. Baylor Cobb singled and drove in Jefferson. Jason Schiavone singled and drove in both Lane and Rogers. That brought the score to 8-6 in favor of the Aces. Although Big Train had men on bases in the eighth inning, they couldn't score again, and the Aces won the game by the 8-6 score.

The next day, Game Two was played at Povich Field. This would be more of a pitchers' duel. Manager Sal Colangelo chose Brandon Clarke to start for the Big Train, and he pitched well. He hurled four innings, and yielded only one hit and one run. Unfortunately, over those four innings, Big Train didn't score, so he left the game behind 1-0. The Aces had scored their run in the third when Eddie Hacopian was hit by a pitch and doubled home by Adam Tellier. Big Train scored two in the bottom of the fifth to take the lead. D.M. Jefferson had reached base on an error by Alexandria's shortstop. Sean Lane had walked. After a wild pitch, Jefferson scored on a single by Clay Wargo. Lane scored on a double by Baylor Cobb. The Aces came back in the top of the sixth to tie the game 2-2 on a single, a walk, and another single to drive in the first runner. Not content to have lost the lead, the Big Train batters returned in the bottom of the sixth to eke out a run via two walks and a hit-by-pitch to load the bases, and then one more walk to force in a run. But the Aces were stubborn as well. In the top of the seventh, Dylan Koontz tripled and scored an unearned run on an error on the subsequent play. The game went into the ninth inning knotted at 3-3. In the top half, Dylan Koontz led off with a walk, moved to second on a fielder's choice, stole third, and scored on an error. Then Cade Sullivan hit a solo home run. The Big Train could not score in the bottom half and the game ended 5-3. The team had given a valiant effort, but the championship series was over.

