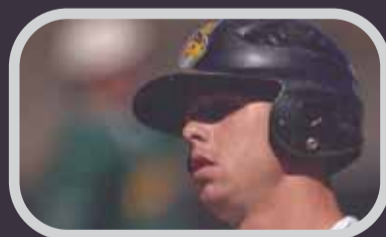


# Showtime.

Eight Division III junior college baseball teams from across the country are converging on Tyler with a single goal in mind: a national championship. Tyler Junior College just so happens to be in the mix. TJC is the No. 1 team in the country going in, but that does not matter unless the Apaches stay on top on the way out.



## COVER STORY

Tyler is hosting the national tournament for the first time, so is there a better chance for TJC to win its first national title? 12A

## INSIDE

TJC head coach Jon Groth had his own experience with a national baseball tournament when he played in college 13A  
TJC twins Cooper and Davis Page are still searching for a big title 13A



**TYLER JUNIOR COLLEGE CONGRATULATES THE APACHE BASEBALL TEAM**



**TOURNAMENT NOTE:** Youngsters from around the area are invited to participate in the KIDS CLINIC, which starts at 5:30 p.m. Friday at MIKE CARTER FIELD. Each team in the tournament will provide two players and a coach to work with the kids for an hour-and-a-half. The clinic is FREE.

**NJCAA DIVISION III  
WORLD SERIES**  
Tyler Morning Telegraph, 14A  
May 18, 2007

# around the horn

By BRETT HONE Staff Writer

## HERKIMER GENERALS

**Who:** Herkimer County Community College Generals (Herkimer, N.Y.).

**Record (rank):** 32-6 (NR).  
**Conference (district advanced from):** Mountain Valley Conference (District A).

**Previous Appearances:** The Generals advanced to the NJCAA Division III World Series last year, with a record of 34-7. The year before that, in 2005, Herkimer advanced to the Regional Final Four.

**Coach's Info:** Jason Rathbun is in his third season with the Generals. He replaced Henry Testa, who coached Herkimer for nine seasons. In his time at Herkimer, Rathbun has led the Generals to two College World Series appearances and amassed an 87-30 record. This season, Rathbun was tagged the Mountain Valley Conference coach of the Year.

**Facts and Figures:** Herkimer has five players hitting better than .400 with a minimum of 70 at bats. Leading the way, outfielder Keith Hendricks has 52 hits in 103 chances (.505 average) with 28 RBIs and a team-leading 12 doubles. First baseman Drew Farley leads the Generals hitting in the clutch with 41 RBIs to go along with a .396 average.

Off the mound, former Taylor native Rex Brinkmeyer will return to Texas to start the first game of the Junior College World Series. Brinkmeyer has a 3.29 ERA with 29 strikeouts in 27 1/3 innings pitched.

**Impact Players:** Outfielder Todd Allen returns from an All-America season in 2006 and hasn't missed a step. He is hitting .479 with 38 RBIs and six doubles this season, and has already been named to the all-region first team.

Hendricks is joined on the all-region first team by Allen, Farley, third baseman/pitcher Chad Salls (1.125 ERA in 24 innings and four saves, .423 BA) and DH Johnny Goodson (.419 BA, 28 RBIs).



## JOLIET WOLVES

**Who:** Joliet Junior College Wolves (Joliet, Ill.).

**Record (ranking):** 43-13 (No. 3).  
**Conference (district advanced from):** N4C Conference (District B).

**Previous Appearances:** Joliet JC advanced to its sixth Junior College World Series this season, winning more than 30 games for the 18th straight season. In last season's World Series, the Wolves finished third.

**Coach's Info:** Wayne King Jr. is in his 21st season as the Wolves head coach, and is leading his sixth team to the World Series. He has won 10 NJCAA Region IV titles and this season, eclipsed the 700-win mark after finishing last season with 666.

**Facts and Figures:** Unlike most of the rest of the World Series field, Joliet doesn't boast numerous players with batting averages over .400. Only Mike Offerman has done so, hitting .423, and he has only played in 26 of the Wolves 56 games.

Don't think this team can't score runs though. The Wolves, led by Nick Arndt, Ed Koncel and Tim Victor, have scored 394 runs this season, about seven per game. Victor has the best average of the trio (.355), has 36 RBIs and 12 doubles. Arndt leads the team in RBIs with 43, has a .319 average and 15 doubles, while Koncel has a .326 average with 37 RBIs.

**Impact Players:** Joe Stover and John Trepel have had stellar seasons from the mound thus far.

Trepel is 10-0 with a 3.03 ERA in 11 starts. His 68 1/3 innings pitched is second only to Stover, who has thrown 78 in 12 appearances. He is 8-3 with a 2.54 ERA.



## RIDGEWATER WARRIORS

**Who:** Ridgewater College Warriors (Willmar, Minn.).

**Record (ranking):** 38-6 (No. 2).  
**Conference (district advanced from):** Minnesota Community College Conference (District E).

**Previous Appearances:** The Warriors have been a staple at the Junior College World Series recently, making the tournament five of the last six years. Ridgewater finished fifth last year, second in 2005 and seventh in 2002 and 2003.

**Coach's Info:** Dwight Kotila has set the standard of success since taking over as the head coach nine years ago. He has amassed a 346-129 record in his tenure at Ridgewater and made the national tournament six of those nine seasons.

Kotila is a five-time Region XIII coach of the year.

**Facts and Figures:** The Warriors have three pitchers with ERA's lower than 2.00 who have thrown more than 30 innings.

JaColby Anderson headlines the group with a 6-0 record and an anemic 0.48 ERA. Anderson, who is completely deaf in one ear and has limited hearing in the other, has allowed just two earned runs in 37 1/3 innings.

Chad Willenbring is also unbeaten this season at 4-0 with a 1.20 ERA in seven appearances (30 innings). Chris Koenig has the most innings of anyone on the Warriors' staff, pitching 43 1/3 innings with a 1.25 ERA to show for it.

David Deminsky is also 6-0, but has a 3.16 ERA in nine appearances (37 innings).  
**Impact Players:** Ridgewater is led on offense by Keaton Gustin and Tyler Horning.

Gustin is hitting .407, 28 points lower than Horning's team-best .435 average, but has 47 RBIs to Horning's 28. Both have proven power, with Gustin hitting nine home runs and Horning four.

## MASSASOIT WARRIORS

**Who:** Massasoit Community College Warriors (Brockton, Mass.).

**Record (rank):** 32-10-1 (No. 9).  
**Conference (district advanced from):** New England Conference (District H).

**Previous Appearances:** The Warriors have advanced to the NJCAA Division III World Series three of the last four years. Massasoit finished fifth in 2004 and third in 2005, but its postseason history doesn't end there. The Warriors won the Division II championship in 1993 and finished fourth in 1995 before moving to Division III.

**Coach's Info:** Tom Frizzell is in his 17th season as coach of the Warriors. During his time there, he has collected both his 400th and 500th-career victories, coaching each game from a wheelchair. He has coached from the wheelchair since 1991.

**Facts and Figures:** Massasoit is led at the plate by a pair of sophomore Massachusetts natives, All-Region XXI members Matt Hart and Eric Salvador. Hart, an outfielder from Easton, is leading the Warriors with a .450 batting average and 32 RBIs. He also has nine doubles and has stolen 37 bases on 40 attempts.

Salvador, a catcher from Middleboro, is batting .410 with 29 RBIs.

**Impact Players:** Aside from Hart and Salvador, shortstop/pitcher Pete Wolstenholme is a difference maker for Massasoit. He is hitting .370 with a team-high 11 doubles, and has 1.26 ERA in 50 innings, allowing just seven earned runs. Also pitching for Massasoit will be All-Region XXI selection Matt Medeiros, who has a 2.62 ERA in 55 innings of work and a 5-1 record.

Right-handed sophomore Jeff Sarahs is also 5-1, though he hasn't seen as much action (39 1/3 innings pitched) and his ERA is higher (3.66).

## BROOKDALE BLUES

**Who:** Brookdale Community College Jersey Blues (Lincroft, N.J.).

**Record (ranking):** 32-12 (No. 8).  
**Conference (district advanced from):** Garden State Athletic Conference (District G).

**Previous Appearances:** The Blues will make their 10th appearance in an NJCAA College World Series, but its first at the Division III level. The Jersey Blues' previous nine tourney trips were on the Division II stage, including last year when they finished third. They also played in the Division II World Series in 2002 and 2005.

**Coach's Info:** Johnny Johnson is in his ninth season as coach of the Jersey Blues. A former player at Brookdale, Johnson has led the Jersey Blues to Region XIX championships and World Series berths three of the previous five seasons before moving to Division III this season.

**Facts and Figures:** The Jersey Blues had three all-GSAC first team members, including a pair of sluggers.

Outfielder Jimmy Principe was one, batting .417 this season with 33 RBIs and 10 doubles in 156 at bats. Shortstop Paddy Matera also earned the nod to the all-conference team after hitting .400 this season with a team-best 38 RBIs and 16 doubles. The Jersey Blues lone pitcher to earn GSAC honors was Joe Behan. The right hander was 6-2 with a 1.78 ERA in 10 appearances. He allowed seven earned runs in 35 1/3 innings.

**Impact Players:** Aside from Behan, Jed Rehfluss and Lex Wolfe have seen the most action from the mound this year. Wolfe leads the team in innings pitched with 49 1/3. He has a 2.37 ERA and is 4-2. Rehfluss is 5-2 with a 4.60 ERA in 45 innings. Cory Hawes leads Brookdale with five saves and has a 4.97 ERA in 12 2/3 innings pitched.

## MONTGOMERY GRYPHONS

**Who:** Montgomery College Gryphons (Germantown, Md.).

**Record (ranking):** 24-13 (NR).  
**Conference (district advanced from):** Maryland JUCO Conference (District D).

**Previous Appearances:** This isn't the Gryphons first chance at an NJCAA Division III World Series title. Montgomery College has been this far in the playoffs six times in its history, including last year.

**Coach's Info:** Dan Rascher is 2-for-2 so far. Rascher has been the head coach of the Gryphons for two years and both seasons have ended with Montgomery advancing to the Junior College World Series.

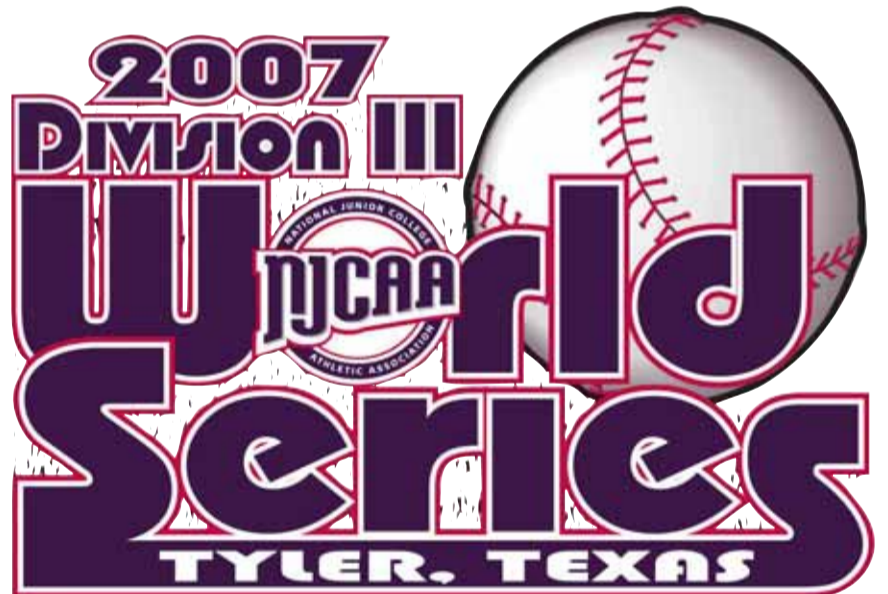
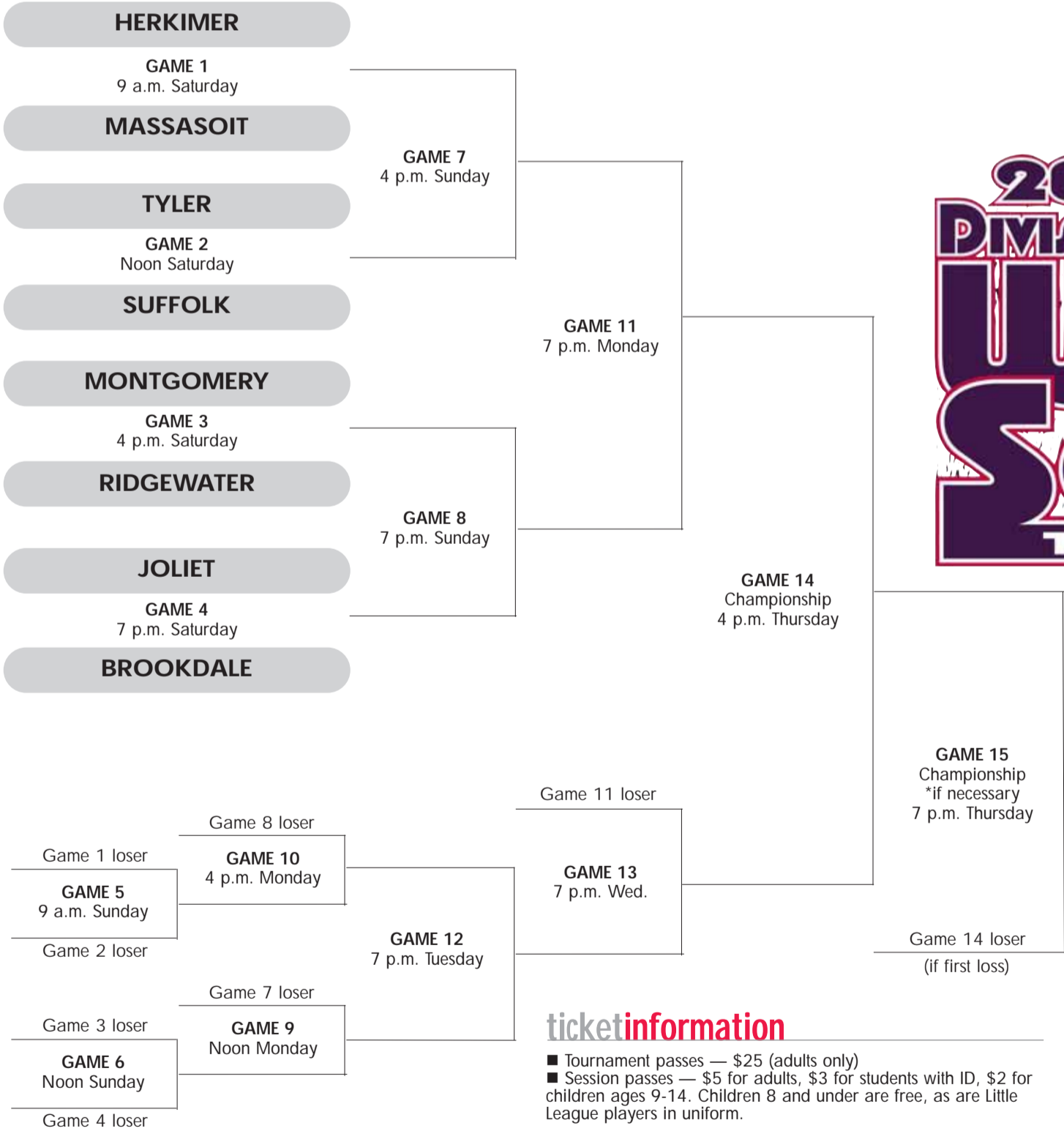
**Facts and Figures:** The Gryphons are led offensively by shortstop Jensen Pupa, who is hitting .476 with 40 RBIs and 12 doubles. Pupa also serves as a pitcher, going 5-1 this season with a staff-best 3.12 ERA in 49 innings pitched. He also has three saves, another team best.

The only Gryphons' pitcher with a better record than Pupa is Nick Franceski. Franceski is 8-1 with a 5.20 ERA and 41 strikeouts in nine appearances (64 innings).

Offensively, Daniel Bengtson is also in the .400 club with Pupa. Bengtson is hitting .407 with 14 RBIs. Justin Perry is also an important cog in the Gryphons offensive machine, hitting .371 with 12 doubles and 38 RBIs this year.

**Impact Players:** If you are looking for an impact player for Montgomery College, Aaron Sofield is that guy. Returning from Tommy John surgery he underwent less than a year ago, Sofield has contributed at the plate and on the mound.

Sofield is batting .437 with a team-high 43 RBIs and eight home runs. As a hurler, he is 6-4 with a 4.71 ERA, another team-best with 71 K's and the most innings pitched this season (65).



### the teams

District	World Series Qualifying Team
A	Herkimer (NY) Co. CC Generals
B	Joliet (IL) JC Wolves
C	Tyler JC Apaches
D	Montgomery (MD) Co.-Germantown Gryphons
E	Ridgewater (MN) College Warriors
F	Suffolk (NY) West CC Longhorns
G	Brookdale (NJ) CC Jersey Blues
H	Massasoit (MA) CC Warriors

### ticket information

- Tournament passes — \$25 (adults only)
- Session passes — \$5 for adults, \$3 for students with ID, \$2 for children ages 9-14. Children 8 and under are free, as are Little League players in uniform.

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**HOME, SWEET HOME :** The Apaches have 10 players from the Houston metropolitan area, three from the Metroplex and only two from East Texas — Tyler's Blake Worthen and Jacksonville Peyton Diers, both freshmen pitchers. TJC's two assistants, Cody Ellis and Ryan Dean, are native East Texans and are former TJC players.

**NJCAA DIVISION III  
WORLD SERIES**  
Tyler Morning Telegraph, 13A  
May 18, 2007



**turn back the clock**



TMT Photo/AMY PETERSON

Tyler Junior College coach Jon Groth was passed up by Mississippi State for former major leaguers Rafael Palmeiro and Will Clark.

# Now in Tyler, Groth remembers Omaha

■ By **JOE BUIE**  
TMT Staff Writer

While watching his team celebrate clinching a berth in the NJCAA Division III World Series, Jon Groth's thoughts weren't far from Omaha, Neb.

Eight years before restarting the Tyler Junior College baseball program, Groth played in the College World Series in Omaha as a center fielder for the University of New Orleans.

The year was 1984, and UNO had defeated mighty Mississippi State in Starkville to earn the trip to Omaha.

That Mississippi State team had a pair of sensational sophomores — Will Clark and Rafael Palmeiro, and another future major leaguer on the mound — Jeff Brantley.

Ironically, this wasn't the first time Mississippi State made an impression on Groth, who had been a standout at Cuyahoga Community College in his native Ohio.

"I got recruited very heavily out of junior college by Mississippi State," Groth said. "I'd go to the mailbox and there would be six to eight letters a day. I had boxes of letters from alumni all over the country saying you need to come to Starkville and play for Mississippi State."

"When push came to shove, they did not have a scholarship for me."

The Mississippi State coach told Groth that he had signed two players who had been selected in the baseball draft out of high school. And if either one signed a pro contract, Groth would get the vacant scholarship.

Those players, it turned out, were future major league superstars

Clark and Palmeiro, who opted first to play college ball.

And that's why Groth ended up playing for the University of New Orleans, and getting a measure of revenge on the school that sent him all those letters.

"One of my favorite memories from that game is I robbed Clark," Groth said. "I dove and caught a ball off my chest. Clark hit a bullet to left-center field."

At the College World Series, UNO played its first game against the University of Texas and future major league pitcher Greg Swindell.

Texas won, but UNO prevailed in its next game and eliminated Michigan, and future Cincinnati Reds star Barry Larkin.

UNO advanced to meet Oklahoma State and Pete Incaviglia, who has been called college baseball's greatest power hitter ever.

The game was an extra-inning classic won by Oklahoma State in the 10th to eliminate UNO.

"We scratched for a run in the 10th," Groth remembered. "So we're up a run with two outs and two strikes. Incaviglia's at the plate. We're a pitch away from advancing to play Arizona State, who had Oddibe McDowell and Barry Bonds."

"We hang a slider and Incaviglia hits a ball over our right fielder's head."

The tying run scored from third, and the winning run came around from first base.

"I have some really neat memories of Omaha, and to be able to lead a team to a World Series ... when we start coaching in August, that's what our goal is."



TMT Photo/AMY PETERSON

Twins Cooper (left) and Davis Page have their own moments of "brotherly banter," as TJC coach Jon Groth likes to call it, but the brothers simply call it brotherly love. The pair has even played opposite each other at pitcher and catcher this season.

# ... and twins!

Losing is simply not an option for TJC's Page brothers

■ By **JOE BUIE**  
TMT Staff Writer

The identical twins on the Tyler Junior College baseball team are on the same page when it comes to their outlook on the NJCAA Division III World Series.

Cooper and Davis Page are tired of finishing second in their chase for a championship. Last year, as seniors at Argyle Liberty Christian north of Denton, the brothers lost in the state finals in both football and baseball.

And losing is hardly in their vocabulary. Cooper, a starting pitcher who is 6-0 for the Apaches, beat childhood leukemia after getting diagnosed at age 7.

He took chemotherapy treatments for 2½ years and by age 10 was completely cancer-free. Yearly checkups continue to reveal that Cooper is healthy.

"It's an experience that made me stronger," he said. "I try to think back to how far it's brought me and how much stronger it's made me."

"It was always a goal of me and Davis to play college baseball. That setback when I was 7 years old, I thought maybe that was a sign from God that I wasn't supposed to. But

I missed very few games growing up even through the treatment. I'm blessed to be here."

Davis and Cooper, who were initially recruited by different colleges, didn't set out to be a packaged deal.

But TJC head coach Jon Groth saw them both play at the TAPPS state tournament in Waco. Groth liked what he saw, and the twins' father, Larry, was equally impressed with Groth.

"... My dad really liked his style of coaching and the way he was a Christian man," said Davis, the starting second baseman for the Apaches.

An added bonus for the twins this season was getting to play catch — from 60 feet, 6 inches — as a pitcher-catcher combo.

Davis would get to catch his brother during conference doubleheaders to keep the starter, Kevin Els, fresh behind the plate.

"It was a fun experience," Davis said. "We knew going in what pitches we wanted to throw to what hitters, so we were kind of on the same page. If a new hitter came up, we figured out what pitch we wanted to throw — usually it was the first sign; he shook me off every now and then."

The two competitive personalities would

butt heads occasionally — Groth said the brotherly banter created an interesting dynamic — but the twins prefer to call it brotherly love.

They are similar, yet different.

"We think a lot alike," Cooper said. "We act differently sometimes. I guess you could say we disagree on most pitch calling. We know what the other one is thinking and each thinks he has to be right 100 percent of the time."

Cooper, a 6-1, 181-pound right-hander, is scheduled to pitch TJC's second game of the national tournament on Sunday. Davis, meanwhile, will start the opener at second base.

TJC, having a record of 42-11 and a No. 1 national ranking, sounds about right for the Pages.

"We've never really been on a losing team," Cooper said. "In high school it was always a goal to get a state championship, and we lost two state championships our senior year — one in football and one in baseball."

"To get another chance to win a championship the first year in college ... I hope this year we can take advantage of the opportunity we get."

**TJC'S FIRST OPPONENT**

## SUFFOLKLONGHORNS

**Who:** Suffolk Community College-Grant Longhorns (Brentwood, N.Y.).

**Record (ranking):** 27-9 (NR).

**Conference (district advanced from):** Long Island Conference (District F).

**Previous Appearances:** This is the Longhorns' first trip to the NJCAA Division III World Series.

**Coach's Info:** Bobby Molinaro is in his fifth season as the head coach for the Longhorns.

**Facts and Figures:** Suffolk has a pair of pitchers with 5-1 records and another two with 2-2 marks this year. The combination of Mike Kitt, the Region XV Player of the Year, and Ed Schrouder has been stellar, accounting for more than a third of the Longhorns wins this season.

Kitt has the low ERA on the staff, allowing just five earned runs for a 1.04 showing on 43 1/3 innings pitched. He has two saves and 54 strikeouts.

Schrouder's is nearly as impressive. He has allowed

just six earned runs for a 1.72 ERA in 31 1/3 innings. After Kitt and Schrouder, the productivity falls off. Tom Gudzik (2-2) has the next best ERA (3.33 in 27 innings).

**Impact Players:** Kitt didn't just earn the POY award from the mound. He is also hitting a robust .440 with team highs in doubles (12), triples (6) and RBIs (28).

Offensively, Rob Aglialoro and Mike Amendola are both also hitting over .400 on the season.

Amendola is hitting a team-best .456 (seven doubles and three triples) with 21 RBIs, while Aglialoro has 24 RBIs, seven doubles and four triples to go along with his .435 average. Both were named to the All-Region team, as was Kitt, Schrouder and Rob Moschetto.

Moschetto is hitting .390 with a pair of doubles and 10 RBIs in just 59 at bats this season.

— Brett Hone

## TYLER APACHES

**Who:** Tyler Junior College Apaches.

**Record (ranking):** 42-11 (1).

**Conference (district advanced from):** Metro Athletic (District C).

**Previous Appearances:** This is the Apaches' first trip to the NJCAA Division III World Series.

**Coach's Info:** Jon Groth is in his 15th season as the head coach for the Apaches.

**Facts and Figures:** The Apaches set a team record this season with a .345 batting average.

The Apaches have won 14 games in a row against Division III teams. Their pitching has been particularly outstanding the last six games, with three shutouts and no more than three runs allowed in the other three.

TJC had a 4-7 record against Division I (scholarship) programs this season. The Apaches were Division I for 10 years before becoming non-scholarship.

**Impact Players:** Michael Wilson, a 6-6, 255-pound right-hander, leads Division III with 12 victories. He is 12-1 in 15 starts with a 1.35 ERA. Teams are battling a combined .189 off Wilson, who has 60 strikeouts and only 18 walks in 86 2-3 innings.

Middle reliever Michael LaCourse is 8-0 with a 2.54 ERA, while starter Cooper Page is 6-0 with a 3.04 ERA. Third baseman Brock Lemire, who has signed with McNeese State, is hitting .439 with 10 home runs, 60 RBIs and a .743 slugging percentage.

— Joe Buie

## COVER STORY Continued from page 12A

Right fielder Clint Stroud of Bonham is second on the team with a .398 batting average. Mike McCollum, who has started at first base and catcher, is hitting .317 in 38 games. Starter Kyle Harrison (.312 average) has not committed an error in center field all season.

On the mound, freshmen Michael LaCourse (8-0), Cooper Page (6-0), Peyton Diers (4-1), Michael Harlow (2-0) and Tyler's Blake Worthen (3-2) have combined for more than half the team's total victories.

Groth is proud to say a handful of those freshmen turned down scholarship money to play for the non-scholarship Apaches.

"I'm very impressed with the way he's been pulling in guys and I think he's built a good core of freshmen this year to come back and do a repeat next year," Denney said.

Another reason for the team's historic success in 2007 is team chemistry, and the effect former pitching coach Robert Ellis had on the staff before taking a job with the New York Mets organization.

"I would give Robert Ellis a lot of credit," said Groth, who has guided his team to six playoff appearances while winning 371 games. "He left the last week in February, but a lot of the stuff we did with the pitchers was in place because of his influence and planning."

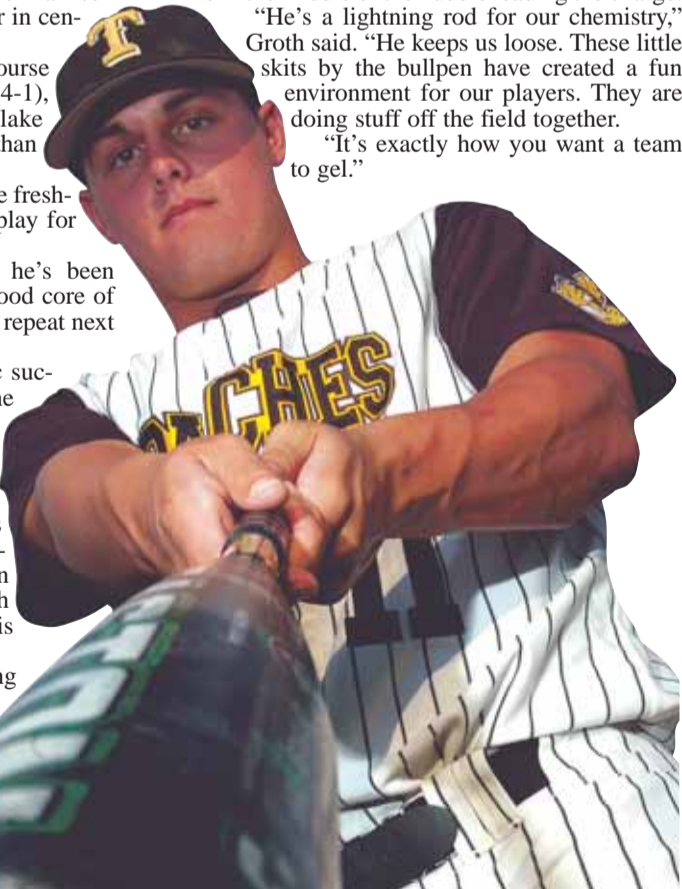
"We really tried to protect our pitching staff and we now have a chance to win a national championship in large part to how we managed our pitching."

When it comes to how well this team has bonded, and enjoys coming to the park every day, Groth says don't overlook

the contributions of bullpen catcher Matt Stephenson. When the pitchers begin their pregame chant down the right-field line before the game, Stephenson is in the middle of the huddle leading the charge.

"He's a lightning rod for our chemistry," Groth said. "He keeps us loose. These little skits by the bullpen have created a fun environment for our players. They are doing stuff off the field together."

"It's exactly how you want a team to gel."



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TMT Photos/AMY PETERSON

Tyler Junior College sophomores (from top, clockwise) Jordan Rutenbar, José Molina, Billy Donaho, Kevin Els, Brock Lemire and Bud Kidder are looked to for leadership and to produce runs when the Apaches need them most. These guys are a main reason TJC is No. 1 in the country going into the tournament.

# ONE SHOT.

In season of firsts, TJC looking to capture first-ever national title

■ By **JOE BUIE**  
TMT Staff Writer

**T**he best season in Tyler Junior College baseball history has one chapter that is still unwritten.

The book could be titled, "A Season of Firsts."

First-ever No. 1 ranking.

Most wins in the program's history.

First conference championship, followed by a first-ever district title and a berth in the NJCAA Division III World Series — another first.

And TJC's timing could not have been better. The national tournament is being held at the Apaches' home park — Mike Carter Field — you guessed it, for the first time.

Now, that success brings expectations for the Apaches (42-11) to win the World Series title.

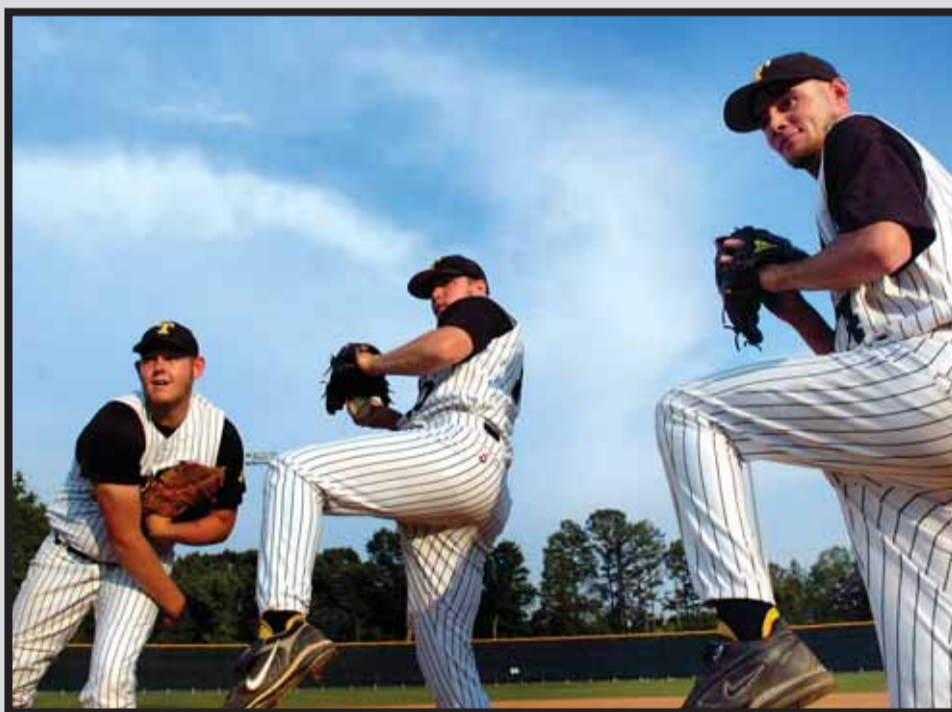
The Metro Athletic Conference, of which TJC is a member, has produced the national champion five of the last six years — three for Richland and two for Eastfield.

The Northeast, where most of the Division III baseball programs are located, are well aware of Texas' dominance.

And this year, teams from New York, Massachusetts, Maryland, Minnesota, Illinois and New Jersey are making the long trip to the Lone Star State while the TJC players get to sleep in their own beds.

The eight-team, double-elimination tournament gets under way Saturday. There will be four games each on Saturday and Sunday, three games Monday, and one each Tuesday and Wednesday.

The championship game is set for 4 p.m.



Tyler Junior College pitchers (from left) Michael Wilson, Kyle Denney and Matt Phillips are sophomores on the Apaches' staff and will be looked upon to carry their team on the mound against the nation's best teams.

Thursday. If necessary, a second title game would be played that night.

"Everybody's going to be gunning for us because there are a lot of teams from the northern part of the United States, and everybody knows Texas baseball players are usually the best in the nation," said TJC third base-

man Brock Lemire, who leads the Apaches with a .439 batting average, 10 home runs and 60 RBIs.

"We'll get everybody's best. I feel like we have a great chance with as many starting pitchers as we have."

The Apaches were on their way to building

something special last year before a season-ending brawl with Richland cost them a play-off berth.

That team had seven freshmen who were either first-team all-conference — Lemire and catcher Kevin Els, or honorable mention — pitcher Kyle Denney, pitcher Matt Phillips, infielder Billy Donaho, shortstop Jose Molina and designated hitter Jordan Rutenbar.

Two other key returners — outfielder Bud Kidder and No. 1 starting pitcher Michael Wilson (12-1) — flew under the radar last season.

"No. 1, we have a great coaching staff and this year we've got a lot of players with a lot of desire," said Denney, the starting center fielder for Humble Kingwood when it won the Class 5A state title in 2005. "And it helped having a lot of core sophomores coming back this year.

"Everybody's really bonded together to play as a team this year. There are no individuals on this team. It's a team effort and it pays off big time."

Denney has made sacrifices for the good of the team. Regarded as TJC's best center fielder, Denney is more valuable on the mound as the setup man for freshman closer Jay Haak.

"I like to do whatever I can to help the team, whether that's getting a foul ball, playing center or pitching," Denney said. "I give it my all whatever I'm doing."

In addition to all the experienced sophomores, TJC head coach Jon Groth signed another stellar crop of freshmen.

Davis Page started at catcher and second base during the season.

See COVER STORY, next page

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