

## Alumni Newsletter – March 19, 2006

On March 3, the Penn State Baseball Club (5-4) loaded up the charter bus and commenced their annual spring break trek to Florida. After a few fine refreshments, numerous fast-food stops, and an unexpected three-hour rest stop due to a broken fan belt (only 40 miles outside of Tampa), the Club arrived at their destination excited to compete in the 2006 NCBA Spring Break Showcase.

Scheduled to play Virginia Tech twice, Ferris State University, Central Michigan University, Bowling Green, and UNC – Charlotte, the PSBC was ready to match up against solid World Series caliber competition and give everyone a chance to see where they stood and what they needed to improve. Game one proved to be a test of endurance in which they used four pitchers and scored ten runs, but unfortunately came out on the losing end. With two outs and the bases loaded in the bottom of the eleventh, a Joe Kozlowski rocket shot was caught at the fence to end the game.

Game two against VT featured Greg Lisa as starting pitcher, but he was able to go only one inning when he suffered an arm injury. Rookie pitcher John Garczynski, who was originally slated to pitch on the third day of competition, had to make an impromptu relief appearance. After scoring five on the PSBC in the first two innings, Virginia Tech was able to win 12-2.

Games three and four, however, featured the PSBC playing up to their full potential. Against Ferris State, the Lions knocked in sixteen runs while rookie Brian Binder held the opposition to only three runs in six innings of work. The heart of the order featured Chris Connors, Mark Mihalik, Jordan Wagner, and Ryan Fitzgerald hitting a combined 9-for-15 in the 16-3 win. Against Central Michigan, the bats stayed hot, scoring seventeen runs on three CMU pitchers. With Ryan Frankeny, Grant Gipson, and Dan DeLuliis giving up six in seven innings.

In game five, rookie Dave Brodeur started on the mound against UNC-Charlotte and cruised through six innings of shutout ball before allowing one run to score in the seventh inning. Meanwhile, the PSBC batters piled on ten runs to win by the mercy rule 10-1. Brodeur won the New Penn West Conference Pitcher of the Week award for his great performance. In game six, however, things fell apart a bit for the Lions as pitchers Mike Cramer and Jason Shirey, both on short rest, gave up thirteen hits in five innings against Bowling Green. A few costly errors and a lack of PSBC offense resulted in a 13-3 loss, ending the week at 3-3.

The PSBC was able to take a lot from their six games on the week. In the wins, the bats were loud, the defense was perfect, and the pitching was flawless. In the losses, the offense struggled in clutch situations, errors and walks were more frequent, and pitchers were kept in the game longer than usual because of the long week. The team has been working on playing a cleaner style of baseball in practice this week, with errors and walks resulting in conditioning.

In addition to the team growth on the field, the team grew much tighter off the field during the ten day trip. Trips to the beach, outings in some of the finest clubs and restaurants in Tampa's Ybor City, downtime at the Mainsail Suites, and over forty hours on the bus resulted in a team we believe is much closer-knit than last year's squad. With some practice and with some finesse in conference play, the team should be set to be a definite contender for a World Series title.



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Our first competition up north will come this weekend at Carnegie Mellon. A doubleheader will start at 12:30 on Saturday, March 25th, and the 9-inning game will be at 1:00 on Sunday, March 26th. The games will be played at Pie Traynor Field—contact Mark Mihalik at [psbc@psu.edu](mailto:psbc@psu.edu) if you would like directions to the field to come out and support us.

Note: Alumni Weekend is scheduled for April 28-30. Make sure to mark your calendar for the exciting weekend of baseball, pitcher's golf, partying, and socializing with past and present players. I will add that we defeated the alumni 8 to 5. Ryan Albright's homerun off Chris Rayburg has just landed and Ryan is talking about dropping two bombs this year.

Sincerely,

Mark Mihalik, *President*  
Greg Lisa, *Treasurer*

<http://www.clubs.psu.edu/up/psbc/>