



2012 SEASON RECAP & GOLF TOURNAMENT INFORMATION

Motivated by a preseason No. 12 pick by the Atlantic 10 coaches, the UMass Baseball Minutemen went to work in the winter preseason with something to prove. Practices were energized with a goal of getting ready to play our best, reaching our potential individually and as a team during the spring season. Although we went through some early injuries, we settled in with a fairly consistent lineup as we travelled to UCF for our season-opening series. We battled hard all weekend, were competitive and had a chance to win two of the three games of the series. Good pitching kept us within striking distance in the final two games of the weekend and gave us confidence moving into the next week.

We beat Hartford in a must-win midweek game before travelling to Old Dominion for a three game weekend series to start our Spring Break trip. Once again, we came up short the first two games of the series, but the bats came alive and Joe Popielarczyk and Leif Sorenson combined to throw an 8-0 shutout. We lost a tight ballgame to a pretty good Monmouth ballclub on our way to Fordham for our first A-10 games of the year. We played the Fordham series with a great deal of confidence and came away winning 2-of-3 to get us out to a solid start in conference play.

We opened the home A-10 schedule with a three-game sweep of La Salle and won our first round Beanpot game, 4-1 over Northeastern. We then travelled to Philadelphia where we dropped 2-of-3 to an improved Saint Joseph's ballclub. We had the opportunity to play on their new Field Turf field, which is now on campus. Their new facility is a tremendous improvement over the various fields that we have played on in the Philadelphia area over the past 25 years.

The Beanpot Tournament was held at LeLacheur Park in Lowell this year (apparently the Red Sox are not interested in hosting the Beanpot in the future); the Minutemen were matched up with Harvard in the Championship. We jumped out to a sizeable lead early by playing aggressive offense and getting good pitching from freshman Conor LeBlanc (Atlantic 10 All-Rookie Team). The game eventually became a tight one, but with solid relief pitching from Leif Sorenson and some great defensive plays we earned our sixth Beanpot title.

With a great deal of confidence coming out of the Beanpot we headed to St. Louis and preceded to beat a top-30 ranked Billiken team in 2-of-3. This weekend series gave us the belief that if we prepared well and played hard that we could beat anyone in our league! After losing a hard-fought series at home against Temple, we bounced back with another outstanding pitching performance by our weekend pitchers (Dennis Torres – 28th round draft pick - Baltimore, Glen Misho, and Joe Popielarczyk - Atlantic 10 Pitcher of the Year, as well as the relief staff of Ronnie Wallace, Aaron Plunkett, Andrew Grant, Tim Stoops, Tim Cassidy, and Leif Sorenson) to beat a very talented Richmond team.

To wrap up the A-10 regular season we were swept at Dayton (all close contests) and then in the final series of the year, we celebrated Senior Day and swept George Washington. Finishing the season fourth in the league after a pre-season pick of 12 was very rewarding and really says a great deal about the character and drive that the 2012 UMass Baseball Minutemen exhibited all year long. Although we were beaten twice (by Richmond and Rhode Island) and made an early exit from the A-10 Tournament, there was certainly a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment with the kind of season that we had. We played tough and were

competitive all year; a great example of the gumption that this ballclub showed was the fact that we played 21 one-run games, winning 11, and posted 10 come-from-behind victories. The Minutemen scored the winning run six times in their last at bat, recording three walk-off wins.

The contributions of seniors Tom Conley, Glen Misho, Ben Hart, Joe Popielarczyk, Leif Sorenson, and pro signee Dennis Torres (junior) will be very much missed next year. Their input related to a positive change in attitude and team competitiveness was impressive. We are fortunate to have our entire outfield (Tony Serino, Rich Graef, Kyle Adie, Adam Picard, and Jeff Cavanaro), who all made outstanding offensive and defensive contributions to the Team, return next year. All of our infielders (Dylan Begin - 1B - 2012 Atlantic 10 All-Tournament Team, Nick Campero - 3B/1B, Ryan Cusick - 2B, Bryan Dionicio - 3B, Rob McLam - 2B/3B, Nick Sanford - SS, and Paul Yanakopoulos - UT), made extraordinary additions to the success of the 2012 ballclub, return as well. This gives us a great nucleus to build from as we move forward into the 2012-13 season.

Donations from alumni, parents, and friends of UMass Baseball have made our new field improvements possible. Earl Lorden Field now has a new outfield wind screen, home plate halo (complete with UMass logo), and new dugout extensions. These upgraded additions have made a big difference to the ballpark. We still have some money left in the Capital Improvement Fund, which will allow us to put in a new backstop. Additionally, our wish list includes: Fencing in the bullpen areas (\$8,650.00), infield make over: grass/dirt (\$40,000.00), Field Turf (\$250,000.00), Full Field Turf (\$800,000.00), and a three-level tiered grass berm home plate seating area (cost unknown, but much cheaper than a new grandstand). It's an optimistic list, however these improvements will make Earl Lorden field the facility that it should be. The setting is unique, we just need to upgrade.

This year's UMass Baseball Golf Tournament will be held at The Orchards Golf Club in South Hadley, Mass., on **Monday, August 27**. Formal registration forms will be sent out soon. The change in date and venue is due to availability of the course and the opportunity to play an outstanding course of the caliber of The Orchards. Visit www.orchardsgolf.com for more information on the course. We will begin with a full breakfast before a 10:30 a.m. tee time, 18-hole scramble format, which will be followed by a steak dinner. All proceeds will go to UMass Baseball for field improvements and spring trip supplemental costs.

We encourage a great turnout at the Golf Tournament as well as at the Alumni game which will be on **Saturday, September 22**. We look forward to catching up and enjoying the company of friends and former teammates. Make sure to pencil in Monday, August 27 at The Orchards!

Looking forward to seeing you there!

- UMass Baseball Head Coach Mike Stone

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Stone", with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

2012 EARL LORDEN FIELD IMPROVEMENTS



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