

GLOBE NORTH SPORTS

Stoneham slugger feeling the draft

But Wiswall will return to BC if offer is too low

By Lenny Megliola, Globe Correspondent | June 6, 2010

Mickey Wiswall tried to answer the Major League Baseball scouts honestly.

First, "They'd ask if I wanted to play baseball after college," said Wiswall. "My answer was always 'yes.' Then they'd ask, 'What would you sign for?'"

A slugging corner infielder at Boston College, Wiswall hadn't figured the money part out. He had to discuss it with his father, Jim.

Fresh off a power-packed junior season in which he belted 19 home runs and knocked in 61 runs for the Eagles, the 21-year-old Stoneham native is a little wiser about the process now. He's told the scouts that he'd like to start a pro career as soon as possible. But it's all about the you-know-what.

"We have a rock-bottom figure that, if he gets it, he'll go and play pro," said Jim Wiswall.

"Or he goes back to school."

Wiswall starred at Belmont Hill and was pursued by a number of colleges. He narrowed it down to Boston College and Duke. "It was a tough decision, but BC was just 25 minutes from my home. It was a good fit for me."

It was also an adjustment. "Biggest transition in my life," he said. He had been that big fish in a little pond, and now he was playing with teammates who were getting picked in the first five or 10 rounds of MLB's amateur draft.

If his son is selected in the first five rounds, it would be "a dream come true," said his father. The draft starts tomorrow.

"We liked him when we saw him in his junior year at Belmont Hill," said BC coach Mik Aoki. "We got a verbal commitment from him the third week in July, after the Bay State Games, where he played very well. He's added a lot of muscle since then. He's a lot stronger."

The 6-foot, 212-pound Wiswall said Aoki told him "he wanted the best players in New England to stay here." He chose BC for the same reasons he went to Belmont Hill. "They were both the best combination of academics and athletics," he added.

Starting when he was 13, Wiswall had success playing AAU ball against top-flight competition around the country. New Orleans. Virginia Beach, Va. Sarasota, Fla. "I found out how serious the game could get," he said. "That's when I knew baseball could get me a scholarship."

He played two summers for the Wakefield Merchants in the Inter-City League. "It's an advanced men's league, and Mickey was just 16 and 17," said Jim Wiswall. "He made the all-star team both years and was the MVP of the all-star game."

Scouts began taking a longer look at Wiswall last summer after he hit over .300 for the Yarmouth-Dennis Red Sox in the wood bat Cape Cod League. Colleges use aluminum bats.

"That's what the scouts look for," said Wiswall.

He's had contact with all 30 big league teams, "a lot of them face-to-face." The Colorado Rockies and Chicago White Sox had interest in signing Wiswall after his senior year at Belmont Hill, according to his dad. "But college was his only option," he said.

A .310 career hitter at the Heights with 37 home runs and 152 RBIs, Wiswall powers the ball to all fields. In a recent game against visiting Georgia Tech in Chestnut Hill, with a number of scouts watching, the lefthanded-hitting Wiswall drove a pitch over the wall in left.

A first-team All-Atlantic Coast Conference pick and second-team All-New England (University of Connecticut first baseman Mike Nemeth was the first-team pick), he slugged a team-best .697 this season with a .398 on-base percentage.

Jim Wiswall said, "The scouts have been very good about letting Mickey play his game. They're not hounding him or the family. Occasionally, they have a question."

Wiswall played an errorless third base for this season's first 18 games. But to strengthen the defense, Aoki put him at first. "I said, anything to help the team. I'm not a difficult guy to coach."

"He played well at third," said Aoki, "but he's as good of a defensive first baseman as there is in this conference."

When Wiswall was at Belmont Hill, former Red Sox catcher Rich Gedman was an assistant coach. "He had a good arm, speed and power," said Gedman. His son, Matt, was a teammate at Belmont.

"He's a line drive guy. We got him to relax in the field and he improved his defense. He's a good kid."

Belmont Hill head coach Ed Gallagher told Aoki, "We've got a kid who's pretty good." Aoki went to watch a Belmont Hill game and came away convinced that he had to talk to the prospect.

Wiswall played baseball, football, and hockey growing up. "I was always active. I considered myself an athlete. I loved all three sports. I got serious about hockey," he said.

"Some people thought he'd be a better hockey player," according to Jim Wiswall. "But baseball's always been his passion." To the father, having scouts following his son "has been kind of surreal. I'm trying to savor every moment. It's every dad's dream."

If Wiswall doesn't sign, he'll play in the Cape Cod League again. At 3 p.m. today, he'll be on the field at Fenway Park, where his Division 1 squad will take on a team of Division 2 and 3 players as part of the annual New England Collegiate All-Star game. In last year's game, held at Campanelli Stadium in Brockton, he homered.

Asked if he'll be able to sleep tonight on the eve of the draft, he said, "I hope so. This is a great opportunity. I'm not nervous. Of course I'm anxious. I just want to be treated fairly financially."

"He's handled this quite well," said Aoki.

And when it's over, "hopefully it's a celebration," Wiswall said.



Lobster Shanty gets its 15 minutes of fame

By Tom Dalton and Amanda McGregor
Staff Writers

June 10, 2010

SALEM — In a city with a lot of new restaurants, the old favorites sometimes get forgotten.

Take the Lobster Shanty.

It was way ahead of its time on outdoor dining, but never got much credit. While it has always had a loyal following, all the buzz recently has been about Tavern in the Square and other new restaurants opening all around it.

Well, the Shanty is finally getting its due.

Last weekend, Guy Fieri, a cable food superstar, swooped down on the joint that brags about its warm beer, lousy food and surly waitresses.

The Food Network program "Diners, Drive-ins and Dives" spent two days filming at the Lobster Shanty for a later broadcast.

The host, Fieri, with his famous blond, spiked hair and a loud blue shirt, mixed it up with the staff and customers. He even left his mark on a wall with spray paint.

When asked about the visit, Lobster Shanty chef and co-owner Diane Wolf declined to say much. As with many of these TV shows, they have been asked not to talk about the show until it's ready to run on television.

"I was kind of honored and pleased they selected us" was all Wolf said.

No date has been announced for the airing.

Shape up

Salem Academy Charter School students shaped up their bodies and the city recently when they competed in the Bay State Games Kids Fitness Challenge, which challenged kids to be creative with physical activity.

Wearing matching T-shirts, the students cleaned local beaches and parks, including the Palmer Cove baseball field, Salem Common, Memorial Field at Bentley School, Derby Wharf and the charter school's recess yard on Perkins Street.

Afterward, they played team games.

The students hope the activity will motivate others to exercise 30 minutes or more each day in "a rewarding and fun way," teacher Erica Menzia Pelletier said.

Salem Academy students clean up their act for fitness challenge



Courtesy photo

Middle school students from Salem Academy enjoyed lovely spring weather on June 4 when they were participating in the Kids Fitness Challenge.

By Anonymous
Salem Gazette
Jun 11, 2010

Salem — Salem Academy Charter School students shaped up their bodies — and the city of Salem — on June 4.

The students were participating in the Bay State Games' Kids Fitness Challenge. The goal was to be creative with physical activity, showing that getting fit can be fun. The middle school canvassed Salem in brightly colored matching T-shirts, cleaning local beachfronts and parks, shaping up the city while promoting fitness among school-aged children. They covered Palmer's Cove baseball field, the Common, Memorial Field, Derby Wharf and the school's recess yard on Perkins Street.

After work was done, groups participated in team play with soccer, tenniball, basketball and volleyball games.

The school's Service Learning groups, who have never been shy about finding local and global causes to support, participated in this school-wide event to raise awareness about the importance of physical education in schools. The hope is that this activity will motivate others to exercise 30 minutes or more each day in a rewarding and fun way. By having 100 percent participation in the event, the school qualified to enter a drawing for a \$500 grant, courtesy of Bay State Games. If the school wins, the money will be used to benefit the Salem Academy Physical Education Department.

Saugus High School track star Olisa Obiefuna challenges New England's best in the triple jump

By Joe McConnell / jmconne@cnc.com
GateHouse News Service
Posted Jun 16, 2010 @ 09:19 PM

Saugus — Olisa Obiefuna is only a sophomore, but his name is now out there in the world of scholastic track for coaches, peers and college scouts to ponder and wonder what he might accomplish next.

The author of the State Division 3 long jump championship, and the All-State triple jump crown, Obiefuna earned the opportunity to measure his immense talents against the rest of New England during the regional meet in New Britain, Conn. June 12.

Being a young underclassman, Obiefuna was certainly not intimidated facing the best that the region has to offer in 2010. Overall, he finished seventh in the triple jump in a war among three others competing for the third spot. The Saugus product was among the Top 36 triple jumpers in the region.

"It was a war," coach Kevin Fontanella said. "Eight inches separated four jumpers from third to seventh. [Obiefuna] had his second best triple jump performance ever, leaping 45-feet-3 inches in his final heat after five other attempts.

"He was the only sophomore out there, and he did very well," added coach Fontanella. "He was certainly the most impressive underclassman in the field, but lost a chance to finish sixth by one-half inch. He was actually fourth with a couple of jumps to go."

It was a very solid performance for Obiefuna, and Fontanella expects even better results throughout the next two years from this track phenom.

"I expect him to be in the Top 3 in this meet next year, and win it in his senior year," Fontanella said. "I'm also hoping that he qualifies for the National meet next year, as well. He needs only two feet to reach the standard to participate in the nationals."

The cutoff mark to take part in the national competition is 47-feet-3 inches.

Obiefuna will be still working to get better, even during the summer months. He will be competing in the Bay State Games and the Needham Youth Classic, not to mention pursuing his lifting and jumping regimen to get ready for the fall and another school year.

"I'm hoping he's going to play football in the fall, and he will be doing indoor track for the first time next winter to get ready for his best sport in the spring," Fontanella said. "Most football players tend to be good jumpers, and that's why I'm hoping he'll go out for football."

Fontanella remembers

It was like going back to the future for coach Fontanella, who returned to a site that he was once a participant as a miler on the Newington (Conn.) High School track team.

Fontanella witnessed Newington's rival, Wethersfield High School, secure a second place finish in the high jump.

It was good to come home again for Fontanella, who was also delighted to show off his prized young athlete, who he will be grooming into a potential regional champion over the next two years.



Ipswich's O'Flynn closes season at National Outdoor Track and Field championships

By Joshua Boyd/jboyd@cnc.com
GateHouse News Service
Jun 25, 2010

Ipswich — Hannah O'Flynn could “feel the burn” while running at the New Balance National Outdoor Track and Field Championships.

“The temperature was really interesting,” said O'Flynn, speaking about the event held in Greensboro, N.C. over the June 18-20 weekend. “I knew it would be hot, but I didn't get it in my head how hot it would be. It was 95 degrees, sunny and humid. As we were all getting on the track [for the 400-meter dash], and you put your hand on the track for the start, the track would burn your hand.

“While I was running, I could feel the heat of the track through my spikes,” O'Flynn added.

However, the Ipswich High senior-to-be got her first taste of national competition.

“It was a blast,” she said. “It was an honor to be with so much great competition. I had no idea it would be that intense and competitive. It was really fun. Everything there was for the athletes. There were different places to go before and after your events.”

O'Flynn finished 23rd overall with a time of 56.90, a little off her season best time of 56.16 that she ran to win the All-State championships on June 5.

“I still have another year,” she said.

She'll be back next spring to try her luck on the track again, but for now, it's all basketball — AAU, Bay State Games, and next winter, Ipswich High School. For those who may not remember, O'Flynn was the Cape Ann League Small Division Player of the Year in 2009-10, giving the Tigers their third straight such award. The University of Maine's Amber Smith won it the two years before O'Flynn.

O'Flynn also helped the girls soccer team to the state tournament as the goalkeeper, after the team missed “the dance” in 2008.

After her unforgettable junior basketball season, of course, she went and won both the Division 2 and All-State 400-meter crowns.

“I just can't believe it's all gone by,” said O'Flynn. “I was told that ‘junior year is a very important year,’ and it was my best so far. It's all been a good experience.”

She has thought about her future a little bit.

“While I was at Nationals, I went and visited some colleges,” she added. “I don't have a very good idea of where I'm going. I'm trying to observe all these colleges and see where I best fit. I have a lot of choices.

There's a pretty good amount of coaches recruiting me for different things. I am very undecided. I still have some time."

O'Flynn likes the idea of having some time. She is ready for a break — from track and field, at least.

"I'm basically playing basketball every single day, including helping out at a camp in Ipswich with some of the younger kids, being a camp counselor, which is fun," said O'Flynn. "But summer's finally here, so I can spend time with my family and take a break and relax."



Georgetown's Nutter receives Bay State Games Future Leaders scholarship

By Joshua Boyd/jboyd@cnc.com
GateHouse News Service
Jun 25, 2010

Georgetown — Matthew Nutter, a junior at Georgetown High School, was named the winner of one of six Bay State Games Future Leader Scholarship Awards on Friday.

After a rigorous application process, filled with many deserving Bay State Games participants, six student-athletes were selected for possessing outstanding credentials in academics, athletics, community service and leadership.

Nutter was selected alongside Tori Daniels (of South Hadley and Frontier Regional H.S.), Ashley DiFraia (of Revere and Revere H.S.), Sean Flanagan (of Framingham and Bishop Feehan), Kathleen Krah (of Medfield and Medfield H.S.) and Alexander Lagos (of Millis and Millis H.S.).

Applications for the scholarship were submitted by Bay State Games athletes who were in the 11th grade as of the 2009-10 academic year. More than 100 applications were reviewed by Bay State Games staff and board members, before a pool of 18 were asked to interview.

This year, six students from that pool were selected to receive a \$2,000 scholarship. For more than two decades, the Future Leaders Scholarship program has distributed over \$200,000 to students. For more information on the Future Leaders Scholarship and the Bay State Summer Games, please visit www.baystategames.org.

Nutter is an avid swimmer. He has been swimming competitively for 10 years and is currently a part of the Andover YMCA Hurricanes swim team. He also swims for both the summer and winter YMCA national teams.

At school, the Georgetown student was elected treasurer of the National Honor Society and enjoys tutoring middle school students in math and science.

Each week, Nutter spends time volunteering at the Salem Animal Shelter, where he cleans cages, walks the dogs, among other duties.

During the summer, this student athlete is employed as a lifeguard at Salisbury Beach. Putting his talents to use, he competes in the Ipswich Triathlon at Crane's Beach to help raise money for the Ipswich YMCA.
