

Baseball America/NHSBCA Top 25

Capsules by Nathan Rode

The National Classic and Anaheim Lions tournaments exposed some teams, good and bad. Long Beach's Wilson HS is struggling to play consistent baseball while Calvert Hall squeezed out just one win in Southern California against West Lynn (Ore.) HS. Tampa's Plant HS made the biggest jump to No. 13 after being unranked. They were No. 37 in the preseason poll. Calvert Hall dropped from No. 1 to No. 25 and six teams exited. American Heritage HS (Plantation, Fla.) takes over at the top spot as they continue to destroy opponents with a potent offense.

The staff of Baseball America and the National High School Baseball Coaches Association Ranking Committee compiles the top 25 rankings. In-season polls are conducted bi-weekly and released every Tuesday. The final poll will be released June 17. Records included are as of Sunday, March 30 and do not reflect ties.

<i>Rk.</i>	<i>School</i>	<i>Record</i>	<i>Prev.</i>
1.	American Heritage HS, Plantation, FL	15-1	3

It seemed inevitable that the Patriots would take over at No. 1. Opposing coaches and even scouts have compared them to a college team. In their last three games, they've outscored opponents 39-5 and have hit 42 home runs this season.

2.	Tupelo HS, MS	19-0	5
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Tupelo continues to roll even through league play. The Golden Wave has allowed five or more runs in just three games so far while ten of victories have been by a margin of 10 or more.

3.	Sarasota HS, FL	12-2	4
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The Sailors' have won four straight and their only losses are in one-run games to Eagle's View (Jacksonville) and Charlotte (Punta Gorda, Fla.), who have recently appeared on the Baseball America radar.

4.	Bishop Gorman HS, Las Vegas, NV	17-1	9
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The Gaels traveled to Arizona two weeks ago for the Cleats Invitational and simply cleaned house by beating perennial powers Hamilton HS (Chandler, Ariz.), Brohpy Prep (Phoenix) and Rocky Mountain (Colo.) HS. Their 2008 win streak of 17 wins was snapped last week by California's Newbury Park HS.

5.	Moody HS, Corpus Christi, TX	19-2	11
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The Trojans still sit atop the 4-A schools in Texas. They've won eight straight and Rudy Flores' three-run homer gave them a big win over local rival Calallen.

6.	Brookwood HS, Snellsville, GA	12-1	13
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Brookwood took advantage of the spotlight and vaulted to No. 6 after upsetting Walton (Ga.) HS, previously ranked 10th in the country.

7.	Lutheran HS, Orange, CA	12-2	15
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The Lancers have arguably the best rotation in the country, but four games in four days is enough to wear any high school team out. Lutheran came up short in the National Classic, losing 7-2 to Crespi HS (Encino, Calif.) Lefthander Aaron Gates was throwing on two days rest.

- 8. Owasso HS, OK 8-0 17**
The Rams won their 11th straight game of 2008 on a dropped pop up in the bottom of the seventh against Ozark (Mo.) HS. Ben Kozma, younger brother of Pete (Cardinals' first round pick, 2007), scored the winning run.
- 9. Bartlett HS, TN 9-3 12**
The Panthers have been holding strong in 2008, but a significant loss to Grissom (Ala.) HS has put them on alert. They've won two straight since by scores of 16-1 and 15-0.
- 10. Sunrise Mountain HS, Peoria, AZ 15-2 21**
The fifth game in five days got to Sunrise Mountain, snapping a nine-game unbeaten streak, but the Mustangs bounced back against Tempe's Corona del Sol, winning 6-3 last week.
- 11. Valley Christian HS, San Jose, CA 13-2 25**
Valley Christian continues to roll while other California counterparts falter. The Warriors won their second consecutive Crown Classic title this past weekend and are gearing up for the brunt of their league schedule.
- 12. Plant HS, Tampa, FL 17-1 NR**
The Panthers started 15-0, but slipped in a one-run game to fellow Tampa high school Jesuit. They've rebounded with two wins with two to go before the postseason begins.
- 13. Jupiter HS, FL 17-2 NR**
Jupiter traveled cross-country to the National Classic and dropped their first game to the eventual champion Crespi (Calif.) HS. They were able to salvage a 3-1 record in the tournament with their only other loss coming to the always-competitive Palm Beach Gardens (Fla.) HS.
- 14. James River HS, Midlothian, VA 5-2 6**
Game One didn't go as planned, with righthander Daniel Marrs taking the mound and loss in the National Classic opener. Game Two didn't go much better as lefthander Austin Stadler's start was pushed back after he took a foul ball of the knee in the dugout. James River was able to come back with a 2-2 record at the Classic to get them in shape for Virginia 3-A competition.
- 15. St. John's HS, Washington, D.C. 6-2 8**
The Cadets were off to a good start in the National Classic, beating then No. 7 Vista Murrieta in their second game before losing to eventual champion Crespi HS (Encinco, Calif.) and coming out flat against Seminole Ridge (Loxahatchee, Fla.).
- 16. Vista Murrieta HS, Murrieta, CA 10-4 7**
It took 11 innings and their Game Two starter, but the Broncos avoided a first round upset by West Lynn (Ore.) HS thanks to a home run by catcher Trent Garrison. But they lost their next two before closing out the tournament with a 3-2 victory over co-host El Dorado.
- 17. Wilson HS, Long Beach, CA 11-3 2**
The Bruins' lack of depth has been exposed now that righthander Ray Hanson is sidelined with a broken thumb in his non-throwing hand. Aaron Hicks was also kept off the mound for a week with a stiff back. In the last eight games, Wilson has lost two and tied one, all of which came in the Anaheim Lions tournament.

- 18. Cy-Fair HS, Cypress, TX** **11-3** **19**
The Bobcats recently slipped in a game against Houston's Strake Jesuit, but were winners of five straight since the Brenham Tournament.
- 19. Nova HS, Davie, FL** **14-2** **24**
The Titans have outscored opponents by almost 100 runs and their only recent loss came in a 3-2 ballgame against Fort Lauderdale's St. Thomas Aquinas.
- 20. Texarkana HS, AR** **16-5** **18**
Injuries are still nagging the Razorbacks as Garret Underwood is not back to 100 percent and they've dropped a couple of games in league play and a Little Rock tournament.
- 21. Walton HS, GA** **7-4** **10**
The Raiders have hit a tough stretch in their schedule, dropping three of their last six games. However, those losses came against No. 6 Brookwood, Kell and Lassiter, three teams that always sit at the top of the Georgia rankings.
- 22. Washington HS, New York City, NY** **3-0** **NR**
It's still cold in New York but George Washington is off to a hot start with 13 straight wins. They're lead by Jean Carlos Rodriguez, a catcher who's been getting some professional interest.
- 23. South Caldwell HS, Hudson, N.C.** **12-1** **NR**
In 2007, lefthander and first round pick Madison Bumgarner, helped the Spartans become a mainstay in the rankings. In 2008 they're led by Jimmy Messer who had 26 strikeouts in his first 15 innings pitched. They have also shut out six opponents so far.
- 24. Florida Christian HS, Miami, FL** **14-2** **NR**
Another private powerhouse known as the Patriots, Florida Christian was first noticed this year when they beat Barbe HS (Shreveport, La.) in a Houston tournament. Barbe was No. 6 at the time. They have also most recently knocked off Charlotte Christian and Russell County (Ala.).
- 25. Calvert Hall HS, Baltimore, MD** **5-3** **1**
The Cardinals' party as the No. 1 team didn't last long as their trip to the National Classic wasn't very pretty. They dropped their first three games before beating fellow 0-3 West Linn (Ore.) on the final day of play with a score of 4-3.