

Pitching Gives The Woodlands Hot Start

By **Nathan Rode (Baseball America)**

The Woodlands (Texas) High started the season as the No. 10 in the Baseball America/National High School Baseball Coaches Association Top 25 and the Highlanders are proving themselves worthy so far. They're off to a 5-0 start and two of their pitchers have already thrown no-hitters this season. Right-hander Carter Hope, who is committed to Oklahoma State, took the hill for the first time in his high school career last week and no-hit Klein Collins High (Spring, Texas), a perennial power in the Houston area. Hope pitched a complete game, striking out nine and walking just one.

Against Houston's Clear Lake High on Feb. 26, lefty Ryan Burnett, a Texas Christian recruit, fired a no-hitter of his own.

"Burnett threw a great first game last week," head coach Ron Eastman said. "Then he came back tonight and was pretty lights out. He was so dominant; he was just throwing fastballs the last three innings. He had good command of his curveball. He's a great young man. He's watched (Bryan) Brickhouse and Kevin (McCanna) and he's just really dialed in and focused right now. Those three guys feed off of each other. They want to try to one-up each other."

Eastman said a scout told him Burnett was sitting 86-89 mph. He improved to 2-0 on the season and has allowed one unearned run in 13 innings. A walk, sacrifice and error in the fourth inning allowed a run to score in Tuesday's no-hitter. Burnett struck out 15 to bring his season total to 22.

The third pitcher Eastman referred to is Chris Andritsos, a sophomore right-hander and corner infielder that figures to be heavily recruited in the near future. He is 5-for-14 on the season and hit his second home run in the victory over Clear Lake.

"He's a specimen," Eastman said. "He's really good on the mound and equally, if not better, offensively."

Andritsos has made one start so far, throwing six innings and allowing one run on two hits. He didn't walk a batter and struck out 11.

Texas schools run through the gauntlet early with three weeks of tournaments before getting into district play. The Highlanders have five more games this week so their pitching depth will be tested. It won't stop there though, as The Woodlands will travel to Cary, N.C., for the National High School Invitational at the end of March.