

## **Top 50 Pre-Season Team Capsule**

### **1. Huntington Beach (Calif.) High**

After a slow start in 2015, Huntington Beach rebounded and went 25-8, going on to win the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) Southern Division championship with a team filled with talented underclassmen. In 2016, most of that squad is back. Pitchers Hagen Danner, Nicholas Pratto and Logan Poulsen, all strong prospects committed to Pacific-12 Conference schools, form a dynamic staff for the Oilers. Huntington Beach should be expected to win every time it takes the field this season, though its schedule is filled with skilled Southern California competition. The Oilers will play in two very challenging tournaments in the National High School Invitational in Cary, N.C., and the Boras Classic.

### **2. Walton High, Marietta, Ga.**

Walton is hungry after losing the 6A Georgia State Championship in 2015, and returns quite a bit from last year's squad. The Raiders' top player is shortstop Carter Kieboom, a Clemson commit who could be a high draft pick. In addition to strong, fundamentally sound defense and power in the middle of the lineup, Walton also has a bona fide ace in Georgia commit Zac Kristofak. The Raiders face a challenging conference schedule and will also be tested at the National High School Invitational in March.

### **3. Coppell (Texas) High**

The Cowboys have arguably the best pitching staff in the country, with 6-foot-5 righthander Charles King leading the way. King, a Texas Christian commit, teams up with seniors Ray Gaither, Chris Burdine and Hayden Kettler, as well as junior John Kodros, to form a five-headed dragon that could run the table in Texas's tough 6A classification. Coppell returns 11 starters from last year's squad.

### **4. Hamilton High, Chandler, Ariz.**

Hamilton has a powerful 1-2 punch in its rotation, with righthanders Zane Strand and Logan Boyer. Strand has a loose arm and is committed to Arizona State, while Boyer is a talented catcher and pitcher and headed to San Diego State. In total, the Huskies bring back eight starters from last year's team.

### **5. JSerra Catholic High, San Juan Capistrano, Calif.**

JSerra's storied baseball tradition continues in 2016. The Lions should have no trouble putting runs on the board, with speedy junior Royce Lewis setting the table for seniors Chase Strumpf, Brady Shocky, Davis Wendzel and Jack Owen, who should also serve as the ace of the pitching staff. JSerra's difficult schedule includes Huntington Beach, Orange Lutheran and the loaded field at the Boras Classic's Southern California bracket.

### **6. North Broward Prep, Pompano Beach, Fla.**

North Broward has 10 seniors bound for college baseball, with Greg Veliz leading the group. Veliz is a righthanded pitcher and an infielder. On the mound, his fastball can bump 98 mph and he has shown the ability to spin a quality breaking ball. In the rotation, Veliz will team up with Evan McKendry and Anthony Masiello, giving the Eagles a potentially dangerous rotation. The Eagles will be tested in late March, as they'll play in the National High School Invitational.

### **7. De La Salle High, Concord, Calif.**

Despite losing ace Justin Hooper to UCLA, the Spartans have returning five pitchers committed to play Division I baseball: Nick Sparks (St. Mary's), Connor Redmond (Cal Poly), Conner Roberts (UC Santa Barbara), Jordan Criss (Columbia) and junior Cullen Kafka. Armani Smith (UC Santa Barbara) is the team's top returning hitter. The Spartans, who made it to California's North Coast finals in 2015, face early tests against St. Francis and Elk Grove, and will show people what they're made of quickly in 2016.

#### **8. Oxford (Miss.) High**

After a brilliant 2015 season in which they won the Mississippi 5A state title, the Chargers are poised for another run in 2016. Oxford has two Under Armour All-Americans in shortstop Grae Kessinger and transfer catcher Thomas Dillard. Their rotation will be anchored by returning aces Jason Barber and Houston Roth, both of whom are committed to play at Ole Miss. Oxford should run the table in Mississippi again this season.

#### **9. Orange (Calif.) Lutheran High**

The Lancers bring back a talented group from 2015, with several high-profile underclassmen. Juniors Garrett Mitchell and Tristan Hanoian will set the tone for the offense, and Cole Spear, Chris Burica and Luke Mattson should all play a key role for the pitching staff. Freshman catcher Gabe Briones brings in vital experience, having won a gold medal with Team USA's 15U national team last summer. Orange Lutheran's schedule is filled with challenge, including Huntington Beach, Puyallup (Washington), JSerra Catholic and the loaded field at the Boras Classic.

#### **10. Christian Brothers High, Memphis**

After winning the Division 2 Class AA Tennessee state championship in 2015, the Purple Wave look to stay strong in 2016. Christian Brothers gets a boost in transfer righthander Weston Bizzle, whose fastball can reach into the low 90s. Austin Peay commit Landon Kelly will lead the way for the Purple Wave offensively.

**11. Pope:** Pope's roster is filled with Division I prospects, and 3b/rhp Josh Lowe is a likely first-round pick.

**12. Moeller:** Moeller has won three state championships over the past four years, and returns four Division I prospects.

**13. Basic:** Senior righthander Ryne Nelson, an Oregon signee, will anchor the Wolves' rotation in 2016.

**14. Prosper:** The Eagles cruised to a 35-3 season and a state championship in Texas's difficult 5A classification, and they'll challenge for another championship this spring.

**15. Barbe:** Last year's 5A Louisiana state champions return an experienced rotation and fundamentally sound club under legendary coach Glenn Cecchini.

**16. Plant:** Sophomore of/lhp Connor Scott brings intriguing tools and solid experience to the table, having played a key role as a freshman last year.

**17. James Madison:** After winning the 6A Virginia state championship in 2015, the Warhawks return most of their starters, including Brigham Young commits Pete Nielsen and Matt Favero.

- 18. St. Francis:** UCLA commit Jeremy Ydens and UC Santa Barbara commit Andrew Martinez will look to lead St. Francis to another CIF Central open division state championship in 2016.
- 19. Bentonville:** The defending 7A Arkansas state champions look to repeat in 2016.
- 20. Flanagan:** The Falcons are loaded with Division I talent, and junior Mark Vientos is one of the top offensive players in the country.
- 21. Parkview:** Catcher Austin Biggar and righthander Will Ethridge give Parkview one of the nation's best batteries.
- 22. Houston Westside:** The Wolves return nine starters from last year's squad, and they'll look to do damage in Texas' competitive 6A classification.
- 23. Corpus Christi Calallen:** Offense will be key for the Wildcats in 2016, as they'll look to replace three of their top starters on the mound.
- 24. Christian Brothers College:** Missouri's defending 5A state champions bring back six starters in 2016, including righthander Blake Charlton, a Missouri commit.
- 25. Rock Canyon:** With 10 lettermen and seven starters returning, Rock Canyon will look to defend its Colorado 5A state championship this season.
- 26. Heritage:** The Patriots return a strong core from last year's 20-5 squad, including promising two-way prospect and St. Mary's commit Kevin Milam.
- 27. Malvern Prep:** Last year's Pennsylvania Independent Schools Athletic Association champions have an impressive group of nine college-bound players, including junior slugger Shane Muntz and projectable Wake Forest commit Brady Devereux.
- 28. St. Xavier:** Three Division I recruits return from last year's 29-10 squad.
- 29. St. Thomas Aquinas:** Flamethrowing righthander Riley Pint could be a first-round pick in June.
- 30. Farragut:** Shortstop Duncan Pence is the top prospect for the fundamentally sound Admirals.
- 31. Basha:** Senior Gonzaga commit Casey Legumina leads the Bears' promising pitching staff.
- 32. Rancho Bernardo:** The Broncos have had no shortage of talent in recent years, and they have an exciting core returning as they look to repeat as CIF San Diego champions in 2016.
- 33. Loganville:** Under Armour All-American lefthander Mitchell Miller leads a Red Devils squad that comes off a 30-5 season.
- 34. Archbishop McCarthy:** 2017 first baseman Alex Toral brings elite power to the Mavericks' lineup.
- 35. Jefferson:** Head coach John Lowery has most of last year's 37-2 team returning as the Cougars look to defend their 3A state championship.
- 36. Timberline:** Timberline has Idaho's reigning Gatorade Player of The Year in Gonzaga commit Parker Price.
- 37. Elk Grove:** Senior first baseman and Cal State Fullerton commit Dylan Carlson brings power to the Thundering Herd's lineup.
- 38. Arrowhead:** The Warhawks went 26-2 in 2015, and they have Florida-bound righthander Nate Brown anchoring their rotation this spring.

- 39. Omaha Westside:** Head coach Bob Greco has guided the Warriors to Nebraska Class A state championships for three consecutive years, and the seniors will look to finish their high school careers with a clean sweep in 2016.
- 40. Buchanan:** Righthander Grant Gambrell leads a promising Buchanan squad that went 29-4 en route to a CIF Central Section Division I state championship last season.
- 41. Venice:** The Indians return a dangerous lineup that includes promising infielders in junior Florida commit Shane Shifflett and senior Jacksonville commit Scott Dubrule, as well as hard-throwing righthander Trevor Holloway.
- 42. George Washington:** Head coach Steve Mandl has built a powerhouse in New York, and his squad will look to repeat its 2015 PSAL championship this spring.
- 43. DeSoto Central:** The Jaguars are looking to build off of 2015's Mississippi 6A state championship.
- 44. Owasso:** Coach Larry Turner has built a perennial powerhouse at Owasso that lives on in 2016.
- 45. Tottenville:** The Pirates seek redemption after losing last year's Public Schools Athletic League championship 1-0 to George Washington.
- 46. St. Thomas More:** LSU-bound senior Mason Templet will set the tone for the Cougars' lineup.
- 47. Francis Howell:** The Vikings return most of last year's pitching staff, which is highlighted by Braydon Cook, Justin Perkins, Ryan Perkins and Chase Beiter.
- 48. La Costa Canyon:** The Mavericks have four Division I prospects, including outfielder Mickey Moniak, who projects as a first-round pick.
- 49. Cullman:** In 2015, Cullman won 44 games with a team built around an exceptional sophomore class. That group returns with another year of maturity under its belt this spring.
- 50. Christian Brothers Academy (N.J.):** New Jersey Gatorade Player of the Year Gianluca Dalatri will give the Colts a chance to win every time he takes the mound, and catcher Brandon Martorano provides veteran leadership and a power bat in the middle of the lineup