

2010 Baseball America/BCA Top 50 Preseason Rankings

By **Nathan Rode** – *Baseball America*

As pitchers and catchers report to their respective spring training camps, young ball players dust off their gear and head to the field—or gymnasium depending on their geographic location—for the start of their high school baseball season. Fifty quality teams make up the National High School Baseball Coaches Association/Baseball America Preseason Top 50 poll. Some of them are regulars to the scene and others are getting their first taste of national attention.

Bellaire (Texas) High starts the season at No. 1 and the Cardinals are no stranger to this list. They began 2009 at No. 11, rose to No. 1 and fell to No. 16 after early exit from the playoffs. Head coach Rocky Manuel and his squad will look for some redemption in 2010, but obviously have a challenging road in the state of Texas.

As always, there are several prestigious tournaments that will host some of these squads as well as intriguing matchups between ranked teams.

The National Classic will once again be held in Anaheim, Calif. The field is stacked again and includes No. 3 Edison High (Huntington Beach, Calif.) and No. 35 Lutheran High (Orange, Calif.). Perennial powers Mater Dei High (Santa Ana, Calif.) and Notre Dame Prep (Scottsdale, Ariz.) will be there as well.

Rich Hofman, the former head coach of Miami's Westminster Academy will be holding a National Classic of his own in Orlando. Partaking in that tournament will be several strong Florida schools as well as No. 4 Farragut (Knoxville).

Ohio will have a great matchup as No. 19 Walsh Jesuit (Cuyahoga Falls) and No. 24 St. Edward will face off in the season opener.

The staffs of Baseball America and the NHBSCA compile the Top 50 rankings. In-season polls of the top 25 will be conducted every two weeks and released every other Tuesday throughout the season. The first in-season poll will be released on March 16 and the final poll will be released June 8 and will expand to 50 teams. Records below are from 2009 and do not include ties.

1. Bellaire (Texas) HS, 33-4 (16)

The Cardinals had a national title lined up in their sights in 2009 after taking over the top spot at the end of March. They faltered, but regained the No. 1 ranking in mid-May only to lose in the region finals. Chances are good again for Bellaire in 2010 as the team has six Divisions I signees and a standout junior. The offense is centered around shortstop Alex Silver (Texas; .463-8-42) and middle infielder Kirby Taylor (Texas A&M; .432-8-44). The pitching staff is strong enough to go deep into the postseason with righthander Kyle Chaskin (Texas A&M; 6-1, 1.33) and junior Toller Boardman (11-1, 1.03).

2. Columbus HS, Miami 25-6 (NR)

With eight seniors signed to D-I programs, plus two juniors with verbal D-I commitments, the Explorers hope to avenge a loss to Tampa's Alonzo High in the 2009 state title game. They have a solid one-two combination with righthander Andres Perez Lobo (Florida International; 8-1, 1.35) and junior lefthander Andy Suarez leading the pitching staff. Transfer shortstop Jesse Pintado (Florida International) will also see some time on the mound.

3. Edison HS, Huntington Beach, Calif., 23-6 (NR)

The Chargers lost to Tyler Matzek and Capistrano Valley High in the Southern Section finals in 2009. With juniors Eric Snyder (OF; .354-3-17) and Henry Owens (9-1, 0.98) returning and the addition of transfer shortstop Christian Lopes, Edison has three pro prospects that will keep them competitive in 2010 and 2011.

4. Farragut HS, Knoxville, 38-5 (8)

Legendary Farragut head coach Tommy Pharr took the head coaching position at the Christian Academy of Knoxville. He leaves a winning tradition in the hands of Matt Buckner, a former player and assistant of Pharr's. Buckner will have to replace four starters but already has two proven underclassmen in Nicky Delmonico (.465-.12-57) and lefthander Philip Pfeifer (12-2, 1.53). Delmonico can play a variety of positions including catcher and third base, but will hold down shortstop in 2010.

5. Bishop Gorman HS, Las Vegas, 40-4 (1)

The Gaels started the 2009 season atop this ranking, faltered early and then rode a 35-game winning streak into the playoffs. They eventually won their fourth consecutive state title and first national championship. They lost four important starters including first baseman/lefthander Jeff Malm (Fifth round, Rays), but return four starters, 10 players total, including junior catcher Eric Van Meetren (.496-12-64), who hit five home runs in a game last season.

6. Menchville HS, Newport News, Va., 25-2 (2)

The Monarchs won the 3-A title last season on their way to finishing behind only Bishop Gorman in the final standings. They lost their ace in righthander Ethan Carter (South Carolina), but have righthander Austin Chrismon (East Carolina), who is 18-0, 1.05 in his varsity career, to take his place. They also have Deshorn Lake, a righthander from the Virgin Islands that can run his fastball up to 96 mph.

7. Capistrano Valley HS, Mission Viejo, Calif., 26-6 (17)

Losing lefthander Tyler Matzek (first round, Rockies) is a huge blow to the pitching staff, but the defending Southern Section champions have three pitchers committed to D-I schools in righthander Brandon Brennan (Oregon), righthander Lee Casas (UC Irvine) and lefthander Bryan Clough (UC Irvine). They don't have a ton of experience, but a rotation like that goes a long way in prep competition.

8. Naples (Fla.) HS, 32-1 (6)

The Golden Eagles' only loss last season came against Lake Wales (Fla.) High in a three-game state semifinal series. After taking the rubber match, they won the 4-A state title. Naples looks to make another run with the return of seven starters including third baseman Brad Fieger (.452-6-44). Naples needs holdovers such as outfielder/lefthander Cameron Griffin (5-0, 1.21, 5 saves; .390-1-12) to improve their production to help ease the loss of two graduated pitchers, who combined for 21 victories.

9. The Woodlands (Texas) HS, 21-9 (NR)

The Highlanders have a history of appearing in the Top 25 and won a national championship in 2006 with a righthander/shortstop named Kyle Drabek. They return to the spotlight this season after a disappointing exit in the region quarterfinals in 2009. Leading the team will be No. 1 high school prospect Jameson Taillon (8-2, 2.82). He'll have a supporting cast of two other D-I signees in righthander/infielder Nick Frey (TCU) and third baseman/righthander Spencer Davis (Texas A&M) as well as catcher Daniel Homann, who committed to Austin's St. Edwards, a D-II program.

10. Rocky Mountain HS, Fort Collins, Colo., 22-4 (44)

The Lobos keep rolling even after losing top players such as Andy Burns (now a sophomore at Kentucky) and athletic outfielder Jake Stewart (a freshman at Stanford). They return 13 seniors and six starters who have contributed to three straight Colorado state titles. Lefthander Marco Gonzales (Gonzaga; 9-1, 2.03), shortstop Pierce Trumper (Arkansas; .441-2-16) and catcher Bryan Matz (Air Force; .341-3-8) lead the 2010 squad.

11. Roswell (Ga.) HS, 21-7 (NR)

The Hornets exited the 2009 state playoffs in the first round, but have two D-I righthanders and a junior transfer to lead the way this season. Andrew Smith (North Carolina; 6-5, 3.26) is a Top 100 prospect and will give Roswell a nice 1-2 punch with Zane Evans (Georgia Tech; 5-1, 3.75). Shortstop Tyler Green is a verbal commit to Georgia and transferred from perennial state power Lassiter High.

12. Sumrall (Miss.) HS, 36-0 (7)

The Bobcats are riding a 42-game winning streak into the 2010 season and are in position to dominate their 3-A schedule on the way to a potential third straight state title. Only three seniors are gone from last year's team and seven starters return, including senior shortstop Chase Lewallen (Mississippi State; .435-5-39), third baseman Jackson Posey (.505-10-60) and outfielder Chad Guice (.365-4-41).

13. St. Rita HS, Chicago, 33-6 (45)

Runners-up in the 4-A state tournament last season, the Mustangs have four D-I recruits including outfielder and Arizona State signee Mark Payton (.438-11-40). Other recruits include middle infielder Kyle Stearns (Holy Cross; .337-0-13), outfielder Anthony Andres (Northern Illinois; .463-3-21) and righthander John Starcevich (Chicago; 2-1, 2.10). Junior first baseman/lefthander Joey Filomeno (.313-3-27; 1-2, 5.33) is verbally committed to Louisville.

14. Rancho Buena Vista HS, Vista, Calif., 24-11 (NR)

The Longhorns finished in second place in the San Diego Section in 2009, but return three starting pitchers and their entire infield, which is anchored by the Aflac Game MVP, shortstop Tony Wolters (San Diego; .396-3-29). Supporting Wolters will be third baseman Jimmy Allen (Cal Poly; .387-5-27), righthander Reed Reznicek (Indiana; 4-1, 3.91) and lefthander Anthony McIver (Notre Dame).

15. Barbe HS, Lake Charles, La., 30-7 (NR)

Coach Glenn Cecchini's storied program is primed for yet another state title run and he'll have one of his sons leading the way. Shortstop Garin Cecchini (.402-6-46, 53 SB) is a top prospect for the 2010 draft and committed to Louisiana State. His brother Gavin is also an infielder and a returning starter as a sophomore. First baseman Hommy Rosado (LSU-Eunice; .326-2-11) should add some pop to the lineup.

16. Hamilton HS, Chandler, Ariz., 23-12 (NR)

The Huskies finished second to Tempe's Corona del Sol High in the 5-A-I state championship in 2009. They'll look to return and claim the title this season with seven returning lettermen including Arizona signees and infielders Ryan Casillas (.500-11-34) and Jorge Flores (.415-3-21). The pitching staff, which is talented but young, will be led by righthander Zak Johnson (3-2, 4.41).

17. Owasso (Okla.) HS, 34-4 (3)

Under head coach Larry Turner; the Rams have won nine state titles, six in the 2000s. While they did lose a fair amount of talent, the Rams instill a tradition that spreads among the underclassmen. Owasso has been to the state finals 12 of the last 13 years and fully expects to do it again in 2010 with a talented group that includes lefthander/outfielder Ryan Wilson (Seminole State College; 5-0, 3.25; .412-1-32) and righthander Dylan Bundy (12-1, 0.88) who transferred from Sperry (Okla.) High and is one of the top pitching prospects for next year.

18. Alonzo HS, Tampa, 30-3 (11)

Alonzo took down preseason No. 2 Columbus in the 6-A state title in 2009. With Columbus' batch of Division I signees and the return of Alonzo's top two pitchers, a rematch could be in the making. Senior lefthander Thomas Dorminy (South Florida; 8-0, 1.31) struck out 81 batters in 48 innings last year. Junior righthander and Cuban defector Jose Fernandez (5-1, 2.44) also returns.

19. Walsh Jesuit HS, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, 29-4 (41)

The Warriors bring back a core group of seniors that won a state title as sophomores in 2008 and finished second in the state in 2009. Five of them are committed to D-I schools. Righthander Tyler Skulina (Virginia; 9-0, 0.75) will lead the pitching staff while the offense will look to shortstop Johnny Fasola (Kansas State; .392-7-25).

20. Thomas HS, New York, 24-0 (36)

The Tigers finished the 2009 season with a 24-0 record and PSAL Class A championship. They should be good again with junior centerfielder Miguel Reyes (.375-3-24) and junior shortstop Alberto Morales leading the way. But they'll have competition with league-rival Washington High (Manny Ramirez's alma mater), the preseason No. 39 team.

21. Clovis West HS, Fresno, Calif., 28-6 (NR)

The Golden Eagles finished second in the Central Section in 2009, losing to Bakersfield's Stockdale High. Eight starters return for the 2010 season and will be led by shortstop Eric Karch (Pepperdine; .295-4-20) and junior catcher John Koretoff (.402-0-30).

22. Germantown Academy, Fort Washington, Pa., 24-6 (NR)

The alma mater of Phillies Hall of Famer Robin Roberts, Germantown Academy was bounced from the 2009 state semifinals by Malvern (Pa.) Prep, but they return two top 100 prospects in shortstop Sean Coyle (North Carolina; .463-2-25) and righthander Keenan Kish (Florida; 3-4, 2.50).

23. Charlotte Christian School, 30-3 (13)

The Knights cruised to the North Carolina Private School 3-A state title in 2009 and are in prime position to repeat. It won't be easy though as they travel to Orlando to face some Florida competition. Leading the offense will be outfielder Ty Linton (North Carolina; .456-12-50), a superior athlete who is also a highly touted football recruit, along with shortstop Jake Watson (South Carolina) and second baseman Trey Laney (Western Carolina; .326-4-24).

24. St. Edward HS, Lakewood, Ohio, 21-7 (NR)

The only school with two preseason All-Americans, St. Edward will look to improve upon a region runner-up finish in 2009. Leading the team will be infielder/righthander Stetson Allie, who saw limited time on the hill in 2009 but can run his fastball up to 97, and catcher Alex Lavisky (.481-6-27). Both are first team All-Americans. The Eagles will have an early test facing No. 19 Walsh Jesuit in the season opener.

25. Severna Park (Md.) HS, 22-2 (21)

The Falcons have recently begun to dominate Maryland 4-A competition, winning three state titles since 2003 (the only three in school history). They return two all-state players and Maryland signees in catcher Alex Ramsay (.362-7-22) and shortstop Kyle Convissar (.481-8-31).

- 26 Mamaroneck (N.Y.) HS 23-4 (50)
- 27 Archbishop Mitty HS, San Jose, Calif. 24-12 (NR)
- 28 New Trier HS, Winnetka, Ill. 32-7 (NR)
- 29 Florida Christian, Miami 23-4 (NR)
- 30 La Cueva HS, Albuquerque 29-2 (12)
- 31 Mill Creek HS, Hoschton, Ga. 20-11 (NR)
- 32 Northshore HS, Slidell, La. 34-2 (4)

- 33 Lawrence (Kan.) HS 21-4 (27)
- 34 Harrison County HS, Cynthiana, Ky. 27-10 (NR)
- 35 Lutheran HS, Orange, Calif. 18-11 (NR)
- 36 Pelham (Ala.) HS 24-6 (NR)
- 37 Moeller HS, Cincinnati 25-5 (38)
- 38 Fort Zumwalt South HS, Saint Peters, Mo. 28-6 (40)
- 39 Washington HS, New York 22-4 (NR)
- 40 Wando HS, Mount Pleasant, S.C. 28-4 (NR)
- 41 Maize (Kan.) HS 20-4 (NR)
- 42 Malvern (Pa.) Prep 27-6 (NR)
- 43 Central HS, Madison, Miss. 27-5 (48)
- 44 Cartersville (Ga.) HS 33-4 (15)
- 45 Moody HS, Corpus Christi, Texas 37-4 (9)
- 46 Kell HS, Charlotte 38-8 (35)
- 47 JSerra Catholic HS, San Juan Capistrano, Calif. 22-7 (NR)
- 48 Paul VI HS, Fairfax, Va. 22-9 (NR)
- 49 Millard West HS, Omaha, Neb. 27-10 (NR)
- 50 Deering HS, Portland, Maine 25-0 (NR)