

2009



## Team to Watch



Mater Dei High School, Santa Ana, California

By David Himmelstein

It should come as no surprise that the team to watch this spring comes from Orange County in California. The Mater Dei Monarchs come from an area that has multiple teams ranked in the California Top 25.

“This team’s chemistry is very good. We enjoy being around each other, and lean on each other. We have a great approach,” comments Coach Burt Call when asked what has led to this year’s success.

That and a good work ethic, by focusing practice on pitching and defense, the Monarch’s were able to start the year off with a 9-game win streak. It also doesn’t hurt to have lots ballplayers with talent.

It all begins with Aaron Northcraft, senior RHP, and ace of the staff. Sporting a record of 6-2 with a save, Northcraft has an ERA of 1.33 in 47.3 innings. He has struck out 39 only allowing 32 hits and giving up 17 walks. Northcraft is in his third season as varsity starter.

Not only can Northcraft pitch it he is dangerous at the plate. This season he is hitting .403 with 27 hits, including 4 doubles and 3 home runs. Aaron also did his part by driving in 19 runs.

Backing him up from the bump is senior Jake Hamblin and junior Matt Blanchard. Hamblin, 2-0, with a 2.22 ERA in 41 innings, has only allowed 36 hits and 17 walks, striking out 25. While Blanchard comes in to close things out, he is 4-0 with 3 saves and a 1.62 ERA in 17.3 innings. Blanchard has allowed 14 hits, 5 walks, and has struck out 18.

Working on pitching has definitely paid its dividends. Mater Dei has an overall record of 21-5, and in conference they are 7-4.

**Pitching may dominate, but a team needs to score in order to win. Senior 1B Brian Frattali is getting it done at the dish. He is hitting .357 with 20 hits, 4 doubles, 1 home run, and 11 RBI's. Frattali is the Monarch's clean up hitter and quiet leader.**

**"He just goes about his business, and does well in the clutch," notes Coach Call.**

**As good as a defensive SS can be is junior Derek Campbell. He is also a force at the plate and on the bases. Campbell is hitting .361 with 22 hits, 4 doubles, 6 home runs, and 16 RBI's. He has also swiped 4 bags.**

**Coach Call also mentioned Corey Hahn, junior OF, with a great arm, who comes through with the big hit. He is hitting .355 with 22 hits, 5 doubles, a triple, and 2 homers. Hahn has driven in 8 runs.**

**"Chemistry!" Call exclaims, to sum up what makes this year special.**

**As the regular season draws to a close, be sure the Mater Dei Monarch's are out on the field everyday working hard, and are preparing for a championship run. Good luck Monarchs!**