

2009



Team to Watch



**Menchville High School
Newport News, Virginia**

By David Himmelstein

There has to be a first time to everything. 2009 will go as the year the Menchville Monarchs won their first Group AAA baseball championship of Virginia, capping off a dreamlike season.

The Monarchs have been nationally ranked for most of the season. They showed why in the championship game.

They beat Hanover 7-1. Ethan Carter dominated, not allowing a hit until the fourth. Pitching a complete game, Carter struck out the final batter, ending the game impressively. He only allowed one run on 7 hits and struck out 6.

Carter has devastated opponents all year. He was 11-1 with a 1.17 ERA in 65.2 innings. The 6'5" righty had 100 strikeouts, allowed only 48 hits, and gave up 11 free bases. Ethan also got it done at the plate, hitting .360 with 18 hits, 2 doubles and a home run. Coach Phil Forbes believed a big portion of the success of this year, was linked to his pitching staff.

"There are four pitchers that can start versus anyone," he comments. Beside Carter, another of the four and leader by example was Matt Armstead. The senior P/OF was 3-0 with a 2.53 ERA, in 19.1 innings. He struck out 28, with 14 hits and 2 walks. He was also an offensive force, hitting .440 with 33 hits, 5 doubles, 2 triples, and 5 long balls.

"Matt is a major core of the program. He is a leader by example and helps the younger guys. He is always on-time and willing to do whatever it takes," mentions Coach Phil Forbes, in regards to Armstead.

Then there is Austin Chrismon. He was 8-0 with a 1.05 ERA in 53.1 innings. He recorded 80 strike outs, only letting up 29 hits, and 15 walks.

Rounding out this strong staff was Jharel Cotton. He was 4-1 with an awesome 0.76 ERA in 36.2 innings. He had an incredible 74 strike outs, with only 18 hits and 13 walks. Cotton

was a major impact from the plate all year. He hit .415 with 34 hits, 5 doubles, 2 triples and 3 home runs.

Cotton also strongly influenced the championship game. He had an amazing day going 3 for 4 with a triple and 3 RBI's.

Other players added offense during Menchvilles's championship season. Jeff Grey, junior C, hit .360 with 32 hits, 8 doubles and 2 homers. Also adding his force was Devorn Lake. He hit .376 with 32 hits 8 doubles and 4 home runs.

"We had a year round focus on conditioning. We wanted to be bigger, faster, and stronger. Also we added a new assistant. Jeff Grey really took over as the hitting coach. He was able to get the guys to be focused and confident at the plate," commented Coach Forbes, when asked what helped lead to this year's success.

This is a team that became brothers. They battled everyday with each other, and played well from the top of the lineup to the bottom. Coach Forbes shared that the team was a close knit group and always had a positive attitude.

Congratulations! Hard work definitely paid off....