

TEAM SPOTLIGHT

Mansfield MudHens Baseball Club

Columbus, Ohio

Editorial by Teresa Vore; Player photos courtesy of Ryan Niemiec-Digital Dynamix; Nolan Hatfield pic courtesy of Stacey Hatfield

The Mansfield MudHens enter the 2011 season with the same core group of players from the 2010 club that went 31-17 along with some new faces. The team was formed in 2008 as an 8-U Coach-Pitch club and has enjoyed great success each year with records of 30-10, 29-18, and 31-17 in 2008, 2009, and 2010 respectively. The MudHens won the USSSA 8-U Coach-Pitch Ohio State Championship, the Hilliard Classic Tournament, the Mentor Firecracker Tournament, and were runners-up at the Navarre Tournament in 2008. In 2009, the team moved into kid-pitch competition. The MudHens played in the Central Ohio Youth Baseball League (COYBL) for their regular season. They were runners-up in the USSSA 9-U Ohio State Championship (Open Division), runners-up in the 9-U Wayne Williams Dublin Memorial Tournament, runners-up in the Mentor Firecracker Tournament, and finished fourth at the USSSA 9-U World Series International Open Baseball Tournament in Crystal Lake, Illinois in 2009. The MudHens played a second regular season in COYBL. They were runners-up in the Euclid 10-U Batter-Up Spring Classic Tournament, finished third in the USSSA 10-U Ohio State Championship (Elite Division), runners-up at the King's Island 10-U Invitational Tournament, won the USSSA Midwest Meat Grinder Tournament in North Ridgeville, and played in the CABA World Series in Westfield, Indiana in 2010.

The MudHens are very excited about the upcoming season and look forward to trying to exceed their great successes of the prior three years. The coaches are dedicated and the players are always willing to work hard to improve their physical skills and hone their mental approach to the game.

The players come from five different school districts, but are all from Richland County in north-central Ohio. Our league, the Central Ohio Youth Baseball League, is mostly teams from Columbus, Ohio



Photo Courtesy of Picture Day Photography

and surrounding communities. We are very proud of our team's performance since we draw from a much smaller population area than do almost all of the teams we play against.

The parents group is close-knit and this helps with team chemistry. People always step up to help out families with other conflicts with a ride, or a meal, or even a hotel room for out-of-town tournaments. And, Mrs. Blubaugh is always there with her traditional cookies for the players (and siblings) after each game. We're not sure how she does it when we have weekend doubleheaders in different cities!

Our coaches, Jayson Stone (Head) and Doug Rickert have a combined 23 years of high school coaching experience and have developed a number of players who went on to play at NCAA Division 1 schools and professionally. The practices are intense, organized, and well run. Physical and mental fundamentals are stressed. Players' health, especially pitchers, and having fun playing the game are the primary goals of the coaching staff. The wins come because the players execute sound, fundamental baseball and enjoy playing the game with each other. There is no happier moment when someone makes an unexpected play in the clutch to pull out a win.

The 2011 Mansfield MudHens players by roster number:

Trey Williams #1: Trey plays first base and pitcher. This will be his third year as a MudHen. His favorite MLB player is Josh Hamilton. Trey has been the MudHens' leading hitter in both of his years on the team - hitting for both power and average – and has won many games with a clutch, late-inning hit. He is also a left-handed power pitcher with a Major League quality pick-off move. Trey regularly gets out of jams with a timely pick-off of a runner. Trey also plays football and basketball. Trey is a fifth grade student at Hillsdale Middle School. He is an Honor Student and is the school ambassador for anti-bullying. Mrs. Dawson is the principal and his homeroom teacher is Mrs. Weisenstein. His favorite subject is social studies.

Trenton Mortimer #3: Trenton plays third base and pitcher. This will be his fourth year as a MudHen. His favorite MLB player is Albert Pujols. Trenton is the best bunter on the team. The MudHens have won numerous games as a result of a clutch squeeze play with Trenton laying down a perfect bunt. He is a steady third baseman who makes all of the fielding plays and has an accurate throwing arm. Trenton also plays state league soccer. Trenton is a sixth grade student at Eastview Elementary. He is an Honor Student and is involved in the Stage Club. Mr. Rupert is the principal and his homeroom teacher is Mrs. Frey. His favorite subject is math.



Trey Williams



Trenton Mortimer



Jaycob Stone

Jaycob Stone #4: Jaycob plays shortstop, catcher, and pitcher. This will be his fourth year as a MudHen. His favorite MLB player is Joey Votto. Jaycob is the leadoff hitter and the spark plug of the team. He has been one of the top three hitters each year on the team and gets the team going by getting on base and using his speed to create runs. Jaycob is the defensive leader on the team and has excellent range at shortstop. He does a good job backing up AJ at catcher. Jaycob also plays football and basketball. Jaycob is a fifth grade student at Madison Eastview Elementary. He is an Honor Roll student and is on the Student Council. Mr. Rupert is the principal and his homeroom teacher is Mrs. Spencer. His favorite subject is science.

Ben Vore #5: Ben plays pitcher, infield and outfield. This will be his fourth year as a MudHen. His favorite MLB players are Roy Halladay and Manny Ramirez. Ben is the ace pitcher for the MudHens and has a bulldog mentality. He is our big game pitcher and has exceptional control for a young player. He only surrendered eleven walks, while striking out 65 batters, in 77 innings during the 2010 season while going 13-5 against our best opponents. Ben usually plays the position of whoever is pitching when he isn't on the mound. Ben has also been one of the top three hitters during his three years on the team. Ben was the only



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MudHen named to the All-Tournament Team for the 2009 USSSA Summer International Championships in Crystal Lake, Illinois. He also won the Home-Run Derby Contest at the Navarre, Ohio tournament as an eight-year old. Ben also plays football, basketball, and soccer. Ben is a fourth grade student at Lexington Eastern Elementary. He is an Honor Roll Student, is on the Student Council, and a Captain on the Academic Challenge Team. He also plays the viola in student orchestra. Mr. Daup is the principal and his homeroom teacher is Mrs. Lantz. His favorite subject is math.

Doug Shenberger #7: Doug plays outfield. This will be his fourth year as a MudHen. His favorite MLB player is A-Rod. Doug is the quiet toughness of the team. He absorbs the hits and scrapes and keeps on going without showing how much getting hit by the pitch really hurt. The other players respect this. He also makes excellent contact delivering key hits or moving runners into scoring position. Doug's major hitting highlight in 2010 was an inside-the-park home-run at the USSSA Midwest Meat Grinder Tournament in North



Doug Shenberger

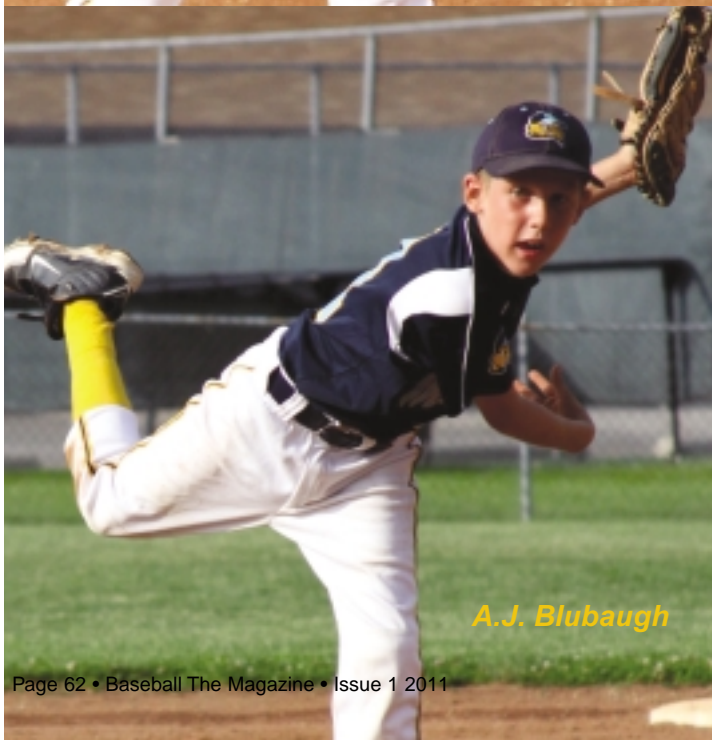
Royalton, Ohio. Doug also plays football. Doug is a sixth grade student at Madison Wooster Heights Elementary. He is an Honor Student. Mrs. Parr-Wigton is the principal and his homeroom teacher is Ms. Vermillion. His favorite subject is math.

Cal Rickert #8: Cal plays second base, shortstop, and pitcher. This will be his fourth year as MudHen. His favorite MLB player is Cal Ripken, Jr. Cal is the epitome of hard work and is the MudHens most consistent player. He bats clean-up for the team and sets a great example with his attitude. Cal also plays football and basketball and is a fifth grade student at Madison Mifflin Elementary. He is an All-A's student. Mr. Breitingner is the principal and his homeroom teacher is Mrs. Cates. His favorite subject is Phys. Ed.

A.J. Blubaugh #11: A.J. plays catcher, pitcher, and outfield. This will be his fourth year as MudHen. His favorite MLB player is Grady Sizemore. A.J. has developed into a very good catcher. His defensive ability and success throwing out potential base-stealers allows the MudHens to better control the running games of the opposing teams. A.J. is a solid hitter who has delivered several key hits over his MudHen career. A.J. also plays soccer and basketball. A.J. is a fourth grade student at Clear Fork Bellville Elementary. He is an Honor Student and is involved in the Student Council and the Good News Club. Mr. Byrns is the principal and his homeroom teacher is Mrs. Studemund. His favorite subjects are Phys. Ed. and reading.



Cal Rickert



A.J. Blubaugh



Kyle Jackson #12: Kyle plays outfield and pitcher. This will be his fourth year as a MudHen. His favorite MLB players are Joey Votto and CC Sabathia. Kyle was considered our most improved player last season. Kyle will be assuming a larger role in the outfield this year and his hitting continues to develop. In one of the most impressive at-bats last year, Kyle fouled off fourteen straight pitches before delivering a single. Kyle also plays football and basketball. Kyle is a fifth grade student at Madison South Elementary. He is on the Student Council and plays the trumpet in the band. Mrs. Scholl is the principal and his homeroom teacher is Mrs. Case. His favorite subject is science.

Jake Shambre #13: Jake plays outfield and catcher. This will be his fourth year as a MudHen. Jake is the "spirit" leader of the MudHens who makes sure everyone stays focused on the game and supports his teammates. Jake is an aggressive hitter and base-runner who attacks every offensive opportunity. Jake also plays football and is an accomplished wrestler. Jake is a fifth grade student at Madison Mifflin Elementary. Mr. Breiting is the



Nathan Jordan

principal and his homeroom teacher is Mrs. Cates. His favorite subjects are art and science.

Nathan Jordan #23: Nathan plays right field. This will be his fourth year as a MudHen. His favorite MLB player is David Ortiz. Nathan is a power hitter and is the only MudHen player, to date, that has hit an over-the-fence homerun. It was an exciting moment for him, his teammates, and the fans. Nathan has also improved his defense, making some rally-killing grabs in the outfield. Nathan also plays football. Nathan is a fifth grade student at Madison Eastview Elementary. Mr. Rupert is the principal and his homeroom teacher is Mr. Randall. His favorite subject is science.

Nolan Hatfield # 9: Nolan is a new addition to the MudHens this season and plays first base and pitcher. He played for the Galion A's last year. His favorite MLB player is Alex Rodriguez. The MudHens are looking forward to good things from this big left-hander this year. He adds immediate strength to the pitching staff and gives Coach Stone some more options for player positions when he is not pitching. Nolan also plays football and basketball. Nolan is a fifth grade student at the Sacred Heart of Bethlehem School. He is an Honor Student and his favorite subject is math. Mrs. Myers is the principal and Miss Rietschlin is his homeroom teacher.



Kyle Jackson



Jake Shambre



Nolan Hatfield