



YOUNG GUNS

PART DEUX

COP CORNER

with Jeff Blair

In my September 2006 installment of the Cop Corner I wrote about rising stars in the law enforcement softball circuit. I titled the article, "Young Guns" and provided some profiles on some youngsters who were in a position to usher in the next wave of elite players in our game. Now, approximately four years later I am going to revisit that concept by introducing you to some new up-n-comers and give you a snapshot of what has become of our first crop of "Young Guns."

Young Guns, Class of 2010

Aaron Lewis from the Delaware Association of Police/DAP softball team isn't too well known outside the Northeast region. But if things go as planned, DAP team spokesperson Dave Meyers is confident that Lewis will earn big name status by the end of the season. Lewis' baseball pedigree is impressive as he has racked up awards such as; four - time First Team Allstate High School Baseball Player, 2003 Collegiate First Team All American, and two-time Delaware Semi-Pro Baseball Most Valuable Player. Twenty-eight year old Lewis has been a police officer for the Wilmington Police Department since 2008 and recently joined the DAP squad where he prowls left field and bats cleanup for the team, providing much needed protection for iconic Donavan



Aaron Lewis

Delaney. Meyers warns that if a team pitches around Delaney, Lewis will make them pay with a drive into the gap or, if warranted a long ball on command. A scout watching Lewis play at the recent West Palm Beach Florida tournament confirmed Meyers' assessment. "Delaney grabs a lot of the headlines, but this kid Lewis is right there with him ability-wise. DAP now has one of the strongest 2-3-4 punches on the East circuit."

Danny Ruiz is better known to his teammates on the Arizona based Southwest Elite softball team as "Toro" (Bull in English). At 6'5" and 220 lbs. but nimble enough to play middle infield he bears a physical resemblance to MLB superstar Alex Rodriguez when A-Rod re-defined the role of a shortstop in the big leagues. Ruiz is a United States Border Patrol Agent and is new on the cop softball circuit. According to teammate Eddie Leal, Ruiz has unlimited potential. Leal cited some notable accomplishments on



Danny Ruiz

Ruiz's baseball resume including: Member of Team Mexico in the Pan-American Games, 3 years varsity baseball at Kofa High School in Yuma, Arizona where he was named All-State each year, received a scholarship to Arizona Western College and played in the National Baseball Congress World Series in Wichita, Kansas. He was signed as a free agent in 1999 by the Atlanta Braves, played up to class-A ball. He later played in the Liga Mexicana Del Pacifico with the Aguilas de Mexical but gave up baseball in 2005. He debuted with the Southwest Elite team two years ago and he now anchors that line-up. Leal raved about Ruiz as a player and a teammate and stated, "As a teammate of his, I can honestly say that he is truly a class act, on and off the field."

David Braun has already made a big impact on the cop softball circuit despite only a few years of exposure while roaming the outfield for the LAPD Blue softball team. Braun has worked for the LAPD for 5 years and he has excelled both in his assignment in the Narcotic/Gang Detail and also on the softball field. In 2007 Braun was named LAPD Athlete of the Year and in 2008 he was named to the Policesoftball.com World Series All-Star team to represent the West. Before discovering softball, Braun was delivering heaters from the pitching mound for Fullerton Junior College and Cal Poly Pomona. After an arm injury cut his baseball career short Braun delved into the civilian



David Braun

(TRAINING ROOM)

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side of softball where he was a member of Team Big Richards/Mizuno, USSSA Class E World Champions. He followed that with another title, this time clenching the NSA Class D Worlds with WTS/KME. Although Braun still plays plenty of civilian ball, he is most dedicated to playing on the cop softball circuit and his goal is to, "compete at a high level against the top cop players in the nation...and to find a way to get my hat even flatter." One scout described Braun as, "giving a Lenny Dykstra effort between the lines every game, but also being a genuinely nice guy off the field who embraces the brotherhood of our game."

Mike Snyder got his first experience playing police softball during the 2009 season when he made his debut with the defending World Champions, SoCal Alliance. Snyder was an



Mike Snyder

immediate impact player. At 6'5 and 250 pounds, Snyder is one of the fastest big men to play police softball and in a recent tournament he went 18-23 with 16 extra base hits. Team manager Del Pickney said, "Snyder explodes out of the box and turns routine hits into doubles. I think he is allergic to singles." Snyder has a strong baseball background and was drafted #70 overall in the 1999 amateur draft by the Toronto Blue Jays. Snyder played seven seasons in the minor leagues before deciding to become a

police officer. Snyder is a legitimate five tool player as he hits for power and average, has a great arm, glove and is extremely fast. Snyder played mostly first base during his minor league career but he has now converted to an outfielder. At 29 years old Snyder is one of police softball's "Young Guns" but with his talent, work ethic and dedication to the game and his team, he is poised to be among the elite in the law enforcement nation. One Western scout summed it up best when he said, "Where does the Alliance find these guys? They have 8-9 studs in their late 20s-early 30s, they are going to be tough to beat for the next decade."

Mario Barroso is only 23 years young, but he has been playing softball for the last 4 years and just recently debuted for the surging Central California based Team Combat/Syndicate. Barroso works at Salinas Valley State Prison as a Correctional Officer and hopes to one day transfer to the State Parole division. Prior to playing softball Barroso played travel baseball with the Aldrete baseball academy as pitcher and had a very promising future until he had Tommy John surgery on his throwing arm. Barroso has since transformed into a lockdown short-stop who can also hit for power and average. According to team coach Frank Gombos, "Barroso plays with fierce tenacity and continues to amaze people with his defensive plays. He has the

makings to be a superstar on the cop softball circuit." Not only did Barroso amaze people with his ability, Team Combat/Syndicate debuted in the Twin Creeks (NorCal) Law Enforcement Tournament last month and sent shockwaves through the law enforcement softball community by placing 3rd ahead of several notable highly ranked teams. A scout at that event stated, "This kid Barroso elevates that Syndicate team to another level. They are going to be rock solid this year."

Bryan Mangin has made such a strong first impression playing for the Greene County Enforcers (Ohio) that he has already drawn comparisons to former major player and one time cop softball superstar Bruce Meade. Mangin's legend is growing and is best explained by renowned Ohio cop softballer Matt Woolf; "Last year in the Ohio Battle of the Badges Tournament, Mangin hit an absolute bomb all the way onto another diamond. The rest of the day the entire park would hush and play would halt on the other diamonds because everyone would be nudging each other and whispering that the kid from Greene County was up again. The sound of bat meeting ball when this kid hits is just different than when other people hit. I have been watching Police Softball for 30+ years and only seen anything like that once before. And that was when Bruce Meade flew in from Florida to play in the Dayton Nationals." Mangin originally hails from Philadelphia, Pa. but he relocated to Ohio to attend Cedarville University where he played on the school's baseball team. After college Mangin joined the Ohio Highway Patrol and took up softball in 2005. Mangin should get plenty of exposure this year because his team, the Greene County Enforcers will be making their World Series debut and Mangin is an early favorite to win the HR Derby and earn the opportunity to face off one on one against tournament sponsor Brett Helmer.



Bryan Mangin

Young Guns, circa 1996 • Where are they now?

Jeff "Biscuit" Graus continues to play for the Michigan Lawmen softball team and has developed into the cop circuit's most dominating USSSA pitcher. Graus splits time with his Michigan Lawmen team and his civilian team, Team Sinister. In 2008 Graus was named Policesoftball.Com East Defensive player of the year. That same year Graus' civilian team, Bud Light won the USSSA class B Worlds.

Chris Oliver has gone through many life changes since that article was published. To begin with he relocated from his San Diego home and is now a correctional officer in Northern California. Oliver has switched teams three times since playing for the San Diego Excessive Force (El Dorado Cartel, Sacramento Razorbacks) before finding a home with the powerhouse NorCal based Concord Combo squad. Oliver was a softball junkie for several years but another change in his life took him off the field, and he has no regrets. Oliver is now a father! Although being a good dad is his priority, Oliver can still be found dropping bombs in the middle of the Concord line-up about one weekend per month during the season.

Scott Bridges has proven to be steady as a rock for the Jacksonville Police Softball team. Bridges has anchored the powerhouse Jacksonville team that was the East #1 ranked team in 2006, 2007 and 2008. Despite his impressive pedigree Bridges continues to fly under the radar because he is soft spoken and humble on the field. Bridges 2006 goals were as follows: "I want to continue to win championships with my team and help motivate my teammates by turning singles into doubles." It is safe to say that Bridges has accomplished his goals.

Jim McFarland still continues to play outfield for the Sacramento Razorbacks and still believes players should be loyal to their agency. McFarland has never been a fan of combo teams, but even the elders on the Razorbacks have recognized the necessity to branch out. Arguably, no region in California has been hit harder by the downturn in the economy more than Sacramento County. The agency had to lay-off hundreds of employees including some who played on the Razorbacks. As a result the team is not nearly as active as they were just a few short years ago. That being said, they are still plugging along and are making the best of the situation. The highlight for the team this year will be they are co-hosting the biggest tournament in the NorCal region and it is a World Series qualifier. The NorCal Mid-Summer Classic in Lincoln, Ca. will be an Easton provided bat tournament and should draw teams from several states. And you can bet that McFarland will be right in the mix playing ball and helping his teammates host the event.

Ryan Coe has definitely lived up to the hype. Some consider him the best overall player in the cop softball circuit and nobody has accomplished as much as he has in just four short years since the article was published. In 2006 Coe stated his goals were: "Play for a Majors team in civilian ball and win the Policesoftball.com World Series." Well he hasn't played for a Majors team (his promotion to detective will prevent that from ever happening) but he did win the USSSA class B Worlds in Orlando, Florida with his civilian team, Bud Light. And not only did he win the Policesoftball.com World Series, he won it TWICE! Wait, it gets better...he was MVP of the World Series both years! Coe has played on the West All-Star team twice, he was named Player of the Year in 2007, he has won numerous MVP, All-Tourney awards, home run derbies, etc. and he is now part of the SoCal Alliance management team. Now that is an impressive resume for someone who just turned 30 last month!



Chris Larsen

After a quick one-season hiatus from Softball 360's Long Haul Bombers Stadium Power Tour, we've stepped up in a big way for 2010. Over the years, we've brought some of our most colorful and powerful members of the DeMarini Family to the tour. This season is no exception, as we've recruited Chris Larsen and Geno Buck. I hope you folks are ready, because these boys plan to set half-a-dozen Big League parks on fire. Larsen and Buck are not only looking to best the other bat manufacturers' teams on the tour, but they're also busy playing for a couple of the top teams on the Major division circuit. Chris will lock down the left side of the infield for the 23-time World Champion Long Haul Bombers while Geno hurls the ball for the always dangerous Dan Smith/Menosse ball club. Players and fans on the circuit are well aware of Larsen and Buck's names and their game. Now, teaming them up for the Stadium Power Tour is an ideal way to showcase their skills as a duel force with DeMarini products in front of larger audiences across the country, not only inside the stadiums, but also on the Softball 360 television show.

Softball 360 fans, we know you missed us. But the wait was worth it, since instead of park-hopping we chose to spend the past year focusing even more attention to detail on our 2010 slowpitch bat lineup and ramping up our entire slowpitch program. The season away from the tour gave us the time and resources we needed to intensify our slowpitch focus to make sure you're getting the best possible products and service.

We're back, baby.

DeMARINI FACTORY HITTER

And now that we've launched the new bat line, we're back on the tour and looking forward to getting after it in a bigger way than ever.

Meet Team DeMarini.

"You're only as good as your next at-bat." - **Chris Larsen**, from Vancouver, Washington, is known in the league as "The DeMarini Guy." He's been working with us at DeMarini HQ for years, and he's been consistently improving his level of play so that now he's a serious threat in ASA A. A 2009 ASA A World Champ alongside Geno, Chris was named ASA A 1st All American and was a USSSA Major All World Selection. Since he's a long-time member of the DeMarini Family, Chris says he's looking forward to talking to all the players on the tour to find out what they really want in a bat design. You'll see him ripping bombs with the J2 1.2, since the bigger end-load and shorter barrel fit his swing perfectly. He may be a rookie on the Stadium Power Tour, but people are already talking about his dedication to the sport of slow pitch softball and his ability to hit harder and farther every year.

Geno Buck, from Redwing, Minnesota, joins Team DeMarini as a seven-time World Champ. He has two ASA A National Titles and was named MVP for one of those. He has five Native American World Series titles, earning MVP honors all five times. He helped claim the Long Haul Bombers Stadium Power Tour Manufacturer's Cup last season. He's a family man first. He and his wife, Jess have four kids. Being a World Champ at the highest level of ASA, Geno is at the top of his game as he upgrades to DeMarini's The One 1.2 during the Stadium Power Tour.

The Softball 360 Long Haul Bombers Stadium Power Tour kicks off with the first stadium standoff on May 15th at the home of the Florida Marlins. If you've never seen the Stadium Power Tour in person, don't miss it this season when it rolls through a city near you. It's free to everyone with a ticket to the pro baseball game, and it's not your Granddaddy's home run derby. Each Bomber gets 18 pitches, 15 swings and no practice swings. So put it on the calendar and come say "hey" to Chris and Geno. And if you can't make it in person, you can always check your local TV Listings and catch the Softball 360 TV show. You can also find a schedule of tv show times and affiliates on the Softball 360 website.