

# Gazette.Net

**SiteSearch**[Advanced Search:](#)  
[Archives](#)**NEWS** by Community**SPORTS** by Community**EASY FINDER**[Births](#)  
[Columns](#)  
[Editorials](#)  
[Engagements](#)  
[Letters](#)  
[Movie Finder](#)  
[Obituaries](#)  
[Police Reports](#)  
[Restaurant Finder](#)  
[Reunions](#)  
[Weddings](#)**GAZETTE SECTIONS**[Business](#)  
[Classifieds](#)  
[Entertainment](#)  
[Local Calendars](#)  
[Sports](#)**LOCAL NONPROFITS**[Frederick](#)  
[Montgomery](#)  
[Prince George's](#)**RELATED SITES**[The Bowie Star](#)  
[The Business Gazette](#)  
[DCMilitary.com](#)  
[Weekend Edition](#)**THE GAZETTE**[About Us](#)  
[Advertising Info](#)  
[Contact Us](#)  
[Employment](#)  
[Photo Reprints](#)  
[Newspaper Locator](#)

## In with the new, back with the old

 [E-Mail This Article](#)**by John Y. Wehmuller**  
*Staff Writer*

June 8, 2005

Within a few years, the advent of the Cal Ripken Sr. Collegiate Baseball League could change the face of summer-league wood bat baseball in Montgomery County.

The new league incorporates the county's two former members of the Clark C. Griffith League and has already spawned a new franchise in Rockville. With its focus on community support, inter-organizational cooperation and first-class facilities, the league plans to expand and eventually rival some of the finest summer leagues in the country.

But for now, the move from the Clark Griffith League (CGL) to the Cal Ripken Sr. League (CRSL) doesn't spell a whole lot of change for the Bethesda Big Train and the Silver Spring-Takoma Thunderbolts -- not yet in practical terms, anyway.

"[Recruiting players] is pretty much the same, although we always try to be very forthcoming in telling players that the league has changed," Thunderbolts manager Bobby St. Pierre said. "I think it's something that we'll have to wait and see, maybe not even this season. Maybe we're talking three or four years from now."

If anything, changing leagues has actually meant less change for the Thunderbolts' and Big Train's rosters. Whereas the CGL is an under-20 league, the CRSL allows players up to 22 years of age. That means that both the Big Train and the Thunderbolts welcome back several players who would not have been eligible to play for them under the old rules.

The Big Train won the CGL's regular-season and tournament titles for the first time last year. Eight players will be back from that team, including Virginia Tech pitcher Adam Redd, who is entering his unprecedented fourth summer with the Big Train.

Also back are reliever Wyatt Stewart, catcher Trey Cuevas, middle infielders Greg Lemon and Andrew Smith, and outfielders Drew Carson, Nick Cleckler and Jonnie Knoble. In addition, Bethesda added four familiar faces from the Herndon Braves, their former CGL rivals: pitchers Dustin Pease and Jon Link, catcher Steve Fay and slugging first baseman Rhett Teller.

"What we're doing now is saying to college coaches, 'We want your one or two best guys,'" said first-year Big Train manager Sal Colangelo. "When you do this with 20 and under, you're getting redshirt guys. It's a little trickier and there's more strategy. ... I got my guys [back], I got his [Herndon's] guys and then I had to be real selective."

Among those making the cut as first-year Big Train players is Marcus Jones, a recent Landon graduate bound for North Carolina State University. High-school players were rare in the CGL; they'll be even more so in the CRSL.

The Thunderbolts are in a similar situation, with 11 familiar faces back this season. Matt Capece is a third-year Thunderbolt. He'll be joined in the lineup by Justin McClanahan, Andrew Greene, Mickey Shupin and Tim Bianci. Silver Spring native Brad Taylor returns to the pitching staff alongside DeMatha graduate Brett Cecil, Matt Peterson, Bill Konecny and Robbie Campbell. Zach Clark played for Silver Spring-Takoma two years ago and is back this season.

"It helps with the guys we've had in the past, and in the beginning, the tendency is going to be to rely on them a little bit in the roles they've had in the past," St. Pierre said. "That's not to say a first-year player isn't going to get a shot in a critical situation, but it gives you a little reassurance."

Speaking of reassurance, St. Pierre has several potential pitching prospects lined up for later in the summer, just in case. Last year, injuries and other bad luck decimated not only the Thunderbolts' staff, but also their backup plans. This year, St. Pierre said he has "double-protected" himself.

In Rockville, the brand new Express started a little behind because they began this fall with a blank roster sheet. Manager Tom Shaffer has some experience in summer-league ball, though, having managed the Germantown Black Rox last summer.

"I guess for other people who have been doing it for a few years, it's not that hard because they will go back to the schools whose players did well and were quality kids," Shaffer said. "The biggest thing coaches would say about me is I'm too young and don't have the connections. But to me, it's easy to pick up the phone and talk to a [college] coach."

After the higher age limit and the Express' arrival, the biggest new factor in the CRSL is the competition. Youse's Maryland Orioles are a well-established powerhouse from the Baltimore area. The Redbirds (Cockeysville) and Bombers (College Park) will also present a new challenge.

"I think this league is better talent-wise and baseball-wise than the CGL," Colangelo said. "Top to bottom, it's going to be competitive, not like our league in the past where we had Reston winning three to five games every year."

[Frederick County](#) | [Montgomery County](#) | [Carroll County](#) | [Prince George's County](#)  
[CALENDARS](#) | [SPORTS](#) | [ENTERTAINMENT](#) | [CLASSIFIEDS](#) | [DIRECTORIES](#)  
[Privacy Statement](#)