

# Baton Rouge Royals Baseball

*submitted by Donnie Fairbanks*



**T**he Baton Rouge Royals enter the 2010 season with the same 12 players as their 2009 season lineup. In fact, it's an extraordinary accomplishment that 9 of our 12 players have grown up playing tee ball, machine pitch and coaches pitch together since they were 4 years old!

Consistency of the players and coaches is what defines this team. Even our team name comes from siblings, cousins and friends of our players, who had to give up their Royals team name as they moved up in age brackets in our league. Our team voted unanimously to take over the Royals name from them, and we've kept it since 2007. Over the last four years, the Royals have put up an impressive record of 121 wins, 54 losses and 4 ties (.690 win %). Included in that record of wins and losses is three straight league championships, going for the fourth straight in 2010; four tournament championships; five tournament runner ups; and eight third place tournament finishes. Also included are three different World Series tournaments: 2008 AAYBA World Series in Dallas, Texas (5th place); 2009 Grand Slam World Series, Panama City, FL (7th place); and 2009 Global World Series, Baton Rouge, LA (1st place).

Over the past four years, the Royals have played teams from

Oklahoma, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia and Florida. The Royals have also played many different tournament associations including USSSA, Super Series, AAYBA, YBBR, and Grand Slam and will play in a Nations Baseball tournament in Houston, Texas, in 2010. On more than one occasion, opposing teams' coaches have complimented the Royals on how they successfully competed against the hand picked, all-star teams we play against when traveling.

In 2009, the Baton Rouge Royals finished among the top 20 teams in the nation for 11-AAA USSSA points. They capped off a great year with a Global World Series Championship in Baton Rouge, Louisiana after compiling a 48-23 record (.680 win %). The Royals also won the Cypress Mounds 12 year old league championship as an 11 year old team with a 15-4-2 record. The Royals were also tournament champions in the Jambalaya Classic, Gonzales, LA; 2nd place in the Marsh Madness tournament, Baton Rouge, LA; 3rd place in the Governor's Games super NIT tournament in Lake Charles, LA; 3rd place in the USSSA, 11 AAA, State championship tournament in Pineville, LA; and 7th place in the Grand Slam World Series in Panama City Beach, FL, with a 6-2 record. In Panama City Beach, the Royals played 11 year old teams from Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia and Florida.



Blaine Edmonson



Brandon Fairbanks



Jason Harris



Daniel Guilbeau



Martin Morris

The 2010 Baton Rouge Royals consists of 12 young men from various Christian schools in Baton Rouge. We have seven from Most Blessed Sacrament Catholic School, three from St. Aloysius Catholic School, one from Christian Life Academy and one from St. Gerard Catholic School. We have all, parents and kids, been friends for many years.

The Royals have started 2010 with a 9-4 record: 3-0 in league play and 6-4 in tournaments, with a 2nd place, 3rd place and 5th place finish in three tournaments so far. The Royals enter the season as the favorites to repeat as 12 year old league champions at Cypress Mounds Park in Baton Rouge, after winning the 12 year old league in 2009 as an 11 year old team. The Royals will also play in about eleven tournaments throughout the south, from Houston, Texas, to Panama City, Florida.

The 2010 Baton Rouge Royals coaching staff is virtually the same as it has been for the last four years, with all five

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coaches having sons on the team. Our coaching philosophy is geared toward teaching the fundamentals of baseball: throwing, catching, hitting and running, along with hustle and mental focus. We have an approach where all twelve kids play virtually the same amount of playing time and we rotate them into the game accordingly. Each kid has a primary and secondary position to play, not including pitching and catching. The Royals

Head Coach is Donnie Fairbanks. He has devoted a significant amount of his time and love to this team both on and off the field. He sees the potential in these kids that's not always easy to find, and he brings out the best in all of them. He will tell you that his responsibilities are simply defensive positioning, personnel rotations, making the defensive calls, third base coach, and setting the line ups. But make no mistake, his list of responsibilities is endless, from organizing our fund raisers, to managing the budget, to coordinating our tournament schedules. He is blessed with many assistant coaches as well. Russell Lofton has been our pitching coach since the team evolved many years ago. His responsibilities not only include the pitchers, but also the catchers. He also calls all pitches and keeps the official book. Wendell Welch joined our coaching staff 3 years ago and has done a tremendous job as our hitting coach and first base coach, along with outfield positioning. Dwain Varisco, whose son is the youngest member of our team, also works with our pitchers as well as the infielders. He is responsible for keeping our pitching charts/counts. Eric Edmonson is our team physical therapist and probably has one of the hardest jobs as the bull pen coach. He also coordinates our pre-game stretching and warm ups. Our philosophy is that although we all have our own responsibilities to coach, our most important decisions are made as a staff.

The 2010 Baton Rouge Royals consists of the following players by roster number:

**#1 Blaine Edmonson:** Blaine's positions are 2B & OF, he also pitches. Blaine has shaken off some tough injuries throughout his time with the Royals, a broken nose and stress fracture in his foot to name a few, but has persevered through each injury to keep playing. Blaine is a 6th grade student at Most Blessed Sacrament School.

**#2 Jason Harris:** Jason's positions are 2B and OF. Jason is a defensive specialist and can make spectacular plays in the field, even the game winning catch in last year's World Series win. Jason is a 6th grade student at Christian Life Academy.

**#4 Daniel Guilbeau:** Daniel's positions are 3B, OF and catcher. He has also pitched some. Daniel is one of the top catchers on the team, a very good defensive catcher. He is also one of the top hitters in the lineup. Daniel is a 6th grade student at Most Blessed Sacrament School.

**#5 Brandon Fairbanks:** Brandon's positions are SS, 1B and catcher. He is also one of the top pitchers on the team. Brandon is a good catcher and also plays well at short stop. He has great hands and a great arm. He is

also one of the top hitters on the team and bats cleanup. Brandon is a 6th grade student at Most Blessed Sacrament School.

**#7 Brandon Ruth (B2):** Brandon's positions are 2B, OF and pitcher. He is one of the top athletes on the team with great quickness and range in the field. He is also the lead off batter and an excellent base runner. Brandon is a 6th grade student at St. Aloysius School.

**#8 Martin Morris:** Martin's positions are 1B, OF and pitcher. He is our only left handed pitcher. Martin has good quickness and a good arm in the outfield. Martin is a 6th grade student at St. Aloysius School.



Brandon Ruth



Trey Lewis



Tristan Welch

Jon Lofton



**#10 Trey Lewis (Coco):** Trey's positions are OF, 1B and some pitching. Trey has great speed in center field and can cover a lot of ground. He is known for his sliding catches. He is also one of the top hitters on the team. Trey is a 6th grade student at St. Gerard School.

**#11 Jonathan Lofton:** Jon's positions are 3B, catcher and pitcher. Jon is one of the top pitchers on the team and has a great arm at 3B. He is also one of the emotional leaders on the team - he gets really fired up when he makes a great play or strikes out a batter, sparking the rest of the team. Jonathan is a

7th grade student at Most Blessed Sacrament School.

Brandon Fairbanks



**#15 Tristan Welch (T):** Tristan's positions are OF, SS, catcher and pitcher. Tristan is one of the top pitchers on the team. He also has great speed and a great arm in the outfield, as well as catcher. He is also one of the leading hitters on the team and bats third in the lineup. Tristan is a 6th grade student at St. Aloysius School.

**#17 Brian Fairbanks:** Brian's positions are 3B, OF, catcher and pitcher. Brian is one of the top pitchers on the team and has a great arm at 3B and catcher. He also has good quickness in the field. Brian is one of the team's emotional leaders and keeps them loose before and during games. Brian is a 6th grade student at Most Blessed Sacrament School.

Michael Smith



**#22 Dwain Varisco (little D):** Dwain's positions are SS, OF and pitcher. Dwain is one of the top pitchers on the team despite being only 11. He has a great arm and a good knack for getting to the ball. He is also very versatile at the plate and can both hit and bunt very well. Dwain is a 5th grade student at Most Blessed Sacrament School.

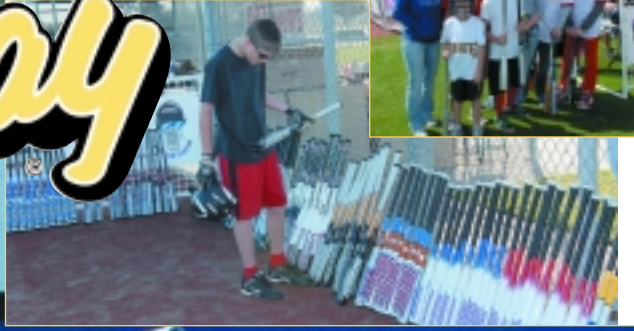
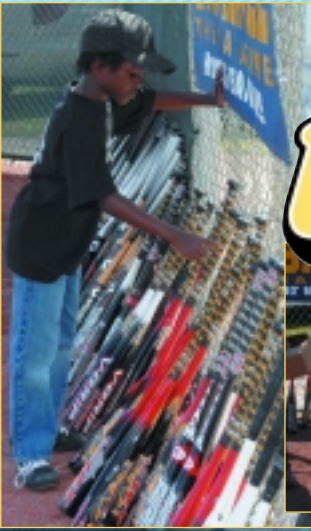
Dwain Varisco



**#24 Michael Smith:** Michael's positions are 1B and OF. Michael is a very good defensive 1st baseman, a tall player with long arms, very quick to the ball and can scoop bad throws. Michael is a 6th grade student at Most Blessed Sacrament School.

Last but not least are our team families. One of the great things about the Royals is our team families. We have a great group of parents that really support the team. From the team cooks and their jambalaya pots, to the moms that design the trading pins and team banner as well as work/run the fundraisers, to the medical bag mom and our team doctor, Jimmy - the Royals are a close knit group. Everywhere we go, we stay and get together to cook, eat and enjoy watching the kids play good competitive baseball. They all have their Royals hats and shirts and aren't afraid to wear them. Looking forward to our upcoming 2010 season - Geaux Royals!

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The 2010 Bat Wars sponsored by the Official Catalog of Bat Wars, Eastbay season got off to a strong start with the first event this year at the Washington Nationals Spring Training facility in Viera, Florida. It was Spring Training time for Major League Baseball and when you combine "Fan Fest Day" with a Spring Training game between the Nationals, the St. Louis Cardinals along with Bat Wars - well it is baseball heaven! A thousand youth ball players from all around Florida made it to the event knowing they could test out the latest models of high performance bats before heading off to the game - what a day!

For the Bat Wars crew it was time to get the first event of the year off the ground and in some ways it is Spring Training for the Posse as well. They arrive well before the sun comes up (time changed that weekend as well) to begin the process of arranging 10,000 pounds of equipment

that even the most hard-nosed fans would admire. The event seems to come out of the ground and in just a few short hours Bat Wars is running like clockwork. The Posse is the best in the industry. Glenn Ciardiello, Promotional Event Manager for Baseball The Magazine and Softball Magazine has assembled a team of all-stars that will out-hustle any other team out there. Nobody does it better or provides a better experience for all those attending or just watching. The Posse is the best dressed in the business as well as Russell Athletic outfits this hard charging group.

There were hundreds of new bats lined up ready to go from Louisville Slugger, Miken Sports,