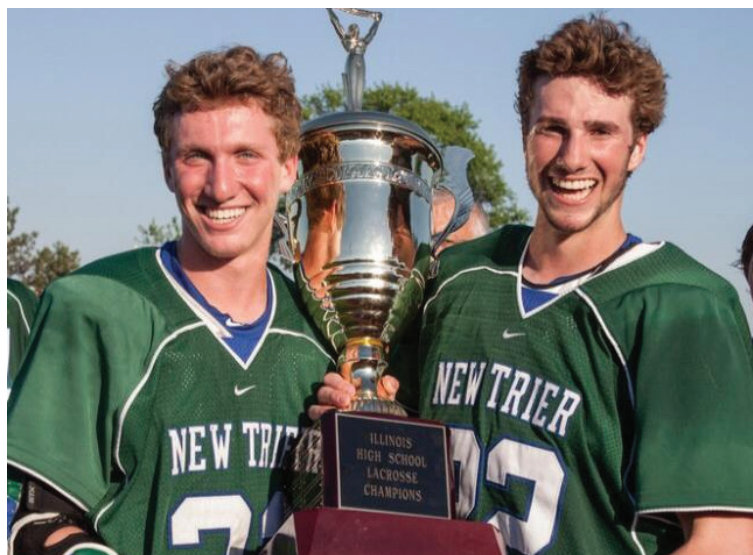


Connelly's leadership displayed on and off field



Hammes and Connelly aim to bring another trophy to New Trier | Connelly

by Camille Bear

Senior Ben Connelly is not just a star lacrosse player and captain. The Tufts commit is also an excellent student, and a great contributor to the community.

Following in his father and brother's footsteps, much of Ben's life has been devoted to lacrosse, starting at the ripe age of six.

"My dad is from Upstate New

York, and they play a lot [of lacrosse] up there, so I've been playing with my dad and my brother for as long as I can remember," Connelly said. "My dad taught me the game, but Jack [Connelly's older brother] kept me going with it."

He realized in middle school that lacrosse was his true calling, crediting Coach Chip Kenyon, who played at Middlebury from Kenilworth Lacrosse with helping

him find his passion.

"Coach Kenyon pretty much got everyone wanting to play better," explained Connelly. "He helped spark my interest, and I think anybody who played for Kenilworth Lacrosse can attribute any kind of competitive nature they have to him."

Aside from Kenyon, Connelly was surrounded by lacrosse at home. His brother Jack played for New Trier all four years, and was then recruited to play at Providence College where he has named to the Big East weekly Honor Roll before transferring to Johns Hopkins after his freshman year.

"My brother was playing a lot while I was in middle school, so we'd spend hours playing around in the backyard. It helps because he's a goalie so I just get to whip the ball at him."

Connelly's other brother, Max, has Downs Syndrome, but Ben does all he can to always include Max and expose him to lacrosse.

"Jack and I like to get him playing with us sometimes, or at least we try to," he said.

Although most of Connelly's life revolves around lacrosse, he likes

to spend a lot of his time working with kids and adults who have special needs.

"Max lives at Misericordia, so I've spent a lot of time with people who have disabilities," said Connelly.

He also works with New Trier Special Olympics, ELS club, and other Misericordia programs outside of high school.

New Trier head lacrosse coach, Tom Herral, raves about Connelly.

"Ben is the best shooter on the team, if not in the country, and his college coach said the same thing to me," Herral said.

"Off the field, he's just a great kid. Super nice and awesome teammate," he added. "People like Ben are hard to find; he gets along with everyone because he's so easy to hang around with."

His dedication to lacrosse, and his team, is also evident. While lacrosse is in off-season, Ben, and the rest of the varsity team, spend hours in the weight room each week to keep up strength and endurance.

"We're a pretty tight-knit group of guys," said Connelly. "We'll hang out with each other after lacrosse. Having that trust factor with your

team is really important, and helps a lot during games."

Connelly's teammates offer high praise for him.

"Ben is a game changer, and just watching him play is an inspiration," said senior and Quinnipiac commit Jack Hill.

"His head is always up, and he is always willing to share the ball," added Hill. "I feel as if he is not only a role model on the field, but a father figure to the team."

Connelly's role this season will be to help the Trevians repeat as State Champions.

The captain will attempt this feat along with co-captains David Hammes, Kevin Mulhern, goalie Jonathan Anastos, and the aforementioned Hill.

"Coach Herral just wants us to focus on getting better every time we have a stick in our hands," concluded Connelly. "He coaches us well, and has been awesome the last three years I've been with him. I think we're all excited to get back out there next year and to try and win another for him. We have the best staff in Illinois and we'd run through a wall for those guys."

Cubs creating buzz in Chicago

by Anna Ferguson

It has been 106 years since the Cubs won a World Series — the longest title drought in North American professional sports — and they haven't appeared in a Fall Classic since 1945.

Which of course brings along the classic question, is this finally the year?

Answering that would require predicting the unpredictable MLB playoff, but the 2015 Cubs could very well be in the conversation when October rolls around. From the starting lineup to the starting rotation to the much-talked-about farm system, there's talent everywhere in this organization — an organization that has been built and rebuilt and rebuilt again.

Unlike seasons past, there seems to be some actual foundation for Cubs fans' hopes.

The Cubs' president of baseball operations, Theo Epstein, ended the 83 year World Series drought in Boston, and has amassed a pool of young, cost-controlled players who appear capable of stringing together an extended run of success. His experience in winning two World Series with the Red Sox has Cubs fans hoping that he could reverse another curse, this time on the North Side.

Epstein himself has been attempting to play down the hype surrounding the 2015 season while staying optimistic.

"I said the other day, the hard part is just beginning now. We've put ourselves in position to be competitive and win, and that's what I'm thinking about," he said in an interview with Chicago Tribune.

Epstein has done a complete rebuild of the Cubs organization, drafting, trading and signing young prospects with plenty of upside, along with acquiring established and talented players like former Boston ace Jon Lester.

He even picked up manager Joe Maddon, who worked miracles with young, low-budget teams in Tampa Bay and seems like the perfect manager to usher the Cubs into this new era of success.

Maddon signed a five-year, \$25 million contract with Chicago last November after using an opt-out to escape the Rays. With him he brings a loose and fun personality in the clubhouse, which will certainly help the young Cubs roster acclimate to the Major League.

Lester, who won the last game of the 2007 World Series for the Red Sox and pitched a no-hitter in 2008 looked fantastic in a Spring Training tune-up start last Tuesday, throwing 54 pitches and topping out at 93 mph.

Excitement about the upcoming season has been widespread.

"There is lot hype this year as opposed to past years. It is a different feeling, optimistic clubhouse and I think Maddon is going to put the best team out on the field," said pitcher Brian Schlitter, a member of the 2014 Cubs.

As far as prospects go, the Cubs are well-stocked and hold the best farm system in the MLB, per Baseball America. Polished third baseman Kris Bryant was ranked the number one prospect in the MLB and should be up in the majors for good around mid-April.

Five other Cubs prospects made Baseball America's 2015 Top 100 — shortstop Addison Russell (No. 3 overall), outfielder Jorge Soler (No. 12), catcher Kyle Schwarber (No. 19), pitcher C.J. Edwards (No. 38), and outfielder Billy McKinney (No. 83). Schwarber and McKinney aren't expected to contribute at the major league level this season, but the others should.

They will join an already potent roster, anchored by the talented shortstop Starlin Castro, first baseman Anthony Rizzo, and pitcher Jake Arrieta.

These factors, along with Cubs owner Tom Ricketts' willingness to spend whatever it takes to get the Cubs to the top, as seen through the new video board in left-center, have come together to create a more modern culture on the North Side.

It's a rebuilding process, and although this year shows promise, success is no guarantee. But this shouldn't be a problem. Cubs fans are well-schooled in the virtue of patience.

Waukegan departs from the CSL

by Michael Pruchnicki

Waukegan High School made an announcement Mar. 4 stating their intentions to leave the Central Suburban League in favor of joining the North Suburban League.

An application for admission by Waukegan superintendent Dr. Donald Batiste was accepted Mar. 3, and the Bulldogs will officially have a new conference home for the 2016-17 athletic season.

"I think our community would like to be playing the schools that are in close proximity to us," said Waukegan athletic director Sam Taylor to CSL Insider. "It creates natural rivalries and should be a little more exciting, and it will be a little easier to get to games."

Taylor is excited to learn about his school's role in the North Suburban League.

"I look forward to that part of learning new ropes and having new challenges we aren't used to. Coaches will have to learn some new ways because we knew the CSL very well. So that part is exciting as well."

New Trier athletic director Randy Oberembt found the move more surprising than exciting.

"A few years ago Waukegan had informed the schools of the Central Suburban League that they were petitioning the North Suburban League for admittance into their conference, but they were denied. So we (the schools of the CSL) knew that Waukegan had thoughts of joining the NSL in the back of their mind, but whenever a team leaves a conference it always comes as a shock," said Oberembt.

Waukegan has a long history of competition with teams from the CSL. The school originally joined the CSL in 1975 (the inaugural year of the CSL was 1965) as two schools, Waukegan East and Waukegan West. The two schools merged into Waukegan High School in 1989. 1975 was the first year of there being two schools in Waukegan School District 60.

But prior to the split of the original Waukegan High School (in 1975) the school competed in the



Waukegan's presence in all sports will be missed by the CSL. The Bulldogs will be moving to the more convenient North Suburban League | Facebook

old Suburban League (founded in 1913) which was one of the most powerful conferences in high school athletics in the Chicago area. The old conference had the likes of Proviso East and West (in Maywood and Hillside respectively), Oak Park-River Forrest, Lyons Township (La Grange) and of course Evanston and New Trier.

So when the Suburban League folded in 1975, it was only natural for Waukegan to join its natural geographic rivals (New Trier and Evanston) in the Central Suburban League.

Even though New Trier and Waukegan had been competing against each other since the 1910s, the Bulldogs still had the urge to switch conferences. They will be making the switch for the 2017 football season, the same season the North Suburban League will be undergoing some major changes as well.

North Chicago, Antioch, Lakes, Round Lake, Grant, Wauconda, Grayslake North and Grayslake Central will all be forming their own conference that year. All of these schools were once part of the 14 school North Suburban Conference, which in 2017, will consist of Zion-Benton, Warren, Libertyville, Stevenson, Lake Forest, Lake Zurich, Mundelein, Vernon Hills, and now Waukegan.

Oberembt does not want to comment on the reasons why he thinks Waukegan left the CSL, but

he speculates it was because of a geography issue. The closest school to Waukegan in the CSL is Highland Park, which is still a 40 minute drive, and when they come down to play New Trier, Evanston, any of the Maine Township schools, (East, South, and West), any of the Niles Township schools (West and North), bus rides can exceed over an hour, which is very far to go for a conference game in high school athletics. On top of that, Waukegan will have natural rivals with Warren and Zion-Benton being right in their neighborhood.

Once Waukegan left the CSL, president and Glenbrook North Athletic Director John Catalano told the Chicago Tribune that he expects to replace Waukegan with another school. Oberembt says that he the CSL is accepting bids from other schools and it does not expect to have an announcement on which school will be replacing the Bulldogs until the end of the school year.

New Trier athletes will certainly miss the competition that Waukegan provided. Football and basketball player Andrew Hauser offered an interesting perspective on the move.

"I'm going to miss their pep band, it's awesome," he said. "By far the best band in the conference, their mix of new and old songs combined with an energetic conductor makes for a band that is second to none in the CSL. I'm devastated to see them leave."