

Boys of Summer start early

New baseball coach brings professional experience

This spring will mark the beginning of a new era for the Rams baseball team. When baseball coach Wes Whitfield left PHS for a new job, many of the boys were sad to see him go.

That changed when they got the word that Henry Cruz, former professional baseball player, was going to be their new coach. That said, these players are bound for the experience of a lifetime.



With a father who played Major League Baseball, Cruz was destined to work in the baseball field. Cruz's first move toward his career began when he moved from Puerto Rico to go to school at Martin Methodist College in Tennessee.

At Martin Methodist, Cruz majored in Human Services, while also playing baseball for many teams, like the Newark Bears, the Puerto Rican National team and also in Saskatoon, Canada, where he was coached by former Major League player Nate Oliver.

In 2001, Cruz's coaching career began, working his way from coaching a team in Saskatoon, to college, to a traveling team, to a high school team, leading him here to Paoli.

Cruz heard about the open baseball position at PHS through some of the players' parents who he happens to be friends with. He did not hesitate to apply for and then accept the position when it was offered to him.

"Coach Cruz focuses on the fundamentals; he is very focused and energetic. Baseball is in his roots, with him it's baseball, baseball, baseball," said Principal Casey Brewster.

Growing up, Cruz was surrounded by baseball. His father, also Henry Cruz, played for many teams, including the Chicago White Sox and the Los Angeles Dodgers.

"I grew up around baseball," said Cruz.

Living around baseball for so long really gets person into it. Cruz has had plenty of experience and plans on sharing with his new team.

There is little doubt that Cruz will have an impact on the baseball program this year.

"I want to teach them the way I was taught by my dad and my coaches," said Cruz.

Cruz will also have a family member on his roster, nephew junior Colton Phelps.

"He's experienced, knows what he's doing, and is a good teacher," said Phelps.

Many of this year's players have already had the opportunity to meet and work with Cruz.

"I think he is a good coach, this season should be good," said sophomore Justin Bowles.

Cruz also looks forward to a great season.

"Hopefully the kids will play hard, and go out there and win, and if they don't win, they'll play hard," said Cruz.

Winning is not everything. Some of Cruz's main goals are making sure that his kids

walk away with a new outlook on the way they play baseball, and for them to become better people.

"I just want my kids to make progress," said Cruz.

He wants to make sure they have opportunities beyond high school.

To prepare for the season, Cruz already has been holding open gym time for interested players on Tuesday and Thursday from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Cruz is using his Major League connections right off the bat to prepare his players for the upcoming season. Former coach of Cruz and a MLB player, Nate Oliver will be visiting Paoli from February 16 to 19 to work with the players one-on-one. Oliver played in the Majors for 7 years. For the Oliver family, baseball is also a family tradition. Oliver's father Jim also played in the Negro league in his day. Oliver's brother, also named Jim, played in the Majors as well.

Along with coaching high school baseball, Cruz also works for the DCS, is married and has three children.

"He already has his son playing baseball," said junior Wes Phelps, also his nephew.

Over all, Cruz brings a lot of experience and professional credibility to the Rams team that should be as interesting for the fans as it is the players.



The numbers we think you need to know to really know sports.

By Taylor Pigg
Photos by Wes Phelps

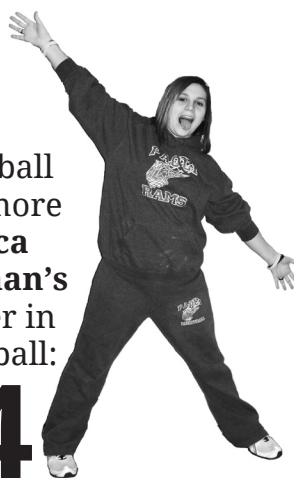
Basketball Freshman Shelby Rice's fastest mile:

9:27



Basketball Sophomore Jessica Buchanan's number in basketball:

34



Wrestling Sophomore Bryce Murphy's fastest pin:

20
seconds



Wrestling Junior Shawn Moon's weight class:

152
pounds



Cold hard cash, and lots of it

Professional athletes top most any pay scale

Almost everyone in the world dreams of being rich. Unfortunately, most work all their lives and can barely provide for their family.

There are a lot of jobs in the world that require tons of work for little pay. Professional athletes are lucky enough to not have this problem. Some of the sports do not require much work at all.

For example, the highest paid athlete in the U.S. is Tiger Woods. In 2010, Tiger made a little over 90 million dollars. The closest to Woods is another golfer, Phil Mickelson, with 60 million in one year.

Most of the money athletes make is from endorsements. Woods made 70 million from endorsements only. Because of the problems he had last year, he lost some major endorsement deals.

Baseball has always been known for huge salaries. The current highest paid

player is Alex Rodriguez. In the 2010 season he made 33 million. Recently Seattle Mariners player Ichiro Suzuki signed a five-year contract for 90 million dollars.

The highest paid athlete without endorsements is boxer Floyd Mayweather Jr. He made 60 million from winning fights in just one year.

Basketball is another huge money maker.

In Shaquille O' Neal's 18 year career he has made over 280 million dollars. Currently the highest paid NBA player is Miami Heat's LeBron James. James made 46 million this past season.

Very few athletes are lucky enough to compete at a professional level. They get to play their sports while making millions at a time.

In one game most athletes make more than many Americans working all year.



The Ram Card



Devin Rutherford
Senior



Height: 6'3"
Weight: 165 lbs.

Position:
Guard

Jersey number:
14

Number of years playing:
8 years

Favorite type of Shoe:
Nike

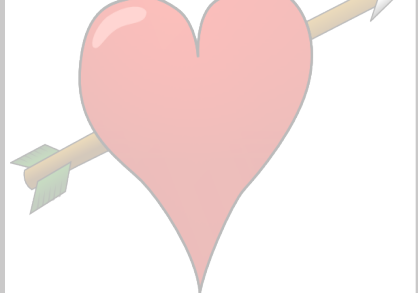
Shoe Size:
12

Fastest mile:
5:58



Ram Card by Tasha Tedrow

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Association**



1726 North County Road 160 East
723-2868

Dollar General



936.9101

**Mackenzie
Window
& Door Co.**

1130 East Livonia Rd.,
Paoli 47454
723-5210

**Drs. Harmon, Harmon & Petty
Optometrists**

J.M. Harmon, O.D.
Eric Harmon, O.D.
Ryan Petty, O.D.

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