Six Times a Champion! Wildcats Top NSU for Sixth Straight MEAC Crown

The Wildcats took care of business in all aspects of the game to dispatch the Norfolk State Spartans, 9-3, in the MEAC Baseball Championship final at Jackie Robinson Ballpark, earning B-CU its sixth consecutive MEAC title and 15th overall. Though the score grew close near the mid-point, the Wildcats were able to pull away late. Head Coach Mervyl Melendez earned Outstanding Coach, along with Peter O’Brien as Outstanding Player. O’Brien joined Ryan Durrence on the All-Tournament team.

“The key for us was to continue the pressure, continue to score runs, to build a big enough gap that when they did make a comeback we have enough distance to win,” said Head Coach Mervyl Melendez.

Despite the shutout in Friday’s semifinal, the Spartans showed fight to stick around, bringing the score tighter in the fifth with a two-RBI single, cutting the Wildcat lead to a single run. Meanwhile, NSU’s defense made a stand, keeping the ‘Cats off the board for the fourth and fifth.

As the game rolled into the late innings, the Wildcats began to catch fire again in the seventh.

“Norfolk State had a lot of intensity,” said Melendez, “you’ve got to give them a lot of credit for coming back out of the losers bracket, and coming ready to play.”

As the Wildcats rushed together in celebration, Mervyl Melendez’ team had set a new program standard, clinching their program-high sixth consecutive MEAC Championship and eleventh in his twelve seasons at the helm. The Wildcats also wrapped the year with their NCAA best (according to B-CU Sports Information research) 46 consecutive conference win streak intact. There was much rejoicing to be had as the ‘Cats now head to their sixth straight NCAA Regional.

“They’re all special,” said Melendez of the sweetness of a sixth straight crown. “It doesn’t matter how many you win, it doesn’t get old.”

All-MEAC first-teamer Patrick Goelz took care of the Wildcats on the mound, collecting his eighth win of the year, tied with MEAC Rookie and Pitcher of the Year Scott Garner, his teammate who pitched a combined shutout in the semifinal.

“He pitched very well, like he has for the last half of the season,” said Melendez of Goelz. “I’m so proud of him for making the adjustments that he made on the mound. [Pitching] Coach Matt Crane deserves a lot of credit for that.”

“We’ve worked hard so long this year, with pain along the way,” said Goelz. “It feels really good to get the win and help the team out; now we’ve got to take it to Regionals.”

Leading the Wildcat charge at the plate, Peter O’Brien hit 2-4 with two RBI, along with Alejandro Sanchez and DJ Leonard, who hit 2-4 with an RBI each.

Brandon Turner and Nick Johnson each picked up RBI as well in the championship win.

O’Brien wrapped up the week hitting 8-14 with eight RBI.

“We came out here and did what we needed to do, put runs on the board and win the ball game,” said O’Brien after the win. “It feels great, but this is just a small step in what we want to accomplish this year.”

With the victory, Bethune-Cookman (35-22) earns the MEAC’s automatic qualification to the NCAA Baseball Championships. The pairings will be announced on Monday, May 30 at 12:30 p.m. on ESPN. The Wildcats will hit the diamond preparing hard for the familiar territory of the tournament, hoping to carry over the same type of play into Regionals.

“I feel good, because we’re playing with a lot of emotion and passion,” noted Melendez. “That’s what we need to do in the Regional. Those teams are usually the ones who make it to Omaha.”
**B-CU Athletes Also Prove Academic Prowess**

59 Wildcats Honored on MEAC Commissioner’s All-Academic Team

The Bethune-Cookman Wildcats demonstrated their academic prowess this school year, with 59 B-CU athletes named earlier this week by officials from the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC) as part of the MEAC Commissioner’s All-Academic Team. This marks an improvement over last year’s 55 members for the Wildcats. The men’s team earned 33 honors, led by the baseball team’s 13 members, while softball’s six members headlined the 26 members from the women’s teams.

“With a total of 59 student-athletes making the MEAC Commissioner’s All-Academic Team, it proves that our Wildcats are competing and winning as much in the classroom as on the field of play,” said Bethune-Cookman Director of Athletics Lynn W. Thompson.

The conference recognized 761 student-athletes who meet the honor of maintaining a 3.0 or higher through the 2010-11 academic school year.

“I am elated to recognize 761 student-athletes,” said Commissioner Dennis E. Thomas. “I would also like to take this moment to celebrate the athletic academic support staff and personnel, coaches, institutions, and parents for their contributions to the success of these student-athletes.”


**SPOTLIGHTS**

Rev. Lawrence Edgerton, Sr., a B-CU graduate from the Class of 1981, arrived on campus last week with a crowd in tow. Edgerton brought along his church group from Chambers Memorial Baptist Church all the way from New York, New York. The group toured campus and visited with brothers of Edgerton’s Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity.

Rev. Edgerton, left, visits with Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity brothers B-CU staff member Glen Walker, center, and student Eric Smith.

Members of the Chambers Memorial Baptist Church pose together in front of the Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune statue on International Speedway Blvd.

The B-CU Religious Life Fellowship has discovered a way to reach out to people from all campus sectors in need of prayer. Beautiful, handmade prayer boxes have been placed on campus, allowing anyone to insert a confidential prayer request inside a box.

“We wanted to address people with problems and concerns because a lot of people were seeking something like that,” said Stephen Redd, director of Christian leadership development. “We want people to know someone cares, we hear what they’re saying and we understand their issues.”

Each week, the Religious Life Fellowship collects the requests from around campus and prayers are made for each individual.

Tavious Peterkin, who served as president of the Religious Life Fellowship for three years, developed the idea for the boxes. After continually receiving prayer requests on pieces of paper while serving as chaplain for the Student Government Association, Tavious enlisted the help of his father, Benjamin Peterkin, to build the prayer boxes. Tavious has since graduated with both a bachelor’s and master’s degree from B-CU.

Now, these boxes are providing peace to faculty, staff, students and guests campuswide. For this purpose, they are currently placed in central locations across B-CU, and the idea has taken off. In order to address the growing interest in the boxes, Tavious plans to ask his father to build more.

Tavious is certain his father will be glad to help again. If anyone asked Benjamin why he is taking on such a big project in building each box, Tavious knows how his father would respond.

“I come from a very Christian family,” he explained. “He would say that the Lord told him to.”

Under the leadership of B-CU Chaplain Rev. Walter Monroe, the Religious Life Fellowship consists of faculty, staff and student representatives, whose responsibility it is to coordinate the religious life programs at the University. The organization is ecumenical in nature, with persons representing a variety of religious denominations.

For more information on the boxes, call Mr. Redd: 386-481-2454.