



Beacon

A publication of the Ban Johnson Amateur Baseball League

- Aug. 6, 2010
- Volume 32
- Issue 5



Celebration - Building Champions celebrate after winning its first league title July 30 at Mid-America Sports Complex.

Building Champions grabs first title

Make it a perfect ending for Building Champions.

The team finished fifth in the regular season, but came on strong in the post-season tournament, winning all seven games. This is the first title in just the third year in the league.

Building Champions beat the Milgram Mustangs in the quarterfinals and defending champion MSBL Royals in the semifinals.

And may have saved the best for last, winning the best of five championship series giving up just three earned runs.

Building Champions defeated the BJ Raiders 5-1 in the first game and blanked the Raiders 3-0 in the second contest.

In the final and decisive game, Building Champions was tied at 4-4 before exploding for eight runs in the bottom of the fourth inning to

win going away 12-4.

Third-year Building Champions manager **Brad Willis** played for the BJ Raiders, winning two titles under legendary manager **Pat Nolan**, who managed at the age of 94 in the BJ. Willis coached for five years for the Raiders before moving to Building Champions.

“The true honor for me is having my name near manager Pat Nolan,” Willis said. “I got very close to him, and really enjoyed every moment of my time with him. He was a true class act and one of the greatest people I have met in my life.”

Looking at his championship team, he said, “All the credit goes to my team. They competed and really turned it on when they had to. I am so proud of them.”



Notable Numbers presented by Independence Ridge Apts.

**(FINAL - UNOFFICIAL)
Batting Average**

(based on a minimum of 46 at bats)

1. Jason Solma, KC Bandits	.421
2. Jarid Renzelman, MBSL Royals	.413
3. Devin O'Rourke, Building Champions	.412
4. David Smith, BJ Raiders	.398
5. Taylor Sibala, BJ Raiders	.391
6. Joe Kassanavoid, UMB Bank	.373
7. Jonathan Pomatto, KC Bandits	.371
8. Joshua Dennett, KC Vipers	.368
9. Chad Shannon, Seaboard	.367
9. Joshua Barnes, KC Blues	.367

Doubles

1. Freddie Adamson, BJ Raiders	10
1. Taylor Sibala, BJ Raiders	10
3. Andrew Kuhn, NKC Apartments	9
4. Sean McHugh, Building Champions	8
5. Joe Kassanavoid, UMB Bank	7
5. Nick Doughty, UMB Bank	7

Triples

1. Freddie Adamson, BJ Raiders	3
1. Joe Kassanavoid, UMB Bank	3
1. Cameron Bentley, UMB Bank	3
4. (Four tied with two each)	

Home Runs

1. David Wade, NKC Apartments	2
1. Clarke O'Dowd, Milgram Mustangs	2
3. (10 tied with one each)	

Runs Batted In

1. Freddie Adamson, BJ Raiders	26
2. Andrew Kuhn, NKC Apartments	17
3. John Calhoun, Seaboard	14
3. Cody Cobb, KC Vipers	14
3. Taylor Sibala, BJ Raiders	14

Earned Run Average

(based on a minimum of 25 innings)

1. Chad Gordon, UMB Bank	1.19
2. Matthew Bergin, MSBL Royals	1.30
3. Kyle Gehrs, Building Champions	1.41
4. Christian Witt, KC Bandits	1.46
5. Ryan Hafner, Building Champions	1.62
6. Kyle Seithel, Building Champions	1.75
7. Jared Berman, MSBL Royals	1.80
8. Eric Silkwood, KC Blues	1.87
9. Brett Pender, Seaboard	2.27
10. Eric Schmid, Seaboard	2.30

Strikeouts

1. Christian Witt, KC Bandits	56
2. Vince Spilker, Seaboard	43
3. Ryan Hafner, Building Champions	38
3. Jeremy Tate, KC Vipers	38
5. Christopher Conner, Regal Plastics	37
6. Kyle Gehrs, Building Champions	36
6. Mark Spreckels, KC Bandits	36
8. Colin Warren, UMB Bank	33
9. Eric Silkwood, KC Blues	32
10. Zach DeValle, UMB Bank	31



Beacon

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**Ban Johnson
League Standings**

	FINAL		
	W	L	GB
UMB Bank	17	9	----
MSBL Royals	15	8	.5
KC Bandits	16	9	.5
Milgram Mustangs	14	8	1.0
Building Champions	15	9	1.0
BJ Raiders	16	10	1.0
KC Vipers	13	14	4.5
Seaboard	11	15	6.0
Regal Plastics	8	18	9.0
NKC Apts.	7	18	9.5
KC Blues	6	20	11.0

O'Rourke nabs MVP honors

Building Champions infielder/outfielder **Devin O'Rourke** was named by league officials as the MVP of the Championship Series.

He was five-of-10 in the three games with a double and an RBI.

"I just took the momentum from the season," the 2010 Rockhurst HS grad said. "My bat was popping real well and I had a good mindset. I tried not to let the pressure get to me."

O'Rourke batted .412 during the regular season. He will be attending St. Louis University to play baseball.

Manager Brad Willis said. "D.O. is a great player and had a great season for us from start to finish. He can play all three outfield positions and third base in a pinch. But as good as Devin is as a player, he is an even a better person."

Building Champions captures

Continued from page 1

Building Champions only allowed three earned runs in the three games of the Championship Series.

"Our pitchers were hitting their spots well," catcher **Sean McHugh**, a 2010 graduate of Blue Valley North, said. "They started off with strikes."

McHugh was the third-place hitter for the team and went one-for-three with a walk in the third and decisive game.

"I had a couple of good nights," he said. "It all comes down to having runners on base."

The veteran on the Building Champions team is infielder-pitcher **Matthew Garcia**.

This is his third year with Building Champions and he will be a junior this year at Pittsburg State.

He pitched the second game of the semifinals, an 8-1 win over defending champion MSBL Royals.

He was also three-for-four in the game and was a home run short of hitting for the cycle.

"The coaches and everyone came together at the end," he said of the team's seven-game winning streak to end the season.

Building Champions won the first game of the Championship series 5-1 behind the pitching of **Adam Giacalone** allowed five hits and fanning 10.

Horace Johnson tossed a shutout in the 3-0 win over the Raiders in the second game.

Bradley Foss was the winning pitcher in the final game going the first five innings. **Kyle Seithel** worked the last two innings, fanning four.

Sal Belfonte was two-for-three with a triple and four RBIs. **Brett Miller** was two-for-four and **Tom Herrera** was two-for-three with an RBI.



Best of the Best - Devin O'Rourke of Building Champions receives the Tournament MVP award from **Bob McFarlane**, executive director.



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Post-Season Tournament highlights

Here is a look at the Post-Season Ban Johnson League Tournament

First Round

July 21

KC Blues 6, Seaboard 3

Chet Harvey had a double and an RBI and **John Kane** had a two-run double.

NKC Apartments 7, Regal Plastics 1

Highlights were not reported for this game.

KC Blues 8, NK Apartments 7

The Blues advance into the eighth-seed spot in the tournament.

Ben Cox had a two-run double and **Chase Hoffman** had an RBI single.

Quarterfinals

July 22

UMB Bank 11, KC Blues 3

James Smelcher was three-for-three with an RBI; **Joseph Kassenvold** had a two-run homer and Frank Salandino was two-for-four with an RBI.

MSBL Royals 8, Vipers 6

Travis Quick was two-for-three with two RBIs and **Michael Rezin** was three-for-three.

BJ Raiders 2, KC Bandits 0

Nick Tweiten tossed a one-hitter, fanning nine and walking one. **Eddie High** was one-for-three with an RBI.

Building Champions 7, Milgram Mustangs 6

Matthew Garica was three-for-four with the game-winning RBI in the top of the seventh. **Sean McHugh** was three-for-four with an RBI and **Devin O'Rourke** was two-for-four with an RBI.

July 23

UMB Bank 9, KC Blues 2

Nick Doughty was three-for-three with an RBI and **James Smelcher** was four-for-four with an RBI.

BJ Raiders 5, KC Bandits 4 (9)

Angelo Chrisiano drove in the winning run with an RBI single in the bottom of the ninth. **Taylor Sibala**, **Dave Smith** and **Eddie High** went two-for-five each.

MSBL Royals 3, KC Vipers 0

Jared Berman tossed a three-hitter, striking out six and walking one. **David Richards** had an RBI single.

Building Champions 3, Milgram Mustangs 0

Adam Giacalone tossed a three hitter, fanning six and not walking a batter. **Matthew Garcia** had two hits and **Mitch Meyer** had an RBI double.

Semifinals

July 26

BJ Raiders 5, UMB Bank 3

All Raiders runs were unearned. **Freddie Adamson** went two-for-four with an RBI.

Building Champions 6, MSBL Royals 4 (8)

Sean McHugh had a single to drive in two runs in the top of the eighth.

July 27

BJ Raiders 6, UMB Bank 0

Nick Tweiten tossed a five-hitter. He fanned five and walked one.

Taylor Sibala had a two-run triple and **Freddie Adamson** and **Jeremiah Biggar** had RBI singles.

Building Champions 8, MSBL Royals 1

Matthew Garcia gave up just one run on the mound and was three-for-four at the plate and **Connor Murray** was three-for-three.

See Highlights, page 5



Hot Bat - Sal Belfonte, Building Champions center-fielder, went three for five with a bases-loaded triple and four RBIs in Tournament Finals at Mid-America Sports Complex.

Belfonte is a 2010 graduate of Rockhurst High School.

Opening Act -

Seven distinguished Ban Johnson alums threw ceremonial first pitches at the Tournament Finals July 28 at Mid-America Sports Complex. The participants were (from left) **Bruce Nelson, Moe Lago, Michael Younghanz, Ron Zuber, Bill Fenton, Don Saint** and **Chris Halford**, who also sung the National Anthem.



Continued from page 4

Championship Series July 28

Building Champions 5, BJ Raiders 1

Adam Giacalone fanned 10 and walked two in hurling the complete game. Devin O'Rourke was four-for-four with an RBI.

July 29

Building Champions 3, BJ Raiders 0

Horace Johnson tossed a six-hitter, fanning six. **Conner Murray** had an RBI single.

July 30

Building Champions 12, BJ Raiders 4

Sal Belfonte was two-for-three with a triple and four RBIs. **Brett Miller** went two-for-four.

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Ban Johnson alums dot MLB scene

There are a number of former Ban Johnson League alums that are filling various positions with Major League Baseball teams. This includes:

Keith Lieppman is the Oakland A's director of player development.

Russ Morman is with the San Francisco Giants organization. He is batting coach for the Richmond Flying Squirrels, the club's AA team in the Eastern League. Morman spent a great deal of time playing in the minors and had several limited opportunities in the big leagues.

Mike Grouse is a scout for the Texas Rangers organization. He is the central cross-checker.

Mike Hankins is with the Detroit Tigers organization. He is the Midwest crosschecker.

Paul Provas is with the Chicago White Sox

organization. He is a pro scout.

Cullen McRae is with the Florida Marlins. He serves as the club's video coordinator.

Carl Blando is with the Kansas City Royals organization. He had retired from scouting, but the Royals asked him to come back part-time and cover the Kansas City area.

Frank White is with Fox Sports-Kansas City serving as an analyst on the Kansas City Royals games. He played for the Royals for a number of years, winning a plethora of Gold Gloves as a second baseman. He has also managed in the Royals organization.

Rick Sutcliffe is now working for ESPN as an analyst. He spent a number of years in the big leagues with the Los Angeles Dodgers, Cleveland Indians, Chicago Cubs, Baltimore Orioles and St. Louis Cardinals. He won the Cy Young Award in 1984.



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Alumni Corner presented by Moe Lago

Goldman remembers working on BJ book, "Diamond Connections"

This is the 10th anniversary of the Ban Johnson League book, "Diamond Connections."

The book written by **Stuart Goldman** was part of the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the league.

Goldman was the sports information director and editor of the BJ Beacon from 1992-1994. He also helped gather the information and did the program for the 75th Anniversary team in 2002.

He was approached by league officials about doing the book and started writing the book in 1999.

Goldman remembers talking to **David Cone** of the New York Yankees for the book during a series here at Kauffman Stadium and making a trip to St. Louis to interview **Rick Sutcliffe**.

He recalls that when he talked with various people about the book, they all seemed to mention **Les Milgram**. He knew he had to have something about Les in the book.

What surprised him the most about writing the book?

"There was a common theme that everyone who talked about the BJ, whether they played for one year or five, or whether they played in the majors or just had a solid professional life, had the utmost respect for the league," he said. "They all regarded the BJ as the highest level of baseball in Kansas City, and if you

were good in the BJ, you were really good. Most of the alums I talked to could recount games in detail from 20 or 30 years before, as if it were yesterday. Those games and those times meant so much to them."

Goldman is now managing editor of Club Industry magazine. He also spends some time working for the Royals as a tour guide and docent at the Royals Hall of Fame.

Goldman noted, "To me, the Ban Johnson League is the closest thing to a fraternity as I've ever been. I've been associated on and off with the Ban Johnson League for 18 years. That's an accomplishment I'm most proud of."

There are very limited number of the books still around. For more information, call the BJ office at (913) 383-7765.

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*BJ alum: Lapetina's, 1955-59
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|------------------|---|------------------|---|
| ◆ Carl Blando | Butternut manager, 1972-78 | ◆ Ken Monaco | Meyer Metalcraft/Moody's/Lapetina's 1952-56 |
| Mike Bray | Western Auto 1968-70 | Larry Mosnick | Lapetina's 1949 |
| ◆ Jim Cash | Katz 1949-52 | ◆ Don B. Motley | Milgram coach/manager 1968-present |
| Darrell Corwin | Moody's/Feld 1957-60 | ◆ Gary Patton | Boyle's 1973-76 |
| Stuart Goldman | Sports Information Director 1992-94
"Diamond Connections" author | ◆ Tim Presko | Boyle's Famous Corned Beef 1974-79 |
| ◆ Don Goodwin | Milgram 1954-59 | ◆ Don Saint | Milgram 1957-60 |
| ◆ Norm Gunderman | Meyer Metalcraft/Rodeo 1955-56 | ◆ Carl Shortino | Lapetina's 1955-57 |
| ◆ Tom Higgins | Guy's 1968-72 | ◆ DeMorris Smith | Milgram 1956-58 |
| ◆ Steve Jacobus | Milgram 1960-62 | ◆ Jack Talley | KC Life 1975-79 |
| ◆ Jerry Lafferty | Scout, Philadelphia Phillies | Lowell Toombs | Milgram 1956-57 |
| ◆ Moe Lago | Lapetina's/Western Auto 1955-59, coach 1965-69 | ◆ Terry Welsh | Umpire 1970s |
| ◆ Richard Ludwig | Boyle's 1977-79 | | |
| Doug Minnis | Milgram/Feld coach 1960s | | ◆ = Diamond Club |

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Good Game - Building Champions receive congratulations from the BJ Raiders after winning the Ban Johnson title July 30 at Mid-America Sports Complex. The third-year team won three straight games in the best of five Championship Series.