

Caller-Times 2017 High School Honors

The All-South Texas Baseball Team

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

Nick Loftin, Ray

Loftin did just about everything for the Texans this season in what was the program's deepest playoff run in more than 60 years. As a pitcher, Loftin was 11-4 with a 1.10 earned-run average as he struck out 94 in 82.2 innings. The Baylor signee was one of the area's top hitters with a .465 average to go with 35 runs, 21 RBI, seven doubles, four triples and three home runs.

NEWCOMER OF THE YEAR

M.J. Rodriguez, fr., Veterans Memorial

Rodriguez entered the season as a freshman to keep an eye on and did not disappoint. Hitting near the top of the Eagles lineup, Rodriguez was arguably one of the most dangerous hitters in the area during the season. He hit .424 with 28 RBI, seven doubles and seven home runs, which was among the area's best totals in all categories.

COACH OF THE YEAR

Joe Curiel, Moody

There is probably no baseball coaching job in the state that comes with as much pressure as the coach at Moody, and Curiel handled all of it. His quiet leadership and staying focused on the routine helped the Trojans return to the state tournament for the first time since 2013 and for the 13th time in program history. The Trojans finished the 2017 season with a 30-3-3 record and did not lose a game during the regular season.

FIRST TEAM

Pitchers

Marcus Cantu, sr., Moody

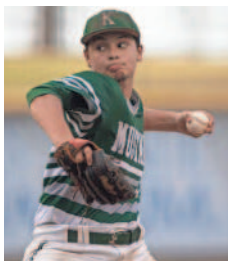
There was probably not a better big-game pitcher or player in the area this season. Cantu had big starts throughout the season, including one that beat rival Calallen in Game 2 of the District 30-5A title series. His single against Ray may be the most memorable hit of his stellar career because it sent the Trojans back to the state tournament.



Moody's Marcus Cantu

Dustin Saenz, sr., King

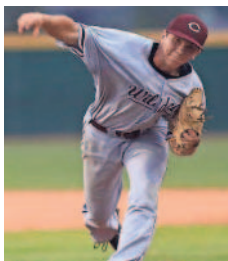
Saenz, a Texas A&M signee, finished the season with a 7-4 record, along with a 1.19 earned-run average and 133 strikeouts, and helping King make it three rounds to the post-season.



King's Dustin Saenz

Zach Rumfield, sr., Calallen

Rumfield was one of the area's best big-game pitchers as he was one of three starters to earn victories against Moody this season. Rumfield, who will play in college at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi, was 9-1 with a 1.84 earned-run average with 91 strikeouts and 33 walks in 72.1 innings. He also had six saves.



Calallen's Zach Rumfield

Catcher

Nate Medina, sr., Moody

Medina hit in the clean-up spot for the Trojans for much of the season and led the team in batting average, hitting .400. Medina, who will play at Laredo Community College, also handled one of the area's best pitching staffs.



Moody's Nate Medina

Infielders

Ramsey Flores, sr., Moody

It was not hard to see what Flores meant to Moody on the field and off. He was one of the team's leaders and one of its best hitters and fielders. Arguably the toughest out in South Texas, Flores hit



Moody's Ramsey Flores



PHOTOS BY GABE HERNANDEZ, COURTNEY SACCO AND RACHEL DENNY CLOW/CALLER-TIMES
Ray's Nick Loftin is the All-South Texas Baseball MVP.



M.J. Rodriguez from Veterans Memorial High School is the All-South Texas Baseball Newcomer of the Year



Moody's Joe Curiel gets a dunking after a win in the region finals. He is the Coach of the Year.

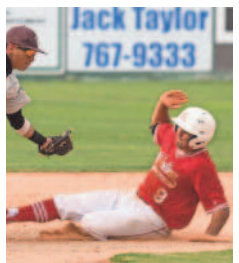
.385 this season with three doubles, two triples, three home runs and 29 RBI. Flores followed in his older brothers' footsteps in helping a Trojan team to the state tournament.



Calallen's Brandon Broughton

Brandon Broughton, jr., Calallen

Broughton led the Wildcats in batting average this season, hitting at a .421 clip and added 10 doubles, a triple, two home runs and 21 RBI.



Robstown's Austin Kwiatkowski

Austin Kwiatkowski, jr., Robstown

Kwiatkowski

was one of the Cotton Pickers' top players in the field and at the plate this season with a team-best .372 batting average, along with 32 RBI, five doubles and three triples.

Jordan Martinez, sr., Sinton

A two-way player who will play at North Central Texas College, was the 31-4A MVP this season after going 8-1 as a pitcher with a 1.37 earned-run average along with 92 strikeouts in 76.1 innings. He also hit .441 with 19 doubles, six triples, a home run, 34 RBI and 36 runs.



Sinton's Jordan Martinez

Outfielders

Jonathan Carrillo, sr., Sinton

The Pirates' leadoff hitter showed his speed in the outfield and the base paths this season. Carrillo hit .384 with 12 dou-

bles, five triples, scored 43 runs and had 17 walks. He also led the team with 16 stolen bases. He was also 2-0 on the mound with a 0.85 ERA.

Abel Pena, sr., King

The catalyst for the Mustangs offense this season, Pena hit .382 with 16 doubles, four triples and had 22 RBI from the lead-off spot. He also scored 27 runs and drew 26 walks.

Roy Sandoval, sr., Moody

Part of a deep and experienced outfield, Sandoval, a Texas A&M-Kingsville signee hit .327 with 7 doubles and 4 triples. He was also named to the Class 5A All-State Tournament team.



Sinton's Jonathan Carrillo

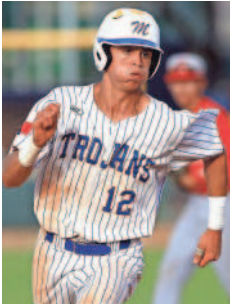


King's Abel Pena

Utility Players

Dominik Lopez, jr., Moody

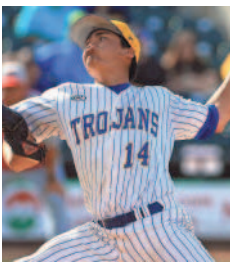
Lopez's pitching prowess was known when the season started but as the season progressed he also became an offensive weapon for the Trojans. Lopez was 6-1 on the mound with a 2.06 earned-run average, and hit .293 with 8 doubles and 14 RBI.



Moody's Roy Sandoval

John Gaddis, sr., Calallen

The future Islander led the Wildcats with 33 RBI this season, while also hitting .370 and scoring 37 runs. As a pitcher, he was 7-4 with a 3.11 earned-run average.



Moody's Dominik Lopez

SECOND TEAM

P — AG Ayala, sr., Miller

P — Mason Hopkins, jr., Sinton

P — D'Mond Lafond, sr., Refugio

P — Nic Hernandez, so., Bishop

C — Andres Aguas, sr., IWA

IF — Kyle Jackson, sr., Flour Bluff

IF — Alec Martinez, sr., Moody

IF — Jesse Gonzalez, jr., Robstown

IF — Zach Trevino, so., Hebbronville

OF — Stephen Pereles, jr., St. John Paul II

OF — Jeffrey Boggess, jr., Veterans Memorial

OF — Royce Carrera, jr., Falfurrias

OF — Rico Trevino, sr., Bishop

U — Brett Brown, so., Sinton

U — Jacob Flores, jr., Carroll

THIRD TEAM

P — Isaac Ponce, so., G-P

P — Isaac Flores, fr., Ray

P — Jon Barrera, so., King

P — Randal Garza, so., Agua Dulce

C — Manuel Garcia, sr., Alice

IF — Bryce Balusek, so., Calallen

IF — Mateo Saenz, jr., San Diego

IF — Xavier Pena, sr., Robstown

IF — Bobby Herrera, sr., Mathis

OF — Robert Arredondo, sr., Moody

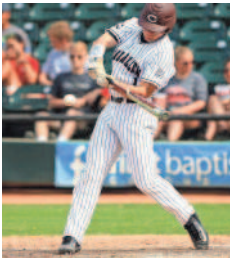
OF — Joseph Gutierrez, sr., Banquete

OF — Jordan Perez, sr., Moody

OF — Alex Aitken, sr., Riviera

U — Gabe Castillo, sr., Riviera

U — Jacobe Avery, jr., Refugio



Calallen's John Gaddis



Miller's AG Ayala



Robstown's Xavier Pena

Baseball

Continued from Page 1C

plate this season?

Basically just be a tough out when I had two strikes, putting the ball in play, stay up the middle or the other way. Other than that that was it just be a tough out.

What are your expectations when you get to Baylor?

To work hard and go in there with the mentality that I'm going to start. They lost a middle infielder this year, he's a senior, and I'm just going to go in there with the expectation that I need to work hard and produce for the team.

What was it like playing in that Ray-Moody series?

That was one of the greatest games I've ever played in my entire life. Playing in front of 7,000 fans is insane. There's now way to put it, it's just incredible.

You've had quite a run in high school, did you meet your expectations, did you exceed your expectations?

Coming into high school, of course I wanted to succeed as a baseball player but I also wanted to succeed as a person as well. I believe that my coaching staff has really helped me to exceed my expectations in the game of baseball to get better every day but there's always room for improvement. That's what I expect to do next year and keep on as years go on.

What was your best moment from this past year?

There are so many of those. I'd have to

say, this doesn't really pertain to baseball, before every game and at every practice we'd go into the locker room and play ping pong. We'd always have ping pong games. I loved playing coach Rodriguez and coach Ruiz. Just the way that we bonded as a team, everyone was in there playing ping pong together. We would always play each other, it was a competition between each other all the time. It was just having fun all the time was probably the greatest memory, just having fun every single day playing the game of baseball.

Who was the champ?

It was definitely me. You ask coach Ruiz he's going to say it's him but I swear he doesn't beat me. He doesn't beat me. I think he's beaten me like three times and I've beaten him like 20-something times. There was one time I beat him 21-5. He

doesn't remember it but I do, that was the biggest win I've ever had.

What will your legacy be with the Ray program? What do you want them to remember about Nick Loftin?

I want them to remember that there's always room for improvement in that you can't be afraid to fail. I want them to remember me as a hard worker. I want them to always work hard, and just never give up.

What's the future like for the program?

It's very, very bright. Knowing we only lost three starters this year and the people coming up, we had a bunch of leaders this year and it wasn't just me that led the team. Everyone was a leader on their own. It's going to be very bright and I expect Ray to shine for these next years.