

How Good is a Bay Sox?



Big League Realities: A SouthCoast Stop on the Road to the Majors

Every major league baseball player has spent years learning their craft. They play ball in, and up through, an organized system of teams designed to teach the game, and to ensure that players with serious baseball talent play the game as often as they can. Learning the complexities of baseball is one of the hardest things to do in sports. A player needs to understand the nuance of the pitch count and feel the rhythm of the game. The only real way to do that is play, play a lot, and play against other gifted players. Major League Baseball has worked to create a system of teams – both professional and college amateur – to help young men learn this “perfect game”. The New Bedford Bay Sox are one of those teams.

This year, and every year, the Bay Sox field a roster of talented young players working their way along the path to the pros. So how good is a Bay Sox? The answer can be found on the diamond at Paul Walsh Field in June and July at 6:30. And, the answer is proven by looking at players from Bay Sox past.

Pitching phenom Stephen Strasburgh of the Washington Nationals was the first overall selection in 2009’s Major League

Baseball draft and broke into the big leagues as possibly the most anticipated rookie baseball had ever seen. Long before his 2011 major league debut, Strasburgh's journey to the big leagues featured a summer pitching for the Bay Sox organization in the New England Collegiate Baseball League (NECBL).



Nothing beats the sights, smells, and sounds of a live baseball game!

It was the summer of 2007, and the Bay Sox, based out of Torrington Connecticut at the time, hosted a young Stephen Strasburgh as their closer. He pitched a total of 14 innings, racking up 8 saves while striking out 25 and walking only 1. Strasburgh's numbers included a 1.45 ERA and earned him the honor of being named the NECBL's top prospect. He went on to a stellar Junior season at San Diego State, won a bronze medal with Team USA in the 2008 Olympics and the rest is history. That's how good a Bay Sox can be.

In fact, a total of nine former Bay Sox were drafted in this year's MLB draft. This group included last year's Luke Ferrell and the 2011 pitching standout Steve Janas. Luke Ferrell, who is the son of current Boston Red Sox manager Jon Ferrell and a student at Northwestern University, was selected by the Kansas City Royals. Steve Janas, who posted a 1.63 ERA with the Bay Sox, was selected by the Atlanta Braves and has signed a minor

league contract.

The NECBL as a whole has produced nearly 100 major leaguers since its inception in 2002. Current Boston Red Sox closer Andrew Bailey is a 2009 NECBL alum. Every summer, future big leaguers play ball at Paul Walsh Field in a league with a reputation for producing quality talent. The NECBL's, wooden-bat, pro-style baseball is getting the attention of more and more major league scouts every year.

How good are the 2013 Bay Sox? The season is young, but there are emerging stars to keep an eye on. Slugger Chris Shaw from Boston College has started out with a bang hitting .385 and leading the NECBL in RBI's. Shaw was drafted out of high school by the New York Mets. But, he chose college and the summer leagues to improve his skills and continue his education. He will re-enter draft better prepared and with greater visibility with more big league scouts. And, he has a chance to play with gifted teammates like Bay Sox catcher Matt Nogay from West Virginia University or pitcher Tucker Forbes from UCLA or the other 22 players who are the Bay Sox. This year's team is just starting to get on a roll. Come to game and see how good these guys are . . . they may be, like players past, Major League Baseball good.