

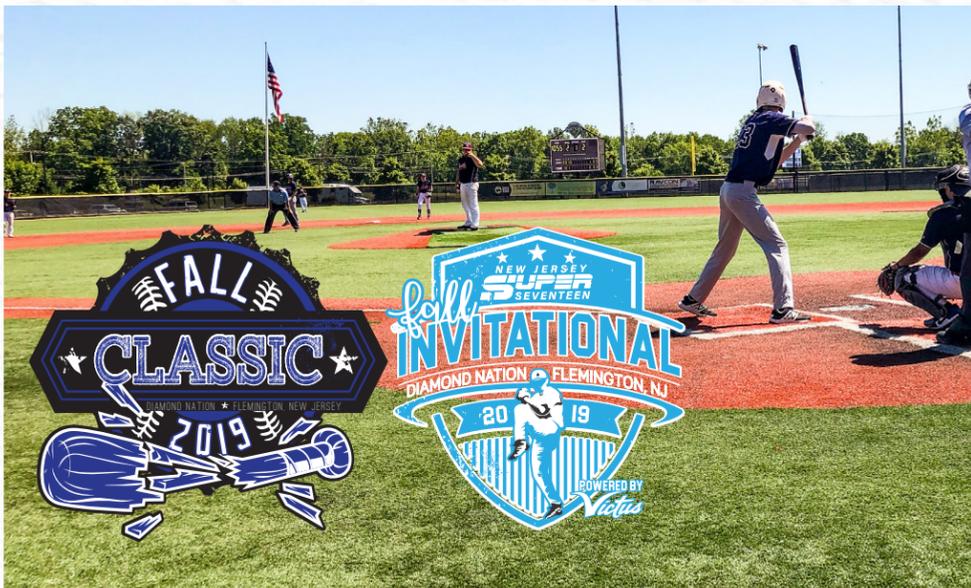
SUPER 17 FALL INVITATIONAL PROVIDES HUGE SHOWCASE AT 'THE NATION'

By Bob Behre

Sixty teams from many of the very best travel programs frequenting Diamond Nation will compete in the Super 17 Fall Invitational and turn the northeast's top baseball complex into a scouting bonanza this weekend.

Meanwhile, the small diamonds will be busy, too, as the Fall Classic will boast 11U and 12U brackets.

The **Super 17 Fall Invitational - powered by Victus** opens with a quartet of 6:30 p.m. games on Friday and one of the more intriguing of the four is a tilt pitting Full Count Prospects 2021 against All-Out Scout Team on Field 3.



Evoshield Canes North Atlantic, just to name a few.

The top eight finishers from the Super 17 Fall Invitational will advance to the Columbus Day Showcase where eight other surviving teams from the 17/18U Wood Bat Championship will join the field to make a run at a championship.

FALL CLASSIC

The **11U Fall Classic** opens at 10 a.m. on Saturday when the Junior Ducks of West Chester square off with Stars Baseball - Colangelo on Field 6. The two-day 11U tournament closes at 6:30 p.m. on Sunday when the championship game is contested on Field 2.

The tournament runs through Sunday when the event is capped by four 6:30 p.m. games. The Super 17 Fall Invitational will utilize the four turf fields at Diamond Nation, Jack Cust Baseball Academy around the corner, and a trio of top fields at Raritan Valley Community College in Branchburg, Mercer County Community College in West Windsor and JFK Memorial High School in Iselin.

The tournament field boast such top flight programs as ASBA Futures, which has entered two teams, Baseball U., which is sending a tournament-high six teams, the Diamond Jacks (3), Wladyka Baseball (3), Tri-State Arsenal (2), Sportika Gallagher (2), Northeast Pride (5), Farrah Scout, Complete Performance Baseball Academy and

The Bucks County Generals, MB Thunder, Diamond Jacks Super 11U and Phoenix Baseball round out a strong 11U field.

The **12U Fall Classic** opens at 8 a.m. on Saturday when the Whiz Kids tackle the Locked In Expos on Field 6. The 12U tournament field is shaved down to a championship pairing at 2:15 p.m. on Sunday on Field 2.

An impressive array of talented programs round out the 12U Fall Classic, including the Fair Haven Diamonds, the Bucks County Generals Red, NJ Renegades, Diamond Jacks Super 12U, Buck County Generals Black and the Diamond Jacks Gold 12U.

DIAMOND JACK ZACH SYLVESTER COMMITS TO SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

By Bob Behre

Zach Sylvester had established himself as one of Montville baseball team's leaders last year as its starting shortstop and a reliable bat in first-year coach Ian Schwindel's lineup.

Then Sylvester showed just how dangerous and clutch he can be when he ripped a two-run home to left-center field to knot up at 2-2 Monville's NJSIAA North Jersey, Section 1, Group 4 championship game against Roxbury.

That fifth inning home run would prove to be Montville's only runs as Roxbury, its North Jersey Athletic Conference rival, went on to win, 3-2. The home run was only Sylvester's second of the season but stamped a thoroughly productive and efficient season for the junior.

"That home run was my greatest experience in baseball," said Sylvester. "But their catcher hit two home runs and they came back to beat us." Winning a sectional championship would have topped the home run but for Montville, the 2019 season had exceeded all expectations.

"I was down 1-2 in the count and thought I just hit a fly ball," said Sylvester. "It just kept carrying. I guess I squared it up better than I thought. It was a tough end to the season but it was a phenomenal season overall. No one expected us to make it that far."

Sylvester batted .390, scored 29 runs, drew 20 walks and just seemed to always be on base. The talented infielder carried that big junior season at the Morris County school into an excellent summer that was capped off by his commitment to play college baseball for Seton Hall University.

Seton Hall University will be getting a ball player with a very high baseball IQ and a mature, grounded approach to the game.

"Zach's a great kid, very mature," said Steve DiTrollo, Diamond Nation's recruitment coordinator. "He has a great feel and excellent timing for the game." Sylvester joined the Diamond Jacks program in the winter of his sophomore year of high school. He plays this fall for the Diamond Jack's Super 17 squad. "Zach's very advanced for a high school player in regard to being able to see the field the way he does."

Seton Hall assistant coach Mark Pappas initiated the recruitment of Sylvester

before head coach Rob Sheppard joined the process. Sylvester visited the South Orange campus on Monday, July 29 and, by Friday, August 2, told Sheppard he wanted to be part of the long-running Division 1 baseball success story.

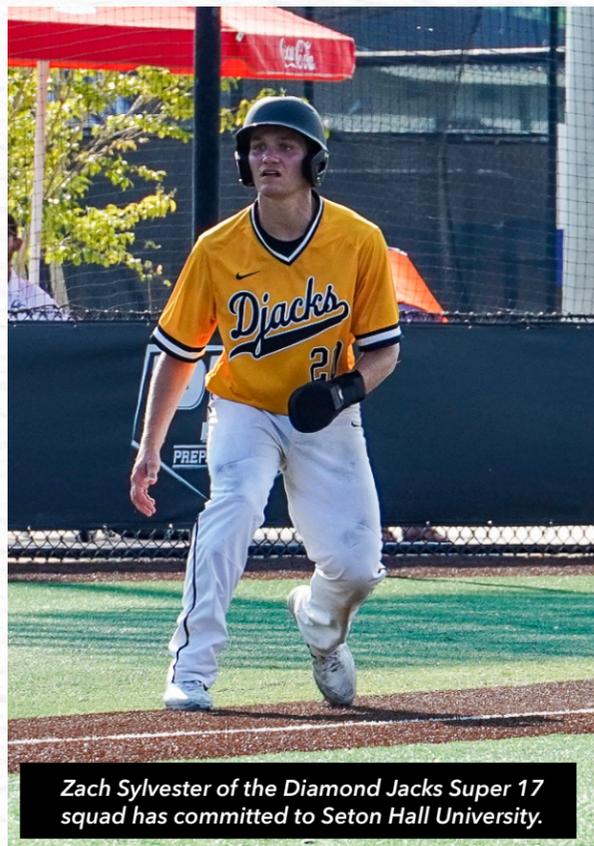
"I wanted a smaller campus where there weren't a lot of distractions so I could focus on baseball and school," said Sylvester, who is deciding between a course of study in psychology or biology. He also was looking at such schools as Lafayette and William & Mary. "The campus and facilities are extremely nice. There's a lot to like. The basketball team is one of the top teams in the nation and the baseball program is outstanding. I was excited when they offered me."

Sylvester and his fellow Seton Hall 2020-21 freshman classmates will arrive on campus to see a new baseball field and stadium, the construction of which is to be completed and ready for the 2020 season. Sheppard had been giving Diamond Nation updates on the field's progress all summer.

Sylvester has played the stiffest of competition as a member of the Diamond Jacks Super 17 team and his Montville squad boasted one of the more difficult public school schedules in the state last spring, dealing with the likes of Non-Public A powers Delbarton and Pope John, and traditional baseball strongholds Morristown, Randolph, Nutley, Old Tappan, Watchung Hills and Lakeland before running into Paramus and Northern Highlands in the NJSIAA tournament.

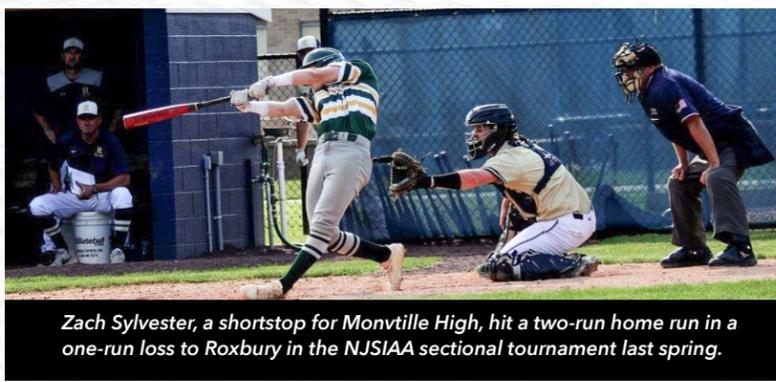
"We always fought hard against those tough teams," said Sylvester. "Even when you lose to good competition you do gain something from it."

Monville was certainly battled tested through an impressive 16-12 season under Schwindel's direction. Schwindel was an assistant in 2018 under former Montville coach Joe



Zach Sylvester of the Diamond Jacks Super 17 squad has committed to Seton Hall University.

SYLVESTER (continued from front page)

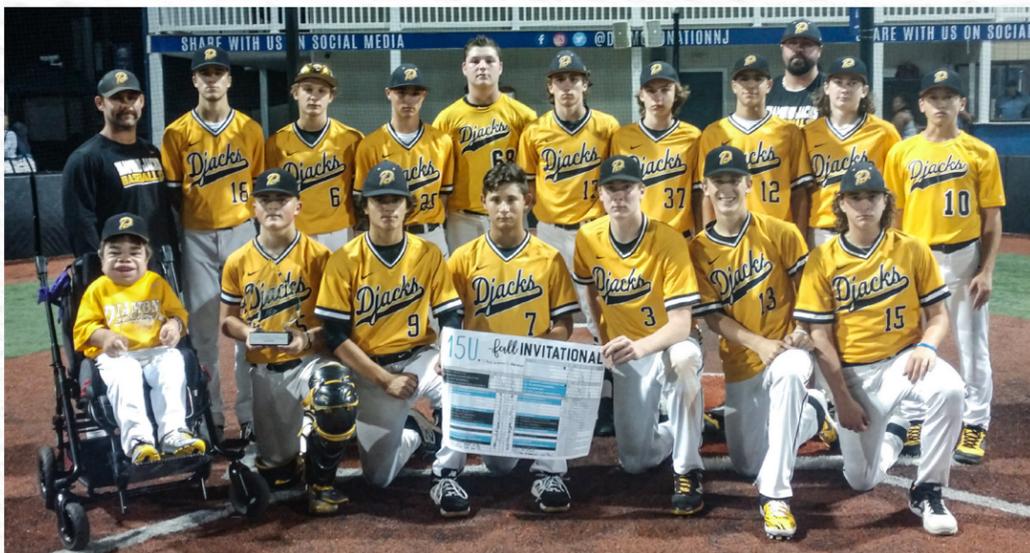


Cardinale, who took the head baseball job at Cedar Grove beginning in 2019. Schwindel, a Livingston grad, is a first cousin to Frank Schwindel, a Livingston grad and a Triple-A player in the Detroit organization.

"Zach was a huge part of our success," said Schwindel. "He really came on as a leader. We were a senior heavy team but, as a junior, he stepped up. He proved it over the summer then stepped in and did a great job at shortstop. He made some huge plays in the Randolph game to help us win that one. At the plate, Zach set the table many times. He has a great eye. He's just a baseball junky with instincts that are the best I've seen."

Schwindel, who has taught physical education at the elementary school level in Montville for six years, says Sylvester "keeps everyone on the team up. When we struggle with energy he's right there to pick everybody up. He's in the game every single second. He knows the game so well. He's the captain for a reason."

DIAMOND JACKS SUPER 15U CRUISES TO FALL INVITATIONAL CROWN



By Bob Behre

The Diamond Jacks Super 15U squad played to its Fall Invitational tournament form in the championship game when it used the same stingy pitching and defense and a steady drumbeat of base hits on the way to an 8-0 victory over Stars Baseball 15U Red.

Righthander Kolbie Stellpflug pitched a six-hit shutout, striking out three and walking three as his teammates rattled off 12 hits in their six at bats to keep the talented Stars Baseball team on its heels.

"Our hits were loud," said Super 15U coach Walter Cleary. "And we strung together some deep at bats."

Mark Gialliusi had the first of those loud hits when he delivered the Diamond Jacks first run in the first inning on a two-out grounds rule double to right-center field. The shot in the gap scored Griffin Mills from second base. Mills drew a walk leading off the bottom of the first, stole second and moved to third on a wild pitch. Stars Baseball starting pitcher Michael Lewis then struck out the next two batters before Gialliusi latched onto a fastball and drove it the other way.

"Mark has hit the cover off the ball," said Cleary. "So have Jaros and Maselli. We've been swinging it real well all fall."

Stellpflug retired the Stars in order in the first inning but would battle with runners in scoring position in four of the next five innings. He never seemed affected by the jams, though, and his defense picked him up with a pair of double plays. Left fielder Justin Christensen helped, too, gunning down a Stars Baseball runner at the plate for the third out of the top of the sixth inning.

"Kolbie had to pitch out of some trouble and our defense played real well," said Cleary. "Christensen threw that guy out at the plate and the double plays helped a lot."

Stellpflug didn't blink when Brett Renfrow drew a walk leading off the second inning for Stars Baseball and Matt Westley followed with a single to center field. It helped that first baseman Ben Schild made a nice stop to start a 3-unassisted-6 double play before shortstop Griffin Mills gobbled up another grounder to end the threat.

"I just wanted to get them to hit the ball on the ground and give my fielders a chance to keep us in the game," said Stellpflug, a freshman at Somerville. "I was pounding the zone with fastballs and keeping them off balance with the changeup."

Carson Cho singled to right field with one out in the fourth and Renfrow hit a knock to left field with two outs for Stars Baseball. But the Diamond Jacks dodged a bullet when right fielder Marco Maselli snared Westley's hard lined drive to end the inning.

The Diamond Jacks (4-0) used some aggressive base running to tack on a pair of runs in the bottom of the fourth and extend their lead to 3-0. Ryan Jaros, the Super 15U's No. 3 hitter, easily beat out a grounder in the shortstop hole leading off the inning. Gialliusi then singled hard to left to be being forced at second base by Maselli's grounder to the right side.

That's when the Super 15U put a play on, having Maselli charge to second base while Jaros broke from third on the back end of the double steal. Both runners were safe and Maselli took third when the throw back to the plate got away. Lewis would uncorked a wild pitch with Jake Dally at the plate, allowing Maselli to score from third for a 3-0 lead.

"Our base running was phenomenal," said Cleary. "We ran the bases to so well this tournament. That's been a big improvement for us."

Stars Baseball (4-1) would actually load the bases in the fifth with just one out. Lewis singled through the right side before Sean McCloy walked and Ryan Marohn singled to right with one out. But the next batter hit a bouncer toward the middle of the diamond and Mills fielded it, stepped on second and fired to first for an inning-ending double play. Schild made an outstanding pick out of the dirt at first base to ensure the third out.

The Diamond Jacks lifted the lead to 4-0 in the sixth on Logan Eibacher's one-out single into left-center field. Nick Lorenzo, the No. 8 hitter, triggered that rally with a leadoff single to center field. Jimmy Mulvaney followed with a single to left and Lorenzo then charged home from second on Eibacher's clutch hit.

Cho drew a one-out walk in the top of the sixth for Stars Baseball and reached second on a fielder's choice grounder. He raced around third on Renfrow's single to left as Christensen's throw home was off line. But catcher Gialliusi ranged to his right to catch the ball and dove back to his left to apply the tag on Cho before he touched the plate.

Stars Baseball went to its bullpen in the last of the sixth but the Diamond Jacks would put the game away with a four-run rally that secured the victory via the 8-run mercy rule.

Christensen came up with the bases loaded and one out and singled home two runs. Lorenzo followed with an RBI double to boost the lead to 7-0. Then Mulvaney put the game away when he hit a hard shot over third base to score Christensen with the decisive run. The rally began with a Gialliusi walk, Maselli's single and a walk to Dally.

Cleary has coached this group since they were 12 years-old and has watched them develop into an efficient unit on the mound and defensively while forming a highly potent attack at the plate. This Diamond Jack team is 63-5 since the spring when they were still playing as 14U Diamond Jacks. They outscored their Fall Invitational opponents this weekend 39-2.

Virginia-based Stars Baseball, steered by head coach Glen Caroline, turned a pair of double plays of their own and held a 24-13 runs advantage on their opponents.

FALL INVITATIONAL RECAPS



10U
Bucks County Generals Black, 20, Central Jersey Young Guns Elite 19

The Bucks County Generals Black outlasted the Central Jersey Young Guns Elite, 20-19, in the 10U Fall Invitational championship game. Oliver Olson of the Generals was named the tournament's Most Valuable Player.. Buck County (3-1) outscored its opponents 45-36. The Central Jersey Young Guns (2-2) held a 55-44 runs advantage on its opponents.



11U
Tri-State Arsenal National 5, Diamond Jacks Super 11U 2

Tri-State Arsenal National defeated the Diamond Jacks Super 11U squad, 5-2, in the 11U Fall Invitational championship game. Gianluca Gallina of Tri-State Arsenal was named the tournament's Most Valuable Player. Tri-State Arsenal (4-0) outscored its opponents 36-15. The Diamond Jacks (3-1) held a 27-15 runs advantage on its opponents.



13U
Diamond Jacks Super 13U 8, Elite Squad NY 2

The Diamond Jacks Super 13U defeated Elite Squad NY, 8-2, in the 13U Fall Invitational championship game. J.R. Rosado of the Super 13U team was named the tournament's Most Valuable Player. The Diamond Jacks Super 13U (3-1) outscored its opponents 32-9. Elite Squad NY (3-1) held a 35-11 runs advantage on its opponents.



14U
Rising Stars Baseball 14, Diamond Jacks Super 14U 2

Rising Stars Baseball defeated the Diamond Jacks Super 14U, 14-2, in the 14U Fall Invitational championship game. Noah Brandt of Rising Stars Baseball was named the tournament's Most Valuable Player. Rising Stars Baseball (4-0) outscored its opponents 52-6. The Diamond Jacks Super 14U (3-1) held a 28-18 runs advantage on its opponents.



16U
Stars Baseball 16U Blue 6, Diamond Jacks Super 16U 1

Stars Baseball 16U Blue defeated the Diamond Jacks Super 16U, 6-1, in the 16U Fall Invitational championship game. Carson Mayfield of Stars Baseball was named the tournament's Most Valuable Player. Stars Baseball 16U Blue (5-0) outscored its opponents 40-10. The Diamond Jacks Super 16U (4-1) held a 37-12 runs advantage on its opponents.