

SPORTS

ON THE RADAR

Potomac Falls' fireballer Savino readies for MLB Prospect League



“

Nate Savino is one of the hardest working players we've ever had in our program. He's 24/7 baseball. He's an outstanding student and an outstanding individual. When you put the work in that he does, you're going to get the results.

POTOMAC FALLS BASEBALL COACH JOE TERANGO

Times-Mirror/Tavan Smith

Potomac Falls junior Nate Savino pitches during a recent game against Briar Woods. Already committed to play Division I baseball at the University of Virginia, Savino has been selected to play in the five-day Perfect Game National Showcase this summer.

BY JASON S. RUFNER
Special to the Times-Mirror

Nate Savino has always “played up.”

Ever since his Lower Loudoun Little League days, then with the Sterling Xplosion and Diamond Elite travel teams, and now as a junior at Potomac Falls High School, left-handed pitcher and outfielder Nate Savino has a history of being one of the youngest players on the field.

It's a circumstance he's used to, and one he feels has made him a better baseball player. So he doesn't expect to be intimidated this summer when he's among the youngest of about 80 blue-chip high school players in the Prospect Development Pipeline League.

“This summer I'm going to be facing the best,” said Savino of his spot on the prestigious showcase squad, a partnership of USA Baseball and Major League Baseball.

First Savino travels to Arizona in June to participate in the five-day Perfect Game National Showcase. Then the Sterling native heads to Florida, to play in the PDP League for several weeks in June and July.

Listed at 6-foot-3 and 195 pounds, Savino has the thick legs of a power pitcher. His fastball is consistently clocked in the low 90s, though he reportedly hit 95 miles per hour and faster in an 18-strike-out performance to open the Panthers' season March 15.

He relies on a hard-breaking slider as a put-away pitch, and mixes in a changeup.

“After every game, my pitching coach, my catcher and my dad and me analyze my performance,” Savino said. “It's about having a smooth motion and finishing everything straight toward the plate.”

His repertoire and mechanics, combined with a big frame, make him the target of scouts' radar guns every time he toes the rubber. He is likely to receive feelers from the professional ranks and could be drafted by an MLB organization in June of 2020, but Savino has been committed to the University of Virginia since November of his sophomore year.

“I toured the campus and fell in love with it. I committed that day,” said Savino of the Charlottesville school. “I definitely want to go to college. I think it's for the

best. It lets me mature more and also get my education.”

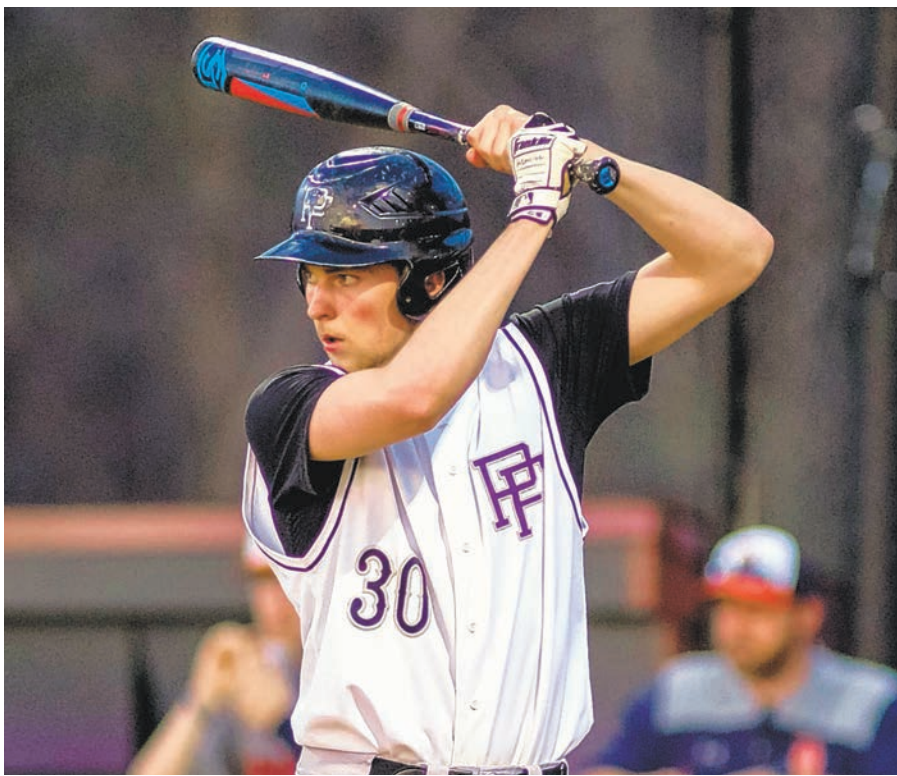
Being left-handed and coordinated, Savino has been a pitcher since he could throw. His scholarship offer is as a pitcher, and he studies pitching and hones his motion with an outside pitching coach. But Savino considers himself a total ballplayer.

“I think I'm a ballplayer. Through my whole career I've been able to hit,” said Savino, who hits in the middle of the Panthers' lineup.

Joe Terango has held the job of Potomac Falls head baseball coach since the school opened in 1997.

“Nate Savino is one of the hardest

SAVINO, page 33



Times-Mirror/Tavan Smith

Known for his pitching prowess, Nate Savino prides himself on being a complete baseball player. He hits in the middle of Potomac Falls' lineup and is one of the fastest players on the team.

SAVINO from page 30

working players we've ever had in our program," Terango pronounced. "He's 24/7 baseball. He's an outstanding student and an outstanding individual. When you put the work in that he does, you're going to get the results."

Savino engages in a daily regimen involving conditioning, weight training, sprinting, hitting and throwing.

"He is working on something related to the sport every day. He excels in every facet. You have to appreciate that as a coach," Terango said. "He's just a ball-player, all the way around."

The coach noted that Savino has gone from a mediocre runner to one of the team's fastest — something Savino pointed out too.

"Just recently, I don't know, I got fast," Savino said, sounding almost embarrassed about it. "Last year I wasn't, and this year I might be the fastest guy on the team."

Terango said relaxation and focus will be the keys to Savino maximizing his remaining time in high school ball.

"We just want him to relax and play baseball. He's had a lot of pressure on him from the outside, and we're trying to keep

NATE SAVINO

- **Hometown:** Sterling
- **School:** Potomac Falls
- **Class:** Junior
- **Sport:** Baseball
- **Positions:** Left-handed pitcher, outfielder
- **Pitching repertoire:** Two-seam fastball, four-seam fastball, slider, changeup
- **College commitment:** University of Virginia
- **Next baseball experiences:** Perfect Game National Showcase; MLB Prospect Development Pipeline League

it off of him and focus on what we're doing here as a team."

Asked about his goals for his junior and senior seasons, Savino said he wanted to be a reliable teammate.

"I want to be that person my team can rely on, that they can win with," he said. "I want to give my team a great chance to win the game."



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SPORTS

A PRO ON THE DIAMOND

Lockhart realizes lifelong dream, signs with Texas Rangers

BY JASON S. RUFNER

Special to the Times-Mirror

On June 3, Nick Lockhart was fishing at a pond near his family's Lovettsville home when his phone buzzed. A friend had sent him a message of congratulations. Then he got another, and another.

"My friends found out before I did," he said. "I was kind of confused about what was going on."

Then Lockhart's agent called, an agent he'd hired to usher him into the world of professional baseball. The news was good. The Texas Rangers had just drafted Lockhart in the 11th round of Major League Baseball's draft, earlier than the agent had expected.

The athletic 6-foot-7 pitcher and third-generation Loudowner, who'd helped Woodgrove High School make a state tournament in baseball and win a state championship in football, had just realized another of his dreams.

"I really didn't believe it at first. It's always been a lifelong dream of mine," Lockhart said. "It was an awesome feeling."

Since his sophomore year Lockhart had been committed to play collegiately at Virginia Tech, but his first-day selection presented a choice: Continue his formal education and play college ball, or take advantage of the rare opportunity to go pro.

"As long as I can remember, I've wanted to be a professional baseball player," said Lockhart, who inked a contract July 3 and was assigned to the Rangers' rookie-level club in Arizona. "When it happened, I didn't want to delay the process at all. I wanted to get started now."

Lockhart has already tasted success. On July 21, his team clinched first place in the Arizona League, assuring a playoff appearance.

"We had a champagne shower in the locker room," Lockhart said. "I had Sprite."

Despite forgoing school, Lockhart is nevertheless getting an education. In addition to mandatory Spanish classes — most of his teammates are native Spanish speakers — the 18-year-old said he's learning how to live on his own.

"There are a lot of adjustments to make, learning how to be a professional. I went in sort of blind," Lockhart said.

His daily activities include class, weights, meetings, practice, and a game at 6 p.m. He's gaining strength — his fastball now reaches 94 miles per hour — and he's working on a curveball and a changeup.



“

As long as I can remember, I've wanted to be a professional baseball player. When it happened, I didn't want to delay the process at all. I wanted to get started now.

NICK LOCKHART

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SPORTS

LOCKHART from 27

So far, the lifestyle of a ballplayer suits him.

"I think I'm doing alright. I've got a pretty good handle on it now," he said. "Being out on the field all day playing baseball, I like that part of it a lot."

He's not the first of the Loudoun Lockharts to play professional baseball. His uncle Mike, a Middleburg native, was a catcher at Clemson University before toiling a few seasons in the Cleveland Indians' minor league system.

As a group, the Lockhart men are ballplayers. Nick's brother Zach played baseball and football for Woodgrove before playing football for Virginia Military Institute. Cousin Adam was a first baseman and a golfer for Loudoun Valley.

Father Chris and grandfather Lee are veterans of local amateur leagues. They're also the ones who turned Nick on to baseball at an early age. At 4, he started playing in Upper Loudoun Little League, then transitioned to travel ball with the Western Loudoun Cardinals at age 9.

In middle school Lockhart joined the Richmond Braves, an elite-level showcase team. He saw up close how good players can be.

"That was eye-opening. That was the first time I saw a real, real baseball team, seeing how developed some guys are," he recalled. "I wanted to be that good."

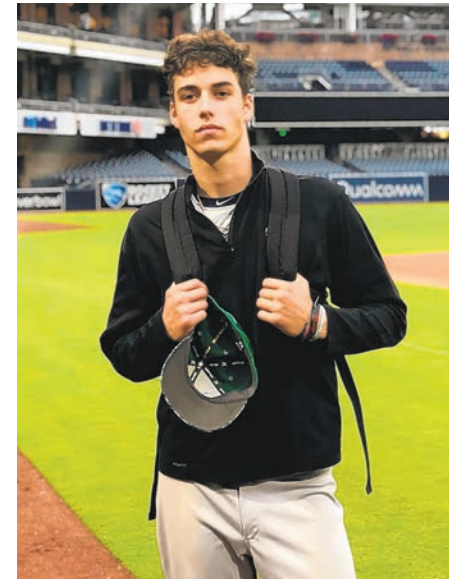
It was around then that Lockhart hit a growth spurt, shooting up from 5-foot-8 to 6-foot-4 in a summer. That was also when he took to the pitcher's mound, just in time to play for Woodgrove.

Previously, with his dad as coach, Lockhart was prohibited from the rigors of pitching.

"There are all these stories about arm injuries, careers ending before they can even take off," he said. "My dad didn't want that for me, so he never let me pitch until about eighth grade or high school."

Lockhart was a two-sport star for the Wolverines. As a pitcher on the diamond, he earned all-state honors as a junior and all-region as a senior; as a senior defensive end on the gridiron, he was named all-state and the region's co-Defensive Player of the Year.

In his final season as a Wolverine,



Courtesy Photo

A third-generation Loudouner, Nick Lockhart will return home for the fall and winter before heading to Arizona in February for his first spring training experience.

NICK LOCKHART

- **Hometown:** Lovettsville
- **School:** Woodgrove
- **Position:** Pitcher
- **Age:** 18
- **Height:** 6-foot-7
- **Weight:** 210
- **New job:** Professional baseball player

Lockhart pitched 52 innings, won six ballgames, struck out 68 and walked just 18.

But it was at a tournament in Georgia last July that Lockhart, pitching for the Braves in front of a bunch of scouts, really got noticed.

"I probably pitched the best I ever have," he said. "It just took off from there."

Lockhart figures to finish out the current season, which runs through August. He'll return home for the fall and winter, following a strict workout regimen the Rangers will provide.

Next February Lockhart will be back in Surprise, Arizona for his first spring training experience. It will be his next big step.

"I want to make it to the bigs and stay in the bigs. That's been my dream forever and my ultimate goal."

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SPORTS



Times-Mirror/Jeff Scudder

Dominion High School midfielder Tierney Schaible, shown here during a 2019 state semifinal win over Riverside, returned as a sophomore from an injury-shortened freshman season to set a Titan program record for goals in a season with 78.

Schaible overcomes injury to reach next level

Dominion lacrosse standout picks San Diego State, still has games to play in Sterling

BY JASON S. RUFNER

Special to the Times-Mirror

She's only halfway through her high school career, but she's already got her college path picked out.

On Sept. 28, Tierney Schaible of Sterling committed to play Division I lacrosse at San Diego State University, despite having two full high school seasons to go.

She's already done plenty to merit the offer. Schaible is a quick midfielder with attacker skills and an adept draw specialist, bringing an accurate shot with either hand. She burst onto the high school scene with 65 goals and nine assists, earning second-team all-state and first-team all-region honors.

The breakout performance netted Schaible spots on the watchlists of the Under Armor 150 and the US Lacrosse National team for high school girls.

Her freshman year was cut short, however, by a gruesome injury to her left pinkie finger suffered in a late-season home game.

"I remember it very well," Schaible said. "We were going up for a draw and it shot over my way. I was going to get it and I got pushed from behind and I just fall. I didn't think much of it, but then I get up and look at my hand and my pinkie's all, like, not the right way."

Her pinkie was bent diagonally over the ring with its tip grazing her middle finger.

TIERNEY SCHAIBLE

- **School:** Dominion
- **Class:** Junior
- **Sport:** Lacrosse
- **School record:** Single-season goals (78)
- **Club:** Virginia Metro
- **Future college:** San Diego State

"I didn't know what to do," she said.

After the initial shock and confusion, Schaible did cry because of the injury — but not because of pain.

"I'm crying because I know I'm out for the rest of the season and I can't help my team," she said.

After surgery to insert two pins followed by eight months of physical therapy to regain motion — "a lot of work," she said — Schaible returned to action as a sophomore for Dominion High School.

It became a historic campaign for Schaible and the Titans.

Despite a permanent kink in her pinkie, Schaible broke the school's record for goals in a season with 78, eclipsing the previous mark by four. She added 28 assists, becoming an all-state and all-region first-teamer.

Last season concluded with the Titans claiming their first state championship in their 16th overall season.

After falling behind early in the state

title game, Schaible helped Dominion turn the tide, coming on to dominate draws in the center circle.

SAN DIEGO MADRE

Choosing a college in San Diego completes a kind of circle for the lifelong Sterling resident. Schaible's mother Erin, whose family is from San Diego, was the first to put a lacrosse stick in Tierney's hands.

"I don't know how she found it. One day she came home and was like, 'You should really try this sport,'" she recalled. "But my best friend's mom was our coach, and she made me love the game."

Schaible got hooked on lacrosse as a second grader with the Algonkian Tribe, a recreational team. She spent her formative seasons — second grade until high school — learning lacrosse under Algonkian coaches Caroline Lee and Russ Battaglia, with mom Erin assisting.

"Every year I'd switch between those two coaches. They were so into it and knew so much about it, they made me love it," she said. "I just liked getting the ball, running down the field and scoring."

Schaible chose to keep playing rec even while also playing at the elite travel level with Virginia Metro Lacrosse Club, an organization she's been with since local coach Justin Fitzgerald founded it.

That association with Virginia Metro, her club squad since age 10, is a source of

pride for Schaible.

"He was at a game we had at Dulles South, and he talked to my parents. He was like, 'I want her to be on this team.' It was the start of the team so I was one of the first. It was an honor for him wanting me to help start a new program," she said.

PRACTICE MAKES AN AZTEC

Schaible decided to commit to San Diego State upon her visit to the campus at the women's lacrosse program's invite.

"It felt like home," she said. "I knew I fit in there."

She fits in with the rest of the Schaible family too. Her older brothers Caden and Jacob played at Dominion before her. The three still like to fling the ball around the backyard.

That backyard holds a bounce-back net, the target of Tierney's shots nearly every day for years. A typical self-guided practice includes 100 shots lefty, 100 shots righty, some behind-the-back practice and a few trick shots, in case she ever needs them.

"It helps with my shot accuracy," she said.

Schaible's accuracy has netted her a lot of goals in a brief span. She cannot sign with a college program until next year, but she's enjoying the chances the sport is affording her.

"It's all a great opportunity," she said. "Lacrosse has given me so much to look forward to."