Beckley, W.Va. — Junior designated hitter/first baseman Nathan Minnich (Waynesboro, Pa./Waynesboro Area Senior High School) of the Shepherd University baseball team was named WVIAC Hitter of the Year and shared WVIAC Player of the Year honors with West Virginia Wesleyan's Cy Moziago as announced by the WVIAC office on Thursday.

Minnich started all 37 games and batted .433 with 52 hits in 120 at-bats. He drove in 38 runs and scored 42. He added nine doubles and 14 home runs.

Minnich is currently ranked among the NCAA Division II leaders in several categories. He is third in on base percentage (.553), fourth in home runs per game (0.38), fourth in slugging percentage (.858), tied for 10th in home runs (14) and ranks 11th in batting average.

Minnich is tied for 30th in base on balls per game (0.76) and is 32nd in runs scored per game (1.14).
'Cats' staff all set

Staff report

Posted: 05/13/2011 01:16:39 AM EDT

Friday May 13, 2011

NORTH ADAMS -- Yep, it's almost that time for summer baseball.

The North Adams SteepleCats will start the celebration of their 10th anniversary season on June 10 -- their home opener -- against the Vermont Mountaineers.

Clayton Kuklick was formally introduced as the SteepleCats' new manager last week, and the team has set its coaching staff. The ninth manager in the team's history didn't hold back his feelings about the 2011 New England Collegiate Baseball League season.

"I am extremely excited about the opportunity to be manager of the SteepleCats," Kuklick said. "There is a lot of tradition here and I am excited to be a part of the North Adams community. I am looking forward to the challenge of continuing a winning tradition here."

Last year, the SteepleCats finished 26-16 and lost to Danbury in the NECBL playoffs. It was the best regular season record in the history of the team, as the 'Cats also won the Western Division for the first time, finishing two games up on Danbury.

Kuklick just finished his first season as a coach with Shepherd University in West Virginia, and said he's bringing a similar mindset to the table.

"The fact that the team's never won a championship only motivates me to reach the ultimate goal for the organization and fans," Kuklick, who played his college ball at Kutztown University in Pennsylvania, said.

Kuklick said he met general manager

Sean McGrath a few years back at a baseball convention, and the two kept in touch ever since.

Cameron McMullen, a player on the SteepleCats in 2009, is on the bench as a volunteer assistant this year. McMullen finished up his master's degree from University of Southern California this year, and decided he wanted to come back and help.

"I could not be in a better position than in North Adams," McMullen said. "It will be nice to have my first coaching coaching job with a team that I already have such a strong connection with. Sean McGrath put together a great staff and I can't wait to learn from them."

In 2009, McMullen started 26 games and finished second on the team with a .319 batting average, while adding 19 runs batted in. The most impressive stat, though, was the .972 fielding percentage he accrued.

Another assistant is Matt McCarty, also a coach at Shepherd. McCarty will focus his work on position players. Last summer, McCarty was an assistant with the Winchester Royals of the Valley League, and helped lead the team to a 29-21 record.

Michael Vicaro, a former teammate of Kuklick, is taking the role of pitching coach.

"The player inside me is still there and won't leave overnight," Vicaro said. "Of course I'll throw with the guys, condition and work out, but you won't ever see me toe the rubber."

Another debut

Former SteepleCat pitcher Evan Scribner (2005) made his major league debut on April 26 with the
San Diego Padres in a game against the Atlanta Braves.

Scribner came out in the seventh inning, and gave up two hits in under two innings.

"I wasn't as nervous as I thought I'd be," Scribner said. "I think I was more nervous going into the dugout after my first inning before going back out there."

The Braves ended up with an 8-2 victory.
FSU's Leach named first-team All-WVC
(http://timeswv.com/fairmont_state_sports/x2108373105/FSU-s-Leach-named-first-team-All-WVC)

Five other Falcons earn league honors

By Duane Cochran
For the Times West Virginian (http://timeswv.com)

FAIRMONT — Fairmont State University outfielder Andy Leach headlines a group of six Falcons who received honors on the annual All-West Virginia Conference baseball team announced this week by the league.

Leach, a senior from Grafton, was Fairmont's lone first-team selection.

Craig Szymczak, a freshman second baseman, earned second-team honors, while starting pitchers Tyler Kincaid and Ryan Fenwick and catcher Shaun Vernesoni all garnered honorable mention on the squad.

FSU junior third baseman Sam Belcastro was selected by the conference's coaches as the 2011 recipient of the league's Heart & Hustle Award.

Leach, a four-year starter for the Falcons, was one of the most productive offensive players in the league this spring batting .321 with 11 home runs and 30 RBI while slugging .679 and scoring a team-best 33 runs. He was second in the WVC in home runs, and ranks seventh in NCAA Division II in home runs per game. Half of Leach's hits on the year went for extra bases as he also tallied seven doubles. In addition, he stole 13 bases on 16 attempts.

Szymczak, who is from Strongsville, Ohio, had a solid freshman campaign to earn second-team honors. He started 41 games for the Falcons and batted .301 with 23 RBI and 28 runs scored. He was also solid defensively at second base, committing only six errors while helping turn 22 double plays.

Kincaid, a sophomore left-hander from Elkton, Md., served as FSU's top starter on the mound for most of the year before being slowed late in the season by injury. Kincaid posted a 3-6 record with a 5.40 ERA in 11 starts for the Falcons. He pitched five complete games with one shutout. He struck out 41 batters in 53.1 innings of work. He was named WVC Pitcher of the Week on March 28 after pitching a complete-game shutout against Pitt-Johnstown.

Fenwick, a freshman right-hander from Leonardtown, Md., posted a 2-3 record with a 4.17 ERA in 10 appearances and five starts. Fenwick had two complete games and had 25 strikeouts in 45.1 innings of work. Fenwick was named the league's Pitcher of the Week on April 18 for his strong performance in a win over West Liberty.

Vernesoni, a junior from Meadville, Pa., played in 27 games and made 26 starts primarily behind the plate for the Falcons. He batted .239, but was solid defensively, throwing out runners 10 times
attempting to steal. In addition, Vernesoni served as a reliever and posted a 1-1 record with a 2.08 ERA and three saves.

Belcastro, who hails from Bridgeport, played this season with a heavy heart. He lost his father, Jimmy, prior to playing his first game of the 2011 season, and his mother Joyce Ann prior to the start of his college career four years ago. Belcastro batted .304 in 18 games with 16 RBI for FSU this spring.

Shepherd University's Nathan Minnich and West Virginia Wesleyan's Cy Mozingo were named the WVC's Players of the Year, while Seton Hill (Pa.) University's Marc Marizzaldi was selected as the conference's Coach of the Year.

Minnich was the league's Hitter of the Year, while Mozingo was tabbed as the conference's Pitcher of the Year.

Minnich led the WVC with a .433 batting average. Starting all 37 contests, he tallied 52 hits, drove in 38 runs and scored 42 times. Minnich had 14 home runs, nine doubles and drew 28 walks.

Mozingo, on the other hand, was a standout on the mound for the Bobcats in 2011. He posted a 7-1 mark and had an ERA of just 2.74. He tossed five complete games, including two shutouts. Mozingo worked 82.1 innings on the year and allowed just 19 earned runs. He struck out 88, walked 12 and held opposing batters to a .219 average.

Marizzaldi led Seton Hill to a 33-10 overall record during the regular season, including a 26-3 mark in the league. The Griffins, who claimed the WVC's Northern Division title, are currently ranked third in the NCAA Division II Atlantic Regional Rankings.
Minnich moves on for honor

Shepherd standout is semifinalist for top D-II player

SHEPHERDSTOWN - Junior designated hitter/first baseman Nathan Minnich of the Shepherd University baseball team was named recently as a semifinalist for the 2011 Tino Martinez Award by College Baseball Lineup.

The award is presented to the most outstanding player in D-II college baseball. The annual honor is named after the former University of Tampa Spartan, United States Olympian, first-round draft pick and major league all-star, Tino Martinez.

The Waynesboro, Pa., native was recently named West Virginia Conference Hitter of the Year and gained a share of the WVC Player of the Year honors.

He is ranked among the NCAA II leaders in numerous categories.

Forty-seven semifinalists represent 41 different schools from across the nation.

Each of the eight geographic regions are represented, with a minimum of five players selected from each area. Five players comprise the semifinalists from the Atlantic, East and West Regions, six student-athletes make up the list from the Midwest and Central, and six players have been included from the South, South Central and Southeast.

Initial nominations for the award were made by baseball sports information contacts and media members.

A panel of media, coaches and sports information officers will be polled to finalize the candidates. The group will once again vote on the finalists, with a fan Internet vote also contributing to the crowning of the winner.

The finalists are scheduled to be named on Thursday.

The winner will be announced after the conclusion of the D-II Baseball Championship to be held May 28-June 4 in Cary, N.C.

Last year, Bryan Fogle of Erskine won the first edition of the award after batting .430 and leading D-II with 28 home runs, 103 RBI (the second-most in NCAA history) and 203 total bases.

Fogle was drafted by Tampa Bay following the season and is currently in the Rays' minor league system.

Runner-up Hayden Simpson of Southern Arkansas was a first-round draft choice of the Chicago Cubs.
Various Shepherd sports camps being offered this summer

Shepherd University will be offering many sports camps this summer. The list of camps includes a softball pitching camp (June 7-10), a baseball hitting camp (June 6-9), a high school football skills camp (June 11), a baseball hitting skills camp (June 13-16), and a fun sports camp for girls that has volleyball and basketball (June 20-23).

Other Shepherd camps in June will be a co-ed soccer camp (June 20-23), a high school boys soccer camp (June 20-23), a third baseball hitting camp (June 20-23), a girls beginners lacrosse camp (June 20-24), and a fourth baseball hitting camp (June 27-30).

In the month of July there will be a softball fundamentals camp (July 6-8), a boys volleyball night camp (July 11-13), a baseball hitting camp (July 11-14), a girls volleyball day camp (July 11-14) and a baseball hitting camp (July 18-21).

The remainder of the July camps include a boys basketball day camp (July 18-22), a baseball hitting camp (July 25-28) and a girls volleyball high intensity camp where the residential rate will be $335 and the non-resident rate will be $285 (July 26-28).

For all other information concerning any of the Shepherd summer camps or to register for one of them visit www.shepherdbook.com or phone (304) 876-5219. There is a limit on the number of campers for each camp.
05/20/2011

Two Earn Academic All-District Honors
WVIAC
Princeton

Fairmont State men’s tennis player Fabien Mevs and Shepherd men’s golfer Aaron Stenta have been named to the Capital One Academic All-District II at-large team.

Both honorees were selected to the first team.
Shepherd football camp
for high schoolers

The Shepherd University high school football skill camp will be held on June 11 from 8:30 a.m. until 4 p.m. at Ram Stadium in Shepherdstown. Early registration closes on June 1 and the cost on that date or before is $50. The late registration cost is $65. Lunch will be provided to the campers and they will also receive a T-shirt. Campers will receive individual instruction as well as offensive and defensive instruction. Combine testing will be given in the 40, L-Drill, pro agility and broad jump.

Shepherd University head coach Monte Cater will lead the camp's instruction.

For more information or to register for the one-day camp, go to www.shepherdbook.com or phone (304) 876-5219.

Shepherd football

golf outing in July

The annual Rams Golf Tournament will be held at the Maryland National Golf Club in Middletown, Maryland on July 15. The day will include golf, golf carts, prizes, a gift packet, beverages at lunch and a barbecue dinner for all four-somes. All proceeds from the outing directly benefit the Shepherd University football program.

Registration begins at 7:30 a.m. on July 15. The practice range will be open.

For other information concerning the golf outing or to register to play, contact Emie McCook at (304) 671-1281 or at emccook@shepherd.edu or Aaron Ryan at (304) 876-5527 or at Aryan@shepherd.edu.

The phone number at the golf club is (301) 371-0020 and its website is: www.marylandnational.com.
Last week I wrote that the Sacramento Mountain Lions were holding open tryouts in Sacramento on Saturday May 14 and Sunday May 15. A total of 245 players showed up to the workout, and five would find a spot on the roster on coach Dennis Green's roster.

The Mountain Lions signed Eric Argofza (tight end, Tuskegee University), Daniel Catalano (defensive end, Northern Michigan University), JT Gilmore (linebacker, Western Oregon University), Adam Tafrais (quarterback, San Jose State) and Marcus Smith (defensive lineman, University of Arizona) after the Sacramento tryouts.

Tafrais grew up in Millbrae, where he starred at Mills High School. After three years at San Jose State (2004-07) he was signed as an undrafted free agent by the Indianapolis Colts.

Smith was raised in San Diego before playing at Arizona. He has spent two seasons as a practice squad player before playing with the Canadian Football League's Montreal Alouettes.

Before the open tryouts in Sacramento, Coach Green and his coaching staff held similar tryouts in San Diego, signing both tight end Dominique Jones (Shepherd University) and defensive end Brian Coulter (University of Missouri).

"We had an exciting weekend of two tryouts in Sacramento," Green said. "We were really impressed with a lot of players at the tryouts, but we did not want these particular (five) players to leave without knowing of our willingness to commit to them on the spot. They have the talent and potential to help us be a tremendous team in our upcoming season."

That season will begin in August, but the schedule is yet to be finalized. Ticket information will be available soon at www.sacmountainlions.com.
Nathan Minnick a finalist for NCAA Division II Player of the Year

By Lee Goodwin
The Record Herald

Waynesboro, Pa. — There's a saying that goes like this: Success comes to those who wait.

Don't tell that to Nathan Minnick.

Now a junior at Shepherd University in Shepherdstown, W.Va., the 2008 Waynesboro Area Senior High School graduate has excelled in baseball since he was a youth league player.

He's not about to stop now, and his accomplishments on the diamond — specifically as a hitter — have thrust him into the national spotlight as a candidate for NCAA Division II Player of the Year.

To recap, it all started when Minnick was named West Virginia Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WVIAC) Hitter of the Year and co-Player of the Year. The dominant effort continued as Minnick earned the Daktronics Division II Atlantic Regional Player of the Year as well as the National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association Division II Atlantic Regional Player of the Year.

Minnick's main goal this season was to earn All-American recognition. He could end up with much more. Last Thursday, Minnick was named one of eight finalists for the 2011 Tino Martinez Award for Division II Player of the Year. The winner of the award will be announced after the conclusion of the Division II Baseball Championship held in Cary, N.C. from May 28 to June 4.

"It feels good," Minnick said Monday night. "Just like anything you do, if you get rewarded and it feels good. Some of the awards, getting them is something I never thought I'd be getting. I was just shooting for All-America.

"Whether I get an award or not, I'm still going to try to do the same thing." For Minnick, it's hitting the ball and getting on base — or around the bases. His statistics are impressive, leaving no doubt as to why he's in line for the big award. As a junior, Minnick's batting average was colossal (.433). He had 52 hits, 14 of which were home runs. He also drove in 38 runs and scored 42.

Minnick is ranked fourth nationally in on base percentage (.496), fourth in home runs per game (0.38), fourth in slugging percentage (.820) and ninth in batting average. He's tied for 11th in home runs.

Minnick is three home runs shy of tying the school record for career home runs, and he's got one more season to accomplish it. His total of 27 was bolstered by his 14-homer season, and his take on the 3-for-10 philosophy of batting is tilted to the side of it's better to miss seven of 10 by actually hitting the ball rather than striking out.

Minnick did better than three hits every 10 at-bats, which is a reflection of his work ethic and his relentless drive to make every at-bat count.

The 6-foot-3, 260-pound designated hitter spent his first season doing nothing but digging in his heels at home plate as a hitter. He played every game the past two seasons at first base.

"I knew I wanted to play baseball before high school, whenever I was 12, because I was always playing in my brother's age group," Minnick said. "They were moving on to high school and I was just as good as them. When I went to high school, I did well there."

And so on and so on.

Minnick said the key is consistency and bouncing back from failure along with maintaining optimal playing condition.

"Baseball is designed on failure," he said. "You have to bounce back. In baseball, you can have a hit three times out of 10 and be a hall of famer.

"The best thing is to stay in shape. Bad habits are going to come with playing so often, but you just have to keep at it. Everybody is going to have an off day eventually. You can't let it get to you."

Minnick, whose parents Joseph and Robin have been steadfast supporters, won't be taking the summer off. Before he returns to Shepherdstown for the fall semester and resumes intrasquad activities, he's competing in the Valley League for the Winchester Royals.

The team plays a 44-game schedule and, once it's all over, he'll have about a week to relax his muscles before starting all over for the Rams baseball program.

"Whenever you don't play, you practice," Minnick said of the summer league. "It's one of the better summer leagues. A bunch of different college players are in it, anywhere from Division I to JUCO players who want to play. Last year was my first year."

Minnick credits his father and his high school head coach (Greg Chandler) for making him the player he is today.

"I played with (Joy) so my dad could coach both of us," Minnick said. "My dad was my coach ever since I was little. He's taught me everything I know. I get a lot of support from my family. My mom's googling my name every day. I think she's more excited about everything than I am, so is my fiancé (Lindsay Perler). She came to almost all of my games."

Some time around June 4 Minnick will find out his status as potential Player of the Year. A couple days later, he'll also find out if he's drawn the notice of teams from Major League Baseball at the annual amateur draft.

"That's my hopes and dreams," Minnick said. "Everyone else tells me I can make it, but only time will tell. There were five or six teams
that came to watch. I'm not going to be mad if I don't get drafted. I have one more year to get better.
Nathan Minnich

MANSFIELD — Junior designated hitter Nathan Minnich (Waynesboro/Waynesboro Area Senior High School) of the Shepherd University baseball team has been named ABCA/Rawlings All-Atlantic Region Player of the Year.

One of eight finalists for the 2011 Tino Martinez Award for Division II Baseball Player of the Year, Minnich garnered his third regional player of the year honors after earlier gaining similar accolades on the Daktronics and NCBWA teams.

Minnich batted .433 with 52 hits in 120 at-bats. He drove in 38 runs and scored 42. He added nine doubles and 14 home runs. Minnich is ranked among the NCAA leaders in numerous categories.
Nathan Minnich named to Daktronics NCAA Division II Baseball All-America Team

Marshall, Minn. — Junior designated hitter Nathan Minnich (Waynesboro, PA/Waynesboro Area) of the Shepherd University baseball team has been named to the 2011 Daktronics NCAA Division II Baseball All-America Team.

Minnich, a first team selection, becomes the first player in program history to garner first team All-American honors.

Minnich batted .433 with 52 hits in 120 at-bats. He drove in 38 runs and scored 42. He added nine doubles and 14 home runs. Minnich is currently ranked among the NCAA II leaders in several categories. He is third in on base percentage (.553), fourth in home runs per game (0.38), fourth in slugging percentage (.858), eighth in batting average, and is tied for 12th in home runs (14).

Minnich is ranked 27th in runs scored per game (1.14) and is tied for 28th in base on balls per game (0.76).

Minnich was also named to the National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association (NCBWA) Division II All-America Team. He was a third team selection.
Falcons announce 2011 grid schedule

By Duane Cochran  
Times West Virginian (http://timeswv.com)

FAIRMONT — Fairmont State University head football coach Mike Lopez has announced the Falcons’ 2011 schedule which features six home games, including a pair of Thursday night contests, at Duvall-Rosier Field.

Three of Fairmont’s six home games will feature new noon starting times.

The Falcons open the 2011 season Thursday, Sept. 1 at home at 7 p.m. against Clarion (Pa.) University.

FSU will then visit Montgomery on Saturday Sept. 10 for a 1 p.m. nonconference battle with a familiar foe — former West Virginia Conference member WVU-Tech.

The Falcons open WVC play Saturday, Sept. 17 when Glenville State invades Duvall-Rosier Field for a noon showdown.

On Sept. 24 Fairmont will travel to West Liberty for a 1 p.m. meeting with the Hilltoppers.

The Falcons begin October with back-to-back home games. The University of Charleston comes to Fairmont on Saturday, Oct. 1 for a noon game. Then on Thursday, Oct. 6, Bowie State (Md.) University pays a visit to Duvall-Rosier Field for a nonconference showdown at 7 p.m. 

On Saturday, Oct. 15 Fairmont travels to Buckhannon for a 1 p.m. meeting with West Virginia Wesleyan. The following Saturday, Oct. 22, the Falcons are on the road again this time in Greensburg, Pa. for a 3 p.m. league battle with Seton Hill.

Fairmont returns home Saturday, Oct. 29 to host Concord for homecoming. The game will feature a special 2 p.m. starting time.

The Falcons start November on the road on Saturday, Nov. 5 with a trip to Institute to tangle with West Virginia State at 1 p.m.

FSU then wraps up the 2011 season on Saturday, Nov. 12 by hosting NCAA Division II “Final Four” finisher Shepherd University in a noon game at Duvall-Rosier Field. The Rams ended up 12-2 last fall and lost to Delta State, 29-17, in the semifinals of the D-II playoffs.

Fairmont State finished the 2010 season with a 5-6 overall record.
Shepherd's Riser to offer baseball camp

Join Shepherd University Head Baseball Coach Wayne Riser for a one-on-one, individualized instructional hitting camp for players 10 to 15 years old.

The camp will take place at Shepherd University Fairfax Field at the outdoor enclosed cages, rain or shine.

Choose from one of the following sessions:

June 13 to 16
June 27 to 30
July 11 to 14
July 18 to 21
July 25 to 28.

To register for one or more sessions, go to www.shepherdbook.com or call 304-876-5219.
Rams’ Minnich cleaning up on baseball honors

BY ERIC JONES
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

SHEPHERDSTOWN – How do you top a season in which you led your team in six offensive categories?
You lead seven.
That’s what Shepherd’s Nathan Minnich did this season.
Minnich was one of the Rams’ top hitters in 2011, putting up big numbers to lead Shepherd’s offense in six different areas.
So, all he did in 2011 was go a step further and lead his team in a seventh category, Minnich finished the season as the Rams’ leader in batting average (.433), slugging percentage (.658), RBI (38), runs scored (42), home runs (14), walks (28) and total bases (103).
Minnich was also second in on-base percentage (.553) and doubles (nine), along with hitting .400 with runners in scoring position and .500 with the bases loaded.
Minnich’s performance drew him consideration for every major award in the conference, region and all of Division II. Voters took notice and have rewarded Minnich, so far, with five awards.
The most recent honor bestowed upon Minnich, and the biggest so far, was a history-making one. On Tuesday, he was named to the 2011 Daktronics NCAA Division II Baseball All-America Team as a first-team selection, becoming the first player in Shepherd baseball history to be a first-team All-American.
He’s among the leaders in Division II, ranking third in on-base percentage, fourth in home runs per game, fourth in slugging percentage, eighth in batting average. He’s also tied for 12th in home runs.
“Definitely feels like all the hard work has paid off,” Minnich said. “It’s satisfying to know that every day you were working in the offseason, it all worked out and paid off in a big way.”

See MINNICH D3

Shepherd’s Nathan Minnich has racked up three regional player of the year awards and is up for the Tino Martinez Division II Player of the Year after another solid season with the Rams.
The latest honor was just one of several that started rolling in a few weeks ago. It started with the junior designated hitter/first baseman being named the West Virginia Conference Co-Player of the Year, alongside West Virginia Wesleyan’s Cy Mozingo. Minnich, a Waynesboro, Pa., native, was tabbed as the league’s top hitter, posting the league’s best batting average.

That was just the beginning for Minnich, who racked up a trio of regional awards.

He was named the National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association Division II Atlantic Regional Player of the Year, the fourth under Shepherd coach Wayne Riser, the Daktronics Division II Atlantic Regional Player of the Year and the ABCA/Rawlings all-Atlantic Region Player of the Year.

“I wasn’t as surprised about the conference award, but the players of the year for the region, that really surprised me,” Minnich said. “I didn’t expect a lot of these awards. They all mean a lot.”

Minnich’s numbers rank among the best in the region. At the time of his awards, he was fourth in on-base percentage, fourth in home runs per game, fourth in slugging percentage, ninth in batting average and tied for 11th in home runs.

On top of all that, Minnich is one of eight finalists for the 2011 Tino Martinez Division II Player of the Year, which will be announced at the conclusion of the Division II baseball championships on Saturday.

“To be the Division II player of the year would be spectacular,” he said. “It would be an awesome experience.”

It would be as awesome and spectacular as his season.

— Eric Jones can be reached at 304-263-3381, ext. 234, or ejones@journal-news.net