

## WHS Baseball Team earns historic win in Fort Myers

WHS Red Devils Baseball Team is the 2015 Florida High School Athletic Association Class 1A State Champions - second consecutive year



### Story and Photos

By Rose Fant © May 15, 2015 @ 7:17 a.m.

**FORT MYERS** -- The Williston High School Baseball Team made history Thursday night (May 14) by earning back-to-back, unprecedented annual State Championship titles.

The WHS Red Devils Baseball Team is the 2015 Florida High School Athletic Association Class 1A State Champions in Baseball.

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With the Williston High School Red Devils Varsity Baseball Team defeating the Blountstown High School Tigers Varsity Baseball Team with a 3-0 score on Thursday night (May 14) in jetBlue Park at Fenway South in Fort Myers, they earned their second consecutive state title.

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**The team prays before they play.**

WHS Red Devils pitcher Austin Langworthy (#7) pitched a complete game, only allowing two hits and striking out seven Tigers.

When a team does something extraordinary, one must wonder what was done differently. What made the Williston High School baseball team stand out above all the rest? In order to find the answer to that question, many team members and parents were asked to share what they think is so outstanding.

The parents agreed that the team, in general, gets along great and works together as a team. Many of the teammates have known each other since preschool and even played together on the field as far back as T-ball and youth league.

Many of the boys have played travel ball together, as well. Working together for all these years, they know what to expect from each other. Their strengths are utilized effectively.

The teammates' perspectives were somewhat different. They presented Coach Hall's colloquialisms that will forever stick with them.

"Sit down and shut up"

"Would you look at that?"

"I will run your butt."

"Y'all mad?"

"Dadgum you!"

"It ain't about you."

Equally, parents and teammates agree, though, that prayer has made a difference in their success. Before and after every game, Coach Hall has prayer with the whole team.

"Hear my prayer, O Lord, give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness." Psalm 143:1 (KJV)



**(from left) Ricky Vanasco (#8), Coye Fant (#16) and Ryan Battle (#17) show the medals soon after being presented with them in Fort Myers.**

Some people think that tradition plays a big role in success. For example, every win coincided with one of Coach Hall's many birthdays. That is to say, the players sang "Happy Birthday" to Head Coach Scott Hall after each win, because the win was a gift to him.

According to the dictionary, "luck" is success or failure apparently brought by chance rather than through one's own actions. In regard to this most recent victory, as with past wins, team cooperation, prayer, and Coach Hall's "encouragements" were not enough to propel them to home plate enough times at state, many players felt the need to add luck to the arsenal, just to be sure.

The whole team agreed to get fresh haircuts before the big send-off to the state playoffs. Fades, mohawks, and the like. Some were even cut in the dugout within the hour prior to leaving on Tuesday. The catcher's brother, Damien Cano, got in the spirit, as well. Teammates rubbed his new 'do for good luck.

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So, was it the extra luck that influenced a feat such as a back-to-back, unprecedented State Championships? Was it skill? Was it tradition? Was it prayer?

In all likelihood, it was a combination of all of the above. The players had Coach Hall pushing them with the same words of encouragement at every practice. The team gifted every win to their coach. They all prayed for guidance and success. They rubbed Damien's hair for luck. They have worked together forming a lasting bond for more than a decade. They have honed their skills TOGETHER. They earned their success not by way of happenstance -- but rather by endurance, trust, skill, and faith.

Williston area residents, students, teachers, and families have something to be proud of -- the team -- Austin Langworthy, Britton Hall, Haydn Cano, Cameron Coffey, Tyler Moore, John Elderkin, Mason Burton, Ryan Battle, Keith Hardee, Denver Ripley, John Carlisle, Ricky Vanasco, Will Thompson, Reggie Days, Tad Donald, Shea Rees, Brody Pierce, Coye Fant, Joey Long, and Head Coach Scott Hall, and assistant coaches Danny Etheridge, D.J. Bowers, Trent Viau and John Paul.