



Dinwiddie pitcher Nick Christopher is player of the year

Those who excel in all facets of baseball are known as five-tool players. They can run, throw, field, hit for average and hit for power at an exceptional level. Ken Griffey Jr., Willie Mays and a pre-steroid-infused Barry Bonds are some of the best five-tool players to ever step on a diamond. But coaches have bestowed a greater title upon Dinwiddie senior Nick Christopher. They call him a six-tool individual. Because on top of everything else asked of a normal player, Christopher can pitch. "You don't find many kids who can do that," said Generals coach Shawn Wynn, who identified the shortstop and pitcher as probably the most all-around talented player he's ever coached. On offense, Christopher dominated the Central Region, leading or tying for the regular-season lead in runs (35), hits (37), RBIs (34) triples (four) and home runs (10). He had a .507 batting average and struck out only three times. On the mound, his eight regular-season wins led the region, too. He finished the 2011 campaign with one loss and a 1.96 ERA, sending Dinwiddie to a Central District title and an 18-2 record. The combination of those stats rolled into one player made Christopher an obvious choice to become All-Metro player of the year. Most area teams were young in 2011, led by juniors and supplemented by sophomores and even a few freshmen. Christopher was one of the few seniors capable of leading his team to the playoffs. So he was a favorite to win the award before the season began. Wynn was afraid Christopher's statistics might take a hit when he moved him from cleanup to leadoff to add pop to the lineup before the season started. But he still drove in more runs than anyone else, something Wynn characterized as "pretty ridiculous." He exploded out of the gate, blasting nine homers in his first 10 games. "A lot of that is luck," Christopher said. Though his batting average stayed high, his luck for the long ball ran out in the second half of the season, as he hit only one the rest of the year. But Christopher notes that a couple of shots fell a few feet short or hooked a few feet foul. Christopher hasn't made concrete plans for where he'll be next year. "Everything's up in the air right now," he said. Test scores have limited his options, and he's considering Louisburg junior college and Virginia State University. But Louisburg recently hired a new coaching staff after Christopher had already gotten to know the old one. Even so, Wynn still hopes Christopher will go there. "That's a baseball factory," Wynn said. "A few people get drafted off their team every single year." Christopher was named first-team All-Metro as a junior. Before his senior season, he focused on mechanics — like how he moved his hips and where he held his bat when he swung. The result was Christopher's best season yet. "His work ethic and attitude were just leaps and bounds better than his junior year," Wynn said. "He's a testament to show kids, that when you do more, no matter how good you already are, when you do more, you're going to get results. "This year is the hardest year that he's worked. And it's not by mistake that he had the best year he ever had."

The 2011 All-Metro baseball team



KIT SCHEETZ - School: James River -
Year: Junior - Position: Pitcher

The skinny: After missing 2010 with an injury, Scheetz returned to competition this year and became the Rapids' most reliable pitcher. An all-region selection, Scheetz went 9-1 with a 1.67 ERA. He struck out 76 in 58 2/3 innings, leading James River to the state semifinals. **What you didn't know:** "I have a world-renowned George W. Bush impression."



MATT LEES - School: Mills Godwin -
Year: Senior - Position: Pitcher

The skinny: An all-region pick, Lees went 6-1 with a 1.98 ERA. Splitting time on the mound with Reed Garrett and Carson Stephens, Lees struck out 84 batters in 52 2/3 innings. He walked only 16. He will pitch at VCU next year. **What you didn't know:** "I am an uncle." Lees has two nephews.



LUKE LOWERY - School: Cosby - Year:
Junior - Position: Catcher

The skinny: Lowery was named all-region after hitting .479 with 24 runs and 25 RBIs. Regarded as one of the best defensive catchers in the area, he has committed to ECU. **What you didn't know:** "I have played the bass in the orchestra for the last three years under the direction of one of the best teachers, Mrs. Joy Nowak."



T.J. DOBRUCKY - School: Blessed
Sacrament Huguenot - Year: Junior -
Position: First base

The skinny: Dobrucky was named VCC player of the year and VIS Division III state player of the year after finishing the season with a .603 batting average and 11 home runs. He also had 37 RBIs, leading BSH to the state title game. **What you didn't know:** "I went to Steve Young's Hall of Fame inauguration" in Canton, Ohio in 2005.



BLAKE SPIERS - School: Hanover - Year:
Junior - Position: Second base

The skinny: An all-region pick, Spiers hit .420, scoring 18 runs and stealing eight bases, helping Hanover to a 15-6 record this season. He also has the top GPA in his class. **What you didn't know:** "One of my favorite things to do is get in mosh pits at metal concerts."



CONNER HALL - School: Atlee - Year:
Senior - Position: Third base

The skinny: Hall was named all-region after finishing the year with a .510 batting average. He hit in the middle of Atlee's high-powered offense, producing 23 runs and 16 RBIs. **What you didn't know:** "I love to hunt and fish."



CASEY JONES - School: James River -
Year: Senior - **Position:** Shortstop

The skinny: Jones moved to James River from North Carolina over the summer and was an instant success. He hit 11 homers despite being the Rapids' leadoff hitter. He also had 33

runs, 30 RBIs and hit .438. He will attend Elon. **What you didn't know:** "I'm a superb dancer. We always have dance-offs before every game, and I always win."



REED GARRETT - School: Mills Godwin
Year: Senior - **Position:** Outfield

The skinny: The only Central Region player named first-team all-state, Garrett hit .440 and swiped 19 bases in 21 attempts. On the mound, he was 6-2 with a 2.48 ERA, striking out

71 in 421/3 innings. He will attend VMI. **What you didn't know:** "I sing while I'm pitching in my head," usually whatever was playing in the locker room.



CHRISTIAN HAMLETT - School: Cosby
Year: Senior - **Position:** Outfield

The skinny: Cosby's leadoff hitter, Hamlett hit .507 and blasted 10 doubles and seven home runs. He had 34 runs and 38 hits and will attend Hampden-Sydney. **What you**

didn't know: "My sister was the baseball manager at Cosby for the 2007 and 2008 seasons."

TYLER ALLEN - School: Powhatan - **Year:** Sophomore -
Position: Outfield

The skinny: The Southside District player of the year hit .614 and scored 42 runs in 57 at-bats as just a sophomore. He delivered 26 RBIs and drew 27 walks. **What you didn't know:** "I'm a big Darius Rucker fan. But I keep that on the down low."

DEREK DRAKE - School: Matoaca - **Year:** Senior - **Position:** Outfield

The skinny: An all-region selection, Drake hit .440 with 17 RBIs. The Warriors' most dangerous hitter, Drake also had a 4.9 GPA. He will attend Messiah College in Pennsylvania.

That you didn't know: "I am a horrible singer, but I love to sing in the car to whatever's on the radio."

JORDAN BOZE - School: Lee-Davis - **Year:** Senior - **Position:** Utility

The skinny: The Capital District player of the year, Boze hit .422 with 24 RBIs and scored 20 runs as a pitcher, first baseman and third baseman. On the mound he struck out 65 batters and walked 19 in 48 2/3 innings. He will attend CNU. **What you didn't know:** "My travel team won the world wood bat national championship in Atlanta" in 2009.

ANDREW WOODS - School: Benedictine - **Year:** Senior -
Position: Utility

The skinny: As a pitcher, Woods went 10-1 with a 2.14 ERA. Opposing batters hit .177 against him, and he struck out 72 in 62 innings. At the plate, he hit .426, scored 29 runs and had 22 RBIs. Woods will attend VMI. **What you didn't know:** "Not many people know I play guitar."

CASEY FOX - School: St. Christopher's - **Year:** Senior -
Position: Utility

The skinny: The Saints' best all-around player, Fox hit .464 with eight homers, 33 RBIs and 37 runs. On the mound, he went 8-2 with a 1.03 ERA. He threw a no-hitter against Woodberry Forest and will attend Haverford College. **What you didn't know:** "I lived in England for a year." (Between first and second grade.)

Second team

Pitcher: Nick Conner, Sr., L.C. Bird; Zach Joseph, Sr., Benedictine; Hayden White, Jr., Steward; Michael Boyle, Jr., Deep Run. **Catcher:** Cody Handshaw, Sr., Mills Godwin. **First base:** Daniel Bridgeman, Sr., Dinwiddie. **Second base:** D.J. Martinez, Sr., Patrick Henry. **Third base:** Kyle Vass, Jr., Matoaca. **Shortstop:** Augie Ayers, Sr., Manchester. **Outfield:** Michael Trentham, Jr., James River; Chop Pulisic, Jr., Atlee; Gary LeClair, Sr., Steward. **Designated hitter:** Kyle Butler, Sr., J.R. Tucker; Bryce Harman, Soph., L.C. Bird; Brock Kelley, Sr., King William.