

# Misfortune Plagues '85 Raider Baseball

With a strong finish by both the Varsity and the JV Baseball teams in 1984, success for Coach Jim Sochan and his 1985 Varsity squad seemed almost a certainty. Instead, the Raiders finished the '85 season with a 7-13-3 record. What happened?

This team of returning "veterans" and JV "rookies" on the Varsity squad did not mesh well as a team. The team batted well (.339 BA), but lacked the necessary "clutch hit" when needed. Critical fielding mistakes in the late innings proved to be very costly to the Raiders. Pitching was at times brilliant and at times inconsistent, with control a major problem (36 wild pitches, nearly 1 walk per inning surrendered).

Critical injuries affected whatever depth the squad possessed. Ace starter Dave Flack had shoulder soreness and was felled by mono midway through the season. Injuries to Catcher Chris Park and Outfielder Dino DiFrancesco limited their playing time and production. When coupled with other nagging injuries, the tough Raider schedule (14 opponents reached the Semi-Finals of State-level tournaments) became even more challenging. Eight of the 13 Raider losses were by one run.

Returning players in 1986 should include Chris and Dino, along with Ralph Russo (.385 BA), Matt Maloney (.323 BA, 17 RBIs), and 9 other Varsity players, including Chris McAlindin. Chris led the '85 squad in batting with a .432 average while failing to commit a single fielding error at second base: suitable stats for the 1985 Team MVP.



The 1985 Varsity Baseball Team. Top Row, L-R: K. Hyde, A. Mertz, T. Neilson, A. Gibb, J. Rosania, M. Challiet. Middle Row, L-R: C. Park, D. Cox, E. Schank, M. Maloney, S. Grimmer, J. Beckman. Bottom Row, L-R: D. DiFrancesco, K. Hammonds, J. Jakubik, J. Fowler, M. Michalisin, C. McAlindin.