



March Madness is all the rage this week as the networks and the Twitter-verse argue who's in, who's out, who should go to what region, which team should be what seed, and pretty much go over the same six or seven points ad nauseum. Not there that's anything wrong with that because the first two weeks of March Madness are some of the most exciting days that the world of sports has to offer.

How often does the conversation come up where you and some buddies are talking about a player and someone, maybe you, asks, "Where'd he go to school?" Luckily, in this age of smartphone technology, it's easy to look these kinds of things up. Often times, one person is right but unsure while another person in the group is adamant that it's a certain school and they couldn't be further off.

Steve: "Remember Herschel Walker?"

Tom: "Yeah, where'd he go to school?"

Bill: "I think he went to Georgia."

Jerry: "No way, he went to Oklahoma!"

Bill: “Nah, that doesn’t sound right. I’m *pretty* sure he went to Georgia.”

Jerry: “Absolutely not. Boomer Sooner!”

Steve: “Maybe one of his alter egos went to Oklahoma, but I think he went to Georgia.”

Believe me, conversations like this come up more often than you might think. Next time you’re BSing with friends, subtly keep track of the number of times that the question of what college so-and-so attended comes up.

But, what about the Cleveland Indians? It’s easier to remember where NFL and NBA players went to school because there’s a lot more collegiate exposure for them. How many of you know where the Cleveland Indians players went to school? For some guys, we know their path to The Show up through the minor leagues or the organizations that they were traded from. But, how much do we know about their college careers?

There are a couple of things to keep in mind with the route to professional baseball. The first is that players who transfer from Division I NCAA schools are required to sit out a year if they transfer to another D-I school. That’s why you’ll see a handful of players transfer from D-I schools to Junior Colleges before going back to a major university, if they go back to a major school before getting drafted. The second is that players who are drafted out of high school who choose to go to Division I NCAA programs in lieu of playing professional ball must attend school for three years before they are draft-eligible again. There are exceptions, like in the case of Lonnie Chisenhall, who was drafted out of a community college two years after passing on the offer to play professionally in the Pirates organization.

Any players not named after this point were drafted straight out of high school or were signed as international free agents.

One of my favorite trivial tidbits to throw out when anybody mentions Albert Pujols is that Pujols was drafted out of Maple Woods Community College in Missouri. Imagine that. One of our generations greatest players, if not the greatest, came from a small, northern Kansas City

community college. Now, you'll have some of those nuggets of information to help you win a bar bet or just to impress your friends about the Cleveland Indians.

So, with all that said, I decided to use this week's View from the Porch to educate and inform. Unfortunately, most of these guys do not have alma maters in the field of 68 for the tournament, so you will have to continue picking by mascot or team colors when filling out your bracket.

Travis Hafner is a proud alum of Cowley County Community College in Arkansas City, KS. Hafner was part of one of the school's back-to-back NJCAA (National Junior College Athletic Association) World Series champion teams for the Cowley Tigers. Hafner was the World Series MVP of that 1996 team.

The Texas Rangers plucked Hafner in the 31st round of the 1996 MLB Draft affirming the old baseball adage of "If you're good enough, they'll (scouts) find you."

If you visit Cowley County CC today, you're bound to see the Travis Hafner Training Center, which opened this past November, on campus.

Jason Kipnis started his collegiate baseball career at the University of Kentucky after sitting out a year as a "redshirt" (being around the program but not playing in games to save a year of eligibility). After some issues at UK, Kipnis transferred to Arizona State. The Padres selected Kipnis in 2007, but he elected to stay at ASU where he played until he was drafted in the second round in 2009 by the Indians.

Lonnie Chisenhall certainly has one of the more interesting collegiate paths to the Majors. Chisenhall opted to pass on the Pittsburgh Pirates' offer after drafting him in the 11th

round in 2006 and attend the University of South Carolina to play under long-time coach Ray Tanner. He wound up getting dismissed from the program during his freshman season after being charged for breaking into a dorm room and stealing.

Chisenhall was sentenced to six months probation. In the meantime, he enrolled at Pitt

Community College in Winterville, NC. Like Hafner's alma mater, Cowley County CC, Pitt CC is a member of the NJCAA.

Chisenhall hit .410 and drove in 66 runs in 53 games with the Pitt CC Bulldogs and was selected in the first round in 2008 by the Indians.

Jack Hannahan attended Cretin-Durham Hall High School in Minnesota and was a teammate of Minnesota Twins catcher Joe Mauer. While Mauer was drafted out of high school, Hannahan went to the University of Minnesota where he was named Big Ten Player of the Year during his junior year. Following that season, Hannahan was drafted by the Detroit Tigers in the third round of the 2001 Draft.

Jason Donald was drafted by the Anaheim Angels in 2003 right out of Buchanan High School in California, but opted to play at the University of Arizona instead. Donald was drafted after his junior year by the Philadelphia Phillies in the third round of the 2006 Draft.

Shelley Duncan also attended the University of Arizona and was selected by the New York Yankees in the second round of the 2001 Draft.

Matt LaPorta was drafted out of Port Charlotte (FL) High School by the Chicago Cubs in the 14th round of the 2003 Draft, but instead attended the University of Florida. LaPorta was again drafted in 2006, this time by the Boston Red Sox, but he elected to stay in school for his senior season. After winning the SEC Player of the Year and graduating with his Health and Human Performance bachelor's degree, LaPorta was drafted in the seventh round and signed by the Milwaukee Brewers in 2007.

Jamaican-born **Justin Masterson** attended Bethel College in Mishawaka, IN. It's a small evangelical school with an enrollment of just over 2100. The Bethel College Pilots are part of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA).

After throwing for two years at Bethel College, Masterson really got noticed pitching in the

highly-regarded Cape Cod Summer League and transferred to San Diego State University shortly thereafter. He was taken in the second round of the 2006 Draft by the Boston Red Sox.

Josh Tomlin attended Angelina College in Lufkin, TX where he pitched for a year after graduating from Whitehouse High School in Whitehouse, TX. Tomlin was drafted by the San Diego Padres after his year at Angelina in 2005, but decided to go to Texas Tech University for a year instead. The Indians drafted him out of TTU in the 19th round in 2006. While at Angelina, Tomlin was joined in the rotation by current Boston Red Sox Clay Buchholz.

Kevin Slowey got little attention coming out of Upper St. Clair High School in Pennsylvania and wound up pursuing an academic scholarship to Winthrop University in Rock Hill, SC. Slowey was selected by the Minnesota Twins in the second round of the 2005 Draft.

Joe Smith played his collegiate ball at Wright State University in Fairborn, OH, a suburb of Dayton. While at Wright State, assistant coach Greg Lovelady suggested that Smith try out the submarine-style delivery that we know and love today. The WSU Raiders compete in the Horizon League. Smith was selected by the New York Mets in the third round of the 2006 Draft.

According to [my interview with Vinnie Pestano](#) a few weeks ago, Pestano signed with Cal State Fullerton the first day that commitments could be secured. He had been a bat boy for CSU-Fullerton in his younger years so his college of choice was quite clear. Pestano was drafted by the Tribe in the 20th round in 2006.

Chris Perez had one of the more conventional routes to the Majors, attending the University of Miami (FL) and being a supplemental first round pick by the St. Louis Cardinals in 2006.

Tony Sipp was plucked out of Clemson University in the 45th round of the 2004 Draft by the Indians. Last year, during a rain delay, I was taking shelter down in the bottom level of Heritage Park when Sipp walked out of a concession stand door to look at the rain. Of all the questions to ask, because my fiancée is a native South Carolinian who hates Clemson and loves her Gamecocks, I asked Sipp why he chose Clemson, despite being from Mississippi. His answer was that they were the only school to offer him a scholarship.

Frank Herrmann is smarter than all of us because he graduated from Harvard in 2006. Herrmann's high school, Montclair Kimberley Academy, was Cavs guard Kyrie Irving's school for his freshman and sophomore years and also home to US National Soccer Team goaltender Tim Howard. Herrmann was signed as an undrafted free agent by the Indians in 2005 after being spotted playing baseball in a Hawaiian League.

Nick Hagadone was drafted out of Sumner High School in Sumner, WA in the 36th round in 2004 but decided to attend college instead. He was a teammate of Giants' ace Tim Lincecum at the University of Washington. The Red Sox drafted Hagadone in the supplemental first round in 2007.

Shin-Soo Choo: Although Shin-Soo Choo didn't attend a college or a university, Pusan High School in Pusan, South Korea might as well have been one. From a [Sports Illustrated article](#)

by SI's Albert Chen:

Every so often, Shin-Soo Choo thinks about the ones who didn't make it. There were hundreds just like him at South Korea's Pusan High School, a baseball academy run like a boot camp: There were 5 a.m. wake-up calls, morning practices, afternoon practices, grueling hours in the weight room at night. The boys lived on campus and saw their families on Sundays. "We didn't study. All we did was play baseball, think baseball, nothing but baseball," says Choo. "The problem is, if you don't make it in baseball, what do you do?"

Choo was signed as an amateur free agent by the Seattle Mariners in 2000.

As you can see, the path to the bigs is different for everybody. Unlike basketball, where most players come from "basketball factories" like Memphis, Kentucky, Kansas, Duke, UNC, etc., or football where the majority of the players come from major colleges like Ohio State, Southern Cal, Oklahoma, Texas, or Florida, baseball only has a handful of schools that consistently produce Major Leaguers.

As you're filling out your brackets, as an Indians fan, you'll have to root for either Justin Masterson's San Diego State Aztecs or Frank Herrmann's Harvard Crimson as they will probably be the only teams in the field with a legitimate chance to represent current Indians players deep into the tournament. You could back Kentucky as Jason Kipnis went there for a couple years, but he was ultimately drafted as an Arizona State Sun Devil. Chris Perez's

Hurricanes may sneak into the field along with Donald and Duncan's Arizona Wildcats if they win the Pac-12 automatic bid. Nick Hagadone's Washington has a slight chance at being in the field of 68.

In the unlikely event that you're at a game this summer and somebody behind you asks where Lonnie Chisenhall played his college ball, now, you can proudly explain the odyssey of his dismissal from the University of South Carolina and subsequent enrollment at Pitt Community College in Winterville, NC, sounding like a well-informed fan in the process. Which, quite frankly, the conversations I tend to hear behind me on the Porch are about as uninformed as any I've ever heard. Hearing something enlightening would enhance any good fan's ballpark experience.

Told you the goal was to educate and inform.