

Team USA's Cody Migliore

TRA catcher earns a spot at Nationals

By **Thomas Sellers Jr.**
Millington Star Sports Editor

At one point the Millington area had dozens of Team USA Baseball players walking around.

But since the squad left town after 1996, it's rare to see a USA Baseball players. This spring when the Tipton-Rosemark Academy Rebels take the field, spectators can see Cody Migliore take the diamond as catcher. This past summer Migliore played that position for Team USA's 18-under team in Cary, N.C.

"I like to represent the USA," he said. "It's an honor just to even be asked to play for them let alone go to North Carolina and play on that field."

The 17-year-old son of Cindy and Michael Migliore drew the attention of Team USA coaches from his all-out style of play with the Rebels. Once his bat started to have more pop, Team USA contacted TRA Head Coach Brad Smith about Migliore.

All summer Migliore tried out for Team USA making the state time in July. In August, Migliore earned a spot at Regional tryouts.

"I just prayed before everyday," Migliore recalled. "I asked God to give me all the strength to go out there and perform within my best and leave it all out there."

Then it was to the big time playing on the National Training Field in North Carolina Sept. 8-11. Migliore said he enjoyed the lessons he learned from the coaching staff and being among top-level peers.

Migliore held his own impressing scouts with his hustle plays and pop-up time to throw out runners. But for the TRA senior one of the lasting impressions was painful from the pitches he caught.

"It hurt my hand," he said. "There was a guy from Florida who verbally committed to Ole Miss throwing 93 and 94 easily. We had a look alike on the team. He was about 6'7 and looked just like Stephen Staursberg. He pretty much threw like him too. I just went out there and had fun with them."

Now Migliore is preparing for one more season of fun with the Rebels. The Memphis native helped TRA reach Sub-State last season coming up one game short of the State Tournament.

Combining that heartache with his joyous summer, Migliore said he has a new prospective heading into the 2012 season.

"Just play the game like it's our last," he said. "I know how heartbroken everybody was last year. We just have to have that in the back of our minds but don't let it defeat us. We have to overcome it and play to the best of our abilities."

The Rebels will have many players with solid abilities in an effort to return to Sub-State. TRA has a

large senior class scheduled to take the diamond including the Team USA catcher.

"All of our seniors are great seniors," Migliore said. "And we all have different parts to be in control of, but I know with all of that experience I was taking it in I know it's going to help us no matter what."

Another motivating factor to Migliore and the guys is the success of the 2011 Division II-A State champion Lady Rebel Softball team. The boys want rings just like the girls.

For now Migliore is enjoying a bit of individual success overcoming the small-school perception at the USA Baseball tryouts.

"Have the mindset, 'No matter what the odds are, if you are from a small town, you can overachieve anything you put your mind to and put God first,'" he said.

Playing the game before he could walk, he said his faith will play a part in him trying to achieve his dream of becoming a professional baseball player and one day returning to Team USA to play the world.

"Keep God first and everyday just work harder and harder," he concluded. "Pushing myself to the limits until I can't do anything else."

Words from Cody —

Baseball is not only a God given talent and desire in my life, it is in my genes. My great, great uncle; great grandfather; grandfather; and father were all outstanding catchers and hitters. I actually still have a photo beside my bed of my Dad giving me a high five immediately after I hit a "home run" off of my tee when I was still in a diaper. I would always be outside with my baseball and glove waiting on my Dad to get home from work so we could play catch. Many times I would be waiting hours in advance playing catch by myself, just in case he got home early that day. On days that he had to work late and came home tired, he still played catch with me as soon as he got out of his truck. We have always shared this special bond.

