

Outfielder Eric Cattoni Nominated for CLASS Award

By Jennifer Wake

Saint Mary's senior outfielder Eric Cattoni, who has set the pace with single season stolen bases and runs scored this season, was among a list of 30 candidates for the baseball division of the Lowe's Senior CLASS Award.

The CLASS award, which stands for Celebrating Loyalty and Achievement for Staying in School, was originally launched in 2001-02 with basketball as a way to honor excellent student-athletes who stayed in college amid the lure of professional offers. Lowe's recently announced the addition of baseball and three other NCAA sports to the CLASS award program.

Out of the list of baseball division nominees spanning the country, Cattoni was the only representative chosen from a California institution.

While Cattoni's on-the-field performance during his collegiate baseball career was a factor in determining his candidacy, his personal character and off-the-field achievements

in the classroom solidified the nomination. Since coming to Saint Mary's in 2005 from the College of Southern Idaho, the Lethbridge, Alberta native has maintained a 4.0 GPA while taking pre-med courses. He was also awarded the CRC Press Chemistry Achievement Award for his outstanding scholastic achievement in chemistry.

On the field, Cattoni has proven himself as a WCC leader, moving into a tie for ninth all-time in single season stolen bases with 26 while his 46 runs scored this season rank him in a tie for eighth in single season runs scored. He also sits in sixth all-time with 43 career stolen bases – five away from two others in fifth.

Ten finalists for the award will be selected by a national media committee in May, with the award winner and the college baseball All-Senior All-America Team to be announced during the 2007 NCAA College World Series in Omaha, Neb., next month.

Last weekend, the Saint Mary's baseball team hosted the Portland Pilots in a three-game conference series at Louis Guisto Field. In addition to Cattoni, other Saint Mary's WCC leaders include freshman Anthony Aliotti, who is second in the conference with 29 walks and a .455 on base percentage, and sophomore Joel Staples, who is fourth in home runs with six, fifth in slugging percentage at .527, and fifth in RBI with 35.

The Gaels held a record of 17-23-1 (0-12 WCC) going into last weekend's series, following the 7-6 victory over Sacramento State on April 25 where Cattoni hit a "three-run bomb" before freshman Taylor Stanton brought in the save to secure the one-run victory.



Outfielder Eric Cattoni waits for the pitch

Photo by Carly Soto