

**“Playing Eaton Baseball was, and always will be, a privilege”** Major Jimmy Reeman, ‘88 Reds’ Graduate (and centerfielder) and The Top Graduate from F16 Fighter Pilot School and Leader of First-Strike Missions in The War on Terror

Being in charge of the Reds infield is a great privilege. Being in charge of every pitch from behind the plate is a great privilege. And so too is being the Reds’ fastest player and often top athlete that mans centerfield for the Reds, in charge of the entire outfield. The Reds’ centerfielder is the only man on the field who can call off any other player on a ball in the air, even calling off the shortstop, and thus in many ways having the privilege, and responsibility, of leading the Reds onto the field defensively each inning. Over the past 36 years in spring and summer games, the Reds have taken the field defensively in over 11,000 innings, and only 21 Reds have had the honor of leading the Reds onto the field as Eaton’s starting centerfielder over this period. The Reds win a lot of games with “that one inning”—a big rally that results in 5 to 10 runs to put an otherwise close game away. More often than with any other position, these rallies are started with the Reds’ leadoff hitter, which is almost always the Reds’ centerfielder. The Reds’ history is filled with lore and legend of players who simply willed their way to victory and accomplished truly unbelievable feats. Many of these ghosts of the past were Reds’ centerfielders.

### Reds’ Centerfielders

Koehler, Nelson, Abbott, K. Hall, Geisick, L. Hall, Jones, T. Anderson, T. Garretson, Hungenberg, Smith, Adams, Noffsinger, Schmeh, Moody, Reeman, E. Garretson, Specht, Grauberger, Rosales, M. Anderson, Hoffner

Ryan Koehler was one of the best left-handed hitters in Eaton history as a 3-year starter, though as even a freshman he pinch ran to score the tying run against Faith Christian. Koehler as a senior batted .477, slugging .755 with a remarkable 18 doubles, few as memorable as the extra-inning walk-off double to beat University at home 2-1. Koehler earned a trip to the Top 40 Futures Game at Coors Field and was named the Weld County Baseball Player of the Year. Jake Nelson will be best-remembered as the Reds’ ace pitcher, but as the Reds’ centerfielder, Nelson was also one of the Reds’ all-time best top of the line-up players, with superior base-running abilities, leading the team in stolen bases and runs scored as a junior and senior, and likely faced more 10+ pitch at-bats than any Red in history, leading the Reds to a record of 88-4 in his final 3 seasons. Britten Abbott was the Reds’ team captain leading the Reds to State Championship pileups in both the spring of 2012 and the summer of 2012, delivering his best in the critical moments of the game, playing through a broken nose in the summer 2012 postseason tournament and yet still sliding headfirst to send the Reds to the State Tournament, which the Reds won under his leadership. Keenan Hall was the Reds’ centerfielder before Abbott, and he led his senior class with a .413 batting average as a senior. Hall’s postseason heroics included the game-clinching 2-RBI hit in the 2012 State Championship Game, after having reached base and scored the winning run for the Reds the week before in an elimination game in which the Reds trailed by a run entering the bottom of the 7<sup>th</sup> inning.



Koehler leaps into 2014 Legion State Championship pileup



Nelson slides in safely in win over Kent Denver



Abbott leaps into 2012 Legion State Championship pileup



Hall leaps into 2012 State Championship pileup

In 2010, Adam Geisick stole more singles from hitters with diving catches toward the infield than any Red in history. Geisick, the first Red in history to hit leadoff all 4 years of his career, moved from rightfield to centerfield following the graduation of Hall, and in that one season, was noted in newspapers as a highlight-reel waiting to happen, earning him All-State honors and selection to the Top 50 Game. As team captain, Geisick led the Reds to one of the nation’s 12 greatest win streaks in baseball history, as the Reds rattled off 60 straight wins with Geisick hitting leadoff. Logan Hall led the Reds in centerfield for 3 seasons as one of the very top defensive players at that position in Eaton history, literally tracking down nearly every ball that a man could even dream of reaching. It has been said before about top

Major League centerfielders that water covers two-thirds of the Earth's surface, and their centerfielder covers the other third—Hall made the type of plays that would lead one to suggest that of him as well. He also was a top hitter for the Reds, providing a rare combination of contact and power as a top singles, doubles, triples and home run hitter. Whitman Jones helped lead the Reds to the 2006 State Championship Game as not only the centerfielder, but also the leadoff hitter. Jones, like many Reds' centerfielders, hit #1 in the lineup and led the Reds in on-base percentage. He was great at taking hit-by-pitches, drawing walks, and slapping singles to get on base for the Reds' power hitters that followed. Jones was hit by a pitch a dozen times his senior year, just doing anything to get on base, though he also posted a .400 batting average throughout the postseason. He was not alone amongst Reds' centerfielders who got better under pressure during the postseason; in fact, that's the tradition and expectation of these great players.



Geisick makes diving catch in State Tournament



Hall holding 2008 State Championship Trophy



Jones makes diving catch in an early spring home game



T. Anderson sliding into 3<sup>rd</sup> base before tying up 2003 State Semifinals



T. Garretson manning centerfield during 2003 State Championship win

Travis Anderson manned the Reds' #1 outfield job and also the leadoff spot in the lineup in 2004 and 2005. With Anderson in centerfield, the Reds completed their 6<sup>th</sup> consecutive State Championship with a spring and summer Title in 2004, amidst the greatest streak in Eaton history, as the Reds won 33 consecutive spring and summer postseason games while staring in the face of elimination. Anderson is one of a select few Reds to have a career on-base percentage over .600, and he scored 108 runs in his career, including a staggering 31 runs in the postseason. Anderson also pulled off numerous late-game, postseason heroics. Just two examples include his game-tying run after a two-run double in the Regional Semifinals followed by the game-winning hit in the 8<sup>th</sup> inning, and his 7<sup>th</sup>-inning, two-out, two-strike, game-tying hit and game-winning run to send the Reds to the 2003 State Championship Game. As for who knocked in that game-winning run of Anderson's in 2003, that was the Reds' centerfielder who preceded Anderson, Tyler Garretson. Garretson won State Championships as the Reds' centerfielder in 2002 and 2003, as well as the 2002 American Legion B State Championship in the summer. Garretson is the only Red in history to score 5 runs in a State Championship Game. In fact, in the 2002 and 2003 State Championship Games, Garretson reached base in his first 9 at-bats, with 4 hits including 2 triples. His 10<sup>th</sup> at-bat was unimportant as the Reds had already secured a 7-run 7<sup>th</sup> inning lead to cruise to the Title. Garretson was simply a menace to opposing pitchers, seemingly on-base every time he stepped to the plate, and then a serious threat to steal not only 2<sup>nd</sup> base, but also 3<sup>rd</sup> base, which he did on numerous occasions. Garretson walked 30 times in 2002, scored 40 runs, and reached base more than 2 out of every 3 times he stepped to the plate.

Eric Hungenberg also reached base with great consistency and played great when it was needed. In the 15-inning 2001 State Championship Game, Hungenberg made 5 plays in the outfield, including recording two outs in the 15<sup>th</sup> inning to secure the win, after nearly winning the game for the Reds in the 14<sup>th</sup> inning after being hit by a pitch and then stealing

2<sup>nd</sup> base. Hungenberg played in the State Championship Game in each of his seasons in centerfield as well, and like all Reds' centerfielders, hit near the top of the lineup, in the #2 hole, reaching base over 60% of the time his senior year and leading the Reds in runs scored, doubles, hits, total bases, and stolen bases. Jason Smith was one of the all-time great Reds' centerfielders, and played for arguably the greatest Reds' team ever. Smith, like many of the Reds' centerfielders, was first-team All-State among numerous other awards received. Smith can also lay claim to being the only Reds' leadoff hitter to ever complete a perfect season, which the Reds did in 1998, en route to winning a state-record 45 straight games through 1999. A rare 3-year starter in centerfielder, and 3-year leadoff hitter, Smith simply tracked down every fly ball hit anywhere near him, which basically meant about any ball hit in between the leftfield and rightfield foul lines. In one of the only comebacks required for the Reds from 1997-1999, Smith singled in the 5<sup>th</sup> inning of the 1998 State Championship Game to force the tying run into scoring position and then scored the game-winning run.



Hungenberg celebrates 15-inning 2001 State Championship win



Smith atop 1998 State Championship pileup



Adams breaks up a double play in 1996 State Championship Game



Noffsinger scores a big run in 1994 State Semifinal win

Kurt Adams led the Reds in 1996 to the State Championship Game for the 3<sup>rd</sup> consecutive season. Batting #2 for the Reds, Adams helped the Reds to one of the greatest stretches of dominance in Eaton history, as the Reds won 12 straight games with 11 of these games being decided by the 10-run rule en route to the State Tournament. Adams reached base in the 7<sup>th</sup> inning of the State Semifinals, then stole 2<sup>nd</sup> base and scored a major insurance run to send the Reds to the State Championship Game. Brig Noffsinger not only tracked down every ball hit into the outfield, but also led the Reds to their first two State Championship victories as one of the top leadoff hitters and centerfielders that the Reds have ever had. Noffsinger is the all-time Reds' leader in on-base percentage in Regionals, reaching a remarkable 16 times in 17 plate appearances. He also reached base well over half the time in the Final Four, and scored 25 runs in the State Tournament throughout his rare 3-year career starting in centerfield and as the leadoff hitter. Noffsinger was always on a dead sprint toward the ball by the time anyone could even look up to find the ball. When Noffsinger, like many Reds' centerfielders, ever let up from a dead sprint with two outs, the rest of the team jogged toward the dugout without even waiting to make sure of the catch, as it was a certainty. Noffsinger set numerous records, including drawing 38 walks, stealing 29 bases, and scoring 45 runs as a senior en route to playing at a 4-year university, as was the case for many Reds' centerfielders. Noffsinger caught a remarkable 54 fly balls in 1995 with no errors.



Schmeh slides into home plate during a 1992 league victory



Moody stretches to reach 1<sup>st</sup> base safely



Reeman posing in team photo



E. Garretson hits home run at Brush

Before Noffsinger led the Reds in the leadoff spot, Brad Schmeh was the Reds' centerfielder and top power hitter. Schmeh set the then-record for home runs, and was the first Red to be drafted right out of high school, with a great combination of power and speed. Schmeh nearly hit for the cycle in 1992, and led the Reds to the 1991 State Championship Game. Collin Moody was the Reds' centerfielder in 1990 and 1991. Moody simply scored 10 runs in the Regionals and State Semifinals in one of the greatest performances by a leadoff hitter in pressure situations for the Reds. Moody also stole home with two outs to tie up the State Semifinal Game when the Reds intentionally got picked off first base. Moody hit .457 for the Reds as a senior, posting one of the highest batting averages all-time for Reds' leadoff hitters, and kept up the tradition of reaching base over 60% of the time he stepped into the batter's box. Before Moody and Schmeh, Jimmy Reeman led the Reds' outfield. Prior to singlehandedly outscoring the Reds' opponent in the District Tournament with 3 runs to send the Reds to the State Tournament, Reeman reached base in all 7 at-bats in the District Quarterfinals and scored 5 times before delivering the game-winning hit to keep the Reds' season alive with a 23-22 comeback win. Reeman went on to the top streak in Eaton history by reaching base in 24 straight at-bats to send the Reds to the Regionals, scoring 18 runs during that stretch as the Reds' #2 hitter and centerfielder. Eric Garretson, the uncle of Reds' 03 graduate and fellow centerfielder Tyler Garretson, manned the position in 1987. He effectively ended the league championship race after scoring the tying run and then hitting a home run at Brush in his next at-bat to put the game out of reach. He hit leadoff as a junior, and then moved to protect the Reds' #3 and #4 hitters as a senior, providing power by leading the team in triples and being in the top 3 Reds' hitters in terms of home runs.

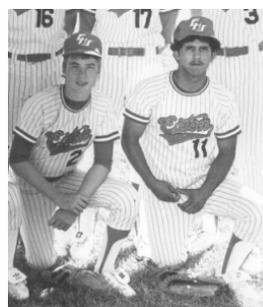
*Reds' centerfielders don't just have a great tradition of being top athletes, they also are born of a tradition of manning likely the largest and most hazardous centerfield in America, up until the Reds got a new field in the late '90s. The old field was fraught with all sorts of land mines and mystifying ground rules. In dead centerfield, 270 feet away from home plate, a centerfield light pole (with no padding or warning track) was placed, and the centerfield fence behind it was about 500 feet away from home plate, with a JV football goal post also in play in deep centerfield. A third "foul" pole was placed in left-centerfield that required a centerfielder to either jump the fence or climb beneath it if the ball was hit to the right of that pole and got past the hole-ridden fence. Right-centerfield was the most dangerous place on the field, as any balls that a centerfielder had to track down there would require him to run onto a loose track to make the play. With concrete edges on the track, it took a great deal of skill to determine where the ball would end up bouncing. There was a sandpit and paved runway for the track team also in right centerfield, along with another football goal post, this one for the varsity football team. Playing centerfield for the Reds was a treacherous job, and in order to prevent triples and inside-the-park home runs, these Reds had to avoid these hazards, and play the ball off of them, in a manner that was completely foreign to any visiting ballplayer. The Reds held a distinct home field advantage in those days, and the men that stepped up to play centerfield clearly out-hustled and outplayed their opponents.*

Terry Specht was the Reds' centerfielder in 1986, and he—like most in this group—was a first team All-State selection. Specht hit #2 on the team until after the Reds' cleanup hitter started being walked too often and the Reds needed to put someone at #5 to protect him; Specht did exactly that by delivering a number of key blows to opponents both in the outfield and at the plate. Specht led off a league game at Roosevelt with three consecutive home runs, with each one outdistancing the previous home run, and then singled and scored to go 4-for-4 in the win. Specht also led the Reds to wins in a doubleheader sweep that wrapped up the league title against University by drawing a walk, hit-by-pitch, and a single to give the Reds a 5-4 win, and then stepped up with a two-run home run to lead the Reds to complete the sweep and record the 50<sup>th</sup> consecutive home win for the Reds, a streak that still stands as the record today. Brad Grauberger was a rare 3-year starter in centerfield for the Reds, and was in fact the first Red to ever accomplish this feat, as only 3 men since that time have held down the top spot in the outfield for 3 years. Like Specht, Grauberger hit #2 his senior year and could also provide power when the Reds needed it most, including a 1<sup>st</sup> inning 2-run home run in the 1985 State Semifinals to give the Reds the lead. Grauberger covered the Reds' centerfield with great instincts and hustle that would become the expectation of those that followed him. During Grauberger's tenure from 1983-1985, the Reds never lost a single game at home, and went 55-5 overall, advancing to the 1983 State Championship Game, becoming the first Reds' team to head into Regionals with an undefeated record in 1984, and advancing again to the Final Four in 1985. Grauberger made only one throwing error in his lifetime, otherwise fielding the difficult position perfectly for 3 years.

Mike Rosales led the Reds in 1982 as the centerfielder, tracking down 3 flyballs that could have decided the game as the Reds defeated University 1-0 for the League Championship. From the first game of the season—when Rosales had 3 hits and scored on all 4 plate appearances with 3 RBIs to lead the Reds in an important league win—through the last game of the season—when he threw out both runners that tried to stretch a double into a triple—Rosales fielded his position perfectly, without a single error. Mike Anderson led the Reds in centerfield in 1980 and 1981 before Rosales was able to take over centerfield and have Anderson play shortstop for his final two seasons. Prior to playing collegiately and then professionally, Anderson hit over .420 and fielded 1.000 in 1981, leading the Reds to the Final Four for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time in Reds' history. In the Regional Championship that year, Anderson reached base 3 times, stole 3 bases, and scored 2 runs in the 3-1 win. Prior to that win, Anderson kept the Reds' season alive with 2 runs on 2 hits and ended the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> innings with great plays in the outfield, throwing out a runner at the plate to preserve the 5-3 lead that sent the Reds on to the State Tournament. Anderson displayed similar heroics throughout all 4 years that he started for the Reds. Brian Hoffner manned centerfield before Anderson, and led the team in stolen bases while also being a top RBI man for the Reds. Hoffner singled to knock in the winning run in the first game of an important league doubleheader, and then drew a bases-loaded, 3-2 walk to secure the doubleheader sweep, as the Reds marched on to win the League Championship for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time ever, and also qualify for the State Tournament for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time in Eaton history.



Specht posing for team photo



Grauberger (left) and Rosales pose for team photo



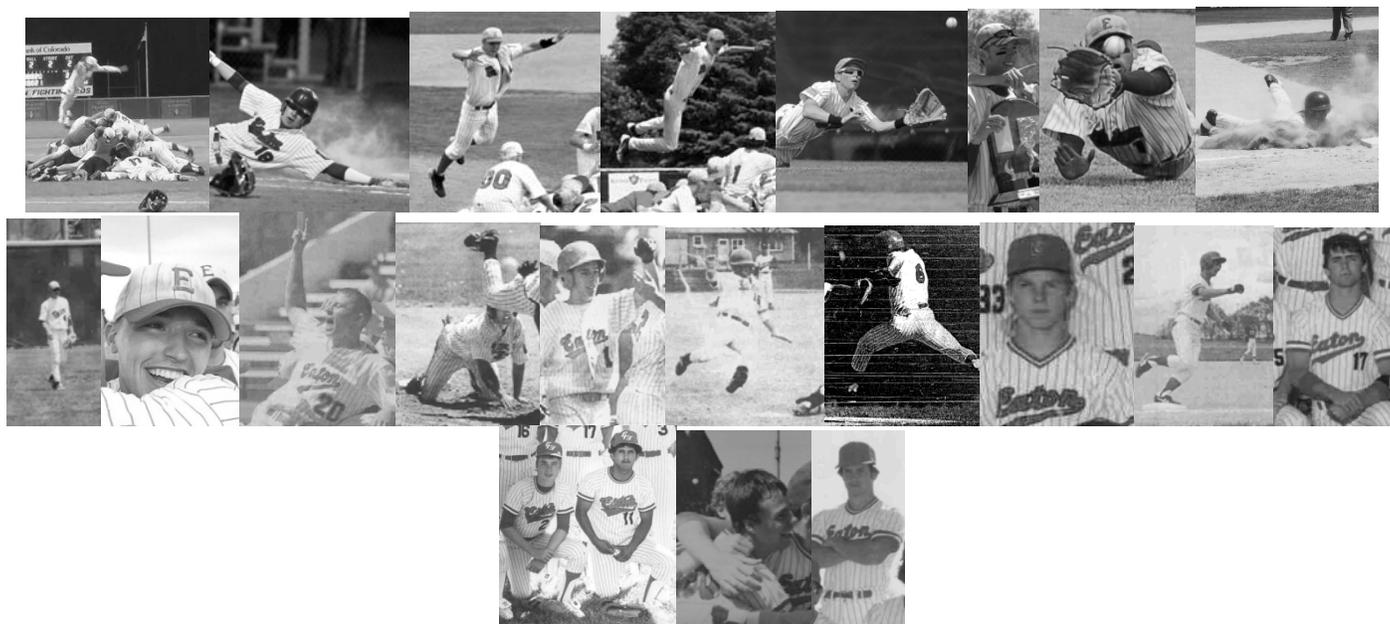
M. Anderson (left) celebrates 1983 State Semifinal win with teammates



Hoffner posing for team photo

These young men were superior athletes and thrived on the pressure of being in charge of every fly ball hit. They stepped up long ago to play on likely the largest and most hazardous baseball field in the state, if not the entire nation, and that tradition of toughness and great instinct has been passed down over the past 35 years from player to player. They took every game and every play as a one-on-one battle of wills, daring someone to try to land a ball in their outfield, or to try to advance an extra base on their arm. They simply did not accept anything short of absolute victory. They led their teams to remarkable championships and win streaks. They won 35 League Championships. They qualified for State 36 times. They won 29 Regional Championships. They played in 21 State Championship Games. They won 11 State Championships. They won over 730 spring games, and over 1,000 summer games as well. And they accomplished all of this within merely 37 years. They earned all sorts of all-league, all-state, and other awards, and most of them earned scholarships to play in college and a couple of them were even drafted by Major League organizations.

They set a standard more than three decades ago that all future Reds would follow, of simply using their great baseball instincts to get superior jumps on every ball hit in the air, and to have the confidence and presence to take charge of every ball that was humanly reachable. They also led the team typically as leadoff hitters and base stealers that set the stage for many great rallies and victories, and outthustled everyone on the field, but also provided some pop in their bats when a double or home run was needed in a tough, two-out situation. And we're just proud and grateful to know them as Eaton Reds.



**22 Reds' Centerfielders Spanning 37 Years of Eaton Baseball**

*Koehler '15*  
*Nelson '14*  
*Abbott '12-'13*  
*K. Hall '11*  
*Geisick '10*  
*L. Hall '07-'09*  
*Jones '06*  
*T. Anderson '04-'05*  
*T. Garretson '02-'03*  
*Hungenberg '00-'01*  
*Smith '97-'99*

1979 – 2015  
 36 State Tournament Appearances  
 35 League Championships  
 29 Regional Championships  
 21 State Semifinal Wins  
 11 State Championships  
 738 Wins, Averaging 20 Wins per Season

*Adams' '96*  
*Noffsinger '93-'95*  
*Schmeh '89, '92*  
*Moody '90-'91*  
*Reeman '88*  
*E. Garretson '87*  
*Specht '86*  
*Grauberger '83-'85*  
*Rosales '82*  
*M. Anderson '80-'81*  
*Hoffner '79*