

'for TANNER'

BASEBALL PLAYERS HONOR TEAMMATE



The sun peaked out from the rain, just long enough for opening day to commence. A typical spring day in Nebraska, crowds filled into packed bleachers. The first game of the season is supposed to be exciting, but this year there was no cheering. There were no big smiles. Today, the baseball team would open the season without their friend and teammate senior **Tanner Farrell**.

"Tanner was extremely likable and easy to coach," assistant coach **Rich Christensen** said. "He's the epitome of a selfless team player. He meshed with the rest of our team very seamlessly."

On Saturday March 12th, Farrell attended a team bonding event at a bowling alley. Farrell had told his coaches he was bad at bowling, but by the end of the night his bowling team had won. Farrell was the new 'Ralston Team Bowler of the Year' and was awarded a bowling pin trophy. Later that night, after leaving the event, Farrell tragically passed away in a gun-related accident.

Opening day took place just one week after Farrell's death.

At the opener, friends and family from around the metro wore blue ribbons and shirts commemorating Farrell's initials and baseball number, TF6. Instead of an admission fee, the district collected donations for a scholarship fund created in his name.

"That initial week was very difficult of course," Christensen said. "The boys played with a lot of emotion on opening day."

With Farrell's family and friends in attendance, the team vowed to play 'For Tanner' during the season.

"We have carried around a number six jersey everywhere we go, and we hang it in the dugout," friend and team captain senior **Garrett White** said. "During the National Anthem, we leave the spot on first base empty in honor of him. We also have a little TF6 we paint behind the plate or mound on home game days."

For Christensen, playing 'For Tanner' means being selfless and doing what is best for the team. "Tanner was willing to play multiple positions if it would help the team," Christensen said. "We have a handful of players that have done that. They've accepted roles and positions that may not have been what they had envisioned at the beginning of the year. I'm really proud of that."

Off the field and in the classroom, Farrell was a lovable student and a dedicated friend. He was known for his quiet and polite demeanor in classes, but in the stands at a game, he was his friends' loudest supporter.

"Tanner was a great person," White said. "He never failed to put a smile on anyone's face. He was amazing to be around as a friend and as a teammate."

For White, the outcomes of games no longer matter. "This season is for Tanner." Story and photo by Nina Kudlacz.



Fitting right in Before his passing, senior **Tanner Farrell** played first base and right field for Ralston Legion Baseball. He transferred from Millard West, and played summer ball with his new teammates at Ralston. "One of my favorite memories was when we went to hit, and he hadn't hit for a while," senior **Garrett White** said. "I was teasing him about swinging and missing and on his very first swing he completely wiffed it. I started laughing even though he didn't find it too funny." Photo courtesy of the Farrell family.

CATCHING up

FAVORITE POSITIONS



All the action. Second Base is where freshman **Gabe Walsh** has some of the biggest responsibilities on the field," Walsh said. Photo by Kailey Walsh.



Hard hitting. Junior **Kade Rodgers** is ready to field the ball at third base. "Playing third is alright when the balls aren't hit super hard," Rodgers said. Photo by Nina Kudlacz.



Always moving. Junior **Cody Rutledge** jumps to catch the ball at third base. "I normally play outfield," Rutledge said. "I like how mobile I can be." Photo by Kailey Walsh.



From a different perspective. Junior **Aden Lira** gets down and ready. "As a catcher, you get to see the whole field as everything unfolds," Lira said. Photo by Nina Kudlacz.

ONTO THE next

SENIORS LEAVE IT ALL ON THE FIELD



Future plans. Senior **Garrett White** pitches against Gross Catholic at the season opener. He plans to play for Southeast Community College next year and study business. "I will miss just playing high school baseball," White said. Photo by Nina Kudlacz.



Mixed feelings. Senior **John Harrington** winds up a pitch for a Lincoln Northeast batter. "It feels very weird knowing this is my last season and that I'm counting the days down," Harrington said. "I will remember the memories I made." Photo by Nina Kudlacz.



No place like home. Senior **Caden Corcoran** slides into home plate to score. "I will miss the community the most," Corcoran said. "I always love to hear their joy when we do good things." Corcoran will go on to play at Northeast Community College. Photo by Nina Kudlacz.



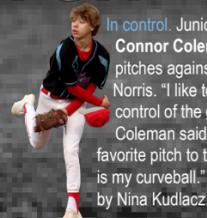
Moving on. Senior **Tucker Brantley** celebrates a run. "I'm gonna miss everything about baseball, but at the end of the day I've gotta move on to the next chapter of my life," Brantley said. "I will be studying sports medicine at UNL." Photo by Nina Kudlacz.

perfect PITCH

PITCHERS' BEST GAMES



Holding it down. Junior **Phoenix Briley's** best game was against Malcolm earlier in the season. "I threw four innings with one hit and no runs and got the win," Briley said. Photo by Nina Kudlacz.



In control. Junior **Connor Coleman** pitches against Norris. "I like to be in control of the game," Coleman said. "My favorite pitch to throw is my curveball." Photo by Nina Kudlacz.



Doing his part. Sophomore **Wyatt Gettman's** best game was against Nebraska City. "Even though I pitched one inning, I kept the game tied," Gettman said. "The rest of the team scored a walkoff run to win." Photo by Kailey Walsh.

BOMB squad

BATTERS STEP UP TO THE PLATE



One for the books. Junior **Hudson Holloway** bats against Norris. Holloway's best at bat was against Auburn. "[It was] my first home run of the season my junior year," Holloway said. Photo by Nina Kudlacz.



Team work. Junior **Max Hoffman** talks about his best at bat this season. "I hit a single to right field to move Caden to third base," Hoffman said. "It set up the walk off opportunity against Nebraska City." Photo by Nina Kudlacz.



Keeping it in the family. Junior **Nash McNichols** steps up to the plate against Millard South. "I use a 2019 CF Zen," McNichols said. "It's my brother's old bat." Photo by Kailey Walsh.



Hard hitting. Junior **Harrison Acklie** prepares to swing while at bat against Norris. "One game at Plattview I hit a triple to the fence," Acklie said. Photo by Nina Kudlacz.

standing WITH six

OPPOSING TEAMS HONOR NUMBER SIX

Showing up. Many opposing teams showed support to the Ralston and Farrell family by bringing a gift to the game. It started with a number six jersey and a signed baseball from Twin River. As the season went on, some schools signed t-shirts, hats, and baseballs, while others made "TF6" signs and paintings.

All photos courtesy of Ralston Baseball Twitter.



PLATTEVIEW

TWIN RIVER

FARRELL

MALCOM

NORRIS

BELLEVUE - EAST

RONCOLLI

fresh FACES

FRESHMEN JOIN THE VARSITY ROSTER

Playing up. Starting varsity games is a common occurrence for both freshmen **Deacon Courtney** and **Owen Elsasser**. Courtney is no stranger to playing with boys above his age; he also played varsity basketball this year. "The competition is higher, and I can get better faster," Courtney said. Despite not playing with many of his freshmen friends, Elsasser enjoys his varsity teammates. "I really like our team," Elsasser said. "I get a lot of experience." Photos by Nina Kudlacz.

