

Cardinals exec headlines 2016 American Legion Regional Tournament Player's Banquet

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EDWARDSVILLE – The American Legion National Baseball Tournament showcases some the best amateur talent anywhere and that attracts the attention of major league scouts. Those players from 6 Midwestern states, along with professional and college scouts will arrive in Edwardsville, Illinois on August 2nd to participate in the Great Lakes Regional. For the better part of a week, Wednesday, August 3rd to Sunday, August 7th, SIUE will play host to this national event.

Players and coaches will be treated to an evening of celebration at the tournament banquet on Tuesday, August 2nd at Edison's Entertainment Complex. Matt Slater, Director, Player Personnel, Special Assistant to the General Manager at St. Louis Cardinals, will headline a distinguished panel of keynote speakers to welcome the players to the area. Matt joined the Cardinal organization in 2007 and is in his 26th year in Major League Baseball. Named Director of Player Personnel in January 2012, Matt, in his role as senior talent evaluator, works hand in hand with the General Manager in all player acquisitions including Major League, minor league, amateur draft and

international talent. Other keynote speakers will feature remarks from Col. Anthony Mitchell, USACE, and U.S. Congressman, Rodney Davis.



This prestigious tournament is one of eight regional sites from which the champions will advance to the American Legion World Series (ALWS) to be held in Shelby, NC and televised on ESPNU. The combined local Edwardsville Post 199/Alton Post 126 team will serve as host and also enjoy an automatic bid to participate in the tournament. Last year's team fell just one win short of advancing to the World Series losing to Midland, Michigan, the previous year's ALWS runner-up.

15 games will be played at Simmons Baseball Complex/Roy Lee Field located on the campus of Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville off of New Poag Road in Edwardsville. Teams will feature graduating high school seniors and college aged freshman from Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky and Illinois.



Opening ceremonies, held on the field Wednesday, Aug. 3rd at 4:00 pm, will include local dignitaries, a special color guard and anthem, a salute to our military and presentations from the Mayor of Edwardsville as well as the recitation of the American Legion code of honor from all players participating.

“Our sports facilities are second to none,” said Edwardsville Mayor, Hal Patton. “These players will experience a safe community, a fun community, and a heck of a place to play baseball.”

“This tournament puts our region and the local legion program on a national stage,” noted Matt McSparin, tournament co-director. “It is a great opportunity to pay tribute to our military personnel, while providing these young men a chance to compete at a high level. This is grass roots, amateur baseball at its best and our local boys will surely remember this as a once in a lifetime experience.”

American Legion Baseball was formed in 1925 and has provided young men an outlet to play amateur baseball for nearly a century. Baseball legends like Ted Williams, Stan Musial, Don Mattingly, Carlton Fisk, Greg Maddux, Ryne Sandberg, Roger Clemens,

and local Cardinals heroes like Albert Pujols, Scott Rolen, Chris Carpenter and many others have played American Legion baseball.



Advance tickets are not yet available, but all tournament information and updates are online at www.LegionBB.com. Game sessions \$5 per ticket, a day pass is \$10, and an all-tournament pass is only \$30. Those interested in getting involved as a volunteer, a sponsor, or to simply help promote the event can contact Matt McSparin at 618-307-9020 or mattm@edisonsfun.com or Ron Tanner at 618-570-9125 or ron@confluenceba.com for more information.