

# AQ graduate goes many extra innings

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

GENEVA — To most, an eight-hour work day is sufficiently draining.

To Tony Bianchi, eight hours would be more like a day at the beach.

And with the pace he's set for himself this summer, there won't be too many opportunities where Bianchi can actually enjoy any sand or surf.

A typical daily itinerary for Bianchi:

- Perform outdoor maintenance work in the morning and afternoon for a real-estate management company;
- Travel to Geneva to play two games of baseball, either in that city or somewhere else in western New York, for the Geneva Knights;

- Return to Rochester at approximately 11:30 p.m. and work out at Samson's Gym until 2 a.m.

Just to make his schedule even more hectic, Bianchi still fills in for the town of Greece's American Legion baseball team for which he's played since 1991. In all, he averages at least one baseball game per day.

Pretty ambitious stuff for a guy who's only 18 years old and has just completed his freshman year of college.

But as Bianchi relates, that's the price an athlete must pay if he ever hopes to make it to the professional ranks.

"If I could get the chance, I'd like to get drafted," said Bianchi, a Gates resident and parishioner at St. Theodore's Church.

And Bianchi is very good at creating opportunities like these, as his college career has thus far illustrated.

He pursued his dream despite receiving scant attention from major colleges while attending Aquinas, where he was a three-time All City-Catholic League outfielder.

"I don't think Rochester gets that much exposure. They don't recruit there that heavily, and you don't have a big university (for baseball)," Bianchi pointed out.

But Bianchi was determined to compete at the Division I level, and he enrolled at the University of Maine.



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer  
Tony Bianchi (right) attempts to steal second base during the Geneva Knights' game against the Hornell Hornets Thursday, June 23, at Geneva's McDonough Park.

"I didn't want to say, 'Oh, I could have played Division I' but be at a Division III school," Bianchi acknowledged.

Bianchi saw substantial duty during his very first season at Maine, finishing with one of the team's higher batting averages (.270) while serving both in the outfield and as designated hitter. Although he did not receive any scholarship money this past school year, Bianchi may now be eligible for a partial scholarship in 1994-95.

To keep his baseball skills polished, Bianchi has joined the Geneva Knights for the summer. This first-year team, comprised of several top college players, replaces the city's Class A professional club which disbanded after the 1993 season.

Bianchi and his Geneva teammates travel to locales such as Hornell, Cohocton and Ithaca, facing other select amateur squads in the nine-team Northeastern Collegiate Baseball League. The Knights had achieved an 8-10 record through the end of last week.

"The competition is great. You face good pitchers," said the left-handed hitting outfielder. "A lot of people say it's summer ball so it must be more relaxed, but I take it just as seriously as a college game."

He favors the league's banishment of

aluminum bats, which tend to be more forgiving for hitters and are permitted in college — but not in the pros.

"I like the wood bats. You don't get any 'dink' hits," he remarked. "A lot of scouts come down here, too, seeing what you can do with a wooden bat."

Bianchi is also pleased with the fact that he can play high-level ball so close to home, whereas many of his Knight teammates are taking temporary lodging at fraternity houses in town.

"My parents come down every night, and my other family (members) and friends come whenever they can," he said.

Another loyal supporter is Tom Wilmer, who serves as Bianchi's American Legion coach.

"The guy's got an unbelievable work ethic," Wilmer remarked. "He wants to go to the next level, which he's already done in his first year (of college). But he knows he can go further."

## Nazareth lax players selected All-American

PITTSFORD — Seven members of this year's Nazareth College men's lacrosse team have been chosen as All-Americans by the United States Intercollegiate Lacrosse Association.

Senior midfielder Jeremy Hollenbeck was named to the All-American first team, and second-team honors went to senior midfielder Cam Bomberry.

Junior attackman Pat Metzler and senior defenseman Rich Petersen were named to the third team. Receiving honorable mention were sophomore attackman Neal Powless, senior defenseman Tony Wallace and senior goalie Sean O'Rourke.

## Benefit tournament scheduled for July 11

PENFIELD — The ninth annual School of the Holy Childhood Ladies Golf Tournament will take place Monday, July 11, at Shadow Pines Golf Club.

Funds raised through the tournament will benefit the children's program at School of the Holy Childhood, a non-denominational, non-profit agency serving mentally handicapped children and adults.

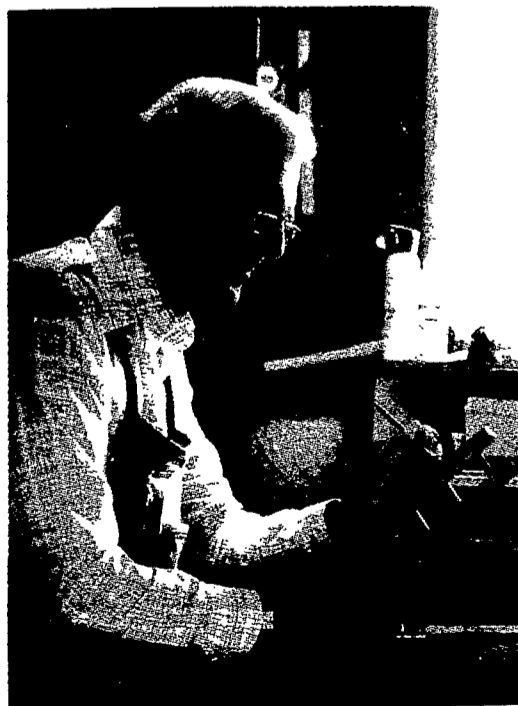
For information, call Rose Marie Pape at 716/359-3710.

## DeSales' Russell named top cheerleading coach

GENEVA — Ted Russell, cheerleading coach at DeSales High School, was recently named Section 5 Class DD Coach of the Year.

Russell has coached the DeSales football and basketball cheerleading squads for seven years. This marks the third time he has earned Coach of the Year honors.

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