

1987 Baseball Team



Bill Seabury's 1987 Baseball team entered the season with a target on their back. The Spartans surprised everyone the year before winning the Division II North Championship. The League thought they got lucky, but they were wrong. The Spartans gutted out a win in their season opener against Melrose 5-2. Their next game was against Lexington where the powerful Stoneham lineup pounded out 24 hits in a 14-1 victory.

The Spartans were on a roll. In the fifth game of the year against Wakefield, who was also undefeated at the time, the Spartans outlasted the Warriors winning 1-0 on a walk off home run by Rich Piaseczynski. The Spartans ended the regular season undefeated and were ranked #1 in the state by the Boston Globe.

In the first game of the state tournament, the Spartans beat the Northeast Voke 18-8. Doug Clark led an awesome display of hitting with two 3 run home runs and 8 RBI's. The second game was another slugfest as Stoneham defeated Salem 15-6. Joe Vitiello started the game on the mound. He also had 4 hits including a towering home run. Andy Hartung homered for the Spartans as well. The 3rd game of the tournament was a game for the ages as Stoneham beat North Andover 7-6 in 13 innings. The hard-throwing Doug Clark started the game for the Spartans and pitched 6 innings striking out 10 batters. Joe Vitiello then relieved Clark and ended up striking out 17 hitters in 7 innings keeping the game close. As the clock approached midnight, Dick Pignone stroked a bases loaded walk off hit that would end the 4 ½ hour classic. It was now off to the Division II North Championship in a repeat match-up against Swampscott at Morelli Field in Melrose.

Over 1,500 fans watched as Joe Vitiello pitched a complete game 11 inning gem striking out 16 batters, and Rich Piaseczynski ended the game in the 11th with a walk off single for the Spartans. The Division II state Semi Final is a game still talked about by those who were there as Stoneham ended up losing 12-11 in 10 innings. It was a see-saw affair that saw six lead changes and featured some awesome hitting. Joe Vitiello had four hits and two home runs while Dick Pignone had 3 hits and one home run. Ed Whelan and Andy Hartung also had 3 hits apiece in the game.

The 1987 Spartans loved the game of baseball and had an intense desire to win. The team was led by Captains Dick Pignone and Andy Hartung. Joe Vitiello would go on to win his 2nd of what would eventually be three consecutive MVP awards. The team had five players on the All-Star team and eight players went on to play college baseball. Every player contributed to their success. Teammates included Eddie Whalen, Joe Micale, Doug Clark, Rich Piaseczynski, Derek Abruzzese, Brian Hilliard, Mike Calcavecchia, David Ellegood, Erik Frank, Rich Lotti, and Joe Ciccariello. Bill Seabury and Ed Russo did a masterful job coaching throughout the year. Although they lost in the Semi Finals, they were truly the best team in the State