

Game 1 - Rough Start



Joey Bielek hits HR in Chaparral season opener

Chaparral Drops Season-Opener

The 2011 baseball season commenced with a rough start for the Firebirds, as **Chaparral** fell short to **Mountain Point** 8 – 3 in their home opener of the Scottsdale Invitational Tournament.

Both starting pitchers kept the hitters in check thru the early innings. Chaparral's **Nevin Wilson** pitched well, allowing 2 runs on 3 hits, but Mountain Point's Anthony

Balderrama held the Firebirds hitless through four innings to retain a 2 -1 lead.

Chaparral rallied with a run in the fifth to tie the game after **Kyle Toth** singled then scored on **Austin Singer**'s double off the right field fence. But Mountain Point answered with three runs in the sixth and three more in the seventh. Top prospect Kevin Cron, who last year set an Arizona state record with 22 home runs, led the way with three hits (two extra-base), and Balderrama helped his own cause with two extra-base hits & three RBI.

Joey Bielek breathed life into the Firebirds with a solo home run in the sixth, but it was short-lived as Mountain Point's hot bats proved to be the difference in the game.

While this may not be the start **Head Coach Sam Messina** was looking for, there's no need for concern among the Firebird Faithful. Messina takes over after legendary coach Jerry Dawson, who ran the program for 37 years, retired last year. Messina becomes only the second head coach in Chaparral's storied history, and while Dawson's record of success speaks for itself, Coach Messina brings a resume that will only add to the foundation known as **Chaparral Baseball**.

Messina has over 20 years of coaching experience and was also a player on Arizona's 1986 College World Series Championship team. But his value extends far beyond the diamond – Messina is recognized as one of the top Math teachers in the state, and our players are reminded every day of the importance of success in the classroom.

Firebird Flash



“The legacy of Chaparral baseball is bigger than me” stated Messina, and “it’s the responsibility of every member of our organization to carry on that legacy”. The entire coaching staff is committed to instilling these values to help our players achieve success both on and off the field.

With a talented roster comprised of nine returning varsity players, deep pitching, strong hitting, and solid defense, there is no doubt the Firebirds will be a top-ranked contender this season and for years to come.

Tournament play continues this week:

- the Firebirds visit Boulder Creek Thursday 2/24 @ 3:45
- travel to Highland Saturday 2/26 @ Noon
- host Gilbert on Monday 2/28 @ 3:45

It’s a new chapter for Chaparral, but the Legacy continues...