

Miami Herald

Miami Dade College extends proud MLB tradition with 26th player drafted in last 10 years

BY DAVID WILSON

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Welcome to the Miami Herald's annual celebration of South Florida's top young athletes, the best high-school coaches, and youth sports culture — a tradition that dates back to 1957. BY MIAMI HERALD

With one round to spare, Juan Gonzalez rounded out South Florida's 2021 MLB Draft and continued one of the region's most impressive traditions of draft success.

The catcher from Champagnat Catholic wasn't picked in the shortened 2020 draft, so he elected to go the junior college route and head to Miami Dade College to remain eligible for the 2021 draft. In the 19th round, Gonzalez's decision paid off and he headed to the Toronto Blue Jays with the

20th pick in the penultimate round. He's the 26th Miami Dade College player to be picked in the past 10 years and the 471st in program history.

Gonzalez, who was born in Venezuela, was one of more than a South Floridians to get picked across the three days of the MLB Draft this week. On Tuesday, MLB held the final 10 rounds of the draft — Rounds 11-20 — and four South Floridians found professional homes, including two from Champagnat.

Michael Rothenberg, a catcher for the Duke Blue Devils and Pine Crest alumnus, kicked off the day by going to the Detroit Tigers in the 12th round, then Anthony Vilar, a catcher for the Miami Hurricanes and Westminster Christian alumnus, headed to the San Diego Padres in the 15th round.

To round out the day, two former Lions went in the final four rounds, as Champagnat shortstop Kaylan Nicasia got picked by the Milwaukee Brewers in the 16th and Gonzalez got picked by the Blue Jays in the 19th.

The Lions were one of only two South Florida teams with multiple players drafted this year. Calvary Christian Academy led the way with four picks, including pitcher Andrew Painter, who went to the Philadelphia Phillies with the No. 13 overall selection in the first round.

Two players from the Miami metropolitan area [ranked among MLB.com's top 250 pre-draft prospects and went undrafted](#): Plantation American Heritage pitcher Devin Futrell and Calvary Christian catcher Rene Lastres. Futrell is committed to the Vanderbilt Commodores and Lastres is committed to the Florida Gators.

SOUTH FLORIDA DRAFT RECAP

Round 1, Pick 13: RHP Andrew Painter, Calvary Christian Academy, Phillies

Painter was the first and only South Floridian picked in the first round Sunday after he won the Gatorade Player of the Year award for Florida and posted a 0.38 ERA as a senior for the Eagles. The 6-7 pitcher is committed to the Gators, but unlikely to actually wind up in Gainesville after going to the Phillies in the top 15.

Competitive Balance Round B, Pick 4: C Adrian Del Castillo, Miami (Gulliver Prep), Diamondbacks

Del Castillo [began the year as the No. 4 prospect in the draft, but slipped to No. 42](#) in the pre-draft rankings after an underwhelming third season with the Hurricanes in 2021. His tumble [lasted even](#)

[longer in the actual draft](#) with the Arizona Diamondbacks landing the catcher with the No. 67 overall pick in the draft. A Gulliver Prep alumnus, Del Castillo was the first Miami-Dade County native picked in the 2021 draft.

Round 4, Pick 6: SS Alex Ulloa, Calvary Christian Academy, Astros

Ulloa was the second of four Calvary Christian alumni picked on the first two days of the draft. The Houston Astros took the shortstop with the No. 117 overall pick. The infielder, who's committed to the Oklahoma State Cowboys, [was a first-team Broward All-County selection](#) by the Miami Herald this year after he batted .483 with six home runs in 21 games.



Saint Thomas Aquinas HS Caleb Roberts (7) hits a triple and drives in runs in the fifth inning as they play Sarasota HS in the Class 8A in the FHSSA Baseball State Championships in Fort Myers, Florida, June 2, 2018. Charles Trainor Jr. CTRAINOR@MIAMIHERALD.COM

Round 5, Pick 6: C Caleb Roberts, North Carolina (St. Thomas Aquinas), Diamondbacks

Roberts batted .270 with a .918 on-base-plus slugging percentage for the North Carolina Tar Heels this year and headed to the Diamondbacks with the No. 138 overall pick. While Roberts primarily played the outfield with North Carolina, MLB announced him at the draft as a catcher, which is the position he primarily played in high school for St. Thomas Aquinas.

Round 5, Pick 10: RHP Christian Scott, Florida (Calvary Christian Academy), Mets

Scott, who wrapped up his career with the Eagles in 2018, headed to the Mets with the No. 142 overall pick after playing three years at Florida. Scott was primarily a relief pitcher throughout his career with the Gators, posting a 3.00 ERA with 51 strikeouts in 54 innings this year.



Irv Carter, photographed in 2019, is one of the top high school pitchers in the 2021 MLB draft.
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Round 5, Pick 20: RHP Irv Carter, Calvary Christian Academy, Blue Jays

Four former Eagles got picked in the first five rounds after Toronto nabbed Carter with the No. 152 overall pick. The pitcher slid a little bit before landing with the Blue Jays in the fifth round. Carter, who's committed to the hometown Hurricanes, was a first-team All-County selection after putting up a 1.87 ERA in 10 appearances this year.

Round 6, Pick 15: RHP Carlos Rodriguez, JUCO Florida SouthWestern State College (Miami Christian), Brewers

After going undrafted out of Miami Christian in the shortened 2020 draft, Rodriguez landed in the sixth round of the 2021 draft, No. 177 overall to the Brewers. After posting a 0.67 ERA in his shortened senior season, Rodriguez headed to JUCO Florida SouthWestern State and logged a 2.11 ERA in 47 innings.

Round 8, Pick 6: 3B Gavin Conticello, Stoneman Douglas, Diamondbacks

Conticello was the veteran leader for a Stoneman Douglas team loaded with underclassmen, helping the Eagles win a state title and finish in the top five of MaxPreps' national rankings. The third baseman, who is committed to the USF Bulls, was a second-team All-County selection by the Herald after batting .351 with eight doubles and two home runs, and became the No. 228 pick in the draft.

Round 9, Pick 29: LHP Alex Ayala Jr., JUCO Florida SouthWestern State College (Brito), Rays

Like Rodriguez, Ayala went undrafted in the shortened 2020 draft, so he headed to Fort Myers for a year in JUCO and became a second-day selection by the Tampa Bay Rays. Ayala didn't give up a run in his abbreviated senior season at Brito in 2020, then posted a 3.53 ERA as a freshman for the Buccaneers to get drafted No. 281 overall.

Round 12, Pick 3: C Michael Rothenberg, Duke (Pine Crest), Tigers

Rothenberg was the first South Floridian picked on Day 3 of the draft Tuesday, heading to the Detroit Tigers with the No. 345 overall pick. The switch-hitting catcher batted .251 for the Duke Blue Devils this year.

Round 15, Pick 28: C Anthony Vilar, Miami (Westminster Christian), Padres

Vilar started 131 straight games all over the infield for the Hurricanes, but the Padres drafted him as a catcher with the No. 460 overall pick Tuesday. If he can make the switch, Vilar will create

tons of value, but he could also opt to return to Miami as he has two seasons of eligibility remaining.

Round 16, Pick 15: SS Kaylan Nicasia, Champagnat Catholic, Brewers

A switch-hitting shortstop from Curacao, Nicasia batted .369 in 24 games for Champagnat this year to earn second-team All-County honors from the Herald. He's currently uncommitted, which could make it easier for Milwaukee to sign him.

Round 19, Pick 20: C Juan Gonzalez, JUCO Miami Dade College (Champagnat Catholic), Blue Jays

After going undrafted in the shortened 2020 draft, Gonzalez headed from to the JUCO ranks in Miami and quickly put himself in position to be drafted. The Venezuelan catcher batted .306 as a freshman to entice Toronto to select him with the No. 572 overall pick Tuesday.



MDC baseball team qualifies for nationals for the first time since 2014, and here's what they had to overcome. *MIAMI*

<https://www.miamiherald.com/sports/high-school/article252727628.html>