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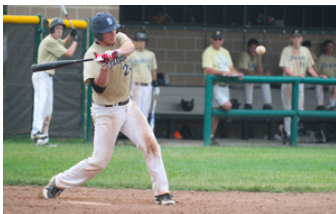
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Perrysburg's Mark Delas Is The Mirror's Player Of The Year

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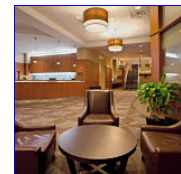


Perrysburg's Mark Delas lines the bat up with the ball during a recent Yellow Jackets' ACME baseball game. Delas was recently selected as the 2013 Mirror Player of the Year after batting .400 with 40 hits, 23 runs, 31 RBI, 14 walks and seven stolen bases and pitching 48.67 innings while compiling a 6-1-3 record and a 1.58 ERA.

MIRROR PHOTO BY JOE NEGRICH

BY J. PATRICK EAKEN | MIRROR SPORTS — When you play your games at a field named for the Detroit Tigers manager and it's in the manager's hometown, you have a tradition to uphold. That manager is, of course, Jim Leyland, and the brand-new Perrysburg High School baseball field is Jim Leyland Field, just like the old one. The All-Mirror baseball Player of the Year, however, Perrysburg pitcher and third baseman Mark Delas, has his own ties to the Tigers. Mark's father, Mickey Delas, was a 6-foot-4, 220-pound right-handed pitcher in the Tigers organization after being drafted in the 12th round out of Eastern Michigan University. Mickey, now 46, played rookie and Class A ball for Bristol, Fayetteville and Lakeland. So far, son Mark Delas (6-3, 220) doesn't know where his future will be because he's a standout athlete in three sports. Delas was all-Northern Lakes League in football and wrestling, but baseball is the sport in which he's a first-team All-Mirror pick along with Player of the Year. He was a first-team all-league third baseman who also made first-team All-Ohio in Division I. In addition, he was only a

junior and plans to play all three sports again his senior year. He has had an offer from Ohio Dominican University to play baseball and football but is going to wait to see what other offers he receives. In leading Perrysburg to the NLL championship last spring, Mark batted .408 with 40 hits, five doubles, four triples, one home run, 23 runs, 31 RBI, 14 walks, seven stolen bases, a .478 on-base percentage and a .571 slugging percentage. On the mound, he was 6-1 with three saves and a 1.58 ERA, allowing just 11 earned runs in 48-2/3 innings pitched. He struck out 31, walked 28 and allowed 30 hits. Despite those numbers, it was winning an NLL title that highlighted Delas' season. "It was great," he said. "I think we all definitely got along with each other better than last year, and I think we kind of evolved as players and kind of matured on the ball field. "We definitely hit better than last year and we had a better idea of what we were going to do at the plate. I think that helps – being a better hitting team than last year." Perrysburg, ranked fifth in the final D-I prep baseball poll, closed the season at 26-4 after losing in the regional semifinals to No. 4-ranked St. Francis deSales, 10-5, at Bowling Green State University's Steller Field. "We just had a bad game and we didn't hit as well as we thought we would," Delas said. "St. Francis came out to play and they hit better than us. We all have those games where you are hitting right at them, and we were definitely hitting right at them. That's baseball, and they hit the ball phenomenally." Even though Delas was an all-league third baseman this year, Perrysburg coach Dave Hall says he will likely start at catcher next year. "He's just a really fantastic athlete and young man," Hall said. "He has become a leader this year. He's a very good three-sport. He hits the ball extremely well, runs well, became a very good fielder this year and he's got a lot of tools." Hall says Delas has a strong arm and speed. Despite his size, he manages to run a 6.8-second 60. Last year, during football season, he was benching 330 pounds. Hall thinks bigger college offers are on the way for Delas. "He's built well and definitely a (NCAA) Division I college baseball player and probably potentially a D-I college football player as well," Hall said. "At this point," Delas explained, "I think just waiting for the right offer and the right match for me is what I'm hoping for." Delas got his first high school varsity experience at a young age and by his sophomore year was already one of the team's top performers. "We brought him up as a freshman for the tournament and he had two big pinch hits, including a big double in our state semifinal game when he was a freshman and he was our leading hitter as a sophomore," Hall said. "But this year, his numbers were definitely a lot better. I think he matured as a hitter and started hitting a little bit more intelligently after being on varsity as a sophomore. He started hitting counts better, started gaining a better philosophy of hitting, and hitting pitches that he could drive." This summer, Delas is playing for the Perrysburg Senior ACME team and also as starting catcher for the Michigan Dogs travel team. In one week, he hit four home runs, including a 400-footer over Perrysburg's scoreboard and another that went more than 400 feet at Lourdes College, hitting the top of a 16-foot fence before bouncing over. Delas is joined on the Dogs by Perrysburg teammate Nick Fleming, a second baseman. The Dogs play mostly in Michigan tournaments but had one last week in Indiana. "I think it's nice to go somewhere else to see different competition, and Michigan always has good pitchers, so it definitely helps batting," Delas said. "It's nice to go somewhere with a different caliber." Hall likes what he is seeing from his senior catcher this summer and can't wait to get him on the field again next spring. "I think it just gives him more confidence," Hall said. "I think it gives him a better chance for offers – obviously, we'd like to see him offered and signed before the start of the (spring 2014) season to take some pressure off of him. "He's already getting offers, and he has to take one sport at a time, and usually you don't get recruited until your senior year while the season is going on. It's much nicer if you can get signed during the signing period." Hall knew he had a good team this year because of his seven seniors, but next year he has two marquee players returning. "We were old this year," Hall said. "Our junior class is decent – we have Mark and another kid who will be a four-year starter, pitcher, A.J. Stockwell, who is also getting a lot of looks. Those are two big kids coming back, and we have other kids coming back who will be big role players in the lineup next year." Delas said those seven seniors were important to molding him as a player. "It was nice because my freshman year we went down to state, and we had a lot of those guys who were there and were on the team this year," he said. "It was nice to have people who knew what to do and how to handle pressure." Delas knows that next year he and Stockwell will be in that role – and he expects to live up to it. "Your team is everything," he said. "You have got to make sure everyone is getting along and get on the underclassmen


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Humidity:

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and make sure they are doing the right stuff." Even though Delas is playing three sports, he never really quits playing baseball. His father sees to that. "During football season, I just hit into the batting cage with my dad to help my swing out and he tells me what to do," Mark says. Delas hopes to major in criminal justice and someday become a detective, whatever college he chooses, or possibly stay in the sports world working in sports medicine or exercise science. Or, he says, maybe it would "be really cool" to be a college coach someday. Or maybe, Delas' playing career will lead to another work experience. "I'd like to be an All-American in college," Delas said. "I think that would be a great honor, and a long-term goal is, of course, to graduate college and go on to hopefully, the pros."

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