



Baseball: Montclair High School join Summer High School Development League



Montclair High School will be taking part in the High School Development League this summer. Co-coaches Anthony Genche and Ron Gavazzi will use this year's freshman team in the league.

PHOTO BY ANDREW GARDA/STAFF

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The school year is drawing to a close, but Montclair High School's baseball team is still playing.

Or at least some of them.

This summer, co-head coaches Anthony Genchi and Ron Gavazzi are coaching a team in the newly formed High School Development League. In years past, the coaching staff would put together a squad to play in the Essex County American Legion League, but as that no longer exists, many of the schools that were in it banded together to form a new league — the High School Development League or HSDL.

Many familiar opponents from the other league will be on the schedule this season, including Glen Ridge, Nutley and Bloomfield. MHS will also face Montclair Kimberley Academy, its crosstown rival, who was not in the Legion League.

Many, if not all the schools the Mounties will play against are fielding teams with rising freshmen, sophomores and juniors (no seniors are allowed), but Montclair is taking a different tack.

Genchi and Gavazzi will only have freshmen from their spring squad.

For Genchi, the idea is to get to know the players a bit in a way they couldn't when they were focused on the varsity squad.

"We work with the older guys starting in March, right through the spring," Genchi explained while the team warmed up before a game against Verona last Thursday. "We don't get that much of a chance to practice with the younger guys because we're with the varsity guys. [This] gives us the opportunity to coach these guys up."

It also allows the older players to play on travel teams or take a break altogether and recharge.

Montclair will be fielding other teams of younger players as well in the HSDL, though they will not be coached by the high school coaches. Genchi expects those teams to be very good.

"We feel like there's a lot of talent in town, from seventh grade up."

For his own team, Genchi's expectations are simple: to play hard and gain some new skills.

"Throughout the summer we're just looking for them to learn, and just develop," he said. "We're gonna have some good times [but] there's gonna be some tough times and some bad times for us. It's part of the game. We're just looking to keep developing during the summer."

The HSDL runs a 13-game schedule, and everyone makes the playoffs. The league wraps things up by the middle of July. It may not be a long season, but the teams pack a lot into that brief time.