



**Wharton County
Junior College**

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BIG LEAGUE VIEW

WCJC baseball team gets up-close look at pro ball, courtesy of State Rep. Stephenson

WHARTON, TEXAS – Wharton County Junior College baseball players got a taste of what their future might hold while attending a recent Sugar Land Skeeters baseball game.

More than 20 sophomore members of the Pioneers Baseball Team were on hand for the minor league club's game on Sept. 16 against the York Revolution at Constellation Field in Sugar Land. Although the Skeeters ended the night on the short end of a 6-2 score, the experience was still thrilling for the WCJC players.

The Pioneers were treated like baseball royalty, watching the game from an air-conditioned skybox, having a chance to go on the field and into the locker room and even getting a personal introduction from Skeeters manager Gary Gaetti.

"A lot of the guys had been to a Skeeters game before, but being able to go down under the stadium and meet the team officials was kind of special," said WCJC Baseball Coach Keith Case. "It was a great experience."

State Rep. Phil Stephenson orchestrated the night of festivities. From supplying the tickets to obtaining the VIP seating to arranging visits from baseball dignitaries, Stephenson created a singular experience for the WCJC sophomore players. One of the Pioneers starting infielders – Austin Zillweger – was even allowed to throw out the first pitch.

Stephenson said it was a pleasure to spend time with the young players. A Wharton CPA and former WCJC trustee, Stephenson has a special affinity for baseball. In addition to playing pitcher for Texas Tech back in college, Stephenson has been intricately involved with Wharton Babe Ruth for years.

"The Pioneers are fine, upstanding men who can also play some great baseball," he said. "It was great to be around such fine young men and I want to thank Coach Case and the WCJC Pioneers for letting me be a part of a great night. These should be some great memories for these guys."

Case said it was a fun night that provided his sophomore players with insight into minor league ball. He thanked Stephenson for providing a valuable opportunity.

“Phil loves baseball and I appreciate him being a part of it with us,” Case said. “It was pretty neat.”

Stephenson credited Case with effective leadership that is having a lasting impact on the young players. In addition to being competitive on the field, many of the team’s members have also been recognized over the past months for academic excellence. Zillweger, the player who got to throw out the first pitch, was an academic All-American as a freshman.

“Coach Case’s leadership is allowing WCJC to be a very competitive baseball team that represents the college well both in talent and academically,” Stephenson said.

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