

Locals Set To Shine In All-State Series

You would think after a long grueling spring of coaching baseball that Bill Walker and Mike Archer would like a break. Maybe so, but they'll gladly make an exception this weekend.

The two Valley veterans will team with Connell's Tom Walker to coach one of the four all-star teams playing in the All-State Baseball Series at Parker Field.

Walker will get a final opportunity to coach two of his standout players at Naches Valley - Zach Swart and Drew Belton. They're fresh off a 25-win state-runnerup season in Class 1A.

For Archer it's even more personal. His son, Brooks, a major part of Selah's 2A state-runnerup season, is graduating Saturday afternoon and then playing in the second game for his dad later in the day.

"It's special for both of us, and I'm sure it will be a lot of fun," said Walker, who has been involved with the series four previous times when it was held in East Wenatchee. "We'll be the second-place coaches out there trying to figure something out."

Eight local players were selected for the series, which features doubleheaders on Saturday and Sunday, and four of them will play for Walker and Archer on Team C.

In addition to Swart, Belton and Archer, La Salle catcher Lawrence Cacchiotti is also on Team C. He, too, will graduate on Saturday but he'll be able to make the 3:15 p.m. start for the second game.

Davis' Saby Martinez (Team A) will play against East Valley's Chase Livingston (Team B) in Saturday's first game at noon. La Salle's Michael Pleger has also been picked for Team B, but because of La Salle's 11 a.m. graduation on Saturday he will be unable to play until Sunday.

Rounding out the local participants is Eisenhower's Justin Kraft, who will play for Team D.

Saturday's losers will play at 10:25 a.m. Sunday followed by the championship game at 1:35 p.m.

While Walker and Archer will oversee a majority of the local talent in the series, the 19-player roster for Team C is filled with Division I talent.

A pair of University of Washington recruits will be on display with Tahoma's Kirk Wetmore and Auburn's Troy Scott, and Team C will also feature Redmond's Chris Sturdavent (Gonzaga), Tahoma's Riley Tubbs (Washington State) and Mead's Connor Moore (Hawaii). Earlier this week, Tubbs was named The Seattle Times' athlete of the year for all sports.

"I've seen the Wetmore kid and the shortstop from Auburn is supposed to be something else," Archer said. "It's an impressive roster up and down."

Walker's first experience with the series came in 1990 while he was coaching at Cle Elum. He assisted his father and Hall of Fame coach, Bill Walker Sr., who is coaching this weekend with Blaine's Gary Clausen on Team B. "The first couple times I really worried about keeping everybody happy and that's a little bit of a challenge," Walker said. "Sometimes a college coach will ask to see a prospect play at a different position. Trying to appease everybody takes work, but you do your best."

Each game lasts eight innings and coaches attempt to get each player four innings per contest.

With his quick transition from Selah's high school season to his duties directing the Yakima Valley Pepsi Pak summer club, Archer hasn't had time in the past to be involved in the series.

"It's my last time to see my son in a Vikings uniform, so it's a special deal," Archer said. "It should be fun. I'll lean on Bill a lot because he's done it before. I'll just say stuff like swing harder and run faster."

Shouldn't be a problem for these all-stars.