

[MV Sharks reach new heights on MLB Draft Day](#)

Nine players from the past three summers were chosen

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By Sam Canfield

Years of hard work and a stint on the Island paid off for nine Martha's Vineyard Sharks this month, having their big league dreams come true during the 2024 MLB Draft.

In total, five pitchers, two catchers and two corner infielders made the next step, including five members of the Sharks' 2022 New England Collegiate Baseball League championship team, plus two players each from 2021 and 2023.

Coming off the board first was left-handed pitcher Rafe Schlesinger (Round 4 of 20, Cleveland Guardians), followed by right-handed pitcher Peyton Olejnik (Round 6, Los Angeles Angels), left-handed pitcher Camron Hill (Round 8, Philadelphia Phillies), first baseman Ryan Nicholson (Round 10, Los Angeles Dodgers), catcher Derek Berg (Round 10, Pittsburgh Pirates), third baseman Michael Snyder (Round 10, Miami Marlins) and right-handed pitcher Jimmy Romano (Round 16, Cincinnati Reds).

Meanwhile, right-handed pitcher Channing Austin and catcher Jorge Corona signed minor league deals with the New York Mets and Chicago White Sox, respectively, as undrafted free agents.

"It's a dream come true," said Schlesinger, who won the 2022 NECBL championship with the Sharks and attends the University of Miami. "I'm super stoked for all those guys."

For Schlesinger and company, the last several months have featured dozens of phone calls and meetings with various teams, a trip to the draft combine in Arizona, and a fair amount of suspense.

The nerves finally die down after contract negotiations wrap up in the hours or even days following the draft. Then, the players get shipped off to their team's rookie-level or low-A affiliate ball clubs to get to work.

"It's a long process. There's so much to balance — things change all the time," Schlesinger said. "It's stressful because you get attached to the teams and scouts that like you, [but] the Guardians talked to me first and the most. We both expressed interest in each other; they develop pitching the best."

Schlesinger expressed his gratitude for the confidence former Sharks coach Jay Mendez instilled within him.

“Coach Mendez gave me an opportunity to be myself — I didn’t feel like the world was ending if I pitched badly,” Schlesinger said. “The NECBL was where I found myself. I went back to college that fall a different animal.”