

**educational curriculum materials:
bringing baseball to the classroom**



**grand slam school day 2008
middle school version**

This curriculum adheres to the Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCE) and is supported by the State of Michigan Board of Education.

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* These tasks must be completed at the ballpark.

Baseball Statistics

How to compute baseball statistics...

Batting Average: Divide the number of hits by the number of at bats

Earned Run Average(ERA): Multiply the number of earned runs by nine and then divide that number by the number of innings pitched

Slugging Percentage: Divide the total bases (total bases, HR=4, 3B=3, 2B=2, 1B=1) of all safe hits by the total times at bat (at bats do not include walks, sacrifices, hit-by-pitch, or times awarded first base because of interference or obstruction).

Fielding Average: Divide the total putouts and assists by the total number of putouts, assists and errors

On Base Percentage: Divide the total number of hits, bases on balls and hit-by-pitch by the total of at bats, bases on balls, hit-by-pitch and sacrifice flies.

Won/Loss Percentage: Divide the number of games won by the number of games played.

The Magic Number: Determine the number of games yet to be played, add one and subtract the number of games ahead in the loss column of the standings from the closest opponent.

Using the above information, compute the statistics for the scenarios on the following page.

Baseball Statistics and Story Problems

1. Lansing's Jason Armstrong was a 2005 Midwest League All-Star selection. He played a wide variety of positions. In all, he collected 131 putouts and 247 assists while committing 26 errors. What was Jason's fielding percentage for the 2005 season?
2. Luke Hetherington was a mainstay of the Lansing lineup in 2006. At one point, he reached base in 24 straight games. In all, the OF played in 91 games and collected a total of 293 at-bats. In those at-bats, he collected 87 hits, including 62 singles, 18 doubles, 2 triples and 5 home runs. What was Luke's slugging percentage for the 2006 campaign?
3. The 2006 Lugnuts featured the top slugging team in the league by blasting 98 home runs. In all, the team collected a total of 1,159 hits. Around all those hits, they managed to strike out 1,156 times. The strikeouts accounted for 25 percent of the total at-bats on the season, a total of 4,604. Knowing that, what was the Lugnuts team batting average for the 2006 season?
4. In the 2006 campaign, Kristian Bell struck out 86 batters. The right-hander, who hailed from Alabama, worked in a total of 23 games. In those games, Bell worked a total of 128 innings while allowing a total of 59 total runs to score. However, his teammates weren't always on the top of their game, so only 53 of the 59 runs ended up being considered earned runs. What was Kristian's earned run average during the 2006 season?
5. The pennant race in the Midwest League's Western Division was down to the wire in 2005. Clinton, Wisconsin, Beloit and the Swing of the Quad Cities all had a shot to capture the crown. With just two weeks left in the season, only 14 games remained on the schedule and Clinton had a two game lead over Beloit. The teams matched up six times over the final 14 games of the season. What is Clinton's magic number to clinch the Western Division?

Reading Comprehension: Brian Dopirak

DIAMOND DESTINATION

Lugnuts' first baseman finding the success that he's been trying for all his life

By Mark Feather, Lansing State Journal

Lansing Lugnuts first baseman Brian Dopirak can't think of professional baseball as a dream.

"Since I was a little kid, my goal was to be a major-league baseball player," Dopirak said. "A lot of people think of those things as dreams. Dreams are fantasies, they're out there. But I always set it as a goal. "Goals can be reached. They're something you can work for. Dreams are dreams."

Dopirak, 20, a second-round draft pick in 2002, is inching close to that goal in his second full year as a professional.

"He's turning out to be the player they thought he'd be," Baseball America Executive Editor Jim Callis said of Dopirak. "He's a power hitter and power is going to be his thing. "The Cubs have Derrek Lee there now and I don't see them rushing Brian through the minors.... He might be ready by mid-2007. I don't see him being ready before then."

It's true that the Cubs are in no hurry to push Dopirak through the minor-league system.

"I don't think we're ever in a hurry," said Oneri Fleita, the Cubs' director of player development. "Brian is inexperienced and I want him to experience success first and foremost."

Dopirak already has had some success in his short lived career.

Last year, he was selected as a Northwest League All Star in 52 games with Boise, prior to being promoted to finish the season with Lansing, where he was a pivotal player in the Lugnuts championship run.

He's back in Lansing for 2004 and started a Midwest League all-star campaign by hitting a league-high eight home runs. He's batting .265 with 19 RBI through 30 games.

"I don't know how much more we can ask of him," Fleita said. "He's off to a good start, playing every day and hitting the ball well."

Dopirak wasn't at all disappointed in returning to low single-A Lansing because he knew he would get his at-bats and felt comfortable with the Lugnuts coaching staff.

"These guys have their jobs for a reason," Dopirak said.

Dopirak attributes that relaxed, no-worries attitude to his parents, Allan and Penny.

"He's already accomplished everything we've wanted of him and that was to graduate high school and be the person that he is," said Allan Dopirak, who runs a charter fishing service along the west coast of Florida.

"He's happy and I told him when he's not happy playing baseball anymore, he'd better come home and go fishing. Baseball is supposed to be fun."

Dopirak's love for family, the ocean and baseball are represented by four colorful tattoos on his 6-foot-4, 235-pound upper-torso.

The top half of his right arm is decorated with a lion wearing a cross and thorns to represent courage and religion. The inside forearm bares a hammerhead shark and his shoulder blade a baseball player.

His parents' names are inscribed on a cross marking his left bicep and intertwined with a black dragon and ring of fire that cover his entire upper arm.

Dopirak's father was a major influence in the sport, signing him up at 9 years old and watching his son progress into a talented player. Dopirak eventually played summer AAU and in other leagues against older players in an effort to get better.

Reading Comprehension: Brian Dopirak

"I was into traveling around with my mom and dad driving me all over the country. I loved it," Dopirak said. "My parents never put pressure on me and all I wanted was a shot, an opportunity to play baseball professionally."

Dopirak eventually got his chance-and his childhood friend to join him.

At 12, Dopirak started playing Little League with Ryan Harvey, the Cubs' 2003 first-round draft pick selected sixth overall.

The duo grew up and attended Dunedin (Fla.) High School, the same alma mater as Jim Hendry, the Cubs' vice president and general manager.

"I was a '73 grad, obviously not the player or prospect they are, but I'm proud of our Dunedin High School tradition," Hendry said.

"Brian and Ryan are obviously two very different types of players....Dopirak is more of your prototype right-hand hitting first baseman with a lot of power where Harvey is got to have a chance to have a little more versatility, running and playing the outfield. Harvey's also got some power potential, but it's hard to have much more power than Dopirak."

Harvey is playing for the Cubs' rookie league team in Mesa, Ariz.

Dopirak and Harvey never won a state title but, "We were a pretty solid lineup, I'll tell you that," Dopirak said.

The baseball buddies went undefeated with the Falcons until the semifinal game in Dopirak's senior year before falling out of the state tournament.

The Cubs pair of power-hitting prospects are now focused on a bigger championship, a World Series perhaps. It's a distant goal, but Dopirak has the essential tools to get there.

Dopirak has major-league power as a heavy-swinging first baseman with limited, but improving, range defensively. He's shown the capability to clobber 400-foot homers with the consciousness to slap singles to all areas of the field when needed.

"Brian tries to stay within himself," hitting coach Mike Miccucci said. "A lot of time you get young kids that have power and they try and hit it out every time. Brian's pretty smart. He holds out and knows when to cut his swing down."

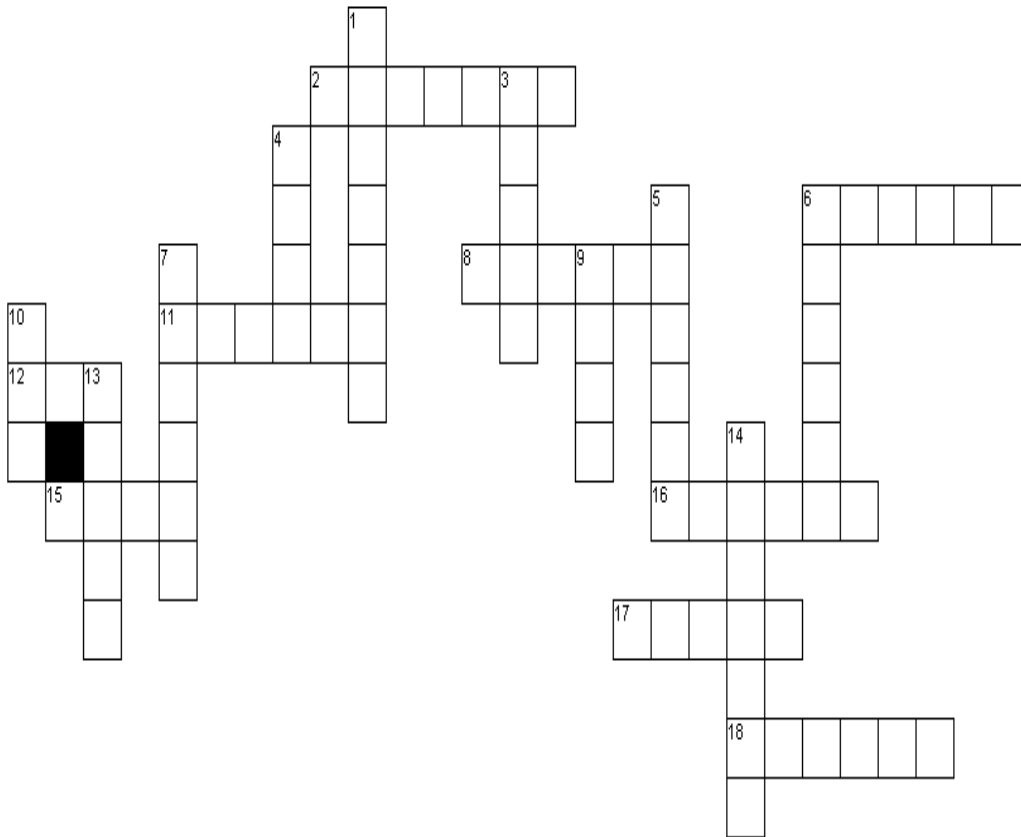
His off-the-field practices also merit big-league review.

"He's a happy-go-lucky guy," Lugnuts manager Julio Garcia said. "He's got the type of attitude that's always picking up people...I would say that he's one of the leaders on this team."

After reading the following article, please answer the following questions:

1. In what league was Brian selected for the All-Star team? Why doesn't he think of making the big leagues as a dream?
2. To whom does Brian give most of the credit to for his attitude?
3. What influences in your life have helped shape your attitude?

Lansing Lugnuts Baseball Crossword



Across

2. The player that sits behind home plate
6. A hit in which the batter reaches first base
8. A hit in which the batter reaches second base
11. A first year player
12. The Lugnuts' purple mascot _____ Lug
15. A pitch thrown outside the strike zone
16. A pitcher that comes in after a starting pitcher
17. An attempt to advance to the next base without the ball being hit
18. An official who adminsters the rules

Down

1. The leader of the baseball team
3. A misplay by a fielder
4. Getting to first base as a result of the pitcher throwing four balls
5. One who sells items at a baseball game
6. A pitch that is delivered directly over the plate
7. A hit by which the batter reaches third base
9. To bat a ball so lightly it does not go out of the infield
10. Run batted in
13. _____ slam
14. The No. 4 hitter in a lineup

Weather Forecasting

If you have lived in the state of Michigan for awhile, you understand that the weather can change really quickly. Many of the Lugnuts come from different states across the United States and are all used to different types of weather. Since a great majority of the players have never been to the Midwest before they are unsure what the weather will be like in the upcoming month when friends and family members come to visit.

Once again the Lugnuts players need your help. They want to be able to tell their guests what type of weather to expect when they come to Lansing the week of May 3-13, 2008. Starting with observations taken from today's game, collect weather data over the next ten days and prepare a "preview" of what the players' guests should expect. You may use the local newspaper, the internet(www.weather.com and www.nwsnorman.noaa.gov/severewx/safety.html) and visual observations to complete this task.

Using the above resources, chart the weather patterns for the time period of May 3rd (depending on when your school attends Grand Slam School Day) through May 13th. Take visual observations of the weather three times each day and using the newspaper and internet, determine the day's high and low temperatures. Record this information into a chart and track the changes in temperature. Create a chart that illustrates each day's weather trends such as: high temperature, low temperature, wind direction, and description of the day in words at three different times during the day.

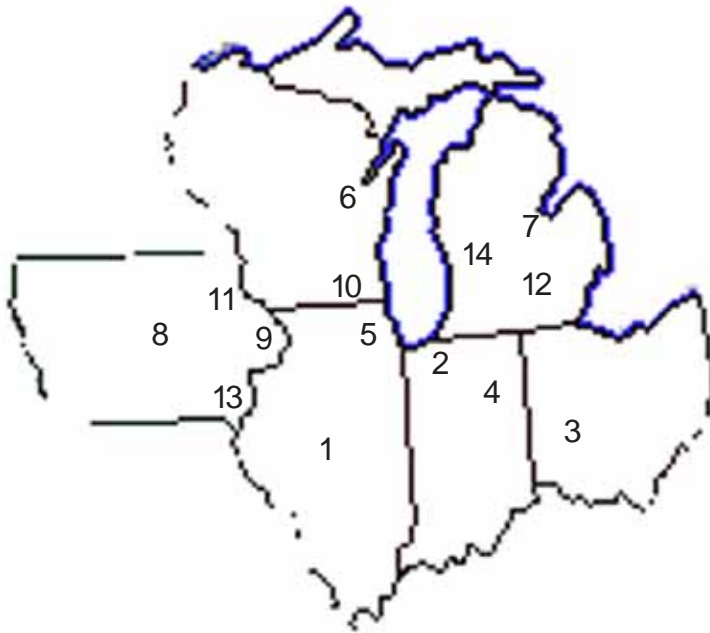
Meteorologists will often try and "predict" what the weather will be like. Using the internet website listed above, check their work and describe any differences you see in your forecast from what was predicted will happen.

Using the severe weather website, gather information regarding safety measures related to any severe weather that the players guests may have to account for during their stay. Since you have lived in Michigan before, think about the kinds of severe weather you have had to deal with during this part of the year.

Finally, using the week long weather chart determine what the average day should be like and describe what they can expect to be able to do during their stay besides watching their friends play baseball.

Geography: The Midwest League

The Lugnuts are one of 14 teams in the Midwest League. The League is comprised of teams from the states of Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan. Below is a map of these six states. Test your geography skills and match the number with the team below.



- _____ Beloit Snappers
- _____ Fort Wayne Wizards
- _____ Burlington Bees
- _____ Kane County Cougars
- _____ West Michigan Whitecaps
- _____ Cedar Rapids Kernels
- _____ Great Lakes Loons
- _____ Swing of the Quad Cities
- _____ Wisconsin Timber Rattlers
- _____ Lansing Lugnuts
- _____ Peoria Chiefs
- _____ Dayton Dragons
- _____ South Bend Silverhawks
- _____ Clinton LumberKings

Thought that was easy? Try these out!

1. Identify the capitals of each state and circle the teams in capital cities.
2. Use the Internet to identify the population of each metropolitan city that has a team.
3. Calculate the distance between Lansing and each of the cities in the Midwest League.
4. What is the furthest distance to travel in the league for teams to play each other?

Use an atlas or the Internet, i.e. Mapquest, to aid in your research

What's In A Name? Sports Team Nicknames

If you look at most sports team nicknames, you will be able to identify some trends. Most team nicknames tend to be based off three different categories: geography, culture and economics.

When the Lugnugs first came to town, they didn't have a name yet. They decided to let the people of Lansing choose by having a contest. Many people entered their ideas, but the winning nickname turned out to be Lugnugs. Do you think the nickname Lugnugs was good for a team in Lansing?

Of the above three categories mentioned, which do you think the nickname Lugnugs would fall under?

In the following exercise, select two sports teams for each category

Examples:

Geography - Colorado Rockies

Economics - Detroit Pistons

Culture - Baltimore Ravens

Geography: _____

Economics: _____

Culture: _____

The Grand Slam School Day Scoop

Have questions about Grand Slam School Day? All the answers you need and lots of other great information is just a click away! Check out www.lansinglugnuts.com for all the latest info on GSSD. Click on the link called Grand Slam School Day information, located on our home page, and then the rest is up to you! Here are some elements you'll find to assist you:

For the teachers...

- **Necessary event information:** including times, dates, ticket prices, lunch info.
- **Contacts:** who to call about your trip to Oldsmobile Park.
- **E-mail:** a chance to e-mail questions such as "Where does the bus park?"
- **Photos:** look at the fun from other Grand Slam School Days.

For the students...

- **Who will be there:** check out which other schools will be attending GSSD the day your school is there.
- **What to bring:** helpful reminders about what not to forget
- **Other activities:** besides a baseball game, there will be other events going on you may want to tune into.
- **Jr. Press:** after the game students will write articles about what they saw and learned from talking with players. If you are not a part of Jr. Press, but would still like to submit a story, this is the place for you.
- **Photos:** look at the fun from other Grand Slam School Days.