

ALL-STATE SERIES

EV's Juarez Ready to Cap Stellar Prep Baseball Career with All-State Series

Red Devils' ace one of four locals to play in the weekend showcase



YAKIMA, Wash. — Lucas Juarez was aiming for one school record and settled for another. Truth is, he got the most impressive one.

With two ace starts to end his season, the East Valley senior broke the Red Devils' record for career earned-run average, finishing at 1.65 over four years. That was just enough to slip under the 1.68 set by Riley Benedetti two years ago.

Shortly after he set the previous record, Benedetti played on the winning team in the All-State Baseball Series and Juarez will have the chance to do the same when he takes the field with 76 of the state's best seniors this weekend at Parker Faller Field.

Wedged in between his games he will graduate with his classmates Saturday night in the SunDome.

“It’ll be kind of a crazy weekend but it’s the best of both worlds for me — baseball and graduation,” he said. “It’s a little surreal to be finishing high school but exciting at the same time. It seems like four years went by pretty fast.”

As a three-sport athlete, Juarez got a lot of mileage out of those four years.

Even with three years invested as East Valley's quarterback in the fall, when he threw for 4,257 yards and 38 touchdowns, Juarez was always first and foremost a baseball player. He was a four-year starter as a pitcher and infielder and one of the CWAC's most versatile standouts.

Heading into his final season this spring, one of his personal goals was Benedetti's single-season ERA record of 0.85.

"That's a tough one but I wanted to go after it. I knew it would help motivate me," Juarez said. "But in my second outing I stumbled. We played a game in Portland (against Olympic), it was cold and I couldn't really get a feel for the ball. I gave up three runs and that messed me up."

So he settled for a blown-up ERA of 1.07 this season, the end of which came with 17 strikeouts and one earned run over 131/3 innings — a run that included a win over state champion Ellensburg.

While the early season hiccup cost Juarez the single-season ERA record, knocking off the career mark is more notable because it came in a league that has produced three state champions during Juarez's four years.

"I feel like there were definitely times when I could've done better, but it was fun playing in this league," he said. "The competition in those big games was great and that's what you always look forward to."

Not only will Juarez be playing this weekend on his future home field as a Yakima Valley College signee, but he'll play alongside a future teammate in Hunter Anderson of Burlington-Edison. Juarez and Anderson will play for Team Baker, which faces Team Adams in Saturday's Series opener at noon.

Like Juarez, Anderson was a quarterback in football and set B-E schools records for yards, touchdowns and completions. Anderson is a catcher so the two YVC recruits may even form a battery at some point this weekend.

Selah's Dac Archer and Kittitas' Jerome Lael will be on the Team Adams roster, and Zillah's Parker Sandlin will play for Team St. Helens in the second game at 3:30 p.m.

On Sunday the third-place game starts at 10:30 a.m. followed by the championship game at 1:45 p.m.