



## BOULDERS HOLD OPEN TRYOUTS

BY: Keith S. Shikowitz, Editor in Chief/Investigative Reporter



We're a month into the 2026 Frontier League season and the NY Boulders have lost catcher Jack Scanlon to the NY Mets. On June 20, 2026, the Boulders held open tryouts and about 70 potential players came out to see if they could make it onto a professional baseball team. Kevin Tuve, Head Scout for the team was conducting the tryouts. Each of the players was assigned a number that they had to call out when they started their drill so they could be tracked as to their performance. They came from all over the country to try to get their piece of every boy's dream, to play professional baseball.



He had them doing infield and outfield drills Three shots to outfield, throwing to third base and then three to second base. The infield drills consisted of five chances at third and when all went there, next was from shortstop, getting ground balls and throwing to first.

I had the opportunity to interview some of the pitchers and catchers. Kyle Cipolla from Westwood, New Jersey, trying out to be a pitcher has been playing ball his whole life from little league the whole way through. He always wanted to be a pitcher.

Why pitching? "I loved it, the chess match between pitchers and batters. You're there by yourself it's you and the catcher and the hitter. That's it. You're involved in every play in the game too, yeah, you set the pace. I'd say my, my changeup for sure is my best pitch. I'm throwing it all my life, just getting better and better." Cipolla stated.

He decided to try out for the Boulders because he just wanted to keep playing ball. "I love baseball, love playing it, so this can give me more opportunities to play then. Why not?"

He has been coaching baseball in Park Ridge at the high school level with teams ranging from 10 to 17 years old. He thinks he's got a pretty good chance of making the team. "We've been sitting around here for a little bit, so just kind of, gotta get stretching soon. The toughest part of trying out is the waiting."

<https://youtu.be/KG3g9tbvZNc>

One of the pitchers Thomas Browne, from Pleasantville, an exercise science major, is a recent graduate from SUNY Brockport, where I just happened to have graduated from back in 1985. He's been playing ball since he was young. He played Little League, high school and at Westchester Community College and transferred to Brockport, which he chose after visiting thee and said it was a great visit.

"The facilities are really nice. I'm a pitcher, so they have a really good pitching program and a really good campus."

What's the toughest part about trying out for Browne? "Just the uncertainty, like I wasn't really sure what I was getting myself into today. I wasn't sure what the schedule would be like, but I just came in open-minded, doing whatever. I'm going to throw live and hopefully it goes well. We're trying to throw hard and hopefully; I can get an opportunity. My best pitch is my breaking ball. It's like a slurve. So, it's like a slider and the curve. It's pretty vertical, but it, it's not like a true curveball. You get a bottom to drop out of it, or it's pretty like north, south.

<https://youtu.be/taTUNqK7cTs>

How do you deal with adversity? You realize you're having a not so good day how do you deal with that when you're still on the mound?

"I'd say you just don't think about what's happened in the past. You just think about the next pitch. You've just got to be ready, like anything can happen. You should be ready to get the next job done."

Zach Zajac, another pitching hopeful has also been playing all his life. "I started at, Wheaton College before I came to RPI, and I'm just trying to live the dream. That's

all it is. He didn't start out pitching.

"I was actually a catcher throughout high school. I didn't start pitching until I got to college.

Why the change?

I always threw really hard and I've always had, natural two-seam movement on my fastball, so. Kind of like a lefty how they always have that tail. I have it from the right side.

What is your best pitch?

"Yeah, I'm a sinker baller for sure. I will throw my sinker 100% of the time I love to straight overhand, sidearm, 3 quarter, low 3 quarter. I pitched when I was younger, so that's how I, yeah, I've been up here when I started, got dropped down to sidearm at me, and then I brought myself back up once I transferred.

What do you feel is the easiest motion to go through? "Whatever's natural, I'm being honest, for me, I've thrown both naturally and unnaturally in my time in college, and the low three-quarter slot feels the most natural, and it, it's been the most effective for me.

He's hoping to get exposure out of the tryouts today. "Whether I make the team or not, it'd be a blessing if I do make the team, but I just want to get my name out there and just see what it takes to compete at the professional level." He's a business major. "I still have another year of school because of the transfer, and I would have graduated this year, but some credits didn't transfer over, so I still have one more year to finish it out. Been doing baseball a lot.

[https://youtu.be/2\\_0WVxEHtfo](https://youtu.be/2_0WVxEHtfo)

After the pitchers, I went and got to speak to some of the catchers. Ethan Crawford, from San Francisco was one of the catchers trying out for the NY Boulders at the open, tryouts.

What, what made you decide to fly over here for this? "The opportunity. I'm hungry to play baseball this season, and if the New York Boulders can give me that shot, that's why I showed up today.

Was there anything in out in California of this level? There is, but it would be really, really cool to play for the New York Boulders. I have some, some family friends nearby, that kind of thing. So, the opportunity to play here would be golden, especially so close to the city. I think it's a great place to live, I'm excited for it.

Why catching? "Best position in baseball. Think about it, it's the only position where you can see the entire field, right? You're the leader, you're the captain. You've got to have a certain aptitude, mental aptitude to do it. Certain baseball IQ. I feel like there's no other position that takes that kind of grip. It's kind of a one in a million. That's why I love it. No one can really do it.

He's been playing since he was 4 years old in T - ball how every kid starts his dream, and then he went to school out in Iowa and played D3 ball out in Grinnell College, Division 3, alright, classified as the lowest tier of baseball. That's why being here and having the chance to play professionally is kind of a dream come true. Started thinking about where he came from. Yeah, but, no, he just can't give baseball up. He grew up out in California. Born in San Diego and then moved to. San Francisco, when he was about 12 years old in 2015. He went to Candlestick Park a lot.

"It's sad to say if anyone's from San Francisco listening or reading this, I'm a Dodger fan being from San Francisco and born in San Diego, so it makes no sense, right? The Padres sucked back in the day. Giants, yeah, they were going on their tear, right, so I had to root for the enemies. That was the Dodgers. I'm trying to go to Dodger Stadium soon, that's for sure.

[https://youtu.be/WkYR\\_wMt9ho](https://youtu.be/WkYR_wMt9ho)

What does he find is the most difficult thing about catching itself? "Many people would turn and answer that as it's the physicalness of the position. People would say it's physically demanding and that's what makes it tough, but what I think is the most difficult is the mental side. Are you thinking about every single play before it happens? Are you thinking about how the defense is lined up? Are they shifted pull side because that batter has pull tendency? You've got to command the defense to make sure the shortstop's playing in the five hole. You've got to run around first. You gotta make sure your pitcher's slide stepping. There's all these things and don't get me started on sequencing."

He says is that batter, is he a pull guy? Does he want that fastball middle in? We're going to go slider away to start. It's all these things that if you're trying to make it up in the moment, you're already screwed. You've got to think about it. The pitch, the pitch before, two pitches before, etc.

You've got this batter you've never seen before. How do you figure the pitching for him if you've never seen him before? "I had a great coach last season with the Boise Hawks in the Pioneer League. His name was Cash.

He always taught our catchers to do that. How does he stand in the box? What's his physical presence? Does he timidly walk up to the plate, or does he like chest up with confidence come up there? Is he the 9 hitter? Is he the 3 hitter, right? These are the things you've got to consider."

According to Crawford, It even gets so detailed that he looks to see, if the batter has an elbow guard or a shin guard. What that tells him is that an elbow guard means he wants to get his hands inside the baseball, go opposite field. With the shin guard on, that means he's prone to rolling over, so he's a pull hitter. "So, a shin guard guy, I'm going to pitch away more so an elbow guard guy, I'm going to pitch outside if that makes sense. Try to avoid the meat of the bat."

My last interview was with Caleb Miller from Rome, New York. What brought him down here?

"I just want to keep playing baseball. My college season ended. I graduated in the spring a week ago. Just wanted to keep playing some ball.

What do you find the most difficult about catching?

"I think it's just the involvement in every play is probably the toughest part of catching, just like not getting any plays off. It's like being an offensive lineman in football, like you could be great for every play, but one pitch you take it off and you don't do well. Like that could be the game right there. So just like the continuous, attention to detail, I think is a tough.

What pitch do you have the most trouble dealing with when it comes in? "That's a tough one to say. I worked out with Tommy Kaneley this winter and his changeup was disgusting. It was a different pitch than I'd seen before, but it's probably why I had so much success in the big leagues with it. It wasn't very difficult to catch; it was difficult to adjust to it and just back to like college pitchers. I'd say other than that, like a good splitter is gonna be tough.

He's been catching his whole life. "I think I started catching when I was like 4 or 5 years old and I've been catching ever since. I felt safe."

I tried catching once. When the bat came back and knocked me upside the back of the head off of the helmet, I said, OK, done with that. And I stayed on the other side of the battery.

What, what do you want to get out of this? "I didn't really come up with any expectations today. I just wanted to put a good foot forward and hopefully keep playing baseball in some capacity. To me every kid, I want to be a professional baseball player.

You're here, you're trying for that position. What's going through your head?

"Nothing much. I never really told myself I couldn't do it. I wasn't as focused on this step essentially but just getting to the next step. When I was in high school, I was focused on doing what I could to be a great college player, and then all through college I just wanted to be better every year. So now this is just the next step for me."

<https://youtu.be/Ejqs6pynJ98>

One of the infielders Ryan Rivera did make the cut and joined the team for that day's double header where he got two hits in the first game. "TJ Stanton had been following Rivera for some time, and it was a no brainer." Said, Tuve. He added that there will be another open tryout on July 18. Some of the pitchers who were not able to face batters at this tryout will be invited back to try again.