

# hit **HARD** run **FAST** & turn **LEFT**

## Freshmen baseball players explain what keeps them motivated

"What keeps me motivated to keep playing is to obtain what we stand for which is to win. My mom motivates me the most because she tells me to do my best." **Zach Little, 9**

"My love for the game motivates me to keep going. My dad pushes me the most because he always keeps me working and helps me out." **Peyton Peoples, 9**

"The teammates, the coaches, and the history we have motivates me to keep playing. The pitchers and the coaches try to push us really hard and definitely motivate me the most." **Caleb Gibson, 9**

"I've played all my life, and it's just what I love to do. My dad motivates me the most because he helped me learn how to play and he's always at my games supporting me." **Blake Bullock, 9**

"My love for the game motivates me. My biggest motivator is myself because I'm self motivated." **Russell Shelton, 9**

"I want to play in college so that really motivates me. The coaches motivate me the most because they care enough to try to help me get better." **Nick Esplin, 9**

"My parents motivate me to keep playing because they taught me how to play baseball. Also, my sister helped me because when my parents weren't there she would help me practice." **Blake Moore, 9**

"Oak Grove is made for winning, so I want to win. I motivate myself because baseball is what I've been doing since I was young, and it is something that I enjoy." **Alfred Acosta, 9**

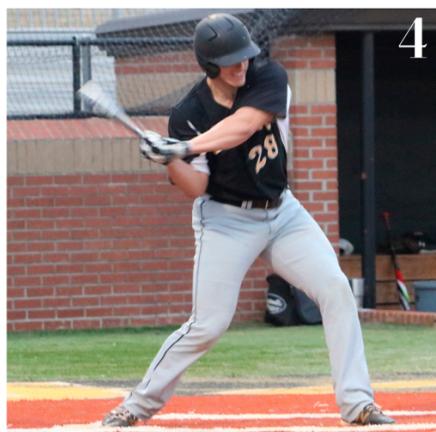


### 1. DIGGIN' THE DUGOUT

While taking a break in the dugout, Noah Harris, 12, and Alex Bolling, 11, joke about the scoreboard. "My favorite chant we do in the dugout is 'ECHOOO'," Bolling said. "Everyone is always rowdy in the dugout, and Hayes' speeches really hype the team up." *McKenzie Woodard photo*

### 3. CATCH YA LATER

Throwing a ball to first base, Turner Swistak, 10, gets the third out, which led to the win. "Third base is a position I have grown up playing my whole life," Swistak said. "I have always been comfortable playing there, so it came naturally playing there." *McKenzie Woodard photo*

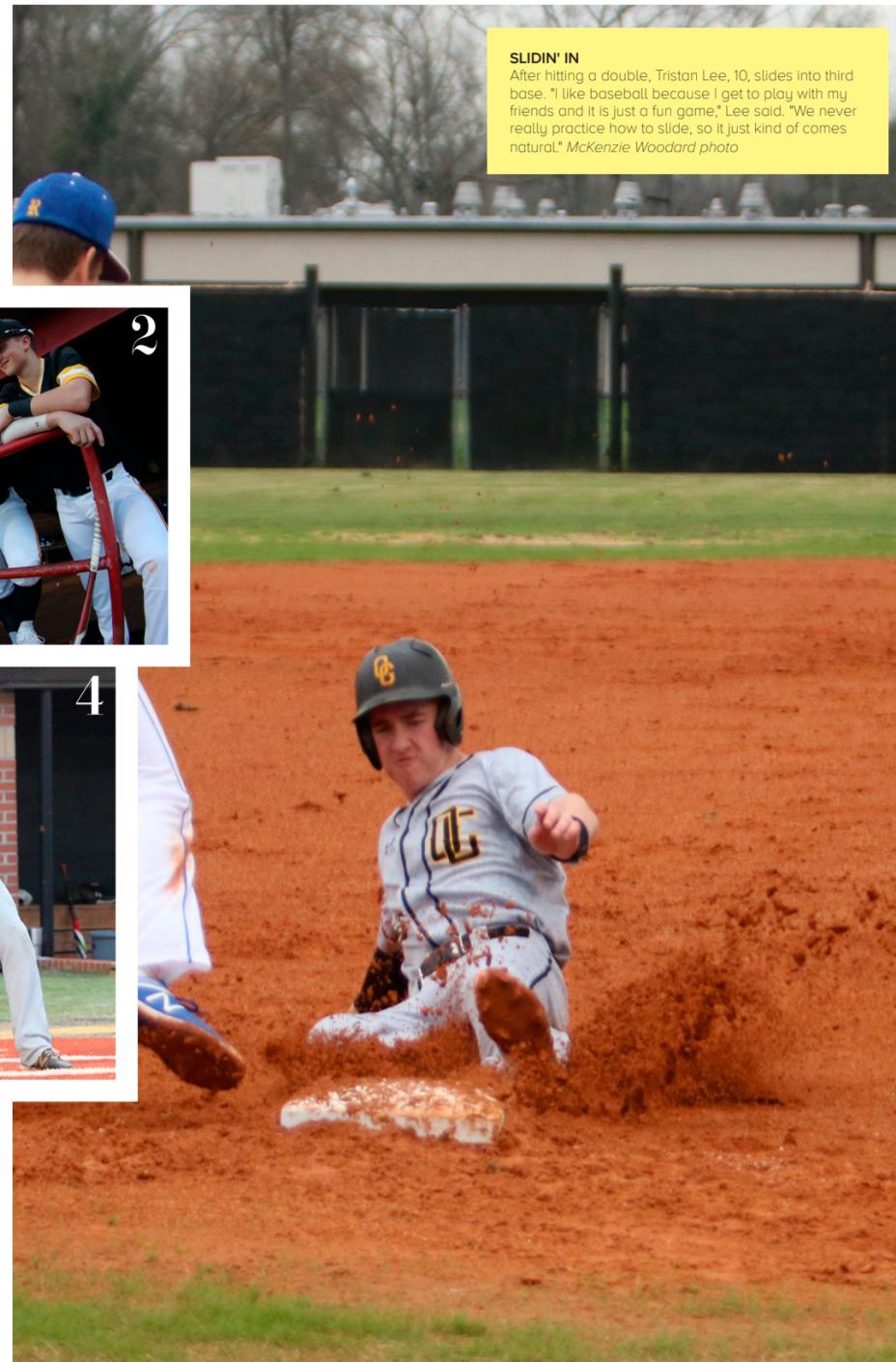


### 2. OUT OF YOUR LEAGUE

With a player up to bat, the team yells out to the pitcher "RIP" to distract him. "Everyone's always hyped up, yelling, and getting everyone up when they are down," Connor Odom, 10, said. "My favorite chant we do is 'echos'. Kade counts it off and we all yell 'RIP'. It echos off the wall." *AC Bynum photo*

### 4. SWING BATTER

While at a scrimmage, Hayes Maples, 12, hits a double to help his team win. "When I'm up to bat, I think about trying to get a hit to help the team out," Maples said. "Before batting I try to do a couple practice swings. I try not to do too much and get superstitious." *AC Bynum photo*



### SLIDIN' IN

After hitting a double, Tristan Lee, 10, slides into third base. "I like baseball because I get to play with my friends and it is just a fun game," Lee said. "We never really practice how to slide, so it just kind of comes natural." *McKenzie Woodard photo*

## DINERS DUGOUTS LIVES

What are the most loved snacks in the dugout?



**AUSTIN CARRIERE, 11**

"I like to eat dill pickle sunflower seeds and a blue Powerade."



**HARDIN KAY, 11**

"I like to eat snickers and Hubba Bubba gum. I usually drink a blue Powerade too."



**TANNER WOOLBRIGHT, 11**

"My favorite thing to eat in the dugout is Skittles, and I usually just drink water."



### EYE ON THE PRIZE

Hitting a double, Hayden Sikes, 12, bats against Jackson. "Before I bat, I'm thinking about hitting the ball," Sikes said. "Everytime I bat, I pull up the sleeves of my jersey." *McKenzie Woodard photo*

## PITCH perfect

Baseball players share their favorite pitching techniques



"My favorite part of pitching is striking out people. My fastest pitch is a fastball at 81 mph, and my goal is to get is to 105 mph. My favorite position is outfield, though because you get to hit and catch."

**RHETT BLACKBURN, 11**



"My fastest pitch is 84 or 85 mph, and my goal is to hit 90 mph this year. My favorite ball to throw is a slider, and that's where the ball curves starts on one side and slides to the right."

**DJ BOOTH, 10**



"My different pitches are fastball, change up, and curve ball. My fastest pitch is 86 mph, and my goal is 90 mph."

**CADE CUEVAS, 11**



"Pitching is my favorite position to play because you are in control of the game. My fastest pitch is 90 mph, and my goal is to be 96 mph by my senior year."

**LUKE LYON, 10**



"I like throwing curveballs the best because it looks a lot cooler. Being a pitcher, you can create plays for the defense. The fastest pitch I've ever done is 84 mph, and my goal is somewhere in the 90's."

**NIC SCUCCHI, 11**