

GTL: Winning in the Grade A Market



submitted by Charles Garcia - GTL Cartel/ Worth

How do you follow up an A world championship? Easy! By putting together what has now become the most competitive A team since Mountain Top. There is no secret to the recipe that GTL Cartel/ Worth uses to build its team year in and year out. We start by recruiting great people that happen to be good players. Our theory is, would we ever leave our kids with one of these people if needed? The answer is yes. The Cartel family is how we refer to ourselves because we are just that... an extended family. We've got each others' backs at all times- on and off the field. The founding Sponsors in 2007 were Charles Garcia and Don Wilson and our coach was and still is Jose Sanchez. Original players from that year that are still with us are Chad Munger, Don Wilson and Bubba Mack. Needless to say that was a very big learning experience for us and after a dismal 0-2 showing at A worlds we went back to the drawing board.

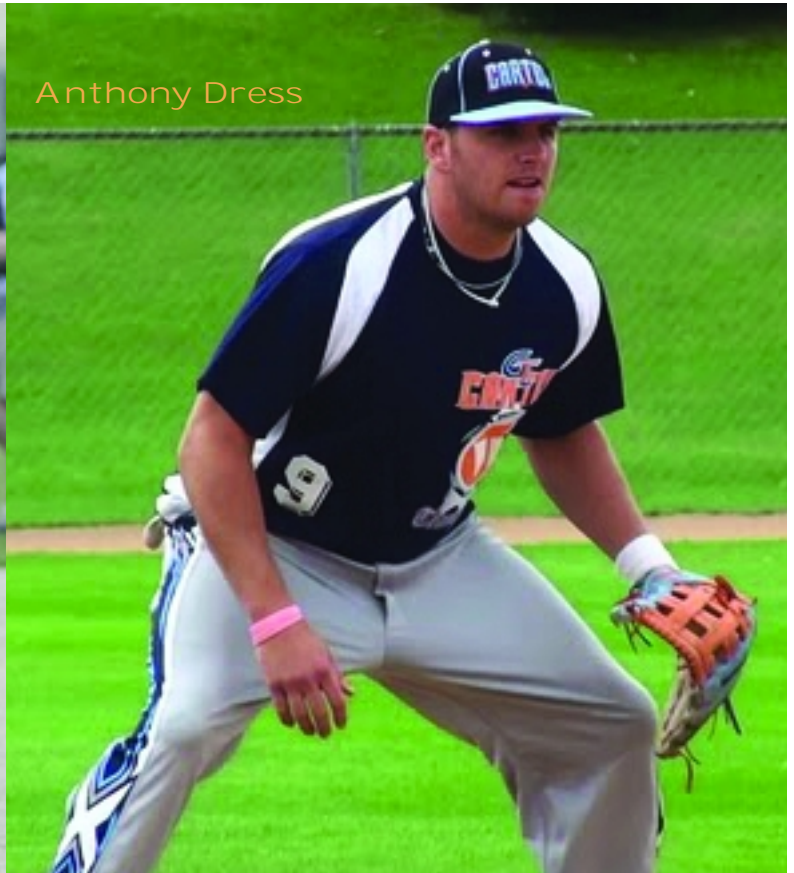
2008 was a year that we learned how to win and with the additions of Victor Cordova, Mike Bowlin, Sam Lopez, Kevin Filby and Brian Blount. In most of our wins, we came from the loser's bracket. We became famous for losing our second game of the tourney but would redeem ourselves by always playing in the last game on Saturday night,

averaging about 8 to 10 games a weekend. Although we had a lot of success in tournaments, we still weren't establishing ourselves as a front runner in the A division. At the 2008 A worlds the tide had turned and for some reason we were the team sitting in the undefeated spot and Jean Shoppe had to come through the loser's bracket. Well we all know how that turned out so we don't talk about it much. Ever!

2009 became a year of redemption for GTL and the A worlds could not come fast enough. We continued with top five finishes in the conference tournaments, never forgetting the goal that was not achieved. We added Donovan Pokraka, Rick Sedlacek and Anthony Dress to solidify our squad on both sides of the ball and went in search of that ever elusive A title. Needless to say that worked out for us after defeating Jean Shoppe in the game of the A world title. We knew with that win, it would mean a change to our core players. Because of the play of our younger guys, some of them landed on the Major Player lists and changes would have to come. After the 2009 season, it took some time as a sponsor group to decide if we wanted to rebuild because of the guidelines to play A ball. We knew there were good, young ball players that were not noticed and deserved the chance to make a name for themselves and stake a claim at a World title. After several players had decided to part ways and or walk away from the game we decided to pursue the young unknown talent from the Northwest. In 2010 we made the additions of Matt Pessa and Jimmy Salas out of California, Tyler Beuerlein from Phoenix and Don Rogers from St. Louis with defense being a huge factor in the recruitment of each of these players. What we got when we put them with Anthony Dress, Victor Cordova, and Sam Lopez was a phenomenal defense that has shut down the opposition at all levels



Chad Munger



Anthony Dress



Bubba Mack

at one time or another. The addition of a second pitcher in LC Watson has allowed us to keep both our pitchers in the game at one time because of his hitting abilities. It seemed to be the right equation after defeating Combat/Laser Vision to win our second world title in three years. GTL/Cartel/Worth found a way to grind out a 5-1 record and two tough battles in the championship to win on a walk off Home Run by Jimmy Salas to capture our second title. Anthony Dress was named the tournament MVP and was joined on the all tournament team by Bubba Mack (defensive MVP), Don Rogers, Sam Lopez, Jimmy Salas, Chad Munger, LC Watson, and Mike Bowlin. While at the A world tournament a comment was made to me about how GTL has made a commitment to 'play for the name on the front of the jersey instead of the name on the back.' We really would like to keep it that way in the future. Although this year's final chapters have not been written yet to our story we would like to believe that it will end with much success. The outlook for 2011 seems to have us wanting to stay together and make a run at the Major level. Due to the fact that the system in place will be moving players on to the Major Player list, it seems that is where the Cartel family will be headed in 2011. We would especially like to thank Worth for all their support over the past years. Without them none of this would have been possible.