

Team USA lacrosse abounds with Baltimore Catholic connections

After he graduated from Archbishop Curley High School in 2003, Kyle Hartzell became an integral part of championship lacrosse teams at the junior college, NCAA Division III and professional levels.

In 2012, while Joe Fletcher was helping Loyola University Maryland to an NCAA Division I title, Ryan Brown led Calvert Hall to a Maryland Interscholastic Athletic Association A Conference crown.

Their championship pedigrees are among the reasons those players are on the roster of Team USA, which is in Israel for the Federation of International Lacrosse Men's World Championship tournament, which runs July 12-21.

Hartzell was on the 2014 team that lost the gold-medal game to Canada, and is most eager to make amends.

"I will never forget how that felt after we lost to Canada," Hartzell told the Review. "This being my second time playing internationally will definitely help in the experience department."

A 32-year-old defenseman, Hartzell led CCBC-Essex to a NJCAA title in 2004, and Salisbury University to the NCAA Division III championship and unbeaten season in 2007.

At the professional level, he's a four-time Major League Lacrosse all-star. Hartzell led the Chesapeake Bayhawks to the MLL title in 2010, when he was MVP of the championship game, and moved on to the New York Lizards, helping them to a

championship in 2015. On the indoor circuit, he helped Washington to a National Lacrosse League title in 2010.

Along with Tucker Durkin, another member of Team USA, Hartzell, who was raised in Dundalk and resides in Dallas, founded Defensive Lacrosse Academy.

A native of Syracuse, N.Y., Fletcher was a sophomore in 2012, when Loyola, under coach Charley Toomey, won its only NCAA lacrosse crown. He was a two-time first-team All-American, and in 2014 won the Schmeisser Award as the nation's top defenseman.

Fletcher was also the only collegian on the final USA training team for the 2014 worlds, when he gained a further appreciation for the level of competition involved.

"What I try to do is not overthink things," Fletcher said. "Treat it like everything else. Take it seriously and be focused, but have fun with it. At the end of the day, we're all playing lacrosse, the sport we love."

Fletcher, 26, is a three-time MLL all-star, and a teammate of Hartzell's on the New York Lizards. A Baltimore resident, he works as a financial analyst for a local real estate company.

Brown registered 39 goals and 14 assists as a senior at Calvert Hall, then stayed in town and played for The Johns Hopkins University. He was the Big Ten Offensive Player of the Year in 2015, and left Homewood as the Blue Jays' No. 2 all-time scorer.

He finished second in the MLL Rookie of the Year balloting in 2016, and was an MLL all-star for Charlotte in 2017. He is one of the youngest players on Team USA.

"It's a great honor," Brown said. "Not only are you representing yourself and your

country, but also US Lacrosse and all lacrosse players in the country.”

Brown is an assistant coach at Marquette University, which made the NCAA tournament in 2015, two years after it began playing at the collegiate level. Its head coach, Joe Amplo, is among the assistants to head coach John Danowski, of Duke.

Team USA includes other Catholic connections.

The midfield includes the Haus brothers, John and Will. Their father, John, a veteran college coach, was an All-Metro player at Loyola Blakefield in the late 1970s.

Team USA spent July 10 taking in the historic and spiritual significance of Jerusalem, with stops at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the Wailing Wall and Yad Vashem, Israel’s official memorial to victims of the Holocaust.

“I have never been to the Middle East, and Netanya (Stadium) looks like an amazing spot to play the game I love,” Hartzell said before leaving the U.S. “While I am sure we will see a few sites, our goal is a gold medal. That is first on the radar.”

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