

## All-Star Game had strong Kernels flavor

Written by Bob Brooks

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For suspense and competitive balance, the Major League all-star game in Kansas City Tuesday night was not. In fact, the way the 8-0 National League win turned out, the Kansas City Royals probably could have played as well.

But from the local standpoint, to see three Cedar Rapids Kernels graduates in that type of atmosphere was a thrill.

Major League baseball got a big boost from Mike Trout and Bryce Harper elevated to all-star status. Consequently, the ratings went up.

But I want to focus on the local angle of Trout, Mark Trumbo and Mike Napoli. To have three Cedar Rapids grads as all-stars was terrific and shows that the Angels have been in the development mode with the Kernels for year upon year.

As an addition, I would suggest the Angels now concentrate on being competitive in the Midwest League, and I hope they will decide to give Cedar Rapids a team next season that is truly a competitive team for a pennant.

But for now, we bask in the bright lights of three Cedar Rapids grads who made the all-star team.

**PART II:** We turn our spotlight on Fran McCaffery and Iowa basketball.

The Prime Time League is under way in North Liberty and McCaffery finds himself already in the Big Ten's first division. Not for wins and losses, but for salary.

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Iowa has elevated Fran to that status with the extension of his contract this week to a seven-year deal worth conservatively \$11 million, with supplements, of course.

Here's my take on Iowa basketball: The tide has been turned, the fans have returned, the players are in place, the recruiting is in top-20 form and that contributes to fan optimism. As a result, I believe Iowa will make the NCAA tournament and compete for the conference title this season.

Those improvements rest at the door at now long-tenured Coach Fran McCaffery.

**PART III:** With the start of the summer baseball tournament, Kennedy comes in as one of the favorites to get to Des Moines. But it will take a great combination of things, in my view, to get the Cougars back to the state finals.

Everybody starts the same and we wish them all good luck.

*(Bob Brooks is sports director at KMRY and has been one of the leading voices of college and prep sports in Eastern Iowa for more than 65 years. He is a 10-time winner of the Iowa Sportscaster of the Year Award, and was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in South Bend, Indiana in 2004. His sports reports can be heard weekday afternoons at 4:30 and 5:30, and Saturdays at 6:40 for the Hawkeye football wrap-up.)*