

Former coaches and teammates remember Blake Payne



Blake Payne was a coach's dream.

"Blake was everyone's favorite kid to coach," said Victoria West coach Manuel Alvarado, who coached Payne at Victoria Memorial High School. "He carried himself with great values, and he was one person you never had to worry about on or off the field. Blake just competed in everything he did."

Payne, who also played for the Victoria Generals, died in a car wreck July 20 alongside his fiancée in Little Rock, Ark.

The Victoria native played college baseball for Seminole State and Central Arkansas. He was living in Little Rock at the time of his death and was an Audit Manager for Landmark PLC.

The Generals held a moment of silence in Payne's memory before Saturday night's game.

The [@VicGeneralsTCL](https://twitter.com/VicGeneralsTCL) hold a moment of silence for former Memorial High and Generals player Blake Payne who tragically passed away along with his Fiance Alexa Montez in a car accident in Little Rock Arkansas. pic.twitter.com/QhRvae73n5

— Tyler Tyre (@TylerTyre) [July 28, 2019](#)

Chris Clemons, who coached The Generals during Payne's time with the team, said Payne exemplified the best of Victoria as a community.

"He was a great teammate and a great guy to have on the mound," Clemons said. "It was a perfect situation to have a hometown player there, who was the model of Victoria. The fun-loving smile, how engaging he was with everyone, that's how everyone in Victoria treated us. He was the perfect representative."

Current Generals head coach Michael Oros played alongside Payne for the Generals in the summers 2009 and 2010. He recalls Payne being a great teammate.

"Every day when you came to the ballpark, he would have a smile and make you laugh," Oros said. "Whether it was a funny story or joke, and it would always lighten the mood."

Both Payne and his family were a big part of the Generals from the inaugural season on.

"It started with his parents. They hosted families and opened up their home to complete strangers," Oros said. "Blake being a player gave back to the community. His brother (Colin) became an intern for us a few years ago and did radio broadcast as well. The whole family has been a big part of the Generals; it's awful to see this happen to them."

Payne had a strong relationship with his family and developed a close bond with his teammates.

"Blake was very close to his parents," Clemons said. "You could see the love that he had for his family, and how much they meant to him. He was a joy to be around, always had a smile I will always remember that."

Alvarado will remember Payne as a strong competitor when he pitched for the Vipers.

"Every time Blake was on the mound, it was always great to see the kind of competition and drive that he had," Alvarado said. "Blake wanted to be the best; for me, that's how I'll remember him is by how he played the game every time he stepped out there."

Oros had a difficult time sharing the news of Payne's death with former Generals players.

"I unfortunately had to tell some former teammates about what happened, and it was just eye opening for me to see how he touched each and every one of our lives," Oros said. "And that is what I will remember the most, is that there wasn't one bad thing to say about him. He was just a joy to be around and such a great person."