

# PRESS RELEASE

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## The Right Mindset, On the Diamond and Off

*Lincoln Prep junior Lee Allen, Jr. earns spot at MLB Dream Series in Arizona*

**Kansas City, January 15, 2020:** Lee Allen, Jr. likes to play mind games.

Mr. Allen, 16, is a junior at Lincoln College Preparatory Academy. He's also one of just about 80 elite high school baseball players who were invited this year to participate in the Major League Baseball Dream Series from Jan. 17-20 at Tempe Diablo Stadium in Tempe, Ariz.

The series is an opportunity for Allen to learn from and showcase his talents for a prestigious group of college and professional coaches and scouts. The results could be a college scholarship offer or even a possible invitation to the MLB draft after Allen graduates in 2021.

The secret to success on the playing field, in school, at home and at work, according to Allen, is all in your own head.

"It's all about controlling your mindset," he said during an early afternoon interview at a high-top table in the sunlit fourth-floor library at Lincoln Prep. "The most important thing I've learned by playing baseball is that it's a mind game. I'm able to control my mindset, even when the game is moving fast, and maintain my focus."

Focus is a priority for a young man whose life is dominated by a demanding schedule of sports and academics. When Allen isn't practicing, playing or exercising, he's focused on mastering the course load of Lincoln Prep's International Baccalaureate program.

Allen's love of baseball started early in life. His own father, East High School Vice Principal Lee Allen, played football. But Allen, Jr.'s mom decided baseball was the right choice when her young son started swinging a bat around their living room.

"I just loved the way the bat felt when I picked it up," he recalled. "My mom would get angry, though, when I would break things."

Allen started playing little league, and then moved up to club ball when he got to middle school. He earned a spot on Lincoln Prep's team when he became a freshman. Allen also plays as a point guard on the Tigers' basketball squad and wide receiver on the football team. He's proud to be a student-athlete at the same school many of his family members attended and to be part of the important and historic legacy Lincoln Prep plays within the African American community in Kansas City.

"This school has so many different types of students, and that's a good thing," Allen said. "It's about challenging every student and giving every student a chance to improve. It makes all of us better people, well rounded."

The young man is a right-hander who plays shortstop and second base. He's compact, visually reminiscent of baseball great Ozzie Smith, who was 5'11" and 150-pounds even while dominating the game. The comparisons to Smith extend to the way Allen plays, according to his coach, Lincoln Prep teacher Kevin Bair.

“He’s smooth and he’s got quick hands,” Coach Bair said. “He’s got a high baseball IQ. He’s always aware of what’s happening, he reacts well and he’s thinking several plays ahead.”

Allen’s invitation to the MLB Dream Series was the result of a nomination submitted by Kansas City Urban Youth Academy Executive Director Darwin Pennyne. Allen and his teammates are able to utilize the state-of-the-art baseball facilities thanks to the academy’s partnership with Kansas City Public Schools.

“It has definitely made a difference for us as a team and for me individually as a player,” Allen said. “I think this area is going to start to get a lot more attention from college coaches and pro scouts because of what we’re able to do at the academy. I’m really thankful that it’s here.”

Regardless of what happens in Arizona during the Dream Series this weekend, Allen is focused on prioritizing school work, preparing for the upcoming season and being a leader for his team. Down the road, outside of baseball, he’s interested in pursuing a career in sports journalism.

“We’ve got a bunch of freshmen who signed up for baseball this year and I’m just excited to be part of helping coach them up and helping our whole team get where we need to be,” Allen said. “That’s my mindset.”