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Panther Baseball Team in Division III World Series; Game 1 is May 25

NO. 1 PANTHERS WILL HAVE A BIG TARGET ON THEIR BACKS IN APPLETON

ORANGE, Calif. They've been the maids of honor so to speak all year; ranked No. 2 by Collegiate Baseball and the ABCA coach's poll since the preseason rankings were released in December. Now, on the heels of its third consecutive West Region championship, the Chapman University baseball team is No. 1 in NCAA Division III. And the Panthers hope it lasts longer than a week.

Chapman will begin the Division III World Series in Appleton, Wis. as the favorite to win its second national title in five years when the Panthers face defending champion Marietta College (Ohio) on Friday, May 25 at 2:30 p.m. (PDT) at Fox Cities Stadium. No. 7 Marietta upended the previous No. 1-ranked Wooster (Ohio) to come out of the Mideast Region tournament last weekend. Wooster had not budged from the No. 1 spot all year until its elimination.

As good as Chapman has been since 1997, the Panthers have never had a season like this. At 40-6, Chapman set a school record for wins in a season and is making its fourth trip to Appleton in the last five years. Chapman finished third at the World Series in 2006. Surprisingly, the Panthers' 40 victories have been well balanced. Chapman's longest winning streak of the year was just 10 and that was snapped at the West Region tournament by No-9-ranked Pacific Lutheran.