PEABODY – David Apostolides plans to study broadcast journalism when he enters Suffolk University in August, so he knows as well as anybody that headlines are often reserved for one person when in fact it’s a team that deserves the credit. Such was the cast last Wednesday when the senior right-hander tosses his first career no-hitter to help lift his Peabody baseball team to an 8-0 win over Lynn Classical at Bezemes Field.

The victory secured a tournament bid for the Tanners – which is an annual event – but more importantly it revived a Peabody team that had been struggling coming into the Classical game.

The co-captain was the first one to credit his teammates for making plays in the field and at the dish.

“We still have a lot ahead of us, and getting this win was a huge step for the team,” Apostolides said. “We played great as a team with a lot at stake in this game, so knowing that we all were capable of stepping up and playing with added intensity, will help us down the line.

While Cy Young once famously said a pitcher’s got to be good and got to be lucky to get a no-hit game, for Apostolides, there would be a third – and perhaps more important - component to Young’s analysis of what it takes to accomplish what every pitcher dreams of, and that would be rock solid defense by a supporting cast of teammates behind him. Amazingly, there was only one ball that reached the outfield and that was by the Rams’ leadoff hitter. That ball landed safely in glove of Peabody center fielder Matt Correale.
With the Tanners outfielders assuming roles as spectators, the burden fell on the shoulders of the infield to get the job done, and that they did and more.

The Tanners made only one error, but more importantly, they made several spectacular plays that robbed more than one Rams hitter and kept Apostolides’s bid for the no-hitter alive.

“This was total team effort and a great win for the team when we needed it most,” Apostolides said. “But I have to give credit to Christian (Morales) and Ryan (Collins) who easily made four or five plays that on any other day would have gone for hits.

“We all knew that after losing three of the last four games, we needed to win this game, and for me, it was probably the most intense and focused I’ve been in any game I’ve ever played, and the rest of the guys played the same way.” (Peabody would be one-hit in its next game, losing 6-1 at Bishop Guertin). “David was phenomenal today and considering there was a lot of pressure we were putting on ourselves and rightfully so to win this game, we needed someone to step up and he did,” Peabody coach Mark Bettencourt said.

“David has paid his dues and he knew how important this game was, and today he was like an artist, just painting the corners and mixing up his pitches and commanding the strike zone.

“He got great support from Christian at second who handled a couple of slow rollers to take away a couple of hits, and from Ryan who took away a few hits up the middle and deep in the hole, and Brandon Butcher did a nice job behind the plate controlling the tempo of the game and moving him in and out an showing him where he wanted the ball.”

Apostolides struck out only five in the game, but two of them were the last two Classical hitters of the game, who Apostolides caught looking, the last one on a 1-2 count on a fastball that caught the outside corner.

“There were definitely some jitters in the last inning and obviously there was a heightened sense of urgency with the players and coaches and it felt more like a 1-0 game, not an 8-0 game,” Apostolides said.

“As much as you want to stay focused, you have to be excited because it’s a very cool thing when you think about it, and it had never happened to me before,” Apostolides said. “When it ended, there was a sigh of relief, and we celebrated a little bit, but while it was nice to get the no-hitter, it was so much more important for our team to get back to playing the way we know again, and that’s what I’ll remember this game for.

“The Swampscott game was a real wakeup call for us, and after our coach gave us a mental health day off, the captains called a meeting in the locker room, not to be negative, but to clear the air and talk about what was going on with the team, and that helped all of us so much to be able to play good again and know that we are ready to win another nine games in a row the same way we did to start the season.”

As far as college is concerned, Apostolides had narrowed his list down to Suffolk, Fitchburg State University and Western New England University.
“I was being recruited by the coaches at Suffolk and had talked to some of the other coaches, but it just clicked with Suffolk,” Apostolides said. “A big thing for me was I had played in the Lynn Invitational Tournament last year and I heard from Suffolk right around the time I was first starting to look at schools.

“I first heard from one of the assistants, Anthony del Prete, who had seen me at the Lynn tournament, and he emailed me and we kept talking back and forth, and when I met Coach (first name?) O’Connell, it just seemed to be a perfect fit from a baseball perspective and also from an academic perspective.

Apostolides thinks going to college in Boston will help his career track.
“Being in Boston is advantageous as there are tons of internships and opportunities available in Boston through Suffolk, so that was a huge factor in my decision to go to Suffolk,” Apostolides said. “At Peabody I take honors in all my classes, but this year I loaded up on television production electives to prepare myself for next year.”

Apostolides also ran indoor track for four years at Peabody.

“So far this season, Apostolides has posted a 2-0 record for the Tanners. In 24 innings pitched he has allowed four earned runs on 18 hits, has struck out 20 and walked six with an ERA of 1.17.

According to Bettencourt, Apostolides’s strength lies in his ability to pitch within himself.

“He doesn’t throw 90 mph, but he knows who he is and controls the movement on his ball very well,” Bettencourt said. “The timing of the no-hitter was incredible, as he took it upon himself to pull us out of this funk that we had been in and really pulled the team together.”