The country duo Florida Georgia Line includes Tyler Hubbard, left, and Ormond Beach native Brian Kelley. The pair are nominated for Vocal Duo of the Year and New Artist of the Year at the 48th Academy of Country Music Awards.

By RICK de YAMPERT
ENTERTAINMENT WRITER

Brian Kelley, half of the rising country music duo Florida Georgia Line, learned an important lesson on a baseball diamond.

“I spent a year playing baseball at Daytona State College under a coach named Tim Touma, which completely changed my life,” Kelley says on floridageorgialine.com. “I hated it at the time. It was basically like boot camp, but he always said it was bigger than baseball. What you were going to learn under him was stuff you could use the rest of your life.”

Kelley, a 27-year-old Ormond Beach native and 2004 Seabreeze High School grad, has parlayed those lessons into country music success.

Florida Georgia Line, his duo with Georgia native Tyler Hubbard, released “Here’s to the Good Times,” their major-label debut album, in December 2012. The album’s debut single, “Cruise,” went to No. 1 on the country charts and has passed sales of 2 million. Their current single, “Get Your Shine On,” has entered the Top 10.

A remix of “Cruise” featuring hip-hop artist Nelly was released Tuesday and was No. 4 on iTunes sales “among all genres,” said Brian’s father, Ormond Beach Mayor Ed Kelley. “Of course they’ve had 2 million sales on ‘Cruise’ already. That’s huge for a little Ormond Beach guy and a little Monroe, Ga., guy.”

Florida Georgia Line is nominated for Vocal Duo of the Year and New Artist of the Year at the 48th Academy of Country Music Awards, which will be broadcast at 8 p.m. Sunday on CBS.

Fans can vote for New Artist of the Year by going online at voteACM.com.

“Our friends are really excited,” Brian Kelley says on the duo’s website. “But to them I think we’re still just two guys who started out doing music on the back of a tailgate and have been working hard at it and trying to get better.”

Brian also gives a shout-out to his father and his mother, Mary Margaret Kelley: “The way my parents and Tyler’s family have also been so supportive along the way, it’s like everybody’s success, not just ours.”

rick.deyampert@news-jrnl.com