

Madeliene Maggs
Walk-on Pitcher, Dakota Forsyth

As a sophomore, Penn State pitcher Dakota Forsyth made 16 appearances to rank fifth on the team in the category with three starts late in the season.

Forsyth, now a junior, did not take the expected route of a successful Division I athlete.

Forsyth played for Bethel Park High School in the Pittsburgh, Pa. area. He's very humble about his high school baseball career saying his was "nothing special." His team never won any big title, and he never won any big award himself until his senior year when he was named to the All-State team.

Tony Fisher, Forsyth's high school coach, recommended he play Division II baseball because of the interest these schools were showing in him. Division II schools such as Seton Hill, Meryhurst and Indiana University of Pennsylvania recruited him.

However, Forsyth had a strong desire to play Division I baseball ever since he can remember. He was recruited by numerous smaller Division I schools including: Wofford College, William & Mary, Navy and Virginia Commonwealth University. Forsyth said he did not feel he would have "fit" at any of these schools.

"When I wasn't recruited by big schools such as Penn State," Forsyth said, "It really crushed my hopes."

This was the turning point for Forsyth. Instead of looking to be recruited by one of these schools, he decided he would try out for the team at the school he chose to attend for reasons unrelated to baseball.

"I wanted to go to a place that I would enjoy going to," Forsyth said, "Even if I didn't make the baseball team."

This is where Penn State came into play. The top tier academics, his love for the campus and State College, as well as, the fact that he had friends at the school persuaded him to choose the Nittany Lions.

Forsyth tried out for third base and pitcher. He said the coaches really liked his ability to pitch so they brought him onto the team as a pitcher. When on the mound, Forsyth threw 90 MPH.

It is certainly more challenging as a walk-on. When asked what made coach Rob Cooper give him a chance, Forsyth said he believes Cooper saw the talent was there because he knew he was recruited by smaller Division I programs. Forsyth went on to say that he feels the combination of talent and willingness to compete at a high level influenced the coaches to bring him onto the team.

Forsyth said, "I think the deciding factor for the coaching staff was that I had a chip on my shoulder. I was overlooked by many colleges, and they knew I had something to prove."

As a freshman and a walk-on, Forsyth did not expect to get a lot of playing time his first year. However, that assumption proved to be false. He threw 41.1 innings in 17 appearances, which was third on the team.

When asked what advice Forsyth had for a future walk-on, he said, "Any walk-on should out work every player on their team...that will earn them the respect and trust of fellow teammates."

Outfielder Nick Riotto said, "Dakota plays without being afraid of failing and he's not afraid of big name teams...that fearlessness allows us to trust him when he's on the mound."

Forsyth wants to be known as the best teammate possible and one of the hardest workers out of any of his teammates.

"If this is the legacy I leave behind," Forsyth said, "Then I must've done something right in my career."

Forsyth expressed aspirations to play in the MLB. He is eligible to get drafted this year and next.