

Kirkwood baseball picks up pair of Metro stars

Written by Jim Ecker

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Jefferson outfielder Michael Rooney and Linn-Mar middle infielder Ben Larison have signed letters-of-intent to play baseball at Kirkwood Community College in 2012.

Rooney hit .350 with five homers and 30 RBIs for Jefferson last season as their leadoff hitter and center fielder. He's looking forward to joining the Eagles next season.

"It's really exciting," he said. "The past few years I've been wondering whether I'm good enough to play in college. It just feels good to have other people recognize you and think you're good enough to play for them."

Rooney said he also considered Wartburg and Coe.

Larison hit .383 with one homer and 31 RBIs for Linn-Mar last season as their shortstop, although he'll probably move to second base at Kirkwood.

"It just seems like Kirkwood was the best opportunity, both academically and athletically," he said. "I love baseball. It's a great opportunity."

Larison said he considered other junior colleges in Iowa and Minnesota before picking Kirkwood.