

## Freese leaves Warriors for Chi-Town Cream

Written by Jim Ecker

Monday, 20 June 2011 22:38 - Last Updated Monday, 20 June 2011 22:41

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Dakota Freese has left the Cedar Rapids Washington baseball team to play for the Chi-Town Cream, a summer travel team that's based in Chicago.

Freese said Monday he plans to play for the Chi-Town Cream for most of the summer, but plans to return to Cedar Rapids and play for Washington in the Class 4A substate tournament in mid-July.

Freese said he hopes playing for the Chi-Town Cream will improve his bargaining position with the Chicago White Sox, who selected him in the 34th round of the Major League draft this month.

"I'm trying to do as good as I can and face the best competition I can and get a good contract," he said.

Freese missed the first seven games of the 2011 high school campaign while serving an in-school suspension at Washington. He compiled a 1-1 record and 2.63 ERA for the Warriors in three appearances after the suspension, with 26 strikeouts and 11 walks in 16 innings. Opponents hit just .113 against him.

Freese, a 6-foot-4 righthander, was 6-3 with a 2.69 ERA in 2010 when he made all-state. He fanned 91 batters in 57 1/3 innings last season with 20 walks.

Freese has signed to play college baseball at LSU-Eunice, a junior college in Louisiana, and said there's a chance he'll enroll in school if he doesn't like the offer he gets from the White Sox.

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"I'd love to go pro. No matter what, I want to go pro, but there's always that price," he said.

Freese pitched for Washington on June 13 against Iowa City West. He told Washington Coach Brent Henry a few days later that he was leaving the Warriors and joining the Chi-Town Cream.

"This is something the White Sox want him to do, and his advisers thought it was a good idea," Henry said. "It's good for him.

"He's trying to help himself and get a contract and get a signing bonus, so we're supporting him on that," Henry said. "We've had other obstacles that we've had to overcome, and this will be another one for us."

The Warriors are 8-11 overall and 3-8 in the Mississippi Valley Conference. They have had 14 players in uniform for most games, including Freese.

Freese traveled to Chicago last Thursday and played for the Chi-Town Cream last weekend. The Cream is scheduled to play Glenbrook (Ill.) South on Wednesday and play in the University of Michigan-Great Lakes Tournament this weekend.

The Cream also is scheduled to play in tournaments in Georgia, Illinois, Indiana and Texas this summer.

Freese has been clocked at 92 mph and throws a sharp curveball. He was hoping to be drafted higher than the 34th round, and is determined to have a pro career.

Freese is living in an apartment with a Chi-Town Cream teammate in the Chicago suburbs. He said there's a possibility he'll rejoin the Warriors in late June during a break in his travel team schedule, but said the chances are "very high" he'll be back for the Class 4A substate tournament that begins July 15.

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"I really hated leaving the team," Freese said. "It was hard. I know the guys feel bad about it. It's really hard for all of us."