

Sweeting left Bahamas to help Eagles

Written by Jim Ecker

Friday, 28 March 2014 20:23 - Last Updated Friday, 28 March 2014 20:29



Kirkwood pitcher David Sweeting could have been back home in the Bahamas on Friday afternoon, enjoying another warm day and the beautiful blue-green waters.

"Mid-80s," he mused about the temperature where he lives in Nassau. "Clear skies, clear water. You can go out a couple of hundred feet of water and still see the bottom."

Instead, Sweeting was toiling on the mound for the Eagles on Friday with the temperature straining to reach 40 under gray skies.

He didn't seem to mind a bit.

Sweeting tossed six shutout innings as No.19 Kirkwood defeated Rochester Tech, 5-3, in the first game of a doubleheader at the Kirkwood Community College diamond in Cedar Rapids.

Keaton Blackford, a Linn-Mar graduate, pitched six more shutout innings in the second game as the Eagles took the nightcap, 5-0.

Sweeting left Bahamas to help Eagles

Written by Jim Ecker

Friday, 28 March 2014 20:23 - Last Updated Friday, 28 March 2014 20:29

Sweeting had a hunch it might be a little cold in Iowa when he made his first trip to Cedar Rapids in January and enrolled for the spring semester.

"I got here for a couple of days where the wind-chill had it negative 30 to 40. So that was a good way to welcome me to Iowa," he said, smiling. "So far I like it up here. It's a nice change."

Sweeting is getting to pitch. That's the main thing, setting the unfriendly weather aside.

Sweeting, 21, attended the College of Central Florida in 2011, but was injured and did not play. He spent the last two years working in the Bahamas, but wanted to give college baseball another try.

His meandering path took him to Iowa.

"My baseball coach back home got me connected with somebody in Florida, and he got me connected with Kirkwood," Sweeting explained. "So once we got connected, Coach Rima said he wanted me to come up and play for him, so here I am."

Todd Rima has players on his team from Puerto Rico, Australia, Aruba, Canada, the Bahamas, Florida, New York, Colorado and Tennessee. He relies on contacts and studies lots of film, because it's not like he can fly all over the world looking for talent.

"I don't know if the recruiting budget is quite there," he joked.

Rima must be quite a salesman to get a pitcher here from the Bahamas.

"I don't know if we told him it was going to be 38 on his first start," he said, laughing. "Kind of a neat story. It kind of fell into place."

Sweeting left Bahamas to help Eagles

Written by Jim Ecker

Friday, 28 March 2014 20:23 - Last Updated Friday, 28 March 2014 20:29

"He wanted a chance to play and we're glad he's here. He's given us two quality starts, and we hope he keeps progressing."

Sweeting tossed a four-hit shutout with 12 strikeouts in his other start for Kirkwood when the Eagles blanked the Canadian Baseball Academy on March 17 in Florida.

Sweeting scattered three singles, walked three batters, struck out three batters and hit two others Friday. He was bailed out of two jams when shortstop Sulliam Rios Reyes and second baseman Randy Perez turned a pair of slick 6-4-3 double plays.

Sweeting said he did not mind pitching in the cold weather.

"Once I got warmed up and started pitching, my hands stayed warm and my arm stayed warm, so everything felt pretty good," he said.

Cedar Rapids Prairie grad Tyler Butz went 2-for-3 for Kirkwood in the opener with a two-run double in the sixth inning. Rios Reyes, Matt Paciello and Shawn Hagarty also had two hits.

Blackford, a transfer from Ellsworth Community College, had a sharp outing for Kirkwood in the second game. He allowed four hits, struck out eight batters and did not walk a man.

"Our starters were great today," said Rima. "Blackford really had command of the strike zone. And Sweeting gave us a really good start."

"We needed that, going into a four-game series starting tomorrow. We didn't want to use a lot of our bullpen, so they picked us up big."

Sweeting left Bahamas to help Eagles

Written by Jim Ecker

Friday, 28 March 2014 20:23 - Last Updated Friday, 28 March 2014 20:29

Kirkwood (10-2) has doubleheaders at Des Moines Area Community College on Saturday and Sunday.

Milton Croes went 2-for-3 with two RBIs for Kirkwood in the second game Friday. Angel Merced was 2-for-3 with one RBI.