

## Tomshaw pitches for Kernels with a smile

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 06 April 2013 18:52 - Last Updated Saturday, 06 April 2013 18:59

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Matt Tomshaw does not fit the profile for a typical pitcher in the Midwest League.

He's 24 years old, which is a year or two older than most of the other pitchers for the Cedar Rapids Kernels, and he'll turn 25 in December.

He has a college degree from Jacksonville University in finance and worked for a financial company during the offseason in the mortgage department.

He was drafted by the Minnesota Twins in 2011 in the 42nd round, which is fairly low and means he got bus fare and a uniform, but that's OK.

He loves what he's doing.

"Ever since I started playing baseball at the age of 5, I've always wanted to make it to the Major Leagues," he said Saturday. "My senior year in college, when I got the call from the Twins saying they'd pick me up, it was awesome.

"Every day I get to put on the uniform, I'm happy playing baseball."

Tomshaw pitched 2 2/3 innings of scoreless relief Saturday as the Kernels suffered their first loss of the season to Beloit, 2-1, before 1,007 fans at Veterans Memorial Stadium.

Tomshaw, a lefthander, struck out four batters, allowed two doubles and walked two batters, but he worked out of trouble and kept Cedar Rapids in the game.

Tomshaw began his pro career in the rookie Gulf Coast League in 2011, but was promoted that

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season to the Fort Myers Miracle in the High-A Florida State League where he pitched for current Kernels Manager Jake Mauer.

He spent most of the 2012 campaign with the Beloit Snappers in the Midwest League with a 4-6 record and 3.02 ERA, and he's back in the same low A league this year with the Kernels.

"His stuff is not overpowering, but he's a strike thrower," said Mauer, who plans to use Tomshaw as a relief pitcher and possibly as a spot starter.

Tomshaw pitched in seven games in the Florida State League in 2011 and held his own, compiling a 2.13 ERA in 25 1/3 innings, despite jumping from a rookie league to Advanced-A.

"He was an older guy, a college guy, so they didn't think he'd be intimidated. And he wasn't," said Mauer.

Tomshaw would like to work his way back to the Florida State League and see how far he can take his baseball career. He plans to pitch until somebody tears the uniform off his back.

"As a lefty, there's always a need for you," he said. "As long as I can throw the ball, I love to pitch."

Tomshaw is from Kingston, N.Y., where he played in the high school band and was a Yankees fan. He was an all-conference pitcher at Jacksonville, an NCAA Division I school that's located in Florida and plays in the Atlantic Sun Conference.

He was the winning pitcher in a game against the University of Florida in college and was a workhorse, starting 17 games his senior year.

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"Can't complain," he said about his college career. "Florida, sunny weather, got a decent scholarship down there. It was nice."

His fastball was clocked at 88 mph Saturday, which isn't fast but fast enough for a lefthander with good control.

"That's a little higher than normal," he said. "Back in college I didn't break a pane of glass too often."

The Kernels collected only four hits Saturday and trailed 2-0 until they scored their only run in the eighth inning on a single by Candido Pimentel and an RBI double by Jorge Polanco. The Snappers made several fine plays to rob the Kernels of hits.

"Couldn't find a hole today," said Mauer. "Son of a biscuit."

The Kernels and Snappers are scheduled to finish their four-game series on Sunday at 2:05 p.m.

BELOIT (2): Shipman, cf, 5 0 0 0, Bostick, 2b, 4 0 1 0, Wooten, rf, 4 0 0 0, Olson, dh, 4 0 0 0, Maxwell, c, 4 0 2 0, Nunez, 3b, 3 0 1 0, Tanis, 1b, 4 0 1 0, Roberts, ss, 4 1 2 0, Mathews, lf, 3 1 3 2, Streich, p, 0 0 0 0, Healy, p, 0 0 0 0, Lamb, p, 0 0 0 0. Totals 35 2 10 2.

KERNELS (1): Buxton, cf, 3 0 1 0, Pimentel, 2b, 4 1 1 0, Polanco, dh, 4 0 1 1, Hicks, 1b, 4 0 0 0, Jimenez, rf, 4 0 0 0, Harrison, 3b, 2 0 0 0, Goodrum, ss, 4 0 1 0, Arias, c, 3 0 0 0, Williams, lf, 2 0 0 0, Melotakis, p, 0 0 0 0, Tomshaw, p, 0 0 0 0, Soliman, p, 0 0 0 0. Totals 30 1 4 1.

Beloit     001 010 000 - 2 10 1  
Kernels   000 000 010 - 1   4 2

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Streich, Healy (6), Lamb (8) and Maxwell. Melotakis, Tomshaw (5), Soliman (8) and Arias. W - Streich (1-0). L - Melotakis (0-1). S - Lamb (1). 2B - Roberts (1), Mathews (1), Tanis (1), Polanco (1). HR - Mathews (1). SB - Roberts (1), Pimentel (1), Williams (2). E - Nunez, Harrison, Hicks. A - 1,007. T - 2:44.