

Red Top's Howe is baseball lifer

Written by Jim Ecker
Monday, 13 June 2016 04:54



SOLON - Tyler Howe simply cannot get enough baseball, despite two serious arm injuries that ended his professional career with the New York Mets organization four years ago.

Howe is the successful head coach at Northeast High School in Goose Lake during the week, then he stars for Red Top in the Iowa Valley League on Sundays.

"It's a busy summer," he acknowledged Sunday.

Howe belted a solo home run in the fourth inning to snap a scoreless tie and help Red Top blank Watkins, 3-0, in the second game of an IVL doubleheader at the Solon High School field.

Red Top won the first game, 5-2, and is undefeated this season at 6-0.

Howe, a catcher and first baseman, was on base all day with three walks, a hit-by-pitch and his towering home run to left-center field.

Howe, 30, looks forward to the games each week.

"I love it. I love it," he said. "I wouldn't miss it for the world. We've got a great group of guys. It's just fun to come out and still play the game I love."

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Howe played at Kirkwood Community College and the University of Kentucky before being drafted by the Mets in the 41st round in 2008 following his senior year at Kentucky. He was selected as a catcher and got off to a promising start with a .306 batting average in the Rookie Gulf Coast League in 2008, followed by a .245 mark in the Appalachian League in 2009.

The Mets, impressed with his strong arm, converted him into a pitcher, but the arm problems began shortly after that. He has a long, ugly scar on the inside of his right elbow to prove it.

"I had one Tommy John (surgery). Then I blew it out all over again and I could see the writing on the wall and it was time to move on," he said. "So instead of having surgery again I retired and that's when I moved back."



Howe officially retired on July 4, 2012, a day before he was scheduled for his second operation. He never had that second Tommy John surgery for a torn ligament, but still throws well from behind the plate.

"I just can't pitch anymore," he said. "I can let it loose to second base three or four times a week if I need to and I'll be good. I know my limits and that's kind of where I'm at.

"I can still do everything in day-to-day life and throw BP (batting practice) to high schoolers all summer long and it's just fine."

Howe has compiled an 85-29 record at Northeast High School in Goose Lake, his alma mater, with consecutive campaigns of 24-9, 26-8, 26-9 and 9-3 this season at the Class 2A level.

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Howe comes from a sports-minded family. His brother is the starting second baseman for Red Top and their sister Stephanie was the two-time Iowa Player of the Year in softball at Northeast before starring at Wartburg College.

Howe enjoyed an outstanding baseball career at Northeast High School, where he had a .512 career batting average with 50 home runs, 241 RBIs, 40 victories on the mound and 517 strikeouts. He hit .598 as a senior with 11 homers and 69 RBIs and was named the Iowa Player of the Year.

Howe, who is married with a 3 1/2 month-old son, can still belt a baseball and comes ready to play every week.

"I'm lucky enough to have my Dad throw BP to me and my brother whenever we want it," he said. "We get batting practice at home. We've got an indoor facility at my parents' house, so I get batting practice with my Dad before we come here every Sunday."

Red Top took a 3-0 lead in the opener Sunday on a fielding error and a two-run single by Reid Bonner. Watkins pulled within 3-1 on an RBI single by Austin McFarland and drew within 3-2 on a solo home run by D.J. Utley.

Red Top tacked on insurance runs in the bottom of the sixth on two-out RBI singles by Trey Beckman and Tyler Rahmatulla.

Aaron Sauegling pitched the first six innings for Red Top, allowing two runs on only two hits with seven strikeouts. Ben Rettenmeier struck out two batters in the seventh for a save. Danny Bales pitched a complete game for Watkins in the first game and took the loss despite allowing only two earned runs.

Howe belted his home run with one out in the fourth inning of the second game. Ben Weeks then slugged another homer over the left-field fence, giving Red Top back-to-back homers against Evan Boddicker and making it 2-0.

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Red Top added an insurance run in the seventh on an RBI pinch-hit single by Bonner.

Cole Baker pitched the first 3 2/3 innings of the nightcap for Red Top. Drew Yanecek tossed the next 2 1/3 inning and got the victory. Rettenmeier relieved in the seventh inning again and collected two more strikeouts for his second save of the day.

Boddicker pitched 5 1/3 innings for Watkins and took the loss. Luke Franzenburg pitched two-thirds of an inning in relief.

Weeks and Corbin Day had two hits for Red Top in the second game. Beckman had two hits in the opener.

Watkins fell to 0-6 for the season.

GAME 1

WATKINS (2): Strellner, ss, 3 0 0 0, Kuester, 1b, 3 0 0 0, Brown, 2b, 3 0 0 0, Utley, dh, 2 1 1 1, J. Frese, c, 3 0 0 0, Stramer, cf, 3 0 0 0, Jarbo, lf, 2 0 0 0, Schneiders, rf, 2 1 0 0, McFarland, 3b, 3 0 1 1. Totals 24 2 2 2.

RED TOP (5): Beckman, lf, 3 1 2 1, Rahmatulla, ss, 4 0 1 1, N.Day, 3b, 4 0 1 0, Sauegling, p/1b, 3 0 0 0, T.Howe, c, 0 1 0 0, Kass, cf, 3 0 0 0, Pauli, 1b, 2 1 1 0, Weeks, pr, 0 0 0 0, Rettenmeier, p, 0 0 0 0, J.Howe, 2b, 3 1 0 0, Bonner, rf, 3 1 1 2. Totals 25 5 6 4.

Watkins ▯ ▯ ▯ **001 100 0 - 2 2 1**
Red Top ▯ ▯ ▯ **030 102 x - 5 6 2**

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Bales and J.Frese. Sauegling, Rettenmeier (7) and T.Howe. W - Sauegling. L - Bales. S - Rettenmeier.

GAME 2

WATKINS (0): Strellner, ss, 3 0 0 0, Kuester, 1b, 4 0 0 0, Brown, 2b, 3 0 1 0, Utley, dh, 3 0 1 0, J.Frese, 3b, 3 0 0 0, Jarbo, lf, 2 0 1 0, Johnson, c, 3 0 1 0, Stramer, cf, 2 0 0 0, Schneiders, rf, 1 0 0 0. Totals 24 0 4 0.

RED TOP (3): Kass, cf, 2 0 0 0, Rahmatulla, ss, 3 0 1 0, N.Day, 3b, 3 0 1 0, Sauegling, dh, 3 0 0 0, T.Howe, 1b, 2 1 1 1, Cotton, pr, 0 1 0 0, Pauli, 1b, 0 0 0 0, Weeks, lf/2b, 3 1 2 1, Rumpf, rf, 3 0 0 0, J.Howe, 2b, 2 0 0 0, Bonner, ph/lf, 1 0 1 1, C.Day, c, 3 0 2 0. Totals 25 3 8 3.

Watkins 0 0 0 000 0 - 0 4 0

Red Top 0 0 0 000 201 x - 3 8 1

Boddicker, Franzenburg (6) and Johnson. Baker, Yanecek (4), Rettenmeier (7) and C.Day. W - Yanecek. L - Boddicker. S - Rettenmeier.