

Van Scoyoc helps Norway sweep twinbill

Written by Jim Ecker

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NORWAY - If your last name is Van Scoyoc and you lived in Norway for part of your life, there's a really good chance the game of baseball flows smoothly in your blood.

Spencer Van Scoyoc is the latest example.

Van Scoyoc pulled on his father's old Norway Bandits jersey Sunday and starred on the same field where his grandfather won 12 state titles as the Hall of Fame coach at old Norway High School.

Van Scoyoc delivered the game-winning sacrifice fly as Norway trimmed Fairfax, 2-1, in eight innings in the first game of an Iowa Valley League doubleheader at the venerable ballpark.

Van Scoyoc then sparkled in relief and was the winning pitcher as the Bandits took the second game, 7-1, to complete the sweep.

Van Scoyoc lived in Norway until he was seven years old in a house that sits near the ballpark. His father, Aaron Van Scoyoc, starred at Norway High School and played in the minor leagues for the New York Yankees. His grandfather, Jim Van Scoyoc, won those 12 state titles and 796 games during his legendary coaching career at Norway and helps keep the field in tip-top shape with his keen eye for detail.

"My house was right on that corner over there," Spencer Van Scoyoc said after the doubleheader, pointing in a northwest direction from the field. "We'd always come out here when I was little and play around, and now to get a chance to play on this field is pretty

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awesome.

"My dad used to hit me softballs over here. Everything is connected."

Van Scoyoc moved to Cedar Rapids when he was seven and just finished his all-state career for Cedar Rapids Jefferson last week at the state tournament in Des Moines. He was selected in the 19th round of the Major League draft in June by Toronto, but did not sign and will begin his collegiate career at Arizona State this year.

"We never really came close (to signing)," he said.



Van Scoyoc played in one game for Norway last year in the IABA state tournament. He plans to play for the Bandits in the 2016 IABA tournament again next weekend, but he'll be gone before the tournament ends in August.

Van Scoyoc's younger brother, Connor, also played for Norway on Sunday and handled himself nicely as a designated hitter and infielder. Connor Van Scoyoc just finished his sophomore year with the Jefferson varsity and is considered a major college prospect himself as a pitcher.

Spencer Van Scoyoc said he plans to leave Aug. 8 and watch his brother play in the Area Code Games in California. Then he'll fly from California to Arizona and get things started at Arizona

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State.

Van Scoyoc was an outstanding hitter, left-handed pitcher and outfielder at Jefferson. He led all of Class 4A with 16 home runs this season and compiled an 11-4 record with a 1.31 ERA during his last three years as a pitcher, with 149 strikeouts in 101 2/3 innings.

Van Scoyoc said he's heading to Arizona State as a pitcher and hitter.

"We'll just see what pans out the best down there," he remarked. "I'd love to do both, the whole time.

"My scholarship is mainly for pitching, but they told me to be ready to hit when you get down here."

Van Scoyoc has been favorably compared to Cedar Rapids Washington graduate A.J. Puk, who signed a \$4 million contract with the Oakland A's this summer after being the sixth overall pick in the draft following three years at the University of Florida. Both are tall left-handed pitchers who opted for college baseball rather than turning pro after high school, although Puk is three or four inches taller than Van Scoyoc.

Van Scoyoc plans to get stronger, throw harder at Arizona State and get drafted again in 2019 when he's eligible following his third year with the Sun Devils. Perhaps a fat signing bonus will come his way as well.

"That's the plan, hopefully," he said. "I'd love that."

Van Scoyoc throws a nasty curveball, but he's had control problems with a 90 mph fastball during his career. His control issues may be changing, thanks to a tip he received recently from his grandfather.

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Jim Van Scoyoc suggested his grandson put his hands over his head when he delivers the ball for better results, and sure enough Van Scoyoc had much better control with his heater on Sunday. He struck out five batters in four innings and did not allow a single hit, facing a Fairfax lineup that featured a string of college players.

Van Scoyoc walked two batters, but none of the Fairfax batters were able to get the ball out of the infield.

"I felt really good today," he said. "We tried some new things today and it turned out pretty good."

The first game Sunday was tied, 1-1, after the regulation seven innings. Norway loaded the bases with one out in the bottom of the eighth inning and Van Scoyoc hit a long fly ball to right field for a sacrifice fly and the winning run.

Norway starter Brady Corson struck out 10 batters in seven innings before yielding to Brandon Brittain, who pitched the top of the eighth inning and got the victory. Adam Lloyd pitched a strong game for Fairfax and allowed only two hits in 7 2/3 innings.

Mitch Walser belted a solo home run for Norway in the second game and Brittain socked a two-run blast. Taylor Brecht contributed a two-run single for the Bandits.

Norway finished in second place in the Iowa Valley League standings with an 11-7 record. Fairfax fell to 6-10.

The IABA state tournament begins next Saturday.