

Lohaus enjoys his return to baseball

Written by Jim Ecker

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IOWA CITY - Tanner Lohaus felt like a kid again Sunday, roaming around at shortstop and bantering with his teammates in the dugout at Iowa City West High School.

There was just one problem.

"The spikes don't quite fit. I need a new pair," he said after playing for Red Top on opening day in the Iowa Valley League. "But it felt really good to be out there. It was fun."

Lohaus, an Iowa City West grad, spent two years at the University of Northern Iowa on their basketball team, but he's planning to change schools and change sports.

He wants to play baseball for his remaining years in college after his basketball career did not take root. He was redshirted at UNI as a freshman in 2016-17 and played sparingly this past season, appearing in seven games and playing a total of 35 minutes with eight points and 10 rebounds.

Lohaus announced this spring that he'd be making a major change and the search has begun. He's primarily viewed as a pitcher now, but played shortstop in high school and is a good athlete.

"I've visited Kirkwood and Mount Mercy," he said. "Coe and Morningside have talked to me. That's it right now."

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Lohaus was a member of an NCAA Division I basketball program at UNI, but right now he's talking to smaller schools for baseball.

"The level doesn't really matter to me," he said. "I'm looking for a group of guys that's fun to be around and a coaching staff that I can trust and know is going to help me develop as a player. That's really it for me."

Lohaus got two hits for Red Top in Sunday's doubleheader against Norway. He also did a good job at shortstop, but his return to the pitching mound this summer will wait until he builds arm strength.

"We are excited to help Tanner get some quality innings against high-level competition," said Red Top Manager Adam Sadler. "This league will give him a good idea on how he will be able to compete at the collegiate level."

"Tanner has a high ceiling as a pitcher, and dedicating all his time to baseball should bring some big results," said Sadler. "He has all the physical attributes you want in a pitcher. He just needs to put in the work and get some innings."

Lohaus said he'd like to pick a new college by mid-June. He was a teammate with his older brother, Wyatt, for two years at UNI, but now he'll be venturing out on his own.

Lohaus compiled a 16-5 record as a pitcher for Iowa City West in 2014, 2015 and 2016. The Trojans compiled a 103-29 mark during those three years and finished second at the Class 4A state tournament all three times.

Lohaus is confident he's made the right decision to change sports and change schools.

"It feels really good," he said about the switch. "I could just tell by how much fun I was having out there. As far as how much fun it is, the choice was the right decision."

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He has been working on pitching with his former coaches at Iowa City West and hopes to pitch for Red Top fairly soon.

"That stuff has been going really well," said Lohaus, a 6-foot-7 right-hander. "It feels like the arm is still there."