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A Tiger finding his roar on the Cape: Ian Bedell's transition from college bullpen arm To All-Star pitcher

July 27, 2019 | *Ryan Lemay (2019 Gatemen Beat Writer)*

Imagine being so good at what you do, one of the best college baseball programs in the county asks you to forego your senior year of high school. For Ian Bedell, that imagination was a reality. Instead of taking the mound at Davenport Central High School in 2018, Bedell was pitching in the SEC for the Missouri Tigers.

Most high school seniors would have folded under that kind of pressure. Bedell on the other hand, thrived and has always found a way to ignore the hype. The results were not immediate however.

Bedell struggled in his first collegiate season. He posted a 6.17 ERA in 11.2 innings, allowing eight earned runs on 12 hits. Bedell struck out 13 but also walked six. The fact that Bedell even played on this level at such a young age speaks volumes to the type of person he is and the kind of player he may potentially become.

Bedell broke out in his sophomore season. He was widely regarded as one of the top bullpen arms in college baseball finishing with a record of 3-1 and 1.56 ERA over 40.1 innings pitched. Bedell struck out nearly a batter per inning pitched striking out 36 batters and limited opposing batters to a .193 batting average against.

Bedell was basically untouchable on the mound. Right handed batters hit .179 (14-78), left handed batters hit .209 (14-67), with bases empty batter hit .163 (15-92), leadoff batters hit .195 (8-41), and with 2 outs batters hit .174 (8-46).

Those numbers are a lot to digest but it's hard not to look at them considering what he has done. The Cape Cod Baseball League is a great platform for college baseball players to display their talents and Bedell has used it as a way to elevate his game to an entirely new level.

In college, Bedell was one of the most dominant relief pitchers in the country. This summer, Bedell is perhaps the most dominant pitcher in the Cape Cod Baseball League. Bedell has put himself in prime position to become a star starting pitcher.

"The transition from being a relief pitcher to starting pitcher has translated pretty well. At Missouri I was doing long relief so I'm used to going multiple innings at a time" Bedell said. "There are little tricks that coaches Lawler and Weinstein have taught me to stay consistent for multiple innings, but mentality wise it's the same approach I use in college."

The level of the Cape Cod Baseball league never ceases to amaze, and this summer the cream of the crop for college prospects are playing. Bedell has embraced some valuable lessons from the talented players he has played with and played against.

"The level of batters I have faced this summer is similar but the opposing lineups as a whole are more talented" Bedell said. "You have guys that are hitting in the 3 hole in the SEC that are hitting in the 9 hole here so 1-9 can beat you at any time. In the SEC there is more of a drop off in the bottom half of lineups you don't see here."

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Bedell's teammates have been just as valuable to his growth as a pitcher. Fellow Missouri Tiger Trey Dillard is a member of the Wareham Gatemen this season as well and that made the initial adjusting period easier. There is a great rapport amongst the Gatemen pitchers and it shows with all the fun they have off the field.

"We have some really good pitchers on this team and we have fun messing around in the bullpen but when we are being serious these guys have taught me a lot" Bedell said. "West coast baseball is different than what I see in the SEC so you learn multiple styles of pitching from different guys."

Bedell has shined so much that he was named the starter for the West Division team in the Cape Cod League Baseball All-Star Game. Bedell is 3-0 with a 0.70 ERA in 25.2 innings pitched with 28 strikeouts only walking 3 batters. Bedell's most memorable performance was in Chatham July 10th. Bedell led the team to a 7-0 victory finishing with a final line of 6.0 IP, 0 ER, 1 H, 8 SO.

"Only two guys are able to say they are starting in the Cape League All-Star game. To be recognized as one of the top pitchers in the league is an honor" Bedell said. "I didn't expect to be an All-Star when I came here, I just wanted to pitch well and show everyone what I got."

Fellow West Division All-Star and Wareham Gatemen teammate Trent Palmer has played alongside Bedell all season long and has first-hand experience of how special he is.

"Ian takes a lot of pride in what he does so it has been nice to watch him and learn from him this summer" Palmer said. "I am excited to see what Bedell does tonight on the mound in the All-Star game."

Wareham Gatemen Manager Jerry Weinstein was the manager of the West Division team in the All-Star Game. Weinstein is very impressed with the skill level of Bedell.

"Ian has had a great season. He pounds the strike zone as good as anybody" Weinstein said. "I expect Bedell to play well tonight."

It was a very good performance for Bedell in the All-Star game, going 1 inning and facing the minimum. From watching Bedell in both the All-Star game and it is obvious to see why he has found so much success. Bedell has a fastball that tops out at 95 mph. The slider is his second best pitch with good velocity and nasty swinging motion. The curveball is the pitch Bedell probably has to work on the most but even that pitch has been a great weapon for him this season.

"The Cape League has helped me grow a lot as a player. This summer I have really attacked hitters well and throw changeups to left handed batters which I didn't do in college" Bedell said. "One very important thing I have learned is that the off days teach you more about yourself than good days on the mound do."

Bedell's growth in maturity on and off the field has been evident. Bedell is ready to take all of the tools he has added to the toolbox and become a starting pitcher when he returns to Missouri. Bedell does like being a reliever, but his dream has always been to be a starting pitcher.

The sky is the limit for Bedell. He has lived up to all of the hype revolving around him and he doesn't shy away from the big stage. Bedell has displayed maturity playing college baseball as a high school senior and he has taken that one step further thriving in one of the best summer baseball leagues this summer. This season has molded Bedell into being a starting pitcher and may serve as a springboard for the rest of his career.

"I would like to eventually transition into a starting role at Missouri and the coaches are probably willing to do that" Bedell said. "At the end of the day I just want to do what's best for my team."

November 2016

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