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Brothers make Alaska baseball a family affair

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By Tim O'Donnell TODONNELL@NEWSMINER.COM Jul 13, 2014  (0)

FAIRBANKS — The last time Eric and Anthony Hutting were on the same side of a baseball diamond was 2009. That year was Eric's freshman season at Tesoro High School while Anthony was a senior.

This summer, they've reunited in Fairbanks. Eric is a catcher for the Alaska Goldpanners of the Alaska Baseball League, while Anthony serves as the team's hitting coach.

"It's been awesome. I haven't had the chance to spend the summer with him in quite a while," Anthony said following the Goldpanners 5-4 win over the Anchorage Bucs on June 30 at Growden Memorial Park.

"It's an awesome opportunity to spend some time with him and coach this team. Overall, it's been an awesome experience," Anthony said.

Goldpanners General Manager Todd Dennis said the Huttings are the third set of brothers to play for the Goldpanners in nearly 50 years. Albert and Alvin Strane played for the Goldpanners in 1967-68 followed by the Reynolds brothers in the early '70s to early '80s.

Don Reynolds suited up for the Goldpanners from 1973-74, followed by Larry in 1975-77. Harold Reynolds, the former Major League All-Star and Gold Glove second baseman played for the Goldpanners in 1980.



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The Huttings, from Rancho Santa Margarita, California, did not plan on spending the summer together in Fairbanks. Eric, who plays at California State University Long Beach in Long Beach, California, knew he was coming to Fairbanks early in the college baseball season.

“He was coming up here before I knew where I was going to go and coach,” Anthony said. “The opportunity came up to coach with coach (Mike) Grahovac. It ended up just working out that I was going to coach at the place that he was playing. It was a pretty cool opportunity.”

Through two years with the Dirtbags, Eric is hitting .255 with 24 RBIs and 18 runs scored. He hit .270 in 40 games his freshman season in 2013 before dropping to .241 in 46 games this past season.

Eric and Anthony’s cousin Tim Hutting played for the Dirtbags from 2002-03. Tim was drafted by the San Francisco Giants in the eighth round of the 2003 MLB June Amateur Draft and later played with the Fresno Grizzlies, the Giants Class AAA affiliate in the Pacific Coast League.

The two are cousins of Kansas City Royals pitcher James Shields and former major league outfielder Aaron Rowand,

Anthony was drafted by the Texas Rangers in 38th round of the

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2009 MLB Draft but did not sign. He instead he went on to play collegiately at California State University Fullerton from 2010-13. Anthony was named to the Second Team All-Big West Conference in 2012, his junior year.

In four seasons with the Titans, Anthony hit .241 with 54 runs scored, six home runs and 75 RBIs. He hit a career-high .279 in 2012 and had a career-high five home runs in 2013. He also had 27 RBIs in both of those years.

Anthony also played in the ABL with the Anchorage Glacier Pilots in 2009. In 10 games with the Glacier Pilots, Anthony hit .226 with two runs scored and four RBIs.


While the two haven't been on the same team since high school, they have shared a field together.

Long Beach State and Cal State Fullerton are separated by about 20 miles and are rivals. Cal State Fullerton won all six games against Long Beach State in 2013, the only season the Huttings played against each other.

"Those were pretty fun. Obviously the Long Beach-Fullerton rivalry is one of the best in college baseball," Eric said. "It was fun playing against him and seeing how he competes on the field."



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“It was awesome. I never had the opportunity to play against him before he went to Long Beach State. The rivalry is a big thing so we had a lot of fun playing against each other,” Anthony said. “It’s cool being back together on the same side of the field.”

As for their parents, Greg and Melissa, dealing with the rivalry, Anthony said that they stayed neutral.

“Now that I’m not playing I think they’re back on the Long Beach side of things,” Anthony said. “They did a good job of staying neutral for us.”

Greg and Melissa were in Fairbanks to see the Goldpanners take on the Anchorage Bucs on June 28-July 3.

According to Eric, his parents were happy to see the brothers on the same side of the field again.

“They knew it would be a good experience for both us,” Eric said. “We’re able to spend some time with each other this summer.”

Through Friday’s game, Eric is hitting .263 (15 for 57) in nine games this season for the Panners. He also has 14 RBIs and 11 runs scored. He has already eclipsed his RBI total from this past season at Long Beach State, where he had nine RBIs in 46 games. His succes at the plate he credits to things he has

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learned from Anthony so far in Fairbanks.

“He’s just helping me with my timing at the plate, just seeing the ball, being able to recognize pitches and all that,” Eric said.

“Just playing the game. The little things in the game that I’m picking up and learning from my brother.”

Contact sports reporter Tim O’Donnell at 459-7583. Follow him on Twitter:

@FDNMSportsGuy.



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