

Carrollton native Sam Coonrod steps closer to play in the Majors

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January 25 2016 2:10 PM



CARROLLTON - Carrollton's Sam Coonrod, 23, is a step closer to his dream of being a Major League Baseball pitcher.

RiverBender.com visited with Coonrod at a recent Carrollton girls' basketball game and he said he has been invited to training camp with the San Francisco Giants.

Standing 6-foot-3 and weighing 225 pounds, Coonrod was a fifth round pick and the 148th overall selection in the 2013 draft while attending Southern Illinois University-Carbondale.

The Carrollton native said training at Scottsdale, Ariz., with the San Francisco Giants is “a good opportunity to show what I have.”

“I did really well last year,” he said. “I threw hard and did what I wanted to do. My goal is now to get on the Big League roster.”

Coonrod said time as a minor league baseball pitcher is not an easy lifestyle on the road, but at this stage of his life he wouldn't trade it.

“A lot of times you function with not much sleep, but it is a good experience,” he said.

“Sometimes you will be on a 12-13-hour bus ride, leaving at 7 or 8 in the morning and pitching at 6 o'clock that night.”

At Southern Illinois University-Carbondale as a junior, he finished the year with a 2.87 ERA. He ranked ninth in the conference with 77 strikeouts and a .226 opponents' batting average. He threw 42 strikeouts in the MVC in 42.1 innings. Coonrod posted 199 strikeouts in his three-year SIUC career.

At Carrollton, Coonrod was a three-sport star, participating in football, basketball and baseball. He led the Hawks to a 33-1-1 record and the 2011 state title in baseball under Coach Greg Pohlman. He is the son of Tim Coonrod and Karen Coonrod.

Sam Coonrod had a 7-5 overall record in 2015 in Class A ball for San Francisco. He posted 114 strikeouts. In 2014, he had a 1-0 record for a career 8-5 mark in the minors with a 3.29 ERA and 139 strikeouts. Coonrod's prime pitches are a fastball, curveball and the change up.

In the off-season, Coonrod spends a lot of time with family and throws through the winter at St. John's Elementary School gymnasium. He lifts and conditions almost every day through the winter in Carrollton.



One of the things the Carrollton pitcher is working on now is consistency in delivery of his changeup. He said he feels if he can get that part of his delivery down, he will be able to find a spot in the Major Leagues.

“I am a starting pitcher and they bring starters along a little slower than relief pitchers,” he said.

Over and over, Coonrod has visualized what it would be like to be pitching on a Major League Baseball mound.

“Since I was 5 or 6 years old, I wanted to be a Major League pitcher,” he said.

He said he loves his visits in Carrollton and time with family.

“There is no place like home,” the Carrollton boy said.

