

STEP CLOSER TO BIG LEAGUES: Former SIU-C, Carrollton hurler activated to Class AA Richmond team

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RICHMOND, VA. - Every young boy who plays baseball dreams of the day where he can step on to a Major



League field and play his first game in the big leagues.

Former **Carrollton High School baseball star Sam Coonrod** has been activated to the Class AA Richmond farm team for the San Francisco Giants over the past week. Coonrod, who lived in the small rural community of Carrollton through high school, always dreamed of stepping on a Major League pitching mound, his father, Tim, said this week.

Contacted in Richmond, Sam Coonrod said he couldn't be more excited for the opportunity to play at the next level and edge another step closer to play with the San Francisco Giants.

"I'm blessed to be healthy enough to compete at this level and would like to thank the good Lord for allowing it to happen," Sam Coonrod said.

In Class A baseball with the San Jose, Calif., team, Coonrod was 5-3 with an impressive 1.98 ERA so far this season and the Giants organization felt it was time to move him to another level. He played three years at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale after

Carrollton before being drafted in the Major Leagues and starting his quest to big league baseball.

As a senior, Sam Coonrod's Carrollton Hawks team won the IHSA Class 1A state title with a 31-1 record.

Tim Coonrod said it is pretty exciting for himself and Sam's mom that their son is so close to making it to the Major Leagues.

"His mom and I were talking about it until early in the morning the day he was moved up," Tim said. "He has felt he deserved to be in the Major Leagues all along and is a very confident kid. We are happy for him. It is definitely something he has earned."

Tim Coonrod pointed out that a lot of top prospects move straight to Major League baseball from Class AA, which is a prep area for the top league.

"We are overjoyed about it," Tim said speaking for his family. "I don't know what the percentage is of players who make it to the Major Leagues but it is very small. He will soon be 24 years old."

Sam didn't always want to be a Major League player, his dad said. At age 3 or 4 he wanted to be a bug exterminator when he grew up, his dad laughed, but at age 4 or 5 that changed to playing in the Major Leagues. His dad said that goal or dream of being a Major League hurler never waned from that point in time.

When Sam does make it to the Major Leagues, Tim said he and his family will be there to watch and likely have "goose bumps."

"I am sure we will shed a few tears when it happens," he said. "Imagine walking from the bullpen and getting that opportunity. We are going out to watch him pitch sometime in July and looking forward to it."