

Bryan Hudson interview from Mesa reveals optimism for his pitching future

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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For Bryan Hudson, one part of his life came to an end when he received his diploma from Alton High School and the baseball season came to an end for the Redbirds.

Wednesday, a new part of his life began – one that could conceivably take him to places many dream about.

Hudson signed a contract with the Chicago Cubs Wednesday after the Cubs made him the 82nd choice of the 2015 Major League Baseball First-Year Player Draft on June 8. Terms of the deal were not disclosed, but the MLB web site reported that Hudson was eligible for a \$1.1 million signing bonus.

“It is an awesome opportunity and I’m just glad I get to take advantage of it,” Hudson said from Mesa, Ariz. “The Cubs welcomed me the first week of practice. I don’t think it will take long to get used to everything.

“I am practicing every day. I took three-and-a-half weeks off from throwing to give my arm a break; I will have to get my arm in shape and I should be ready to play. I hope to be playing in a few weeks.”

“I’m very, very happy for both Bryan and his family,” said Redbird coach Todd Haug. “It’s the start of a new chapter in his life. He’s in good hands with the Cubs organization; they’ve got a plan in place and I think he’ll do well with them.”

Hudson, a 6-8 left-hander, went 10-2 with an 0.50 earned-run average for the Redbirds in 70.1 innings in his final high school season; the Redbirds won a school-record 30 games and finished tied for second in the Southwestern Conference with O’Fallon. They reached the IHSA Class 4A Edwardsville Regional final, where they fell to the Tigers. Hudson struck out 152 hitters and limited opponents to a .138 batting average. Hudson was also a key player on the Redbirds’ IHSA Class 4A basketball sectional finalists.

In his career, Hudson had a school-record 25 wins and 323 strikeouts; he was on the All-SWC team three times and was recently named to the College Baseball News’ Louisville Slugger High School All-America Team. Hudson’s starts attracted a large number of major-league scouts and executives, including a visit from Cubs President of Baseball Operations Theo Epstein during one game.

Hudson has been assigned to the Cubs' Rookie League-level Arizona League team in Mesa. According to the Minor League Baseball website, the team is currently managed by former big-league infielder/outfielder Carmelo Martinez, while the pitching coach is former left-handed big-league pitcher Ron Villone. Hudson had signed a letter of intent to play for the University of Missouri starting in 2016.

Hudson said his mother and father were extremely proud of him and he was thankful for all their support.

“My mom and dad are awesome and miss me at home,” he said.

While Hudson realizes most of the people in the area are St. Louis Cardinals fans, he knows he will have the support of people around the region as he makes the next step in his career. “I had a strong feeling I would be drafted by someone,” Hudson said. “The Cubs went to my games and showed a lot of interest. My goals now are to get to the major leagues with the Cubs.”

“He’s gone through a physical and now they’re going to shape him into being a baseball player,” Haug said. “I’m really excited about what the future holds for him. He could go a long way in baseball.”

[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)