

Japan-Metro Classic: Trey Beckman

Written by Jim Ecker

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Trey Beckman learned the hard way that Division I athletics is a business when Nebraska yanked the scholarship he'd been promised to play baseball for the Cornhuskers, but he's overcome the blow and is excited for the future.

Beckman, an all-state outfielder from Cedar Rapids Prairie, will play in the Japan-Metro All-Star Classic Thursday night at Veterans Memorial Stadium and then leave later this month for Wabash Valley Community College.

Wabash Valley is a long way from Nebraska, but Beckman is eager to get started with one of the top junior college baseball programs in the Midwest. He thought he had an iron-clad deal with Nebraska Coach Darin Erstad, but that evaporated.

Beckman accepted an offer from Nebraska when he was a sophomore and quit looking for another place to play. Then the trap-door opened.

"About this time last year Coach Erstad gave me a call and said I have some bad news: 'We over-booked on outfielders and we ended up recruiting too many kids.'"

Erstad invited Beckman to join the Cornhuskers as an invited walk-on, but Beckman declined.

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"I said I couldn't do that to my family," he remarked Tuesday. "That's a lot of money and that's not what I wanted to do."

One day he had a scholarship to a Big Ten school, and the next day it was gone.

"Division I athletics is a business. I kind of learned that," Beckman said. "But there's no point in being bummed about it. It's nothing I can control. I think I'm in a good position now with where I'm headed."

Beckman was disappointed, of course, when Erstad called with the bad news.

"I was their first commit for the 2015 class," he noted. "I committed there as a sophomore. It's the only school I ever visited.

"It was tough at the time, but you kind of grow and realize there are a lot of worse things that can happen and that everything happens for a reason."

Beckman hit .337 for Prairie as a sophomore in 2013, but he slumped to .262 last year when Nebraska yanked the scholarship. Determined to succeed, Beckman enjoyed a banner year this season when he hit .440 and helped the Hawks enjoy the best season in school history. He also did an outstanding job on defense in left field.

Prairie captured the first Mississippi Valley Conference title in school history and won 31 games, smashing the old school record. They more than doubled their victory total from 2014 and Beckman went out a winner.

"That's what I'm talking about: Everything happens for a reason," he said. "And I think the way things are going, it gives me a lot of confidence."

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"It's no joke: Hard work pays off," he said. "I've been working hard all winter and all spring and I think it showed this year. I'm just trying to continue that and play at a higher level and a higher level and keep going."

JAPAN-METRO CLASSIC ROSTER

Landen Akers, Washington

Brody Alberts, Prairie

Nolan Arp, Xavier

Trey Beckman, Prairie

John Carstensen, Marion

Zach Daniels, Kennedy

Corbin Day, Prairie

Connor Frese, Xavier

Blake Hargens, Kennedy

Colton Knox, Jefferson

David Kuhn, Marion

Lucas Larson, Jefferson

Sammy Lizarraga, Kennedy

Adam Stolley, Linn-Mar

Drew Yanecek, Prairie