

3 Metro ballplayers headed to WAC

Written by Jim Ecker

Wednesday, 19 December 2012 20:37 - Last Updated Thursday, 20 December 2012 21:25

Chicago State University is headed to the Western Athletic Conference for NCAA Division I athletics and three former Metro baseball players will be going with the Cougars, too.

Dane Mehring and Ean McNeal, a pair of Xavier High School graduates, and Linn-Mar grad Jordan Stroschein plan to enroll at Chicago State next year and play for the Cougars when they make their debut in the WAC in the 2014 campaign.

Mehring and Stroschein are sophomores at Ellsworth Community College and Mehring is a sophomore at NIACC. They'll be reunited in Chicago next year.

Chicago State announced Dec. 5 that it would be joining Cal State Bakersfield, Grand Canyon, Idaho, New Mexico State, Seattle and Utah Valley in the Western Athletic Conference.

"We're going to be flying to the West Coast. That's going to be exciting," said Mehring, a left-handed pitcher.

Mehring, McNeal and Stroschein are part of a parade of Metro products who have committed to new schools for next year, including at least six high school seniors.

Four Cedar Rapids Prairie seniors have picked their next schools with Ty Mougin and Tyler Votroubek headed to Wartburg, Brennan Hammer going to Heartland (Ill.) Community College and Tyler Butz staying home to play at Kirkwood.

Austin Stroschein, Jordan's younger brother and a senior at Linn-Mar, has committed to DMACC. Nate Greve, another Linn-Mar senior, will be going to Barry University in Florida.

Chicago State is building a \$3 million baseball stadium as it upgrades its program and moves into the Western Athletic Conference. Jordan Stroschein visited Chicago State a few weeks ago

3 Metro ballplayers headed to WAC

Written by Jim Ecker

Wednesday, 19 December 2012 20:37 - Last Updated Thursday, 20 December 2012 21:25

and liked what he saw.

"It seemed like a great situation and a great opportunity," he said.

Stroschein, an outfielder, hit about .310 for Ellsworth Community College last season. Mehring compiled a 3-2 record and 4.47 ERA at Ellsworth, where he and Stroschein are roommates. McNeal had a 2.40 ERA at NIACC last season.

Hammer developed into one of the top pitchers in the Metro area last season as a junior at Prairie with a 7-1 record, 2.76 ERA and 63 strikeouts in 45 2/3 innings. Arizona State was interested, but it was felt he needed more development before trying to play at one of the top major college programs in the country.

"It's hard to come out of high school and play at a high-level school like that as a freshman," he said.

Hammer will be joining one of the best NJCAA Division II college baseball programs in the country when he enrolls at Heartland. The team went 54-8 last year and finished third in the Division II World Series.

Hammer was recruited as a pitcher and position player and plans to do both at Heartland. "I'll do whatever gets me the most playing time and whichever gets me the farthest," he said.

Austin Stroschein also is headed to a top NJCAA Division II program at DMACC, which went 51-15 last season and reached the World Series.

Butz will try to help Kirkwood rebound from a rare losing campaign when he enrolls for the 2013-14 school year. The Eagles finished 21-33 in 2012 but have a new coach with Todd Rima, who ran a successful program at NIACC.

3 Metro ballplayers headed to WAC

Written by Jim Ecker

Wednesday, 19 December 2012 20:37 - Last Updated Thursday, 20 December 2012 21:25
