

More local kids doing well

Written by Scott Unash

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A few weeks back I talked about how truly blessed we were to have as many local metro kids doing well in their respective sports.

That trend is continuing.

In racing, last weekend was a good one for a pair of locals. First of all, Landon Cassill finished a season-best 12th at the Michigan International Speedway on Sunday in the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race. It has not been a secret that Cassill's car owner wants results, and soon, and this result is a great step to staying in the recently renumbered No. 51 car.

Also, recent Xavier graduate Joey Gase got a call late last week to participate in the K & N Racing Series East race at Langley Speedway in Virginia. Gase had a spin and finished a few laps behind in the race, but being asked to pilot a car shows how highly he is thought of in the national ranks.

In baseball, four locals begin their seasons in short-season minor league ball this week. Matt Holland of Marion and Texas A&M-Corpus Christi is playing with the GCL Phillies in the Gulf Coast League. Holland had a banner senior season for Corpus Christi being named to several honor squads. He will be joined in Florida by former Xavier and Belmont University star Nate Woods, who is playing for the GCL Marlins in the Gulf Coast league. Woods helped lead Belmont to its first NCAA regional appearance this spring.

Scott Schebler, a Prairie product, is playing for the Ogden Raptors in the Pioneer League in the Los Angeles Dodgers system. Schebler will be running up against Kernels-to-be playing for the Orem Owls in Utah, and also will enjoy (?) some of the longest bus trips in the minors!

Finally, former Jefferson prep Kellen Sweeney begins his second season of pro ball with the Bluefield Blue Jays of the Appalachian League. Sweeney toiled - and sweated - in the Florida heat and humidity last summer in Dunedin. Now he moves up the ladder in the Jays

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organization and will spend his summer traveling around some of the most beautiful scenery in the country.

We could end up seeing a pair of these locals playing in the Midwest League and back home in Cedar Rapids against the Kernels sometime in the near future. The Dodgers are affiliated with Great Lakes up in Michigan and the Blue Jays are also in Michigan at Lansing.

Vets Stadium could be an even more popular place in the near future to take in the "Major Leaguers of Tomorrow."