

Freese plays waiting game with White Sox

Written by Jim Ecker

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Dakota Freese keeps waiting for the Chicago White Sox to call and make an offer.

The White Sox selected the 6-foot-4 pitcher in the 34th round of the draft on June 8, but still have not made an offer.

"No, they have not," Freese said Thursday night.

Have they said when they'll get back to you?

"No, they have not," he said.

The clock is ticking. The deadline for signing draft picks is Aug. 15, which is one week from Monday.

Freese, 19, graduated from Cedar Rapids Washington this spring. He spent part of the summer with the Washington baseball team, pitching in five games, but spent the bulk of the summer with the Chi-Town Cream, a travel team in the Chicago suburbs.

He's signed a letter-of-intent with LSU-Eunice, a junior college in Louisiana. If he doesn't sign with the White Sox in the next 10 days, he'll go to college.

"My orientation (at college) is the 16th," he said. "We're driving down the 14th. It's a 19-hour drive, basically. So after that I'll be able to tell you what's going to happen."

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Freese figures he might get a "take it or leave it" offer from the White Sox on Aug. 15, right at the deadline. "Yeah, basically," he said. "That's how it works."

He said Braden Shull, a pitcher from Mount Pleasant who was drafted in the 28th round by the Phillies, is in the same situation.

"I hate it," Freese said, "but there's nothing I can do about it."

Shortly after the White Sox picked him, a White Sox official told Freese's mother they'd talk once the high school season was over. The high school season ended three weeks ago for Washington.

"The last time we talked was when I was in Indiana (with the Chi-Town Cream)," he said. "Like two weeks ago."

They talked, but they did not talk money.

Freese compiled a 2-2 record with a 3.50 ERA for Washington this season, with 40 strikeouts in 24 innings.

He thought playing for the Chi-Town Cream against elite competition would improve his negotiating stance with the White Sox. He's convinced it was the right thing to do.

"That was a great move," he said.

The Chi-Town Cream won a major tournament in Dallas on July 31, marking the end of its

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season. "I did pretty good, actually," said Freese.

He said his fastball was clocked at 92 and 93 mph.

Freese is back in Cedar Rapids now, waiting for the White Sox to call. He might drive to Louisiana on Aug. 14, get a call on Aug. 15 and make a U-turn to Iowa if he likes the offer.

"Maybe," he said.

Then again, he might stay in Louisiana and go to college. Right now, he has no idea what's going to happen.

"I don't really know what to tell you," he said.

Freese wasn't sure what to expect when he got drafted. He wasn't sure when an offer would be made.

"I heard so many different things," he said. "I heard it could be right away, it could be later, it could be the last week. I heard it might be a long time."

He knows the White Sox will make an offer at some point, but has no idea what it will be.

He might have to wait until Aug. 15 to find out.

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