

Pauli can't get enough baseball

Written by Ryan Merken
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NORWAY - There is no such thing as too much baseball for Casey Pauli.

If the former Kirkwood and Wartburg infielder doesn't get his fill of the game as an assistant coach for defending 4A champion Cedar Rapids Prairie or as the coach for his 6-year-old son Caden's team, there is always his playing career to fill the void.

The 33-year-old Pauli suited up for another season of Iowa Valley League baseball on Sunday, helping Red Top salvage a doubleheader split with Norway with a 15-10 win in Game 2.

"There's never too much baseball," Pauli said. "It doesn't get old, I just love being around the game in any way I can."

Baseball has been a big part of his life for as long as Pauli can remember. For a decade and a half, the Iowa Valley League has helped feed Pauli's love for baseball.

He started playing in the league in 2002 and now serves as a sort of player/coach for Red Top.

"I still get to play a little bit but I'm moving more into the coaching side, if I can still hang with these young bucks that's all right," he said. "It's just fun to still be out here playing the best game."

An All-Region performer at Kirkwood and All-American at Wartburg College, Pauli started

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playing in the Iowa Valley League during his college years. He continued playing in the league after his collegiate career ended and has been a regular in the Red Top lineup since.

Now a part-time high school coach with a full-time job and three children (daughters Chloe and Camryn join son Caden), Pauli continues to make time on the weekend for extra baseball.



"With having kids it's about letting them be at the ballpark," he said. "My son is six years old so letting him watch me if I do well or not is fun. He's into it, he likes being around the park."

Last week was a typical baseball week for Pauli.

Prairie had games on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. His son had a tournament on the weekend that forced Pauli to miss the first game of Sunday's season-opening doubleheader in the Iowa Valley League.

Even with the hectic schedule, he plans to keep his playing career as long as he can.

"I'll do it as long as my wife lets me," he said. "I appreciate her the most for letting me do this. She has the hard job of trying to keep an eye on three kids while I play a game I love."

Pauli provides more than just a bat in the lineup or a slick glove in the infield for Red Top. As an experienced coach, he is able to mentor some of the young talent on the Red Top roster each season.

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This year that includes players like Prairie graduate and current Kirkwood infielder Cal Clark, who went 3-for-5 with a double in the second game on Sunday.

"I try to bring my knowledge to them and help them to be better people and ballplayers," Pauli said. "The way I was coached when I was in high school and college, hopefully I can relay some of that knowledge and some of the things I learned on to them."

Norway took the opener on Sunday when Otis Roby slammed a three-run home run in the seventh inning to lift Norway to a 3-2 win. Norway had just two hits through six innings against Red Top starter Aaron Sauegling before Roby provided the game-winning home run.

Joe Funkhouser picked up the win for Norway in the opener as Red Top stranded 13 baserunners.

Red Top pounded out 13 hits in the 15-10 win in the nightcap, led by Clark's three hits. Ryan Rumpf had two hits and scored two runs and Ben Weeks was 2-for-4 with a pair of doubles in the Game 2 win.

Spencer Wiskus had a double and scored a run for Red Top in the second game and Ben Rettenmeier picked up the win.