

Salato is Iron Man for Norway

Written by Jim Ecker

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IOWA CITY - Tony Salato is not a big fan of Gatorade, but he planned to replenish his fluids as quickly as possible Sunday after pushing his body to the limit on a red-hot



day.

"A lot of water. A LOT of water," he said after helping Norway sweep Red Top on Opening Day in the Iowa Valley League.

Salato pitched a complete game in a 12-4 victory in the opener, then caught a complete game in an 8-1 victory in the nightcap with the temperature in the mid-90's.

"I'm pretty tired," he confessed. "But tomorrow I have an off day, so I won't do anything.

"You just have to keep going until the game is over."

Salato is a catcher at Upper Iowa University, where he hit .297 for the Peacocks this season as

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a junior. He pitched at Knoxville High School, but did not pitch during his two years at Marshalltown Community College or this season at Upper Iowa.

"All I do is catch," he said.

Norway did not have its normal allotment of pitchers Sunday, so Salato got the ball in Game 1 and figures he threw about 120 pitches. He allowed four runs on seven hits with four strikeouts, but the Bandits produced 12 runs of their own to help the cause.

In addition to all his pitching and catching, Salato excelled as a hitter all day and reached base nine straight times with five hits, two walks, a hit-by-pitch and an error. He scored four times and drove in two runs.

There are no courtesy runners for pitchers or catchers in the Iowa Valley League, so Salato had to run the bases all nine times.

"Not being a fast runner, I don't have to steal too many bases," he said, discounting the physical exertion. "Whenever I got to first base, the only thing I really had to worry about was getting a good jump on a dirt ball or something like that.

"I don't get the straight steal sign too much," he cracked. "I didn't have to worry about that at all."

Travis Mueller pitched the first five innings for Norway in the nightcap and had a nice, comfortable rhythm with Salato behind the plate, allowing just one run on four hits.

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"That was pretty easy," said the catcher. "Travis made it real easy. Not a whole lot of guys got on base to steal. I could just lob it back to him."

Salato plans to get his business degree from Upper Iowa next spring, but might not enter the business world right away.

"Actually, I'm going into mortician school after that," he said. "My dad was joking about it one day: He said, 'You might want to be a mortician.'"

"I didn't think too much of it, but two weeks later I thought 'That's not a bad idea.'"

Salato has been helping local morticians in Knoxville to learn the business.

Norway produced a lot of offense in the first game. Salato and Mitch Walser were both 3-for-4, while Christian Stekl, Mueller, JT Sole and Carlo Rivera had two hits. Braedon Brown socked a two-run homer. Mueller and Salato had two RBIs.

Ethan Copeland had three hits for Red Top in the opener. Connor McCaffery had two hits.

Riley Braughton had two hits and two RBIs for Norway in Game 2. He also pitched two scoreless innings in relief. Rivera had three hits and four RBIs, including a three-run double. Salato had two more hits.

Copeland had two more hits for Red Top in the second game.