

Schebler not satisfied with good year

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The Los Angeles Dodgers almost lost Scott Schebler. In fact, the outfielder thought they had.

En route to Dodger Stadium in 2010 to sign a contract, Schebler found out the team wasn't quite matching his asking price after all. Determined to stand his ground, the native of Cedar Rapids decided to fly back home and honor his scholarship to Wichita State rather than start his professional career.

"I thought it was all over," the Chattanooga slugger said.

The Dodgers, though, upped their offer on the day of the August deadline that year and Schebler said yes this time.

"It was crazy," the left-handed hitter said. "They had someone drive from Chicago with the contract to beat the deadline by a couple hours."

Schebler, who received a \$300,000 bonus, finally made it to Dodger Stadium last September when he was honored as the team's Minor League Player of the Year.

"They mentioned that I got to see Dodger Stadium when it looked even nicer, because they had finished a lot of remodeling," he said.

It may not be too long before the Dodgers' No. 9 prospect gets to play in Chavez Ravine. The 26th-round draft choice from an Iowa junior college about whom the team was on the fence has come a long way.

"It's all worked out great," he said.

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Schebler, who hit for the cycle June 1, had a three-homer game Aug. 12 to take over the Southern League lead. He has a league-best 12 triples in addition to his 25 home runs and also is tops in extra-base hits and total bases while slugging .548 with a .359 on-base percentage.

"I'm happy with my season but not satisfied," said the 23-year-old, who was batting .276 through 121 games.

Schebler is certainly glad the Lookouts play at AT&T Field now rather than History Engle Stadium a couple miles away. He came up empty in the Home Run Derby there the night before the Southern League All-Star Game.

"It didn't really bother me," Schebler said. "I knew I wasn't a batting-practice power hitter, and I got to see Kris Bryant put on a show. He was amazing."

Schebler likely wouldn't be leading the Southern League in homers if the Chicago Cubs hadn't promoted their No. 1 prospect from Tennessee to Triple-A Iowa in late June, but his numbers are still impressive.

Schebler has hit 17 of his homers and eight of his triples at AT&T Field, where he is batting .305 with 44 of his 67 RBIs in 64 games.

"This is a good place to hit, and I'm really comfortable with the routine at home," he said.

It can be tough for a hitter to go from the Class A Advanced California League to the pitcher-friendly Double-A Southern League. Schebler, who led the Cal League in total bases and extra-base hits while recording 27 homes and 91 RBIs for Rancho Cucamonga last year, fell victim for a while.

"I think I over-thought it at first," he said. "It took me a couple of months to get in a groove."

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Schebler played football, basketball and soccer during high school in addition to baseball and also set records in indoor track and field. In fact, he originally thought his college future was in football.

High school baseball is played during the summer in Iowa and doesn't attract many scouts. But Schebler hit .446 with 20 homers as a freshman at Des Moines Area Community College. Still, there were questions about Schebler's signability.

"I may have outpriced myself," he said.

The Dodgers, though, took a chance and liked Schebler even more after he tore up the Northwoods League that summer playing for Green Bay. But they had to make the money work.

The Dodgers also signed No. 3 prospect Joc Pederson and No. 6 prospect Zach Lee on the signing deadline that year, which could make Aug. 16, 2010, a very important day for the team's future.