

If Levi Usher plays college baseball, he'll stay in the neighborhood and play for the Kirkwood Eagles.

It could be a big "if," however.

Usher, a senior at Cedar Rapids Prairie, would be tempted to skip college and play pro baseball if he's selected high enough in the major league draft this June and likes the offer.

"I would be very tempted," he told the Metro Sports Report Sunday evening. "It's something my parents and I have talked about. I think I'm ready for it.

"We'll see how the spring goes and how I play."

Usher is a fleet center fielder who hit .468 with seven homers, 34 RBIs and 37 stolen bases for Prairie last season as a junior. He's ranked as the No. 2 high school prospect in Iowa by Perfect Game USA and the 82nd best high school player in the country.

If he goes high enough in the draft and is offered a lucrative signing bonus, he'll head straight to the minor leagues. If the draft does not turn out the way he wants, he'll head to Kirkwood and play for the Eagles in 2019.

Todd Rima, his baseball coach at Prairie, is also the head coach at Kirkwood and Usher would love to keep playing for him beyond this year. Several other Prairie grads have continued their careers with the Eagles.

"Rima is a great coach, a great person," said Usher. "I've talked to quite a few players and they've loved it there."

Usher has been recruited by a number of NCAA Division I schools, including the Iowa Hawkeyes, LSU, Mississippi and Mississippi State. "It was cool," he said about their interest.

If Usher enrolls at Kirkwood and stays for two years, he'll be eligible for the major league draft again in 2019 as a college freshman and again in 2020 as a sophomore since he'd be at a junior college.

If he enrolled at a four-year school like Iowa as a freshman, he would not be eligible for the draft again until he's a junior in 2021 due to all the college and major league rules.

That's a big reason he's committed to Kirkwood. "It gives me a lot of options," he noted.

Usher has discussed his situation with Scott Schebler, who graduated from Prairie in 2009 and spent one year in junior college at DMACC before signing a pro contract with the Los Angeles Dodgers in 2010. Schebler hit 30 home runs for the Cincinnati Reds last year.

"He thinks going to a junior college could really help," said Usher.

Usher, who is a multi-sport athlete at Prairie, broke his right leg in the third game of the football season on Sept. 8 and was sidelined for several months. He began playing for the Prairie basketball team a few weeks ago and said his leg feels fine.

He has one more day of rehab, when the physical therapist will test the leg and make determinations.

Usher plans to play for a Perfect Game select team this spring to get back into the swing of things and perhaps improve his status for the 2018 pro draft.

"It gives me a little more time to show myself," he said.

Usher's older sister, Olivia, is a prominent member of the Kirkwood women's basketball team that is ranked No. 2 in the country. She helped the Eagles win the national title last year.