

Jansen becomes ace of Williamsburg staff

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Tanner Jansen spent the last two summers trying to juggle two sports.

It's tough enough trying to play both baseball and football in college, but Jansen's plight was even more difficult. He was splitting time at Simpson College, working on his quarterback skills for football while trying to pitch when he could in the Iowa Valley League for Williamsburg.

As a sophomore last fall at Simpson, Jansen appeared in eight football games for the Storm, completing 5 of 16 passes for 59 yards and rushing for 131 yards and two touchdowns on 29 carries.

In the spring, he had a 2-4 pitching record with a 4.83 earned run average.

This summer, Jansen decided to devote all his attention to baseball.

"It was a little tough being a two-sport athlete," he said. "It got to the point where I was getting to the latter half of my college career and I figured it was best to go after baseball and attack it on the diamond."

He was only able to pitch on a spot basis last year for Williamsburg due to his football commitments. With his football career behind him, Jansen's mound career has taken off in the first three weeks of IVL play.

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In Week 1, he pitched six scoreless innings with seven strikeouts and allowed only three hits in a 7-0 victory over Watkins.

In Week 2, he pitched six scoreless innings again with eight strikeouts and allowed only two hits as the Red Sox shut down Walford, 6-0.

Last Sunday, he worked around three errors in the field and didn't allow an earned run in six innings in a 3-2 win over the Stars.

"We haven't had an ace in awhile," said Williamsburg center fielder Cam Frazier. "We've really rode Tanner in every game he's pitched. He hasn't dropped the ball once for us."

Jansen, a Malcom native who graduated from BGM High School, attributes much of his success this summer to getting into a routine as a pitcher.

"Consistency is the best thing ever," he said. "Just being able to know that I can come out here and execute with a great group of guys."

"There's no better feeling than getting out here on Sundays to play the game that God gave me the ability to play."

Williamsburg's 4-2 start has the Red Sox in the thick of the IVL title chase after the first three weeks. Quite a turnaround for a team that won just four league games all last summer.

"I'm really confident in the defense I have behind me," Jansen said. "It really helps me to be confident on the mound knowing that I can pitch to location, pitch to contact because I have seven guys behind me who will give their all to make the plays."

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Frazier said it is a joy to play behind Jansen.

"Nothing is ever going to come easy for us," he said. "We have to fight for everything and Tanner is the same way on the mound. We know he is going to keep us in every game."