

Goldenstein heading to Dominican Republic to play ball for Team USA

Written by Chris Lee



Jaydin Goldenstein, pictured in center, recently attended a tryout for the Team USA 15 and under team in Auburn, Wash. HHS baseball coach Kyle Bules, pictured at left, recommended Goldenstein tryout for the team. His dad Clint accompanied him and plans to go with him to the Dominican Republic in August when the team will participate in the Latin American Baseball Classic.□ □

—Enterprise photo

It's not every day a kid from small town America gets picked to represent his country on the baseball diamond, but for 15-year-old Jaydin Goldenstein that is exactly what he will do.

The HHS freshman will spend a week in Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic Aug. 2-9, playing for the USA 15 and under baseball team at the Latin America Baseball Classic.

HHS baseball coach Kyle Bules has a nephew who will participate on the 14 and under team. A month or so ago, his brother had asked him if he knew of anyone who would be interested in trying out for the team because a few spots needed to be filled.

Bules said Goldenstein's name came to mind so on Feb. 21, Jaydin and his dad Clint took off for Washington. The 15 and under team had already been filled but one kid hurt his elbow and another decided not to participate. They needed to find a couple more kids to fill the team so an additional tryout was held. This tryout was by recommendation only, as opposed to the November tryouts where anyone could attend.

The workout consisted of batting, throwing, catching, throw downs, fielding ground balls and pitching. The entire workout only took about an hour and 10 minutes, Jaydin said.

One of the funny things about Jaydin's tryout was the fact he hadn't touched a baseball or glove for quite some time. He suffered a concussion last summer while playing baseball and was

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forced to miss the first part of the football season as well. The other kids at the tryout play ball almost every day. Jaydin said he started to throw a couple weeks before the tryout but hadn't even picked up a bat.

The tryout was with former Chicago White Sox and Tampa Bay Devil Rays pitcher Jim Parque. Clint said Jaydin was able to take batting practice off Parque. "It was kind of fun and a neat experience to see," Clint said.

After the workout, each kid was called up individually by Parque and given feedback. That is when Jaydin found out he had made the team.

Jaydin will act primarily as a catcher for the team but will also be a relief pitcher. He said they told him it will be pretty competitive. If you don't earn a playing spot, they aren't just going to put you in because family traveled to watch, Clint said. The team will be there to win.

"I was kind of amused by the whole thing because Jaydin didn't start catching until two years ago," Clint said. Coach Bules said he forced Jaydin to begin catching against his will.

Somewhere between 700-800 kids tried out for the teams, according to Bules.

Approximately 140 people associated with the four teams will travel to the Dominican Republic in August. That includes players, coaches, medical staff and other personnel.

While in the foreign country, Goldenstein will get the chance to tour the area as well as participate in some character building with his teammates. And of course they will be trying to come away with great experience and a win.

Clint said the USA teams will get to see how the kids in the Dominican Republic live and are raised. He added baseball is a way for the kids there to get out and make a life for themselves.

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Baseball diamonds have been built so the kids there can play and craft their games from an early age.

The level of competition will be different than playing in Colorado as well. Not only will the crowds be bigger and louder, but the kids on the other teams will be good. Jaydin said some of them are already talking with major league teams and some have already committed to play for the MLB. Bules said there will be major league scouts in the stands as well.

Some of the teams participating in the tournament will be Mexico, Venezuela, Dominican Republic and the USA.

Both Clint and Bules are looking forward to seeing Jaydin participate with the HHS team and some summer leagues before heading off to play with Team USA in August.

Most of the staff working at the facility have either played or been associated with a major league team or college team at one time or another, according to Jaydin.

Jaydin said he has been playing baseball ever since he can remember. He completed the Rockies Skills Challenge when he was age 7 and has participated in the Border League as well as the Babe Ruth League. He also has been on the Border All-Stars and played in the state tournament the last three years. His team won state and made it to regionals in Missouri two years ago.

He hasn't given thought to playing in the majors. He just wants to enjoy high school and possibly try and play baseball in college.

Jaydin will spend his time now until he leaves raising funds so he will be able to attend. He said if anyone would like to help him out to contact either him or his dad. Clint plans to go to watch him play. Bules and his wife Tanisha also plan to go since their nephew will be playing.

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Jaydin was quick to give credit to friends and family who helped him get to the tryout which gave him this opportunity.