

## Staying Grounded

Contributed by Amy Grogan  
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For Jerad Grundy, Illinois is his home and Miami is his school. But baseball is his fun, and that's how it's supposed to be

In a small town where baseball is a tradition, Jerad Grundy is a stand out talent. As a left handed pitcher for the Johnsborg Skyhawks, Grundy makes throwing a consistent 90 mph fastball look simple.

Growing up in Johnsborg, the 18-year-old high school senior developed his game alongside the rest of his teammates. The town takes the ballgame seriously and most parents head out to Tiger Field, which was established in 1925, to cheer on the Skyhawks at home and grill out behind home plate.

"The kids on the team right now, I've been playing with since I was four, five years old on the Johnsborg baseball league. I know everyone really well," said Grundy. "We have excellent camaraderie on our team."

At the start of this season, the Skyhawks practiced indoors because the weather was not ideal for spring baseball. Grundy, who pitched from an artificial mound all winter, didn't step onto a dirt mound until the season opener back in March.

Unlike his teammates however, Grundy is drawing the attention of scouts from coast to coast. Before accepting a scholarship at the University of Miami, Grundy was also considering LSU, UNC, Florida State and Kentucky. Having picked Miami, he is very happy with the decision.

"I want to stay humble but it felt good when I got my scholarship to Miami. I felt relieved to know where I'm going to go for college."

Pitching coach J.D. Arteage was one of the deciding factors in Grundy's coach of going East Coast. "When I met the pitching coach I knew that was the guy I wanted to play for," said Grundy.

Grundy's parents were also happy about the decision but were quick to remind him that he should focus on the game over all the attention and hype.

"They just said keep playing baseball and have fun. That's all that matters. The reason you're playing baseball is to have fun," he said.

With the added pressure of scouts, Grundy keeps his parents words in his mind. Although he was a little nervous when the scouts first started to look his way, now he doesn't let anything take his concentration out of the game.

"When I'm playing baseball, I'm worried about one thing. It doesn't matter who's in the stands, how many people are there, if there's no one there, I'm still going pitch just like I always pitch so it doesn't matter," he said.

And by now, he is used to the attention. He played at the Area Code Tryouts in Long Beach California last summer where all the major league teams check out new talent and major league scouts have frequented his games this spring.

When he isn't practicing with his team, Grundy works with pitching coach, Rachaad Stewart who played with the Atlanta Braves and the Baltimore Orioles, at Pro Player Consultants located in McHenry, IL to stay focused on pitching.

As far as this summer goes, Grundy hopes to get signed professionally. If not, he plans to get a good workout going to stay on top of his pitching game to be ready to play in Miami.

"I worry about [the hype] sometimes but the worse case, I mean if I have a bad year and I don't get signed professionally, I'll go play in Miami for three years and then hopefully get drafted again so its not that big of a deal if you don't perform now," said Grundy.

Either way, Grundy's quiet sense of confidence pooled with his talent is a mixture for a successful future.

[View more photos of Grundy in our gallery](#)