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'Cat Tracks

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Paterson's dream coming true



As the pen touched the paper Tommy Paterson '05 felt his life change.

Years of hard work and a life-long dream were summed up in the contract before him. In early June, Paterson signed as a professional free agent with the Philadelphia Phillies. Hours later he was on his way to Clearwater, Fla.

"I signed my contract at 10 p.m. on a Tuesday night," said Paterson, who earned a bachelor's degree in finance. "I had to be on a flight at 6 a.m. the next morning."

Paterson honed his baseball skills at Linfield where he was named first team All-American by the American Baseball Coaches Association. He hit a career .367 and ranks fourth on Linfield's all-time list for runs batted, 117, and bases stolen, 38.

"Tommy was the model player at Linfield," said Scott Carnahan '73, head Linfield baseball coach and athletic director. "He had a strong commitment to improvement and was the type of player that would be the first one to practice and the last one to leave the field."

Once in Florida, Paterson spent three months living and breathing baseball. He played for the Gulf Coast League Phillies, a short-season team to introduce first-year players to professional baseball. His day began at 6 a.m. with team practice, a game at noon and an afternoon workout lasting until 5.

Although the schedule and 110 degree heat index was a difficult adjustment, it was the business side of professional baseball that surprised Paterson the most. He signed a baseball card contract, in addition to the playing contract, and underwent more than eight drug tests for steroids.

Paterson also faced cultural challenges, encountering a language barrier with Latin American teammates.

"At Linfield it was easy to form a team bond because we attended the same classes and lived and practiced together," said Paterson, who is the 36th Linfield player to sign a professional baseball contract. "I found it difficult to form a strong team bond in Florida because we spoke different languages and people were continuously coming and going from the team."



Tommy Paterson '05

Paterson used the dynamics of the new team to his advantage. He focused on his own skills and made adjustments to improve.

"Tommy just has such a strong desire to play and succeed at the professional level," said Scott Brosius '02, former New York Yankees third baseman and assistant Linfield baseball coach.

Now back in McMinnville for the off-season, Paterson will train with the Wildcat baseball team and stick to the strict workout regimen given to him by the GCL Phillies. He will return to Florida in February to begin spring training. He is confident about his future in baseball after his summer experience.

"My goal has always been to play in the major leagues," said Paterson. "I came away from this summer realizing I have the drive and perseverance to accomplish my goal."

Paterson has a legion of fans rooting him on, including Brosius, who spent 11 seasons playing with the Oakland A's and the New York Yankees. He was also the most valuable player of the 1998 World Series.

"I know I felt this and I know Tommy feels it now, that if you can just get one shot to prove what you can do, that would be enough," said Brosius. "Then, even if you fail, you know you have taken the chance and made the effort."

— Laura Graham '07

Eight athletes, one team to be inducted into Hall of Fame

The Linfield College Athletics Hall of Fame will induct eight individuals, a national championship relay squad, and the first football team to compete in the national playoffs at the eighth annual ceremony, Saturday, Nov. 5, at Linfield. The banquet will follow an alumni-junior varsity football game slated for 1 p.m.

Athletes being inducted include Steve Lopes '84, a former All-American offensive tackle and member of two NAIA national championship football teams; Ed Kama '81, a three-time all-conference offensive tackle and first team NAIA All-American in 1980; Lisa (Lind) Prevedello '89, a Northwest Conference champion in three events and current Linfield record holder in the high jump; Joe Robillard '69, a four-year all-conference defensive back who ranks second on Linfield's career interceptions list; Cliff Saxton '52, a four-year starter on both offense and defense and a NAIA All-American for Hall of Fame football coach Paul Durham '36; Alan Schmidlin '80, a first

team NAIA All-American quarterback who passed for more than 5,000 career yards; and Keith Lazell, Stewart Minors, Carl Shaw and Randy Carter, all Class of '76 and members of Linfield's NAIA national championship 4x400 yard relay squad. The quartet continues to hold Linfield and Northwest Conference records in the mile relay.

Linfield's 1961 Camellia Bowl football team, which played for the NAIA national championship and was the first Linfield squad to compete in the national playoffs, is also being enshrined.

Earning induction into the Linfield Athletics Hall of Fame for meritorious service are Dave Hansen, the Wildcats' football and basketball radio announcer for about 30 years and current vice president for student services and dean of students, and longtime Linfield supporter Del Smith, trustee of the college and owner of Evergreen Aviation.

Learning time management: Susan O'Meara



Susan O'Meara '08, women's basketball and statistician for baseball, soccer and volleyball

Hometown: Sonoma, Calif.

Major: Exercise Science

Being an athlete at Linfield, "In college you have to study way more but the time management skills I learn as an athlete help me be successful. Even though practices are more intense than high school and I have to focus on school as well, I enjoy it. I am a more effective person if I have lots of things to do."

Being an athletic statistician, "I became a statistician after a teammate asked me to fill in and then the athletic department needed a statistician for the baseball season. It was all about knowing the right people. I also had experience from high school when I was the statistician for my brother's sports teams. I enjoy the job because it gives me the opportunity to watch all of the other sports."

Chose Linfield because, "I knew I wanted a small school with a strong program in my intended

major. Even though I am from California, all the small schools are in the Los Angeles area and that was not where I wanted to be. I also looked at bigger California schools and they were just not right. But when I walked on campus at Linfield I felt, "This is it."

Studying exercise science, "Since seventh grade I have had a trapped nerve in my knee. Over the years it has been misdiagnosed and I have tried every treatment for it. I soon found that physical therapy was the only thing that helped. This combined with my interest in the human body attracted me to physical therapy."

Favorite Professor: Laura Kenow (human health and performance). "I took the class Prevention and Treatment of Athletic Injuries with Laura Kenow and I enjoyed it. I found that the class related to me as an athlete but I also found it interesting because of what I am studying. She was an energetic professor, which brought me into the subject even more."

Plans after graduation, "I want to go into physical therapy, which would require graduate school. But I have also thought about becoming a sports trainer for a high school team or going into coaching."