

Eisenhower Shortstop Bounces Back from Arm Injuries

YAKIMA — For a high school baseball player, Will Scott's senior year couldn't have ended much better. First-team CBBN Cascade honors, a hefty division-leading .513 batting average and the chance to play in the All-State Series in front of his family and friends.

That's how his days at Eisenhower ended.



Eisenhower's Will Scott swings the bat he's used since eighth grade as he prepares for this weekend's All-State Baseball Series at Parker Field. A serious arm injury and subsequent infection prior to the start of his freshman year nearly cost Scott his right arm.//ANDY SAWYER/Yakima Herald-Republic

How they began was entirely different, so much so that playing baseball at all seemed remote. In fact, having a right arm was in question.

"There are times, like everybody, when I get mad at myself for making a mistake and feel like complaining about it," Scott said. "But then I think, wow, I'm just glad to be playing. At least I'm out there."

Standing on his home field this week, Scott looked out at the pitcher's mound at Ike Field and said with a grimace, "Right there, that's where it happened."

It was the summer of 2007 and Scott, an accomplished youth pitcher, started a Little League Juniors game at Ike Field. His first pitch, as his dad and coach recalled, was a beauty.

"A fastball right down Broadway," Tom Scott said. "I leaned over to Cory Roybal and said he's on today."

The second pitch, however, sailed 10 feet over the batter's head and hit the screen. Two pitches later Scott's offering nearly hit the top of the screen.

As soon as everyone wondered where that came from, they saw the reason. Scott fell to the ground in agony holding his right arm.

"It just popped and I dropped," he said. "My elbow swelled up like a softball and I knew I was done for a while."

Scott had broken a bone in his right elbow. He had surgery after the swelling finally ebbed, and showed up for his first day at Eisenhower with a cast on his right arm.

But that wasn't the worst of it. Not by far.

Scott contracted a staph infection from the surgery that put the health of his arm in serious jeopardy. There was talk of not playing baseball again and even possibly the loss of the arm if treatment wasn't quickly effective.

“It was bad, and that was really a tough time,” Scott said. “I had a tube running from my arm to a spot behind my heart to keep it clean and medicated. My mom had to change my medicine in the middle of the night every day, and my arm was so weak and shriveled up.”

Through the winter of his freshman year, Scott slowly overcame the inflection and its effects, grew in strength and started assessing his baseball future. Doctors initially told the family his playing days were likely over.

“Hearing that really hurt, but when I started feeling better I wanted to try to play,” he said. “Pitching was out, so I started thinking about the infield. My family was like, if you really want to let’s just take it easy and see how it goes.”

The first order of business was getting in the weightroom and trying to get his right arm to look something like his left. By spring tryouts for baseball there was hope.

“I was nervous to play catch at first, but I kept telling myself, ‘I can do this,’” he said. “I was determined not to give up.”

Today you would never guess Scott had been through so much, unless you looked at the gashing scar across the inside of his right elbow. He got through that freshman season at Ike, and for the next two years was a second-team CBBN second baseman for the Cadets.

In his final prep year, Scott moved to shortstop, replacing ’09 grad Tyler Berman, and bumped his production at the plate with 39 hits in 76 at-bats (.513). Much of that improvement he attributes to his specialty — pitching — before the injury.

“I wanted to work on having a good eye at the plate, and having a plan every time,” he said. “This season everything just clicked. Being a pitcher once I know what they’re thinking and I pick up on things. That’s been a big help.”

Scott, who has a summer with the Yakima Pepsi Beetles ahead of him before heading to Tacoma Community College, will be one of 72 senior standouts in the All-State Series. He will play for Team Adams and will be on the field for today’s first game at noon.

“It’ll be a thrill playing with all these guys,” he said. “To think where I started as a freshman. This is just a great way to finish.”