

Interview With Jason Phillips

Dr. Dixon

Pennsylvania History

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I interviewed Jason Phillips a minor league pitcher in the Pittsburgh Pirate organization. Jason and I grew up together playing baseball together in the town of Hughesville Pennsylvania. Although we won a lot of tournaments and games, Jason was the only one of the many outstanding young ball players to get drafted. It's a very special feeling knowing that you've played with and against a future Professional baseball player. Jason has played two years in the pirate organization. This spring he is scheduled to play with the highest division of single A ball.

Q. I know that every kid that has ever played little league baseball, dreams of someday playing pro ball. When you were growing up when did you first realize that your dreams could become reality?

Jason. Growing up, like you say it's every kids dream to play pro ball. I've always wanted to play. Hughesville is a pretty small town, but we had some good teams. I didn't really realize it until high school (that I had a shot of making pro ball). I fared pretty well against competition in Hughesville and in the surrounding areas. When we were twelve, winning districts, then when we were 15, winning districts again. But we had very good teams. It wasn't really until my sophomore year when I got picked to play for the East at the United States Olympic Festival, and went to Los Angeles for a month. Being from a small

town (Hughesville) and going to a much bigger town (Los Angeles), I got exposed, to scouts and some colleges and things of that nature. My junior year is when I really started to feel it (that he ^{could} play pro ball) I got invited to pro camps and things of that nature. I started getting recruiting letters from Miami, Stanford, Oklahoma State, and a lot of the big baseball schools. Then I went to a camp in North Carolina, in Raleigh, at North Carolina State University. They (N.C. State) took an interest in me and followed my career and came up to Hughesville, scouted me and watched me pitch. Then in my senior year they offered me a scholarship. Basically that was about the time that I knew I probably had a chance to play pro ball. I played on the Jr. Olympic team in my senior year but that was after I got drafted so I signed after that. That was about the only time that I really knew that I had a chance to play pro ball. Brian, as you know Hughesville is about two thousand people and a lot of people don't get out of it. It was the only time that I really realized it when I started getting invited to camps and getting recruited.

Q. Jason I was just wandering how you felt about the strike, being a ball player especially a minor leaguer, what is the differences between you and a major league baseball player? I wanted some thoughts about that.

Jason. What do I think about the strike?

Me. Yeah, how do you feel?

Jason. First of all, I get asked this a lot. the strike in all effects has an effect on me in any sense. It's at the big league level, between the coaches, owners, and players. Recently, I've been hearing that if there thinking about, if they don't resolve it, that they are thinking about bringing minor leaguers up. What I think about that is good. Because in this business you have to think about yourself first. But, the reason that their on strike is the big leaguers now are saying now that their trying to take care of the minor leaguers later. So its kind of hard to go to Pittsburgh, it would be tough to cross the picket line because they are trying to help you out. Plus the big leaguers are going to black ball you, their going to give you a hard time. In all sense I would go because I'm looking out for myself. But, I'm looking for the strike being resolved probably by Christmas Jim Leyland (manager of the Pirates) was in the locker room the other day and we were talking to him, he was saying that "both sides are starting to crack and they probably will have it resolved by Christmas. My opinion is that the owners cut their own throats because a couple of years ago in the last strike they had, I'm not sure what year, in the eighties, but the owners aloud arbritration. What arbritration is, that each player is up for free agency and what they do is go into negotiations about what the players think their worth is. That's were the Jack McDowels', and all those guys get all their money, that's

a big thing. Plus, they (the owners) want a salary cap. The players want to continue with arbitration because that's where they're getting all their money. The players don't want a salary cap like in football. In my opinion the owners cut their own throats, they're the ones paying the contracts, the players are asking for them and getting them. In all sense it's a lot of the owners' fault. Because, they're paying the salaries, and letting it get out of hand. I do support the players because they are looking out for my future. In all sense though I would cross the picket line because I do have to look out for myself.