

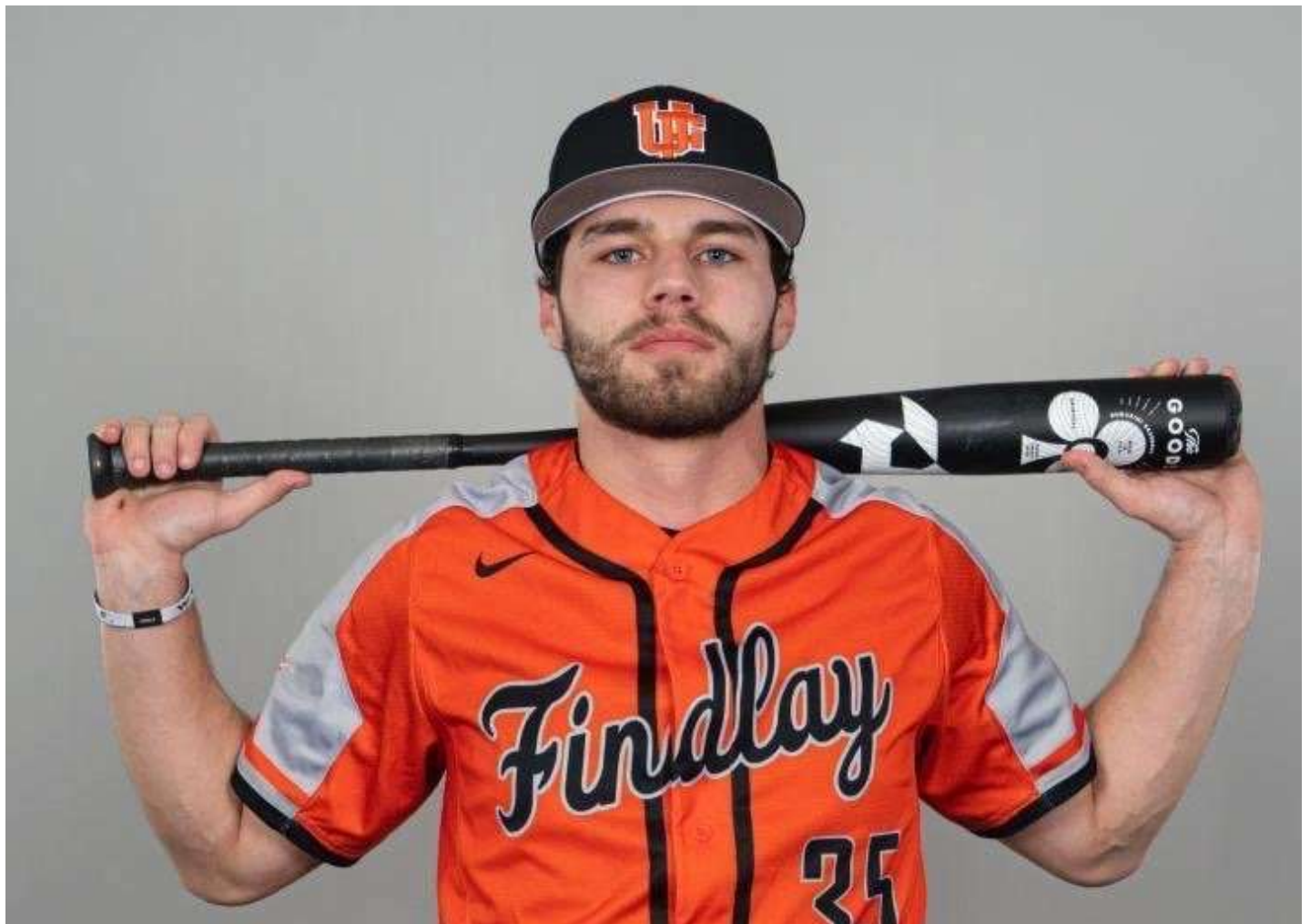


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# Derek Fay stays the course; set for first college regular season baseball action this spring

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Photo courtesy of University of Findlay Athletics.

**FINDLAY, OH** - Patience is a virtue. It's something University of Findlay outfielder and General McLane alumni Derek Fay has learned through a nearly three-year college baseball journey to this point.

A former two-time all-region and All-District 10 honoree for the Lancers in baseball, Fay started his collegiate baseball journey in the fall 2019 as he signed with Slippery Rock University. His first year of college featured fall ball, but in the spring of 2020, COVID-19 canceled spring sports across the country before Fay saw any game action that season.

With the NCAA granting spring athletes an extra year of eligibility, Fay returned to The Rock for his second season of college baseball, but so did almost the entire roster from the season before, along with a new class of freshman. Game action was scarce during his first two years at Slippery Rock.

Looking for more reps and to get back on the field, he decided to play summer ball in North Carolina playing for the High Point Hush Puppies of the Old North State League. This experience introduced him to new players, and through them, he found out about an opportunity to compete for reps in the outfield at the University of Findlay. While it was a move that benefited his baseball career, it was one that also allowed him to continue to also study for a degree in engineering.

"I had a conversation with my teammate Cam Farrar, who is playing with me now at Findlay. He told me they were looking for some outfielders. I eventually had a conversation with assistant coach Troy Merriman, and I determined it was a great opportunity to come here. His message of putting in what you will get out of it really sold me."

Hard work is something Fay's family knows a thing or two about — he grew up assisting his grandfather, Robert Abbot, on the family farm. The experiences from growing up on a farm sparked his interest in a career centered more around manual labor and using his hands to build a collection of things. His dream job is to build farm for John Deere one day.



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Pittsburgh Spikes; playing in tournaments all over the Mid-Atlantic as well as the southern parts of the United States. Facing the best competition in the country during the summer months eventually helped him get recruited by a collection of schools.

His extra reps playing travel baseball translated to high school ball which allowed him to have a senior year that saw him get selected to play in the Erie County Senior All-Star Game, one of his favorite memories from baseball to this point. Fay also took part in the Erie County Senior All-Star Game home run derby that was held with the event and was crowned champion of the competition.

“Having my parents watch that was such a special moment,” Fay said. “My dad (Kurt) actually wanted to throw to me during that, like so many times before, but I decided I just wanted him to enjoy it this time. My dad was such a big help in my baseball career, especially during my travel baseball days.”

Fay gets a lot of his athletic ability from his mother, Gaylene, as she was a former standout volleyball player for The Rock in her college days. With this connection to Slippery Rock as well as some of his travel baseball connections he made to the school, it only made sense to begin his career there. Now, he’s forging his own path at an unfamiliar campus, the University of Findlay, this school year.

“Nobody from my home area is really here except for one person... who is studying to become a veterinarian who also attended General McLane,” Fay explained. “It’s been a nice, fresh start and a good break from living in the same region where I have lived my entire life.”

Despite branching out, Fay has not lost sight of where he came from and the people who provided the foundation to help him become successful in both his career and baseball journey. His travel baseball coach, Jason Phillips, and his high school baseball coaches, Tom Peyton and Mike Dombkowski, have served as great mentors and helped him to reach the next chapter of baseball by becoming a college player.

Almost two decades after getting his start in baseball, Fay still has the same amount of enthusiasm for it today. A fresh start at the University of Findlay will hopefully help him gain the playing time he has worked for over nearly three years. This journey will also see him soon complete a degree in engineering and also hopefully complete a master’s degree so he



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