



NEWS...

from South Suburban College

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July 11, 2005 - For Immediate Release

Former Bulldog Byrdak takes advantage of “last chance”

SOUTH HOLLAND, IL – When Tim Byrdak left last spring for a tryout with the Ottawa Lynx, a minor league affiliate of the Baltimore Orioles organization, he told South Suburban College Head Baseball Coach Steve Ruzich he had decided to give it “one last chance.”

Now Byrdak, 31, is thankful for his decision as he is finally fulfilling his lifelong dream of playing Major League Baseball with a storyline that draws parallels to the popular baseball movie “The Rookie.” Byrdak, a former SSC baseball standout, had served as the pitching coach for Ruzich’s Bulldogs over the past four years while recovering from Tommy John surgery.

Everything changed for him on Saturday, July 2nd of this year when the Orioles purchased his contract from their Triple-A Ottawa farm team. He entered a game against the Cleveland Indians that same day and promptly pitched one scoreless inning with two strikeouts in a Baltimore victory. He was called on two days later in a game against the Yankees retiring all four batters faced including consecutive strikeouts of Jorge Posada and Jason Giambi. He also recorded his first save in a win over the Red Sox on July 7, before surrendering his first runs of the season the following day. Byrdak enters the All-Star break with a 4.15 ERA, one save, and eight strikeouts in just 4.1 innings pitched.

His major league call-up will force Byrdak to miss out on his selection to the International League All-Star Team for his outstanding performance at Ottawa. Byrdak excelled as the Ottawa Lynx closer out of the bullpen this year, posting a 2.09 ERA in 38 2/3 innings.

In his two years at SSC (1992-1993), Byrdak set almost every career record with 14 wins, 146 innings, 164 strikeouts, and holds the single season strikeout record of 99. He received a scholarship to Rice University in 1993, where he later was drafted in the 5th round by Kansas City Royals organization. Byrdak made appearances for the Royals between 1998 and 2000, and also spent time in the Cleveland Indians and San Diego Padres farm systems before the Baltimore Orioles organization obtained his rights last year. Byrdak played baseball at Oak Forest High School prior to attend SSC.

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