

Sports

## COLLEGES: Brett Michael Doran finds his field of dreams at Stanford

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By Chris Hunn, Register Staff

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Brett Michael Doran's story is a mix somewhere in between the movie "Rudy" and the emergence of Jeremy Lin.

The Law product and former Register All-Area MVP grew up with the dream of playing baseball at Stanford, a national powerhouse. He eventually earned a spot as a non-scholarship roster player (he's not a walk-on, but didn't get any scholarship money either) for the Cardinal.

A handful of schools showed interest and offered scholarships, but he turned them down to follow his dream. Sure there were critics and doubters. They said he wasn't good enough. They said he made the wrong decision. They said he wouldn't see the field.

Now comes the Lin comparison (but without all the hype and Linsanity).

Doran has come out of no where and has stepped into the starting lineup. He's now Stanford's second baseman and leadoff hitter.

And he's not only playing, he's playing well.

"I showed up one day and saw my name in the lineup," Doran said. "Getting a chance to play any time is awesome. Especially after sitting a year and a half. That gives you a different perspective of the game. It gives you a little more fight, a mentality to never get comfortable. I'm fortunate enough to be in lineup, but I can't take it for granted."

Stanford, ranked No. 8 in the nation, was 6-2 with him in the lineup heading into Tuesday's game against San Jose State.

He had played sparingly earlier in the season. He had a couple of spot starts and filled in as a pinch-hitter, pinch-runner and in defensive situations.

Then starting shortstop Lonnie Kauppila, Doran's good friend and roommate, went down with a torn ACL in a game against Oregon last month. Doran replaced Kauppila that game, and in his first at-bat, he smacked a two-run single. In the next game against San Jose State, he doubled off the left field wall in his first trip to the plate.

It was no fluke. Since joining the lineup, he's batting .321 with seven runs, four doubles and four RBIs over the eight games.

"He's the type of kid that just needed a shot," said Dennis Sweeney, who coached Doran at Law. "I'm not surprised to tell you the truth. I expected him to get in there and do what he's been doing. Getting the opportunity is the hardest part."

On the field, Sweeney says the 5-foot-11, 200-pound Doran has an uncanny ability to make adjustments. Fielding is his best

asset. He's a solid hitter and the smartest base runner Sweeney has ever seen.

Doran will play for the Hyannis Mets of the Cape Cod League over the summer.

At Stanford, Doran is clearly making the most of his opportunity. It's his spot to lose now.

"Yeah, maybe sooner than I expected," said Doran of the chance to play. "There's definitely people who questioned me. But I wasn't worried. I knew I belonged at this level and knew I could play."

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