

I hated every minute of training, but I said, Don't Quit. Suffer now and live the rest of your life a champion.

Muhammad Ali

As a young athlete playing baseball, it is tough to play some innings, and then sit the bench the rest. You want to be active, you want to be in the game, and you want to play every inning. In Little League and Babe Ruth games, playing time is given but as you get older, playing time is earned. It is earned through hard work, coachability, and other skills that help build team chemistry and team success. Sometimes the road to more playing time has obstacles; others playing the same position, injuries, etc. There is something to be admired by those who never give up and push through those obstacles. With the right attitude and determination, working will lead to success, but the road is not easy and it truly takes genuine hard work. In the case of our March Athlete of the Month, Mitch Baker, his hard work throughout his adolescence earned him the role of Captain for Braintree High School Baseball in 2016 and a roster spot for UMass Dartmouth this season.

As long as I have seen Mitch play baseball, he was never the exclusive starting catcher; he was always sharing time. That never discouraged him and he consistently worked hard through Babe Ruth and Freshman/Sophomore year of high school. All of his perseverance, and some genetics, took form sophomore into junior year when Mitch earned the opportunity to be in the lineup on a consistent basis with the Wamps Varsity group. Mitch was instrumental to their first State Championship run as the DH in the Super 8 Tournament. As a senior, Mitch earned his captaincy and starting catcher position. Manager Bill O'Connell praised Mitch's value to their team in their second Super 8 Championship stating, "Mitch is tough, smart and a dependable baseball player. Very hard working and was a huge reason the Wamps were State Champions in 2016". After graduating from Braintree High School, Mitch took his talents to UMass Dartmouth where so far this season, he is a key contributor as a freshman. His statistics alone show what a solid impact he is making and important role he has established for his team- through April 19th, Mitch is hitting .333, with 2 homeruns and a .606 slugging percentage. It must be stated that throughout this whole process, Mitch was a daily fixture at the baseball club working out and hitting, always looking to improve.

Mitch's story is a true testament to the adage that work ethic will surpass talent any day of the week. Fortunate enough for Mitch, he knew he was talented and eventually his work ethic earned him the playing time and he proved himself in his later years at Braintree High and now at UMass Dartmouth. Congratulations Mitch, your story is an inspiration to those who have the tenacity and will to push through obstacles in order to be successful in life. The obstacles in life are inevitable, it just depends how one chooses to deal with them, you relentlessly push through yours, your success is encouraging we look forward to hearing of further successes and all that you overcome and achieve.

Congrats

Jim Joyce