

Labeling to pitch for University of Illinois

By Daniel L. Chamness

Logan Labeling is coming home. Or as close as he can get collegiately.

Now as a 21-year old, the Tuscola graduate has his wish. The former Warrior, who pitched in the state championships as a sophomore, will suit up for the University of Illinois.

"I am eager to throw for the Orange and Blue," said Labeling, who has been at Wright State University in Ohio on their team the last two years. "I can't wait to be pitching in front of my family, friends, the people that supported me and helped me improve as a player. They watched me grow as a player and a person. I am looking forward to my family attending my home games. It has not been easy on them the last two years. When I talked to the coaches at Illinois, I was excited about the culture and what they explained to me while I was in the transfer portal."

When he entered the transfer portal, Bradley University and Illinois State University, both NCAA Division I schools playing in the Missouri Valley

Conference, recruited him as well.

"Wright State helped me become a better pitcher," said Labeling. "I became more of a pitcher than just a thrower. In high school, you can blow a fastball by a batter. College is different. You are facing the high school hitters that were the best of their high school. You learn how to miss barrels of the bats instead of the bats."

He is looking to do that even better this summer. The future Illini is currently in Connecticut, Danbury to be exact, playing for the Danbury Westerners. Thus far, in the first 12 games, he has worked 4 2/3 innings and has a 3.86 earned run average. He has allowed two earned runs on six hits. The college pitcher has fanned nine and walked three. He has earned one save.

The former Warrior earned that save on Saturday night against the Winnepesaukee Muskrats. Labeling worked the final four innings of the 5-3 Danbury win, allowing one earned run on three hits. He struck out seven and walked three. The Westerners are 6-6

in the New England Collegiate Baseball League.

Labeling's new school was 31-22 overall and 17-7 in the Big 10 Conference. The Illini had a total of eight pitchers, who threw 20 or more innings, that posted records that were .500 or above. Six had winning marks. Of those hurlers, seven are slated to return to the mound of the Orange and Blue.

"The worst thing about being away for two years is I missed my family and friends," said the hurler. "It was tough being that far away from home. My Illinois coaches have given me a workout plan for the summer. I was lucky enough to secure a scholarship to play so close to home. I am hoping to help Illinois advance to a regional. We did at Wright State on two occasions and it was some of my best memories of baseball in college."

The son of Ryan and Judy Labeling will major in Business at the Champaign/Urbana-based school. In his first two academic years at Wright State, he compiled a grade point average of 3.60.



Labeling

"I think I was pitching the best I had ever pitched last fall," said Labeling. "I was hoping to get a ton of innings this

spring. It was the best that I have felt during my college career and can't wait to get back there. I want to carry it for-

ward to Illinois. Hopefully, I will get to play professional baseball in the majors after college."



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