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McGuire helps MCC to baseball title out of bullpen

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[David Jolkovski/AFN]

Baseball: DV vs Mesquite

Desert Vista graduate Sean McGuire appeared in nine games, including three starts, for Mesa Community College to help the Thunderbirds to a No. 1 ranking before eventually winning the NJCAA national title.



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said McGuire. "You have to think you can get the guy out, no matter how you've been pitching, and that's a big part of my game."

In his three starts, McGuire earned three wins. He had nine appearances all season, pitched 26.2 innings with 15 strikeouts and had an ERA of 4.05 as the Thunderbirds went 52-13.

Posted: Sunday, June 15, 2014 8:48 am

By Will Argeros Special to AFN

Sean McGuire had to accept a reduced role, but the championship ring isn't any less shiny.

The Desert Vista graduate helped Mesa Community College captured the NJCAA baseball championship while playing a major role in getting the team to its No. 1 ranking during the season and eventually the title.

"He stepped up for us in a big way," MCC manager Tony Cirelli said. "He came in for us out of the (bullpen) when we were out of starters. He was the first guy ready to go."

Cirelli said that McGuire had started the season in the rotation, but was moved to the bullpen after other pitchers started finding their own and going deeper in games.

"He was always positive and always working hard," Cirelli said. "He pitches very efficiently even though he doesn't have a high velocity. You have to be close to perfect when you pitch like that and he gets the job done."

While he didn't get the chance to compete in the national tournament, the reliever said he knew he could do it if he were called on.

"I've got to be a guy they can look at to get out of any situation if the starter gets in trouble,"

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“He had a great performance late in the season after not pitching a lot,” Cirelli said. “He came in and pitched 6.1 shutout innings against Phoenix College, in what proved to be a very important game.”

McGuire had a season high seven strikeouts against the ASU club team in 4.2 innings. The freshman only walked eight batters all season and didn’t hit any.

“I’m big into winning, and I knew coming in what (McGuire) could do,” his manager said. “He keeps his pitch count low and pitches very effectively.”

McGuire said that his style really developed in high school under the guidance of Stan Luketich.

“He taught me you don’t need to throw hard. You just need to know how to pitch,” McGuire said. “So I tell myself I can be successful without the 90 mph fastball.”

The freshman said there was a bit of an adjustment coming in to MCC, going from being a sure starter to a middle reliever.

“I was a starter all through high school, and all of the sudden I’m facing guys who can hit the ball 50 feet further than I’d ever seen, and with wood bats,” he said.

It was a challenge the Desert Vista graduate welcomed, often thriving on the tension from coming in to a tough spot or working out of a jam.

“I like making the hitters look stupid,” he said. “I have a big curveball I can put in the dirt, and they look foolish trying to chase it.”

McGuire said he has some work to do in the offseason and build his confidence with his pitches with hopes of moving on to four-year program as a junior.

“I know I need work on my change-up, and some of my pitches need more velocity,” he said. “That will give me confidence in my pitches. I do best when I can mix them all together.”

• Will Argeros is a junior at the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University. He is interning this semester for the AFN.

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