Daniel Kassouf (Lexington, N.C./North Davidson), who helped lead Appalachian State University baseball to a Southern Conference championship with an all-America campaign in 2012, has

signed to play professionally for the Southern Illinois Miners of the independent Frontier League. Kassouf, who was not selected in the 2012 Major League Baseball Draft despite ranking among the NCAA Division I top 25 in home runs (17), RBI (66) and slugging percentage (.635) as a senior last season, will begin his professional career with one of the top independent franchises in all of professional baseball. Southern Illinois won the 2012 Frontier League championship and has won the FL's Western Division title twice in the past three seasons. Established in 1993, the Frontier League is the oldest currently operating independent professional baseball league. Twenty-three Frontier League alumni have gone on to play in the Major Leagues.

Kassouf was a first-team all-American (only the second in Appalachian State history) and the first Southern Conference to ever be named the National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association District IV Player of the Year (honoring the best player in the states of Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia) in 2012. He was also one of 35 semifinalists for the NCBWA's Dick Howser Trophy (National Player of the Year), one of 30 semifinalists for the Golden Spikes Award (USA Baseball's top amateur player) and a first-team all-conference honoree by the SoCon's coaches and media.

In addition to the school-record 17 home runs and conference-leading 66 RBI, the 6-1, 230-pounder also finished with a gaudy .339 batting average and made a serious run at the SoCon triple crown, leading the league in all three triple-crown categories (batting average, home runs and RBI) as late as April 21. Spread out over the course of a 162-game major-league season, Kassouf's power numbers would have translated to 47 home runs and 181 RBI.

Primarily a designated hitter as a Mountaineer, Kassouf will likely be called upon to play first base, as well as third base and left field, as a pro. He is one of nine players currently in the professional baseball ranks that finished their collegiate careers at Appalachian.

Photo Courtesy: Daniel Kassouf, ASU Athletics