Written by Mike Kelly
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The Major League Baseball Draft featured a number of area athletes in the first two days of selections.

And Austin Brice, who signed with Appalachian State University during the early signing period and was scheduled to begin classes this fall, headlined the card. The Northwood High School senior from Pittsboro, NC was selected in the ninth round (287th overall pick) by the Florida Marlins. Brice, a righthanded pitcher, was rated the top high school pitcher in the state of North Carolina by Baseball America, and was also the Player of the Year in the Carolinas 9 1A Conference.

Brice has until August 15 to decide if he goes pro, or attends ASU. If he does decide to play at ASU next season, he will not be eligible to re-enter the MLB draft until 2013.

Unfortunately, that was Appalachian's only choice through the first 30 rounds of the draft. Wes Hobson, a pre-season All-America who batted .404 for ASU this season (and was rated as a top 40 pick by major-league scouts), Chris Patterson, who set a new school record with 13 saves, Matt Andress, Appalachian's all-time leader in career wins (with 26) and strikeouts, David Towarnicky and Jerod Faggort are still waiting patiently for their names to be called.

Asher Wojciechowski of The Citadel was the highest chosen player in the Southern Conference. He went to the Toronto Blue Jays in the supplemental round of the draft with the 41st pick. Wojciechowski led the nation with 155 strikeouts and was second among Division I pitchers with 12 wins this season.

Tyler Barnette of Hickory High School, who defeated the Pioneers in the semifinal round of the Northwestern 3A/4A tournament back in early May, was selected by the Boston Red Sox in the ninth round with the 293rd pick. Dylan Norris of the Pioneers nosed out Barnette for Pitcher of the Year honors in the NW3A/4A Conference.

Righthander Ethan Icard of Wilkes Community College and East Burke High School was selected by the Chicago White Sox in the 13th round with the 398th choice; third baseman John Hinson of Clemson and A.C. Reynolds High School, was chosen by the Philadelphia Phillies in the 13th round with the 411th pick; and outfielder Ty Linton of Charlotte Christian High School was taken in the 14th round by the Arizona Diamondbacks with the 421st pick.

The Atlantic Coast Conference had four players selected in the first round. The top picks were pitchers Matt Harvey of the Tar Heels *with the seventh pick by the New York Mets) and Deck McGuire of Georgia Tech (with the 11th choice by the Toronto Blue Jays). Harvey, who was 8-3 with a 3.09 earned-run-average, struck out 102 men in 96 innings of work; McGuire was the Pitcher of the Year in the ACC in 2009. He was 9-4 with a 2.96 ERA this season with 118 strikeouts in 112.2 innings of work.

The draft concludes on Wednesday. Selections for the final rounds---31 through 50---begins at noon eastern time.