

Martin To Attend LRU

Written by Mike Kelly

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For those of you that were wondering where David Martin would be playing college baseball next season. Well, the suspense is finally over. Martin officially announced he will be attending

Lenior-Rhyne University next fall. LRU is a Division II school located in Hickory, N.C., and a member of the South Atlantic Conference.

"It was the right fit for me," he said. "It's located close enough, so my family can see me play, and it really came down to where was I going to play baseball and get a good education. I looked at many schools, Appalachian State included, but Lenior-Rhyne was my choice. Academically, it's where I really want to be."

And Martin will be a huge addition for a program that's only won six games this season and has struggled in recent years. But for Martin, his choice goes way beyond the baseball diamond. As a matter of fact, Martin has dreams of becoming a broadcaster one day.

"I hope to have a nice four-year playing career at Lenior-Rhyne," he said. "But I also want to get my degree in Communications. Ever since I was little, I've had a knack for being on the radio. I remember my dad (Bud) and I use to record this radio thing at his office. Those radio waves at his office probably reached out a mile at the most. But

I use to get on there and talk and talk.

"I use to tape my brother's basketball games on a Walkman, if anybody remembers those big old things. I love radio; I really want to be involved in a hands-on career, and I feel working in broadcasting is a hands-on career."

And Martin, who hopes to do an internship at WBT-TV in Charlotte, has been a hands-on guy for the Pioneers this season. He's off to a blistering start. Martin, who was 1-3 with a walk in Monday night's loss at Davie County, is batting .400 with a home run, five runs-batted-in, seven runs scored and two stolen bases.

"I was really pressing at the plate last year," he said. "I'm glad coach (Pete) Hardee moved me into the lead-off spot. It gave me a chance to see a lot of fastballs, and I love hitting those. It really picked me up. But I needed to get away from baseball for a while. I was getting burned out.

"That's why I decided to play football. It gave me a chance to relax. I feel more comfortable at the plate this season. And I'm seeing the ball much better."

"I was real glad David played football last year," Hardee said. "Sometimes when you do something too much, you get bored with it. You start to develop bad habits. That's why taking time off is beneficial. It gives you a chance to regroup, to look at things differently, to re-discover yourself."

And Martin's decision paid off in a big way. He was an honorable mention all-conference selection, and he was a huge playmaker for the Pioneers on the defensive line. He was fifth on the team in tackles with 91 stops, including 30 solo tackles. He also had 12.5 tackles-for-loss, three quarterback sacks and he returned a fumble for a touchdown against Ashe County.

Those efforts led WHS to a 7-6 record and a second-round appearance in the state playoffs.

Now, he's aiming his sights on leading the Pioneers to another (Northwestern 3A/4A) conference championship and the state playoffs.

But despite his success on the field, Martin gives all the credit to his father, who also happens to

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be his No.1 fan.

"We've always had a great relationship," he said. "I just want to take this time to thank him for all he's done. We must have traveled thousands of miles the past six years to play in various baseball games or tournaments in Florida and Georgia.

"He took time out of his busy schedule to be there for me. And he has shaped me into the man I am today. And I am very thankful for that."

And his dad has a lot to be proud of.