

Greene Signs National Letter

Written by Mike Kelly
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Ethan Greene made it official yesterday as he signed his National Letter of Intent with Pfeiffer University, a Division II school in Misenheimer, N.C., and a member of Conference Carolinas. And Greene will join an old teammate,

Dylan Norris, who is currently a freshman at Pfeiffer.

"I'm just glad to get this over with," Greene said with a sigh of relief. "The recruiting process isn't easy. And proving yourself to a college coach is tough. But Pfeiffer was the right choice. Dylan gave me a lot of insight concerning the school and the program. And I can trust him since we played together. And when I visited the school, it just felt right. It felt like home."

Ironically, the pitching mound has felt like home for Greene this season. For a guy that slowly established himself last season, Greene has emerged as one of the top pitchers in the Northwestern 3A/4A Conference this season. And the numbers don't lie. In five league appearances, Greene has been a nightmare for opposing hitters. He's 4-0 with a 1.24 earned-run-average. And he's only given up six earned runs this year in league play.

"My goal is to throw strikes every time I'm on the mound," Greene said. "If I'm on, and I'm throwing strikes, it will keep my pitch count down, and I'm more effective. I just want to put my team in the best position to win."

And he's done that with a great deal of success. Thanks to Greene, the Pioneers find themselves just one game behind South Caldwell for first place in the NW3A/4A Conference. And in his last four outings (three starts and one relief appearance), Greene has been extremely stingy. He's given up three runs in his last 24 innings for a 0.88 ERA.

"Ethan has rediscovered his curve ball," WHS coach Pete Hardee said. "That's why he's so effective. He's getting his breaking pitches over for strikes. And that's really keeping the opposing hitters off balance. It just goes to show just how dedicated he's become."

Greene has had a hand in 12 WHS wins the last two years. And the Most Valuable Player in the NW3A/4A Conference Tournament last season, is aiming his sights on a much bigger prize this year.

"I would like to be named Pitcher of the Year in the conference," he said. "I haven't mentioned it, or talked about it. But it's something I was shooting for when the season began. I hope I can finish strong and help our team win in the process."

"I feel Ethan has a shot at it," Hardee said. "In my eyes, I know he deserves it. Every time he goes out there, he gives us a chance to win. But he's been a dominating pitcher. It's funny, because he makes it look so easy. But when he's on, he's tough to beat."

Greene threw a complete-game shutout against Alexander Central last Tuesday, and he came right back with three scoreless innings in nailing down his second save of the year against South Caldwell last Friday night.

"Greenie is a lot like I was," Hardee said. "He can throw a lot of innings, and his arm always seems to bounce back. But I keep an eye on him. I know he wants to pitch in every game this week, but we'll see how he feels. Whether we win the conference championship or not, there's still a lot of games left to play."

And if you flashback to last year, Greene has been Jake Watts-like on the mound. Last season, Watts, currently a freshman at Milligan College an NAIA school in Johnson City, TN., simply

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blew hitters away. He had a 0.45 ERA in his last nine appearances of the year.

"Really for me, it was realizing just how good I could be if I worked at it," Greene said. "It's how much I want to work that will take me as far as I can go. Nothing will be given to me. And it'll be like that in college. You've got to work for everything you get. My new coach (Mark Hayes at Pfeiffer) didn't promise me anything. I have to work at it. My hard work is paying off right now, and I hope it continues that way in the future."

Don't worry, it will.