

STHS grad takes a swing at making it in Major Leagues

By Kathryn Reed

Fans crowd Scottsdale Stadium to watch the 2012 Giants – to see their favorite players, new acquisitions and the young guys they want to learn about. Who will be on the 25-man roster is still an uncertainty. But those trying to make the team had to be invited to this audition.

No one said the road to the Major Leagues is easy.

No one said that road is short.



STHS grad
Stephen Yarrow
hopes to be
invited to
spring
training with
the Giants in
the future.
Photo/LTN

But in some ways it is. About a mile away from this downtown stadium is a training complex with four fields. This is where everyone who is definitely not going to San Francisco is working out.

One of those players is third baseman Stephen Yarrow, who graduated from South Tahoe High School in 2007.

This is the 23-year-old's first spring training because last year this time he was wrapping up his senior year at USF. Last July he reported to the Rookie League in Arizona, having been drafted by the San Francisco Giants.

While Yarrow hasn't been given his assignment, he expects to start the season – which begins in early April – in single A ball in Augusta, Ga., in the South Atlantic League.

Pablo Sandoval, the Giants current third baseman, spent some time in that same league.

"I'm in a group with guys who will be in single, double and triple A. A lot of them have been in the system a long time," Yarrow said.

It's definitely competitive because everyone wants to get to the next level.

Yarrow's goal this season is to do well enough to get a midseason promotion.

"Usually it takes three to four years to get to the Big Leagues because there are so many levels of Minor League," Yarrow told *Lake Tahoe News*.

He added the main thing this season will be to see how his body does playing so many days in a row.

Days off during the season are rare – five in five months. That's almost 140 straight games. Minor leaguers don't play in September because this is when the Major League rosters expand to 40. They are filled with players from the lower levels.

For Yarrow, it meant a promotion to AAA in Fresno last fall. In those two games his average was .333, with two RBI.

Overall, he finished 2011 with a batting average of .289 for the 20 games he played.

Lake Tahoe News was unable to meet with Yarrow while in Scottsdale last week. Daily schedules for Minor League players are released one day in advance or that day.

“Our schedule today is quite unusual. It is as close to an off day as we receive; that being said we only practice for a couple of hours, from 10:30-12:30, but then we go straight into meetings about health insurance, 401(k) and travel policies. I have heard that these meetings may take awhile, anywhere from one to three hours,” Yarrow told *Lake Tahoe News* on March 13.

Practice has been going for a couple weeks. Scrimmages with other teams start this week.

While fans are eager to see the Major Leaguers, Yarrow said those players don't interact a ton with guys at his level.

Just in case he isn't able to put his finance degree to use managing the millions of dollars he makes in baseball, Yarrow spent part of the winter interning for a hedge fund in San Francisco, where he lives.

Yarrow is well aware the odds are against most people with dreams of playing for a Major League team.

“I feel incredibly lucky to still be playing baseball at 23,” Yarrow said. “The game of baseball passes everyone. For some it passes at 18; for some it passes at 42 and they get to the Hall of Fame. Eventually, it will happen. It is good I have a backup plan for when that does happen.”