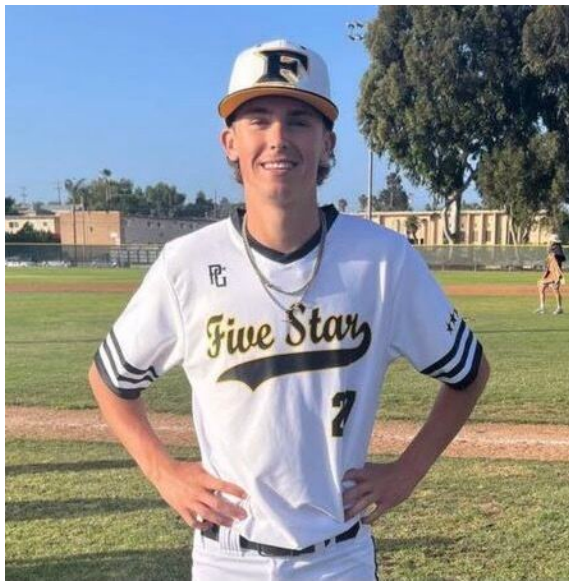


Del Norte's Daniels enjoying a big summer playing for 5 Star Pacific

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With one year remaining in his high school career, Del Norte's Preston Daniels wants to make the most of his opportunity.

And he's working hard on and off the field of competition to make sure he does.

The soon-to-be Warriors senior has been one of the best local high school pitchers since he broke into the school's varsity team as a freshman, and this summer he has been honing his talents with 5 Star Pacific Baseball, a travel club based in San Jose.

Daniels, who was an all-league selection for Del Norte this past spring, has already traveled with 5 Star Pacific for a pair of showcase tournaments this summer, one in San Diego and one in Georgia.

And he says the experience has been beneficial and a lot of fun.

“It was definitely an adventure,” he said of his trip to Georgia. “The competition over there is insanely good. It was definitely a fun experience.”

With another trip to Arizona scheduled for the fall, it’s also been an expensive experience, but Daniels has been working hard to make sure it all happened, raising \$3,000 on his own.

And with hopes of playing for a top college program some day, he says it was an opportunity he felt he needed to take advantage of,

“I saw there were some big schools their kids are going to,” Daniels said of the 5 Star Pacific program “And I talked to my parents and we thought it was a great opportunity for me, especially living in a small town.”

The investment in his own future appears to be paying off.

He has appeared in 10 games for the team, including two starts on the mound.

In those two starts — one each in San Diego and Georgia — he went 2-0 with an impressive ERA of 2.10.

“I feel like I did really well,” he said. “These are some of the top (high school) players in the nation and even some future Major Leaguers. These guys are good.

“They’re a lot bigger and they’re a lot stronger. Everybody there is strong, and it’s really encouraged me to get in the gym and get bigger. The competition there was just awesome. Everybody’s like an MVP. It’s definitely a step up.”

Daniels allowed just four hits in 10 innings in those two starts and struck out nine batters.

He also was named to the all-tournament team in San Diego and the experience of playing for 5 Star Pacific Baseball should put him on the radar of some of the top college programs on the West Coast.

He says he has already been looking at some junior colleges and is considering his options, but he added that he wants to play for a Division-I program some day.

However, he also knows he has to continue to work hard to achieve that goal.

“I’ve definitely looked at some colleges,” he said. “I’ve looked at a couple of junior colleges. Division-I, that’s my main goal. I’ve got to hit the gym hard and train hard, and hopefully get a scholarship to a Division-I school.

“I feel like if I keep doing my thing, I can go to a good college.”

Between now and then he still has some unfinished business to take care of on the high school fields and would like to close out his Warriors career with a bang.

He also wants to see his game continue to improve in his final year of high school.

“One of the goals I have for next year is to get more strikeouts,” he said. “I also want to get better at hitting.”

As a junior, Daniels finished with an impressive 102 strikeouts and batted .300.