

Red Dragons senior experiencing déjà vu

By Sam Feeley

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The cancellation of spring sports season at the high school and collegiate levels has disappointed athletes all over the country, particularly the seniors.

But SUNY Cortland senior infielder Wyatt Myers was in a unique situation three years ago that prepared him for this moment.

Myers, a Chittenango native, started his collegiate career at Division I Buffalo. During his freshman year, the school announced that they would be ending the baseball, men's soccer and men's swimming programs.

"When we first found out we all were in shock," Myers said. "We could not believe that this could happen, it came completely out of nowhere. An hour after we found out the news, we were receiving calls from colleges trying to recruit. The recruitment process started all over again. The next day, we were given the option to finish our season or to call it quits. We, of course, decided to finish the season for respect to the program and the seniors."

That recruiting process led him not to another Division I school, but to SUNY Cortland. But Myers was excited about the prospect of being a Red Dragon.

"One of my best friends, Colin BeVard, was on the baseball team so I followed the program throughout my freshman year," Myers said. "When Buffalo's program was terminated, Coach Brown was the first coach to reach out to me, which meant a lot. Cortland is known for having one of the most dominant Division III athletic programs in all the country. The legacy that Cortland baseball has built over the decades really excited me, and I knew that I wanted to be a part of it."

In 2019, Myers slashed .306/.400/.525 with seven home runs (tied for the team lead), 14 doubles and 42 runs batted in (both third on the team), helping the Red Dragons to a 34-13-1 overall record, a perfect 18-0 record in SUNYAC play and the NCAA Super Regional, where they fell to Babson in two games.

"He had a great year last year when we went undefeated in regular season SUNYAC play," Red Dragons head coach Joe Brown said. "He was great in the NCAA regionals held at Wallace Field."

But when the 2020 season was halted due to the coronavirus pandemic, Myers said he experienced "a sense of déjà vu" and that it hurt more than the experience at Buffalo.

"The cancellation of this season hurts more, it was my final season playing baseball," he said. "I was a senior leader, something I had worked for my whole athletic career, and it was cut short."

With his senior season canceled, Myers believes he has seen the end of his baseball-playing days.

“This is most likely the end of my baseball career,” he said. “I will be graduating this spring and have accepted a job with a very accomplished firm. Baseball has given me so many opportunities and experiences that I will forever be grateful for, but I will not be seeking semi-pro opportunities.”

Myers added, “I am very thankful for the opportunity and relationships made over my four-year athletic career. I look at these situations knowing that they were out of my control and you must deal with the cards that are dealt. I am very grateful for the time I have had playing this sport alongside some of my best friends and the pride I had being a part of such a dominant program at Cortland.”

Brown didn't have to worry about where Myers stood.

“Wyatt is a focused man,” he said. “I just said to all seniors let's not make emotional decisions, get home, focus on your schoolwork, chat with families and then we can discuss fifth years for guys. He is very mature, and he is comfortable with his decision. He comes from a great family and has been presented good guidance.”

Brown is confident that even with Myers's playing days behind him, he has a bright future.

“Wyatt is a mentally tough, loyal player,” he said. “He understands the pressure concept and stays within the moment. That is why he will be very successful in life.”