

Himsworth's game leads him from Butler to Bluffton

By Phillip Collins
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This season marked the end of Darren Himsworth's third year as a starter. The veteran Aviator graduated with Butler's class of 2009, capping off a very productive and fruitful prep career. According to Himsworth, he entered his last season of high school baseball with lofty personal and team goals.

"I wanted our team to get as many championships as we could," Himsworth said. "We got two sectionals in GWOC. Individually, I was trying to better myself in each stat."

Himsworth realized his individual goals, as is evidenced by a comparative analysis of his stats from 2008 and 2009. Himsworth hit .286 as the starting second baseman in 2008. This year, Himsworth hit .363, an improvement of 0.077. In addition, Himsworth tied the Butler fielding record of 1.000 percent, a goal that the Butler grad hoped to achieve since last year.

"Last year, I told myself that I was going to make that record," Himsworth said. "But, I made an error in the first game and I was like, 'Well, there goes that.' So, I was like, 'You know, it would be really cool to not make an error the whole season, especially playing infield.' I really tried not to think about it the whole season because it's one of those things that, when you get close to it, you think about it so much that you end up screwing up. I didn't want anybody to talk about it so that I would become self-conscious."

Butler MVP Tony Cono has cited Himsworth as one of his chief inspirations. According to Himsworth, he imparted "hard work and dedication" to Cono. Together, the two teammates worked on developing their budding skills.

"We did a lot of things on our own to help make us better," Himsworth said. "We both have had this dream of playing college ball. So, we just worked hard together. We hit ground balls to each other and threw a lot. We just went that extra distance and it paid off."

Indeed it did, as was evidenced by their performance during the May 2 face-off with Troy at Fifth Third Field. With the bases loaded and only one out, Troy appeared to be poised to gain the lead against Butler at the bottom of the second. But, Himsworth working in tandem with Dillon Bell prevented further Trojan runs with a skillfully executed double-play. According to Himsworth, such masterful exhibitions of ability became second nature to him and Bell.

"It was instinct," Himsworth said. "If you were to go to a practice, you'd see Dillon and I doing stuff like that all day."

In fact, Himsworth contends that he and Bell could pull off the same double-play again.

"We could do it in our sleep," Himsworth said.

Himsworth's double-play with Bell underscored a definite chemistry between the two Aviators.

"I would love to play with Dillon in college," Himsworth said. "We just had a special thing. We just always knew when the other was going to be there. We didn't even really have to talk to each other and give each other signals. Right away, I knew we were going to click. It didn't take us very long to get used to one another at all."

Himsworth hopes that Bell's "heart for the game" will be a common feature of all of his future teammates.

"Dillon has so much heart for the game," Himsworth said. "He gives 110 percent all the time. If I could play on a team that cared so much about the game and did whatever they could to win, then I would have

that team all my life."

Himsworth will be going to Bluffton University, where he will continue playing baseball. According to Himsworth, the overall milieu of the institution appealed to him.

"I just really liked the atmosphere," Himsworth said. "I've heard a lot of good things about their academics."

Moreover, Himsworth's attendance of Bluffton will allow him to retain his old Butler color: purple.

"I'm staying purple," Himsworth said. "Bluffton's purple, too."

Himsworth thanked all of the people who contributed to his successful prep career, including varsity assistant coaches Steve Clark and Scott Thompson and junior varsity head coach Mike Bardonaro.

"My parents have been my biggest supporters," Himsworth said. "No matter what I do, they just want the best for me. Coach (Trent) Dues has definitely had a huge part, too. He's a great coach. He's helped me not only with the game itself, but the mental part of the game, which is where I seemed to struggle when I was in little league."