Mike Eisenberg is a right-handed pitcher in the Indians player development system, and is currently in the starting rotation at Class-A Lake County. Eisenberg writes a blog for MiLB.com on his experiences in the minor leagues, many of which are great insight into the life of a minor leaguer. Our Indians Insider Tony Lastoria recently had the chance to sit down and talk to Eisenberg about life as a minor leaguer and the path he has taken to get there. Thanks to Mike for taking the time, and be sure to check out his blog and some of his entries we post on TheClevelandFan.com.

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The Indians drafted Eisenberg in the 8th round of the 2006 Draft out of Marietta College in Ohio, and after signing quickly Eisenberg went on to make 13 starts in short-season Single-A Mahoning Valley last year going 3-1 with a 4.29 ERA. Eisenberg's best pitch is his curveball, and is a big reason for his success at Marietta College which ultimately helped him get drafted.

Last year at Marietta College, he pitched the school to the Division III College World Series Championship, was named co-MVP of the Series, and was also the Division III leader in wins (13) and strikeouts (138).

Currently, at Lake County, Eisenberg has had a rough go of it early in the season as in seven starts he is 1-4 with a 5.79 ERA. In 28.0 innings pitched he has allowed 32 hits and 18 walks while striking out 28. However, in his last five starts he has turned things around somewhat and is 1-2 with a 4.09 ERA with 22 strikeouts in 22 innings pitched.

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are great insight into the life of a minor leaguer. We have ran several of these blog entries on TheClevelandFan.com, with full permission from Eisenberg.

Recently, I had the chance to sit down and talk to Eisenberg about life as a minor leaguer and the path he took from a kid all the way to the minor leagues. Thanks to Mike for taking the time, and he is scheduled to make a start today (May 19th) at home against Hagerstown.

If you get a chance, go out and check him out and give him some support (I believe he will pitch game two of the double-header).

Q: You are writing a blog on your experiences in the minor leagues. How is that going?

Mike Eisenberg (ME): It's great. Hard to keep the pace I want sometimes. Tiring, almost. But I got plenty of time and I'm always on the Internet.

Plus, it seems like tons of people are really enjoying it beyond my family and friends.

Q: How did the blog come about?

ME: I was at the Winter Meetings in Orlando. I went to just hang out in the lobby and see famous faces and check out the goingsons. It was only a four hour drive, so it was fun.

Plus, a college friend was there at the Minor League Job Fair so I went to see him as well.

Anyway, I read MiLB.com stuff all the time and recognized the senior editor, Jonathan Mayo, right away.

So, I walked right up to him and introduced myelf.

Said I was a journalism major in college and a current minor leaguer.

I told him how I wanted to get involved somehow and he gave me his card and I called him and he told me I could blog if I was still interested.

Q: What is your hometown? Were you an Indians fan growing up, and if not who was your favorite team?

ME: I was born in Philadelphia, PA and grew up in Potomac, Maryland, just outside of Washington, DC. Now, I live in Miami, FL. I was never really an Indians fan, or a fan of any team for that matter. I simply watched baseball games whenever they were on.

My family tried to make me a Phillies fan as a young kid, but I ended up just liking individual players.

My favorites were Ken Griffey, Jr. and Randy Johnson.

Q: What prompted you to move to Miami?

ME: Well, for one, my mother wanted to get out of Washington, DC. Too many memories after my father had passed away.

She loves Miami, has lots of friends down there, and loves the sun.

But also, moving down there allowed me to make new friends and enjoy the social life.

In return, I found a great girlfriend down there.

Q: Growing up as a kid, was baseball your first love?

ME: I loved baseball ever since I could pick one up, at 2 years old (according to my mom). I don't remember much as a kid, but my mother always says the only reason I am a pitcher is because when they were trying to choose a pitcher on my little league team, they lined everybody up at the mound and the first to throw a strike was the pitcher.

I was that guy.

Ha.

Q: As you moved into high school and college, was there a moment when you realized baseball could potentially be something you could do professionally?

ME: After I hit 90 in relief my sophomore year at Marietta for the first time, I felt like if I worked hard there was a chance. But, honestly, until scouts started showing up, I never really thought it would happen.

Q: How did you do in high school, and was there any anticipation of being drafted out of high school?

ME: Not even a chance. I didn't ge a look from a single college. It was all self-recruiting trying to find a college. I liked Marietta's legacy and wanted to be a part of it and win a national championship.

That's it.

When I won that, I was happy enough.

Getting drafted [out of college] was icing on the cake.

There was never any hope of being drafted until halfway through my junior year of college.

Rags to riches, practically.

Q: What was your best memory at Marietta College as a baseball player? Was there a defining moment when you took off and scouts began to notice you?

ME: Winning the national championship. Hands down. Being able to pitch the final game was something else. I think scouts really started to take notice when I hit 93/94 in Texas during our spring trip.

They began showing up at our home AND away games when we got back to Ohio.

The day I struck out 15 in front of the scouts against Baldwin-Wallace was the day I really felt like I had a chance to do soemthing in June (draft).

Q: What were you doing on draft day last year?

ME: I stayed in Marietta to hang out with my close friends (Ryan Eschbaugh and his family and Justin Steranka). We went golfing, but got back before they even got to my name. So, we listened to the draft on Ryan's dad's XM Radio.

Q: Had any teams contacted you in advance that they might take you?

ME: I got a lot of letters from different teams saying they were interested, but I never took it seriously. It was all too much and hard to believe. So, I tried to keep an open mind about the draft. I was more focused on winning the national championship than the draft, honestly.

I wasn't going to even sign if we didnt get to the D3 World Series.

The Indians and Cardinals showed the most interest, though.

Q: When you were selected, what was the first thing you did? How did it feel?

ME: We all jumped up and opened up a couple drinks in celebration. We expected my name to be called, and people told me I should go in the 8th to 10th round, but I still didnt think it would happen. It was a great feeling.

Not only the pressure of wondering where in the draft was off my back, but at the same time, I felt more pressure pile on.

Now, I had to decide whether to pursue the career and leave my teammates or stay for that final

year and risk everything in hopes of winning another championship.

Q: Being drafted as a junior, you had the option to not sign and go back to school and re-enter the draft in 2007. What made you sign so quickly? Was the Indians offer deemed fair, or was it a combination of just wanting to get a headstart on your professional career?

ME: We went through a couple phases of negotations until we came to a great agreement. The big thing was that the Indians paid for the remainder of my education.

Plus, we won it all and I had a year beyond expectations.

There wasn't much to come back to, so I took the offer and ran.

Q: How was life in the NY Penn League last year? What was Mahoning Valley like, and what was the adjustment like going from college ball to professional ball?

ME: The NY Penn League was fun mainly because it was my first time being a professional baseball player. Signing autographs, getting paychecks to play baseball, experiencing top-notch treatment (compared to Marietta). The main adjusrtment was being more self-reliant. In college, the coaches call pitches, we do the dirty work like tarp the field and prepare the field, and the trainers have more resources at pro ball.

Q: What did you do in the offseason to prepare for this season?

ME: I followed the organization's lifting program and conditioning programs. I didn't pick up a baseball until mid-December.

Being in Miami, I didn't have to find gyms to throw in, which was nice.

Working out outside was good for me and I did a lot of conditioning.

Lifting was good for me, but I'm not much of a weight gainer.

Q: Give a general idea of what an offseason lifting program entails.

ME: Not too much. Squats or leg press. Dumbell bench press. Some running. Lots and lots of ab work. Mostly I am trying to work on my core and lower body strength.

Q: What was your first spring training experience like?

ME: Amazing. Seeing the Major Leaguers and playing baseball all day, every day again was great. After a five-month break for the offseason, all I wanted to do was get back into it.

Q: Did you meet any of the guys in the majors, or are they pretty much separated from you guys? Did you get a chance to meet and talk to any of the highly touted pitching prospects in the system like Chuck Lofgren, Adam Miller,Tony Sipp and Scott Lewis?

ME: They [major leaguers] are definitely separated. The Major League clubhouse is a different building altogether. But we pass each other periodically. I met C.C. in the training room after he got hit on the hand near the end of spring training.

All the minor leaguers are in the same locker room, so all the guys you mentioned I met.

I played poker with Lofgren and Miller and a few other guys.

Q: Did some of the more seasoned and higher up pitching prospects you were able to talk to offer up any advice?

ME: No. Advice is kind of awkward in a hanging-out setting. But watching them pitch in intrasquads and minor league spring training games allowed me to see their pitching styles and the way they approach hitters. It helped.

Q: Did you have an idea going into camp of where you would be assigned, or is this something that you really do not know as a player until the end of camp?

ME: I was pretty confident I would start in Lake County, but hoping it would be Kinston. I was about 99% sure i would begin in Lake County though.

But, honestly, you don't know until it happens.

And as camp nears an end and they begin releasing talented, but older, players, you start wondering what is going to happen to you.

Q: Does the reality hit home when you see players being released, that this may not last forever?

ME: Without a doubt. I've always been a realist. I know that the odds are way against me. The odds of me getting drafted from Division 3 (according to some random website I found) was 0.03%.

But that happenned.

It claimed the odds of an 8th round pick making the major leagues was 3.4%.

Those are much better.

Haha.

But still low.

I will do my best and simply enjoy playing the game I love and getting paid (albeit very very little) to do it.

If I pitch well and they like what they see and I pitch in the major leagues, then the hard work will pay off.

If not, it will prepare me for life.

Q: How do you like your time in Lake County so far?

ME: Lake County has been a blast. It's as big league as a minor league place can get. I've been able to see a lot of college friends as well.

And I'm living with Ryan Dennick (former Marietta teammate, current Lakeland Comm. College pitcher).

I haven't pitched as well as I had hoped, but will continue to battle no matter where I am by the end of the season.

Q: What do you do in your spare time on your off days when not pitching?

ME: I watch movies and play MLB 2K7. That is it. If it is an off day, I'll probably take a long nap or take a ride down to Marietta (three hours away) to hang out with my old college buddies/teammates.

Q: Speaking of MLB2K7, did you create "Mike Eisenberg"? If so, did you start him out in the minors or just make him a stud and put him in the show?

ME: Hell yea! Every time I get those games I do it. And I usually make the entire team I'm on and replace the Yankees roster with them (for salary purposes).

Forget the minors.

Gotta start in the Majors.

And I give myself realistic abilities.

I don't give him all 100s.

Q: You have had some trouble early on with your fastball command. What type of adjustments are you currently working on?

ME: Lots. Adjustments to my front side staying closed, to staying centered instead of my weight back, to landing on the front side of my foot instead of my heel. Mostly, I'm just trying to figure out how to locate my fastball right now.

Q: What is your normal routine to prepare for a start on gameday and what you do on the four off days inbetween?

ME: I wrote an interesting blog on that right here . In between starts, it is basically a lot of running, constant throwing, and some lifting.

Two days after I pitch is when I throw a bullpen session to work on things.

Q: What is it like on the road? Do you guys sometimes get in to other cities late and have a game the next morning or night and you guys sometimes are flat or "hungover" so to speak?

ME: Again, I wrote a great blog on this right here . If you search for it, it was earlier in the year on my blog. We tend to get in extremely late/early (3 or 4 am) and have a night game.

So, keeping a consistent sleeping pattern is simply impossible.

Flatness is a common thing, but it usually evens out throughout the year as teams have to do the same thing when they come to our place.

Q: You have struggled some to start the season, but of late look to be turning it around.

Do you feel the pressure to start performing especially with short season leagues starting up in a month and a whole new draft class coming in?

ME: I am letting up fewer runs, but more walks. And walks are what they care about here. Wa lking people is not going to put smiles on their faces.

It may just put a big demotion next to your name.

That's the concern every day.

Are they sick of you?

Are you going to get another chance?

When the draft hits, it will definitely get difficult to stay positive every day, but I can do that.

It's lots of guys coming in.

And lots of new faces that the organization wants to put on the mound.

But I can pitch and I'm going to keep doing just that.

Q: If things do not workout out with your baseball career, what do you want to be "when you grow up"?

ME: Doing what you do, for one. Working with some Internet or magazine based organization, writing about baseball. But most of all, my dream is to be the pitching coach at the University of Miami.

I want to coach.

But not high school.

Only college.

And not professional, because it's too timestaking and I will eventually want to have time for whatever else comes up in my life.

But for now, baseball is it.