



STAFF PHOTO BY TERRY POPE
NORTH BRUNSWICK High School senior pitcher Chris Walker last week signed a scholarship offer to attend UNC-Asheville. Principal James McAdams (left) and North Brunswick baseball coach Keith Moore also attended the signing.

North Brunswick's Chris Walker Inks With UNC-Asheville

BY JOHNNY CRAIG
 North Brunswick baseball stand-out Chris Walker made it official he will be trading in his Scorpion uniform for that of a University of North Carolina at Asheville Bulldog after signing a grant-in-aid last week with the NCAA Division I school.

Walker, who has compiled a 3-2 pitching record in 35 innings with 26 strikeouts and a 1.79 earned run average thus far this season, was a big sign for the Asheville program, according to interim head coach Jim Bretz.

"We needed a hard-throwing right-handed pitcher and Chris certainly fits the bill," said Bretz. "Chris is an impact player who will make a lot of difference in our program as a freshman. He has a lot of learning to do but we expect big things from him."

"Chris is way ahead of a lot of freshmen coming into the Asheville program. He has experience and has shown some flashes of sophomore and junior year college ability already at the high school level," said Bretz. "We plan for Chris to be a starting pitcher as a freshman and expect good things early from him."

"Chris will fit in well with our team. He really enjoyed the rest of the team during a campus visit earlier this year," added Bretz.

North Brunswick baseball coach Keith Moore also shared similar optimism about the All-Waccamaw Conference and All-Brunswick County performer.

"I'm happy to have worked with Chris for four years," said Moore at the signing. "I think Chris is in a good situation with a young team where he will be able to play right away."

Walker pitched while also playing in the infield and outfield as a junior for North Brunswick helping the Scorpions to a 13-9 overall record and the second round of the state playoffs.

Walker hit at a .304 clip with 21 hits, 10 runs batted in, two doubles, one triple and one home run. He also pitched 49.2 innings with a 3.52 ERA, led the team in strike outs (65) and compiled a 4-6 record.

"Chris will have a chance to pitch in the starting rotation as a freshman. This made the biggest difference," said Joe Walker, Chris' father, on the signing. "By getting the

chance to pitch right away, Chris will develop early in his college career."

Walker had narrowed his choices to Appalachian State, Francis Marion, Pfeiffer and UNC-Charlotte along with the Bulldogs.

Both Appalachian, Francis Marion and Pfeiffer had offered full scholarships while UNC-C had not yet disclosed grant details.

Asheville is a member of the Big South Conference, a NCAA Division I league that includes such local teams as Campbell and Coastal Carolina.

In addition to league opponents, UNC-A also plays against such other Division I teams as Duke, Wake Forest and N.C. State.

"We play one of the toughest schedules in the south," said Bretz. "There are no easy wins when you play 100 percent against Division I opponents. All the experience our players are gaining will do nothing but help us for the future."

The Bulldogs are currently 10-18 overall and feature a starting lineup of a freshman shortstop, second baseman and first baseman along with a sophomore at third base.

While currently serving as interim head coach, Bretz expects to be named soon to the head post permanently. He spent the last 3.5 years as an assistant under former head coach Steve Pope who left to take a position with the Seattle Mariners organization shortly after after Christmas.

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