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## MUENSTER'S HOFMANN HAS BIG LEAGUE DREAMS

He's got the ready-made nickname — the Monster from Muenster. Now. Saskatchewan's Logan Hofmann has the next few years to try to live up to it.

Hofmann is striving to join an exclusive group of baseball players — major leaguers whose home bases are in Western Canada. It's a short list; current Western Canadians on Major League Baseball team rosters include pitchers James Paxton (Delta, B.C.) of the Yankees and Mike Soroka (Calgary) of the Atlanta Braves.

Hofmann, a native of Muenster, Sask., was chosen by Pittsburgh Pirates in the recent amateur draft, going in the fifth and final round, 138th overall.

Normally, the major league draft is a drawn-out affair lasting 40 rounds, but because of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was shortened this year to five. Being selected from among such a reduced pool of players is quite a feather in the cap for Hofmann, who was picked in the 35th round of the draft last year by St. Louis but didn't sign a contract. His desire to improve his draft status by playing one more year of college baseball paid off in spades. A fifth-rounder commands a much bigger contract offer than one chosen in the 35th round.

The 20-year-old right-hander was almost unhittable in his final season with Northwestern State in Louisiana, striking out 38 batters in 28 innings, giving up zero earned runs. Yes, that would be a 0.00 ERA. His stats in the Cape Cod Summer League last year weren't as spectacular, but they were still impressive enough for the Pirates 'brass — 27 strikeouts and only five walks in 20 1/3 innings and a spot on the league's all-star team.

Being selected 138th overall means Hofmann holds the honour of being the highest pick ever for a Saskatchewan product. James Avery of Moose Jaw, who went to the Reds with the 152nd pick in 2005, formerly held that distinction.

"Obviously I had a good start to the year and my goal was to be a top-10 rounder going into this year, and once I heard (the draft) was cut to five rounds I wasn't too happy about it," Hofmann told Saskatoon's CKOM News. "I kind of thought it was a 50-50 chance I'd get drafted still."

There's no timeline for when Hofmann might proceed through the Pirates' system. Baseball is slated to resume in late July as a result of the pandemic. But all of Muenster, all of Saskatchewan and fans all across Western Canada are hoping he can approach the levels of success enjoyed by Paxton, who has a 56-32 record and a no-hitter in seven seasons, and Soroka, who posted a 13-4 record in 2019 and emerged as the ace of the Braves staff.

- **Bob Molinaro** of [pilotonline.com](http://pilotonline.com) (Hampton, Va.): "When baseball and the NBA return, does it make sense to play the national anthem in empty parks and arenas? Just asking."
- Molinaro again: "ESPN notes that the highest-paid public employee in 40 states is a football or men's basketball coach. Clearly then, the priorities of the other 10 states need adjustment."
- Comedy guy **Steve Burgess** of Vancouver, on Twitter: "If the [@Jays](https://twitter.com/Jays) can't play at Skydome their backup plan is to move to Diseaseville in the state of Coronastan."
- **Janice Hough** of [leftcoastsportsbabe.com](http://leftcoastsportsbabe.com): "Florida is still telling travellers from New York, New Jersey and Connecticut to quarantine for 14 days. This would kind of be like the Houston Astros making a video telling the rest of baseball not to cheat."
- **Scott Ostler** of the San Francisco Chronicle: "**Tiger Woods vs. Phil Mickelson?** Boring. Give viewers the golf match they really want to see: **Obama vs. Trump.**"
- **RJ Currie** of [sportsdeke.com](http://sportsdeke.com): "Reuters reports a British man spent five years building a high-performance vehicle from scratch, despite being blind. So what's the NY Knicks 'excuse?'"
- Washington Redskins linebacker **Ryan Anderson**, on why he plays the game so hard: "If I can remember my grandkids' names then I didn't play the game right."
- Headline at TheOnion.com: "Staples Center employee realizes he left shot-clock buzzer on this whole time."
- Tacoma broadcaster **Mike Curto**: "In 1920 Major League Baseball outlawed the spitball. One hundred years later, MLB is outlawing spit."
- Public-service tweet from Ottawa Public Health: "We admit, sometimes wearing a mask in public isn't the most fashionable or comfortable choice. But some people wear Leafs jerseys, so yeah. Just saying."
- **Jay Busbee** of Yahoo.com, on the tenuous resumption of sports: "COVID-19 has surged back out to a three-touchdown lead on us. But believe me, I know it's possible to come back from this kind of a deficit. I am a Falcons fan, after all."
- **Janice Hough** again, on fantasy football: "Beginning to think in 2020 the fantasy is that we can play football." *Care to comment? Email [brucepenton2003@yahoo.ca](mailto:brucepenton2003@yahoo.ca)*