



Baseball Magic Find Freshman Formula Working Early

The STLCC-Meramec baseball team is heading on its Spring Break swing into Louisiana on a high note with a 6-2 record fresh off a two-of-three games series win over visiting McHenry College. The Magic won a 12-2 decision in eight innings on the mercy rule Friday (Mar. 11) over McHenry before splitting with them the next day, winning the first game 12-6 and dropping the finale 7-2.

“We’re doing the little things that we have to do, playing good defense and putting the ball in play when we get runners on and we’re getting them in,” said ninth year head coach **Tony Dattoli**. “So we’re playing basic baseball, we’re not doing anything special; we’ve had some guys with great at-bats.”

One of those players with great at-bats has been shortstop **Stephen Crain** (Troy) who has come out of the gate fast at the plate. The freshman had two hits and two RBI’s over McHenry in a 12-6 win on Saturday (Mar. 12) and has been a regular visitor to the base paths in the early going of the season.

“I’m just really focusing on getting my hands to the ball, just really trying to see the pitch and get my timing down,” said Crane.

Coach Dattoli is pleased thus far with Crane’s flexibility and commitment to improving. “He’s done an exceptional job of making some adjustments this off season. He’s letting the ball travel in the zone, he’s hitting to right field extremely well. I’ve been very impressed with what he’s done so far.”

A personally historic, if not great, at-bat was had by freshman designated hitter **Joe Haas** (Lindbergh) leading off the fifth inning in the same contest against McHenry. Haas hammered a fastball deep over the left center field fence for his first career home run at any level of ball, adding insurance to a 7-4 lead.

“It was kind of inside so I didn’t feel like I got all of it but it felt pretty good,” said Haas. The DH had earlier added another RBI to finish the game with a pair beside his home run. **Eric Tiefenthaler** (Troy) picked up the win on the mound to run his record to a quick 2-0.

The Magic move to a southern swing through Mississippi and Louisiana at a torrid pace, playing 9 games in 6 days. It’s a trip, according to Dattoli, that could set the tone for the year.

“It’s going to be a great test for us to see exactly where we’re at,” said Dattoli. “I think this team needs it to make sure that they don’t have a false sense of security of what they really are. It could be a humbling trip but it could also be a very positive trip. Either way, if we have the right mindset it’s going to be a very positive experience.”