

CAPE COD PLAYER INTERVIEWS

Luke Mann

3rd Baseman / Pitcher

University of Missouri

Sophomore Studying Sports Management



When Luke was about six years old, he would spend summers on the Cape with his uncle, who would often take him to games hosted by the Cape Cod League. As he got older, Luke realized how prestigious it was to play for the league, and as a sophomore, he was given the opportunity to play for the Hyannis Harbor Hawks.

After having surgery his freshman year and missing out on his first opportunity to play collegiate summer ball, Luke was eager to get to know and play against some of the best guys around. Once the pandemic hit, he was hopeful that everything would calm down and go away by the beginning of summer. With many of his friends having the same summer plans at the Cape, Luke looked forward to playing against them in a heightened atmosphere.

Since his sophomore year at the University of Missouri was cut short, Luke had been doing everything he could to keep up with his side of the game. He had been taking reps of ground balls and batting practice and had also been competing in simulated games against other college and professional ball players in the St. Louis area.

Shortly after Luke received the email that the season at the Cape had been cancelled, he was given the opportunity to play in the Coastal Plains League in North Carolina. However, just recently, he found out that their season had been cancelled as well. Going forward, Luke is hoping to play for the O'Fallon Prospect League in Missouri.

After a crazy beginning to his sophomore year, Luke realized that you cannot take anything for granted, whether that be an entire baseball season or the amount of reps you get as a player. Everyday has an intent and taking a day off will only hurt you in the long run. With a lengthened

offseason, Luke is working to gain an advantage going forward as a result of the amount of reps he has taken coming off his most recent injury.

Al Pesto

Pitcher

Southeastern University – Executive MBA Program

Duke University Graduate – History



After having experience playing with the Harbor Hawks in 2016, Al Pesto was eager for another successful summer on the Cape. Al had an amazing time playing for the team and mentioned how valuable the experience was to him. He had finished his summer season with a 3.24 ERA and was planning on spending another season with the Hawks in 2017. Al was especially eager to spend the summer with his host family, Chris and Tina White and their children. However, that year Al suffered a fracture and spent time in rehab which put a pause on his plans for baseball.

Upon graduating from Duke University, Al was unsure of his future plans with baseball. However, after playing around with a baseball one night and throwing the ball 103 mph into the neighborhood fence, he figured his time with the game might not be over after all.

When he received the notification that the Cape had cancelled their season, Al was immediately disappointed. He was looking forward to proving to himself that he could come back from an injury and compete at an elite level. Al was especially anxious to show that he had improved his game, and was a better player now than he was before his injuries.

Going into quarantine, Al took some time off to relax and even took up cooking in order to provide healthier, more convenient meals for himself. He is currently considering options to participate in other collegiate leagues that are still having their seasons and will have a final decision within the next couple of weeks as to what the rest of his summer will look like.

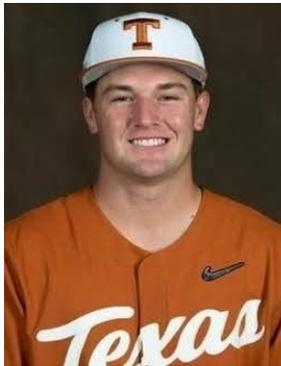
Al has remained self-disciplined and continues to workout and train on a daily basis. With his college season being cut short, he found the days seemed to run together. At the end of the day, Al believes that it is important to remember that things will work themselves out as long as you stay disciplined and remind yourself what your goals are. Without games or practices to prepare for, Al felt staying motivated and focused were the best ways to improve himself before baseball makes its way back.

Austin Wallace

Pitcher

University of Texas

Sophomore Studying Sports Management



Having never played in a summer collegiate league before, the opportunity to play in the Cape was something Austin Wallace looked forward to experiencing. Going into the summer, he knew the Cape was a great place to play ball and compete against elite competition.

Austin was upset when he found out his college season had been cut short and was also saddened when the Cape cancelled their 2020 season. Austin recalled how quickly things changed. On a Wednesday they were competing against Abilene Christian University, and before they could even play the University of New Mexico that following weekend, their season had been cancelled. They had not even reached conference play.

Since the cancellation of his season, Austin has been staying at home doing his usual workouts. He used the months of April and May to rehab his shoulder and has been throwing since June to try and ease his way back into the game. He is currently waiting to get called back to the University of Texas to practice with some of his teammates and coaches. Austin, as well as some of his other teammates, have been meeting up to get reps in and are trying to make the most out of their current situation.

Austin was looking forward to pitching in a competitive league against a list of talented hitters this summer. He was hoping to learn lessons along the way that would help him quiet these talented lineups with his pitches. However, through all the recent troubles Austin believes he has

been reminded that you cannot take anything for granted and it is important to appreciate what you have.

Tai Atkins

Pitcher / Outfield

University of Hawaii

Sophomore Pursuing Hawaiian Studies



After playing in the Kansas Sunflower League and transitioning from high school level baseball to collegiate, Tai Atkins had a good idea of what his summer at the Cape might look like. He had heard from many college players that the Cape was going to be an experience he wouldn't forget, which only made him eager for the summer of 2020.

The week of his last series against the University of Oregon, Tai was notified that not only was his college season cut short, but his season at the Cape had been cancelled. The news was very disappointing especially because Tai and a friend had already discussed and planned for a great summer together in Massachusetts.

With his freshman season being cut short, and having only pitched four games, Tai was hoping that the Cape would offer him exceptional competition that would help him better assess where he stood against some of the best players in the nation. Tai was not only looking forward to meeting players from all over the country, but he was hoping to learn from what he assumed to be numerous failures and successes while playing against great talent.

After receiving the news that his time with baseball was postponed, Tai went back home to his island and has been putting in work every day with one of his old coaches. Since March, he has been pitching to live batters and trying to learn new tools that he can apply once baseball makes its way back.

Although he is frustrated about the season being cancelled, Tai believes he has learned a lot of tools and training tips that will help him out in the long run. Once facilities are open and he is able to use them to their full potential, he is hoping to apply what he has learned on his own and work towards becoming a stronger baseball player.

Kason Howell

Outfielder

Auburn University

Junior Studying Business Marketing



After playing in Omaha last summer, Kason Howell was looking forward to playing against elite competition once again. Since he had not played in a summer collegiate league before, due to the College World Series and injury, Kason was especially excited to play at the Cape and compete at a high level.

Looking forward to a once in a lifetime experience, Kason was upset when he heard the news that the season had been cancelled. Although he understood that there was not much he could do about the situation, he was looking forward to hopefully gaining an advantage by competing against other high-end players.

When his college season got cut short and the pandemic hit, Kason began working for a landscape company and has also been playing golf on the side and taking classes. About four times a week, he meets up with some of his teammates to workout and hit. Even though he

practices and works out every week, it has been difficult to stay in the game since there is only so much he can do without live pitching and a game to play.

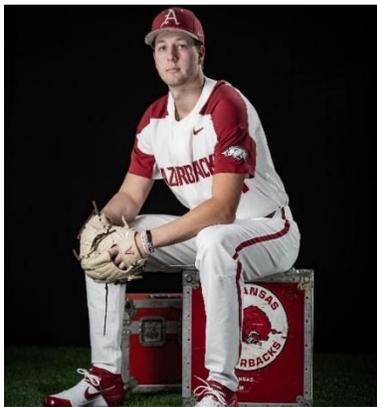
However, Kason has learned how to take ownership of his own game and career. Without coaches and teammates around, he realized that ownership of his side of the game will allow him to get to where he wants to be and develop skills that will help him once baseball is back.

Caleb Bolden

Pitcher

University of Arkansas

Junior Studying Kinesiology



Having already played for the Bourne Braves his freshman year, Caleb Bolden already knew how prestigious playing at the Cape is. After having such an unreal experience and missing out on summer-ball his sophomore year due to injury, he was beyond excited to be given the opportunity to go back and play for the Hawks.

With his sophomore season getting cut short due to Tommy John surgery, Caleb was looking forward to gaining exposure at the Cape and was excited to show off his newfound velocity. When he was notified that the season had been cancelled, Caleb felt mixed emotions. Although excited to work with the coaches and compete with and against other elite players, he understood that making the most out of the situation was vital.

In order to stay in shape, Caleb has been lifting and throwing every day and has been doing whatever he can to stay in the best condition. Spending the summer at the University of Arkansas

has allowed him to meet up with his teammates and coaches and focus on improving both mentally and physically.

With his collegiate season getting cancelled before SEC play and summer-ball being cancelled before it could begin, Caleb has learned that you cannot control everything. However, you can control your mentality and work towards becoming a more well-rounded player and teammate, which is what he will continue working on until baseball play resumes.

Justin Kirby

Outfielder

Kent State University

Junior Studying Marketing



Since he had previously played in the Alaska Baseball League, Justin Kirby had a good idea of what a summer competing against elite talent would be like. Although he had never been to the Cape, Justin was looking forward to spending a summer there and being incorporated into what he heard was a tremendous baseball atmosphere.

After finding out in early September that he was going to play for the Hawks, Justin became eager for a challenge and was looking forward to picking peoples brains and better assessing his game. Once he found out the season was cancelled, he was disappointed since he had been looking forward to seeing how he stacked up against the best college baseball players in the country.

While being at home, Justin has been working out everyday and has been getting together with some friends at local parks and doing what he can to practice. Now that facilities are beginning to open up, he is hoping to get into some batting cages and do whatever he can to improve. Justin is also looking forward to playing for a local league this summer which will allow him to see live pitching and get back into his pregame routine.

Justin has realized that you often do not know what you have until it is taken away from you. He stated how older players often tell him you do not realize what life is like without baseball until it is gone. This experience has made him appreciate baseball and the little things more, like practicing and playing ball with his friends.

Nolan Crisp

Pitcher

University of Georgia

Sophomore Studying Public Relations



Looking forward to coming back and building upon a regional's appearance last summer, Nolan Crisp was excited to be playing for the Hawks again this season. After having a great experience and gaining valuable information from the coaches, Nolan was eager to get back to the Cape.

When the season got cancelled, Nolan realized how tough it was to make the best out of a bad situation. He tried to take everything in hand and do the best with what he was given. He has been training at home with his younger brother and has also been meeting up with friends in order to do bullpens and work towards strengthening his abilities as a pitcher.

This year, Nolan is transferring from the University of Florida to the University of Georgia and he is looking forward to getting a fresh start once baseball makes its way back. In the meantime, Nolan has been scrimmaging against minor and major league players in the area in order to stay on top of his game.

Despite his baseball seasons being canceled, Nolan believes he has improved and has taken a step forward in his career. This experience has allowed him to look back and focus on some things that he would not have been able to critique if everything had gone according to plan.

Brandon Knarr

Pitcher

University of Tampa

Senior Studying Sports Management



Although he had never been to the Cape nor played summer-ball before, Brandon Knarr had been told that a season with the league would be an unforgettable experience. After breaking his back freshman year and training the summer of his sophomore year, he was eager to go east and compete against a lot of high quality players.

Even though the situation was out of his control, Brandon was still disappointed when he received the news that the season had been cancelled. He was looking forward to making

connections with other coaches and players and was upset that he missed out on host family experiences and the scouting perspective the Cape could provide.

Since March, he has been interning and training at a baseball facility. His internship has allowed him to get closer to his degree while also giving him work experience in the baseball industry. Once everything opens back up, he is hoping to get more bullpens in and jump back into his everyday routine.

Brandon has realized how important it is to make the best out of what you can control. Although he missed out on competing in a summer-collegiate league, Brandon still was able to achieve one of his lifetime goals. Through all his hard work and dedication to baseball, he recently signed an undrafted free agent contract with the Milwaukee Brewers and is looking forward to competing at a professional level.