

TJC's Weiss Named NJCAA All-American
By JOE BUIE
Staff Writer

In two seasons at Tyler Junior College, outfielder Eric Weiss fell short of his ultimate goal of winning a national championship.

No ring, no trophy, but on Tuesday the TJC graduate received a special parting gift. The NJCAA named Weiss a first-team All-American after the Houston native batted .402 as a sophomore and committed only one error in center field.

TJC pitcher Jason Jester, who has signed with Texas A&M, made the second team while outfielder Tyler Clakley earned third-team honors in his only season as an Apache.

"That's awesome ... it's a tremendous honor," Weiss told the Tyler Morning Telegraph. "I was telling my dad that my goal in my two years at TJC was to win a national championship and we got so close.

"I told him if I couldn't get a ring or a national championship trophy, (being an All-American) is something I would really want."

Weiss's impressive stats — 53 hits, 10 doubles and 16 steals in 16 attempts — would have been better if not for a strained hamstring that limited the 6-1, 190-pounder to 37 games.

"It was unfortunate," TJC head coach Doug Wren said. "He was a staple in the middle of our lineup and when you take a guy like him out, your offense doesn't work as well."

Weiss had a pair of three-hit games after returning late in the season from his first major injury as a baseball player.

"It was rough. It wasn't fun sitting on the bench having to watch the guys," said Weiss, a product of Cypress Creek HS in Houston. "I was really wanting to be out there competing with them.

"I knew in order to get back to 100 percent and help the team make a run to the playoffs, I would have to take it slow ... and get all the therapy done with the trainers."

Weiss will spend the summer honing his skills and finding a four-year school where he can continue his baseball career. He visited Stephen F. Austin early in the spring and has been contacted by TCU.

He's even got a special contact with the Texas Longhorns — second cousin Erich Weiss, the Big 12 Freshman of the Year. According to UT's Weiss, the Texas coaches asked about TJC's Weiss and said they "want you to remain unsigned until after the draft in case a spot opens up."

SMOKE SIGNALS:

Jester, who moved from the bullpen to No. 1 starter after his freshman year, posted a 9-2 record and a 1.95 ERA as a sophomore. He struck out 87 in 78 1-3 innings and had three shutouts among five complete games. ... Clakley, who transferred from UT Tyler after his freshman year, batted .351 in 45 games for the Apaches. The Chapel Hill graduate had 16 doubles, one triple, five home runs and 45 RBIs. Clakley has signed with SFA.

NJCAA First-Team All-Americans

Eric Weiss, Tyler, OF; Tom Keating, Joliet (Ill.), INF; Kyle Weeks, Suffolk-Selden (N.Y.), INF; Slade Brown, Eastfield, INF; Ryan Matsko, Westmoreland County (Pa.), INF; Ryan Schneider, St. Cloud Technical (Minn.), OF; Nolan Craig, Waubonsee (Ill.), OF; Lester Clark, North Arkansas, C; Kevin Madera, Manchester (Conn.), P; Matt Yuhas, Brookdale (N.J.), P; Billy Creighton, Schenectady (N.Y.), P; Cory Walden, Waubonsee, DH.

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