

Bennett Markinson | Northwestern Baseball

I'm Bennett Martinson I go to Northwestern University and I'm a baseball player Probably the best advice has been to make the most of these 4 years and enjoy them Uh they fly by a lot more than high school when I was younger and I think you make some of the best memories you know being on a team with you know other of your best friends in college um and you know I'm a senior now and I think Literally you know walk around campus and and feel like freshman year was was a few days ago Um so as I have about 2 months left here playing baseball um I think just make the most of you know every second enjoy um every moment you get even even the tough ones the 6 a.m. lifts the late practices um the hectic schedules cause you're gonna look back and those are gonna be some of the the fondest times and you're gonna wish you you know you had one more day where you'd be able to do that with everyone Yeah I think it's important to have a really good routine in place um you know ways that you can know what you have to do without On the one hand like overworking uh mentally or physically um but on the other hand you know if things are going well have a routine in place that you can consistently do um even when you're struggling you can kind of turn to I think you know at times if you are especially in baseball it's a sport um that a lot of people go through slumps I think It's really easy to get in your head and and kind of overthink and and not really know how to get out of it or snap out of it Um but I think if you have you know routines in place that that's super helpful for you Um I think it you know another piece of advice that's helped me in that regard is um every day try to get better Try to you know realize what you need to improve on Don't just you know rep out the things that you're already kind of strong at um but really dive in and work at the things that you know you need to work on and improve on um and kind of look at yourself at the end of every day and And be happy with kind of the work you put in and that you did everything you could kind of in that day to improve and and do as much as you could um to help yourself get better on the field Yeah I think one thing uh I I'm a catcher so mobility and stretching I think is something that when I got to college I didn't put as much emphasis on or spend as much time doing as I could Um and as I got older especially you know the position I play I think having a a really you know set mobility routine and and having exercises that help you know keep me athletic keep me loose behind the plate Um that that's super important and that's something that even you know Northwestern has so much um you

know so many resources when it comes to everything and that's something that if you don't you know go out of your way and and work on it you're not gonna get as much in as you probably should Um so that's one thing I think that's super important to me Um the other thing kind of more baseball specific I think is uh the mental side or like the approach um when when hitting Um I think a lot of times you know people quickly go to like their mechanics or what's wrong with their swing or small things that they're trying to um improve on or work on Um or if they're struggling like hey what's wrong with my swing Or a lot of the times you know 95% of the time it's either your timing or what pitch you're swinging at And that just kind of comes down to your approach your plan when you get into the box um how sold out or committed you are to it Um and if it aligns with you know what you're actually gonna get at the plate Um and I think that's something as I grew as a collegiate athlete that got better and better and has definitely helped me you know improve at the plate Yeah I think for me I I definitely had a unique um high school experience and upbringing I wasn't recruited till very late in the process I think there was even a point my senior year of high school where I wasn't even sure I wanted to and I knew I was gonna do everything I could to play college baseball But um you know I was December of my senior year uncommitted and I was like is this like am I not even get an opportunity or you know a a position to to play at a school I want to play at Um so I would say like A challenge I faced was you know showing up every day having the belief that like things are gonna work out I'm going to you know going to find a place to play in in college and continuing to work hard every single day to prepare myself to be in a position where once I got to college I was ready to go even though you know for you know most of my high school career like it was a lot of uncertainty regarding playing at that next level Um and I think I grew a lot from that and also kind of learned that You know prepare and and do as if um things are gonna work out and that you're gonna be in a position So when that opportunity presents itself you know you're ready to go and it's not oh I got an offer now I'm scrambling to to catch up to get stronger to get better on the field so I'm ready once it Comes Um but in my case it was like you know things ended up working out I committed in in March of my senior year and I felt ready you know to go to finish my high school career strong And once I hit the summer and and got to Evanton in the fall ready to roll and and jump in you're ready to go I've always been an academic person so for me I was trying to find a balance of the best possible academics with the best possible baseball Um and I think

when a you know a school like Northwestern calls and you know you get a top 10 Academic institution in the country and and you compare that with you know Power 5 or Power 4 now baseball uh Big 10 baseball and uh I'm from Los Angeles lived there my whole life too so you know get to experience uh another city in Chicago I think it was a no brainer for me So I think 1 and 2 were you know pairing the academics with the uh the athletics and Um there are very few schools that can offer top tier you know school and sports like Northwestern Um and then I think I was super excited too about being able to to move to the Midwest experience seasons and live really close to Chicago which is a city that I've grown to love in my four years here Yeah I think at the plate I I touched on it a little bit but I think Your mentality and your approach definitely has to grow I think in high school it's easy to have a simple like hey I'm just gonna you know hit fastballs low and away because that's 95% of the time what you're gonna get Um and when you get to college the pitchers improve the stuff is better And you really have to be able to do a multitude of things kind of in the box Like you have to be able to hit a 95 mile an hour fastball but you also have to be able to you know if he leaves a 00 hanging slider over the middle of the plate like in high school it was like all right you might be able to just take that cause you probably one it's not that good of a pitch wo you probably can't repeatedly throw it for a strike Um in college you know you put yourself in a hole and you Immediately you're down 0-1 opens the door for him to you know throw a multitude of pitches and locations kind of off of that So being able to one adapt to like higher velocity better stuff better arms and two being able to hit mistakes more often early in the count I think it's something that you you have to be able to do and get better at Um that was definitely one thing that kind of jumped out you know in the box once I got to college On the defensive side I think a lot of it is you know catching way better pitchers with more movement uh more accuracy more velocity um you know it's a it's definitely a jump in terms of what you're used to seeing and and I think the more preparation you do With you know high velocity pitching machines just getting reps of catching your arms as much as possible Um all all that type of stuff helps kind of get you adjusted and acclimated Um and I think that really helped me on a defensive side to be able to come in and and be ready to catch right away at the college level It's hard it's hard for sure especially um right now you know we're about to have finals in season um but I think one thing that you really learned as a student athlete especially at a top-tier school like Northwestern is you know how to manage your time

well how to get ahead how to communicate with your professors with your classmates you know if we're on the road and I'm missing a class how am I able to either you know get the notes from someone I missed or maybe go to office hours meet with the professor catch up on some of the material that I didn't get Um and then being you know diligent we have You know I I hate doing work on a plane but last night you know we had a two-hour plane ride at like 9 o'clock on a Sunday and I was studying for an exam I had today like being able to know I what times am I gonna be needing to be locked in on baseball fully focused you know fully bought in on on that At what times I may have some downtime and and you might have to make some sacrifices you might not be able to you know go out with your friends you know do kind of social aspirations or social things kind of and and stay in and catch up on work or start you know studying and get ahead Um but I think that's sacrifices that you know all student athletes have to make um and especially at Northwestern you get pretty good at kind of balancing the two and and knowing what you have to get done when you have to get it done by um and how to kind of be prepared both athletically and academically Yeah that's a great question I think you know the way I go about it is I I wanna be a resource to these young guys like I want them to be able To you know ask me anything they want dumb or stupid like it's good question or not Like if something's on your mind like I I've been through it It's my 4th year here and I know about balancing school I know how hard the transition is freshman year I know how the adjustment period to college baseball versus high school baseball is Um like I I've done it and I think you know when I was younger You know underclassmen I lean down some of these upperclassmen um you know ask them for feedback for advice and and they helped me get to the point of where I am Um and I think once you have that culture in place within the team where it's like hey these younger guys are able to rely on these older guys and and when I was a younger guy I was able to do that It it makes it really easy for when you become an upperclassman to be that mentor be that role model to these younger guys and Be like hey any any question you have like feel free to text me call me Like we have a a baseball house We told the younger guys like one of the first days anytime you want stop by the house come by hang out with us Like it's an open door I think that that's how you foster a really strong team culture a good environment Um and that's how you help the freshmen feel comfortable right away I think you know at a a school like Northwestern that's really Uh one niche thing about us is like we have to have freshmen coming in ready to you know

compete right away We're not a school that's able to bring in 100 transfers um you know with kind of the academics and and how hard it is to get into Northwestern That we rely on some of these younger guys to to help us on the field immediately and you know for us to be successful and and be as good as we want like we need those younger guys to be comfortable to be able to come and make an impact right away And a lot of that comes from us being able to help you know speed them up and and get them ready to play college sports um and that you know is a reason that that it's so important for us to be a resource for them Thank you to everyone who has made my 4 years in Northwestern so special um from the coaching staffs from all my teammates throughout my 4 years to the athletic advisors um to everyone athletic trainers strength coaches um everyone who has you know played a part in making this university so special Um I've been blessed and and very grateful to be able to spend my time as a a student athlete here at Northwestern and there's definitely no place that I'd rather be than here and Um there's a reason that you know in today's day and age with you know NIL the transfer portal um I always wanted to stay and I always wanted to finish my four years and graduate from here and and look back proud of of what we've accomplished and what I've done and um it wouldn't be possible for for everyone that I've come across I've played with I've played for um and I'm grateful for for that And um I'm excited to to be a Northwestern Wildcat for life and and look back fondly on my time here and and you know the programs and and the classes of of Northwestern baseball that comes after me as well Some advice that I've I've gotten is in the past has been like hey if you're good enough they'll find you I actually like I would say that's probably not true in some cases So I would say one like keep working Uh the first thing is you need to be good enough to play Um coaches will be able to tell if you are if you're not Um so continuing to get better to improve um you know defensively offensively mentally like all that stuff goes a long way And I think a coach will very easily know if you're strong enough to play Division One baseball if you're strong enough to be a good fit for the program Um so on the one hand you know continuing to work every day and to get better and then from there I I I think be proactive um you know a piece of advice I as I mentioned that I got was hey if you're they're good enough they'll find you and I think it's actually not always the case um but in today's day and age with social media you know with Twitter um it's really easy to you know put a video out there and get a lot of traction um or reach out You know through email to college coaches to have a a highlight reel from kind of your playing

days as a high school athlete um and I think being you know really proactive reaching out to the schools that you want to go to developing relationships with coaches um as early as you can um and I think pushing yourself and marketing yourself well through social media when you're you know meeting with coaches I think all goes a long way for developing interest for yourself and Um the last thing I would say is is don't get discouraged I committed in March of my senior year um and and it was really late So for some guys it it happens early if if you're good enough Um but for a lot of guys like me it's it's a later process So I would say you know if it's Your junior summer or your senior fall and you're not committed yet don't don't give up Keep keep grinding keep you know reaching out and keep having faith that it'll work out um because it it did for me and um I'm grateful for how the process ended up playing out because if I committed earlier I don't think I would have ended up at Northwestern and I'm I'm very grateful for the fact that that I did um and very happy with how my process ended up working out I'm Bennett Markinson I am a senior at Northwestern on the baseball team and you can check me out on Next Level Prep