



Sports



Crusaders catcher Steven Helget has verbally committed to attend MSU next fall to play baseball.

MSU baseball team snags Loyola's Helget

Senior Steven Helget is one of the best catchers to ever come through the Mankato Loyola baseball program and will participate in his final high school season this spring.

But it won't be the last curtain call for Helget's career in Mankato. The 5-foot-11, 186-pound backstop has verbally committed to attending Minnesota State University next fall where he will continue playing baseball.



JIM RUEDA
The Free Press

RUEDA: Helget batted .519 last season for Crusaders

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"I went for a visit and I really liked the facilities they have there," Helget said this week. "They have great equipment and two great coaches in Dean Bowyer and (Matt) Magers.

"And I played about 10 or 15 games with (the Kato Twins) last summer and got a long great with the MSU players on the team. They're a real tight group and it was something I wanted to be a part of."

Helget is coming off a strong junior year for the Crusaders in which he batted a team-high .519 and led the team with 40 hits and 40 runs scored. He was also sec-

ond in RBIs with 26 and boasted an on-base percentage of .606 and a slugging percentage of .753.

MSU head coach Bowyer is prohibited from talking about Helget until he receives a signed letter of intent. That won't happen until the signing period in April, but Helget says he's committed to becoming a Maverick.

Initially, his preference was to go away to college, but after meeting with the coaches and players he canceled visits to the University of South Dakota and North Dakota State.

"I thought about playing football in college, too, but I decided against it," he said. "I want to give baseball 100

percent; I want to give it everything I've got."

Helget assumes he'll stay at catcher for the Mavericks but won't be surprised if he's moved somewhere else in the short term. If he hits the ball well, Bowyer will find him a place in the lineup.

Loyola high school coach Chris Biehn believes Helget's decision is a good one.

"MSU is a very good fit for Steven," Biehn said. "He may not be an impact player right away but, down the line, I see good things for him. MSU is a heck of a program to be invited into."

Helget has always been a good hitter for the Crusaders, starting way back in eighth-grade. The last few years,

Biehn says he's really improved defensively.

"It's not just his physical skills but his mental skills, too," Biehn said. "That part will really help him in college. Once he settles into the Mavericks' system, his potential unlimited."

Typically, Bowyer has proven to be a shrewd judge of talent when it comes to recruiting local players. Helget's production in high school, combined with his positive attitude and work ethic, make him primed for success in the MSU program.

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