



Sports

MSU's King picks football

Senior QB gives up baseball for final semester of eligibility

By Chad Courrier
Free Press Staff Writer

MANKATO — In the end, Ben King had to decide which sport he loved more: baseball or football?

"Football is the sport I want to play," the Minnesota State senior said. "I love playing baseball, but playing quarterback is something different. I can play baseball until I'm 30 with some town team, but you can't play football forever."

King has decided to use his final semester of eligibility to play quarterback for the Minnesota State football team. He could have used his remaining eligibility to play baseball this spring.

"I have friends on the (baseball) team, it's going to be difficult to watch the guys," King said. "But I made a decision, and I'm glad I did. I'm going to support those guys and wish them the best. They'll have a great team with a great pitching staff. I expect them to do great things."

King came to Minnesota State in 2003 as a two-sport athlete, and he played both as a freshman and sophomore.



MSU quarterback and two-sport athlete Ben King has chosen to play football rather than baseball for his final semester of eligibility.

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KING: Chance to break several MSU records

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In 2005, he gave up football to concentrate on baseball, hoping a strong season would get him drafted by a major-league organization.

When that didn't happen, he returned to football last season, starting 10 of 11 games, with a school-record 286 completions in 483 attempts for 3,017 yards with 20 touchdowns and 13 interceptions. In three seasons, King has 602 completions in 1,072 attempts for 6,939 yards, all of which rank second in program history. He also ranks fourth in touchdown passes (44).

King had the top two passing games in school history this season, throwing for 505 yards against South Dakota and 433 yards against Central Washington.

"I love this offense, (offensive coordinator Dan Ragsdale) is a great coach," King said. "I look forward to having a complete offseason to focus on football and improving on the flaws I have and trying to get better."

King, a right-handed pitcher, concludes his baseball career with an 11-7 record and 4.06 earned-run average with 23 starts. In 135.1 innings, he gave up 117 hits and 51 walks

with 131 strikeouts.

"I'm very excited, this is great news for our program," coach Jeff Jamrog said. "He's a three-year starter in this league with a chance to shatter a lot of school records. Hopefully, he'll lead us to our best record since I've been here."

"He got better as the season went on understanding what we wanted to do. If he plays at a higher level, who knows what we can accomplish"

In order to be eligible, King will have to be a part-time student this spring, taking 11 credits this spring and six in the summer. He can't use the athletic department's weight

room or training room, and he can't receive any coaching. King must return as a full-time student in the fall to play football, and he'll graduate after fall semester.

He won't be able to participate in spring football practice; he'll be working out on his own with teammates when there and his schedule permits. Jamrog said that sophomore Ryan Fick and redshirt freshman Tyler Roebke will compete for a backup role during spring practice.

"I'm looking forward to a good season," King said. "Everyone wants to start working."