



PLAYER FEATURE: THE LONG & WINDING JOURNEY

Baysox right-handed pitcher Ryan Long is living the dream of pitching in professional baseball. The 17th round pick of the Baltimore Orioles in 2021 wasn't sure where his baseball journey was taking him a few years ago, but it has led to a path full of opportunity and unique, special life experiences both on and off the diamond.

Long pitched collegiately at Pamona Pitzer – a Division III baseball program located in Los Angeles County in California. The back half of Long's stint at Pamona Pitzer was amidst the coronavirus pandemic. Being in LA County, this meant that not only was half of Long's junior season in 2020 canceled due to the pandemic, but there was also no 2021 season during Long's senior year. This



resulted in a layoff of over a year where Long did not pitch in a game. While the circumstances were not ideal, in a crucial part of Long's baseball career, he chose to take the opportunity to also focus on aspects of his life and career beyond the diamond.

"I ended up working an internship for a DC firm doing public affairs," said Long. "Kind of putting baseball on the back burner. At that point, I got really interested in law."

Long decided that he wanted to simultaneously pursue aspirations in the field of law, while also continuing to play baseball. He had planned to continue his collegiate career for one more year at Georgetown University in Washington, DC in a one-year American Government program. Prior to that, he signed a temp contract to pitch in the Cape Cod collegiate summer league during the summer of 2021, where he was supposed to pitch in 2020, prior to the pandemic. It was the first game action for Long in well over a year and it was a successful stint at that.

"It felt kind of new again," said Long. "I kind of felt like I had a new appreciation for the game after the time off."

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Long continued to juggle his desire to pursue a career in law with pitching in the Cape Cod league after having his contract extended. He would spend hours studying for his LSAT (Law School Admission Test) in the mornings, before pitching in games during the afternoon/evenings. Eventually, his efforts would pay off in an unexpected way. When he was drafted late on by the Baltimore Orioles in 2021, his path changed trajectory, back to a course focused on baseball.

"It was something I wasn't expecting to be honest," said Long. "Everything kind of flipped on its head. I wanted to give this opportunity my best shot."

Long has spent the past four seasons in the Orioles organization. He reached Double-A Bowie in mid-July of 2023 and has spent all of 2024 with the Baysox. While climbing the minor league ladder has been an exciting journey for him, his experiences stretch beyond the minor leagues.

Long's mother is a British citizen, which made him eligible to pitch for Great Britain in the 2023 World Baseball Classic. It's there where long got to compete on a global stage with some of the game's best talents. He even pitched against a loaded Team USA roster that featured the likes of former Baysox outfielder and Baltimore Orioles All-Star Cedric Mullins. Long struck out Three-time American League MVP Mike Trout in his outing against the United States squad. While that may be his favorite on-field memory, the parts he takes away from the experience aren't just between the lines.

"It was probably the best baseball experience, if not the best life experience that I've had up to this point," said Long. "The night before our first meeting, everyone went around the room and spoke on what their heritage meant, who they were playing for. It was really special to see everyone being in the same place and having different reasons for being there and I think it all brought us really close."

Long continues to savor every moment of his baseball experience – taking pride in how far he's come with a focus on what's to follow.

"I'm really proud of what I've done so far – I'm proud that I've made it to Double-A," said Long. "I want to keep making strides. I want to be able to put my best foot forward and go into the offseason feeling strong and hopefully come back next year and give myself a good shot to earn the move up to Norfolk."

