

# Eaton player limps into state tourney

## Knee injury keeps left fielder from reaching potential

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EATON — An attempt to intercept a pass from his free safety position during the football playoffs last fall made for a frustrating baseball season this spring for Garrett Walker.

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league," said Danley, whose Reds are 6-0 lifetime against Faith Christian. "He was hitting three ropes a game."

This year Walker's hitting .265, an average he could maintain with his eyes closed. Walker also has a home run, 21 RBI and an on-base percentage of .494. Most high school players would love to have those numbers, but Walker isn't like most high school players.

"It's been real frustrating because you feel like you're not helping the team as much as you could," said Walker, who hits in the No. 5 hole. "You've just got to work through it, and do what you can do."

Not being able to turn on a fastball because of the surgically repaired knee hasn't been fun for Walker, who has four extra-base hits this year compared to 11 last year.

"The toughest has been hitting. Getting back to being able to turn on it and twist on my knee, I've been collapsing a lot because it's hard to straighten and twist," said Walker, who has struck out only seven times the last two seasons. "I've tried all kind of different stances to help it."

Walker realizes he just has to work through the injury. Danley doubted whether Walker was going to play after the injury.

"You can't just bounce back from something like that and be an All-American," said Walker, who is undecided about next year but would like to play baseball in college.

Danley said Walker will excel at the collegiate level. "He's a kid that a college team ought to take a chance on," said Danley, who was undecided about who he would start on the pitching mound against the Eagles.

Walker, the starting left fielder for the Eaton Reds (20-3), who will be playing Faith Christian (19-4) in the semifinals of the Class 3A Baseball State Tournament at 1 p.m. today at Runyon Field in Pueblo, was destined to be the Reds' next big star heading into this season.

A starter on varsity for the first time last year as a junior when the Reds won



Walker

### statebaseball

their third straight state championship, Walker was named to the Tribune's All-Weld baseball team after a breakout season in which he hit .434 with two home runs, four triples, 37 RBI and an on-base percentage of .627.

Walker, 18, tore up his right knee when he came down wrong after trying to intercept a pass in the Reds' first playoff game against Holy Family.

"I heard a pop. I didn't want to know, but I knew," said Walker, who

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had knee surgery Dec. 4.

The surgery wasn't your basic one. "They cut open my left leg and they cut a piece off my patella tendon to make it my new anterior cruciate ligament," Walker said.

If Reds head coach Jim Danley could redshirt Walker for this season, he certainly would have done that.

"Modern medicine is a wonderful thing, and we've got him out here where he can safely play, but he's not healed. Garrett Walker at half speed is

still better than most of the players in this league, and many of the players in our program," said Danley, who won his 550th career game in the regional semifinals last Saturday against Bishop Machebeuf. "He's a year away from being back to where he was. He's given us everything he's got, and that's all anybody can do."

The left-handed hitting Walker is not the same hitter he was a year ago.

"Last year I thought he was the best left-handed hitter in the league, and maybe the best hitter in the

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No.	Name	Yr.	Pos.	HR	RBI	Avg.
23	Travis Anderson	Jr.	CF	0	16	.435
41	Brett Myatt	Jr.	3B	1	20	.388
1	Josh Noblitt	Jr.	SS	3	30	.423
6	Dusty Dominguez	Sr.	RF	4	33	.468
2	Garrett Walker	Sr.	LF	1	21	.265
24	Shane Dyer	So.	1B	0	10	.349
3	Jordan Hungenberg	Jr.	P	1	19	.348
5	Jordan Nation	Jr.	2B	0	20	.379
4	Jared Carlson	So.	C	0	3	.308
14	Walker Monfort	Jr.	DH	0	12	.292

#### EATON PITCHERS

No.	Name	Yr.	W-L	ERA	IP	SO	BB	H
3	Jordan Hungenberg	Jr.	7-2	5.39	37%	50	23	37
6	Dusty Dominguez	Sr.	5-0	1.32	37%	66	10	15
1	Josh Noblitt	Jr.	3-0	2.05	27%	22	16	17
24	Shane Dyer	So.	4-0	4.03	24%	27	11	23

#### FAITH CHRISTIAN Ralph Nance (coach)

No.	Name	Yr.	Pos.	HR	RBI	Avg.
16	Kyle Chamberlain	Sr.	LF	0	13	.365
4	Phil Vigil	Sr.	C	3	26	.618
21	Josh Marnier	Sr.	1B	1	26	.518
20	Hudson Beasley	Jr.	P	2	20	.450
8	Hondo Carbajal	Sr.	RF	4	24	.380
19	Brennan Bonati	Jr.	DH	2	18	.377
2	Michael Woods	So.	CF	2	14	.353
15	John Hegarty	So.	3B	0	8	.440
1	Joby Schaffer	Jr.	SS	0	12	.291

#### FAITH CHRISTIAN PITCHERS

No.	Name	Yr.	W-L	ERA	IP	SO	BB	H
19	Brennan Bonati	Jr.	6-0	3.62	37	64	12	26
20	Hudson Beasley	Jr.	7-1	2.09	43	58	14	32
21	Josh Marnier	Sr.	3-1	3.30	21	39	14	19

"By fall he'll be getting close, and by next spring I think he'll be very much the hitter he's been here. He's got a beautiful, sweet swing."

Despite a season filled with frustration, Walker will be ending his prep career in the Final Four, a spot where the Reds have called home for 12 straight years. Call Walker the ultimate team player.

"I'm just glad that we have such a great team that can take us this far," Walker said. "I try and stay as unselfish as possible. I just do what I can for the team, and don't complain."

### CLASS 3A STATE BASEBALL

■ **WHAT:** Class 3A Baseball Semifinals

■ **WHO/WHEN:** Faith Christian (19-4) vs. Eaton (20-3), 1 p.m. today; D'Evelyn (20-4) vs. La Junta (19-3), 3:30 p.m. today. (State championship game is 3:30 p.m. Saturday.)

■ **WHERE:** Runyon Field, Pueblo (Take Interstate 25 south through Denver, Colorado Springs and into Pueblo. Take right at Runyon Field exit off I-25.)