

# Ryan Funk is a topnotch catcher

By Rongi Yost  
Correspondent

Ryan Funk has had baseball in his blood from the time he joined T-ball as a three-year-old. His baseball dream of playing at the collegiate level came true this year, as he signed to play for Lower Columbia Community College (LCCC) in Longview, Washington. He'll trade in his black-and-white Outlaws colors for red and blue.

Funk has been a four-year varsity starter for the Outlaws. As a freshman, Ryan played third base and did some pitching, but for the past three years has been the Outlaws No. 1 catcher. He's a top-notch catcher, and also has power at the plate, and batted .333 for the Outlaws this year. The summer of his freshman year, he played on the Oregon Select Club team, and the last two years he has played for the Bend Elks 19U team, which is for players 19 years old and younger.

Every fall for the past four years, Ryan has also played at the Baseball NW Tournament held in Centralia, Washington. Top players from Idaho, Montana,

Oregon, Washington, and part of California try out and the cream of the crop are selected to form a team from each region. Funk has been one of those elite players the past four years.

Sisters High School's Head Baseball Coach Steve Hodges said, "Ryan is the best catcher in the Sky-Em League and one of the best catchers in the state. He keeps the ball in front of him and blocks the ball extremely well. He threw out 15 runners this season. The first criteria for a college catcher is to have a plus arm. Ryan has been blessed with that, and that's what college coaches are looking for.

"Ryan also works hard in the off-season. He's a real team guy and is very reliable. You always know he's going to compete and give everything he has. I wish him the best of luck. It's exciting and rewarding to see guys from our program go on and play at the next level."

LCCC Assistant Coach Kurt Lupinski has been scouting Funk since he was a freshman, and first noticed him at the tournament in Centralia, and has wanted him on the team from the start.

Funk visited the campus in

October of 2016, was given a tour, and met with Head Coach Eddie Smith. He was offered a spot on the team and signed an official letter of intent at his home on January 17, 2017.

**"I feel confident in joining the program. I believe I'll be a good influence there and I hope to get even more of a growing passion for baseball."**

**— Ryan Funk**

Funk told *The Nugget* he chose LCCC because it was cheaper, and he loves the coaches and the program.

"Their baseball program is super-successful and they dominate their league," said Funk. "In the last 42 years they've won 38 regional titles and have won 12 national championships.

"I feel confident in joining the program," said Funk. "I believe I'll be a good influence there, and I hope to get even more of a growing



PHOTO BY RONGI YOST

Ryan Funk will play ball for Lower Columbia Community College.

passion for baseball. I hope the college experience prepares me for the next level. That would be sweet!"

Ryan plans to pursue a degree in business and hopes to transfer to Washington State University to finish up his last two years.

## WRESTLERS: Youths headed for regional competition

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surprised and you're mad," Triston said.

That's where the lifelong lessons come in.

"What I do is just get my head together and focus on the next match," Triston said. "That's all you can do."

Both wrestlers like the physicality and the intensity of the sport. And they figure it will make them more formidable on the football field in their other favorite sport. They're encouraging their friends to join them on the mats and in the intensely focused two-hour workouts they consistently put in.

And whatever competition in Pocatello brings, they're ready for it, and they'll come back for more.

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