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The King of JUCO: How a former Salem-Keizer Volcanoes player became a social media sensation



Eric Sim, aka The King of JUCO, has built a substantial social media following over the last year. Submitted photo

BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

Lift big, throw gas, hit bombs.

That is the motto of former Salem-Keizer Volcanoes player Eric Sim. While the mantra never got him to the big leagues, it did help him create a popular brand and gave him a cult-like following on social media.

The “King of JUCO” has over 60,000 followers on YouTube and more than 40,000 followers on Twitter. Whether it's doing live at-bats against current big-leaguers, or creating his 95-or-die challenge, Sim is having a blast with the content he is able to create.

“It has been an amazing ride. I am just having fun with it. It's just about being different,” Sim said.

Sim grew up in South Korea before moving to Canada at the age of 13. Although he didn't know much

English, Sim fell in love with the game of baseball.

“I just loved the training and truly progressing and getting better at what I do,” Sim said.

Sim had the desire to play after high school, but didn't have any initial collegiate offers. Eventually, he signed with Colby Community College in Kansas.

“It was in the middle of nowhere. It was about learning and growing as fast as you can so you could move forward,” Sim said.

Sim says that his two years at Colby were the most fun he's had ever had playing baseball, and it gave him a passion to be an advocate and supporter for junior college baseball, also known as JUCO, players.

Sim coined the term “JUCO Bandit” as someone who is a high-quality junior college baseball player that grinds to

improve so they can transfer to a four-year school. The term has gained popularity amongst community college players throughout the country.

“People used to play JUCO because they had to. They didn't have any other options. It has been crazy to see how far it has come with kids actually wanting to be JUCO Bandits instead of going to a four-year school right away,” Sim said.

When a former junior college player

called him “The King of JUCO,” Sim ran with the new nickname — which is what he named his website, as well as his social media sites.

“Some jabroni just said that one time and it just stuck. I changed my Twitter handle and it has been a big part of my brand ever since,” Sim said.

After a successful career at Colby, Sim received a scholarship to play his final two seasons at South Florida

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