

SPORTS

BASEBALL

Harber holding out hopes for a 2020 season

By GARY HENLEY
The Astorian

Conor Harber plays professional baseball in another country. But when it comes to the 2020 season, he's in the same boat as every other ball player.

Little leaguers, high school, college and professional players — unless they play in Korea, they're all waiting for that first pitch of 2020.

Harber spent the 2019 season with the Acereros de Monclova (the Monclova Steelers) of the professional Mexican League. And it was one fun season for Harber, both individually and teamwise, as the Acereros won the Mexican equivalent of the World Series.

Harber, in fact, started the seventh and deciding game of the championship series for Monclova, ultimately a 9-5 victory over the Yucatan Lions.

Currently, the Mexican League season has been postponed, "and we're not sure if we're even going to have a season," Harber said last week. "It's not looking too good."

The 2020 Major League Baseball season was set to open in late March, while Monclova was scheduled for an April 6 season opener.

Harber and his teammates were just getting into spring training when everything was put on hold.

"I was down (in Mexico) for three weeks before everything kind of hit," he said. "Our season had already been postponed until May 11, then they pushed it back another month."

Right now, "it depends if they open it up to crowds," said Harber, as the Mexican League is very fan-dependent.

So, Harber headed back to his home turf to wait things out while staying in baseball shape.

"I'm just trying to stay busy," he said. "After every season, I usually give myself a month-and-a-half off just to relax, take my mind off everything and give my body a break."

He starts working out in mid-December, and by mid-January is throwing bullpen sessions.

After the high school season was canceled, Harber gained a new group of workout partners.

"Right now I'm throwing with some of the high school seniors who will be moving on to college. (Warrenton's) Jake Morrow has been catching us. He's trying to get ready for the fall at Linn-Benton."

Meanwhile, "I'm just waiting to see what happens with the Mexican League."

Harber was looking forward to his second season with Monclova, where his pitching blossomed in last year's postseason, along with the Acereros, who rallied from



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Conor Harber plays baseball in Mexico.

the brink of elimination in three straight playoff series to win the title.

In the first round, Monclova trailed Monterrey three games to two in a best-of-seven. Harber was the winning pitcher in Game 6 to tie the series, and Monclova won Game 7, 5-2.

In a best-of-seven against Tijuana, the Acereros trailed two games to none, then won four of the next five (Harber got the win in Game 7) to advance to the championship series, another seven-game affair, with Monclova rallying again to defeat Yucatan in Game 6 and Game 7.

"The regular season was fun, but once the playoffs rolled around ... it's a lot different," Harber said. "I can't get too specific, but they were doing stuff in the crowd and on the field, if you saw that in the states, someone's getting sued for it."

Monclova had never won the championship, "so it was special for everyone in the town," Harber said. "They threw a big party afterwards. Nothing like I've ever experienced. A parade ... we only went 2 or 3 miles, but there were tens of thousands of people. It's a lot of fun there, for sure."

The traveling, on the other hand, is not

"The bus rides and the airplane rides start wearing you down," he said. "Two-hour bus rides to the airport, and then a three-hour plane flight. We have to do that about twice per week."

Harber has certainly paid his dues when it comes to miles traveled.

After graduating from Astoria, he played collegiately at Western Nevada and Oregon.

He was selected in the MLB draft by Baltimore in 2013 and Tampa Bay in 2014, but did not turn pro until he was taken in the 16th round by the Milwaukee Brewers in 2015.

His minor league career began with the Helena (Montana) Brewers, followed by stops with the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers, Carolina Mudcats and the Biloxi Shuckers.

After he was released by the Brewers in the spring of 2019, Harber hooked up with Monclova.

Only 26, Harber still has an agent and has not given up on his major league hopes.

"With the postseason I had last year, I was kind of hoping to be seen," said Harber, who has not ruled out playing in Korea or Japan.

"I thought that might be an opportunity if I keep doing well. A couple guys off our team have gone over. It's harder to get in there, but guys are being picked up all the time and going back to the states and playing for major league clubs."

A lot of it, he said, "is just timing. If you're doing really well and if a club is short on pitching, they will scoop guys up. It's just being ready to go when they need someone."

For now, Harber would just like to be on the mound, in any game in any country.

"I'm still staying healthy. Hopefully we'll get a season so I can get a little baseball in this year."

OBITUARIES

Marc Allan Walter Dunedin, Florida 1959 — 2020

Marc Allan Walter, age 60, passed away suddenly on May 7, 2020.

Born in Lyons, Kansas, in 1959, Marc was a resident of everywhere. Not one to spend too long in one place, he had the pleasure of living on either coast and several places in between. Though if you were to ask him, the years that included any measure of snow were not of much consequence.

Marc is survived by all of those who loved him, and will be remembered as a loving husband, father, papa, friend, the best fire protection engineer God ever blessed this planet with, a man of the sea and a restless wanderer.

Everyone who knew Marc could usually

expect that his cat, "Murphy," was not far behind. Murphy would spend every hour of the workday in Marc's office, which often ran past dinnertime. If you were a client, it was not uncommon to hear Murphy in the background during calls.



Marc Walter

To honor Marc, his best friend Murphy and everyone who makes bonds like this possible, the family requests a donation in lieu of flowers to secure.oregonhumane.org/doggiedash/stephanie

A private graveside service will be held at Evergreen Cemetery in Seaside, Oregon.

Hughes-Ransom Mortuary is in charge of the arrangements. Please visit hughesransom.com to leave messages of condolence.

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SEVEN-DAY FORECAST FOR ASTORIA

| TODAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY | SUNDAY | MONDAY |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 64 50 Partly sunny | 67 51 Clouds and sun | 68 52 Clouds and sun; nice | 63 50 Partly sunny | 63 48 Showers possible | 58 49 Showers possible | 61 48 Showers possible |

ALMANAC

Astoria through Sunday

Temperatures

| | |
|-----------------|------------|
| High/low | 65/47 |
| Normal high/low | 61/47 |
| Record high | 84 in 1993 |
| Record low | 38 in 1923 |

Precipitation

| | |
|----------------------|--------|
| Sunday | 0.00" |
| Month to date | 3.15" |
| Normal month to date | 2.62" |
| Year to date | 35.21" |
| Normal year to date | 32.91" |

Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2020

UNDER THE SKY

Tonight's Sky: Virgo is rising in the east in late evening, containing only one bright star, Spica.

SUN AND MOON

Source: Jim Todd, OMSI

| | |
|----------------|------------|
| Sunrise today | 5:32 a.m. |
| Sunset tonight | 8:54 p.m. |
| Moonrise today | 8:46 a.m. |
| Moonset today | 12:03 a.m. |

| | First | Full | Last | New |
|--|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| | | | | |
| | May 29 | June 5 | June 12 | June 20 |

TODAY'S TIDES

| Astoria / Port Docks | Time | High (ft.) | Time | Low (ft.) |
|----------------------------|------|------------|------|-----------|
| 3:28 a.m. | 8.4 | 10:51 a.m. | -0.6 | |
| 5:33 p.m. | 6.6 | 10:45 p.m. | 3.4 | |
| Cape Disappointment | | | | |
| 3:12 a.m. | 8.2 | 10:01 a.m. | -0.7 | |
| 5:08 p.m. | 6.5 | 9:48 p.m. | 3.8 | |
| Hammond | | | | |
| 3:21 a.m. | 8.5 | 10:20 a.m. | -1.0 | |
| 5:19 p.m. | 6.7 | 10:13 p.m. | 3.5 | |
| Warrenton | | | | |
| 3:23 a.m. | 8.8 | 10:35 a.m. | -0.5 | |
| 5:28 p.m. | 7.0 | 10:29 p.m. | 3.5 | |
| Knappa | | | | |
| 4:05 a.m. | 8.7 | 11:52 a.m. | -0.5 | |
| 6:10 p.m. | 6.9 | 11:46 p.m. | 2.9 | |
| Depoe Bay | | | | |
| 2:21 a.m. | 8.1 | 9:32 a.m. | -1.2 | |
| 4:24 p.m. | 6.4 | 9:21 p.m. | 3.6 | |

NATIONAL CITIES

| City | Today Hi/Lo/W | Wed. Hi/Lo/W |
|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| Atlanta | 78/64/pc | 77/67/t |
| Boston | 77/60/pc | 82/64/s |
| Chicago | 86/70/c | 84/68/t |
| Dallas | 75/61/t | 77/64/t |
| Denver | 76/51/s | 79/51/pc |
| Honolulu | 85/74/pc | 86/74/s |
| Houston | 83/68/t | 86/66/t |
| Los Angeles | 89/62/s | 88/63/s |
| Miami | 87/77/t | 88/76/pc |
| New York City | 77/60/pc | 77/64/pc |
| Phoenix | 103/76/s | 109/80/s |
| San Francisco | 81/56/s | 77/55/s |
| Wash., DC | 80/64/pc | 80/69/pc |

Weather (W): s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, l-ice.

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REGIONAL FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.

| City | Today Hi/Lo/W | Wed. Hi/Lo/W | City | Today Hi/Lo/W | Wed. Hi/Lo/W |
|---------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| Seattle | 69/51 | | Wenatchee | 80/53 | |
| Aberdeen | 66/47 | | Moses Lake | 82/54 | |
| Olympia | 71/49 | | Yakima | 82/51 | |
| Portland | 74/53 | | Kennewick | 83/51 | |
| Salem | 75/52 | | Walla Walla | 77/55 | |
| Corvallis | 76/53 | | Hermiston | 83/55 | |
| Eugene | 76/53 | | Pendleton | 78/53 | |
| Bend | 75/48 | | La Grande | 73/49 | |
| Medford | 85/58 | | John Day | 74/53 | |
| Klamath Falls | 80/49 | | Burns | 78/49 | |
| | | | Ontario | 75/59 | |
| | | | Caldwell | 75/58 | |