

SPORTS

(AP) Travis Bazzana, the top overall pick in the MLB amateur draft out of Oregon State, signed his first professional contract with the Cleveland Guardians on Friday.

Bazzana formally inked a deal at Progressive Field, agreeing to an \$8.95 million contract, a person familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the amount of the contract has not been announced.

MLB assigned a \$10.57 million slot value to the top pick, but the 21-year-old second baseman from Australia was realistic about the process, saying, "I was never going to get slot money anywhere."

"I wanted to be in a place where I could flourish and, with the identi-



ty of the way the Guardians play the game, this is where I wanted to be," the 6-foot, 199-pound Bazzana said. "I put my trust in my great agents, but

they knew I wanted to be a Guard."

The left-handed hitting Bazzana will be assigned to Class-A Lake County and could make his minor

league debut later this month. The Captains play in Eastlake, Ohio, an 18-mile drive from downtown Cleveland.

Bazzana is scheduled to take batting practice with the Guardians on Saturday before the second game of the team's series against San Diego. He is the first No. 1 overall pick in franchise history and the first second baseman to be the top selection.

"I've been watching José Ramírez highlights over and over, then you get out there and say, 'What's up?' to him," Bazzana said of Cleveland's six-time All-Star third baseman. "That's when it sinks in a little bit."

In three seasons with Oregon State, Bazzana batted .360 with 45 home runs and 165 RBIs. He hit .407 with 28 homers and 66 RBIs this season.

"I hope sports fans back in Australia will become Guardians fans and follow Major League Baseball," he said. "It's exciting, knowing that the next Travis Bazzana can sit at home and watch me on my journey."



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