

Aaron Van Scoyoc

Growing up as a talented ballplayer in a small town forces an athlete to live on the boundary between ‘celebrity’ and ‘notoriety’, with many elements of his life scrutinized by others, and his standard of performance – in everything – just a little bit higher than that of his peers. Growing up as a talented athlete in a small town, and also being the son of the head coach, especially when the latter is one of the most successful high school coaches in Iowa history, brings an entirely different sort of fame. That was the environment in which Aaron Van Scoyoc was raised.

Aaron James Van Scoyoc was born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, on March 1, 1970, to parents Jim and Sheryl (Boddicker). The boy eventually grew to 6’ and 165 pounds, and was as gifted on the diamond as anyone could have imagined. Growing up playing youth baseball in Norway, along with Tyson Kimm, Chris Frese, and so many others, he was brilliant by the time he reached high school. He was named All-State First Team infielder as a high school junior in 1987, and again as a senior in 1988, by the Iowa Newspaper Association. In 1987 he was named Most Valuable Player in the state championship tournament, a contest culminated with another Norway high school title, and the next year he posted a 468 batting average to complement his 9-0 record as a pitcher. Following his senior season, Van Scoyoc was drafted by the *Orioles* in the 36th round.

He chose not to sign with Baltimore, instead enrolling at Westark Community College (Western Arkansas) in Fort Smith (today the school is the “University of Arkansas – Fort Smith”). It was there that Van Scoyoc truly displayed his professional potential when he was named All Conference (2nd team) in a talent-laden league, trailing only a shortstop who later transferred to perennial powerhouse University of Miami.

On June 7, 1989, the switch-hitter was drafted in the 21st round by the New York *Yankees*. Given his track record of proven performance, he was not entirely surprised to be chosen. Just not by New York. He later told a local Iowa reporter, “I was expecting the call, but I didn’t know when. I also didn’t expect it to be the *Yankees*. I had talked to New York, but I expected it to be the *White Sox* and *Athletics*.”

Van Scoyoc bypassed the rookie leagues, and instead was sent directly to the Yankees Class ‘A’ team in Oneonta, NY, in the New York-Penn League. In his fifth at-bat under manager Brian Butterfield, he notched his first professional hit. During that first year he was the youngest (19) player in the league, hitting .238 and driving in seventeen runs, and later – in the fall – Aaron was sent to the instructional league in Florida where he played with a number of future major leaguers, including JT Snow, Mariano Rivera, Brad Ausmus, Andy Fox, and Russ Davis,

Van Scoyoc’s three professional seasons included stops not only in Oneonta, but also in Greensboro (North Carolina, in the South Atlantic League), and finally in Ft. Lauderdale (Florida State League). He played in almost 100 games that year, in both Greensboro and Ft. Lauderdale, but despite his stellar defense, his left the game after 1991 to return to Cedar Rapids, where he lives (as of 2011).