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Freedom Sign Local Player

Former Covington Catholic, University of Cincinnati Standout Joins Freedom



Florence, Ky. – The Florence Freedom, presented by Titan Mechanical Solutions, are thrilled to announce the signing of Union native and former White Sox prospect Zach Isler.

“It’s fun to be back home and I can’t wait to play in front of my friends and family again,” said Isler, standing inside UC Health Stadium where he last played in 2009 as a senior at Covington Catholic High School. “I loved spending my high school years in Northern Kentucky and sharing the experience of playing high school and collegiate baseball with my whole family.”

Isler, a former pitcher at Covington Catholic and the University of Cincinnati, played four seasons in the White Sox organization, reaching as high as Triple-A Charlotte last April. The right-hander made 121 total appearances at five different stops within the organization and recorded 18 saves, including 10 in 2015.

"I can't thank the White Sox organization enough because they gave me the opportunity to live out my dream," Isler said on Thursday, the first day of spring training in Florence. "I became a much better baseball player and I got to pitch one step away from the big leagues."

An eighth-round draft pick in 2012, Isler's best stint in affiliated baseball came last season with Double-A Birmingham. In 24 appearances, he allowed opposing batters to hit just .236, while posting a 3.44 ERA, a 1.09 WHIP, and 16 strikeouts.

"Zach had a great year in Double-A last year and a solid spring training, so we are excited to have him in Florence," Freedom Manager Dennis Pelfrey said. "We look for him to battle for one of the backend bullpen jobs, possibly closing or setting up. Plus, as a guy who has been in affiliated baseball, he will be able to give some advice to our younger arms."

Isler embraces the idea of being a mentor. When he was struggling with the White Sox organization, some more experienced pitchers did the same for him.

"I hit a rough patch a few years ago and some of my teammates took me under their wings and really helped me propel into who I am now and how I pitch," Isler said. "The biggest things I learned are to have fun and enjoy the game. I look forward to getting to know these guys and maybe even take a few under my wing to help them become better players."

Before his professional career, Isler had a stellar junior season at the University of Cincinnati. He allowed an earned run in only eight of his 22 appearances and finished ninth in the Big East with five saves. Late in the season, he was asked to start four series openers against Big East teams. In those four outings, he allowed just five runs in 28 innings (1.61 ERA), while striking out 21 and holding opponents to a .212 batting average.

At Covington Catholic, Isler was a first-team all-state selection and a two-time Cincinnati Enquirer All-Star. He finished his high school career with a 17-3 record, including 12-0 in the senior season, while the Colonels compiled a 110-37-1 record in his four years.

The Freedom begin their 2016 campaign at home against the Windy City Thunderbolts on May 13th at 7:05 p.m. Tickets for all games at UC Health Stadium, including Opening Day and the 2016 Frontier League Y'All Star Game, can be found [here](#).

To keep up with all the latest Florence Freedom news and to learn about exclusive deals and contests, make sure to like the team on Facebook and follow the team on Twitter.

The Florence Freedom are members of the Frontier League and play a 96-game schedule with 48 home games at UC Health Stadium in Florence, Kentucky. In 2015, the Frontier League

recognized the Freedom as the league's organization of the year and awarded the team with the league's All-Star event. The 2016 season will mark the 13th year the Freedom have played in Florence.

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