Chris Denorfia took an unlikely route to the pros

By JOHN GORALSKI

Chris Denorfia took an unlikely route to the pros. Every team should have a Chris Denorfia. Every team should have 25 players with Chris Denorfia’s attitude.

Hall of Fame

It didn’t matter. A low draft pick didn’t scare him. A release from his minor league contract didn’t faze him. Nothing seemed to stop the Southington native, and Denorfia seemed to will himself into the majors.

“I really thought that it didn’t matter where I went,” he said. “For me, it was a young coach trying to point me in the right direction, his former high school coach and mentor to the great coaches in Connecticut. Denorfia shagged off the spotlight of CIAC sports to focus on his academic life and prep school athletics. In the summers he chose to play with his varsity teammates on a start-up legion team instead of a bigger scholarship team that could showcase his talents.

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Over the next four years, Denorfia dominated the diamond at Wheaton College. He still holds school records for stolen bases (73), runs (182), hits (264), and at bats (655). He’s still ranked in Wheaton’s top 5 in 15 hitting categories. He was all-region three times and was named to the first team ABCA All-American roster in 2002.

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