JUCO Baseball – Former SCF stars Griffin, Goody shining in minor leagues

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Griffin, Goody get call to big-league camps

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BRADENTON -- One is a right-handed pitcher with nasty stuff.

The other is a power-hitting first baseman.

But the former State College of Florida standouts have one thing in common: They're heading to Major League Baseball spring training for the first time.

Nick Goody and Jonathan Griffin earned invitations off stellar 2012 seasons in the minors. Goody, an Orlando native, garnered interest from the New York Yankees following his sophomore season at SCF.

His best game that year came when he struck out 19 batters in eight innings. Goody opted for a year of baseball at LSU, but the Yankees found a way to get him again, this time in the sixth round in last year's draft. Goody did not disappoint.

He sparkled at three different levels, posting a collective 1.13 earned-run average and seven saves in 23 appearances. He also racked up 52 strikeouts in 32 innings.

The right-hander began the season in the New York-Penn League, then was promoted to the South Atlantic League and the Florida State League.

"For me, I have one goal in mind," Goody said. "And that's obviously make it to the big leagues and stay. The first promotion caught me off guard. I was like, 'What?' I didn't know all the guys names on the team or know them very well, so that caught me off guard. ... And then I spent about a month or so in the Sally League and they called me up to Tampa, and I was like, 'Geez.'"

Griffin also enjoyed success in 2012. The 6-foot-7 right-handed slugger belted 26 home runs to go with 19 doubles and three triples and turned in a .300 batting average at Single-A Visalia for the Arizona Diamondbacks.
That earned Griffin, a former Lakewood Ranch High standout, a late-season promotion to Double-A Mobile.

"I started off a little slow and made a couple adjustments around the All-Star break and really picked it up offensively," Griffin said. "And then got promoted to Double-A, and we ended up winning the championship."

Griffin and Goody are looking forward to soaking up as much knowledge as they can during spring training.

"Everything from plate discipline to defensive fundamentals," Griffin said about what he expects to learn. "You reach a certain point in your career where you're fundamentally you are stable, but after that it's a lot of mind. It's like playing chess, so little tricks that help me out along the way ... little veteran moves. We call it salty. Like that's a salty move."

The two aren't the only SCF alums making headway in the minors. Gus Schlosser, a former Lakewood Ranch star, was a Carolina League All-Star after a 3.38 ERA and 139 strikeouts in 165 1/3 innings pitched for the Atlanta Braves affiliate in Lynchburg, Va.

Former SCF catcher Austin Chubb is preparing himself for his first spring training, albeit the minor-league version, after he spent 2012 in the Gulf Coast League for the Washington Nationals.

With former teammates such as Goody, Griffin, Schlosser, Alex Burgos and Jonathan Rodriguez already immersed in pro ball, Chubb will enter this year prepared after gaining tidbits about what to expect from some of the guys.

"Jonny (Griffin) and I are very close," Chubb said. "I'm staying in Orlando, so we go kind of back-and-forth. We work out and hit together. Goody's in Orlando, and we actually worked a camp with one of the coaches here (at SCF) in Ormond Beach, so I got to see Gus there. It definitely helps. ... They kind of said, 'Go in there with a work ethic and everything will take care of itself.'"
Former State College of Florida baseball players, from left, Nick Goody, Jonathan Griffin, Derek Luciano and Austin Chubb greet each other during introductions Saturday at SCF's annual alumni game at Robert C. Wynn Field. TIMOTHY R. WOLFRUM/twolfrum@bradenton.com