

Schrock Ventures Out

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Growing up in North Carolina's Triangle area, there are three universities to pledge allegiance to—Duke, North Carolina and North Carolina State. Max Schrock, a shortstop at Raleigh's Cardinal Gibbons High, grew up in Chapel Hill, but if he decides not to sign a pro contract out of high school he will leave his stomping grounds and cross the border into South Carolina to don a Gamecocks uniform.

How does a son of Chapel Hill wind up on the other Carolina's campus?

"I wanted to venture out," Schrock said. "I didn't want to go to college and play in my backyard. I grew up wanting to, but South Carolina is the perfect distance from home."

Schrock doesn't jump out physically and the new Collective Bargaining Agreement will likely hinder teams from buying him out of college, but scouts are still dropping in to see him play. Schrock has shown an ability to handle the bat from the left side in the past and plays up the middle—a combination worth monitoring. He sets up with a slightly open stance and has good bat speed, which produces a little bit of pop. Despite being about 5-foot-8 and 180 pounds, Schrock was one of the few players to hit a home run at the East Coast Pro Showcase in Lakeland, Fla., last August.

An average runner with a solid arm, Schrock fits better at second base as a pro, but could handle shortstop in college.

"He's better than what (South Carolina) has right now," an area scout said of Schrock's defense.

There is still plenty of season left, but Schrock's reputation with the bat isn't a secret and opponents are avoiding giving him anything to hit. In a recent tournament game against Durham's Jordan High, Schrock was hit by a pitch and walked in his first two at-bats, then struck out and grounded out in the next two. He expanded the zone as his frustration grew, getting out in front and swinging at balls out of the zone.

"It's really frustrating," Schrock said. "I'm thinking too much. I need to trust my hands and let the ball get deep. I feel all right. I'm just not seeing a lot to hit. I need to stay patient."

Through 15 games, Schrock was hitting .391/.556/.915 with five home runs, 20 runs and 25 RBIs in 46 at-bats.