

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL DRAFT

Railroaders' Ty Kaunas goes undrafted

After being targeted as a third-round pick by Cubs, standout infielder will continue his career at University of Maryland

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Shortly before the MLB Draft began at 6 p.m. Sunday, Ty Kaunas felt some optimism he would end the night as Frederick County's highest-drafted high schooler, one of a coveted few to hear his name called on national television.

His agent, former MLB pitcher Jim Bullinger, had been in negotiations with the Chicago Cubs about the team using its third-round selection on Kaunas, a 2025 Brunswick High graduate.

But by the time the pick – the

90th overall – came around some four hours later, Kaunas wasn't surprised when Abilene Christian right-handed pitcher Dominick Reid's name popped up on the telecast next to the Cubs' logo instead of his.

And after another full day Monday in which he went undrafted, the smooth-fielding Kaunas wasn't surprised he would fulfill his college commitment to the University of Maryland.

"I always made sure I listened to my agent," Kaunas said Monday night. "He did his best to negotiate. I trust in what he did. It's

unfortunate we couldn't come to terms, but it'll happen in three years, hopefully."

Kaunas said he sought a \$2 million signing bonus but would negotiate down to \$1.7 million if necessary. Most teams balked at that price, including the Philadelphia Phillies and Detroit Tigers, who entered advanced discussions with Kaunas



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but were unwilling to meet his demand.

The Cubs were willing to entertain a price in his ballpark. Kaunas said the two sides got "really close" during negotiations but ultimately couldn't agree on a final number. The 90th pick carried a slot value of \$865,500, and Chicago's marginal bonus pool of \$9,636,800 for all its picks made Kaunas' ask a tight squeeze.

Kaunas said he felt there was a chance the Cubs could try again with their first selection Monday – at 121st overall – but that came and went without much fanfare,

cementing his decision to go to Maryland.

By Monday afternoon, he was in College Park with some of his future teammates, completing his required physicals and blasting home runs at Bob "Turtle" Smith Stadium.

"I think it's a really good decision, and hopefully I become a first rounder in three years," Kaunas said.

That's certainly possible if his bat continues to develop.

He's a contact-first hitter who

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rarely swings and misses, reaching base in more than half of his plate appearances in his two seasons at Brunswick after moving to the area from Pennsylvania as a junior.

All the while, he rarely made an error at shortstop,

helping him earn Frederick News-Post Co-Player of the Year honors as a senior.

"A lot of clubs missed out on a great player, and he's gonna show them that over the next three years," longtime Brunswick head coach Roger Dawson said.

Kaunas said he believes Maryland will be the place

to do just that, and he hopes to re-enter the draft in 2028 when first eligible.

"I think I can develop and become the best player I possibly can under this coaching staff, and all the new technology Coach [Matt] Swope offers here," Kaunas said. "I think it's gonna be a great three or

four years here.

"If I was coming out of college, it would be completely different right now," Kaunas said. "But coming out of high school, you've gotta think of it in the long run, and I know I've got a great plan here, and it's gonna go well."