

**LANCERS**

# Could The MLB Draft Be In The Cards For Mount Marty's Leader?

Story By Jeremy Hoeck  
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**W**hen you have played a key role in 96 victories over nearly three and a half seasons like Jason Schmidt has at Mount Marty College, there's little to nit-pick about, right? Well, that's not entirely the case with the Mitchell native. No, the senior shortstop and closer instead vividly recalls one loss during his career — ironically, the only loss he has been charged with as a pitcher. That defeat? In the championship game of the 2009 Great Plains Athletic Conference (GPAC) Tournament. Schmidt, then a freshman, was saddled with

a hard-luck loss when Dakota Wesleyan upended the Lancers in extra innings for the league title. Not only was it a tough loss to swallow, the winning runs scored on a ground ball that took a bad bounce past the second baseman. "Losing games like that actually really help, I think," Schmidt said, looking back. "I was just glad I was a freshman; it was easier to bounce back because I didn't know any different. "It was seriously the lowest of lows and then the highest of highs," he added, without hesitation. "It's funny how baseball works." Since then, Schmidt has developed into one of the school's all-time greats, and has done so at the plate and on the mound. The reigning GPAC Player of the Year and pre-season All-American this spring, Schmidt has been a staple of the Mount Marty lineup since he came to campus in 2008. "We've gotten spoiled playing with him, almost like we just expect him to do something good all the time," said senior second baseman Jason Livermont, who has played next to Schmidt almost as long as anybody. "Anything can happen when he gets to the plate."

More often than not, such outcomes have been positive — usually of the extra-base hit variety. Through games as of March 29, Schmidt is batting .362 with two home runs and 16 RBI for the Lancers (11-11). For his career, Schmidt ranks first all-time at Mount Marty in doubles (45) and walks (124), second in runs (154) and triples (9), and fourth in games played (160) and RBI (138). He has also slugged 25 home runs — that number increasing every season. The left-handed hitting power hitter has produced such numbers while rarely striking out. Schmidt has managed more walks than strikeouts in each of his four seasons with the Lancers. "One thing that amazes me with his ability level, at the plate he's really patient; unbelievably patient," coach Andy Bernatow said. "When you talk about a three or four hitter, you don't mind them being a little bit of a free swinger, but he's not. "It's to the point, where it almost surprises him when teams come right at him." Last spring when college baseball went from pure aluminum bats to composite bats (thought by many an attempt to stunt big numbers),

Schmidt actually got better, especially against GPAC teams. "Everyone in the conference knows he can hurt you; it's pretty much a given," Livermont said. "You just never know what he's going to do." Even literally, Schmidt out-performed entire GPAC teams last season. His 13 home runs in 2011 were more than seven conference teams had total homers. "I was a swing-at-almost-everything kind of kid in high school, but college has made me more patient," Schmidt said. "But I still think I'm more aggressive, it just depends on the situation and if I get my pitch."

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