



Crofton Bluejays pitcher Scot Donner delivers to home plate during a South Central League matchup with the Wynot Expos in the 2013 season.

Donner

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Donner, a Crofton native and former collegiate standout, struck out 13 batters in an 8-0 home victory for the Bluejays who improved to 7-0 in the South Central League.

True to Donner's estimation, the shutout brought Crofton's runs allowed per game mark to seven runs in seven games — a full two runs better than the next best team in the league.

"It's still kind of hard to believe," Donner said Friday. "It actually felt like a no-hitter for once," he added, referencing 5-inning and 7-inning no-hitters he threw back in his youth days.

Donner's performance marked the league's first no-hitter since last July when Yankton's Trey Krier hurled a 7-inning no-hitter against Tabor. Krier had previously thrown a 9-inning no-hitter in the 2010 State Class A Tournament in Yankton.

According to state records, Donner's performance was the SCL's first Class B no-hitter since Freeman's Brett Waltner pitched a 7-inning masterpiece in 2002. The last 9-inning no-hitter in the SCL came in 1996 — when Donner was seven years old. District 6B commissioner Larry Anderson, himself a former player, knows exactly how rare Donner's performance is.

"I pitched for years and never had one. I wouldn't know the real feeling," Anderson joked Friday from his home in Freeman.

"But I imagine it's got to be a great feeling for him. That's not something you experience every day."

Unless he had been keep-

ing track Thursday, however, Donner would have had no way of knowing if he had a no-hitter going. The scoreboard in Crofton does not display hits or errors.

He admits, though, to thinking about a possible no-hitter by the third or fourth inning.

By the time the top of the ninth rolled around, Donner said he wasn't sure if anyone else realized what was going on.

"To be honest, I was pretty nervous," he said. "I was wondering if my teammates even knew what was going on. I was thinking, 'Would they dive for a ball?'"

All the mystery ended when Donner recorded the final out and his teammates mobbed him.

"I guess they knew," he joked.

Although Donner reached the feat, there have been other near no-hitters this season:

- On June 6, Freeman's Lee Scherschligt pitched a 1-hitter, with 13 strikeouts, over Scotland. He allowed only a first-inning single to Scotland's Joe Kronaizl.

- Crofton boasts a pair of two-hitters, with Seth Erdmann and Rand Thygeson combining on those performances.

Going back in the archives, Freeman's Justin Pfeiffer pitched a 9-inning no-hitter back in 1996. Shortly after that performance, however, he was in a car accident that all but ended his pitching career, according to Anderson — who was Freeman's manager at the time.

A lot has changed in Class B baseball since that time, including the use of wood bats starting in 2012. No-hitters may, in time, become more common because of that change, Anderson said. Class A began using wood bats in 2004.

"I grew up in the wooden bat era, and to me, it's baseball," Anderson said. "The scores are a lot lower, games are faster, and what used to be home run is a long fly ball."

Crofton has found success — particularly at the state tournament — in recent seasons because of the wood bats, which has in turn boosted the pitching staff, according to Donner.

"We've got some really good pitchers, and none of us throws the same way," he said. "That's why it makes us the way we are."

"Nobody can get used to a certain way."

Talking about Donner's performance, Anderson commended him for making SCL history.

"I know Scot, and it couldn't happen to a nicer guy," Anderson said. "Throughout all the years, with as much involvement as Crofton has had in the state tournament, I've gotten to know those guys pretty well."

Crofton visits Wynot on Sunday night in a makeup game, and the Bluejays then host Lesterville next Thursday.

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Open

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last month won The Players Championship.

"I never played on tour when Tiger was doing this — leading by six, seven, eight shots," said 20-year-old Jordan Spieth, who had a 70 and was nine shots back. "But I imagine this is what it was like the way Martin is playing this week."

Brandt Snedeker had a 68 and joined Na at 3-under 137. Only nine others were under par going into the weekend.

It looks like a typical U.S. Open — except for Kaymer. Dustin Johnson opened with a pair of 69s, a score he would have gladly taken at the start of the week and perhaps thought it would be good enough to lead.

"I wouldn't have thought it would be eight shots behind," Johnson said.

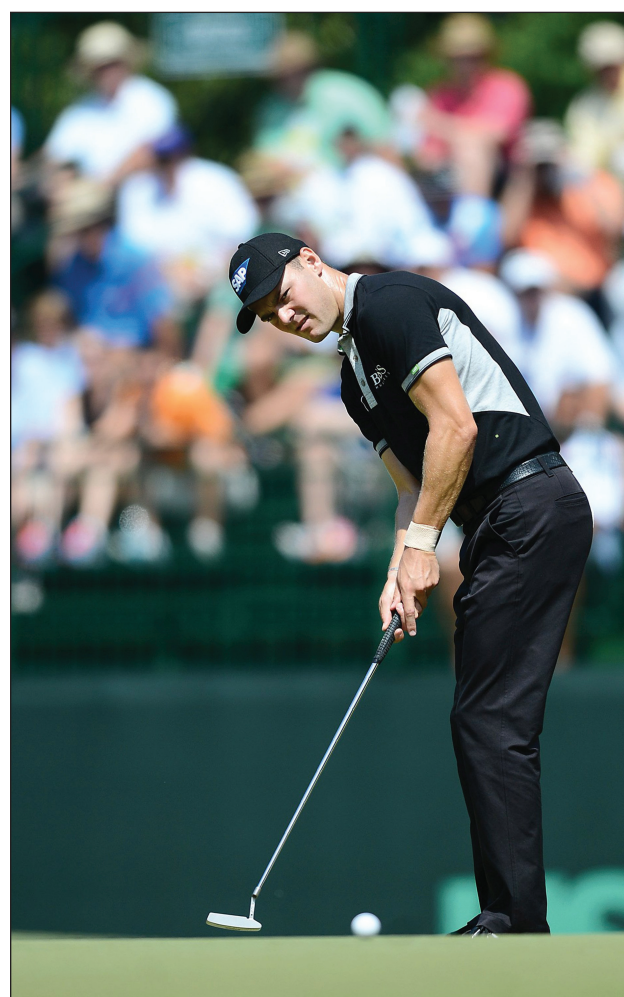
Brooks Koepka, the American who is carving his way through the European Tour, birdied his last hole for a 68 and joined the group at 2-under 138 with Brendon de Jonge (70), Henrik Stenson (69) and former PGA champion Keegan Bradley, who played in the same group with Kaymer and rallied for a 69.

"He's as dialed in as I've seen," Bradley said.

Starting on the back nine, Kaymer hit wedge into 5 feet for birdie on the par-5 10th. He made birdie putts from 20 and 25 feet, and then hit a gorgeous drive on the par-4 third hole, where the tee was moved up to make it play 315 yards. His shot landed perfectly between two bunkers and bounced onto the green to set up a two-putt birdie.

And the lead kept growing. "I look at the scoreboards. It's enjoyable," Kaymer said.

"To see what's going on, to watch yourself, how you react if you're leading by five, by six... I don't know, but it's quite nice to play golf that way."



Martin Kaymer watches his putt on the 2nd green during the second round of the U.S. Open in Pinehurst, N.C., on Friday.

Kaymer was the sixth player in U.S. Open history to reach double-digits under par, though McIlroy was the only other player to get there before the weekend.

This is the "Germanator" everyone expected when he won the PGA Championship, and then a year later rose to No. 1 in the world. Kaymer felt his game was not complete enough, so he set out to develop a draw — his natural shot is a fade — and it took two years of lonely hours on the range to get it right.

At the moment, he can do no wrong.

Kaymer felt tired toward the end of the round, and it showed. He hit into bunkers

on the sixth and seventh holes, and both times blasted out to short range. He also converted a difficult two-putt from the front of the eighth green.

Even with a big lead, Kaymer did not consider changing his strategy.

"Because if you think of defending anything, then you're pulling back, and that's never really a good thing," he said. "You just want to keep going. You want to keep playing. You want to challenge yourself. If you can stay aggressive and hit the right shots. And that's quite nice that it's a battle against yourself."

That's what this U.S. Open is right now. A one-man show.

Softball

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ton Shamrocks vs. BV Slamers, 6:30 p.m., Field A; Hartford Fusion vs. Brookings Blast, 6:30 p.m., Field C

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vs. Brookings Blast Red, 2 p.m., Field D; Yankton Fury White vs. Brookings Blast Blue, 3:30 p.m., Field C; Yankton Fury Wildcats vs. Sioux Falls Star Fire, 3:30 p.m., Field D; Yankton Fury Red vs. Norfolk Golden Girls, 5 p.m., Field C; Brandon Rage vs. Brookings Blast Red, 5 p.m., Field D; Brookings Blast Blue vs. Mitchell Attack, 6:30 p.m., Field D

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