

Looking back, Terry Steinbach pleased with his homecoming

By Chad Courier Free Press Staff Writer Posted July 12, 2012

MANKATO — The Minnesota Wild made a lot of noise last week by signing a pair of free agents to 13-year contracts that will likely allow those players to finish their careers near their home markets.

Fifteen years ago, Terry Steinbach had the opportunity as a free agent to sign with the Minnesota Twins, his home state baseball team, and he said it was the perfect choice for him.

“I got a chance to watch my kids play their games at the same time I was playing mine,” he said. “It was a win-win for me.”

Steinbach was the featured guest Thursday as the Mankato MoonDogs celebrated Twins Night at Franklin Rogers Park. The New Ulm native signed autographs for about 100 fans at a nearby restaurant before the game, visited with coaches and players at the ballpark, and indulged another long line of autograph seekers that attended Thursday’s game.

“People in southern Minnesota are very knowledgeable about baseball,” Steinbach said. “There’s some pretty good baseball played around here.”

Steinbach graduated from New Ulm in 1980 and attended the University of Minnesota, getting his first experience with a summer wooden-bat baseball in the Cape Cod League in 1982.

“After I graduated in 1980, the Kaiserhoff won the state amateur tournament, which is a big deal,” Steinbach said. “So the next year, we all came back and tried to win it again. We played something like 50 games that summer, and it was a blast.

“After my sophomore season (at Minnesota) I went to the Cape, and it was a great experience. I got to live with a host family, and you played ball every night. You got to hang out after the games. The next day, you played again. It’s as close to playing in the majors as you’re going to get.”

Steinbach made his professional debut in 1986 with Oakland, where he stayed for 10 seasons, three of which he played in the All-Star game, and won a World Series in 1988. In 1996, he signed as a free agent with the Twins and played his final three seasons in Minnesota.

For the last five seasons, Steinbach has coached varsity baseball at Wayzata, though he’s done now that both of his sons will be playing at Minnesota Duluth.

He makes some public appearance on behalf of New Ulm organizations or the Twins, relishing his role of an ambassador for Minnesota baseball.

“The only regret I have is that we didn’t have more success (with the Twins),” Steinbach said. “We all want to win, and it’s too bad there weren’t more resources in place to put a better product on the field.”

Steinbach will be featured at a business and Agricultural customer appreciation event for Citizen’s Bank of New Ulm in July, 2012.

(Right) Terry Steinbach signs autographs at the Hilltop Buffalo Wild Wings before Thursday's Mankato MoonDogs game.

Photo by Pat Christman

