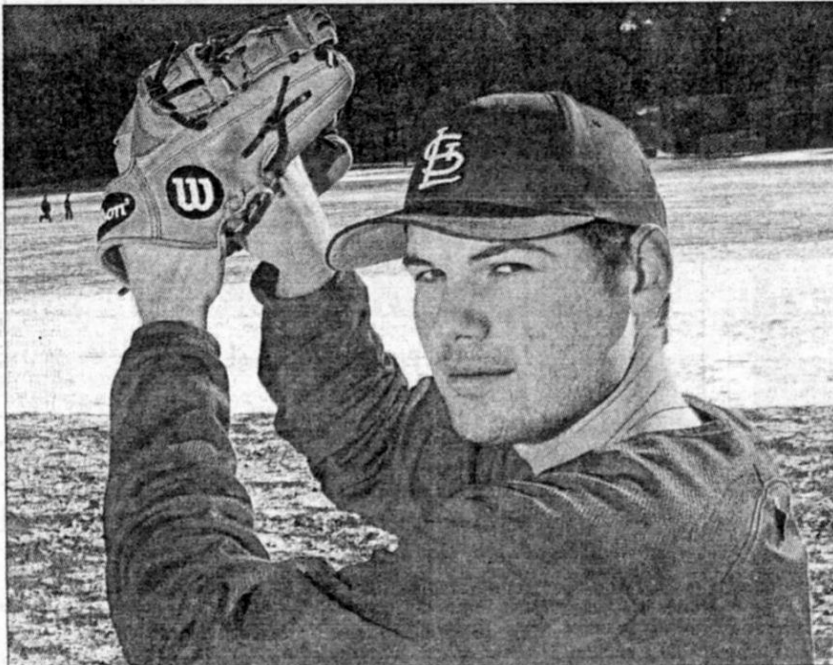


IN THE NEWS

December 10, 2007: Daily News - Adam Ottavino on the way to the Majors



Park Slope's Adam Ottavino, a former standout pitcher at Berkeley Carroll School drafted by the St. Louis Cardinals in 2006, is on track for his debut with the big league squad in '09. Photo by Allison Joyce

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DAILY NEWS

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B'klyn pitcher 'racking up Ks' on his way to the big leagues

THE WORDS tumble out of Adam Ottavino with relish, like a kid about to take his first turn piloting the family car.

"It's right there," he said. "I'm knocking on the door! I just hope I get to walk through it."

Ottavino's spent most of his 22 years getting to that door. Sometime in 2009 he hopes the years of hard work and incredible dedication will pay off in a way most of us can only imagine — he'll pitch his first game as a major league baseball player.

Ottavino, a former standout pitcher for Berkeley Carroll School in Park Slope, Brooklyn, has been a professional pitcher since 2006, when the St. Louis Cardinals made him the 30th pick in the major league draft.

It was the second time the 6-foot-4, 230-pound righthander was drafted by a pro team — he turned down the Tampa Bay Devil Rays' 2003 offer. When the Cardinals came knocking, Ottavino liked the deal enough to leave Boston's Northeastern

University in his junior year — when he was America East Conference pitcher of the year — to pitch full time with the Cardinals' Florida League farm team, headquartered in Palm Beach.

According to the team Web site, Ottavino "posted a 3.31 ERA and just under a strikeout per inning over two levels in his 2006 pro debut. He's kept it up in '07 in the Florida State League, racking up the Ks. Ot-

tavino could still use some refinement, but he's looking promising."

In 2009, Ottavino hopes to step up to "The Show," working a regulation game against many of the ballplayers he's already faced in some of the hundreds of games he's played since his father, John, enrolled him in the Prospect Park Little League a block from his Park Slope home when he was 6 years old.

Ottavino's big league debut will be doubly appreciated by his parents — John, an actor, and Eve, a schoolteacher — people who understand the Byzantine path, hard work and plain

luck avoiding injuries that must precede major league glory.

John is writing a how-to manual for parents of kids with major league talent and aspirations.

Suffice it to say, by the time Ottavino throws that first pitch he will have beaten phenomenal odds — statistics show that 80% of drafted players never appear in a major league game.

The dedication the path has required boggles the mind. Ottavino remembers skipping nights on the town in high school because it might interrupt his training.

Even now, in the middle of winter, he lifts weights and tosses the medicine ball five times a week with a personal trainer.

Come January, he'll head back to Florida — he has a house in Jupiter — and start training full time for the upcoming season and more lessons to come.

"Baseball prepares you for a lot of things in life," he said. "You play as an individual but you also learn to play as part of a team. You learn a lot about dedication and discipline.

"You do the work, you get the rewards."

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CITY BEAT

BY CLEM RICHARDSON

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