

It's Heyder's hit parade LI native ends regular season with .495 average

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One of the best hitters in college baseball resides on Long Island.

Holbrook native Richie Heyder is in the midst of an historic season for Farmingdale State.

Ahead of the Rams' set of back-to-back doubleheaders on Friday and Saturday, the senior outfielder held a .512 batting average, the highest of any collegiate baseball player this season, regardless of Division.

Heyder went 3-for-4 with a double, triple, two RBIs and a run scored in a 7-4 win over SUNY Old Westbury in the first game of Saturday's doubleheader and went 1-for-4 with a walk and an RBI in the Rams' 6-5 win in the second game. He finished the regular season batting .495.

The Sachem East graduate hit .441 last year, falling a bit short of Carey alum Michael Marino's program-record average of .463 set in 2015. With the postseason ahead of the Rams, Heyder has put himself in position to break that record.

What has been the key to his outstanding season?

"The main thing has just been staying within myself," Heyder said. "It's very easy to allow the game to take over your emotion and get you out of your approach. Controlling my mind and my heart rate has been huge. I think my mechanics and my swing have always been good, but I've lost the mental side at times."

"His at-bats have been really smart this year," coach Keith Osik said. "He's taking singles to the opposite field when all they're giving him is outside pitches. And if teams are pounding him inside, he's going to turn and burn them. He has been giving us pro at-bats in a Division III scenario."

Heyder, a 2022 Newsday All-Long Island second-team selection, spent the fall of his freshman year at NJIT, but dislocated his shoulder and needed rotator cuff surgery. He medically withdrew from NJIT and chose to play at Farmingdale State for Osik.

Heyder previously played travel ball for Osik, beginning when he was 13 years old.

"The first time I saw Richie in a game, I just noticed a really good competitive effort that he gives," Osik said. "He's a guy that you don't have to push. If anything, we've had to settle him into a spot where he just tries not to do too much. He's just been a great player to watch grow."

Heyder has shown growth in each of his three years at Farmingdale State. He hit .366 with 29 runs scored, 41 RBIs and a 1.008 OPS in 2024. Last year, he hit five home runs and posted a 1.170 OPS with 34 runs scored and 35 RBIs.

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Entering Saturday's doubleheader, Heyder had six home runs, 41 runs scored, 34 RBIs and sported a 1.577 OPS. His 32 walks mark a drastic improvement - he drew 18 walks in 2024 and 16 last year. But he hasn't noticed opposing pitchers treating him differently this year.

"I feel like pitchers have been coming at me for the most part," Heyder said. "There are times when teams pitch around me, but the rest of our lineup has made it so that teams have to come after me in certain positions. We have consistent pressure on the bases."

Four Rams' starters own batting averages higher than .400. Dom LaFroschia (.434), Mike D'Angelo (.420) and Aiden Mehmel (.405) have helped put Heyder in advantageous situations. Mike Kocovic (.386) and Ryan Wasserman (.351) aren't far behind.

"Our whole team, honestly, the offense has been incredible," Heyder said. "There's a big burden off of every individual because we're just flowing in a sense of passing the bat."

It's a big reason why the Rams (24-9, 16-4 Skyline) entered Saturday's regular season-ending doubleheader against SUNY Old Westbury on a 16-game winning streak. Now winners of 18 straight, the Rams earned the top seed in the Skyline Conference tournament.

Last season, the Rams won their first Skyline Conference Championship since 2019. They lost their first two games in the NCAA Division III Championship Regional.

"The individual accolades are what they are, and they are cool, but my main focus is winning the conference and going as far as we can in the regional," Heyder said. "We want to get the most out of everybody as a team and see how far we can go."

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