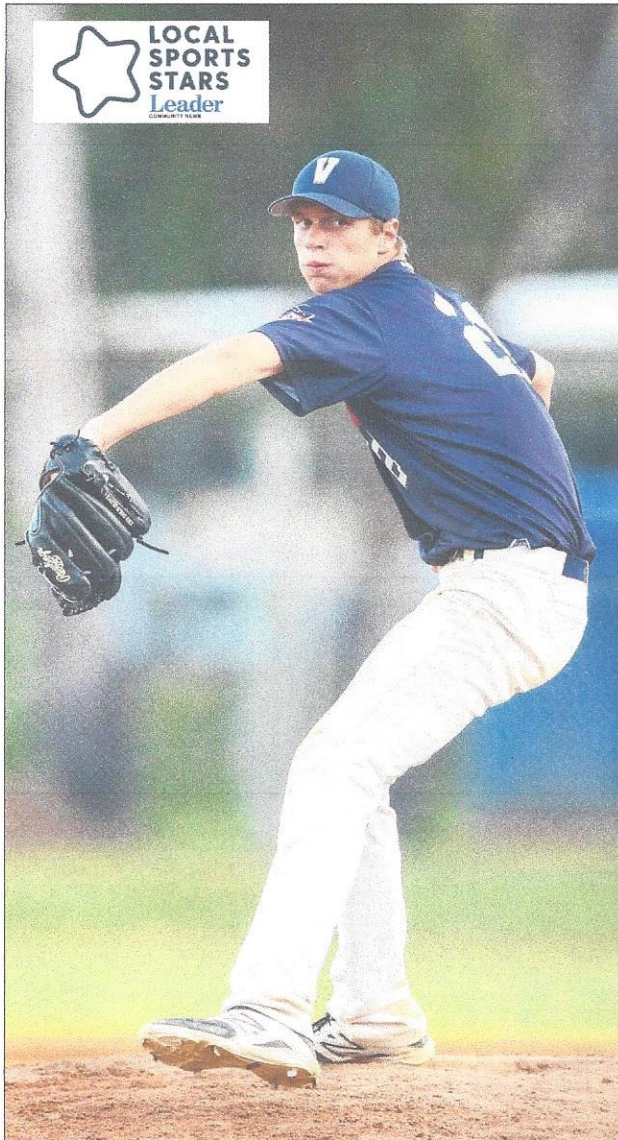


BASEBALL



Waverley Baseball Club's Matthew Beattie, seen here in action for Victoria, has just signed a professional baseball contract with the Detroit Tigers.



Beattie signs for Detroit

Wildcat makes his Major League pitch

Toby Prime

WAVERLEY baseballer Matthew Beattie has completed a lifelong ambition, signing a professional contract with Major League Baseball club Detroit Tigers.

The right-handed pitcher follows in the footsteps of fellow Wildcats baseball graduate James Beresford, who made his Major League debut with the Minnesota Twins last year.

Beattie, 18, said it was a childhood ambition to take his baseball to the US.

His path to baseball was always an obvious one – his mother, Sandra, played softball for a number of years, and his older brother, Daniel, also plays baseball.

The family lives next door to Waverley Baseball Club's Napier Park in Glen Waverley.

"They (Waverley) are stoked for me – a couple of them are my best mates that have been there a while and been trying to get through it," Beattie said.

"I've been playing alongside them since I've been playing and they've seen the ups and downs of it."

The Mt Hira College student has developed his game in recent years under the tutelage of Damian Shanahan, as part of Baseball Victoria's high-performance program.

He's also been a part of the Melbourne Aces Academy.

His journey to the professional ranks has included selection in six state and a number of national teams, most recently representing Victoria at the 2017 Australian Youth Championships and the under-18 World Cup qualifiers with Team Australia.

He won't move to the US until this time next year.

"I'll be sending weekly reports to Detroit with gym work, cardio work and gym monitoring my load," Beattie said.

"The average, if you make it (to the Major League) is about five or six years and you are considered a pretty legitimate player."

Baseball Victoria president Myles Foreman said it was exciting to see Beattie live out his dream.

"It's really exciting that Baseball Victoria has been able to play a part in Matthew's development, along with his family, coaches and supporters," Foreman said.

Beattie is eligible to be a *Monash Leader* senior sports star nominee.

The program recognises and celebrates the extraordinary efforts of junior and senior athletes and competitors across Melbourne.

Cash prizes, as well as vouchers from our sponsor Sportsmart, are up for grabs.

For details and to nominate an athlete, go to www.local-sportsstars.com.au