

Joining Phils is twice as nice for Floyds, teammates at last

Pitcher Gavin, 18, gets \$4.2M up front, record for high school draftee

By PAT O'MALLEY
SUN STAFF

It's the dream of many young people to play professional baseball, but to do it with your brother as a teammate is almost too good to be true.

"It's like two dreams come true," Severna Park's Gavin Floyd said at the Ravens' preseason game at PSINet Stadium with his older brother Michael last night.

"I had dreamed of playing with my brother and this couldn't be better."

The brothers, who rode in style to Baltimore in a limo donated by a Glen Burnie company after driving nine hours from South Carolina, reached agreements to sign with the Philadelphia Phillies late Wednesday night.

The official signing ceremony is set for today at Veterans Stadium in the City of Brotherly Love, a moniker that could not be more appropos for the two Mount St. Joseph graduates.

Gavin, an 18-year-old pitcher, was the Phillies' No. 1 pick and the fourth overall in the draft. Michael, a 21-year-old outfielder, was drafted on the 22nd round by the Phillies.

Had it not been for final-hour negotiations, the two, who have never played on the same team together, might have done so for the first time as South Carolina Gamecocks. They were in Columbia, S.C., Wednesday night when the deal was struck, scheduled to start classes yesterday that would have made them ineligible to sign with the Phillies.

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Instead, the two will begin their pro baseball careers next month as teammates in Clearwater, Fla., on the Phillies' Instructional League team.

Phillies officials confirmed that they gave Gavin Floyd \$4.2 million up front, the largest signing bonus ever awarded a drafted high school player.

Floyd, a 6-foot-6, 215-pound right-hander with command of three pitches — a fastball in the mid-90s, a biting curve and improving changeup — also has a college scholarship included in the deal if he so desires to pursue a degree in the off-season, according to agent **Ira Rainess** of Shapiro and Robinson Associates.

"His signing bonus is the highest a drafted high school player has ever received," said Rainess, whose company also negotiated the deferred \$5.15 million deal that catcher Joe Mauer received from his hometown Minnesota Twins as the top pick in the draft.

Michael Floyd, who was about to start his senior year at South Carolina, is believed to have agreed to a \$65,000-\$70,000 deal with the Phillies.

"I'm so ecstatic right now that

this has happened," Michael said.

Of his brother, he said, "We have been getting closer and closer as the days go by. We're so much alike, same taste in clothes, hair-cuts ..."

The opportunity didn't look like it would happen after the Phillies announced what they said was their final offer Tuesday at \$4 million. That was until Ron Shapiro called scouting director Mike Arbuckle Wednesday night and expressed interest in resuming talks.

Arbuckle, who said on philies.com that Gavin "has the potential to be the No. 1 pitcher on a major-league staff," jumped at the chance. After a consultation with general manager Ed Wade, the Phillies offered an additional \$200,000 and got the ball rolling.

"I truly believe Gavin Floyd really wanted to play baseball and I think that played a significant part in what [followed]," Arbuckle said.

The Floyds were in no hurry to go to school, anyway.

"We were willing to go to Friday [not attend class] if it came down to getting it done," Michael said.

Instead, today brings "two dreams come true."