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## Carmel's Gregor helps Vanderbilt reach its 1st College World Series



Written by

[Michael Pointer](#)

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Vanderbilt University baseball coach Tim Corbin noticed something unique about Conrad Gregor the moment the former Carmel standout stepped on campus.

"I never -- and I mean this -- saw a kid so focused and on point in everything he does," Corbin said. "He's just a routine-oriented kid that's very focused. His mental discipline is as good as you want to see. He's never been awed by the competition level."

The Commodores (52-10) make their first appearance in the College World Series at 2 p.m. today when they play North Carolina in the CWS opener at brand-new TD Ameritrade Park in Omaha, Neb. They are a veteran squad that came into the season with high hopes.

But the freshman designated hitter from central Indiana helped put them over the top.

Gregor is third on the team with a .350 batting average and second in on-base percentage (.455), with three home runs and 30 RBIs, earning a spot on the Louisville Slugger Freshman All-American team. He was named the SEC Freshman of the Week after going 8-for-13 with six RBIs in Vanderbilt's three-game sweep of LSU in late April.

"He's very routine-oriented academically, too," Corbin said. "There's nothing he does where he flies by the seat of his pants. Everything he does, he does for a reason."

Gregor isn't sure he's quite as mature as his coach makes him out to be. But he said his **confidence** got a boost during Vanderbilt's fall schedule, which included a two-game series at national power and fellow CWS participant Texas. Gregor was also quickly accepted by his older teammates, who finished just one game short of Omaha last year.

"I've had my ups-and-downs, but that's baseball," Gregor said.

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"The big thing is to not let it affect you and try to play pitch-by-pitch. Coach Corbin talks all the time about how it's really just a four-second game (from the beginning of a pitch to the end of a play), and that's how I try to approach it."

The 6-3, 210-pound left-handed swinging Gregor hit .449 with eight home runs and 24 RBIs for the Greyhounds last year, earning all-state honors and a spot on the Indianapolis Star's Super Team for a third time.

But he caught the attention of the Vanderbilt coaching staff due to his play with the Cincinnati-based Midland Redskins, one of the Midwest's top summer travel programs. Former Vanderbilt assistant Erik Bakich -- now the coach at Maryland -- put in a call two years ago to Midland officials asking if they knew of a hard-hitting first base prospect.

"I told him, 'There's this guy right up the road from you at Carmel High School. I think he's going to fit everything you're looking for,' " said Brian Hiler, the Redskins' business manager. "It takes the right kind of kid to play at Vanderbilt with that kind of schedule and the kind of academics they have. Right off the bat, it was a perfect fit."

Corbin said Gregor's future with the Commodores could be at first base. Slugging junior Aaron Westlake was drafted by Detroit in the third round of the major-league draft earlier this month and is expected to sign with the Tigers. In the meantime, Corbin and Hiler said Gregor's

work ethic should serve him well today.

They agree that no freshman player is more ready to step into the spotlight.

"The blend of academics and this baseball program made me choose Vanderbilt," Gregor said.

"The goal from Day 1 was to make it to Omaha. That's going to be this team's legacy, that we were the first to do it."

**Call Star reporter Michael Pointer at (317) 444-2709.**

## Fast facts

» **Today:** 2 p.m.: North Carolina (50-14) vs. Vanderbilt (52-10), ESPN; 7 p.m.: Florida (50-17) vs. Texas (49-17), ESPN.

» **Sunday:** 2 p.m.: Virginia (54-10) vs. California (37-21), ESPN; 7 p.m.: South Carolina (50-14) vs. Texas A&M (47-20), ESPN2.

» **Where:** TD Ameritrade Park, Omaha, Neb.

» **Format:** The eight-team CWS is split into two four-team double-elimination brackets. Vanderbilt is with

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