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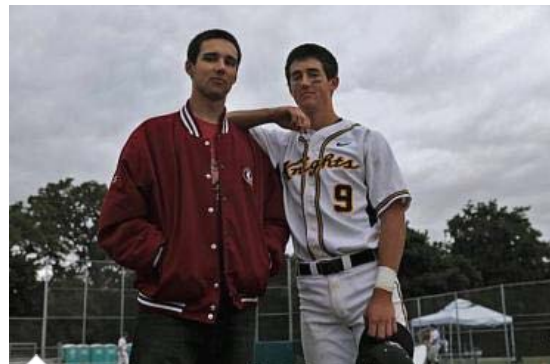
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Stanford, Menlo School baseball brothers

Tom FitzGerald, Chronicle Staff Writer
Tuesday, May 25, 2010

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Lacy Atkins / The Chronicle

Kenny Diekroeger (left) is Stanford's leading hitter; younger brother Danny, a Menlo School senior, will join him in the fall.

(05-25) 10:21 PDT --

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announcers regularly

botch the name. "I once

heard someone put a K

instead of a D in the

front," Kenny

Diekroeger said. "But

it's usually Die-KRO-ger."

"I've heard it Die-kro-EE-ger,"

brother Danny said.

Their father, Ken, said
announcers often invoke a

"duck" as the first syllable. Stanford's baseball media
guide helpfully provides a pronunciation tip:
"du-KROW-gerr." Except that that's wrong too.

For the record, it's DIH-kro-ger. However it's
pronounced, it's a name that pitchers from the Pac-10
to the West Bay Athletic League dread hearing. It's a
name that the Tampa Bay Rays wish they could have
gotten Kenny to sign on a contract, a signature that
would have landed him an estimated \$1.7 million
bonus.

He chose to play for Stanford instead and was a strong
Pac-10 hitter from the moment he descended to the
Sunken Diamond. He leads the Cardinal with a .366 batting average and is tied for first
in RBIs with 39. Until this weekend, he had a 23-game hitting streak, the fourth longest
at the school since 1988.

Danny, a year younger, inherited Kenny's shortstop slot at Menlo School in Atherton.
Danny is hitting .465 with 40 RBIs, helping propel Menlo (23-6) to the Central Coast
Section Division III semifinals.

Kenny hopes to play in the postseason, too. Stanford (30-21, 13-11 Pac-10) is ranked 25th
in the nation, but an NCAA bid may depend on the Cardinal's regular-season-ending
home series starting Thursday against No. 2 Arizona State.

When Stanford coach Mark Marquess offered Kenny a scholarship to the Farm - a few
minutes from his home in Woodside - the family was delighted.

"His recruiting process ended as quickly as it started," said Ken, the father, who has two

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degrees from Stanford and works at a private investment firm. His wife, Kathy, a standout distance runner at Dartmouth, also attended Stanford business school.

"I had wanted to go to Stanford all my life," Kenny said. "It was a dream come true."

When the Rays took a flier on him in the second round, though, things got a little complicated.

"I had always thought Stanford would be the easiest choice," Kenny said. "Whenever a team offers you that much money, you'd be a fool if you didn't consider it."

His decision went right down to the Aug. 15 deadline. "Tampa Bay is a great organization," he said. "I'd be fortunate to be drafted by them in a few years."

This year's draft might take two other Stanford infielders, shortstop Jake Schlander and second baseman Colin Walsh. Assuming both sign, Stanford may have an all-Diekroeger double-play combination next season. Kenny would move to his natural shortstop position after struggling this year at third base (13 errors), and Danny, who has signed with Stanford, could move in at second base.

As good as Kenny has been, Marquess thinks the 6-foot-2, 200-pound freshman can get a lot better. "He's an All-American-type kid," he said. "He'll hit for more power and steal more bases. When he goes to shortstop, he'll stand out more defensively."

He has a textbook swing, power and blazing speed. He has had three-game winning hits, not including a two-out, two-run homer in the ninth at Long Beach. It rescued Stanford from a 2-1 deficit, and the Cardinal won in extra innings.

"He's a great example for me," Danny said. "It's a big advantage to have somebody older than you. Right away, you see what he goes through. Not only does he give me advice, but I see the way he handles things and what he can improve on, and see if I can do better."

Danny is an inch shorter, 15 pounds lighter and bats left while Kenny is a righty. If it hadn't been for baseball, he probably would be headed to Duke or the Ivy League to play football. "He's one of the best quarterbacks we've ever had," Menlo football coach Mark Newton said.

In a family that stressed books over ball-playing, both brothers were straight-A students in high school, and Danny posted a 2390 (out of 2400) on his SATs.

Which Diekroeger will be the best athlete in the long run? Possibly neither of them. Mikey, an eighth-grader, "is better at his age," said their father, "than they were in every sport."

This article has been corrected since it appeared in print.

E-mail Tom FitzGerald at tfitzgerald@sfgate.com.

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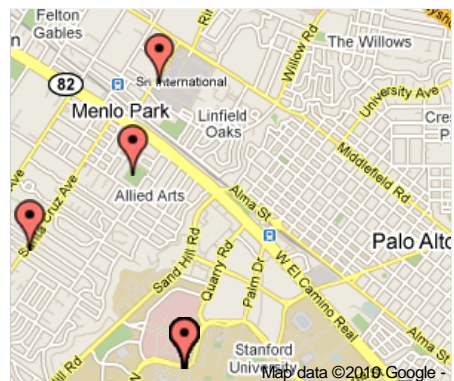
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