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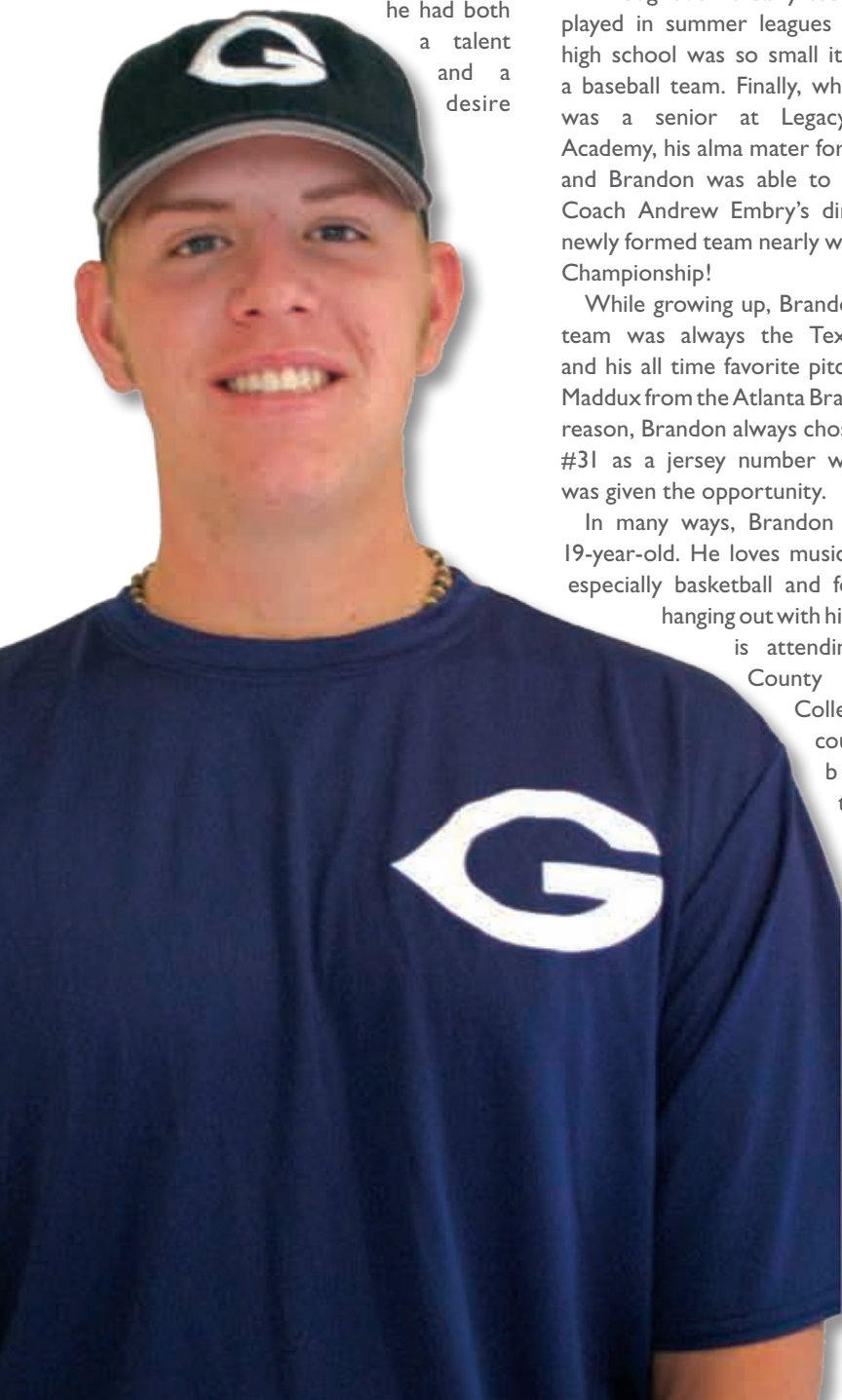
# Field of Dreams

By Wendy Crooks

**HE PLAYED HIS FIRST GAME** when he was only six years old. Who would have dreamed at the time that it would lead to such big things? For 13 years now, Brandon Grabham has been playing baseball. He fell in love with the game at an early age and has been playing ever since.

At age 11, Brandon decided to give pitching a try and soon discovered that

he had both a talent and a desire



to excel in the sport. His father, Marty Grabham, was right there for him, coaching and encouraging him. When asked what his driving force for baseball has been, Brandon said there have been a few things. "I've always wanted to be the best pitcher I can be," was Brandon's first response. He also admitted that his Dad was instrumental in his decision to take up pitching while he coached Brandon over the years. "My Dad pushed me and motivated me for many years. He kept me on track and when I tried to stray a little, he would pull me right back. I wouldn't be where I am today without him," Brandon confessed.

Throughout his early teens, Brandon played in summer leagues because his high school was so small it didn't have a baseball team. Finally, when Brandon was a senior at Legacy Christian Academy, his alma mater formed a team and Brandon was able to play. Under Coach Andrew Embry's direction, the newly formed team nearly won the State Championship!

While growing up, Brandon's favorite team was always the Texas Rangers and his all time favorite pitcher is Greg Maddux from the Atlanta Braves. For that reason, Brandon always chose Maddox's #31 as a jersey number whenever he was given the opportunity.

In many ways, Brandon is a typical 19-year-old. He loves music, all sports, especially basketball and football, and hanging out with his friends. He

is attending Grayson County Community College and, of course, plays baseball there. He hasn't currently declared a major; however, he aspires someday to have a career in physical therapy or sports medicine.

But not every 19-

year-old has been drafted by the San Francisco Giants. Brandon chose what is called a "Draft and Follow" which means although he hasn't officially signed with the Giants, yet, for now he will remain at Grayson Community College for another year. He will play baseball for the college, continue his studies and have the Giants watch his development. In the spring, the Giants will decide to make an offer to sign Brandon and Brandon will have two weeks to sign with the Giants or else have his name go back into the draft.

Brandon hopes to sign with the Giants, play for as long as he can and then go back to college to finish his education. Planning ahead, he said TCU would be a great place for him to finish his education. When asked how long he thinks he'll play ball he responded quickly, "As long as my arm will last, hopefully 20 years!"

Though I'm sure fame and fortune has crossed this young man's mind, he really seems grounded and gives a lot of credit to his parents. "They've spent a lot of money for me to play ball as well as all the time. I'd just like to pay them back some day." But for now, Brandon realizes that he's a role model for young ball players. He said, "Little kids look up to me so I really want to make something of myself."

We all look forward to watching that happen!

*Wendy Crooks is a freelance writer living in Plano.*



*Left, Brandon Grabham in his Grayson County Community College uniform. Right, Brandon's first little league baseball picture, age 7. photos provided by Amy Grabham*