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How Hofstra freshmen baseball players ‘change up’ the schedule

Hofstra University’s baseball team is 26 games into the 2019 season - but only two of those have been played in Hempstead at University Field, with a third game cancelled back on March 7.

It has been a travel-heavy schedule for the Pride to start the season, something that newcomers to the team have had to adjust to coming out of high school. With nine freshmen on the team this year, Hofstra’s young players are quickly learning what it takes to be a college athlete.

“It’s a big adjustment from high school,” said infielder Anthony D’Onofrio. “You have to manage your time really well because you still have schoolwork to do and deadlines [to meet]. In the fall we had mandatory study hall hours to make sure we got our work done. But in the spring we don’t have that.”

The Pride have struggled so far this season, winning only five of the first 26 games with one of those wins coming on home field. Being on the road players will have a different schedule on game days than they typically would playing at home and it can take a toll on them.

“It’s tiring and you kind of feel it, it starts to catch up to you,” said pitcher Mike Murray. “We get up, have a mandatory breakfast, go back to our rooms and relax. Then we get ready to go [to the game], get on the bus, get to the field, batting practice and then game time.”

It hasn’t been all work and no play for the Pride players all season, however. With the team spending so much time traveling to games, creating time to take it easy has become more important for Hofstra’s coaching staff.

“Coach actually gave us the day off to hang out, play volleyball and go by the pool [in Florida],” said Murray. “It was a lot of fun to hang with the guys and have a good time together.”

As the weather begins to improve in the northeast, Hofstra won’t have to worry as much about playing on the road. Eight of the next nine games will be played at University Field, beginning on Tuesday when the Pride take on Monmouth University. Of the remaining 22 games on the schedule, 14 will take place in Hempstead, ending with the regular season finale on May 18.