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## OU infielder signs professional contract

By **Jeff Samoray**, *OU Web Writer*

Former OU first baseman **Peter Varon** recently signed a professional contract with the Kalamazoo Kings of the independent **Frontier League**. His signing follows various workouts with organized and other independent teams after the successful rehabilitation of a hamstring injury.

During his career, Varon played in 143 games for the Golden Grizzlies, hitting .279 with 34 doubles and 21 home runs while driving in 102 runs and scoring 91. He is one of Oakland's all-time top offensive players, ranking in the top five in several categories, including home runs. Last season, Varon hit .282 with a .478 slugging percentage, six homers with 35 RBI. He graduated with a BA in communications.

"It's an honor to be able to continue my career after college," said Varon. "To play professional baseball is every kid's dream and something I will take advantage of. I'm grateful to (OU coaches) Mark Avery, Chris Newell and Ben DiPonio for their support. I'm also thankful to the Kalamazoo Kings for the opportunity to play for their organization."

Varon is the 13th Golden Grizzly to turn professional since 1997. Those who remain active in the minor leagues are right-hander David Viane, who pitches for the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers, a Class A Seattle Mariners farm club based in Appleton, Wis.; left-hander Jared Thomas, who starts and relieves for the Inland Empire 66ers, a Class A Seattle farm club based in San Bernardino, Calif.; and catcher Chuck Van Robays, who plays for the Cook County Cheetahs in the Frontier League.

OU has had one former player break into Major League Baseball. Right-handed pitcher Don Kirkwood signed with the California Angels in 1972. In a five-year major-league career, Kirkwood pitched for the Angels, Chicago White Sox and Toronto Blue Jays. He retired in 1978 with an 18-23 record and 4.37 ERA.

For a Golden Grizzlies baseball season recap, statistics, team roster and archived stories, visit the **OU Athletics** Web site.

### SUMMARY

Former OU first baseman Peter Varon recently signed a professional contract with the Kalamazoo Kings of the independent Frontier League. His signing follows various workouts with organized and other independent teams after the successful rehabilitation of a hamstring injury. During his career, Varon played in 143 games for the Golden Grizzlies, hitting .279 with 34 doubles and 21 home runs while driving in 102 runs and scoring 91. He is one of Oakland's all-time top offensive players, ranking in the top five in several categories, including home runs.

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