Dillon Tate Feature

Right-handed pitcher Dillon Tate has done a lot of moving during his four-year professional career. He has played in three organizations and occupied a spot on top prospect lists for each of them. After being acquired by the Orioles last July, Tate is looked at by many as a big piece in the organizational overhaul under new General Manager Mike Elias.

Tate’s rise began as a collegiate player at the University of California-Santa Barbara. Tate emerged as the Gauchos’ closer during his sophomore season, saving 12 games and pitching to an outstanding 1.45 ERA.

When Tate’s junior year began, it was time for the Claremont, California native to step directly into the spotlight as the team’s ace. Tate shined that season, striking out 111 batters in 103.1 innings pitched, winning eight games and helping set a then-program record with 40 team wins, along with hosting an NCAA Regional for the first time in school history.

After the season, Tate was named an All-American, and was selected in the Major League Baseball Draft higher than any player in UCSB history. The Texas Rangers chose Tate with the fourth overall selection, making him the first pitcher taken in that draft.

After signing for $4.2 million, Tate split his debut season between short-season Spokane, and A-level Hickory. In just nine innings, he displayed why he was taken so early in the draft. Tate had a remarkable 1.00 ERA, allowing just three hits across his two stops. He began the next season as the 69th best prospect in baseball according to Baseball America, and 36th best on MLB Pipeline’s list.

In 2016, Tate experienced the first move of his career. After struggling over 65 innings with Hickory to start the year, Tate was sent to the New York Yankees as the headliner in a deal which returned future hall-of-famer Carlos Beltran to Texas.

The Yankees put Tate in the bullpen in A-Charleston, and he finished 2016 with a flourish, posting an ERA just over three in 17.1 innings. After the year, Tate played in the Arizona Fall League, and was selected to play in the Rising Stars Game, a showcase of the top prospects in the league.

Tate earned a call-up to High-A Tampa to start 2017, moving back into the starting rotation and continuing the upward trajectory of his career. He was undefeated in nine starts, winning six games, had an ERA of 2.62 and held opponents to a measly batting average of .221.
In August of that year, Tate was given another promotion, this time to AA Trenton. He continued his strong season, posting a 3.24 ERA in four starts, and tossed the only complete game of his career.

The following spring, Tate earned a non-roster invite to Major League Spring Training and was ranked as the 11th best prospect in the Yankees’ system by MLB Pipeline, one that was widely regarded as one of the best in baseball.

He began the 2018 campaign in Trenton and shined for the Thunder during the first half of the year. He was named a Mid-Season All-Star in the Eastern League and looked destined for a spot in the Bronx in the not-too distant future.

Then, Tate experienced another change of scenery, headlining another big trade for a star player. Deep in the pennant chase, the Yankees sent Tate and two other prospects to the Orioles in exchange for All-Star closer Zack Britton.

Tate was immediately optioned to Bowie, where he spent the remainder of the season. He struggled in his seven starts with the Baysox, but that may have been in-part due to a quad injury that he suffered at the end of his time in Tampa.

Despite the disappointing end to 2018, Tate is still a bright spot in the organization, and enters 2019 as Baseball America’s 12th best prospect in the Orioles’ system.

Tate told the Baltimore Sun that he has made some mechanical changes that make him even more confident for what is to come in 2019. Now that he has settled in with the organization, Tate seems poised to regain his spot as a top pitching prospect and a big part of the future of the Baltimore Orioles.