

Boring Before Brilliance: Paul Skenes

[MUSIC PLAYING]

PAUL SKENES: Confidence is gained through preparation. Eight months out of the year, I'm doing the same thing every day. It's boring, it's mundane, but it's what it takes.

[TITLE CARD: PNC BANK PRESENTS BORING BEFORE BRILLIANCE. PAUL SKENES // STARTING PITCHER]

PAUL SKENES: My mom has three brothers. They all served in the military. I think I knew from a pretty young age that that's what I wanted to do. Baseball was a part of it, but it wasn't the biggest part. Just seeing the people that were at Air Force, the caliber of individual, it's like,

[TITLE CARD: PAUL SKENES, STARTING PITCHER]

you can't go to a place like that and not get better.

MIKE KAZLAUSKY: He had the ability to fly in an F-15. He went through basic cadet training. We are going to push you at every turn.

[TITLE CARD: MIKE KAZLAUSKY, AIR FORCE BASEBALL HEAD COACH]

It is a constant grinder that we are going to eat you up and spit you out and just keep on going and keep on going.

PAULS SKENES: Just learning to be on all the time, it's what that place grooms you to do.

MIKE KAZLAUSKY: It's pressure, pressure, pressure seven days a week, 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. And I really believe it set the foundation for him to be where he's at today.

UMPIRE: Swing and a miss and the side is retired.

MIKE KAZLAUSKY: After his sophomore year, he ends up going to LSU, and I think that proved to be a great spot for him. And a big part of it was because of Coach Johnson.

PAUL SKENES: When I got to LSU, the first day of workouts, I show up. It's just me, and Wes is this big league pitching coach who just tapped out of the big league season during the year to come coach college. And I show up, and he's like 'alright, you ready?' I'm like yeah. So I'm working my tail off through this

warm up. I'm like what are we doing. This warm up is two hours. It definitely takes patience. I go out to play catch, and I feel amazing. And then you do that over the course of a year there's nobody that's going to stop us now.

ANNOUNCER: A very rare combination of power and precision. It's the explosive stuff, swing and miss stuff.

PAUL SKENES: That's the one thing that flip the switch for me, and I'm like I'm going to listen to whatever this guy says for the rest of my career. Here at Pittsburgh, the warm up is to get ready to throw. Beginning of the off-season was about 2.5 hours every day.

[TITLE CARD: JARED JONES, STARTING PITCHER]

JARED JONES: I've seen some starters take 25 minutes to get ready to throw.

[TITLE CARD: JOEY BART, CATCHER]

JOEY BART: I've never seen anything like that.

PAUL SKENES: It's the same thing every day. It's very mundane. It's very boring.

[TITLE CARD: DEREK SHELTON, TEAM MANAGER]

DEREK SHELTON: Boring is such a beautiful thing because that routine works.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

PAULS SKENES: Start with rolling out just soft tissue, just get blood moving. Some breath work, just basically getting present and staying present. After that, go up to the Stairmaster, just get the blood flowing. Go into some movement prep stuff, basically just to activate hips, glutes, obliques, core. And then we do a mini circuit, sleds, pistol squats, band walks, some hip rotations back extension and joint base movements. And then the mobility stick, the stabilization stuff. Going into arm care, I do some forearm stuff, get my shoulders going, and then I'll throw med balls then plyo balls. The routine is not sexy. It's boring. You don't love it, but at the end of the day, if you love the result, you got to do it.

JOEY BART: Sometimes it's what it takes in sports, the boring process, the boring fundamentals.

DEREK SHELTON: He has this sense of calm because of the fact that he is prepared.

PAUL SKENES: Confidence is gained through your routine, your process.

[TITLE CARD: OSCAR MARIN, TEAM PITCHING COACH]

OSCAR MARIN: It's like a test. You study for the test. You're going to be confident going into it.

DEREK SHELTON: His routine is boring because it's the same every day, but I'll 100% take boring all day long.

[TITLE CARD: KYLE NICOLAS, RELIEF PITCHER]

KYLE NICOLAS: He's throwing 100. He doesn't even look like he's trying.

PAUL SKENES: Brilliance on the field for me is patience. Everything takes patience. There's no instant gratification, and a lot of the time it's boring. But greatness is boring.

[TITLE CARD: BORING BEFORE BRILLIANCE. PAUL SKENES // STARTING PITCHER, PRESENTED BY PNC BANK]