

= Derick Neikirk =

Derick Lee Neikirk (also spelled Derek Neikirk or Derrick Neikirk , born September 5 , 1974) is an American professional wrestler and former minor league baseball player . He has competed for several promotions , and currently competes for Impact Zone Wrestling (IZW) , a territory of the National Wrestling Alliance (NWA) based in Phoenix , Arizona . He has also wrestled in several other promotions and was signed to a contract with World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) for several years . Much of his career has been connected with fellow wrestler Mike Knox , as the two have held championships together as a tag team and have feuded on multiple occasions .

= = Baseball career = =

Before entering professional wrestling , Neikirk played catcher for the Mesa Community College baseball team in the Arizona Community College Athletic Conference (ACCAC) . In 1996 , he was named to the All @-@ ACCAC Team . That year , he was picked by the Detroit Tigers in the 19th round of the Major League Baseball Draft

At age 21 , Neikirk played in Detroit 's rookie @-@ class , minor league team , the Gulf Coast League Tigers of the 1996 Gulf Coast League in Lakeland , Florida . He played catcher in 18 games out of a 60 @-@ game season . His statistics were as follows : 47 plate appearances , 38 at bats , 8 hits , 4 runs , 1 run batted in (RBI) , 5 walks , 7 strikeouts , and 8 total bases . Also , Neikirk ground into a double play 4 times , was hit by a pitch 3 times , and made 1 sacrifice hit . He had a batting average of .211 , an on @-@ base percentage of .348 , a slugging percentage of .211 , and an on @-@ base plus slugging (OPS) of .558 .

That same year , Neikirk was promoted to the high @-@ A @-@ class , minor @-@ league team , the Visalia Oaks , of the 1996 California League , in Visalia , California . While there , he played catcher in 9 games out of a 140 @-@ game season . His statistics were as follows : 29 plate appearances , 27 at @-@ bats , 4 hits , 3 runs , 2 RBIs , 2 walks , 9 strikeouts , and 4 total bases . He also had a batting average of .148 , an on @-@ base percentage of .207 , a slugging percentage of .148 , and an OPS of .355 .

In 1999 , at age 24 , Neikirk returned to baseball playing for the independent minor league team , the Adirondack Lumberjacks , of the 1999 Northern League , in Glens Falls , New York . While there , he played catcher in 42 games out of an 86 @-@ game season . His statistics were as follows : 118 at @-@ bats , 31 hits , 3 doubles , 1 triple , 2 home runs , and 42 total bases . He had a batting average of .263 and a slugging percentage of .356 .

On a weighted @-@ average , 100 @-@ point scale , Neikirk 's Baseball Cube scouting report is as follows :

Power : 39
Batting : 22
Speed : 43
Contact : 43
Patience : 62

= = Wrestling = =

Throughout his professional wrestling career , Neikirk has competed primarily in the United States . He was also wrestled in Egypt and has worked for the World Wrestling Alliance in Europe and for Enezma in Mexico . Much of his career has been spent portraying a heel (villain) through an arrogant demeanor and by turning on allies .

= = = Early career = = =

Neikirk trained under Les Thatcher for a career in professional wrestling . In 2002 , he formed a tag team known as The A Squad with Chet Jablonski . On July 10 , 2002 , The A Squad defeated Ice

Cream Man and Cody Hawk to win the HWA Tag Team Championship , although this title reign is not recorded in the company 's official history . That year , Neikirk was rated number 481 on Pro Wrestling Illustrated 's annual PWI 500 list of the top wrestlers in the world . On August 31 , 2003 , Neikirk wrestled a match on WWE 's Sunday Night Heat television program in which he was defeated by Test . In 2003 , he improved his PWI 500 ranking and was placed at number 442 .

He later wrestled for Ultimate Pro Wrestling (UPW) , where he formed a tag team with Mike Knox . The team was also part of a stable known as The Outlaws . Neikirk and Knox later moved to IZW , where they were known as Team Elite . They defeated Navajo Warrior and Hawaiian Lion on January 18 , 2005 to win the IZW Tag Team Championship . They held the title belts until March 15 , when they dropped them to California Connection (Peter Goodman and Antonio Mestre) . On January 6 , 2004 , Neikirk turned on Knox by superkicking him in the face . He explained this action by saying that he was tired of carrying the team and that Knox had " dropped the ball " . That night , Neikirk and Kox faced each other as part of a six @-@ man match , but Neikirk turned on his teammates and left the ring . Neikirk and Knox had a blow off match on May 25 . Neikirk won the match , but the referee then reversed his decision and awarded the victory to Knox .

= = = World Wrestling Entertainment = = =

= = = Deep South Wrestling (2005 ? 2007) = = =

In 2005 , he and Knox were signed by World Wrestling Entertainment and was sent to the Deep South Wrestling (DSW) , which was a developmental territory for WWE . They resumed wrestling together as Team Elite . Competing as a singles wrestler , Neikirk won the DSW Heavyweight Championship on December 22 that year by defeating Mike Mizanin . He finished the year ranked number 367 in the PWI 500 . He held the Heavyweight Championship for six months before dropping it to Roughhouse O 'Reilly . On August 3 , 2006 , Team Elite faced High Impact (Mike Taylor and Tony Santarelli) for the DSW Tag Team Championship . Neikirk and Knox lost the match , which led to them splitting up and feuding . They faced each other at several DSW house shows , with Knox winning most of the matches . At the same time , Neikirk also teamed with Roughhouse O 'Reilly to wrestle The Full Blooded Italians (Little Guide and Tony Mamaluke) on several house shows promoted by WWE 's Extreme Championship Wrestling . In 2006 , he achieved his highest ranking on the PWI 500 , as he was rated number 310 .

= = = Florida Championship Wrestling (2007 ? 2008) = = =

In 2007 , Team Elite reunited and won the DSW Tag Team Championship on March 8 with a victory over The Majors Brothers . They held the title until WWE ended its association with DSW on April 18 , 2007 . Neikirk and Knox were sent to Florida Championship Wrestling , another WWE developmental territory , where they continued to form a tag team . Neikirk also appeared on WWE 's Extreme Championship Wrestling program as one of Paul Heyman 's bodyguards .

In January 2008 , he was suspended by WWE for a violation of the company 's Wellness Program . He was released from his WWE contract on January 8 .

= = = Return to IZW = = =

He then returned to Impact Zone Wrestling , where he won the NWA Arizona Heavyweight Championship on December 30 , 2008 in a match against G.Q. Gallo . The match ended in controversy , however , because both men 's shoulders were on the mat as the referee counted the pinfall . Neikirk raised his shoulder just before the final count and was awarded the victory and the title belt . The title was declared vacant until the two men could face each other again on January 27 , 2009 . This rematch ended in a draw , but Gallo defeated Neikirk to win the vacant title on March 10 . Neikirk regained the title , which had been renamed the Arizona Heavyweight Championship ,

that summer . He held the belt until dropping it to Mike James on August 11 . NWA Representative Greg DeMarco then tried to strip James of the belt and return it to Neikirk , but Neikirk refused to accept the title .

= = In wrestling = =

Finishing move

Round Trip (Inverted suplex stunner)

= = Championships and accomplishments = =

Elite Xtreme Wrestling

EXW Heavyweight Championship (1 time)

Deep South Wrestling

DSW Heavyweight Championship (1 time)

DSW Tag Team Championship (1 time) ? with Mike Knox

Heartland Wrestling Association

HWA Tag Team Championship (1 time) ? with Chet Jablonski

Impact Zone Wrestling

IZW Heavyweight Championship (1 time)

IZW Tag Team Championship (1 time) ? with Mike Knox

NWA Arizona Heavyweight Championship (1 time)