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## Decker Has His Act Together

If there are any casting directors searching for a baseball player who sings, **Cody Decker** of Santa Monica is your man.

On the eve of Santa Monica's season opener this week, Decker will star in the school production of "The Music Man," using his voice and acting skills to play the lead role of Professor Harold Hill.

The next day, Friday, he'll start at catcher for the Vikings and try to build on his mark of 18 career home runs. That evening, he'll be back for the second of four engagements of "The Music Man."

Don't anyone get the wrong idea about where Decker's talent lies.

"I'm definitely a better baseball player," he said.

But he spent close to eight months preparing for his singing role, taking vocal lessons, auditioning and watching the movie version of "The Music Man" over and over.

"I think I've learned a bit to where I'm bearable," he said. "I've always liked to sing, in my car, in my room, in the shower."

Singing in front of a live audience, though, offers a new challenge, but his drama teacher, **Frank Ford**, has been impressed with Decker's dedication.

"He's as strong as a bull and as disciplined as anyone I've met," Ford said. "I've never seen anybody go as fast and as far as him. He has a nice voice and is learning how to use it. He has incredible energy."

Decker has always enjoyed theater. He'd mimic the sounds of Hannibal Lecter to his friends. And it offers stress relief from baseball.

"I've never had a break from baseball my whole life," he said.

But the 5-foot-11, 210-pound Decker is looking forward to his senior season. He hit 14 home runs as a sophomore and batted .424 as a junior.

Santa Monica first-year Coach **Kevin Brockway** said of Decker, "I played back in the '70s and have seen a lot of high school players. He's the best high school hitter since [former Crenshaw outfielder] **Chris Brown**. The bat speed he delivers, the power he has, the way he can hit to all fields.... "

Brockway is still trying to figure out Decker.

"You don't see kids in today's world so obedient," he said. "It's like, 'Are you putting on a show?' He's, 'Yes sir, no sir.' I told Cody, 'You're either the greatest actor in the world or one heck of a kid.' "

After the opening weekend of the season, we'll know if Decker can pull off the rare doubleheader sweep, hitting a home run in baseball and the theater.