

Tornados ready to touch down

BC Baseball hopeful about Saturday's season opener

By Jordan Laws
Staff Writer

BC baseball fits into one of America's greatest pastimes. At BC it helps the students, faculty, and staff members become more acquainted with college culture. This season is going to be promising.

Coach McCay has a lot to say about this upcoming season and it's all good.

"We are all excited to get going, but I'm not going to guess about this upcoming season. We have a really good group of players who are nice guys; they're fun to coach so we're hopeful that the way they play translates into wins," McCay says about the future for the Tornados.

"I've been here four years and we have now started to get some depth in the older guys in our program; before there weren't as many seasoned players due to the coaching transition, where we lost some of our well-rounded guys. Now we have some veterans, and I think that those guys who have been around us for a while, know what we want and know how to get results," McCay responds about the growing upperclassman players on the baseball team. From the excitement in his voice I could tell that this new season will bring in a new era of BC baseball.

When it comes to the question of who stands out on the field, Coach McCay picks five players but emphasizes that it's not about 'standing out' rather it's about the team as a whole. "We have five seniors who have all played big roles in their career here. John Slade (leading hitter, senior); Tyler Tant (hitter, senior); these are two hitters who have been in our lineup for a while. Slade was the leading hitter last year, and I'm hopeful he has a good end to his college career."

"Three pitchers who have logged a ton of innings for us in the past are Bennett Hixson, Zac Joyce, and JD Chaplain. They are seniors and we are hopeful that they have a good final season. We hope this experience translates into a lot of success. They are good leaders and we hope that they continue being very productive for the team. Of course, there are contributors to our success across the board on the roster."

Travis Salois (#36, sophomore) responds to the influx of new players. "There are a lot of transfers. They are new but have taken control of the team. There are also a lot of juniors on the team as well. We are definitely coming together



Hunter Donaldson

Courtesy of Randall Stewart

as a cohesive unit."

Coach McCay couldn't agree more. "Between freshmen and juniors we have a nice mix of guys who are going to be good players. Ryan Smith (#32), Joe Mesi (#35), and Pat Quinn (#4) are just a few of the names who are going to be contributors to the future success of the game. There are a lot more of them on the team that will move us forward but those three come to mind immediately."

Travis Salois also mentioned Ryan Smith and Joe Mesi. "Both of them are first and third basemen. Joe Mesi hits the ball. He's a stud. They are the first that come to mind but there are twenty others worth mentioning."

The Tornados will play the Kings in Bristol, Tennessee on Sunday February 1st at noon. There's not much of a rivalry between the King's and Tornados but Coach McCay predicts that it will be a good start to the season. "It's going to be a good game. They have a really good athletics program and we have played them in the past. It's a good barometer for where we are as a team. Non-conference games such as this

are good preparation for the conference games against teams like the Lions from Mars Hill; we are really close to them. The way we have opportunities to earn our post-season reputation is to win conference games."

From the way Coach McCay and Travis Salois spoke of their team, this season is going to be hard to miss. Home games are free for BC students but the away games might have a price tacked onto them and it's up to the hosting university to decide the amount students pay. The Tornados have their first conference games on February 6th and 7th against the Coker Cobras who, just two years ago, were in the college series. It's definitely a game that will test the mighty winds of our Tornados. Don't miss it!

For more information about game times, locations, and who the Tornados are playing, feel free to go to bctornados.com; click the Inside Athletics link; and go to the calendar. All of the future games are posted there. You can also find player stats, Athletic News, and rosters for the men and women teams.

Go Tornados!