

BUCS BASEBALL SWINGS INTO A NEW SEASON

BUCS READY FOR BASEBALL SEASON WITH RETURN OF CELEBRATED HEAD COACH

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With the return of head coach Juan Ranero, Bucs Baseball will be moving into full swing come January 2017.

As a member of the American Baseball Coaches Association (ABCA) and with 20 years' experience as a college head coach from Division 3 and high-end Division 1 to the Cape Cod League, Ranero has returned to Barry to lead the Bucs to play as a "fundamentally sound team" and accomplish the concept of "playing for the team and playing as a team."

Ranero resigned from the head coaching position at Barry University back in 2005 after accepting another head coaching position at Rowan University in New Jersey, where he remained for nine years, being named the New Jersey Collegiate Baseball Association Coach of the Year in 2013.

After spending a total of 14 seasons at Rowan and winning 350 games, he made the transition back to familiar territory in the Sunshine State Conference.

In 2014, Eckerd College announced Ranero as the 11th head coach in their baseball program.

Spending the last two seasons with the Eckerd Tritons, Ranero reached a milestone with his 500th career win against Florida Southern in April of 2015.

In July, Sports Information Director Dennis Jezek, Jr. announced Ranero's return to Barry as the head coach, revealing his shining 2002-2005 career record with the Bucs (109-103-1). In those four years at Barry, Ranero also mentored 13 All-Sunshine State Conference (SSC) picks and had six players sign professionally.

Although it's been over a decade since Ranero coached for the Bucs in the SSC, he

admits that the talent within the conference has remained the same. "There's always been good talent in this conference," he said.

Preparing for the upcoming season, the team has been training and working hard during afternoon practices in all areas to ensure they play their best come game time.

With respect to this season's coaching staff, Ranero said: "I like to surround myself with the best coaches and let them coach to help us achieve the best possible team we can be."

Between head coach Juan Ranero, pitching coach Alex Gonzalez, and the assistant coaches, the team's goal is to make the transition as smooth as possible and get them mentally prepared for a winning season.

Gonzalez said that the first step to preparing his pitchers for the season is getting them "acclimated to throwing on a more consistent basis and making sure they can handle the additional workload."

After getting the chance to see them compete in the pre-season scrimmages, Gonzalez asserted, "we are where we're supposed to be."

With the addition of Ranero, he must lead the Bucs after they went 24-25 last season and 8-16 in the Sunshine State Conference.

Returning senior Ryan Baldwin hit .369 with 13 home runs, 15 doubles, one triple, and 51 Runs Batted In (RBI) last spring. Baldwin brings a great amount of baseball knowledge and experience to lead a relatively young team.

Returning junior Alex Lavandero boasts a record of 7 wins and 4 losses, starting in 14 games and struck out a team-high of 107 batters to lead the SSC.

This season, Barry has brought in many new, talented and experienced individuals ready to become a part of the Buc community.

Gonzalez mentioned that the freshman

pitchers are expected to make an impact early on in the season because of their advanced abilities to pitch.

Freshman pitcher Pablo Arevalo, who played for Miami's Belen Jesuit, went 6-1 with a 0.61 earned run average (ERA) through 40 innings.

"The biggest challenge for us right now is adjusting to the new coaching staff, their ideas, and getting everyone involved to realize that the ultimate goal is to win a championship. I think Coach Ranero knows the talent that Barry has and is ready for the task," he said.

Sophomore catcher Justin Lamazares played eight games at Campbell University with eight hits and four home runs prior to this season at Barry.

"We have great talent and guys that will execute basic fundamentals," said Lamazares.

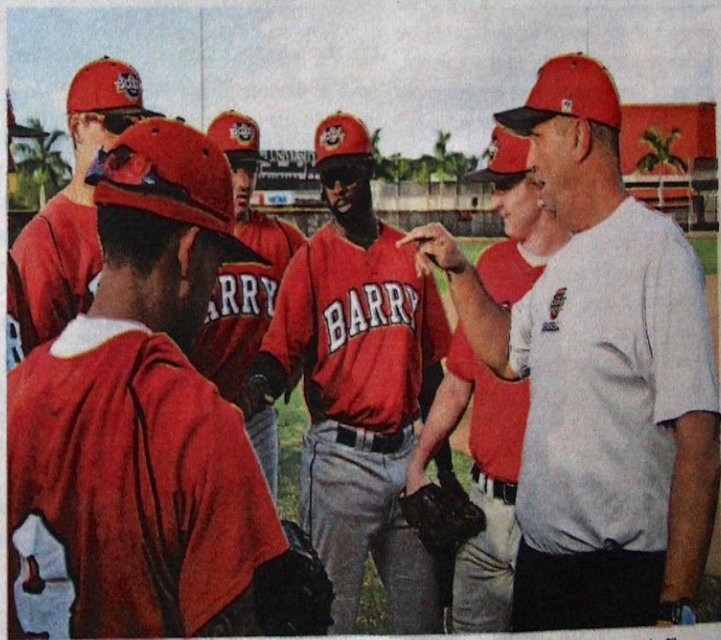
Sophomore Pablo De Armas started in 30

out of 32 games at Stillman College and had 128 at bats, two home runs, and 10 doubles with a .359 batting average before joining the Bucs.

"I see our goal as being able to call ourselves SSC champs and be able to compete in regionals. Our pitchers already look ahead of their game in terms of being ready for the season," said De Armas.

A few changes have been put into effect this fall as the Barry Bucs gear up for another baseball season. Under the guidance of new head coach Ranero, though, the team continues to productively tackle problem areas in their performance on the field.

With a new coaching staff, improved training techniques, and advanced players joining the team, the Bucs are one step closer to becoming SSC champs in 2017.



Coach Juan Ranero, who returned to the Bucs this season, gives the team instructions. Photograph by Anastasia Zhurava