

# A New Coach for Oak Hills Varsity Baseball

By: Emily Lipps

Last year, the Oak Hills Baseball team tied for the GMC Championship spot for the first time since 2006. The team had a whopping 16 seniors on the team and with their graduation, it's going to be a whole new team. Earlier this year, Josh Richmond announced his departure from the spot of Varsity Baseball coach after two years with the team, leaving them without a coach and causing the students to fear the worst. Thankfully, many interviews later, they found the perfect coach.

Greg Leurck was named the new head baseball coach on October 4th following board approval. Greg Leurck has a pretty impressive track record. Leurck has been a health and physical education teacher within the Oak Hills School District since 1999, which is when he began coaching Junior Varsity baseball. He was an assistant varsity coach from 2002-2014. Leurck graduated from LaSalle High School in 1994. He was a coach at Talawanda in 2015, Lakota West from 2016-2018, and LaSalle in 2019 where he earned an 80-59 record. Greg led Lakota West to the Division I state final four in 2017. He was the president of the Southwest Ohio Baseball Coaches Association from 2013-2015 and he played college baseball at Shawnee State University and Northern Kentucky University. Greg teaches at Bridgetown Middle school.



I spoke to Doug Spreen who was a Pitcher last year on the varsity baseball team. "I think last year, since we had a lot of seniors and a lot of senior leadership, there wasn't a lot of room for actual coaching instruction on things to do better, because we didn't really need it. This year, since we're going to be a young team and we're not going to have a lot of varsity experience, I think that having a new coach who's going to come in and lead his own program and help out the players a lot more, I think it'll be an overall good thing for the program." He seems to be very hopeful for the coaching change. I also spoke to Greg Leurck himself.

Q: Since last year's team had a lot of senior leadership, what are you hoping to do to either replicate or change how the team is led?

A: "Yes, they had a lot of seniors, which resulted in a GMC championship, but there are some returning players that will do a great job of leading their teammates. Jameson Richmond and Doug Spreen have already stepped up during our Fall workouts. I have really been impressed with the positive energy they have brought to our workouts. Yes, we will have to fill in a lot of holes left by such a large group of players that graduated last year, but it only takes one person to lead. Whether it be one or a group leading us, the key is getting everybody to buy in and row in the same direction."

Q: Why do you want to coach our team?

A: "Oak Hills is where I received my first coaching and teaching job. I was the Head JV coach for 3 years and a Varsity Assistant for 13 years, while I taught Health and Physical Education at the high school. I learned how to coach and had many great memories while coaching at Oak Hills. After being a Head Varsity coach at 3 different schools, I felt that this was a great opportunity for me to come back to where I started my coaching career. This is a chance for me to make a positive impact on these young men, not just as baseball players or students, but as people trying to find out who they are and what they want to do in life. It is all about building relationships within this program, which is something that can last a lifetime."

Q: Will you change the team's culture?

A: "I think every coach wants to win and make their mark on a program. Winning is the ultimate goal in any sport, but it is my job to develop a culture that teaches the players how to be successful in any aspect of life. I love to win, but the players will not hear me talk about winning. Instead, they will hear me stress the importance of being a good teammate, trusting and enjoying the process, having a positive attitude, and developing good work habits. As I told the players at the first meeting, this is not my program, it belongs to the players. I just get the honor of running it and making sure we keep the strong baseball tradition alive at Oak Hills."

The Oak Hills Baseball season starts in late February all the way to May. It's all looking up for the Varsity Baseball team and it's exciting to see what they can accomplish this year!