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Josh Schneider as team captain for the Reds in 1993; coaching Kiowa in the Regional tournament in 2008

4-YEAR REDS' STARTER BUILDING UP CLASS 2A VERSION OF THE EATON BASEBALL PROGRAM

Eaton has had a number of great ballplayers, but hardly any of them were 4-year starters. None of them hit a postseason home run as a freshman to secure a victory. A sophomore couldn't possibly have hit in the cleanup spot, nor knock in the first two runs and then win a State Semifinal game with a triple. No catcher has picked off multiple runners from first, thrown out a couple more trying to steal, and then crushed a 3-run home run to win a District Championship. Well...there is one, and only one, exception to this however: **1993 Reds' Graduate Josh Schneider.**

Schneider was the greatest defensive catcher in Eaton history. There aren't many honors higher than that, as Eaton has a great tradition of stud catchers; often the Reds' best athlete and toughest competitor is behind the plate. That certainly was true of Schneider. He knew the game as well as anyone on the field, and better than even most coaches. He single-handedly brought the Reds back from rare deficits faced, and worked equally hard to put teams away, especially in the postseason. And he displayed a cannon of an arm that led to opposing runners not only choosing not to attempt to steal, but often not even taking any kind of lead off of first base, as any runner not standing on a bag was a target for Schneider to throw out. Runners didn't know it at the time, but anytime an Eaton infielder referred to Schneider as "Ozzie" (after the best defensive player in the MLB game at the time, Ozzie Smith), that runner was about to get picked off. Sometimes Schneider wouldn't wait for an infielder to even signal the call, his accuracy would catch the infielder in mid-stride if need be to then put on the tag.

Schneider's honors don't end at being the best defensive, and one of the best offensive, catchers in Eaton's proud line of backstops. Schneider was the team captain for the Reds, and was named to the all-conference team 3 times. He was All-State 3 times as well, making first team honors his final 2 years in high school. Schneider was named the Top Baseball Player in Class 3A in 1993 by the Denver Post as a senior. He delivered many game-tying and game-winning hits, especially in clutch situations, and got the Reds out of a number of jams with his defense.

While Schneider hardly looks any different today than he did 15 years ago, the most lasting of the numerous qualities that made Schneider the top player in the State and one of the best in the history of Eaton Baseball is his knowledge of the game, and his ability to teach it to others. Schneider is now coaching high school baseball at Class 2A Kiowa High School, located southeast of metro Denver.



www.EatonBaseball.com

In only a few seasons, Schneider has already turned the Kiowa Indians into one of the top Class 2A teams in the state.



Before all of Schneider's success at Kiowa, Josh had a very successful collegiate career, starting for two years at Colorado Northwestern Community College. Schneider earned honorable mention all-conference honors as a freshman, and as a sophomore was the team captain and was awarded all-conference honors. In one game against Glendale Junior College (which was ranked #6 in the nation at the time), Schneider threw out 6 baserunners; yes, 2 full innings' worth of outs from Schneider against one of the best teams in the nation. At Schneider's graduation from 2-year Colorado Northwestern, the prestigious New Mexico Highlands baseball program sent their head coach to attend his graduation ceremony and sign Schneider on the spot.

At New Mexico, Schneider was the team captain again as a senior, and was named first-team all-conference. Schneider was New Mexico Highlands' Athlete of the Year in 1997, an honor given only to the top athlete in all sports at the university. Right after graduating from New Mexico Highlands, Josh married his college girlfriend Tammi. As Tammi entered the workforce in real estate, Josh wanted to carry on his baseball career in the best way that he could, by becoming a coach. Schneider won the first job he applied for, as an assistant coach at Class 5A Eaglecrest. They quickly realized that Schneider was head coaching material, and immediately made him the head coach of the Freshman team. He coached the Legion B team for Eaglecrest that summer, and finished above .500. He then was promoted to the Junior Varsity head coaching position in 2000 and led Eaglecrest to enough victories to garner the attention of many schools in the area. The first one to come calling was Kiowa High School, which was looking for a Varsity Head Coach. Schneider jumped at the opportunity.



In his first year as head coach at Kiowa in 2001, Schneider guided the team to an unprecedented 17-3 record, making it all the way to the State Semifinals. Schneider was named the Colorado Springs Gazette Baseball Coach of the Year at all levels, and was named the Class 2A Coach of the Year by the Denver Post. Kiowa had never before made the State Tournament, and had only 12 players out for the team that year.

After getting the most out of his seniors' potential in his first year, Schneider had to then get to work building a program for the future once many of his stars from the previous year graduated. Building a program is never easy, and never quick, and Schneider faced a couple of tough years. After a number of snowouts in 2003, the Indians finished 7-3 and tied for third place in league, but failed to make it to the district tournament. The next two years saw only 6 wins versus 22 losses as Schneider played some younger ballplayers and focused on building a youth baseball program for Kiowa. By 2006 though with 6 freshman starters, Kiowa was up to a .500 record at 9-9, and in 2007, Schneider's team went 16-3, won the league title, won the district title, and advanced to Regionals. In 2008, Kiowa went 16-5, again qualifying for Regionals after winning the district championship. With a number of returning starters that will be seniors next year, Kiowa is an early favorite for reaching the State Tournament again.

Schneider has built a top program at record-pace, with a very bright future for the Kiowa program in the years to come. While Schneider would be the first to tell you that no coach ever won a team a game, and it's the players that win and lose games, he also has a knack for giving his kids the best possibly opportunity to succeed and earn a victory in each game. Teaching many of the same lessons learned as a ballplayer for the Reds and then as a collegiate baseball star, Schneider has put Kiowa on a track that's eerily similar to the Reds program under Coach Danley:

Comparison of Eaton and Kiowa

| | Eaton | Kiowa |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Head Coach | Jim Danley | Josh Schneider |
| Mascot | Fightin' Reds | Indians |
| First Year Coaching | 1972 | 2001 |
| Population at Time of 1 st Year Coaching | 1,390 | 580 |
| Classification at Time of 1 st Year Coaching | 2A | 2A |
| First Year Record | 13-5 | 17-3 |
| Avg. # of Losses Years in Years 3 & 4 | 8 | 11 |
| # of District Championships in 1 st 8 Years | 2 | 3 |
| # of Regional Appearances in 1 st 8 Years | 2 | 3 |
| First State Tournament Appearance | 5 th Year | 1 st Year |
| Place Finished in First State Tournament | 3 rd Place (tied) | 3 rd Place (tied) |
| Win Pct. In 2007-2008 | .857 | .800 |
| Total Losses in 2007-2008 | 7 | 8 |
| Record Following 1 st 8 Years Coached | 558-93 (85.6%) | TBD |

While it took Coach Danley 23 years to win their first State Championship (the Reds now own a dozen State Title Trophies), hopefully Schneider can conquer that challenge much sooner. Regardless of when that happens, Schneider takes the most pride in the success of the kids that he's coached. Most baseball players from small towns don't have collegiate baseball options, however Schneider has helped place 4 of his graduates already at top junior colleges and universities.

Josh's wife Tammi is very supportive of his coaching career and very proud of his success. Josh and Tammi have three children, Brody (age 7), Brindelyn (age 4), and Berkley (age 1). Brody is always around the ballfield with dad, looking forward to his chance to one day play for the Indians at the varsity level. Josh has had the privilege to coach the Colorado All-State Games twice, and also coaches girls basketball at Kiowa.

From a former teammate who is still in awe of the way you played the game:

Josh, Congratulations on All Your Success
May You Continue Your Climb To the Top of Class 2A Baseball

