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Red of the Month



FORMER REDS' STANDOUT MIKE ANDERSON COACHING AT THE TOP OF NCAA BASEBALL

One of the best players to ever wear the Eaton pinstripes, a college standout, a Major League draft pick and professional ballplayer, the head coach at one of the top collegiate baseball programs in the country, a finalist for National Coach of the Year....not bad credentials for the second Eaton graduate to be noted as Red of the Month.

As a kid in the 1970's, Mike Anderson became one of the first Reds to play from the age of 7 all the way through age 18 at Eaton, and it was clear from the time he took his first swings in T-ball that he was going to be something special. A truly standout athlete in all sports, Anderson would later graduate as clearly the top baseball player to have ever donned a Reds uniform. Whether anyone's been better since that time is arguable at best, and it's clear that Mike and his achievements in the early 1980's put Eaton on the map in terms of baseball teams in the state. His contributions to the Program off the field helped place Eaton squarely on the center of that map.

A few days after leaving Eaton Middle School following the 8th grade, Mike was immediately thrust into not only the varsity roster, but into the starting lineup. He would go on to earn a starting job on a talented team that summer, and become one of Eaton's very few four-year starters. By his sophomore year, Mike had already established himself as a .400 hitter, batting .421 in 1981 with 13 extra-base hits (including 5 triples) and 32 total hits, 25 stolen bases, 27 runs scored and 19 RBI. That year in the Regional Championship, the Reds were facing one of the State's top pitchers (who would go on to play professionally) when they battled Holy Family. In the 5th inning of the scoreless game, Mike led off with a base hit and then stole 2nd base and came around to score the first run of the game on a base hit. Then in the 7th inning, Mike drew a leadoff walk and stole both second base and third base, later scoring to give the Reds a 3-0 lead as Eaton held on to advance to the Final Four for only the second time in its history.

It's easy today to take for granted the magnitude of victories like this as the Reds have advanced to the Final Four in each of the last 14 seasons, but Mike and the Reds team he led didn't have a history like that, they instead were building the foundation for what the Reds have become as an organization.

Mike's heroics on the field were far from over; instead they were just getting started. He hit .418 as a junior, and posted one of the more remarkable statistics in Eaton's history: 23 hits and 14 walks versus only 2 strikeouts. Anderson led the Reds to the District Championship in 1983 by drawing a bases loaded walk to give the Reds their 6th run against Valley, and then took the mound in the 7th inning and with the tying run on 3rd and winning run on 2nd, Mike struck out the final batter of the game on 3 pitches to secure the Championship. A couple weeks later Mike repeated his closer responsibilities by securing a 1-0 win in the Regional Championship by striking out 3 of the final 4 batters, including striking out the final batter of the game while the tying run was on 3rd base. The next weekend, trailing 3-1 in the State Semifinals, Mike hit a 2 RBI double to tie the game. Later in the game, trailing again by 3 runs, Mike drew a walk to start a rally that would draw the Reds within a single run of Trinidad. Mike then reached and scored again in the 6th inning as the Reds scored 6 runs to go up 12-9. Mike then took the mound in the 7th inning and after yielding a single, drew a groundball that he fielded himself, then struck out the next batter, and ended the game by picking off the runner from first. This sent the Reds to their first State Championship Game.

Mike's career statistics were amazing to say the least: he scored 81 runs, had 84 hits including 31 extra base-hits, batted .396, stole 52 bases (yes, that's more than the career totals of this year's team combined), drew 56 walks, and knocked in 60 RBI. This consistency combined with big game heroics earned Mike a scholarship to the University of Northern Colorado, where he went on to be a star as well. In fact, following his season year in college, Mike was drafted by the California Angels organization and played a number of years in the minor leagues. Following his playing days, Mike went into coaching, first at the high school level, and later at the collegiate level. After serving as the hitting and outfielders coach at the University of Nebraska, Mike earned the top job there, and began a transformation of the Nebraska baseball team that has led them to be among the truly elite teams in the nation. In 2005, the Huskers were ranked 50th in the nation in the preseason poll, by the end of the season, they were ranked 5th as they headed into the College World Series. Mike has won two Big 12 titles, won the Big 12 Coach of the Year Award, and has been a finalist for National Coach of the Year.

Is anyone surprised by Mike's success coaching at the collegiate level? Not in the least, one could see his gift for coaching from the time he was a teenager coaching kids at Eaton. Reds baseball certainly didn't end for Mike the final time he took off the pinstriped uniform, instead, he carried on in coaching the kids that would replace his spot on the field one day. Working with kids from the ages of 7 and up, Mike was out on the field every day throughout the summers while in high school and in college to help those Reds strive for a taste of the success he had achieved. In fact, the kids he coached as T-ballers in the mid-1980s are the kids who grew to win the Reds' first two state championships a decade later. Nine more state championships have occurred since that time, but don't think for a second that the kids who Mike had coached simply took what the Program had to offer and walked away with their trophies and State Championship Rings. They too realized what Mike and his teammates had given to the Program and to them personally, and spent the same time throughout the summers coaching the kids that would go on to be even more successful than they had been. In fact, the players from last year's graduating class were coached as children by the 1990's players who had been coached as children by Mike Anderson.

Heroism isn't fleeting, and heroes don't ride off into the sunset at Eaton; instead, they return the privilege that they had been given as children by teaching the next crop of players what it takes to succeed...at baseball, and in life. This tradition at Eaton is one that Mike Anderson served as the catalyst for, and one that can never be repaid to him, only admired, honored, and repeated.

From one of the hundreds of men to whom you've been a remarkable role model:

Congratulations on all of Your Success, Mike, and Thank You for all that you have done for Eaton Baseball.

Angels pick Anderson in 8th round

UNC's Courtney goes in round 17

A pair of University of Northern Colorado baseball players have been selected in the major-league amateur free-agent draft.

Outfielder Mike Anderson, an Eaton native, was an eighth-round selection of the California Angels. Shawn Courtney of Cherry Creek High School was the Minnesota Twins' 17th-round choice.

Anderson, who turns 21 Sunday, said Angels scout Bruce Himes telephoned him Tuesday with the news. Himes was to visit Anderson and his parents tonight.

"I don't know what the situation will bring, but I know I won't be signing the same kind of bonus Jeff King signed," Anderson said, referring to the Colorado Springs native who was the No. 1 pick Monday in the draft.

"I'm interested to see what they have to offer."

Courtney, who rooms with Anderson, expected to be chosen by either the Angels or the Twins. "I'm probably going to sign, even though there won't be that much money involved," Courtney said. The junior played shortstop for the Bears, but will move to second base as a professional. "Scouts have been telling me to make that move since I was in high school," he said.

Anderson, who also expects to sign and forego his senior season at UNC, led the Bears with a .430 batting average and 30 stolen bases in 31 attempts.

A career .383 hitter at UNC, he played all three outfield positions last season, hit 10 home runs and scored 47 runs despite having just 109 at-bats.

Anderson said Himes visited Greeley twice after the Bears' season to study the outfielder's skills in workouts.

Courtney hit .376 with five homers in 1986. He drove in 101 runs in his three-year career and posted a .334 career batting average. Courtney stole 18 bases this year and was 44 of 52 in his career. He began at UNC as a third baseman before moving to shortstop as a sophomore.

Courtney, 6-foot-1, 175 pounds, said he would consult former UNC coach Tom Petroff before making his final decision. Thursday he will give his contractual offer.

Anderson said: "From what I was told by everybody, realistically, I thought I would go between the fifth and the 10th round. So going in the eighth round is just about what I expected."

Anderson, a 6-3, 195 pounds, became the second UNC outfielder drafted in two years. Last year, Chris Knabenshue signed with the San Diego Padres — he currently is playing at the Class A level.

One UNC product is already in the Angels farm system. Pitcher Doug Banning is playing at the Class AA level at Midland, Texas.

At Eaton High School, Anderson earned all-state honors in baseball and football. His older brother, Mark, played four years at the University of Denver.

STATS

Mike Anderson

Year	Avg.	AB	R	H	B1	HR	SB
1984	.377	154	46	58	41	2	22
1985	.333	126	39	42	30	5	18
1986	.450	109	47	49	31	10	30

Anderson was picked in the eighth round of the major-league baseball amateur free-agent draft by the California Angels.



Anderson gets scholarship

Former Eaton High School standout Mike Anderson has been given the Doy Neighbors scholarship for 1983. Anderson, a three-sport letterman, will attend the University of Northern Colorado.

The Doy Neighbors scholarship, awarded annually by McDoy Distributing Co., is given to an area athlete in memory of the late Doy Neighbors who was a former college athlete and a businessman interested in UNC athletics.

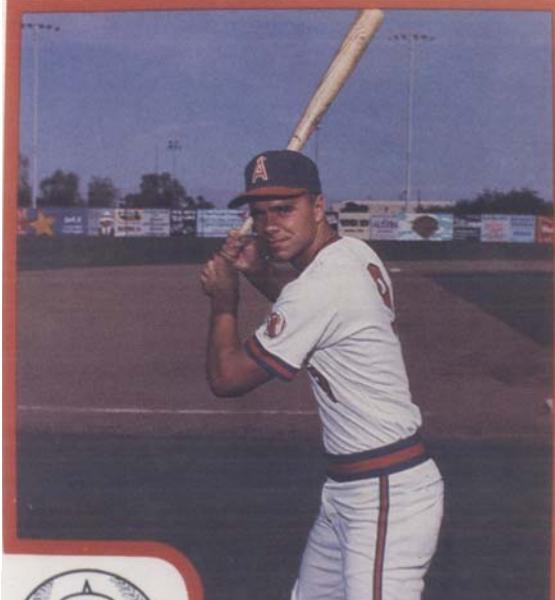
The 6-foot-3, 175-pound Anderson led the Reds' offensive statistics in three sports. On the basketball court, Anderson led the Welco League in scoring as a sophomore with a 20.1 points per game average and also averaged 20 points per game for three straight seasons.

Anderson also played a major role in the baseball program at Eaton High.

As a senior, Anderson batted .500 and had 21 RBI in 38 at bats. In addition to his records for hits, runs, triples, stolen bases, and total bases, he was a standout outfielder and effective pitcher. Anderson also starred as a defensive back and was a top pass receiver in the Welco.

He will enter UNC in the fall and plans to play basketball and baseball for the Bears.

PALM SPRINGS



MICHAEL ANDERSON CF



A new era of Husker baseball was ushered in on June 21, 2002, when Mike Anderson was named the 23rd head coach in the program's history.

When Anderson, who had served as an assistant in the Husker program for eight seasons, stepped to the microphone for the first time as head coach, he made it clear that his student-athletes were his top priority.

"This is about kids," Anderson said. "This is about the commitment to young men getting their education at the University of Nebraska, getting their education on the baseball field, and obviously winning baseball games."

In his four years as Nebraska's head coach, Anderson has lived up to his opening statement, guiding the Husker program to a 182-73 record, two Big 12 titles (2003 and 2005) and the school's third College World Series appearance since 2001.

The 2006 season saw the Huskers continue their success, as Nebraska compiled a 42-17 record and reached an NCAA Regional for the seventh time in the last eight seasons. NU, which was the No. 6 overall seed in the NCAA Tournament, also reached the finals of the Big 12 Tournament for the sixth time in the last eight seasons - the most of any conference program.

Three Husker players - Luke Gorsett, Tony Watson and Ryan Wehrle - garnered all-America honors, while Nebraska placed nine members on the All-Big 12 team. Anderson's commitment to success also extended to the classroom, as four players were named to the academic All-Big 12 team, while Brandon Buckman garnered first-team ESPN the Magazine Academic All-America honors, bringing Nebraska's total of Academic All-Americans in baseball to 10 over the last decade.

Anderson piloted the Huskers to their most successful season in school history in 2005. Nebraska compiled a 57-15 record and advanced to the College World Series for the third time in five seasons. The 2005 Huskers also became the first team in school history to record a victory at the College World Series, while the 57 wins led the nation and easily broke the previous school mark of 51 set in 2001. The Huskers finished fifth in the final Baseball America poll, a publication that had Nebraska 50th in its preseason issue. A finalist for Collegebaseballinsider.com's National Coach-of-the-Year award, Anderson was selected as the Big 12 Coach of the Year, guiding NU to a sweep of the regular-season and tournament titles.

The Huskers had three All-Americans, led by consensus national player of the year Alex Gordon, the No. 2 overall pick in the 2005 MLB Draft, along with newcomers Joba Chamberlain and Johnny Dorn. Gordon, a two-time Big 12 Player of the Year, led a contingent of 11 players who brought home All-Big 12 accolades in 2005, including four first-team selections

Anderson made an immediate impression, guiding Nebraska to a 47-18 record in 2003. After being picked fourth in the preseason by the conference coaches and losing two-thirds of the squad's preseason pitching rotation to injury, the Huskers won the Big 12 regular-season title with a 20-7 record, clinching the title on the final day of the regular season. He became the second first-year Husker coach to lead NU to a conference title and the first since 1929. For his efforts, he was tabbed by his peers as the Big 12 Coach of the Year. Anderson was joined by first baseman Matt Hopper and pitcher Aaron Marsden in sweeping the Big 12's major awards, as they were chosen as Player and Pitcher of the Year, respectively. The duo was joined by designated hitter Curtis Ledbetter and pitcher Quinton Robertson as first-team All-Big 12 selections.

The Huskers also enjoyed success in the classroom, as Jeff Leise and Aaron Marsden were named CoSIDA First-Team Academic All-Americans, while Leise repeated as the Academic All-American of the Year. He became only the second player in the award's 16-year history to be selected as college baseball's top

Anderson at a Glance

Alma Mater: Northern Colorado, 1990

Coaching Honors

Big 12 Coach of the Year 2003, 2005

Coaching Experience

University of Nebraska, Head Coach, 2002-
University of Nebraska, Assistant Coach, 1995-2002
Northern Colorado, Assistant Coach, 1994
Toronto Blue Jays, Professional Scout, 1992-93
Northern Colorado Lab School, Head Coach, 1991-94
American Legion, Head Coach, 1989-94

Playing Experience

California Angels organization, 1986-89
Northern Colorado, 1983-86

Personal Information

Date of Birth: June 8, 1965
Wife: Kim
Children: Daughters: Kaleigh (16), Madison (12) and Andie (5). Son: Taylor (14)

NU Awards Under Mike Anderson

National Player of the Year (1):

2005 - Alex Gordon (Golden Spikes Award, ABCA and Baseball America National Player of the Year, Brooks Wallace Award and Dick Howser Trophy)

National Player of the Year Finalists (5):

1995 - Darin Erstad (Golden Spikes Award); 1999 - Ken Harvey (Golden Spikes and Rotary Smith Awards); 2001 - Dan Johnson (Dick Howser Trophy); 2002 - Jed Morris (ABCA National Player of the Year); 2004 - Alex Gordon (Dick Howser Trophy)

First-Team All-Americans (9):

Darin Erstad (1995), Ken Harvey (1999), Dan Johnson (2001), John Cole (2001), Matt Hopper (2001), Jed Morris (2002); Jeff Leise (2002), Alex Gordon (2004-05)

Big Eight/Big 12 Players of the Year (5):

Darin Erstad (1995), Jed Morris (2002); Matt Hopper (2003); Alex Gordon (2004-05)

First-Team All-Conference Honorees (21):

Darin Erstad (1995), Alvie Shepherd (1995), Todd Sears (1997), Francis Collins (1997), Ken Harvey (1999), Justin Cowan (2000), Matt Hopper (2000-01-03), Dan Johnson (2000-01), Jeff Leise (2002), Jed Morris (2002), Curtis Ledbetter (2003-05), Alex Gordon (2004-05), Brandon Buckman (2006), Ryan Wehrle (2006), Luke Gorsett (2006)

Freshmen All-Americans (4):

Todd Sears (1995), Matt Hopper (2000), Daniel Bruce (2002), Alex Gordon (2003)

CoSIDA Academic All-American of the Year (2):

Jeff Leise (2002-03)

First-Team CoSIDA Academic All-Americans (5):

Erik Mumm (1999), John Cole (2001), Jeff Leise (2002-03); Brandon Buckman (2005)

student-athlete in consecutive years.

In 2004, the Huskers narrowly missed making the NCAA Tournament, ending the year with a 36-23 record, but still enjoyed numerous highlights. The Huskers posted four wins over top-10 teams, including a pair of victories over No. 1 Texas, marking the first time Nebraska had beaten a top-ranked team since 1999. Gordon was a first-team All-American and was chosen as the Big 12's Player of the Year after hitting .365 with 18 homers and 75 RBIs. He also became the first Husker since 1985 to be selected for the U.S. National Team and led Team USA to a gold medal at the FISU World University Baseball Championship in Taiwan. He was one of four Husker infielders selected to the All-Big 12 team in 2004. The Huskers enjoyed unparalleled success in the classroom, as a school-record nine Huskers were chosen to the academic All-Big 12 team, including six first-team selections

Commitment to student-athletes and commitment to teaching – these have been the hallmarks throughout Anderson's coaching tenure at NU.

Since joining the Nebraska staff in the fall of 1994, he has coached a total of 22 first-team all-conference honorees, while 32 of his former players have signed pro contracts. Anderson has coached eight players who have reached the Major Leagues, most recently Drew Anderson, who made his Major League Debut with the Milwaukee Brewers in 2006.

His most famous pupil is current Chicago White Sox outfielder Darin Erstad, who earned first-team All-America honors in 1995, when he was the first overall selection in the Major League Baseball First-Year Player Draft. Erstad, a three-time Gold Glove winner, represented the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim in the 2000 and 2002 All-Star Game.

Anderson also helped Ken Harvey develop into the nation's best hitter in 1999. Harvey led Division I with a .478 average, while belting 23 homers en route to first-team All-America honors. A finalist for the Rotary Smith and the Golden Spikes awards in college, Harvey represented the Kansas City Royals in the 2004 All-Star Game. Other former Huskers coached by Anderson who have reached the Major Leagues include Todd Sears, Jamal Strong, Dan Johnson, Adam Shabala and Adam Stern.

Eight Huskers have been tabbed first-team All-Americans under Anderson's tutelage, while five players – Erstad (1995), Harvey (1999), Dan Johnson (2001), Jed Morris (2002) and Gordon (2004-05) – have been finalists for various national player-of-the-year awards. Gordon became Nebraska's first major award winner in 2005, taking home the Dick Howser Trophy, the USA Baseball Golden Spikes and the Brooks Wallace Awards, while also being recognized as Baseball America's College Player of the Year.

A total of eight Huskers were selected in the 2006 Major League Baseball Draft, equaling the highest number of NU players taken in the draft since a school-record nine Huskers were picked in 1983. It also marked the seventh straight season that at least four Huskers were selected.

The group included starting pitcher Joba Chamberlain (first, New York Yankees), catcher Jeff Christy (sixth, Minnesota), outfielder Luke Gorsett (seventh, St. Louis), reliever Brett Jensen (14th, Detroit), starting pitcher Tony Watson (17th, Baltimore), shortstop Ryan Wehrle (18th, Cincinnati), first baseman Brandon Buckman (19th, St. Louis) and reliever Jared Cranston (34th, San Francisco). Six players signed professional contracts, while Watson and Wehrle elected to return to Nebraska for their junior campaigns.

Before he was named head coach following the 2002 season, Anderson enjoyed a successful tenure as the Huskers' hitting coach, as NU led the Big 12 in hitting in each of his final four seasons.

In 2002, the Huskers led the Big 12 in seven offensive categories, including batting average, hits and runs scored. Individually, Morris and Leise were both first-team All-Americans. Morris led the Big 12 in both homers (23) and RBIs (90), while Leise ranked among the conference leaders in nine offensive categories and tied NU's single-season hits record with 109.

In 2001, Anderson coached a Husker offense that ranked in the top 10 nationally in both team average and runs per game, while also finishing second nationally in total hits and runs scored. NU led the Big 12 in 11 offensive categories, including batting average, runs scored, homers and stolen bases. Anderson coached a trio of first-team All-Americans in outfielder John Cole, designated hitter Matt Hopper and first baseman Dan Johnson, a finalist for the Dick Howser Trophy that year.

As the outfielders coach, Anderson has coached three All-Americans and seven all-conference selections, including Leise, who was a first-team All-American in 2002, while leading the Huskers to their second straight CWS appearance.

Anderson's commitment to his student-athletes also extends to the classroom. Over the past 12 years, the Huskers have placed 54 players on the first-team all-conference squad. Nebraska has had 10 CoSIDA Academic All-Americans and 14 first-team academic all-district selections in the past nine seasons.

Before arriving in Lincoln in the fall of 1994, Anderson was the top assistant coach at the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, Colo. He joined the Bears' staff after four years as a head coach with the Northern Colorado Lab School. Along with his collegiate coaching experience, Anderson has worked as a camp instructor for Greg Riddoch's Major League Baseball School and Tom Runnells' Pro Clinics. Both Riddoch and Runnells managed in the Major Leagues. Anderson also spent two years as a scout for the Toronto Blue Jays.

From 1983 through 1986, Anderson was an outfielder at Northern Colorado for College Hall of Fame Coach Tom Petroff. Anderson was an eighth-round pick by the California Angels before spending four seasons with the Angels organization. Anderson earned a bachelor's degree in physical education from Northern Colorado in 1990. Anderson graduated from Eaton High School in Eaton, Colo., where he was a first-team All-Colorado shortstop for Coach Jim Danley.

He and his wife Kim have four children: Kaleigh, Taylor, Madison and Andie.