



Dragons Roster Taking Shape, 5 return from 2008 squad



From left to right: Copeland, Kurash, Riegler, Zelasko, Noth

March 5, 2009 · Lisle, IL – As the weather starts to change and the baseball season approaches, the Dragons roster is starting to take shape. It begins with 5 returning members from the 2008 team. Those players include pitchers Ryan Copeland, Nick Kurash, Brad Riegler, and Tom Zelasko, and outfielder Mark Noth.

Copeland, a junior at Illinois State, returns for his second go round with the Dragons. The lefty compiled a 3 and 1 record with a 2.54 ERA for the Dragons last year. He also racked up 57 strikeouts which tied him for second in the league. He was also named a CICL All Star for his performance last summer. Before the start of the 2009 college season Copeland was named a preseason All- MVC (Missouri Valley Conference) selection. Last season he led all Division I pitchers in walks per nine innings allowing only 9 walks over 89.1 innings pitched, which led to his receiving an All- MVC honorable mention. So far this season Ryan has a record of 1 win and 1 loss and has a .69 ERA.

Nick Kurash, a sophomore right hander from Miami Ohio, will also be back for his second stint with the Dragons. During the 2008 season Kurash established himself as a solid option out of the bullpen. The hard throwing righty finished with a 1-0 record in 10 appearances. He also compiled 28 strikeouts while limiting opposing hitters to a .100 batting average. Thus far Kurash has only thrown a third of an inning and allowed 2 runs while striking out one for the Redbirds.

When the Dragons season starts, Brad Riegler will do something that no player has done before. 2009 will mark Brad's third summer with the Dragons and he is looking to build upon the past two. Brad, a junior right hander from the University of Illinois Chicago, was named Co-pitcher of the year in the CICL and joined Copeland as a CICL All Star. He finished the season tied for third in the league with 5 wins while bouncing between being a starter and reliever. He also had 2 saves and finished second in the league in ERA with a mark of 2.04. This season he came in with an unblemished career record of 5 wins and 0 losses, but lost his first start of the season to the Texas Longhorns. His record currently stands at 0 wins and 1 loss in two appearances.

Tom Zelasko came in to the 2008 summer season as a relative unknown. He had not pitched much at Northern Illinois during the college season due to injury. But he emerged as a viable left handed option out of the bullpen as well as one of the Dragons most reliable relievers. He finished the season with 3 wins and a 3.02 ERA while making 17 appearances, 4 of which were starts. Currently for the Huskies he has a record of 1 win and 0 losses in 6 appearances.

Mark Noth, an outfielder from Belmont, was a late signee of the Dragons but proved to be a very viable option in the lead off spot and for a team lacking natural outfielders. Noth batted a respectable .262 with 38 hits and 5 stolen bases. He also scored 23 runs which tied for the best mark on the team. He is in a slight rut right now at Belmont, batting .167 through nine games. But the season is still young and he has plenty of time to turn things around.

The Dragons home opener is slated for 7:05 pm on Tuesday, June 9th against the defending champion Springfield Sliders. Tickets are available by calling the Dragons' ticket office at 630-241-2255 or by purchasing online at www.dupagedragons.com.