



COACHES



REGGIE CHRISTIANSEN

19

Head Coach

First Season • Menlo College, 1998

Reggie Christiansen begins his first season as Sacramento State's head baseball coach, taking over the reigns of the program after spending the last two seasons as an assistant and as the associate head coach. Christiansen was appointed to the position by athletics director Dr. Terry Wanless and took over for John Smith, who led the Hornets for 32 seasons.

Christiansen was the Hornets' primary hitting instructor and outfielders coach during his two seasons as an assistant coach. He was named associate head coach prior to the 2010 season before being selected to be Smith's replacement for the 2011 campaign.

Before coming to Sacramento State, Christiansen spent the previous four seasons (2005-08) as the head baseball coach at South Dakota State. He served as the team's hitting instructor, recruiting coordinator and third base coach before moving into the head coaching role.

Christiansen was given the task of building a Division I baseball program during his four seasons with the Jackrabbits, taking over at the beginning of their reclassification period. Christiansen posted a 96-113 record at South Dakota State, turning a 12-win team in Division II a year previous to his hire in 2004 into a team that won the Division I Independent Tournament in 2007, collecting a 34-19 record. During that season, the Jacks notched wins in 11 states, ranging from California to Kentucky and Utah to North Dakota.

The 2007 Jackrabbits team reshaped the SDSU record books under Christiansen. The squad set records for runs scored (395), hits (573), doubles (99), total bases (891), runs batted in (357), and at bats (1,824). In addition, the 2007 team fielded .962, just one percentage point off the school mark. Christiansen earned Division I Independent Coach of the Year honors following that season.

SDSU earned notoriety under Christiansen for playing Kansas in a three-game series in the Metrodome in Minneapolis, Minn., in the middle of the night. Due to inclement weather both places, the teams finally found a safe haven under the dome, but there were already games scheduled all day. The teams had to play a 1:30 a.m. doubleheader one day, followed by a 3:30 a.m. game the next.

Prior to his arrival at South Dakota State, Christiansen was an assistant at the University of Kansas under Ritch Price for two seasons. During his time with the Jayhawks, he served as first base coach and worked as a hitting instructor, while also overseeing the outfielders.

Under his tutelage, Kansas broke several school records and was honored by the Big 12 Conference. In 2004, Jayhawk hitters led the Big 12 with a .316 team batting average, the fourth highest in the program's history, while setting a school record with 697 hits. Kansas also shattered the school home run record during the Christiansen era.

He spent the 2002 season as the head coach of his alma mater, Menlo College, in Atherton, Calif, where he had previously spent time as an assistant coach from 1997-99. He spent the 2001 season as the head coach in his hometown at Ferndale High School, and also spent time with three summer teams as an assistant coach, working with the San Mateo Bulldogs, the Humboldt Crabs and the Topeka Capitals.

Seven different players he has coached during his short career have been drafted, including one, Travis Metcalf, that has seen action in the majors. Metcalf played in 80 games with the Texas Rangers from 2007-08. Jake Rogers was selected in the 22nd round of the 2007 first-year player draft by the Washington Nationals, while Craig Parry was selected in the 50th round of the 2008 draft by the Pittsburgh Pirates.

Christiansen graduated from Menlo in 1998 with a degree in business administration, and received his master's degree from Kansas in 2004 in health, sport and exercise science.

A native of Ferndale, Calif., Christiansen and his wife Amber have two young sons and a newborn daughter.



TOMMY NICHOLSON

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Infield Coach/Recruiting Coordinator
First Season • Texas, 2000

Tommy Nicholson is in his first year at Sacramento State, and will serve as the team’s infield coach, assistant hitting instructor and recruiting coordinator for the 2011 season.

Nicholson joins the Hornets after spending the last two seasons on the coaching staff at the University of Texas. As the volunteer assistant coach for the Longhorns, Nicholson oversaw the squad’s infield while also serving as the team’s first base coach. Nicholson helped lead the Longhorns to the College World Series in 2009 and a Super Regional in 2009. Prior to his coaching career, Nicholson spent six seasons in the Chicago White Sox and Colorado Rockies organizations, playing as high as Triple-A in his final three campaigns for the Charlotte Knights and

the Colorado Springs Sky Sox.

“Tommy is one of the top young infield coaches in the nation, and I’m excited to have him in our program,” Christiansen said. “Our approach to baseball and coaching philosophies are very similar, and I think he will be an excellent fit for Hornet baseball.”

A three-year letterwinner during his time at Texas, Nicholson missed only three starts at second base over that time period, batting .327 with 147 runs, 223 hits, 37 doubles, four triples, nine home runs, 114 RBIs and 20 stolen bases for his career. As a senior in 2000, Nicholson earned first team all-Big 12 honors after hitting .367 with 60 runs, 99 hits, 18 doubles, 43 RBIs and 12 stolen bases. He was the Longhorns’ top hitter at the 2000 College World Series, hitting .500 in Omaha, while also being named to the NCAA Tempe Regional all-tournament team.



THAD JOHNSON

20

Pitching Coach
First Season • Oregon State, 2002

In his first year at Sacramento State, Thad Johnson will serve as the team’s pitching coach when the team hits the field to start the 2011 season.

Johnson comes to Sacramento State from Santa Rosa CC, where he served as the team’s pitching coach since 2007. In his four seasons with the Bear Cubs from 2007-10, Johnson led his staff to an impressive 3.40 ERA, which included a state-leading 2.73 ERA in 2008. Johnson also spent the past three years as an associate scout in the Baltimore Orioles organization, helping locate prospects in the Northern California area.

“Thad comes to Sacramento State as an experienced pitching coach as well as a tremendous evaluator of talent,” Christiansen said. “I feel we needed to hire someone that had the ability to develop our pitchers, as well bring energy and enthusiasm into our clubhouse.”

Prior to his stint at Santa Rosa, Johnson served as the head coach of the Peninsula Oilers in the Alaska Baseball League during the 2006 summer season, and earned ABL Coach of the Year honors after leading the Oilers to the league title. He started his coaching career in 2004, spending three seasons as the pitching coach at Riverside CC. In his final two seasons, Riverside’s pitching staff posted an Orange Empire Conference-leading ERAs of 2.62 and 3.10, respectively.

Johnson spent two years in the Oakland A’s organization in 2001-02, posting a combined 4-2 record as a starter for the AZL Athletics in 2001 and the Vancouver Canadians in 2002. He played his college baseball at Oregon State, where he was a two-time honorable mention all-Pac 10 selection. During his two-year career with the Beavers, Johnson collected 11 victories in 32 starts, striking out 151 batters in 220 innings of work while recording 11 complete games. A standout in the classroom as well, Johnson was a two-time Pac-10 all-academic selection while earning Academic All-America honors as a senior in 2002. Prior to his stint in Corvallis, Johnson starred for two seasons at Santa Rosa.

Johnson holds a bachelor’s degree in sociology from Oregon State, where he graduated cum laude in 2002, and a master’s degree in sports science from the United States Sports Academy that he received in 2009.



JOHN CALLAHAN

29

**Volunteer Assistant Coach/Catchers
Sixth Season**

John Callahan begins his sixth year with the Sacramento State coaching staff.

Callahan has split time as the team's director of baseball operations, as well as the program's volunteer assistant over the past five years. He also serves as the Hornets first base coach, and works with the team's catchers and hitters.

Callahan joined the Sacramento State baseball program coaching staff after 18 successful seasons at Elk Grove High School. Starting in 1986, Callahan served as the head coach of the Thundering Herd's freshman baseball team. During his tenure, Callahan coached his team to a 56-game winning streak that spanned three seasons. His teams also came away with undefeated seasons in 2000 and 2001.

At Elk Grove, Callahan worked under the leadership of Gary Dreher, Jeff Carlson and former Sacramento State assistant Rusty McLain. In 1970, Callahan graduated from Monrovia HS in Monrovia, Calif., before relocating to Sacramento in 1975. Callahan retired after working for 35 years as a dispatcher at SMUD. He lives in Elk Grove with his wife Toni. They have four children, John IV, Jeff, Blair, and Buffy. They also have two grandchildren - Ryan and Braden.



JAKE MCKINLEY

**Director of Baseball Operations
First Season • Bethany, 2005**

Jake McKinley is in his first season as the Director of Baseball Operations under head coach Reggie Christiansen. He will be responsible for day-to-day baseball operations including on-campus recruiting, travel and academic monitoring.

McKinley began his coaching career at his alma mater, Bethany College, before moving to Campbellsville University and most recently, West Valley College.

As a player, McKinley enjoyed a standout career at Bethany and Cabrillo Junior College. While at Cabrillo, McKinley finished his lone year with all-conference honors and was named pitcher of the year. McKinley continued the trend at Bethany as he was twice named pitcher of the year, and once named most valuable player. A two-way player, McKinley is third all-time in career home runs, and still holds most of the Bethany pitching records for a career and single season, including most strikeouts in a career, averaging almost nine strikeouts per nine innings.

After a successful collegiate career, McKinley signed a pro contract as a free agent and spent two seasons with the Golden Baseball League's Chico Outlaws. As a rookie, McKinley set and still holds the league record for fewest hits per nine innings (5.4). He served as a starter, middle reliever and a closer in his two seasons. In his final year of pro ball, McKinley was a starting pitcher on an Outlaws team that went on to win the league championship. In the squad's postseason run, McKinley did not allow a run in the playoffs.