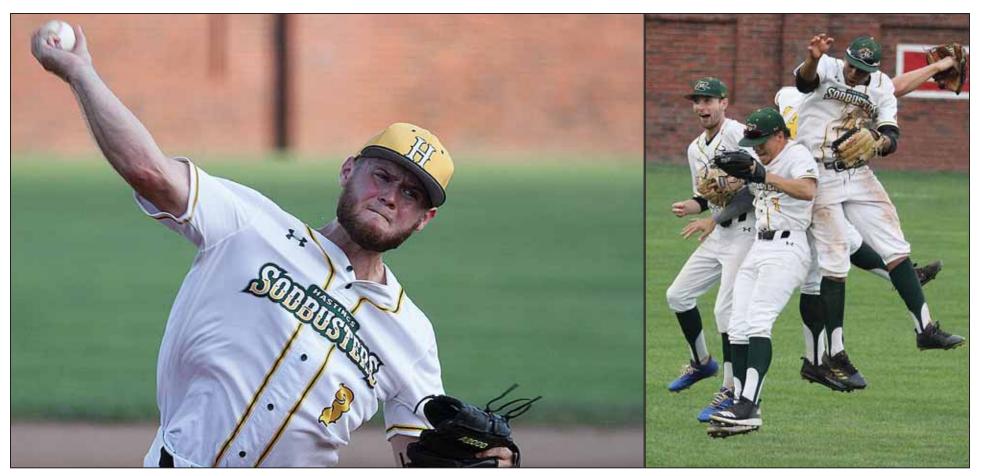
# Sodbusters



# Opening Day: May 24, 2019, Fremont Moo at Hastings Sodbusters

# Four Hastings natives featured on 2019 roster

#### NICK BLASNITZ

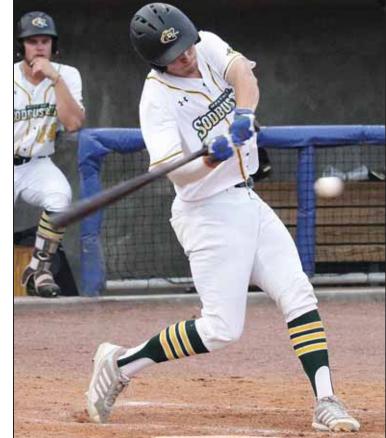
nblasniz@hastingstribune.com n the Sodbusters' inaugural season last year, the home crowd got a kick out of getting to watch Hastings natives Brooks Asher and Vinny Schmidt play on the same field they competed on throughout high school.

This season, four Hastings natives will don the green and gold for the Sodbusters.

Joining Brooks will be his brother, Trey, as well as Connor Laux and Grant Schmidt.

"After last year's (Sodbusters) team, when they made the Sodbusters and everything, it was something I wanted to do my freshman summer. I just wanted to be able to come back home and play in front of the Hastings crowd, because it's such a good crowd and I've played in front of it my entire life," Laux said. "(I wanted to be) able to play in front of family and friends, as well as playing at Duncan on that new turf."

Laux, Trey and Schmidt all play for Cloud County



Schmidt decided to remain closer to home. When opportunity to play for the Sodbusters came up, he quickly took it.

"After last summer, being in a whole different country, I figured this summer I can still play ball but be closer to home or just come home in general," Schmidt said. "I just figured I'd come to Hastings, be home for a summer and just play ball. There's nothing like Duncan Field, everyone knows that. Just come back home, play ball, meet new friends, being with friends and family, that's what it's all about. That's the main reason I'm coming back home, so friends and family can watch me.'

Laux has experience plenty of adversity in his baseball journey. After committing to play for the University of Nebraska-Kearney, the Lopers decided to cut program. Laux didn't know if he'd set foot on a field again after that.

"After UNK dropped their program, I really, truly didn't know if I wanted to play college baseball anymore," he said. "Just knowing that Grant and Trey were going to be there and they were great friends and teammates I've played with my entire life, it made choosing Cloud easier, knowing I'd be around them every single day.' Laux has played in 50 games this season for the Thunderbirds, hitting .310 and recording 34 RBIs. He said at the collegiate level, the game is faster and the players are quicker, but he's adjusted well. A former Hastings Tiger, Laux said he's excited to play on the new turf at Duncan. Cloud County played one game at Duncan this season when it took on the Hastings College junior varsity squad. Laux feels like the turf gives Duncan a younger feel and more life. Playing on Duncan as a Thunderbird brought back a

lot of memories for Laux, and now he'll be able to make some more as a Sodbuster, playing on his home field at a highly-competitive level.

"I went on (the Sodbusters') opening night, and it was just packed. I've never seen Duncan packed that full, besides the first round of the state tournament my sophomore year. I've never seen it that full and it was just a different atmosphere," Laux said. "Being able to play college baseball this year and knowing that will be similar talent that we'll be playing with the Sodbusters is exciting."

Trey said he got "roughed up" in his first outing at Cloud, but he settled in and finished the year 4-2 with an ERA of 2.53. When deciding where he wanted to play this summer, Trey turned to Brooks, who had already spent a season with the Sodbusters.

"I just told him that he'd love to come back," Brooks said. "First off, getting to live at home, that was one of the big things. And then the level of baseball, I didn't really know what to expect but it was a high level of baseball. A lot of good Division II and a lot of teams have good Division I players, as well. I think the level of baseball is high." Trey had gone to Sodbuster games last season to watch Brooks play. One of the big draws for him was the atmosphere he experienced. "I was really open to it because I had been to a couple games last year, with Brooks playing on the team, and I really just enjoyed the atmosphere," he said. "Being home for the summer and being with a bunch of friends I played with throughout high school really intrigued me." Brooks is a catcher for the University of Kansas and has appeared in 19 games this season.

Community College, with Trey and Laux both wrapping up their freshman campaigns, while Schmidt is a sophomore. Schmidt was excited when he heard his former American Legion teammates would be joining him at Cloud County.

"Before the season even started, with Trey and Connor coming in, I knew they were going to love it here and that it would be fun to play with them again since we had so much fun with legion ball," Schmidt said. "It's been good for all of us. We've all done well."

Schmidt improved from his freshman season, belting 13 home runs and driving in 48 runs, but he said he went through plenty of struggles as a freshman.

"Last year wasn't the year I was hoping for. What I think I

#### Hastings Sodbusters Brooks Asher hits during a game against the Casper Horseheads on Aug. 3, 2018, at Duncan Field.

struggled most with last year was that I've never really struggled before, in my entire life in any other sport. Nothing like I experienced it last year. Last year was rough. I didn't know how to handle it mentally because I've never experience it before," he said. "I kind of took last year and put it in the past, but I've also used it as motivation to want to do better for this season. It's helped a lot. There have been ups and downs, but what I went through last year has definitely made me stronger mentally and physically. I'm thankful for last season."

After the season, Schmidt went

to play summer ball for a league in Canada. As they played the Canadian national anthem before every game, Schmidt thought to himself just how lucky he is to have the opportunity to play baseball in another country.

**AMY ROH**/*Tribune* 

"Being up there, traveling they have some awesome, awesome stadiums up there, so that was really cool to experience that and just meet new guys. The fans treated us like we were professionals," Schmidt said. "It's something I'll never forget. I'm glad I did it."

But after being in another country for all of last summer,

See LOCAL/page B2

### New coaches hoping for similar success in new season

#### WILL REYNOLDS

wreynolds@hastingstribune.com Last year was a roller coaster for the Sodbusters. Owner and General Manager Bryan Frew will tell you that, too.

So far, Frew has invested a lot into the franchise, but nothing more so than his time.

In the team's inaugural season, Frew hired the team's first head coach, Scott Stover, just two weeks before the first game. After Frew realized the stresses of doing what he thought he could — running the front office and daily game logistics as GM, as well as coaching and managing the team on the field — he decided it best to make a lastminute hire and take the weight off of his shoulders.

That lasted about half of the season.

"(Doing both jobs) was what I originally had planned to do so it wasn't too big of an issue. We were incredibly fortunate that Stover was available when he was," Frew said. "We got stuck with some unfortunate things that happened, but we stayed flexible and I felt night in and night out we put a very quality baseball team on the field."

Shortly after the all-star break, which was hosted by the city of Hastings at Duncan Field, Frew was required to step in and coach after Stover announced he needed to return home in California to attend to some personal matters before the fall semester began at Solano Community College where he teaches and coaches. Hitting coach Jason Stein had to go start a new job in Texas, so he was absent the entire second half of the season as well.

Stover handed the team over to Frew in the midst of a race for a wildcard spot in the Clark Divison, which the Sodbusters eventually earned before losing to the eventual champion Western Nebraska (Gering/Scottsbluff) Pioneers in the divisional playoff, winnertake-all game.

Frew hopes he won't have to deal with the same situation

next week when the Expedition League's second season begins. He's hired two coaches from Murray State College in Tishomingo, Oklahoma.

Ryan McClaran and Travis Spinney will run the show with a little help from Frew, who plans on watching from the press box as he does public address duties.

"I have had several conversations with both of them. McClaran is an up-and-comer, a big baseball guy. He played a long time and is looking to move up the coaching ranks a little bit and sees us as an opportunity to get some experience with a head coaching gig, which is awesome. That's what summer ball is all about. We're very glad to have him running the team on the field," Frew said.

"Travis had a great playing career and plays the game the way I like it to be played. He is a baserunning coach now and I think we have a good mix of coaches in different aspects ton what we are trying to accomplish. The fact that they coach together at Murray State is a huge plus."

Frew still plans on having some say in the construction of the daily lineup — at least early on — as he built the roster, which features a handful of returners from the 2018 squad.

"I expect to be very involved in all of the conversations. I plan to sit down with Ryan and Travis at the end of the game and touch base on where we're at and how guys feel," Frew said. "They can get my take on what the top-side view of it looks like from the press box. So I think those things will give our team the best chance to win. At the end of the day, it's baseball and what happens between the lines really has nothing to do with who is giving the signs at third base.'

McClaran, 27, will be the head coach, with his focus and background on pitching. Spinney, 23, will be assisting with hitting and fielding.

"He's my right hand man,"

McClaran said of Spinney. "If I ever get a head coaching job, he is going to be my first call. He is young and hungry, and wants to get better so I'm all about that."

Neither coach is too familiar with the Midwest, although McClaran did play for a team in Laramie, Wyo., years ago that had an opponent in Casper, where the Horseheads of the Expedition League compete.

"Casper is one of the favorite places I have ever been," McClaran said. "I'm really close with my former host family in Laramie so I hope I get to run into them. My host dad is from Nebraska, so I hope they can make it out. I can't wait to get to that part of the country. It's absolutely beautiful."

For Spinney, it's an entirely new region of the United States.

"I haven't been north of Kansas, so I'm looking forward to it," he said. "Honestly I'm excited to be in Nebraska and just to be traveling up there, and seeing baseball played up there.

**See COACHING**/page B2

### Sodbusters **Coaching:** New leadership hoping to take team to top

Continued from page B1 Baseball is played differently everywhere, so I'm excited to see what the Midwest has got to offer.' The pair assisted Murray State 57 1/3 innings College to a 29-24 mark this spring. The team had an earnedrun average of 5.00 and a batting average of .324. McClaran's first year at Murray State, his guidance helped lower the team ERA by 1.2 runs. MSC is a known producer of high-level talent. There are

three players playing for the Sodbusters — Wesley Case, Jacob of see and feel the grind as they Mattox, and Raygan Dodd, all would in pro ball," McClaran right-handed pitchers. Dodd led said. "It is probably their best Murray State with a 2.67 ERA in The Sodbusters finished 31-34 that consistent for that long, to last season under Frew and stay healthy and feel good. My Stover. The team hit .290 with a expectations are for guys to find team ERA of 6.13. Those are cerout a lot about themselves and tainly numbers that will have to improve this summer to be comchampionship. petitive in the EL — a schedule with 64 regular season games in a span of around 70 days. gain more coaching experience.

"I'm fresh out of college and "Guys are going to get to kind this is my first year coaching. As far as my first year went, I loved it and I'm excited to see what the simulation and test to see if they summer brings. I just hope to really do have what it takes to be gain knowledge and experience. I'm just glad the coaches don't have to drive the buses," he said with a laugh. There will be a little bit of a rivalry and extra incentive for become better players. I expect a McClaran that should add some Spinney, who graduated from fun to the summer. A close college last May, is just excited to friend of his is coaching for the Spearfish Sasquatch.

"Obviously I've got to have a clean sweep (in Spearfish). I want nothing more than to beat that guy. We've got some Murray state guys going to play there, too, so my goal is for them to lead the league in hit by pitches when we are done," McClaran cracked. Opening day is May 24 at Duncan Field against one of two new teams in the now 10-team league, the Fremont Moo. "We're going to do what we can to try and go win this league," Spinney said.

HASTINGS TRIBUNE

Saturday, May 18, 2019

# **Local:** Laux, Schmidt, Asher brothers featured on roster

Continued from page B1 time since they were in Asher said he's learned a lot American Legion ball, he seized it. playing with teammates "I called Bryan and he that are now making an was happy to have me back. impact in the MLB minor Now, I get to play another league system summer with Trey, and I But Brooks wasn't sure if never knew I'd get another he was going to come back chance to catch my brother to Hastings to play for the in a game. I think the oppor-Sodbusters, but when the tunity of us getting to play opportunity arose to play with his brother for the first together on the same field

again is a blessing," Brooks said. Trey is excited to pitch to Brooks again, and he hopes to gain some valuable knowledge and experience from his older brother. "Being a catcher, he's caught plenty of pitchers at the highest level we have, so I'm sure he can give me some tips. Just getting to see son, but he was happy with

him play — I got to see him the experience. He said the play his first two years of support from the communitv was much appreciated. college, but I've followed him a little bit this year. "It was nice to see a lot of the same fans that would Since I'm playing too it's kind of hard. Getting to see come to legion games out him on a daily basis is going supporting us at our home to be cool," he said. games for the Sodbusters. Brooks didn't really know Them appreciating all the what to expect when playing baseball that Hastings has brought to the area — the for the Sodbusters last sea-

legion program's really

taken off," Brooks said. In addition to the Hastings natives, central Nebraska baseball fans will recognize some other names on the Sodbusters roster. Grand Island will be represented by Casey Burnham, Trey Kissack and Alec Lee. Kissack and Lee both played for the Sodbusters last season.

#### WILL REYNOLDS wreynolds@hastingstribune.com When Brvan Frew took on the responsibility of owning and opersaid ating a summer collegiate baseball franchise, he was the youngest general manager and owner in the Expedition League. It's still the same in that regard, but the now 33-year-old is one year wiser about what it actually takes to run a team "It was the most I've learned in a two and a half month time period in my life for sure. There was season last year. just so much I didn't know and didn't expect," Frew said. It's no secret how difficult it is, in most cases, to introduce something new to a community. Frew will tell you he isn't the most sociable guy, but this job requires a lot of socializing. It took a while for him to make the Sodbusters what they are now, but selling a product such as his — high-level baseball under the lights at historic Duncan Field with local beer and your favorite ballpark grub –

HASTINGS TRIBUNE

**Saturday**, May 18, 2019

almost spoke for itself, especially going into year two. "To be honest we struggled last year, but I thought overall the feedback from the community was overwhelmingly positive. We

were far from perfect, but the fact is that the majority of the feedback was very positive," Frew Frew works a full-time job by day as an accountant, and sacribaseball game. fices hours of sleep at night trying to create an experience that baseball fans in central Nebraska will be dying to come back for. Frew said the community support and preparation is leaps and bounds ahead of where the franchise was a week away from the "Every couple of hours each day I'm just kind of like, 'Man, we are so far ahead of where we were last year at this time.' We have things so much better planned, we have people in place that are going to do the right things and we know it because they did it last year," he said. "Preparation-wise, we are just head and shoulders above where it was last year. That gives me a ton of confidence. "I do feel like we did a good job last year, but we are way more prepared and we are ready to tackle some of those issues we had last year." Some of those issues could be

attributed to staffing shortages. Frew was essentially a one-man players last year. Players and

band attempting to manage the players on the field as well as in the front office. What was most important to him, though, was simply making sure there was a "It was pure survival during the season. I was just telling myself at the end of the day we have to have a baseball game and we have to have food and beer at Duncan Field and whatever else happens. happens," he said. "It wasn't always perfect and we had some warm beer and cold food at times, but we played baseball and our entertainment was great and that's something we can be really proud of as an organization. We spent the entire offseason looking at ways to improve what we accomplished last year." One of the other challenges facing the Sodbusters was their roster. Players, more or less, came and went as they pleased. Of course, reasons for leaving early included injuries, family vacations, etc., but the Expedition League's 64-game slate calls for depth. Frew says he's learned that, and it helps that the league has one year under its belt as well "It was very challenging to get

Sodbusters

Expectations for summer higher in year two

coaches had never heard of the Pioneers' owner Chuck league and didn't know the league Heeman, along with the other owners in the league, have been so filling a roster last year was challenging to say the least," Frew instrumental in walking Bryan said. "This year, I don't want to through the process of running a team, but that doesn't mean there say it was easy because it never is, but I'm constantly getting phone isn't a rivalry between them, espe calls and emails asking if we have cially now that Heeman's group is any room for more players. At this the inaugural league champion. point we kind of have the pick of "Chuck likes to talk a bit and litter...One thing I learned is in a has probably mentioned 158 times league like this and a schedule about their championship last like we play, it's important to have year and I think everybody in the a lot of depth. That's one thing I league is gunning for them, Frew said with a laugh. didn't really focus on last year. I The Pioneers were the closest didn't want to bring in a new guy and not have him play. But now team, and thus the rival, to the I'm more worried about having a Sodbusters in the league's inaufull roster by the end of July if we gural year, but now there is a want to compete for this thing." team in Fremont, which is much Despite their lack of numbers more reasonable for bus travel. at times, most notably in the Clark Hastings and the Fremont Moo Division championship at Western will play 14 times in 2019. Nebraska, the Sodbusters provid-"During those nine innings if ed a valiant effort. There's somewas pretty fierce competition, and thing to be said about a depleted it was fun to have that with and exhausted roster of roughly Western Nebraska last year,' Frew said. "I expect with the teams. Field.

14 players making a 5-hour trek to Gering for a one-game playoff and number of times we play Fremont nearly pulling off a victory. The this year that we will have a simi-Pioneers, of course, won the game lar rivalry going on with the 7-2, and eventually the league championship in a clean sweep of Hastings opens its season May the Badlands (Dickinson, N.D.) Big 24th with the Moo at Duncan Sticks.

### 2019 Hastings Sodbusters

0

TREY

ASHER



AARON Alvarez

**Position:** RHP Bats/Throws: R/R Year: Senior **College:** York College school) Hometown: Madera, Calif State Twitter handle: @TheMainEvent93 Iowa Nickname: Alvey Walk-up song: God's Country — Blake Shelton Is a hot dog a sandwich: Yes Favorite pro team Los Angeles Dodgers **Favorite flavor of** sunflower seeds: Cracked Pepper



WYATT ANDERSEN

G

**Position:** Inf **Position:** C Bats/Throws: R/R Bats/Throws: R/R Year: Senior (high Year: Junior **College:** South Dakota Kansas Hometown: Minden Twitter handle: @BrooksAsher15 **Twitter handle:** Walk-up song: My @andersen\_wyatt Towm — Montgomery Walk-up song: Gentry Kickstart My Heart — Mötley Crüe chops

BROOKS ASHER

DI HEI

CHRIS

**Position:** LHP Bats/Throws: L/L Year: Freshman College: University of College: Cloud County Community College Hometown: Hastings **Hometown:** Hastings **Twitter handle:** @trevasher3 Nickname: T-Bonz **Superstition:** Eat a Snickers **Favorite baseball** Favorite meal: Lamb **movie:** Sandlot Sandlot character **Superstition:** Have to eat sour skittles you most associate **Favorite baseball** with: Squints **quote:** "In baseball, there's Favorite MLB player: always the next day." David Price

DREW JD

Position: Inf Bats/Throws: L/R Year: Sophomore **College:** Arkansas Tech College: Cabrini University **Hometown:** Shaverport, PA. **Twitter handle:** @jbarrett 3407 Walk-up song: I Want Nickname: Johnny Dill Walk-up song: Old Sandlot character Town Road — Lil Nas X Is a hot dog a sandwich: No **Favorite pro team:** New York Yankees **Favorite flavor of** sunflower seeds: Cracked Pepper

BARRETT



GASDEN Dominguez

**Position:** OF Position: Util. Bats/Throws: L/L Bats/Throws: R/R Year: Junior Year: Freshman College: University of College: University of Texas-Arlington Nebraska-Omaha Hometown: Omaha Hometown: Fort Walk-up song: In God Worth, Tex. I Trust — Kevin Gates Nickname: N/A Is a hot dog a sand-Walk up song: N/A wich: Yes Favorite meal: N/A **Superstition:** Push-ups **Superstition:** N/A **Favorite flavor of Favorite pro team:** sunflower seeds: Cracked Pepper



2019 Hastings Sodbusters

**Position:** C **Position:** OF Bats/Throws: L/R Bats/Throws: R/R Year: Sophomore Year: Freshman College: South Dakota **College:** Northern Colorado Hometown: Johnston, Hometown: Fort Collins, Colo. Twitter handle: **Twitter handle:** @Dmhackman9 @hheinze57 Walk-up song: Carry Nickname: Heinzev On My Wayward Son —

Walk-up song: My Kinda Party — Jason Favorite baseball Aldean **memory:** Winning a state Sandlot character

MATTHEW HESS

**Position:** RHP

Year: Junior

Nebraska-Omaha

@matthewhess23

wich: No

drink

Ariz.

Position: RHP Bats/Throws: R/R Bats/Throws: R/R Year: Freshman College: Northeast College: University of Community College Hometown: Scottsdale, Hometown: Grand Junction, Colo. **Twitter handle: Twitter handle:** @hunter\_k25 Is a hot dog a sand-Nickname: Kelch Walk-up song: Biebs **Superstition:** Energy in the Trap — Travis Scott Superstition: Drink a Bang, listen to musi



HUNTER Kelchner

**Superstition:** Tape left wrist before right wrist Sandlot character you most associate with: Bertram

**with:** Yeah-Yeah **Favorite MLB player:** Francisco Lindor **Favorite flavor of** sunflower seeds: Dill Pickle

BAILEY

Bats/Throws: R/R

Hometown: St.

Twitter handle:

U Back — Jackson 5

vou most associate

**Position:** RHP

Hometown:

@scolehowerII

Colorado

Bats/Throws: R/R

**Year:** Sophomore

College: Northern

Greenwich Village, Colo.

Walk-up song: Big

Superstition: Candy

**Favorite baseball** 

my high school coach's

Alley Oop — Quavo

before the game

700th win

**Twitter handle:** 

Nickname: Drewpy

**Position:** Inf

Year: Junior

George, Utah

@Drewpy\_22

Favorite MLB player: Favorité pro team: **Favorite flavor of** sunflower seeds: N/A

N/A

N/A

Oakland Atheltics **Favorite MLB player:** Dustin Pedroia

Iowa

Kansas

championship most associated with: Sandlot character Benny "The Jet" you most associated **Favorite baseball** with: Ham **movie:** Bull Durham **Favorite pro team:** Minnesota Twins

Favorite baseban **memory:** First home run or no-hitter **Favorite flavor of** sunflower seeds: Any Spitz flavor

JACOB

MATTOX

lex.

wich: No

Scherzer

Favorite baseball **movie:** Bull Durham Is a hot dog a sandwich: No

MIX





Darek CASEY BURNHAM BORNEMEIR

Position: Inf Bats/Throws: R/R **Year:** Sophomore College: Augustana Universitv Hometown: Elmwood **Twitter handle:** @BornemeierDarek Nickname: Dewy Walk-up song: Accountant — DDG Sandlot character most associated with: Ham Is a hot dog a sandwich: Yes **Favorite baseball** move: Moneyball

**Position:** OF **Bats/Throws:** L/L Year: Freshman College: University of Kansas Hometown: Grand Island Twitter handle: @Casey\_Burnham01 Nickname: Case Walk-up song: Horses — PnB Rock, Kodak Black, Boogie wit a Hoodie Sandlot character most associated with: Smalls

**move:** Moneyball

**Twitter handle:** @CBunting Walk-up song: Sleeping on the Blacktop - Colter Wall Is a hot dog a sandwich: Yes **Favorite baseball** memory: Accidentally hitting a home run Is a hot dog a sand-**Superstition:** Socks wich: Yes before underwear **Favorite baseball** 

Calif

BUTING CASE Position: RHP **Position:** RHP Bats/Throws: R/R Bats/Throws: R/R Year: Sophomore Year: Freshman College: UC San Diego **College:** Murray State Hometown: Granbury, Hometown: Irvine, Tex. **Twitter handle:** @weslevcase99 Nickname: Dickey C Walk-up song: Programs — Mac Miller Sandlot character most associated with: Is a hot dog a sandwich: Yes **Favorite baseball** 

**move:** Major League

Superstition: Drink

WESLEY



RAYGAN Dodd COLEHOWER

Position: RHP Bats/Throws: R/R Year: Freshman College: Murray State Hometown: Madill, Okla. **Twitter handle:** @RayganParker12 Walk-up song: Nickname: Colehower February  $2\overline{8}$ ,  $201\widetilde{6}$  — Koe Wetzel Superstition: N/A **Favorite pro team: Favorite MLB player: memory:** Being a part of N/A **Favorite flavor of** sunflower seeds: N/A



LAUX Position: Inf Bats/Throws: R/R Year: Freshman College: Cloud County Community College Hometown: Hastings Twitter handle: Nickname: Llama **Walk-up song:** In God I Trust — Kevin Gates Is a hot dog a sand-

Position: OF Bats/Throws: R/R Year: Junior College: Northern State Hometown: Grand Island Nickname: Alamo Walk-up song: Look Alive — BlocBoy JB, Drake Superstition: Don't step on the foul line Favorite pro team: Kansas City Royals **Favorite baseball movie:** Sandlot Sandlot character vou most associate with: Smalls

THEM

Alec

Lee

LOWTHARP Position: LHP Bats/Throws: L/L **Year:** Iunior College: Knox College Hometown: Rockford, **Twitter handle:** @lowie98 Walk-up song: Waves Kanye Yest Superstition: Pray during national anthem Nickname: Trev **Favorite MLB player:** Mark Buehrle **Favorite flavor of** sunflower seeds: Barbecue

Trevan

**Position:** Inf Position: RHP Bats/Throws: R/R Bats/Throws: R/R Year: Sophomore **Year:** Sophomore College: Murray State College: Augustana Hometown: Plano, University Hometown: Dallas, Walk-up song: Tex. **Twitter handle:** Welcome to the Machine — Pink Flovd @itmix12 Superstition: Red Bull Nickname: Tizzle Walk-up song: Get Is a hot dog a sand-Like Me — David Banner Superstition: Listen to Nickname: Drewpy **Favorite MLB player:** "No Problem" by Chance Justin Verland or Max the Rapper **Favorite baseball** Sandlot character **movie:** Bull Durham you most associate Is a hot dog a sandwith: Benny wich: No





Bang



sunflower seeds: Bacon Superstition: Don't Ranch step on a line Roofing-Siding-Seamless Gutters-Windows Exterior/Interior Remodeling Storm Damage Restoration Specialist **Adam Barrientez Restorations**LLC 402-705-1742

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## **Sodbusters** 2019 HASTINGS SODBUSTERS

HASTINGS TRIBUNE

Saturday, May 18, 2019

### Grant Schmidt

Position: OF Bats/Throws: R/R Year: Sophomore College: Cloud County Community College Hometown: Hastings Walk-up song: 2 Step (remix) — E-40, Jim Jones Is a hot dog a sandwich: No Favorite pro team: New York Yankees **Favorite MLB player:** Christian Yelich **Favorite baseball** 

memory: Hitting 3 home runs in one day



Tex Nickname: Obie Walk-up song: Penthouse — Wiz Kahlifa Is a hot dog a sandwich: No Favorite pro team: New York Yankees

**Favorite MLB player:** Josh Donaldson **Favorite baseball** memory: Walking off opening night for the 2018 Sodbusters



AUSTIN QUICK

Position: RHP Bats/Throws: R/R Year: Freshman **College:** University of Kansas

Hometown: Lawrence, Kan. Nickname: Quick Walk-up song: Old Thing Back — Notorious

BIG Superstition: Music **Favorite baseball** movie: Bad News Bears Is a hot dog a sandwich: No Sandlot character you most associate

with: Squints



# Sakamoto

**Position:** C Bats/Throws: R/R Year: Freshman College: Northern Colorado Hometown: Bearverton, Ore. Twitter handle: @carter\_sak Walk-up song: March Madness — Future Sandlot character most associated with: Smalls Is a hot dog a sandwich: No **Favorite baseball** team: Seattle Mariners



#### Owner/GM: Bryan Frew

Assistant GM: Murphy Glen

**Stadium Operations** intern: Trevor Overmiller **Stadium Operations** intern: Darin Brown

Marketing intern: Brianna Danehey

**Baseball Operations** intern: Andy Chase

**Radio Broadcaster:** Will Reynolds

#### Tribune Staff

On cover: Top left: Trey **Kissack pitches against** the Hub City Hotshots July 18, 2018. Top right: Hastings Sodbusters celebrate their win over the Casper Horseheads Aug. 5, 2018, at Duncan Field. From left is Anthony De Santis, Tyler Daugherty, Alec Lee (obscured) and Justin Henry.

**B4** 

Donavon MURRAY

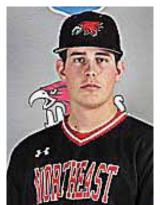
Position: OF Bats/Throws: L/L Year: Sophomore College: Baton Roughe Community College Hometown: Lake Charles, LA. **Twitter handle:** @D\_jMurray Nickname: DJ Walk-up song: Can't Tell Me Nothin' — Kanye West Favorite baseball memory: A 15-pitch at bat walk-off grand slam Favorite flavor of sunflower seeds: Hot n Spicy





#### MAX Schreiber

Position: RHP Bats/Throws: R/R Year: Sophomore College: University of Nebraska Hometown: Cardington, Ohio **Twitter handle:** @MaxSchreiber22 Nickname: Schreibz Walk-up: Man of the year — Schoolboy Q Is a hot dog a sanwich: No **Favorite baseball movie:** Major League Favorite MLB player: Corey Kluber



**Favorite baseball** 

**Favorite MLB player:** 

move: Moneyball

Chris Sale

ANDREW SHAW

**Position:** LHP Bats/Throws: R/L Year: Sophomore **College:** Northeast Community College Hometown: Dillon, Colo Nickname: Shaw Walk-up song: Tic Toc 6ix9ine Sandlot character most associated with: Squints Is a hot dog a sandwich: No

IVAN VARELA

Position: RHP Bats/Throws: R/R Year: Junior College: Cabrini University Hometown: Tuscon, Ariz. **Twitter handle:** @IvanVarelal47 Nickname: IV Walk-up: Sleep with the Lights On — Wanton Bishops

Is a hot dog a san-**Favorite baseball** movie: Major League **Favorite MLB player:** Mariano Rivera



### Ryan MCCLARAN

**Head Coach College:** Murray State Hometown: Whitney, Tex.

Walk-up song: Snake Farm — Ray Wylie Hubbard Superstition: Prayer **Favorite baseball** movie: Moneyball Nickname: Mack Is a hot dog a san-

wich: No **Favorite MLB player:** 

**Favorite baseball** move: Bull Durham

ohn Roo Favorite pro team: Texas Rangers **Favorite flavor of** sunflower seeds: Pickle

Favorite flav sunflower seeds: Pickle

Favorite pro team:

TRAVIS

SPINNEY

**Assistant Coach** 

Hometown: Lewisville,

College: Murray State

Superstition: Prayer

Favorite baseball

Is a hot dog a san-

Sandlot character

you most associate

with: Benny "The Jet"

Boston Red Sox

movie: The Rookie

wich: No

Tex

### Ready for new adventures, memories with 2019 Sodbusters

remember Sodbusters opening day a year ago as one of the more enjoyable days of my 23 years on this earth. (I'm young and better days are ahead, I know.)

As small scale as you can sit there and tell me it was, with 1,138 announced fans filling Duncan Field in our town of 25,000 people or so, it

was a night I will never forget. Justin Henry sparked the crowd's interest with a fifth



Will Reynolds

inning mammoth home run over the left-field fence. "A wood bat blast? Yeah, right," many familiar with Duncan Field and its reputation as a baseball graveyard scoffed before the start of the season.

Also featured was local talent Vinny Schmidt, who dazzled on the mound for five innings and struck out seven batters.

But the most exciting part was the perfect introduction of the team to the town.

Jake Oblas (he's returning!) launched a bases-clearing walk-off double over the head of the Badlands Big Sticks' right fielder in the bottom of the ninth for the franchise's first victory.

In my book, there's no better way to open a season. For those of you reading this and asking, "What about a perfect game or nohitter?" my answer is no,

not on opening night. Those types of games are certainly fun to witness, but Oblas' hit sent a shock through me in the booth that I had never felt before.

Another moment that stood out was Shawn Barrowdale's bomb off the scoreboard in Dickinson, N.D., against the Big Sticks that provided Hastings the lead in the top of the ninth. That road trip was ridiculous for Shawn as he hit two homers in a June 13, 2018, game at Spearfish, S.D. just a few days prior.

Or how about Kolby Force's grand slam at Duncan Field, also against the Spearfish Sasquatch — a first in franchise history.

Or, on the mound, Trey Kissack had his 14 strikeout game, where he allowed nohits, in just seven innings of work.

The memories are still fresh from the 2018 season. but there will undoubtedly be countless more made beginning May 24.

Who knows, maybe I will have to abandon my broadcast booth in the sixth inning again and find myself coaching in the dugout wearing an absent player's oversized uniform after the rest of the coaching staff gets ejected.

Have I mentioned I have a cool job that allows me to experience all of this?

Not to brag, but I have the

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privilege of working as a sports writer for the Hastings Tribune alongside some incredible people who provide me the opportunity to do what I do for the Sodbusters, too.

I literally get the best of both worlds. I travel through the Midwest all summer (albeit on a hot, sweaty charter bus) and my office is a baseball diamond. I see what other towns, and even some cities, have to offer in terms of local cuisine, bars, and baseball stadiums.

But the best part is, I get to tell stories of it all — in the Tribune as well as on the team's website as its radio broadcaster, which I'm lucky to have been invited back by Bryan Frew for season two.

I'm looking forward to opening day this year. A handful of guys from last year's squad are coming back, and it will be good to see them, but I'm most excited to meet all the newbies. New memorable

moments, new inside jokes



By mid-August I hope to be sitting in the press box of Duncan Field calling the Clark Division championship. Actually, it doesn't matter if it's at Duncan or not. I just hope Hastings is playing.

Will Reynolds is the Tribune's Sodbusters beat writer. He can be reached at 402-303-1429 or wreynolds@hastingstribune.com.

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