



Wagoner excited to be in charge of Sodbusters

WILL REYNOLDS

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Chandler Wagoner is a baseball journeyman; a former player who knows his own strengths and weaknesses and encourages others to find those out about themselves as well.

"I think one of the things that's most important to me is knowing what kind of player you are," Wagoner said on a phone call from Lawrence, Kan., earlier this week. "So, just getting these guys to realize who they are as a player and what their skill set is, I think, is super important for these guys to learn this summer."



Wagoner Bay

Wagoner, who will coach the 2021 Hastings Sodbusters, was one of those players at the University of Oklahoma. He came out of a deep pool of baseball talent in Temecula, Calif., knowing he might not be the top dog somewhere. But he desired a college experience at a big school.

Wagoner chose the Sooners and became mostly a role player. "I didn't play a ton,"

he said. "I won't say it wasn't about playing time for me, but I wanted to play at a big school. That was my goal, so when I got the opportunity I took it whether I was going to play or not. I wanted a degree from a big school and then to go into coaching."

Learning from some of the best coaches at the college level was another benefit of going to a Division I. Wagoner developed connections early in life living in California, where baseball is played year-round and college coaches are always on the prowl.

Even though he didn't play at Kansas Univer-

sity, being in the Big 12 Conference and maintaining a relationship with Jayhawks' coach Ritch Price proved to be important in his coaching start.

"I met (Price) probably when I was in elementary school," Wagoner said. "I think I was 7 and a bat boy for him when they were playing at San Diego. We kind of stayed in touch, and when I was at Oklahoma I obviously got to see him a few times a year."

Wagoner, 25, is currently a volunteer assistant coach at Kansas, following two years as a graduate assistant there. Before that, he briefly coached at Palo-

mar College in San Marcos, Calif.

Soon, he'll be in charge, at least for a short few months when he joins the Hastings Sodbusters in the dugout at Duncan Field. His arrival will likely be a little late as the Jayhawks play in the Big 12 tournament beginning May 26.

The Sodbusters open the season May 22 against Fremont.

"I'm planning to be there a day or two after our season (at Kansas) ends," Wagoner said.

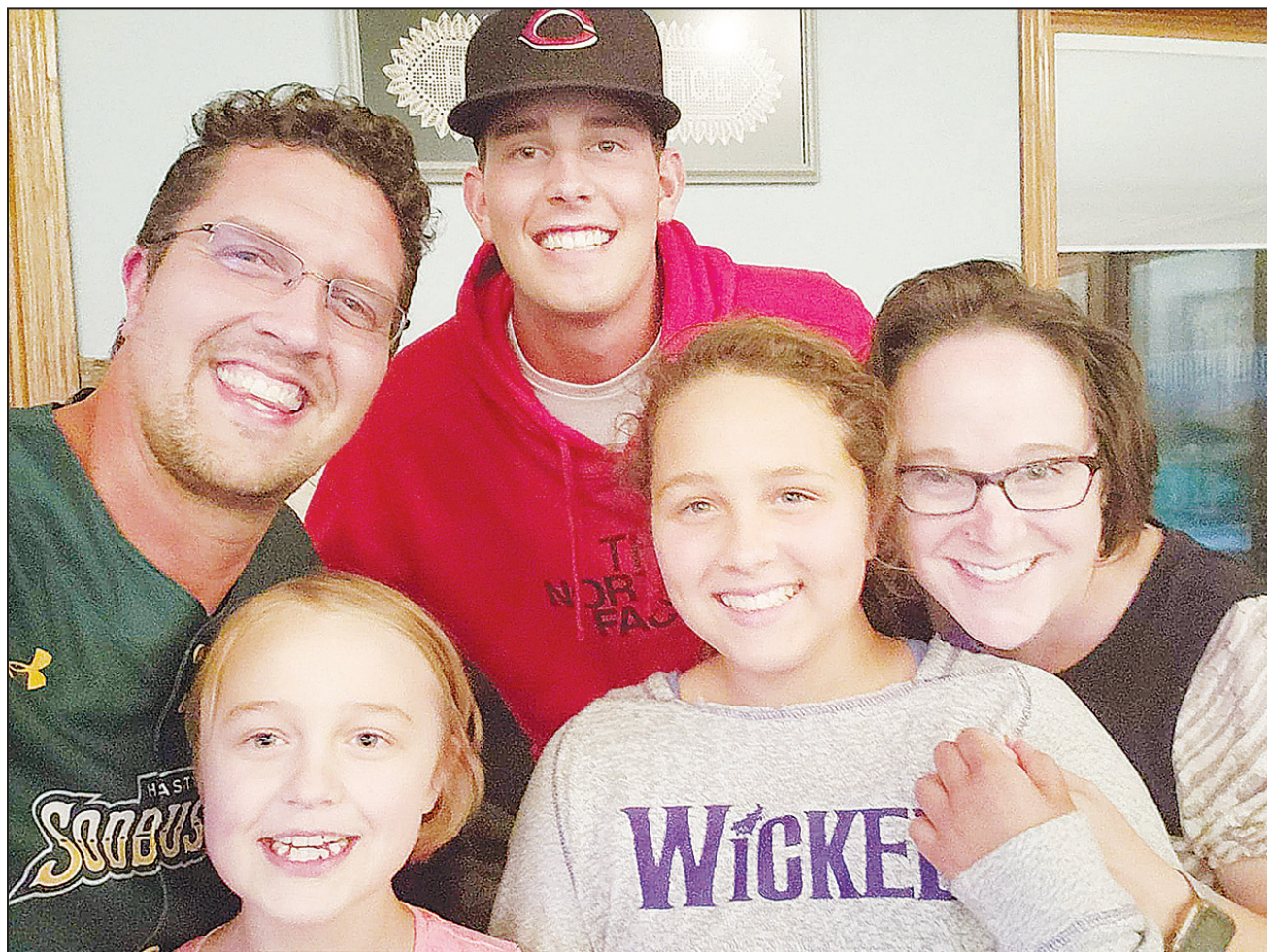
It'll be just the second time he's been the headman of a team. He's far from unfamiliar with summer baseball and how it operates, though.

"The Sodbusters are fortunate to have Chandler as part of the 2021 ball club," said Scott Galusha, the team's co-owner and general manager. "His knowledge and playing experience will undoubtedly be beneficial to our players."

Wagoner spent summers in Maine, California, and Massachusetts as a player and has since helped coach teams in San Diego and Palm Springs.

"This is probably my sixth or seventh stop in summer ball," he said. "There aren't too many places I haven't been for baseball at this point."

SEE COACH/page B2



Courtesy

The Hoffman-Grace family takes a selfie with Sodbuster Andrew Shaw, who they hosted in 2019 and 2020.

Hosting Sodbuster a memorable experience

**HOFFMAN-GRACE FAMILY
HOSTING PLAYER
FOR FOURTH YEAR**

WILL REYNOLDS

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The Hoffman-Grace family may give any townies a run for their money on Sodbuster fandom.

More on that later. Their support over the last three years has not only included beers, cheers, and chirps at tons of ball games. But perhaps more importantly, the family has welcomed players into their home for the previous three summers and will do it again in 2021.

Host families are a crucial piece to collegiate summer baseball. Everything the Sodbusters do revolves around their players. After all, there would be no baseball games without them.

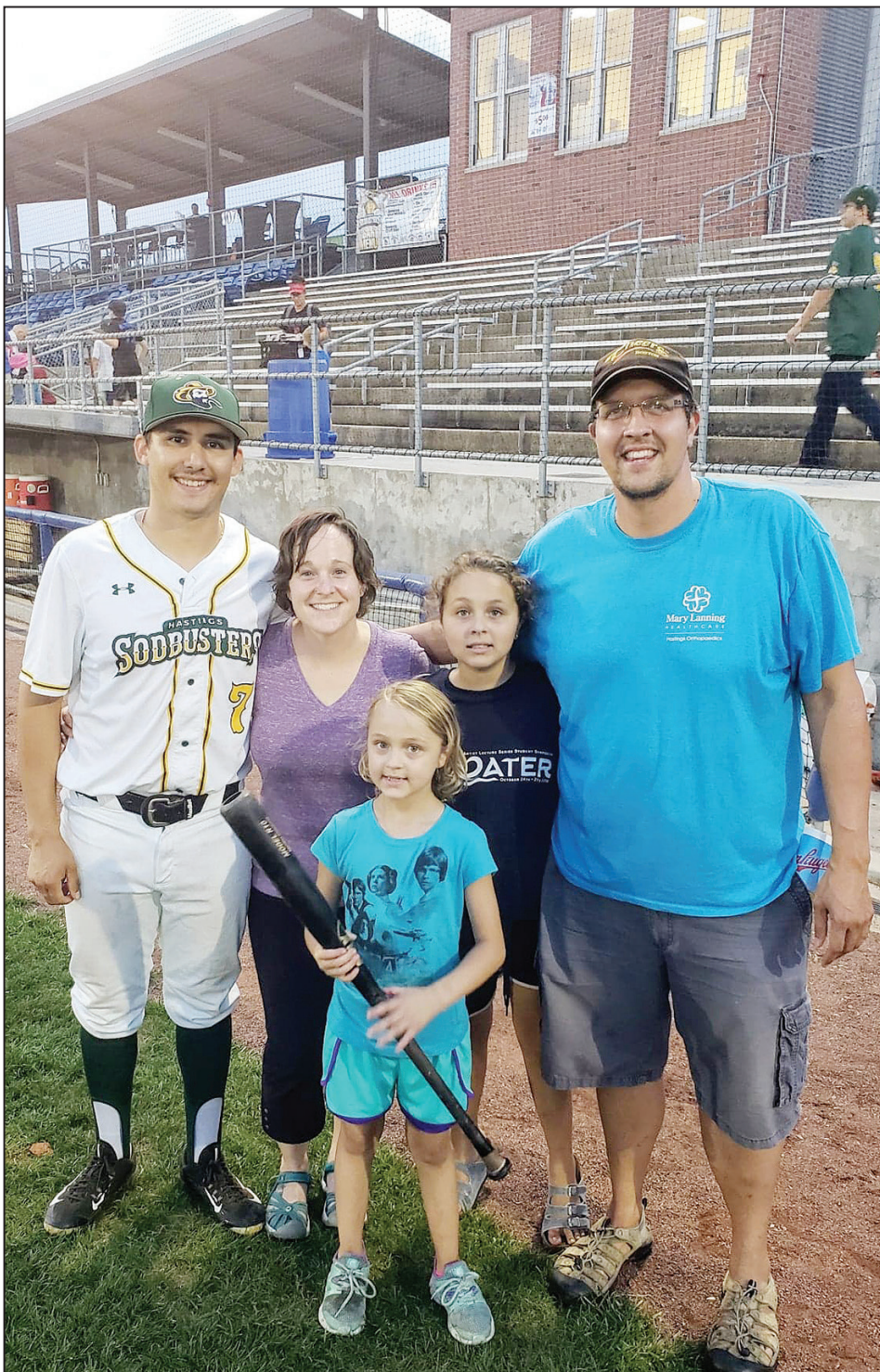
Thus, a summer home is vital. Brian Hoffman, Kittie Grace, and their two daughters, Lyssa (13) and Ariana (10), have provided that.

As season ticket holders in year one, the family initially did not house a player. That is until mid-season when the roster expanded and the team didn't want players sleeping in the dugouts at Duncan Field.

The story of how the Hoffman-Graces came to host a player goes a little something like a pet adoption.

"I was totally pulled into it," Grace said with a smile.

SEE HOSTING/page B2



Courtesy

Sodbuster Anthony Ortega poses for a photo with his host family after a 2018 game. He is joined by host parents Kittie Grace and Brian Hoffman and their daughters, Lyssa (back) and Ariana (front).

Sodbusters' staff gave their all to make 2020 season happen

NICK BLASNITZ

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Everyone's world was changed last spring when the COVID-19 pandemic started, and the sports universe was no different. College basketball's biggest tournament was canceled, the Major League Baseball season was shortened by more than 100 games, and the NBA season lasted even longer than normal (something we thought was not possible).

The Expedition League experienced its own setbacks from the pandemic, but while some teams in the league were not able to have a season, the Hastings Sodbusters experienced one of their best seasons.

Hastings' Expedition League squad may not have gotten to play a full season, but the Busters had a little more than a month's worth of games and gave the Hastings community a little sense of normalcy in a time where it needed a lift.

"Surely there were some amazing hurdles we had to overcome in this crazy world we're living in today," said Sodbusters' owner and Scott Galusha. "I was very happy and very pleased, our staff worked very hard working every day as if we were going to play, knowing that it was iffy all the way. When we finally got the go ahead, which was June 3, we had three weeks to put everything else together and get a baseball team going."

"We were able to accomplish that. There were a lot of limitations and A lot of things that we didn't expect we would have to work on, so we had our best year ever and that is a testament to our organization and how hard our group worked. We had our best year ever, and that is pretty impressive given the situation we had to deal with."

Obviously, last season looked a little different than previous seasons; for example, the Sodbusters were limited in their allowed capacity at the start of the season. And one of the most time consuming differences was also one of the most important: the additional cleaning and safety measures.

Galusha said it may have been a lot of extra work, but it was all worth doing in order to give the fans the joy of watching baseball.

"We knew we were going to have some different rules with Covid and everything else, but almost every night it was me spraying the bleachers after every game. That was important, and I wanted to make sure I did it right. Not that my staff couldn't do it, but if it was going to go wrong I didn't want to say well I thought this happened," he said. "It was something different and something that was going to take some time, it added another hour and a half to the day, but it was one of the things we had to do in order to play and provide our community with some baseball and some smiles... that was well worth everything, seeing those people there smiling and enjoying the game."

The Sodbusters' staff had its daily routine shaken up, but it got through the season without any major hiccups. After the final game had wrapped up, Galusha said the staff felt like it could accomplish anything. It had just held a successful baseball season during a pandemic in a safe manner.

The team's owner said Trevor Overmiller and Murphy Glen played huge roles on a daily basis to the

SEE STAFF/page B3

Coach: KU volunteer Wagoner excited to be in charge of Sodbusters

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I'll probably get to cross a few more off my list this summer.

"I've never been to a lot of the places we're going to this summer, so it'll be cool."

Through the first three years of the Expedition League, rosters have been littered with Kansas Jayhawks, including the Sodbusters. It's partly how Wagoner got connected.

Locals like Casey Burnham (Grand Island) and Hastings' own Brooks Asher were Jayhawks-turned-Sodbusters.

On this year's roster, there's only one Jayhawk so far.

Since Wagoner was snagged as coach later than usual, he didn't have much to do with the construction of it. Galusha, who did a majority of the recruiting, will manage the first

week of games, or until Wagoner arrives.

Joining Wagoner on the coaching staff will be Luke Bay, who is currently a graduate assistant coach for Kansas State. Bay, a pitcher, played one full season for the Wildcats, in 2019, but his senior season was cut short due to the pandemic.

Wagoner and Bay got connected through Pete Hughes, the Wildcats' fourth-year head coach

who was previously at Oklahoma.

"(Hughes) recommended (Bay) and we got in touch," Wagoner said. "He's a pitching guy and I was really looking for a guy to help run the pitching this summer. So, it helped to have a guy who is in to it and knew what he was doing. It seems like a good fit."

The Sodbusters will have a true battery as their coaching staff,

which Wagoner hopes help to translate into wins. Last year the Sodbusters led the Expedition League in walks issued (289), which panned out to be 5.7 per game as a pitching staff.

"Pound the strike zone will be a big (point of emphasis) for me," Wagoner said.

If there's one thing Wagoner wants out of his guys all summer, it's effort. He understands the relaxation aspect

of summer baseball, but he wants the players to leave as better than they arrived. That means maintaining a competitive attitude.

"I feel like as a staff that's something we'll harp the most," Wagoner said. "If you're going to be out there, compete. Compete every day and it's going to be a fun summer. If you're not there to compete, it's going to be a long summer."

Hosting: Hastings family hosting Sodbuster player for fourth year

Continued from page B1

Grace was accompanying Ariana at church camp when Hoffman buzzed her phone with a photo absent of any context.

"I'm like, what is this?" Grace said.

"(Brian) is begging, 'Can we please host? His name is Anthony, here are his stats.' I have never seen this kid."

"He's from California, he needs a home!" Grace imitated her husband.

Long story short, Hoffman got his wish. First-year Sodbuster Anthony Ortega moved into the family's yellow home on University Avenue right around July 4, 2018.

The family typically throws a large gathering for the holiday, which is when Ortega had his introduction.

For the next month, Ortega lived in the basement with close to no privacy, Grace recalled.

"And the poor kid, we didn't have a door on his room and there were two little girls in a playroom across from him," she said. "Poor Anthony had no privacy."

Since then, a door has been added and the girls, now older, have graduated to new hobbies.

Andrew Shaw, the left-handed pitcher the Hoffman-Graces hosted in 2019 and 2020, was a beneficiary of the in-

stallation.

While different, Ortega and Shaw were both great kids, Hoffman and Grace concurred.

"Shaw is really friendly and outgoing where as Anthony, when he was with us, it was doing homework for summer classes," Hoffman said.

While not with the Sodbusters for a third summer, Shaw is playing elsewhere before pursuing a fifth college season with former Sodbuster coach Ryan McClaran at University of Maine thanks to the pandemic.

Ortega just graduated with his master's degree from Benedictine College in Atchi-

son, Kan., and accepted a coaching position there.

The family has kept in touch with both players since their departure.

They sent Shaw away with a gift.

"The biggest thing at the house at the end of the night is we'll go home, pop popcorn in the Whirley maker and they think it's the best thing," Hoffman said. "At the end of the season, we'll get a package sent to them and in there is a Whirley pop, some popcorn, some salt. Kind of like a going away gift."

"Every time (Shaw) uses it, he sends a snapshot," Grace added.

One of the best parts of hosting a player is

when their family visits.

"It's fun because they'll come into town and we'll host them in the house and they really have a good time with us," Hoffman said. "We take them out to dinner; we show them Hastings."

Plus, a misunderstood aspect of hosting is how little the players are actually around. Contrary to popular belief, it's not a huge burden.

"Hosting is easy," Hoffman said. "They get their meals (from the team) in the evening and most of the time they'll go out and have lunch at Dally's or wherever. And really, we ask at the beginning of the season

about breakfasts and we get cereal or protein sandwiches, but they're really easy to host.

They do their own laundry, they're self-managed because they're in college and they're adults."

Hoffman did joke that as "host dad" he likes to sit with the players after the game and chat.

"We'd talk about highlights of the game and it's a real dad moment," Hoffman said.

This year, the family is hosting Jake Bigham, a second-year Sodbuster, which means more memories and another member of the household.

"You're just part of the family at that point," Hoffman said.



JAKE BIGHAM

Position: RHP
Hometown: McCloud, Okla.

School: Southeastern Oklahoma State

Nickname: Big
Twitter: @Jake_Bigham

Walk-up song: "Kings of Summer" by ayokay
Favorite meal: Steak & potatoes

Hot dog a sandwich?: Absolutely.

I spent most of 2020: Working and playing baseball

Baseball quote: "Baseball is like church; many attend, few understand."

Favorite baseball moment: Winning state championship in high school



JT CAFFERTY

Position: C/1B/P
Hometown: Hastings, Neb.

School: Western Nebraska CC

Nickname: JT

Twitter: @jt_cafferty

Walk-up song: "God's Gonna Cut You Down" by Johnny Cash

Favorite meal: Prime rib

Last show binged: The Office

I spent most of 2020: Hanging with friends

Baseball quote: "Baseball is the only field of endeavor where a man can succeed three times out of ten and be considered a good performer" — Ted Williams



CARSON CAHOY

Position: OF
Hometown: Grand Island, Neb.

School: Santa Barbara City College

Nickname: Carso

Twitter: @ccahoy9

Walk-up song: "Outlier" by Desiigner

Favorite meal: Wings

Hot dog a sandwich?: No

I spent most of 2020: Hanging out at the beach

Supersition/Ritual: I always eat before a game

Favorite baseball moment: Hitting my first home run when I was 13



NICK CARLSON

Position: C
Hometown: Kearney, Neb.

School: Northeast Community College

Twitter: @NickCarlson9

Walk-up song: "Sky walker" by Miguel

Favorite meal: Steak

Last show binged: Outer Banks

I spent most of 2020: Playing baseball

Baseball quote: "Baseball is 90% mental. The other half is physical." — Yogi Berra

Supersition/Ritual: Playing catch with the pitcher

Favorite baseball moment: Going to state our first year of high school baseball



COLE DAWSON

Position: SS
Hometown: Russellville, Ark.

School: Kansas City, Kansas, Community College

Twitter: @ColeDawson19

Walk-up song: "Running with the Devil" by Van Halen

Favorite meal: Pizza

Last show binged: Ozark

I spent most of 2020: Playing baseball

Baseball quote: "It ain't over until it's over."



MATT HALBACH

Position: OF/P
Hometown: Los Gatos, Calif.

School: UC San Diego

Twitter: @Halbach_Matthew

Walk-up song: "Right Above it" by Lil Wayne

Favorite meal: Steak

Hot dog a sandwich?: No

I spent most of 2020: Hanging out wit family

Baseball quote: "Baseball was, is, and always will be the best game in the world." — Babe Ruth

Supersition/Ritual: Chewing gum before games

Favorite baseball moment: First Little League home run



JACK HAMMOND

Position: 2B
Hometown: Owaasso, Okla.

School: Kansas

Twitter: @jakchammond_

Walk-up song: "Kickstart my Heart" by Motley Crue

Favorite meal: Steak

Hot dog a sandwich?: Absolutely not.

I spent most of 2020: Going to the lake

Baseball quote: "Chicks dig the long ball."

Favorite baseball moment: Spring break Florida trip in high school



EMMANUEL HERRERA

Position: RHP
Hometown: Panama City, Panama

School: York College

Twitter: @emmanuel92158675

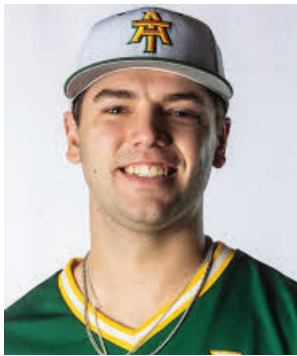
Walk-up song: "El Producto" by Omega

Favorite meal: Rice, lentils and stewed chicken

I spent most of 2020: Playing piano and guitar

Baseball quote: "Train so hard until war seems like a joke."

Favorite baseball moment: 2019 I saved four games in a row in a Perfect Game tournament, which helped me get a scholarship and stay in the United States.



WILL HORTON

Position: LHP
Hometown: Fort Worth, Tex.

School: Arkansas Tech

Nickname: Will the Thrill

Twitter: @will_horton17

Walk-up song: "Deep in the Heart of Texas"

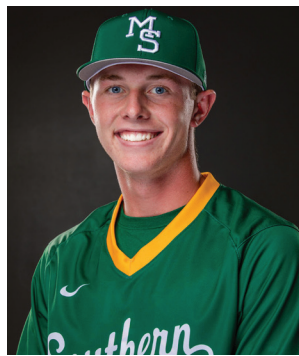
Favorite meal: Tacos

Last show binged: Criminal Minds

I spent most of 2020: Working for a roofing company

Supersition/Ritual: Listen to music

Favorite baseball moment: Winning the conference championship this year



LAIF HULTINE

Position: RHP
Hometown: Hastings, Neb.

School: Missouri Southern State

Nickname: Angus

Twitter: @anguslaif

Walk-up song: "Cowboy" by Kid Rock

Favorite meal: Prime rib

Hot dog a sandwich: No, it's a sausage with an elongated bun

I spent most of 2020: Playing baseball and hunting

Baseball quote: "Swing hard in case you hit it."

Supersition/Ritual: Drink sweet tea and eat a bag of gummy bears

Favorite baseball moment: Playing at state



LOGAN JOHNSTONE

Position: OF
Hometown: Los Gatos, Calif.

School: Gonzaga

Twitter: @LoganJohnstone9

Walk-up song: "Praise The Lord" by A\$AP Rocky

Favorite meal: Chicken & Pasta

Last show binged: The Last Dance

I spent most of 2020: Playing baseball

Baseball quote: "Baseball is 90% mental. The other half is physical." — Yogi Berra

Favorite baseball moment: Four years of high school ball



TREVOR MATTSON

Position: 1B/3B
Hometown: Riverside, Calif.

School: Arcadia Univ.

Nickname: Porkchop

Twitter: @mattson-trevor

Walk-up song: "Your Love" by The Outfield

Favorite meal: Chipotle burrito bowl

Last show binged: Dexter

I spent most of 2020: Playing baseball

Baseball quote: "Juuuuust a bit outside." — Bob Uecker in "Major League"

Favorite baseball moment: Two home run game



CHRIS MAZZINI
Position: LHP
Hometown: Parker, Colo.
School: Northeast Community College
Nickname: Mayo
Walk-up song: "Pour it Up" by Rihanna
Favorite meal: Chicken stir fry
Last show binged: Ozark
I spent most of 2020: Baseball, golf, lifting
Baseball quote: "Fans don't boo nobodies." — Reggie Jackson
Supersition/Ritual: Shave face and arms day before start
Favorite baseball moment: Hitting go-ahead two-run double at Coors Field



CAMERON MCCLURE
Position: OF
Hometown: The Woodlands, Tex.
School: St. Edward's
Nickname: Cam
Twitter: @camerons-mcclure
Walk-up song: "Gorgeous" by Kanye West
Favorite meal: Steak
Hot dog a sandwich?: No, 100% not a sandwich
Baseball quote: "Baseball is 90% mental, the other half is physical." — Yogi Berra
Supersition/Ritual: Drink a Bang
Favorite baseball moment: Helping out with Challenger League; playing with kids who have special needs



RYAN MELVIN
Position: LHP
Hometown: Grand Island, Neb.
School: Oklahoma Christian
Nickname: Melvin
Twitter: @rmelv19
Walk-up song: "Seven Nation Army" by White Stripes
Favorite meal: Alfredo
Last show binged: The Expanse
I spent most of 2020: Recovering from Tommy John
Baseball quote: "Baseball is a lot like life. It's a day to day existence full of ups and downs. You make the most of your opportunities in baseball as you do in life." — Ernie Harwell



IAN RILEY
Position: UTIL
Hometown: Austin, Tex.
School: Cloud County
Nickname: E
Twitter: @ian_riley2
Walk-up song: "Feeling Myself" — Nicki Minaj
Favorite meal: Steak
Last show binged: Outer Banks
I spent most of 2020: Playing baseball
Baseball quote: "Baseball is 90% mental, the other half is physical." — Yogi Berra
Supersition/Ritual: Smelling salst before the anthem
Favorite baseball moment: Playing Seward County in playoffs



MATT RODRIGUEZ
Position: INF
Hometown: New Milford, Conn.
School: Bridgeport
Nickname: Rod
Twitter: @mattrod
Walk-up song: "Married to the Game" by Future
Favorite meal: Pizzzza
Hot dog a sandwich?: No
I spent most of 2020: Sleeping
Baseball quote: "Hum babe."
Supersition/Ritual: Never cross the bats
Favorite baseball moment: First home run



RANS SANDERS
Position: INF
Hometown: Grand Island, Neb.
School: Cloud County Community College
Nickname: Sandy
Twitter: @RansSanders10
Walk-up song: "Public Service Announcement" by Jay Z
Favorite meal: Steak
Last show binged: Outer Banks
I spent most of 2020: Baseball, hunting, fishing
Baseball quote: "Baseball is a game of inches."
Supersition/Ritual: Music
Favorite baseball moment: Freshman year at Cloud County



JEREMY SCHNEIDER
Position: RHP
Hometown: Lovell, Wyo.
School: Northeast Community College
Nickname: Ron
Twitter: @j15_schneider
Walk-up song: "Desperado" by Rihanna
Favorite meal: Spaghetti
Hot dog a sandwich?: No
I spent most of 2020: Online school
Baseball quote: "There's no crying in baseball."
Favorite baseball moment: Too many to pick just one



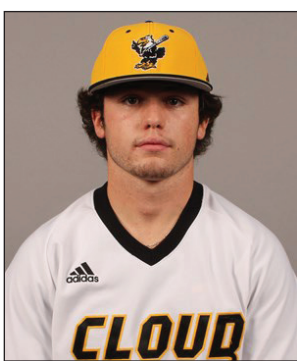
JACOB SCHROEDER
Position: RHP
Hometown: Hastings, Neb.
School: Washburn
Nickname: Jake
Twitter: @_JakeSchroeder
Walk-up song: "Good time" by Niko Moon
Favorite meal: Steak & potatoes
Last show binged: Last Chance U: Basketball
I spent most of 2020: Playing Call of Duty: Warzone
Baseball quote: "Baseball is 90% mental, the other half is physical." — Yogi Berra
Supersition/Ritual: Step over the line with left foot
Favorite baseball moment: Going yard at state



SHANE SCOTT
Position: RHP
Hometown: Ponder, Tex.
School: Arkansas Tech
Twitter: @sscott_24
Walk-up song: "California Gurls" by Katy Perry
Favorite meal: Chicken Fried Chicken
Last show binged: The Ranch
I spent most of 2020: Working
Baseball quote: "Swing hard in case you hit it."
Favorite baseball moment: Super regionals in junior college



TREYTON SCULLY
Position: RHP
Hometown: Lincoln, Neb.
School: York College
Nickname: Scully
Twitter: @TreytonScully
Walk-up song: "Day N Nite" — Kid Cudi
Favorite meal: Wings
Last show binged: That 70s Show
I spent most of 2020: Playing baseball
Baseball quote: "How can you not be romantic about baseball?" — "Moneyball"
Supersition/Ritual: Music
Favorite baseball moment: First college start



JACOB SHAW
Position: OF/P
Hometown: Hastings, Neb.
School: Cloud County Community College
Nickname: Chip
Twitter: @J_shaw_22
Walk-up song: "Up-town" by Lil Wayne & Drake
Favorite meal: Chicken Alfredo
Last show binged: Yellowstone
I spent most of 2020: Playing baseball
Baseball quote: "Grandma and Grandpa didn't come to games to watch a snowball fight." — Jim Boeve
Supersition/Ritual: Listen to "Catalogue Cabin" by Mike Stud



LUKE SOLIS
Position: INF
Hometown: Chino Hills, Calif.
School: UC San Diego
Nickname: Luke
Instagram: @LukeSolis
Walk-up song: "B.O.O.T" — Pepper
Favorite meal: Chick Fil A and fries
Hot dog a sandwich?: No
I spent most of 2020: Playing baseball
Baseball quote: "Baseball is like church. Many attend, few understand."
Supersition/Ritual: Tape on throwing wrist
Favorite baseball moment: Hitting a home run left-handed over the trees at high



TREVOR STEVENS
Position: INF
Hometown: Omaha, Neb.
School: Cloud County Community College
Nickname: T-Bone
Twitter: @StevensTrevor29
Walk-up song: "In God I Trust" by Kevin Gates
Favorite meal: Steak
Last show binged: Billions
I spent most of 2020: Playing baseball
Baseball quote: "Stay off the grass. Can't you see it's trying to grow?" Ryan Hile
Favorite baseball moment: Hitting a grand slam for my first college home run



NATE ZYZDA
Position: RHP
Hometown: Sioux City, Iowa
School: Northeast Community College
Nickname: Z
Twitter: @NateZyzda3
Walk-up song: "Candy Paint" by Post Malone
Favorite meal: Salmon & mashed potatoes
Baseball quote: "Don't chop at it; it's not a sword." — "The Benchwarmers"



WYATT BERRIMAN,
YAKIMA VALLEY



JAXON ROCHA,
YAKIMA VALLEY



TREVOR DUBRAY,
WESTERN NEBRASKA



DYLAN RODGERS,
NORTHEAST



TREYTON KOZAL,
IOWA WESTERN



TYLER MONROE,
NORTHEAST

Staff: Sodbusters gave their all to make 2020 season happen

Continued from page B1

Sodbuster's ability to have a season, but every person on the staff was needed to accomplish the feat. Galusha said the trap is now thinking that this season will be without challenges, but the reality is they'll just be different obstacles. "There are always hurdles we have to

overcome," he said. "But we are very excited for 2021. We are very excited for a full schedule, we are excited that we don't have any limitations, and we have got some stability now. We know we are going to be there. Now, we just have to continue building and strive to be better at everything we can."

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Courtesy Hastings Sodsbusters



Courtesy Hastings Sodsbusters

Uniform redesign mixes old with new

WILL REYNOLDS
wreynolds@hastingstribune.com

As the story goes, Bryan Frew was on a drive to Kansas City, Missouri, during the fall of 2017. The mission of the drive isn't important, but a byproduct of it is.

Frew, who had just announced the Hastings Baseball Team (not yet the Sodsbusters) would be taking the field in the inaugural season of the newly-launched Expedition League, had plenty of items on his to-do list.

This out-of-state trip helped cross one of those off.

Frew needed a color scheme for his new, nameless team. Although a public survey for a team name was out, Frew knew in that moment what its colors would be — regardless of the chosen moniker.

The drive into Kansas City from the north, especially during the fall, is technicolor.

The picturesque route is full of vibrant green and yellow leaves, often falling from the trees and littering roadways and eventually drifting toward the Missouri River.

Frew admittedly wasn't preferential to green and yellow before this day. But now he was and to this day, is.

Still a co-owner involved in team operations, Frew now looks forward every year to seeing the green and yellow cover Duncan Field's turf and stands. The original uniform



Courtesy Hastings Sodsbusters

This graphic shows the Hastings Sodsbusters new hats for the 2021 Expedition League season.

designs favored the green, a forest shade. Yellow, at that point, was mostly trim save for the first-year home hat which bore a white old-style "H" in the center of a bright saffron dome.

The Sodsbusters initially had just two uniform variations. The tops were white and green, the pants white or grey. A black jersey was added shortly after. The hats were yellow and green. In year two, a black hat was tossed into the mix, replacing the yellow.

Year three featured more uniform variety, including a brand new, tricolored hat and a military camouflage uniform with a Busch Light patch on the sleeve.

Now, after various auctions and giveaways, not to mention more than 180 games of use, the Sodsbusters will don an entirely new trio of tops and bottoms.

"In my career of high school coaching, I'm comfortable with a

three-year rotation as far as uniforms go," said co-owner Scott Galusha. "They get worn pretty hard."

"We probably could have made it one more year, but our goal was to find a sponsor who would help us do that and the Nebraska Lottery stepped up. So, you'll see a patch on the sleeve."

The new look draws inspiration from the Oakland A's. For baseball fans familiar with the Major League club, the resemblance is uncanny.

The hats and white pinstripe pants are perhaps the most dissimilar — not by much

— but nonetheless that was the vision.

"We patterned the things we're doing after (the A's)," Galusha said.

That includes a redesigned logo. No H, no team mascot, but a letter B on the cap.

The B's, short for 'Busters — the team nickname's nickname.

"When I presented that to the rest of the staff, they didn't hate it, but they didn't love it at first," Galusha said with a laugh. "But as we started working on it and putting it together, they liked it more and more."

It led to an "I told you so" type of moment with Sodbuster staff-

ers Murphy Glen and Trevor Overmiller that brought Galusha satisfaction.

"One of my favorite moments was when Murphy and Trevor opened the box of the hats and both said 'I hate it when you're right,' " Galusha said.

"The hats are certainly different, but I thought to switch it up wasn't going to hurt anything. We essentially had the same design on the hat for three years so we wanted to change it up."

The team will have options of green, gray, or yellow for its uniform tops. The green is marked "Sodsbusters" in cursive across the chest while gray reads "Hastings."

There is also an alternate yellow jersey, which, like the hat, has the new "B's" logo on the left pec next to the American flag. A jersey number in on the lower right side.

"I knew I wanted to be pretty standard with the home jerseys (green) and I just knew the grays would look nice," Galusha said. "Then we just decided

that we've had the same basic logo the entire time so we thought we'd just freshen it up a little bit and go with it on the hat and the alternative (yellow) jersey."

The pants options are white with green pinstripes and gray with a green and yellow double piping. The team will wear green socks.

"What you're going to see on Saturday night," Galusha said, "is the tall green socks, the pinstriped pants and the green jersey."

Also new this year, the coaches' jackets feature a familiar H, but one different from anything the Sodsbusters have previously worn.

This H is akin to what Hastings College and American Legion teams have worn through the years. It has a flared out left side stroke and slight slant to it.

"We just liked a little bit of a change," Galusha said. "There are a lot of jobs as a general manager of the Sodsbusters, but one of the fun ones is getting to design those uniforms."

Good luck with another successful season!

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