2003 OUTLOOK: UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Twenty-one letterwinners return from last year’s 47-win team including all nine starters, 11 pitchers and three All-Americans with the ultimate goal of the College World Series in Omaha.

Entering the spring, it would appear that all the pieces are in place for Wake Forest to make a run for its fourth ACC Championship in six years, an unprecedented sixth straight NCAA Tournament appearance and a trip to the College World Series in Omaha.

If the ingredients for a championship baseball team are experience, starting pitching, defense up the middle, team speed, the ability to get on base and hit home runs, then Wake Forest might be feasting on its opponents this spring.

“We’re very talented. I like our versatility. We have improved depth. We’re a year older. We’ll field the ball better and for the most part, we’re healthy,” said George Greer who enters his 16th year as the Wake Forest head coach.

“We’re excited to see how it all comes together.”

It’s a team that has been together for a while now. In fact, all nine starters return from a team that finished 47-13-1 last season and ranked as high as number two nationally.

Eleven pitchers are back including consensus pre-season All-American Kyle Sleeth. He is one of three Deacon All-Americans to return for the 2003 season.

Sleeth is joined by outfielders Adam Bourassa and Ryan Johnson.

If the Deacons have one thing, they have experience. A total of 24 returning players combine to have 1,046 games of experience at the Division I level.

This year’s senior class has an ACC Championship under its belt, has earned three straight trips to the NCAA Tournament and owns a record of 128-51-2.

Wake Forest’s baseball resume has grown extensively over the past five years, but there is one puzzle that has yet to be solved: a trip to Omaha for the College World Series.

The Demon Deacons believe that this year, in 2003, all the pieces are in place.

PITCHING

Any discussion about Wake Forest pitching begins with junior Kyle Sleeth. One of the best starting pitchers in the country, if not the best, Sleeth had the best season of any Deacon pitcher in history as a sophomore.

Sleeth posted a perfect 14-0 record with a 2.97 ERA and 118 strikeouts in 113 innings. He won his final ten starts before shining for Team USA this past summer.

He will anchor the pitching staff, drawing the Friday starting assignment during the ACC season.

The pitching staff is hardly a one-horse race, however. Behind Sleeth is a stable of talented and experienced pitchers.

Two lefties, Seth Hill and Tim Morley, saw time in the starting rotation last season and return this spring.

Hill, a senior, is a finesse pitcher described as a tough competitor. Morley is an ultra-talented sophomore who could develop into a dominating pitcher.

A pitcher who could provide a huge boost to the pitching staff if healthy this spring is redshirt junior Ben Clayton. As a freshman in 2000, Clayton showed flashes of brilliance, even tossing a no-hitter. Since then, Clayton has fought a number of injuries and received a medical hardship last spring.

Clayton has dropped 25 pounds and continues to work to regain his old form. If that happens, Clayton would certainly contend with Hill and Morley as the team’s number two starter and the already-deep Deacon pitching staff would immediately become one of the best in the country.

Last season, right-handers Daniel Davidson and Brian Bach were selected Freshman All-Americans as weekday starters and weekend relievers. Successful in those roles last season, both are expected to flourish as sophomores.

The Deacons hope to receive larger contributions from a number of pitchers who missed time with injuries last season including Eric Maycroft and Danny Mackey.

Chris Caudill and Gregory Russell impressed in the fall.

Of the five departed players from last year’s team, the biggest void to fill will be that of workhorse closer Dave Bush. The two-time All-American and second-round draft pick of Toronto provided a safety net for the entire pitching staff.

No single player will be asked to fill that role in 2003. Wake Forest may go “closer-by-committee.”

The team’s top set-up man for the past two years has been Adam Hanson. An All-Star closer in the Cape Cod League over the summer, Hanson certainly has the credentials to become the Deacon closer.

However, the coaching staff feels Hanson may be of better use in the starting rotation. He would be freed up to do just that if one or two position players are able to emerge as capable relievers.

Those individuals would be infielders Jamie D’Antona and freshman Chris Getz. Both pitched in high school but bring a combined zero innings of college pitching experience.

What the pair lacks in experience, they more than make up for in heat. On Scout Day, D’Antona created a buzz by throwing 94 mph off the mound. Getz is known to throw in the low-90s as well.

INFIELD

Wake Forest returns all four starters from last year including Jamie D’Antona at third base, Ben Ingold at shortstop, Nick Blue at second base and Jeff Ruziecki at first base. The quartet is as experienced as they come having started a combined 337 games in their Wake Forest careers.

Just a junior, D’Antona has a chance at becoming the school’s all-

Kyle Sleeth

Jamie D’Antona
time leader in home runs and runs batted in this season.

In 2002, Bourassa had one of the best all-around seasons in Wake Forest history, batting .412 with two home runs, 41 RBI and 26 stolen bases. Considered by many to be the best outfielder in the Atlantic Coast Conference, Bourassa was a Cape Cod All-Star for the second straight summer.

Adam Bourassa and right fielder Ryan Hubbard, who was often at the plate but was always a major factor on the bases with 19 steals in 20 attempts.

Wake Forest has its usual slate of 24 games against Atlantic Coast Conference opponents including home series against Clemson, Duke, NC State and Virginia. The Deacons will travel to Florida State, Georgia Tech, Maryland and UNC. Last season the ACC ranked as the top conference in the country, according to the Ratings Percentage Index (RPI). The non-conference schedule provides intriguing games, especially early.

During the first weekend of March, the Deacons travel to Minneapolis to play a three-game round robin tournament at the Metrodome, home of the American League Central Division Champion Minnesota Twins.

there, the Deacons will play two teams that reached the College World Series last year -- Nebraska and Notre Dame -- plus perennial Big Ten power Minnesota.

On March 18, the Deacons will host Oklahoma State, their first meeting since the 1955 College World Series. Wake Forest defeated the Cowboys, then known as Oklahoma A&M, 2-0, on their way to a national championship.
TEAM SURVEY

In an informal poll, the Demon Deacons were asked to vote on their teammates in a number of categories. Players could not vote for themselves. Below are the results with the number of votes in parentheses.

**Team Leader:**
1. Ryan Johnson (12)
2. Seth Hill (4)
3. Nick Blue (2)
4. Adam Bourassa (1)
   5. Erik MacRae (1)

**Most Competitive:**
1. Adam Bourassa (5)
2. Brad Sicilietti (4)
3. Nick Blue (3)

**Best Fastball:**
1. Kyle Sleet (16)
2. Eric MacRae (2)
3. Chris Caudill (1)
4. Adam Bourassa (1)
   5. Tim Morley (1)

**Best Curveball:**
1. Daniel Davidson (13)
2. Tim Morley (3)
3. Seth Hill (2)

**Best Changeup:**
1. Tim Morley (8.5)
2. Adam Hansen (4)
3. Kyle Sleet (3.5)
4. Seth Hill (2)

**Best Slider:**
1. Spencer Price (1)
2. Brad Sicilietti (1)
3. Seth Hill (2)
4. Adam Bourassa (1)

**Best Splitter:**
1. Adam Hansen (10)
2. Seth Hill (1)
3. Kyle Sleet (1)

**Fields The Position Best:**
1. Adam Hansen (6)
2. Brian Bach (4)
3. Kyle Sleet (3)
4. Tim Morley (1)

**Best Arm:**
1. Adam Bourassa (17)
2. Ryan Johnson (2)
3. Jamie D’Antona (1)
4. Ryder Mathias (1)

**Best Speed:**
1. Ryan Johnson (2)
2. Adam Bourassa (2)
3. Nick Blue (1)
4. Casey Sterk (1)

**Most Likely to Become a Baseball Coach:**
1. Adam Bourassa (5-8), Jonathan Portnoy (5-8), Grant Achilles (5-10), Ryan Hubbard (5-10).

**Most Likely to Run For Political Office:**
1. Ryder Mathias (1)
2. Eric MacRae (1)
3. Tim Morley (1)

**Toughest Pitcher to Hit:**
1. Kyle Sleet (16)
2. Eric MacRae (2)
3. Chris Caudill (1)
4. Adam Bourassa (1)
   5. Tim Morley (1)

**Toughest Out:**
1. Adam Bourassa (17)
2. Ryan Johnson (2)
3. Jamie D’Antona (1)
4. Ryder Mathias (1)
5. Tim Morley (1)

**Best Power:**
1. Jamie D’Antona (20)
2. Ryan Johnson (1)
3. Jeff Ruziecki (1)
4. Ryder Mathias (1)
5. Kyle Sleet (3)

**Best Speed:**
1. Ryan Hubbard (18)
2. Adam Bourassa (2)
3. Nick Blue (1)
4. Casey Sterk (1)

**Most Likely to Run For State Office:**
1. Ryder Mathias (1)
2. Brad Sicilietti (4)
3. Jeff Ruziecki (2.5)
4. Nick Blue (2)
5. Ryder Mathias (1)

**Best Arm:**
1. Jamie D’Antona (14)
2. Steve LeFaire (4)
3. Adam Bourassa (1)
4. Ryan Johnson (1)
5. Ryder Mathias (1)

**Best Defensively:**
1. Jamie D’Antona (14)
2. Steve LeFaire (4)
3. Adam Bourassa (1)
4. Ryan Johnson (1)
5. Ryder Mathias (1)

**Best Defensively:**
1. Ryder Mathias (1)
2. Ben Ingold (2)
3. Jeff Ruziecki (2.5)
4. Nick Blue (2)
5. Ryder Mathias (1)

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2003 ROSTER

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<th>#</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>B/T</th>
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**Pitchers (14)**
1. Eric MacRae R/R 6-3 215 Sr. Algonquin, IL -- -- -- --
2. Gregory Russell R/R 6-8 245 Jr. Glendale, CA 1/0 0-0 13.50 2.0
3. Brian Bach R/R 6-2 195 So. Winston-Salem, NC 17/6 6-2 6.60 45.0
4. Seth Hill L/L 6-4 220 Sr. Sandwich, IL 18/8 3-3 4.86 74.0
5. Chris Caudill R/R 6-4 220 R-Fr. Houston, TX -- -- -- --
6. Kyle Sleet R/R 6-5 200 Jr. Westminster, CO 18/17 14-0 2.97 118.1
7. Kirby Wedekind R/R 6-2 220 Fr. Jacksonville, FL -- -- -- --
8. Ben Clayton L/L 6-4 210 R-Jr. San Leandro, CA 4/4** 2-1 6.19 16.0
9. Adam Hansen R/R 6-2 195 Jr. Medford, NJ 33/0 3-0 4.50 56.0
10. Kyle Young L/R 6-3 175 Fr. Southlake, TX -- -- -- --
11. David Danielson R/R 6-5 215 So. Huntsville, AL 15/2 3-0 4.34 29.0
12. Tim Morley L/L 6-2 190 So. Buffalo Grove, IL 16/16 6-3 4.41 87.2

**Catchers (3)**
1. Nick Blue S/R 6-0 178 Sr. Fairfax, CA 51/51 .355 1 40
2. Jamie D’Antona R/R 6-2 210 Jr. Trumbull, CT 5/5 336 20 83
3. Nick Blue S/R 6-0 178 Sr. Fairfax, CA 51/51 .355 1 40

**Infielders (9)**
1. Nick Blue S/R 6-0 178 Sr. Fairfax, CA 51/51 .355 1 40
2. Jamie D’Antona R/R 6-2 210 Jr. Trumbull, CT 5/5 336 20 83
3. Nick Blue S/R 6-0 178 Sr. Fairfax, CA 51/51 .355 1 40

**Outfielders (6)**
1. Ryan Johnson L/L 6-2 205 Sr. Laguna Hills, CA 58/54 .366 13 77
2. Doug Riepe R/R 6-3 210 Jr. Danbury, CT 8/4 .000 0 1
3. Casey Sterk S/R 5-11 165 Fr. Encinitas, CA -- -- -- --
4. Adam Bourassa L/L 5-8 175 Sr. Apple Valley, MN 61/61 .412 2 41
5. Ryan Johnson L/L 6-2 175 Jr. Huntington Beach, CA 52/52 .274 7 28
6. Steve LeFaire L/R 6-2 205 Jr. Winston-Salem, NC 51/44 .267 5 28

**Head Coach:**
44 George Greer (Connecticut, 1968, 16th Season)

**Assistant Coaches:**
5 Jamie Mabe (Mount Olive, 1994, 3rd Season)
36 Michael Holmes (Wake Forest, 1997, 3rd Season)

**Volunteer Assistant Coach:**
4 Scott Dailey (Wake Forest, 1999, 1st Season)

**Athletic Trainer:**
Jeff Strahm (Kansas State, 1994, 5th Season)

**2002 Wake Forest Statistics**

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ROSTER BREAKDOWN

**By Class:**
Seniors 7, Juniors 9, Sophomores 8, Redshirt freshmen 1, Freshmen 7

**By Position:**
Pitchers 14, Infielders 8, Outfielders 6, Catchers 3

**By State:**
18 States - California 7, Connecticut 3, Illinois 3, North Carolina 3, Pennsylvania 2, Texas 2, Alabama 1, Colorado 1, Florida 1, Indiana 1, Massachusetts 1, Michigan 1, Minnesota 1, Missouri 1, New Jersey 1, New York 1, Tennessee 1, Virginia 1.

**Tallest:**
Gregory Russell (6-8), Daniel Davidson (6-5), Danny Mackey (6-5), Kyle Sleet (6-5), Ben Clayton (6-4), Seth Hill (6-4).

**Shortest:**
Adam Bourassa (5-8), Jonathan Portnoy (5-8), Grant Achilles (5-10), Ryan Hubbard (5-10).