

## 22 Titans embark on annual 14-day Fall College Trip in search of U.S. Baseball Scholarships

Titans 17U Head Coach Denis Bailey is looking forward to taking 22 of his student-athletes on a USA adventure over the next two weeks.

The Titans Director of College Placement is in search of US Baseball scholarships for his players and they will be displaying their talents in front of American coaches for fourteen days in September.

It's an important trip for our Canadian Premier Baseball League club. Connecting with US Coaches at their schools is a big advantage of this trip for our players. They can meet the coaching staff, see the facilities, and visit the campus and town where the college is located. It's a great experience for our graduating players to see all the levels of US College baseball and play against Titans graduates currently playing for many of the schools we're visiting.

The final stop of the 14-day tour is Genesee Community College where Coach Bailey has just accepted a part-time position with the coaching staff at the Batavia, NY junior college.

I'll be serving my alma mater, which is an exciting opportunity.

When asked about the best part of joining the Cougars' coaching staff, the resident of Orillia couldn't isolate just one.

There's so much. My former coach and mentor Skip Sherman and I have been back and forth over the last few years about coaching opportunities. The Titans have had lots of success sending players to Genesee Community College. Three of our grads are playing for the Cougars this year: Tarek Emara, who transferred in from Saint Xavier University in Illinois; Jaxen Lehr, who transferred in from Salem International University in West Virginia; and Saunders Mireault who is in his second season with the Cougars. The transfer of a fourth Titan will take place this Fall.

The Genesee Community College Cougars were five outs from qualifying for the 2024 Junior College World Series, noted Coach Bailey, and I'd like to help the team achieve that goal in 2025. Coaching at the Collegiate level in the US is 'living the dream' for me. I feel about Genesee as I did when I was a player here. I had a funny moment on the field the other day when Skip got mad at the players during practice and I realized I was still scared of Coach Sherman.

The long-time Titans Head Coach started his new coaching position on Coach Sherman's staff in the last week of August. I've been travelling to Batavia, NY, once a week through the off-season to assist with workouts. I'm able to bring objectivity to the practices since I can see on-field player performances with a fresh set of eyes for the coaching staff since I'm not in the daily grind. I'm in a unique position, too, to give back to the College, to see the team from both a player's point of view and a coach's point of view, and I really want to help our guys go from a 2-year school to 4-year schools in the US.

The schools on the 2024 Titans Fall College Trip itinerary represent the seven pathways that a Canadian student athlete could consider as post-secondary destinations in the USA: Four-year schools in NCAA Division 1, NCAA D2, NCAA D3, and NAIA, as well as two-year schools in NJCAA D1, NJCAA D2, and NJCAA D3.

This year's Fall College Trip crisscrosses six states: Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, West Virginia, Maryland, and New York. Coach Bailey delineated the robust fourteen-day itinerary.

We'll start the trip with a two-day stay at Saint Xavier University (NAIA) in Chicago, Illinois where we'll be playing Titan graduates Jordan Sfyndilis and Brandon Nandoo. Day 3 of the Trip is to Rend Lake College (NJCAA D1) in Ina, Illinois where our players will face Titan grad Kai Hernandez who is in his freshman year pitching for the Warriors. We have a game scheduled against Pendleton High School in Indianapolis, Indiana, for Day 4 of the trip. Day 5 will feature a game against Hocking College (NJCAA

D2) in Nelsonville, Ohio, which just launched its baseball program last season. Then we're off to the University of Rio Grande (NAIA) to play the Red Storm in Ohio where our players will face Titan grad Mitchell Crowley on Day 6 of the trip.?

Coach Bailey noted that Day 7's activities will have lots of familiarity for the tour participants since ?they'll be facing Titans grads Cam Byers, Aidan Hoffmeyer, and Colby Guy of the Glenville State University Pioneers (NCAA D2) in Glenville, West Virginia.?

The 22-man squad will spend Day 8 in Beckley for a game against the ?West Virginia University Institute of Technology (NAIA) where we placed 2021 Titans grad DJ McMaster as an Engineering student and pitcher for the Golden Bears.?

The Titans Director of College Placement explained, ?Day 9 is a mandatory off-day for the group so the bus driver gets his legal amount of rest and our guys can attend to their studies and homework assignments in Study Hall at the hotel.?

After a day of rest and consolidating school work, the tour continues to ?Garrett College (NJCAA D2) where the participants will face Titan graduates Graham Marshall and Wyatt Slocum who are in their first and third years, respectively, playing for the Lakers in McHenry, Maryland.?

Coach Bailey explained, ?Day 10 is a trip to the University of Northwestern Ohio (NAIA) in Lima where our 2025 grads will face 2024 Titans grad Adam Darlison--a freshman catcher for the Racers. Day 11 will take us to Lakeland Community College (NJCAA) in Lake County, Ohio and then we're off to Niagara University (NCAA D1) to play the Purple Eagles. Our final stop on Day 14 will be at Genesee Community College (NJCAA D3) to play the Cougars including the three Titans grads: Tarek, Jaxen, and Saunders; then, we drive home up the QEW to the True North Fieldhouse.?

**By Jim Stewart**