

Cook ready for 18th year with Kohawks

Written by Jim Ecker

Wednesday, 26 February 2014 21:26 -

Steve Cook has the ingredients for his own girls basketball team in his household with five daughters, although 2-month-old Lucy might need a little seasoning.

"Everybody says you should keep trying for a boy," Cook said Wednesday, laughing, "and I'm like, 'I've got boys every day in my life here at Coe.' I'm fine with the five girls I've got."

Cook is entering his 18th year as the head baseball coach at Coe College with a 365-344-1 record and three titles in the Iowa Conference tournament. He's got 37 guys on his roster, so he's perfectly happy to head home to his wife, Shannon, and daughters Callie, Shelby, Lilly, Maggie and Lucy and leave the boys behind for awhile.

Besides, all the guys will be together quite a bit on their eight-game trip to Florida that begins Sunday against Rose-Hulman in Winter Haven, Fla.

"I'm looking forward to that, getting out of this cold," Cook said. "It's been a pretty amazing February for everybody here in Iowa, so we're feeling that too."

Some years, the Kohawks have been able to practice in February on the field turf at the Coe football stadium, but not this year. They've been working out inside, trying to put the pieces together after finishing 28-14 overall and 19-7 in the Iowa Conference in 2013.

"We've got to see what we've got," said Cook. "We're really young. A little inexperienced in comparison to the last five or so years. It's going to be a little different challenge for us."

Drew Arends, who went 7-0 with a 3.15 ERA last season, did not return to school this year for personal reasons, leaving a void in the pitching staff. Connor Alberhasky (5-3, 2.70) and AJ Reuter (3-3, 3.96) could be asked to carry a heavier load on the mound this year. Jack Hoffmann, Kyle Brady and freshman Cal Kragenbrink from Mount Vernon also enter into the picture as starting pitchers.

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Brady had Tommy John surgery two years ago, but has looked good in practice with a fastball that's touched 91 and 92 mph.

Reuter is also Coe's first baseman and a good hitter. He batted .357 last year with 23 RBIs and hits for himself when he's pitching.

Two Linn-Mar products help anchor the defense with Ben Larison at shortstop and Michael Redmond in center field. Other possible starters are Cole Tomlinson at catcher, Craig Konrardy at third base and Michael Goerdts in left field. Freshman Andrew Brierton is pressing for playing time as a catcher, designated hitter or outfielder.

Cook thinks he has the ingredients for another competitive ballclub.

"Just pure talent - Do we run fast enough? Do we throw it well enough? Do we have athletic kids? Yeah, the foundation is all there," he said. "A little bit of a journey, but I still feel good about the possibilities once we get back from Florida."

ROSTER

Seniors

Tyler Hixson, P, Davenport Assumption

Jacob Schletzbaum, P, Pleasantville

Nick Svare, OF, Garner-Hayfield

Juniors

Connor Alberhasky, P, Iowa City High

Kyle Brady, P, Leawood, Kan.

Nathan Brown, IF, Des Moines Hoover

Michael Goerdts, OF, Waterloo Columbus

Jory Heckenberg, IF, Van Buren

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Jack Hoffmann, P/OF, Dubuque Wahlert
Jacob Redman, IF, Swansboro, N.C.
AJ Reuter, P/IB, Monticello
Jeremy Santiago, P, Lemont, Ill.
Jake Tickle, P, Elburn, Ill.
Cole Tomlinson, C, Trabuco Canyon, Calif.
Derek Yoder, IF, Iowa City High

Sophomores

Tony Becker, P/IF, Don Bosco
Craig Konrardy, IF, Waterloo Columbus
Ben Larison, SS, Linn-Mar
Isaac Maffett, C, Gilbert
Jordan Mayfield, C, Newberg, Ore.
Justin Petersen, OF, Hudson
Michael Redmond, CF, Linn-Mar
Brett Slager, OF, Park Ridge, Ill.
Tyler Smith, P, Center Point-Urbana
Alex Zwanziger, IF, New Hampton

Freshmen

JT Adams, P/IF, Colo-Nesco
Andrew Brierton, C/OF, Cary, Ill.
Thomas Gandolfi, OF, Mundelein, Ill.
Michael Golinski, P, Naperville, Ill.
Ben Jacobson, P/IF, Humboldt
Colton Janssen, IF, Starmont
Jason Kimminau, IF, Fulton, Mo.
Cal Kragenbrink, P/IF, Mount Vernon
Alex Milne, P, Oswego, Ill.
Thomas Schaedel, P/IF, Wauconda, Ill.
Marshall Shedeck, P, North Cedar
Dan Urban, OF, Elk Grove Village, Ill.