

TEAM SPOTLIGHT

Shenandoah University



Editorial and photos courtesy of Shenandoah Sports Information

Shenandoah University enters the 2011 baseball season, its eighth under head coach Kevin Anderson, well positioned to defend its USA South and South Region titles.

Anderson, who has 194 of his 341 collegiate wins as the Hornets skipper, welcomes back five position starters in addition to pitchers who earned 32 of the team's 38 victories last season.

Chief among these players are returning senior All-Americans Greg Van Sickler and Kevin Brashears.

Van Sickler, a pitcher/utility player, has dominated at both the plate and on the mound in his first three seasons in an SU uniform.

A career .418 hitter, Van Sickler is the program's all-time leader in doubles and sacrifice flies and is in the top ten of every major hitting statistical category.

On the mound, his first victory of the 2011 season will give him 21 for his career and make him the all-time leader at SU.

In 2010, Van Sickler was



Cory Nelson



Greg Van Sickler

named as the USA South Conference Pitcher of the Year, the ABCA South Region Player of the Year and a first team All-America by both the NABC and D3baseball.com.

His NABC All-America honor is his second in as many years.

A true student-athlete with a 3.54 GPA as a Business Administration major, he also earned

third team ESPN The Magazine Academic All-America honors.

"Greg is the epitome of a true student-athlete," Anderson said. "He gets the job done in the classroom, he is one of our leaders with community service initiatives and on the field he is one of the reasons for all of our success in the past couple of years.

"He is a truly a special player who loves to com-

TEAM SPOTLIGHT

Shenandoah University

pete.”

Brashears is a fifth-year senior who has flourished as a centerfielder since converting from catcher for the 2008 season.

A career .392 hitter, he batted a team-best .427 last season with a school-record 90 hits, twenty doubles, fourteen home runs and 61 RBI on his way to matching Van Sickler's All-America accolades and being named as the USA South Conference Tournament MVP.

He is third all-time at SU in runs scored and home runs and owns season records for hits and runs scored.

The team's leadoff hitter, Brashears has finished in the top three in Division III in runs scored in each of the last two seasons.

“Kevin gets us started every game,” Anderson said. “To have a player with his speed and power at the top of the lineup really helps us.

“Defensively, he has been tremendous. Everyone wants to be strong up the middle, and Kevin is a huge part of that for us.”

Anderson also welcomes back catcher Keaton Neeb, third baseman Cory Nelson and leftfielder Mike Smith to the starting lineup.

Neeb earned the starting backstop role as a freshman last season and hit .310 with 35 hits in 113 at-bats over 38 games. Nelson, a two-year starter at DH and first base, moves to the hot corner this spring to replace graduated USA South Conference Player of the Year Scott Van Dusseldorp.

Nelson hit .360 in 2010 with a third-best on team nine home runs and 42 RBI on his way to being named to the USA South and Fayetteville Regional All-Tournament teams.

Smith (along with Neeb) joined Nelson on the Regional All-Tournament squad – he hit .340 in 97 at-bats over 29 games last season and also was a perfect 3-0 on the mound with a 4.86 ERA in eleven appearances.

“Keaton and Mike were important pieces to our success last season,” Anderson said. “They both played in the Valley League this past summer and I expect they both will take the next step in their development.”

Returns on the mound for the Hornets include seniors Bob Stefanowicz and Ben Hendrickson, junior Kyle Scallion and sophomore Vince Claudio.

Scallion led the club in saves with eight in 23 appearances on his way to being named NABC All-South Region and All-USA South. Stefanowicz, a mainstay out of



Ben Hendrickson



Keaton Neeb



Vince Claudio



Kyle Scallion



Kevin Brashears



Mike Smith

'pen, had four wins in the regular season and made three appearances in post-season play.

Hendrickson pitched a complete game at the Fayetteville Regional against Mary Washington to earn a spot on the All Tournament team. Claudio struck out 33 batters, eighteen of which batters were caught looking, and was the team's No. 3 starter for most of the spring. Thanks to a win in the regional championship over Salisbury, he earned a place on the regional All-Tournament team.

After graduating middle infielders Jon Holcomb and Jesse Henry, Anderson will depend on Kurt Krout and Christian Frey to fill those spots. Krout, a sophomore, played in sixteen varsity games and batted a crisp .625 in limited action. Frey, who rejoins the team after a two year absence, hit .244 and was the USA South Conference Rookie of the Week one time in 2008.

Newcomers Clint DeHaven and Joey Donofrio will be in the mix for starting spots in the outfield.

DeHaven, a transfer from USA South rival Greensboro, was named first team All-Conference in 2009 after batting .368 with 42 hits and seven dingers. Donofrio returns to action this season after sitting out the year last spring at DI St. Peters due to injury.

Sophomore Brent Bertschinger comes to SU after originally signing with DI Western Carolina. A high school teammate of Van Sickler's, Bertschinger can throw three pitches for strikes and should be one of the team's top starters.

"These guys all came into our program this fall and quickly picked up the way we do things," Anderson said. "If we get to where we want to be, these guys are going to have to play up to their ability."

Anderson's club will kick off their 2011 season with four home games starting February 12, when they host King's (Pa.), Misericordia and Elizabethtown in an eight-day span. In addition to these contests and the 12 USA South Conference games, SU will also face fellow Fayetteville Regional participant Salisbury University in a non-league game on March 15.

The Sea Gulls are the No. 21 team in the ABCA pre-season poll.

"We play in the toughest Division III league in the nation," Anderson said. "To be prepared for those games, we have to play tough teams out-of-conference. Salisbury is part of that, as are the ODAC schools that we traditionally play. Our schedule is designed to help us peak at the end of the season."

Bobby Stefanowicz

