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## Demons open baseball drills with many new faces

1/19/2007

BASEBALL: Demons welcome 27 new players as practice gets underway this week



There has been virtually a complete overhaul of the Northwestern State baseball team, but don't expect the 2007 season to be a rebuilding year for the 9-time Southland Conference champion Demons.

Sixth-year head coach Mitch Gaspard welcomes a slew of new faces as the Demons open spring practice this week.

Sure, NSU returns just one position starter and two starting pitchers off of last year's team that finished 33-28 but surged to a runner-up spot in the league postseason tournament. But the truth is Gaspard and his assistants sought out and brought in firepower the program has not seen in quite some time.

"This is a similar situation than when I was in my second year here," said Gaspard. "The difference is, we built this team with junior college players instead of high school like we did back then. We've got more experienced players with more maturity. We picked up some guys that will step up and make an immediate impact."

Of the 27 new faces on this year's team, 16 have transferred in from other colleges while the other nine are redshirt or true freshmen. And of the 16 transfers, eight were named to their respective all-conference teams with two players earning JUCO All-American honors.

"We feel we're as deep as we've ever been," said Gaspard. "We can go five or six deep in the outfield and have two quality catchers. As much as anything, there is a lot of competition of the field which is making our practices and intrasquad games very interesting."

Highly touted shortstop Brandon Richey and outfielder Dylan Libadisos headline the list of transfers.

Richey, a junior from Sour Lake, Texas, transferred in from LSU-Eunice where he rewrote the offensive record book in leading his team to the NJCAA Division II World Series championship last season.

He earned First-Team All-American honors after hitting .424 with 11 home runs and 53 runs batted in. He set season records with 98 hits, 85 runs scored, 32 stolen



### Daily Demon Blog

#### DEMONS AT-A-GLANCE

(Home Games Bold)

SPORT	TEAM	DATE
SFTB	ASU	02/08
BSKW	SHSU	02/08
<b>BSKM</b>	<b>SHSU</b>	<b>02/08</b>
SFTB	TXTEC	02/09
SFTB	FLA	02/09
<b>TNNS</b>	<b>ARKST</b>	<b>02/09</b>
<b>BASE</b>	<b>DALBP</b>	<b>02/09</b>
SFTB	FRSNO	02/10
SFTB	CSFUL	02/10
<b>BSKW</b>	<b>SFA</b>	<b>02/10</b>
<b>BASE</b>	<b>DALBP</b>	<b>02/10</b>



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#### THIS WEEK'S POLL

The NSU Demons and Sam Houston State Bearkats collide for the only time this year Thursday night at Prather Coliseum. They have been the SLC's two most successful teams this decade. (3 votes)

Is the NSU-Sam Houston rivalry the best in the SLC today?

[\(View Result\)](#)

Yes, in men's hoops

I like NSU-SLU better

bases and 21 doubles.

Libadisos, a junior from Alea, Hawaii and Highland Community College, earned All-American honors after hitting .489 with 12 home runs and 61 RBI.

“Both of those guys are going to be top flight players at their positions in this league. Richey has so much talent and Libadisos is going to bring some solid defense as well as a strong bat.”

Expected to join Richey in the infield is returning letterwinner Mike Jaworski at first base, junior transfer Clay Baker (.371, 27 stolen bases at Weatherford JC) at second base, redshirt freshman Chase Lyles at third and junior transfer Anthony Jones (.250, 4 HR, 27 RBI at Seminole State) behind the plate.

In the outfield, Libadisos will be joined by returning letterman Casey DeRosa and junior transfer Bernard Williams (Crowder College).

Knox McCorquodale will return as the team’s designated hitter. McCorquodale hit .246 with three home runs and 18 RBI in 46 games last season.

On the mound, the Demons welcome back starters LHP Fraser Robinson and RHP Drew Brown as well as RHP Jimmy Heard.

Robinson, a senior from Ontario, Canada, went 5-5 last season with a team-best 3.27 ERA – sixth-best in the SLC. He tossed a team-high 107.1 innings and had 61 strikeouts.

Brown, a senior from Spring, Texas, compiled a 5-7 record and 4.60 earned run average. He struck out 73 batters in 76.1 inning pitched and had 49 Ks in 46.1 innings in league play.

Heard, a sophomore from Bossier City, finished the year with a perfect 5-0 mark in 21 appearances and one start. The Airline High product had 40 strikeouts in 53.1 innings and was 3-0 with a 3.18 ERA in league games.

“All three of those guys logged a lot of innings last year and all should compete for weekend starting jobs,” said Gaspard. “We brought in some quality arms that will make us much improved on the mound.”

Among the newcomers, Jason Grace (2-2, 2.25 at Seminole State), Jason Troth (7-3, 3.05 at Weatherford College) and Ryan Campbell (Eastfield JC – Division III JUCO World Series champion) are expected to make the biggest impact.

Although the schedule is dotted with a three-game series at Houston, a stint at the Southern Miss Classic and single games at LSU and Tulane, it does appear to be favorable to the Demons.

“We definitely like the schedule. We play our first four games at home, so that will let us get our feet wet. We’ve got a good mix of quality opponents with the front half of our schedule allowing us to play some guys to let us get a feel of how our team will be before we get into conference play.”

The league expands to 12 teams this year with the addition of Texas A&M-Corpus Christi and Central Arkansas. It also divides into two divisions – the East and West. NSU will play in the East with Lamar and McNeese State – two of the top tier teams in the league – along with Southeastern Louisiana, Nicholls State and Central Arkansas.

“The conference just got a little tougher and a little deeper,” said Gaspard. “A lot of the same teams are expected to be at the top but each year, it seems to get tougher and tougher.”

- in hoops
- NSU-SFA in hoops is my favorite
- It's gotta be NSU-McNeese in hoops, too
- The NSU-Lamar series is it

Vote



"We feel really good about this team. But we won't really find out about it until we get on the field and compete. From the practice standpoint, weight room workouts and the little things throughout the fall, that's what is making us believe this is going to be a good team."

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