

BASEBALL

season in review



The DBU Patriot baseball team received national attention and accolades for their truly historic season, capturing the Fort Worth NCAA Division I Regional Tournament.

"We talk often to our players about being our best at the end—the end of practice, the end of games, the end of the season. I think we did that this year. It was a joy to watch guys compete with such intensity," said Patriot Head Coach Dan Heefner, who is in his fourth year leading the program along with assistant coaches, Bob Keller and Nate Frieling.

The team finished the regular season with a 39-17 record, gaining big wins over nationally ranked teams TCU, Texas A&M, Rice, Texas Tech, Oklahoma State University, the University of Oklahoma, and the University of Washington. But even after clenching their final series of 2011, the Patriots still had to await a decision from the NCAA Selection Committee whether they would be awarded an at-large bid to the NCAA Tournament.

A crowd gathered to watch the NCAA Selection Show, and tension grew until the final regional site, located at TCU, was named. The Patriots were listed as the number 3 seed and would be facing top-seeded TCU Horned Frogs, the University of Oklahoma, and Oral Roberts University.

Taking on the Oklahoma Sooners in the first game of the tournament, the Patriots had a great start with senior Jason Krizan bringing home the first run of the night and recording his NCAA-leading 38th double of the season. Although the Sooners tried to come back, Patriot closer senior Chris Haney shut the door to secure the DBU victory and set up a match against TCU.

Facing TCU, the Patriots struck early, capturing the lead. In the sixth inning, junior Landon Anderson's RBI brought home junior Joel Hutter, giving DBU the 3-2 lead. As with the previous game, Haney came in to close out the game, finishing it off with a strike out.

Just one victory away from their first ever NCAA Super Regional appearance, the Patriots took on the Oral Roberts Golden Eagles only to fall 7-2. The loss forced a second game against the Golden Eagles with elimination for both teams on the line.

The Patriots were able to secure a win the following day, taking a commanding 8-0 lead early in the game. In the top of the third, the Golden Eagles chipped away at the Patriot lead, leaving the score 8-4.

With both teams strong at the plate, the bottom of the seventh saw a 11-9 Patriot lead. Haney entered the game to find himself with ORU runners on second and third. Striking out the final two batters, Haney ensured the Patriots two-run lead. Making quick work of the Golden Eagles' final at-bat in the ninth, Haney retired the first two batters quickly. The final batter hit a pop-up foul, which was caught to secure the Patriots' victory and first ever Super Regional appearance.

Five Patriots earned a spot on the Fort Worth Regional All-Tournament Team, including Hutter, Krizan, Haney, and senior Brandon Williamson. Anderson was named the tournament's Most Valuable Player after batting .375 and knocking in four RBI.

Although falling to the University of California in the Super Regional contest in Santa Clara, the Patriots made history for DBU athletics and finished ranked in the Top 25 nationally—#16 by Collegiate Baseball and #21 by the National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association.

Likewise, there were individual accolades for Krizan, Williamson, and Haney who were selected in the 2011 MLB Draft by the Detroit Tigers, Milwaukee Brewers, and San Diego Padres, respectively. Senior Tyler Robbins was named to the American Baseball Coaches Association NCAA Division I Second-Team All-American for leading the nation in hit by pitch, while Krizan was named to the ABCA First-Team All-American. Krizan also picked up Louisville Slugger First-Team All-American, Perfect Game First-Team All-American, NCBWA Division I First-Team All-American, and Baseball America's First-Team All-American awards; he was likewise chosen as the 19th annual Howard Green SABR Metroplex College Player of the Year and was a Golden Cleat semi-finalist.

"The rankings and the accolades are nice and are a testament to the work the guys put in this year," continued Heefner, "but ultimately our goal is to glorify God with the way we play. Whether regular season, NCAA Tournament, Omaha—we want to conduct ourselves in a way that shows Him in a great light, and we'll let wins and losses figure themselves out."





Congratulations, Patriots!

2011 NCAA Fort Worth Regional Champions
Advance to Super Regionals