



Eddie Kim

A Diamond of a Season

2002 JMU baseball season wrap-up

The Diamond Dukes finished the 2002 season with one of the most successful seasons in the history of the program, with a record of 44-16. For the first time since 1995, the team was ranked by Baseball America, claiming the number 22 spot. Out of 286 teams, they also debuted at No. 26 by National Collegiate Baseball and No. 25 by the Collegiate Baseball Writers' Association.

The Dukes set numerous records this season including the record for wins in a season, 44. The record for most double plays was set at 67, and two homerun records were also broken. The record for homeruns in a season was crushed at 87, (previously 62), and a game-record eight homeruns, came against Liberty.

"We did a lot of things this year, I was very pleased," says head coach Spanky McFarland. "We always try to set goals and this season we achieved most of those goals."

The Dukes were the top-seed going into the CAA Championships and ended up placing second. Eddie Kim was the CAA Player of the Year and McFarland was the CAA Coach of the Year. Kim finished the season with 99 hits, 74 RBIs and 24 doubles - each just one shy of a single-season record. Kim was also named to the third team All-America by National Collegiate Baseball. McFarland finished his fifth year at JMU with an overall record of 152-117-2.

Third baseman, Brent Metheny, and left-handed pitcher, Jared Doyle, were selected to the All-CAA first team, chosen by the CAA's head baseball coaches. Selected to the All-CAA Second Team were left-handed pitcher, Dan Meyer, and second baseman, Mitch Rigsby.

Also for the first time since 1995, the Diamond Dukes received a bid to the NCAA regional championships, which were held in Columbia, S.C. Their appearance was only the sixth in the team's history. They went 1-2 at regionals, defeating VCU, the CAA Champions, and losing twice to UNC-Chapel Hill.

McFarland says he was happy with their performance in South Carolina. "In the history of our program, we have been to NCAA's three or four times, but never won any games. This year we didn't just go, we actually won."

With two pitchers, Meyer and Doyle, being drafted in Major League Baseball's 2002 first-year player draft, McFarland says, "we still have a nice crop of pitchers in the fold." However, some roles will change, such as relief pitchers becoming starters and back-up starters seeing more playing time. "The number three, four and five starters are going to have to step up," he adds.

The Diamond Dukes are expecting 11 freshmen next year. "It's a big class, but we anticipated losing more in the draft," says McFarland, who hopes his seniors will "set the stage" for the incoming class.

As for next season's outlook, McFarland says he wants to build on this year's experience and sustain their goals. "Every year we want to win CAA's, win 40 games and go to NCAA's. Hopefully our experience this year will help us."

Story by Janelle DiOrio ('03)

Photos by JMU Sports Media Relations, the Macon Braves and the Lansing Lugnuts