

Ask A Grizzly: Aaron Holley

You submitted the questions and Grizzlies head coach Aaron Holley has the answers.

Holley is in his first year at the helm of the Cheyenne Grizzlies. He also has served as an assistant coach for his alma mater, University of Redlands, for the past five seasons and is a former assistant coach of the Grizzlies.

How did you get in to coaching?

Aaron Holley: I knew that I wanted to stay in sports somehow, and once I realized my playing days were done, coaching was the next best thing to playing. I got into it not really thinking what I was getting into, but once I started coaching I can't imagine doing anything else.

Why did you choose to coach the Grizzlies?

AH: Scott Laverty, who is the head coach at Redlands, was the former coach here for the Grizzlies. In 2008 he invited me to join him for the summer. Now I'm back as the head coach.

Did you select some of the players on the current roster?

AH: The local kids were all signed by (general manager/owner) Ron (Kailey). Every single person other than that, besides maybe one or two players, I contacted them or spoke with their coach. I contacted coaches I knew and trusted, knowing I could trust the caliber of player they were giving me. Some of the players that play out in the Midwest, I didn't know much about, so I had to look at stats online and talk to their coaches about the type of player and person they are.

How did you decide the lineups at the beginning of the season when you were just getting to know the players?

AH: originally our plan was to go into the season trying to see as many guys as we could. We were trying to give everyone at-bats and defensive innings. Pitching wise, for the first week, we limited pitchers to three innings so I could see everybody. We kind of juggled the lineup a little bit, put out different lineups for the first week and tried to see where we thought different players fit in and what roles they were going to play this summer.

Now that you've been playing for a couple of weeks, do you feel like you have a feel for the team?

AH: I think we know them pretty well. We can definitely sit there and make a lineup and say, 'this is the best offensive lineup' or 'this is the best defensive lineup'. That doesn't mean that will always be the lineup. Guys need rest and also, guys need to play. They came out here to play. You want to win, but it's not like school ball where you play your best guys at all times. You have to try to juggle that as much as possible, and I think that's the hardest thing.

What were some of the verbal exchanges between you and the umpire in Fort Collins last week? Do you think that you being ejected fired your team up?

AH: I don't know if it was a spark; that's not why I did it. It was only the second inning and we were down 2-1. I will say, I tell my players they aren't allowed to argue balls or do anything like that. It's my job to back them up and have their back when there are bad calls or calls they don't think go their way because I'm requiring them not to say a word. It wasn't just that call, it was a culmination of a few games.

After getting ejected how did you spend the rest of the game?

AH: The rule is you're supposed to be out of sight, out of mind, which means you're not allowed to be near the ballpark at all. Originally I was down the right-field line but they had the owner come and tell me I had to leave. So I actually took the team van and parked it in center field and watched the game from sitting in the van.

When you got ejected, did you say anything to your assistant coach before leaving the dugout regarding how you wanted the game or your pitching staff run?

AH: The only thing we really needed to talk about was arms and who we had available to pitch that day. He asked who we had and I said 'everybody.'

Now that you've seen the team for several weeks, what would you say are its biggest strengths and biggest weaknesses?

AH: our biggest strengths definitely are we don't have personalities on our team. Summer ball can be very, very selfish, and that's the best way to tear a team apart. We have a great group of guys, and that's our biggest strength, really. Obviously they can all play and we can do things with the sticks and gloves that can help us win, but what's going to ultimately determine it is just the guys themselves.

There's always a weakness when you come into a summer season with guys you don't know. Different schools run things differently, they communicate things differently, so I think that's the hardest part of it, just getting that continuity and familiarity and getting everybody on the same page. I think it's coming, though.

Did you or the team set any goals for the season? If so, what are they?

AH: We didn't verbalize any goals, but when there's only three other teams in the league, I think it's pretty easy to determine what your goal is and it's to win the league. It just kind of goes unsaid.

This week's Ask A Grizzly is starting pitcher Bryce Reid. E-mail questions to Nic at nic.cheyennegrizzlies@gmail.com by Sunday morning to get them answered by Bryce.

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