

Mounds View Baseball Players and Parents,

The purpose of this email is to briefly introduce myself.

First, a little background:

After leaving Mounds View 3 years ago, I came to the realization that the high school environment is where I feel I belong, and where I want to be. That said, my 7 years of experience with college baseball at St. Olaf College has been tremendous and invaluable for me. I am extremely excited to have the opportunity to be back at Mounds View High School!

My wife Marguerite and I live in Apple Valley (a comfortable 30 minute commute), and we plan to move at some point in the not too distant future. My daughter Erin is in Client Relations for CMW Financial in Dallas, Texas, and my son Joe is an Engineer with General Electric in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Having had two kids go through the high school and high school athletics experience not too long ago, I can relate to the joys and challenges of parenting high school kids...

Second, here are a few things that are important to me:

- Coach Nuss and I worked closely together my first 4 years here at Mounds View High School; I have tremendous respect for him. Obviously, the baseball program has made some great strides with Coach Nuss the last 3 years! I'm fired up that Jon will continue to provide significant leadership as Associate Head Coach; I am excited to be working closely with Jon going forward to continue to build the baseball program. A strong coaching staff is in place, and my hope is that all will want to return for the 2014 season; I will be meeting with all of them over the next couple of weeks.
- I understand that leadership can never just be granted. Leadership is always earned. I will work extremely hard to earn the trust of players, parents and all others involved in the baseball program at Mounds View High School.
- We will teach life lessons. While we may be coaching the game of baseball, what's really happening is we're all learning about ourselves and about life through competing in the game of baseball.
- We will coach within the framework of the overall high school experience and priorities. I strongly support and encourage multiple sport athletes!
- We have high expectations for all involved; Class and Commitment are two words the players will hear a lot from me. We will do everything within an environment of commitment, respect and enthusiasm. We will have fun. Fun is working hard and

getting better, and fun is also simply enjoying the game; it's really fun to connect solidly with the bat, or to just play catch...

- We will focus on performance, not on the end result. We get better results when we focus on the things that we control, especially in a failure oriented game like baseball – we cannot succeed if we are afraid to fail. We don't make excuses, and we don't focus on past events that have already happened. When things don't go our way, we move on.
- We will emphasize three things from a baseball standpoint:
 - Execute with Fundamentals
 - Be Mentally Tough
 - Compete aggressively (“with a purpose”)

It was extremely exciting to watch the Mustangs win a state championship last season! Clearly, we want to build on that going forward. That said, history and tradition never won a game or a championship. Hard work and a commitment to executing, being mentally tough, and competing is what provides the opportunity for future success.

- We will communicate well. Coaches must insure that expectations are clear with players. Also, coaches need to explain “why,” not just “how.” Coaches must be available and approachable with players and parents. Likewise, players are expected to communicate with coaches. I always welcome a conversation with a player or a parent; making sure expectations are clear is critical. All I ask is that parents do not contact me immediately before or after a game. My phone number is **612-716-1088**.

Third, about my involvement at Mounds View High School and with Summer Baseball:

In addition to coaching baseball, it's very important to me to be part of the high school environment at Mounds View High School. I will do some site management at various athletic events, and I will be at Mounds View High School many school days. Mounds View High School and Baseball is my one and only employment focus.

We have outstanding youth baseball programs with great tradition and success. I am committed to supporting the efforts of the Tri-City Legion program and SAYB. I will likely be involved in coaching the VFW team. The Summer Fun programs will continue; I'm a strong believer in unstructured (supervised, of course) baseball activity as a means for players to develop skills and a passion for the game.

Lastly, and most importantly, I look forward to meeting you:

1. I am excited to get to know the players through the course of the fall and winter. As a starting point, we will have a brief meeting for any players interested and available this Thursday immediately after school.

2. The Diamond Club's first meeting of the school year is this Tuesday, September 10 at 7:00PM at MVHS. The Diamond Club is a volunteer parent run

booster club that does an outstanding job of supporting the Mounds View High School Baseball Program. I am very appreciative of all the efforts parents contribute to baseball at Mounds View High School; it is significant and it contributes mightily towards providing for a quality high school program! All parents who are interested in helping out are encouraged to attend! I will stick around after the Diamond Club Meeting to meet you and answer any questions you may have.

If you have any questions, comments, or just want to talk about the baseball program, please feel free to call (**612-716-1088**) or email (markdowney0@gmail.com or new school email available soon: mark.downey@moundsviewschools.org)

I highly value and enjoy the opportunity to play a role in helping kids develop through athletics. I take the opportunity to teach/coach seriously and enthusiastically. I commit to you that I will strive continuously to do it well.

Regards,

Mark Downey