

Clark puts Brand on baseball team

Instructor at school will coach college's upstart program

By PAUL VALENCIA
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Clark College's return to baseball has a field leader.

Lee Brand, who teaches health and physical education at Clark College and is a former college athlete, has been named the head coach of the Clark College baseball team.

"Baseball's been a part of my life pretty much my whole life,"

said Brand, adding that he is excited to be part of the process of returning the Penguins to the diamond.

The club team will compete in fall ball before playing a full schedule next spring. The plan is for the program to transition to a varsity sport for the 2010-11 school year and join the Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges.

It will be the first time Clark has had a baseball program since 1992.

Brand was a three-year starter at the University of New Mexico. After his playing days, he played

and coached semi-pro ball before landing the head coaching position at Riverland Community College in Austin, Minn. He has been on staff at Clark since 2001.

"We are very fortunate to have a person of Lee Brand's caliber as a member of the health and physical education department," Clark athletic director Denny Huston said. "He has a tremendous baseball background, and he's an excellent teacher."

While there has been no team at Clark, Brand has kept himself busy in the sport. He has been a volunteer assistant with the Uni-

versity of Portland, he coaches youth baseball teams, and he runs an adult baseball league in the summers.

"Since we (didn't) have baseball at Clark, I've tried to keep my baseball fix," he said.

His focus is now turning toward Clark College baseball. He said he will apply for the varsity head coaching position when it opens, but for now, he wants to excel with organizing the club team.

"Primarily (the job is) to get players to come in and be

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Update

■ Previously:

Clark College athletic director Denny Huston announced plans to bring baseball back as a club sport in 2009-10.

■ What's new:

Health and physical education instructor Lee Brand has been named head coach of the club baseball program.

■ What's next:

Brand will begin working on getting players to fill out his roster, schedule games against other area college programs, and take steps to get the program to varsity status by 2010-11.

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part of the club team, schedule games against local college and universities to play against, and help with getting the field up to the standard of play for the NWAACC," Brand said. "When they hire the head coach — if different from me — I will work with the head coach to help with recruiting, and help with the

transition from club team to intercollegiate team."

The first order of business is finding players. Club teams cannot offer scholarships so there is no official recruiting.

It's more of just getting the word out that a team is forming at Clark and will eventually become a varsity sport that will offer some scholarship money.

Players who participate on the club team next school year will not lose any college eligibility. Any Clark College student is eligible to compete. Those interest-

ed can contact Brand by e-mail at lbrand@clark.edu.

Brand does not know the details of the future of the program, nor his involvement, beyond this coming year, but he is thrilled to see the college giving baseball another at-bat.

"I've been involved with trying to get it back at Clark the last three years," he said. "It's been an uphill battle and little frustrating at times, but it looks like we're on the right tack. The community's involved, and it's been fun being a part of that."