Softball duo and Danny Muno prepare for the season

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Head Coach Margie Wright Celebrates her 25th year with Fresno State

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Bulldogs will be heard

KMJ will broadcast 42 of the 58 games for the Bulldogs this season

By Ben Ingersoll
The Collegian

Who said there was such a thing as too much Fresno State Baseball? Last month KMJ Radio (580 AM) announced its plan to broadcast 42 of Bulldog baseball’s 58 games, including 27 home games as well as any postseason games the ‘Dogs may have.

Fresno State athletic has deep ties with KMJ Radio, having collaborated with each other for more than 35 years now, covering baseball, basketball, football and volleyball.

KMJ radio’s sports director Paul Loeffler and Ray O’Canto will again be the voice of Bulldogs baseball.

Loeffler, who also doubles as radio broadcaster of Fresno State men’s basketball and football, is entering his tenth season with Bulldogs baseball.

“Being involved with Bulldog baseball has been a big blessing and I can’t believe it’s my tenth season in the booth already, but I’m definitely as excited as I was going into year one,” said Loeffler on gobulldogs.com.

O’Canto, meanwhile, is very familiar with the Fresno State red and blue. In 1981 O’Canto delivered an all-conference season as a Fresno State outfielder. He is entering his third consecutive year as the KMJ Radio Fresno State baseball announcer.

The ‘Dogs season opener is now only nine days away and KMJ Radio will be there for pitch-by-pitch action. Of the 42 games broadcasted, eight will be double-headers on the 2010 schedule.

“I’m delighted to team up again with Ray O’Canto, and thrilled that KMJ will be bringing the Bulldogs’ most important ballgames to listeners all over the state,” Loeffler said on gobulldogs.com.

Illustration by Michael Uribes/The Collegian

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Saturdays, February 13, 2010
Bulldogs mark high expectations

With strong returners and fresh newcomers, the ‘Dogs are prepared to win

By Vongni Yang
The Collegian

After winning four straight Western Athletic Conference (WAC) championships and capturing the National Championship in 2008, expectations for the Fresno State baseball team could not be any higher for players.

“We’ve got our goals set really high,” Ribera said. “We need to win the WAC tournament and then we go from there.”

The ‘Dogs ended their 2009 season a goal short of where they’re hoping to reach this year – a trip back to Omaha, Neb. for the College World Series.

“We didn’t get to where we wanted last year,” junior infielder Jordan Ribera said.

“We take it one regional at a time and then we go super regional. Obviously, we want to get back to Omaha.”

With a strong corps of returning players and a fresh group of newcomers, the ‘Dogs expect to field a championship-caliber team in 2010.

“With the players we have this year, our team will be really good and solid,” Ribera said.

Returning for the diamond ‘Dogs will include two preseason All-Americans, junior Danny Muno, a Louisville Slugger first-team All-American second baseman, and sophomore outfielder Dusty Robinson, a third-team All-American selection by the National College Baseball Writers Association.

Muno, the team’s leadoff hitter and most consistent player, led the ‘Dogs with a .379 batting average during the 2009 season. He also had 85 hits. Muno will look to continue his hot hitting ways into the 2010 season.

Robinson started 52 games and played in 60 during the ’09 season, while batting .319 with 15 home runs.

Robinson hopes to play a major role in the 2010 season. He said he wants to contribute to the team anyway he can, whether it’s on defense fielding baseballs or on offense helping his team get on base. “It’s not all about ‘I’, it’s about ‘We’ as a team,” Robinson said.

Another key returner will be senior outfielder Steve Detwiler. Detwiler is one of the five seniors on the team. The College World Series hero will look to add another championship to what has already been a decorated career.

The key newcomers looking to contribute are freshman infielders Clay Cederquist and Kaohu Gaspar. The pitching staff was kept in tact after only losing senior closer Holden Sprague.

Returning for the ‘Dogs will be senior pitcher Matt Morse, 2009’s Friday-night starter, who started 11 games while appearing in 19.

Other key pitchers who are looking for time on the mound will be sophomore Derek Benny, Josh Poytress, and Cody Kendall – who have a combined 26 starts. All three are rookies, but experienced pitchers.

If the ‘Dogs can come together as a team and get off to a fast start, look for these ‘Dogs to meet their expectations.

“We need to start out good,” Ribera said. “If we start out good, I think we can get into a groove and start rolling from there.”

Meet the coaches

Head Coach: Mike Batesole
Experience: 8 Years
Alma Mater: Cal State Fullerton ’90

Assistant Coach: Matt Curtis
Experience: 10 Years
Alma Mater: Fresno State ’96

Assistant Coach: Pat Waer
Experience: 4 Years
Alma Mater: Washington State’95

Volunteer Coach: Gregg Raymundo
Experience: 2 Years
Alma Mater: Pepperdine ’99

Junior infielder Jordan Ribera finished last season with four home runs, 10 RBI’s and was named 2009 WAC Tournament MVP.
Muno eager to win

By Megan Morales
The Collegian

With opening day just around the corner, junior Danny Muno is prepared both mentally and physically to give fans something to look forward to in his third season as a Bulldog.

Muno landed a spot on the Louisville Slugger list of 2010 preseason All-Americans after finishing last season with a .379 batting average, 85 hits, 41 runs batted in, 13 stolen bases and a single season record with 64 walks.

After the Bulldogs fell short in last year’s National Collegiate Athletic Association tournament in Irvine, Calif., Muno was left unsatisfied and eager to improve in the off-season.

Muno was invited to play in the prestigious Cape Cod Baseball League, in Massachusetts for the Orleans Firebirds last summer and the opportunity was only made more enjoyable by getting to play on the same team as his older brother Kevin, who currently plays for University of California, San Diego.

“It was a blast,” Muno said. “It reminded me of high school, and playing with him when we were growing up.”

His brother Kevin wasn’t the only familiar face while playing on the east coast; the Firebirds’ head coach Kelly Nicholson was a math teacher and baseball coach at the brothers’ alma mater, Loyola High School.

In addition to improving his speed and fielding skills while in Massachusetts, Muno spent time in Santa Barbara at a facility that trains some of the world’s most elite athletes.

Muno learned how to prepare mentally for the upcoming season and for the big leagues while spending time with several high profile players including Seattle Mariners pitcher Garret Olson, and Minnesota Twins outfielder Delmon Young.

“They offered a lot of advice while I was there,” Muno said. “They stressed the importance of always being a good teammate before anything.”

To Fresno State fans, it’s no secret Danny Muno is a star at the plate. Since his freshman year, Muno has continuously produced hits for the Bulldog lineup. With his keen hand-eye coordination and fundamentally sound swing, he is arguably one of the nation’s top leadoff hitters.

Two years ago as a freshman, Muno made his mark early and earned a starting spot quickly. He started 74 games that season and played shortstop for the national champion Bulldogs. Last season he split time between shortstop and second base, and this year he’ll be spending most of his time at second.

“Whatever helps the team out,” Muno said. “I played second base in high school and during my summer league, so I’m comfortable at either spot.”

Fans have watched the talented 20 year old grow into a mature player over the last two years. From striking out, to putting balls over the outfield fence, having the patience at the plate to draw walks and even driving the ball up the middle for a game winning hit, Muno has been nothing short of smooth and classy since becoming a Bulldog.

“With at-bats comes more experience,” Muno said. “You learn how to deal with adversity, which I’ve learned a lot about this summer playing in the Cape.”

This season Muno will have his eyes on Omaha, but first he’s ready to help clinch the Bulldogs’ fourth consecutive Western Athletic Conference (WAC) title.

The 2010 team was recently picked as the favorite to win the WAC title in the coach’s preseason poll, and Muno was named the conference’s preseason Player of the Year.

With the offseason coming to an end, Muno and the Bulldogs are more than ready to take the field against Nebraska on Feb. 19, and one of Muno’s goals for the team is to start this season stronger than the previous two.

“We’ve always had a rough time getting off to a good start,” Muno said. “But we’ve been working really hard in practice and in the weight room to get the team ready for the beginning of the season by finding the right lineup and building chemistry.”

As the Bulldogs hope to build chemistry early on, one thing fans can look forward to is the chemistry Muno has consistently displayed swinging a baseball bat.
Two Bulldogs reign supreme in the record books for Fresno State’s softball team, but neither takes the credit for themselves; instead they call it a team effort.

Returning juniors, pitcher Morgan Melloh and catcher Caitlin Stiglich, look to lead the team to another conference title and even further to the Women’s College World Series, in Oklahoma City.

Melloh received several preseason honors this year, including the 2010 Western Athletic Conference (WAC) Preseason Pitcher of the Year and was named to the ASA Top 50 preseason watch list. Melloh, who recorded 450 strikeouts last season, credits the achievement to the help she gets from behind the plate.

Stiglich has been the starting catcher the last two seasons for the Bulldogs, one of five who started every game in the 2009 season.

Margie Wright, head coach of the women’s softball team, gives credit to the two athletes and their chemistry on the field.

“T__hink they are a pretty good combination, and they have had plenty of games to get experience in doing that,” Wright said.

“They know one another pretty well and I think that is a huge compliment to both of them for trying to find out what makes this person click and how can I do to help her be better,” Wright said.

Although Stiglich provides support for Melloh, she admits that at times she pressures her to buckle down and get to work.

“When she says, ‘hey come on Morgan,’ it gets me a little bit mad but it is a good mad and it makes me throw even harder,” Melloh said.

Stiglich, like Melloh, also has a fierce arm, making the opponents shy away from stealing bases or testing her abilities in fear of losing the battle.

Her impact, however, doesn’t end with defense but translates offensively as well. In 2009 Stiglich received Second-Team All-WAC selection, leading the team with 37 RBI’s and two grand slams.

While this dynamic duo receives recognition statistically, they do not take the credit. Each one has a desire to be a part of a team, and without the team neither of them could do it on their own.

“It takes teamwork to win and not just individual stats,” Melloh said. “I think we just create stats for ourselves just as a whole team.”

Both agree that this season is all about winning. Not just to continue to achieve the 22 WAC conference title but to go further and achieve the ultimate goal of Nationals.

“To win. Always to win. Win the WAC, win regional’s, go to super regional’s, get into the World Series and win the World Series,” Caitlin said.

With a dynamic team that only lost one player from the 2009 season, and with the addition of many new bodies, their hopes are not out of reach.

“Our main goal is to come out on top. To just increase our motivation and work on communication and get past regional,” Melloh said. “We have been struggling for the past two years, and I think this is definitely our year to go. Our team looks good and we are ready to come out and do it.”

With the season kicking off this weekend, these two are ready to face it with determination and enthusiasm to make it to the top.
Wright gives her players the credit for the many awards she has achieved as a coach

By Brianna Campbell  The Collegian

At 10 years Margie Wright played in a summer softball league for the first time, marking the beginning of a journey that would set her up to become one of the most well-known coaches in the nation.

With 36 years of softball experience, Wright, the head coach of Fresno State’s softball team, will celebrate her 25th year on the Bulldog diamond this season.

In 1974, Wright graduated from Illinois State University, where she lettered in softball, basketball and field hockey. It was not the last time she would be on the diamond in Illinois. She returned to replace her college coach as head coach of the softball team for six years.

“When I got out of college I chose softball because I felt like I knew it better,” Wright said. “I was a head coach in volleyball and an assistant coach in softball before I went back to my alma mater and took my coaches position as head softball coach.”

Through Wright’s career as a coach she has achieved great accolades and received many awards for her achievements as a coach.

In 1987, Wright was named West Region Coach of the Year, first WAC Coach of the Year and PCAA Coach of the Year. Also, in 1996, Wright was named the women’s USA Olympic Softball Team assistant coach for the summer Olympic games. This was the first gold medal winning team for USA defeating China 3-1.

“It was pretty cool having five players on the first Olympic team too,” Wright said. “I am very used to being there, and that is always going to be our goal as a team.”

Wright and the Bulldogs are determined to achieve more this season, making it to the Women’s College World Series.

By Matt Weir  Collegen File Photo

Head Coach Margie Wright has spent 25 years coaching on Bulldog Diamond, with no sight of stopping.
New addition to Bulldog Diamond

Started last spring, a new indoor batting cage is completed just in time for the season

By Ben Ingersoll
The Collegian

In less than a year, Fresno State softball was able to add a vital need to the already impressive Bulldog Diamond—indoor batting cages.

The Bulldog Diamond has always been known for its beauty as a field and stadium. The women’s softball team takes pride in their field and tends to it year round to ensure its magnificent appearance. Now the new addition will add to the already complete Bulldog stadium.

Construction on the 3,600-square-foot facility began in spring 2009. The structure was completed with time to spare for the Bulldogs’ opening practice.

The building is located along Bulldog Diamond’s left field line, just beyond the already constructed outdoor batting cages.

The facility will allow Fresno State student-athletes to train whenever they want, fair weather or foul.

It also offers players a place to go and improve their skills on their own time or one-on-one with coaches. This is a place that the players can go and call their own.

The building houses three batting cages, each enclosed by nets, as well as two storage rooms and an Astroturf floor.

The building is not merely limited to pitchers and hitters, however. If need be, softball head coach Margie Wright said the facility can be also used to field ground balls.

Renovations for the new indoor batting cages are still in the works, as Fresno State plans to decorate the facility with pictures on the walls of former Bulldog All Americans.

The first official pitch of the softball season will take place in two days, as the ‘Dogs host Santa Clara in a Feb. 12 home contest.

By Brianna Campbell
collegian-features@csufresno.edu
**2010 Softball Home Schedule**

**BULLDOG DIAMOND**

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<td>vs. Cal State Bakersfield</td>
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<td>03/05-03/07</td>
<td>vs. Oregon</td>
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**2010 Baseball Home Schedule**

**PETE BEIDEN FIELD**

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Illustration by Brianna Campbell and Michael Uribes / The Collegian