

Baylor Baseball Fall Notebook: Predator Not Prey

New pitching coach Snedeker preaching attacking mindset throughout fall camp

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WACO, Texas – Attack, attack, attack. That's what new Baylor baseball pitching coach Sean Snedeker has preached throughout the first few weeks of fall ball – pound the strike zone, get ahead early in counts, and the percentages will be in your favor.

"He's shown us the numbers, and numbers don't lie," said fifth-year senior right-handed pitcher Cole Stasio. "When you get ahead on hitters, their batting averages go down. If you're behind in the count 2-1, batting averages are .350, but if you get ahead in a 1-2 count it goes down to like .130. So just being confident in your stuff and knowing we've got eight guys behind us to make plays -- attack, attack, attack, that's what he's been preaching to us. And it's been working this fall."

Through the first eight intrasquad scrimmages of the fall, BU's pitching staff has filled up the strike zone, with 13 pitchers firing strikes at over 60% of the time, including Stasio who leads the squad with a 71.6% total strike percentage. As a whole, the staff has allowed just 31 walks in nearly 90 innings of work on the mound.

"The results speak for themselves, and I think we've pitched extremely well," Snedeker said. "I think we've almost got 90 innings pitched and we've only got 30 walks, and that's elite. That's an elite level strike-throwing pitching staff. If we can maintain that, we'll be in good shape."

After battling injuries and other struggles on the mound last season, head coach Mitch Thompson brought in Snedeker, a 31-year coaching veteran who has led four teams to top-10 national ERAs at previous collegiate stops. Aiming to replicate that success in Waco, Snedeker has already liked what he's seen from the Bears on the bump.

"It's been great," Snedeker said of his first weeks in the green and gold. "It's always an adjustment period because you're learning a new way of doing things. You've got a new collection of players you're trying to get used to. That part of it is the challenge, but that's the fun part as well because we've got a lot of talent here. I've been very encouraged by what I've seen so far, and it's been exciting."

With the 2025 roster bolstered by a balanced mix of newcomers and returners, confidence, as well as competition, has been high around fall camp.

"It has been a hard and competitive fall," said senior catcher Cortlan Castle. "And what that's done is bring us all together. I mean, especially in the weight room, we're doing lifts at 6:00 p.m. and finishing at 7:30 at night, so we're all in there together. And by doing that we have all knitted together so closely. We're starting to see [results] out here on the field, too, which is exciting."

Part of the changes implemented in the 2024-25 year has been the addition of new athletics performance coach Daniel Darcy, who handles the strength and conditioning for the Bears.

“There’s been a ton of change,” Castle said. “I even think about this year alone, with Coach Darcy added to the strength staff, everybody’s gotten so much stronger. I think about the guys who were here when Coach Thompson first arrived, and the growth I’ve seen in myself and those others has been tremendous.”

While spirits are high as the team continues to progress throughout the offseason, the coaching staff holds even higher expectations for the spring season.

“I really think the sky’s the limit,” Snedeker said. “I know in the past, Baylor struggled a little bit on the mound, and I’m here to try to right the ship. This certainly is not about me – it’s about the guys in the uniform. But I’ve seen enough from these guys to know that we have more than enough to be super competitive in this league. The injuries were there last year, but hopefully we can keep everyone healthy. There’s a solid foundation in all areas for us to be very competitive in the Big 12.”

Of those recovering from injuries, Stasio, who has dealt with back-to-back season-ending ailments, has been a bright spot both on the field and in the clubhouse. As one of seven pitchers to not allow a walk so far this fall, the fifth-year senior is leading both vocally and by example.

“It’s been the biggest blessing,” Stasio said of his recovery from a hip injury that shut down his 2024 season after pitching just two innings across three appearances. “I really don’t know how else to describe it. A lot of people wouldn’t think so, getting hurt twice and going through two surgeries, but it gave me a chance to step back and realize that baseball isn’t forever. I used the time to learn more about myself and the game. Now, I’m more mentally strong than I’ve ever been, and physically it’s the best I’ve ever felt.”

As one of the veterans of the pitching staff, Stasio has recognized the positive direction the program is heading in and is excited to pass the torch to the younger guys who have flashed ability early in camp.

“It’s my fifth year here, and as a pitcher I know that every guy I face in the lineup is really, really good,” Stasio said. “The talent’s there. Each position has two or three guys that could start at it right now. To see the freshmen come in and step up too, that’s exciting to see for the future of Baylor baseball.”

Behind the plate, Castle offers a unique perspective as someone who works both with and against the BU pitchers, having to face them offensively multiple times a week. Through eight games, the senior backstop has recorded the second-highest batting average (.467) and third-best OPS (1.100) among the Baylor hitters, while also helping the pitchers to develop a strike-throwing mentality.

“Catchers always play a huge role in the success of the pitching staff,” Snedeker said. “One way is just literally by receiving the baseball and buying strikes, and another is being supportive of the pitching staff and staying positive. Those guys back there are the field generals. They develop the rapport with each pitcher and understand the nuances of what each guy throws, how their pitches move, the velocity. It’s a tough job, but they’ve all done a tremendous job.”

“There’s been a ton of strikes, a ton of command in the zone,” Castle said of the pitchers. “Not just fastballs, but all these guys are throwing curveballs and sliders for strikes, too. Early on, it’s been tough for the hitters because these guys are commanding the zone and throwing pitches wherever they want, in any count. From a catching perspective, it’s been great and fun to work with these guys. As a hitter, they’ve all been tough to face.”

While the Bears approach the halfway point of fall camp with encouraging results and positive momentum, Snedeker wants his pitching staff to continue developing that attacking mindset.

“I want our guys to be the predator and not the prey, you know, be on the attack and force hitters to put the ball in play. The percentages are always in the pitcher’s favor. And once they understand that, it allows them to attack the strike zone more fearlessly. We’ve got plenty of talent and plenty of depth to be really good on the mound.”

Baylor continues its fall slate and will scrimmage up to three times each week through the second week of November. All scrimmages are free and open to the public, with dates subject to change. First-pitch times will be announced on Baylor Baseball’s social media channels weekly.

To stay up to date on all things Baylor baseball, follow the team on its official Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts: @BaylorBaseball.

Baylor Baseball Upcoming Fall Intrasquad Scrimmage Schedule

Week 4 – Tuesday, Oct. 15; Thursday, Oct. 17; Saturday, Oct. 19

Week 5 – Tuesday, Oct. 22; Thursday, Oct. 24; Saturday, Oct. 26

Week 6 – Wednesday, Oct. 30; Thursday, Oct. 31; Friday, Nov. 1

Week 7 – Thursday, Nov. 7; Friday, Nov. 8; Saturday, Nov. 9

All dates are subject to change

First-pitch times to be announced weekly on Baylor Baseball’s social media channels

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