

NOVEMBER, 2023

THE GRINE(D) FOR NINE

CAN THE U TAMPA BASEBALL TEAM ACHIEVE A 9TH RING?

“Never let the fear of striking out keep you from playing the game.” – Babe Ruth

Welcome to the heart of the Sunshine State, where the love for baseball knows no bounds. Tampa, Florida, is not just known for its beautiful beaches, but its range of sports talent stemming from all year play. The University of Tampa, home to its 8 time national champion baseball team, is on the hunt to flip that 8 into a 9 backed by their legendary coach, Joe Urso.

Joe Urso was a 4 year starter as a second basemen when he was a student at The University of Tampa. A two time All-American in his junior and senior year as a Spartan, Joe Urso. After his time playing for the Spartan's he came back to coach in 2001. “It was meant to be... but it took awhile to get there.” he said when asked why he came back to coach, and meant to be it was. Since he

came back to coach the Spartans, he has become the most winningest coach in college baseball history. “The records and numbers don’t mean anything at the end of the day. Sure they’re nice to look at from time to time but records don’t do anything for the team, and this a team game.” Since Urso has taken over as coach, he has led the Spartans to 16 SSC Conference titles as well as 11 regional championships. Every season Urso finds a new way to break a record, with 16 of his 22 seasons being 40+ win seasons paired with the 2006 and 2014 season where his team won over 54 games. But his success has also shown off the field with 74 MLB draft picks since 2001 and a record of 10 picks in the 2010 draft alone. All in all, Coach Urso goes into his 24th season as head coach with one goal, WIN!

WHAT’S TO COME THIS SEASON?

The 2023 season ended with a bit of sour taste left in the Spartans mouth. After having a dominant regular season like usual, finishing 26-4 and a top the SSC rankings, they went into the NCAA regionals as a clear title favorite and a host of the South East region. Things did not go as planned however as the Spartans were knocked off by conference rival Rollins College in the Regional Final.

“Yeah, that’s a game we try to forget...” Coach Urso said when asked about the Rollins game. “...we know what happened and where we went wrong so we try not to dwell on it to much and just focus on the games be have coming up this season.”

The 2024 baseball season starts in January with various exhibition and pre-season friendly games being played. The Spartans look to pick up where they left off from last season and get back to winning ways to ensure that last seasons regional loss was simply just a fluke. It all begins this January as the Spartans start the “Grine(d) for Nine”



Coach Urso briefing his players before one of their fall scrimages.



Coach Joe Urso looking on as one of his players comes up to bat – USA TODAY