

# Raabe excited to make move to college coaching

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By Jim Bastian—Journal Sports Writer

NEW ULM - Former New Ulmite Brian Raabe, head baseball coach at Forest Lake High School, said he is "very excited to coach at the next level."

Tuesday Raabe was named the new head baseball coach at Bethel College.

"Now I get to coach college-age players and get to recruit and try and form a team," he said, after resigning from his head baseball job and from his job with a local bank in Forest Lake Monday. "Hopefully we can do well there and win championships at Bethel. I cannot wait to get started at it. It will be a big challenge coaching in the MIAC (Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference). It is a great challenge. Bethel is known for high academics, a Christ centered institution along with very good athletics. It fits me in the different realms that I believe in."

Raabe, who coached 11 years at Forest Lake High School, said that he learned a lot in his time as head baseball coach for the Rangers.

"The big thing that I learned is that there is a lot more than just coaching baseball when you are the head coach. What I found out is that I really love teaching the game of baseball, which is something that I love to do and am pretty good at. Now I can give my time back to the game and teach players." Raabe said that when he took over as the head coach of Forest Lake 11 years ago, he knew he was going to have to build a baseball program there and that it would take time.

"That is exactly what we did," he said. "In the 11 years here we won four conference titles, we have been in the state tournament four years including the last three years. It takes time to build a program but if you work hard and do the right things you can build a championship team."

Raabe said he found out about the Bethel opening by word of mouth. "And generally when these things happen, usually alumni or people with a tie to a program end up contacting someone and ask them if they have an interest in the job. And if you have an interest you let them know. You then are asked to send in an application and that is what happened."

Raabe said that things went forward from there. "I got the job offer last Thursday and I accepted it on Saturday."

"This has been my dream," he said about coaching college baseball. "After I got out of professional baseball I was offered by a couple of different major league teams a chance to manage in the minors. But I turned them down and the only reason that I turned them down was not because I did not want to or did not have the ability to do it but because I did not know if my family would enjoy that kind of lifestyle. I would not forsake my family for anything, even a dream job. I took a different path, but immediately after I got to Forest Lake, the head baseball job at Forest Lake opened up. That was my in to get into coaching and start my career which has taken me here."

Raabe said that he will hire a new coaching staff at Bethel. "I have developed a relationship with baseball people over the years. I have hired three assistant coaches already and am looking to hire two or three more."

He said that coaching in the MIAC will not be easy. "There is a lot of good baseball and good coaches here."

He added that recruiting will be huge. "I am going to have to find the players," he said. "Bethel is a high quality academic program. We are a Christian college so we are looking for Christ-centered individuals with high academics who loves to play baseball. have a passion for the sport and wants to learn. Those are the kind of players that I want and I will recruit hard for them."

"St. Thomas came out of our conference and has won a couple of national championships. There are a lot of good baseball players in Minnesota - I want them to play for me, a coach who loves baseball. My wife Val said this is where I should be. I feel that I can turn this program around."