

Meet the 2011 Tri-City Red Staff!



Rus Poser

Rus is an Irondale alum -- and a four-year starter on the school's baseball team. He played with Tri-City Red for three years -- 1997 through 1999, serving as a team captain in '99. While playing with Red, Rus was instrumental in the team earning two State Titles, two Regional Championships, and two trips to the American Legion World Series (1997 and 1999), with Red winning the National Championship in 1999, achieving an overall record of 64-5. Quite an accomplishment -- considering that there are over 5,000 Legion teams registered nationally. Rus and his teammates also easily (and totally!!) obliterated the prior Minnesota record that year for team home runs in one season -- Red hit a total of 126 home runs in 1999, more than doubling the old state record. As team catcher, Rus contributed significantly both defensively and offensively; not only was he a big part of the team's pitching successes, in 1999, he led the team in doubles, hitting 25 (a Tri-City Red record, yet to be broken) -- and batting .429 for the season. Simply amazing!

After having been an Assistant Coach with Tri-City Red for five years, Rus took over the reins as Manager & Head Coach in 2009. In only two short years as Head Coach, he has accumulated a winning record of 48-26. In 2010, the team went undefeated through its first 10 games, and it took another 10 games before the team suffered its second loss of the season. Between playing and coaching, Rus has a total association with Tri-City Red of eleven years (so far!).

Rus, unfortunately had to give up playing competitively due to problems with his knees. He initially attended the University of Wisconsin-Parkside, but completed his degree at Concordia College. He currently works for AT&T as an Account Executive, as well as being a part-time baseball skills instructor. Rus and his spouse, Alex, live in Oakdale.

Steve Grasley

Steve Grasley is a Tri-City Red pitching legend. He is a graduate of Mounds View (check out the Mustang pitching record book!), and also played with Red for three years (1998 – 2000.) Along with Rus, Steve brought the American Legion World Series trophy home in 1999. The team's overall record that year was 64-5, with Steve posting a pitching record of 18-2, with 10 saves. Just as did the batters, Steve broke many Tri-City Red records that year: he had 31 appearances, 123.2 innings pitched, and a whopping 179 strikeouts during the season. The National American Legion honored him as the top pitcher in the nation that year, awarding him the National Bob Feller pitching award.

In 2000, the team won another MN State title and went on to regional competition – and Steve, as a team captain, was once again instrumental in the team's phenomenal performance. His record was 12-4, with 4 saves; he had an amazing ERA of .082 and 119 strikeouts – bringing his cumulative, three-season record with Tri-City Red to 42-7, with 16 saves and 381 strikeouts. He was named 4th District MVP in 2000 as well.

Steve graduated from Creighton University in Omaha – and, gee, he also played baseball there. In fact, he earned Division 1 All-American honors. He joined the Seattle Mariner organization in 2004, spending time in Peoria, the Arizona Rookie League, and with the Mariner's Timber Rattlers affiliate in Appleton.

Steve lives in St. Paul, and is employed as an Account Manager with ADP. It gave us great pleasure that "The Legend" (and all around great guy) chose to rejoin the Tri-City Red team as an Assistant Coach, beginning in 2010.

Billy Schneider

Billy, also a Mounds View alum, graduated in 1999. (As with Steve, check out how many times his name appears in the Mustang record book!) As another 3-year Tri-City Red player (1997-1999), Billy was known as "the sparkplug" of the team. In 1999, as a team captain (along with Rus), he served as leadoff man in the batting order -- and he led the team in more ways than one. He topped the team with a batting average of .558 for the 1999 season. Of the 126 home runs hit by the team that year, Billy contributed 21 of them, third highest on the team. He hit 20 doubles (second, behind Rus) and had 83 RBI (third highest on the team). In addition, he racked up an incredible 51 stolen bases during the year. (Next highest on the team? 14.) At 2nd base in 1999, his range was amazing; and as an outfielder during part of his Red career, Billy was so quick that he probably could have handled the entire outfield single-handedly.

Billy, deservedly, was named 4th District MVP in 1999. In the championship game of the State Tournament, Billy hit a game winning home run in the 7th inning against Bloomington Blue. He was subsequently named Minnesota American Legion Baseball's Most Outstanding Player for 1999. (As a sophomore, similarly, in 1997, in addition to making a game-saving, somersaulting catch in left field, Billy hit a game-winning home run in the 12th inning of the State Tournament's semi-final game against St. Paul Park, ultimately enabling Red to make its first trip to the World Series.)

While in college, including a stop at the University of Minnesota, Billy unfortunately suffered a back injury, ending his days as a player. Since then, Billy has worked with his father (Buzz Schneider of the gold-winning US Olympic hockey team) in real estate. And, Billy is a movie star to boot! He played his father, Buzz, in the 2004 Disney film, "Miracle." (Bet this little fact will compel you to soon pop the movie into the DVR for another watch!) Needless to say, as is the case with Rus and Steve, Tri-City Red is honored -- and blessed -- to have Billy back in uniform again!

Gail Kalata

In addition to being the team's chief cheerleader, Gail handles much of the administration for the team. Her love of the team stems from the fact that her brother, Mark (who graduated from Columbia Heights, who played Legion ball himself, and who had coached Tri-City Blue), was involved in starting Tri-City Red in 1990. In helping with Tri-City Red's administration over the years, Gail gradually gained a somewhat widespread (good or bad ... we are not quite sure) reputation as being a bona fide "Legion Baseball junkie." As a result, in addition to working with Tri-City Red (and Tri-City Blue and Maroon), Gail volunteers her time at all levels of American Legion Baseball. She has assumed the role of 4th District League Director (handling all the administration for our league of 10 teams), she is on the State Baseball Board, she handles many programs and administrative duties for the statewide Legion Baseball program (including administering "the Poll" and maintaining a multitude of web pages), and has consulted with National on various issues. If anyone needs info related to Legion Baseball in Minnesota, basically, they contact Gail! Due to her contributions to the Program, in 2011, Gail is being inducted into the Minnesota American Legion Baseball Hall of Fame.

A graduate of Columbia Heights, Gail worked in human resources management for many years, then returned to school fulltime (University of MN), earning degrees in interior, landscape and architectural design. She lives in St. Paul with husband Steve, has one son (Jason) and a step-daughter (Carly). Surprisingly, Jason never actually played Legion Baseball -- but, as a Little-Leaguer, he served as Tri-City Red's chief ball-shagger, while Gail towed him all over the country to cheer the team on.

All staff members participate on a purely volunteer basis. We appreciate your support of the team and your cooperation throughout the season, so that we can try to provide a great experience for all!