

# Father McGivney Baseball Sees 120+ Kids During Annual Baseball Camp

by Bradley Piros, Reporter  
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GLEN CARBON - For Father McGivney head baseball coach Chris Erwin, it's all about what's on the back of his practice shirts.

"That's really important for our program. The back of our practice shirts say faith, family, baseball, no excuses and it's in that order," he said.

He and a few of his current high school players were wearing those shirts during their annual summer baseball camp as they taught the game to all ages and grades 1st through 8th. The camp was also held for the incoming and returning high schoolers as well.

The camp runs Monday-Wednesday of this week from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. and is broken up into different sections for the different age groups.

The 1st through 3rd graders practiced from 8 to 10 in the morning. Everyone else was dismissed at 11. Catchers and pitchers stuck around for another hour for their specific workouts.

All in all, Erwin preached one word throughout the camp, no matter the camper's age, and that word was progression.

"We have to progress," he said.

"Whether it be the guys that were freshmen into sophomores, or juniors into seniors, we have to progress. We have to get better at something every single day, whether that's in the weight room, out on the field, or in the summer programs that they're playing. They've got to find something that they were lacking at last year and come to practice and get better at it every day."

It sounds like he was being a little harsh on the campers, but that's not the case at all. The most important thing he said is that these kids have fun, which they did in bunches.

The lower age groups played whiffle ball and practiced sliding into the base on an actual slip-in slide. It was a great way to learn a new skill as well as stay cool on the near 100-degree day.

All ages did a little bit of batting practice throughout the morning as well.

Erwin was really impressed with the turnout for the camp this year saying it's the most kids he's ever seen since being the head coach.

"It's really great for our program to have 120 campers out here over a three-day period. It's important for them to see our grounds, see our fields, and really see the guys, the team, and our coaching staff."

Erwin wasn't single-handedly running the camp. He had most of his coaching staff out there helping as well as the majority of his current high school team. He called them counselors.

"Our players enjoy being out here and promoting the program," he said.

"It's really important for our program and also for the kids to get a chance to meet with us, talk with us and see what we're all about," Daniel Gierer said. He led his team in hitting this season with a crazy .452 batting average. He'll be a senior in the fall.

As for the high school team, Erwin expects another 30-win season.

"I think we have the talent to do it," Erwin said. "It's a big ask, it's a big goal, but it's a goal that I believe this group of guys can achieve, and if they work hard we can go out and get it for sure."

"I think we're setting our sights on what we want to achieve and I think every program says the same thing or hopes for the same thing. Instead of hoping for it, we're trying to plan for it. Plan for a long run in the playoffs," he said.

For him and his team, it isn't an unrealistic goal. They've had back-to-back 30+ win seasons, so why not make it three in a row? The Griffins have plenty of talent returning to get the job done as they try to make it back to the state championship game as they did a year ago.

"Our 1-2-3 are coming back," Erwin said. "We got, Gabe , Jack , and Daniel coming back. We lost Hop and Darren on the mound, but otherwise positionally we have everyone coming back. We didn't lose anybody from the lineup or anyone defensively from the field, which is why we have high expectations for next year."