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MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

T.J. BENNETT RETIRES FROM REDHAWKS; HIRED AS REDBIRDS ASSISTANT COACH

FARGO, ND — Illinois State University has announced the hiring of RedHawks second baseman T.J. Bennett as an assistant coach with the school's baseball program on Tuesday morning.

As the announcement was made, Bennett, 27, announced his retirement from the RedHawks and will play his final game at Newman Outdoor Field on Friday, August 16TH against Sioux Falls.

"I am very thankful for my time here in Fargo. The team, organization, and fans have been amazing," T.J. said. "This has definitely been the most fun I've ever had playing the game I've loved my whole life. I am very thankful for the support I have received from everybody throughout this process."

A valuable utility player this year, Bennett has played infield, outfield and catcher and is batting .279 with 76 hits, 18 doubles, 10 home runs and 43 RBI in 72 games. He was one of six RedHawks players named to the 2019 American Association All-Star team.

"As tough as it is to lose a player like T.J. this late in the season, I can't fault him for taking the job with the Redbirds" said RedHawks general manager Matt Rau. "Not many guys under the age of 30 get the opportunity to coach at a Division 1 (NCAA) level, so this has got to be pretty special for T.J. and we wish him the best."

The Mesa, AZ native played collegiate baseball at the University of Utah before being signed in 2014 with the Gateway Grizzlies of the Frontier League. In 2016, Bennett was called up to the Sacramento River Cats (SFG-AAA) and continued to play within the Giants organization through the 2018 season.

Bennett was traded to the RedHawks following the 2018 season, but had his contract purchased by the Chicago White Sox. In April of 2019, T.J. signed a free agent contract with the RedHawks, joining his dad, Jim, who was named F-M's manager in March.

"The opportunity to play for my dad this summer is the most special thing I have ever gotten to be a part of in my career, and I am very confident in the environment he and the players have created this



summer.” T.J. said. “While I am looking forward to my new opportunity as a coach, it will be tough to leave this group of guys in the middle of a huge playoff hunt. I will be watching daily and in close contact with the team as they go and do what we have set out to do... win a championship.”

T.J.’s dad and manager, Jim Bennett, who is in his first season with the Fargo-Moorhead RedHawks said, “As T.J.’s manager, we are really going to miss him and what he brings to the team on the field and in the clubhouse. Jim continued “As his father, I am truly excited for T.J. and this next chapter in his life as a college coach. He knows the game, loves the game and is always looking for ways to help others. I’m confident that he will bring a lot to the table as a coach and I will be his biggest cheerleader in his new career.”

The younger Bennett will join the rest of the RedHawks on the road for a nine-game road trip that starts in Gary, IN, tomorrow and continues to Chicago, ending in Milwaukee, before returning home on August 15th for a three-game series against Sioux Falls.

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